SYMPHONY NO. 5 AS A SUMMARY OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE ENGLISH COMPOSER

by

DEBORAH BOWDEN LISANO

(Under the Direction of Roger Vogel)

ABSTRACT

Ralph Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 5 in D was composed between the years 1938 and 1943. The purpose of this study is to analyze Symphony No. 5 as a summary of Vaughan Williams's philosophy of the English composer. Symphony No. 5 has been selected as the work for this study as it is, in the opinion of many, the most representative and outstanding of Vaughan Williams's nine symphonies.

Symphony No. 5 is explored in six chapters that deal with musical, social, and political influences on Vaughan Williams during and prior to the writing of Symphony No. 5; the characteristics of Vaughan Williams's working method; Vaughan Williams's writings as they relate to the English composer and the symphony; the manuscripts of Symphony No. 5; the dedication of Symphony No. 5 to Jean Sibelius; and an analysis of Symphony No. 5. Included in the appendices are observations regarding the premiere, the reception history, and the recorded history of Symphony No. 5, and charts outlining the major tonal/modal areas of the symphony.

INDEX WORDS: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Symphony, British Music, Folk Song, Jean Sibelius, Modality, National Music, World War II, Epilogue

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by

DEBORAH BOWDEN LISANO

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M.M., The University of Georgia, 1989

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by

DEBORAH BOWDEN LISANO

Major Professor: Roger Vogel

Committee: John Corina
David Haas
David Starkweather

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2004

To

Mike Lisano, my husband, who inspired and encouraged me to follow my dream

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ralph Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 5 in D, composed between 1938 and 1943, is central in Vaughan Williams's symphonic output. Not only is it the fifth of nine symphonies, but it is viewed by many scholars as being the most outstanding of Vaughan Williams's symphonies. The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze Symphony No. 5 as a summary of Vaughan Williams's philosophy of the English composer. Symphony No. 5 has been selected as the work for this study as it is, in the opinion of many, the most representative of Vaughan Williams's nine symphonies.

The high regard in which this symphony is held is evident in critical remarks by scholars in the field of research on Vaughan Williams. Michael Kennedy, principal commentator on the works of Vaughan Williams, offered his view of Symphony No. 5 in his study, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*: "[Symphonies 4, 5, and 6] are at once the summit and the kernel of Vaughan Williams's art; and the greatest of the three—perhaps of all his works—is, in my opinion, this Symphony of the Celestial City."[1] Musicologist Robert Layton wrote that "the Fifth Symphony must be regarded as adding a dimension to [Vaughan Williams's] symphonic art that is altogether special. For many (including the present author) it remains his greatest and most perfect single achievement; if nothing else survived from his pen, the essence of his

[1]Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 283. Vaughan Williams wrote a stage work based on John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Symphony #5 in D and *The Pilgrim's Progress* have sections of music in common. The "Celestial City" was the final destination of Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

musical personality is distilled in its pages."[2] Music scholar Wilfred Mellers stated that "one may hazard that the Fifth Symphony is Vaughan Williams's greatest work because it is a quest that *attains* its goal."[3] Roy Douglas, a close associate of Vaughan Williams from 1947 to 1958, assisted with the preparation of many of Vaughan Williams's manuscripts for performance and publication. Douglas commented: "I am sometimes asked: 'Which is your favorite among the symphonies of Vaughan Williams?' My unhesitating answer is: 'No. 5'. . . . For me No. 5 has the very essence of that serene beauty, that controlled ecstasy, combined with that inexplicable feeling of 'Englishness', which are the qualities I most treasure in his music."[4]

In order to accurately examine the "English qualities" of Symphony No. 5, there exists a need for Vaughan Williams's prose writings and recorded remarks to be examined as they relate to his symphonic writing. Does this symphony reflect the musical advice he gave to others and which he himself embraced? Or are his writings a "how-to" manual that Vaughan Williams the composer did not follow? A close examination of Symphony No. 5 will confirm that Vaughan Williams summarized his compositional thought process and philosophy in his writings.

There is no lengthy study prior to this one that is devoted to Vaughan Williams's literary works as they are connected with his symphonic writing. Vaughan Williams expressed his views on music in writing, as did many other twentieth-century composers associated with

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[2]Robert Layton, "The Symphony in Britain," in *A Companion to the Symphony*, ed. Robert Layton (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 433.

[3]Wilfred Mellers, "Prayer for Peace, 'Within and Without': The Double Man in *Dona Nobis Pacem* and the Fifth Symphony," in *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion*, rev. ed. (London: Albion Music Ltd., 1997), 270.

[4]Roy Douglas, *Working with Vaughan Williams: the Correspondence of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas* (London: The British Library, 1988), 114.

nationalism, including Béla Bartók,[5] Aaron Copland,[6] Percy Grainger,[7] Charles Ives,[8] and Carl Neilsen.[9] Vaughan Williams could sometimes be over-zealous in order to make a point. However, as this document will illustrate, Vaughan Williams's literary and musical writings complement one another with only occasional exceptions.[10]

Sources for discussion in this dissertation include Vaughan Williams's literary works and recorded remarks as they are associated with the English composer and with the symphony. Vaughan Williams lectured and wrote extensively on music and composers throughout his lifetime. In these essays, letters, journal contributions, and spoken remarks, Vaughan Williams presented his vision of the English composer. While Vaughan Williams wrote very little about his own musical compositions, his writings do clearly express his thoughts on music. His writings reveal that he was a musical pilgrim, or seeker, throughout his life. They also reveal

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[5]Benjamin Suchoff, ed., *Béla Bartók Essays* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976).

[6]Aaron Copland, *Copland on Music* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960).

[7]Malcolm Gillies and Bruce Clunies Ross, ed., *Grainger on Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[8]Howard Boatwright, ed., *Essays Before a Sonata, and Other Writings by Charles Ives* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1962); John Kirkpatrick, ed., *Charles E Ives: Memos* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972).

[9]Carl Neilsen, *Living Music*, trans. Reginald Spink (London: J. & W. Chester Ltd., 1968).

[10]The advice that Vaughan Williams gave in his literary works can be seen in his musical compositions. Exceptions include "The Composer in Wartime" and "A School of English Music." In "The Composer in Wartime," Vaughan Williams advised composers to write choral works during wartime. Much of Symphony No. 5 was written during World War II. He was not in favor of the use of folk song in "A School of English Music," which was his earliest published journal article. His opinion, though, changed when he made his own "discovery" of folk song.

Vaughan Williams to be a composer who had strong convictions regarding the role of the English composer.

There is little scholarly literature devoted to Vaughan Williams's thoughts about music, and there is no critical study devoted solely to Vaughan Williams's philosophies as they are mirrored in his Symphony No. 5. The majority of the literature that has been written regarding Symphony No. 5 deals with theoretical issues and instances of borrowed material.

Michael Kennedy, Vaughan Williams's chief music biographer and friend, documented many of Vaughan Williams's thoughts about music. Kennedy's *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*[11] is regarded as the definitive survey of the music of Vaughan Williams. The chapter "Folk Song and Nationalism" contains a number of references regarding how Vaughan Williams's writings on these and other topics were reflected in his life and music. The work is also a source of comments by Vaughan Williams that are not found in other sources. Kennedy's Foreword to Vaughan Williams's *National Music and Other Essays*[12] draws a number of connections between what Vaughan Williams said and what he in turn did.

Ursula Vaughan Williams's *R.V.W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*[13] is considered the definitive biographical work on Vaughan Williams. Included in this volume[14] is

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[11]Kennedy, *Works*.

[12]Michael Kennedy, foreword to *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed. by Ralph Vaughan Williams (New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), v-ix.

[13]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). Vaughan Williams's will indicated that his wife was the person designated to write his biography.

[14]Oxford University Press, the publisher of *R.V.W.*, described the work as follows: "Ursula Vaughan Williams's intimate and detailed biography of her husband used much material

information regarding the history and premiere of Symphony No. 5 and her firsthand account of the premiere.

Roy Douglas provided two excellent sources of information about Vaughan Williams. Though their association began a number of years after the completion of Symphony No. 5, Douglas's books, *Working with Vaughan Williams: the Correspondence of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas*[15] and *Working with R.V.W.*,[16] contain insights regarding Vaughan Williams's compositional thought process and working methods.

Hubert Foss, musical editor of Oxford University Press from 1923 until 1941, wrote the earliest lengthy study of Vaughan Williams that included a discussion of Symphony No. 5. It was for this publication that Vaughan Williams wrote his "Musical Autobiography." Published in 1950, Foss's *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study*[17] includes an examination of Symphony No. 5 and a chapter entitled "The English Background" which was Foss's argument for what makes Vaughan Williams's music "English."

In the Preface to *National Music and Other Essays*,[18] Ursula Vaughan Williams traced how a number of the essays contained in *National Music and Other Essays* fit into Vaughan Williams's life at the time the various essays were written. Ursula Vaughan Williams was the

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previously unavailable to scholars to produce a balanced and judicial portrait." See jacket notes to Kennedy's *Catalogue*, 2nd ed.

[15]Douglas, *Working with Vaughan Williams*.

[16]Roy Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[17]Hubert Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1950).

[18]Ursula Vaughan Williams, preface to *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed. by Ralph Vaughan Williams (New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), xi-xiv.

second wife of Ralph Vaughan Williams. She presented the works in chronological order and gave background information on many of the articles. A poet and writer herself, as well as a close associate of Vaughan Williams when many of the essays were written, her remarks drew upon her firsthand observations of the composer at work.

Heirs and Rebels,[19] edited by Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogene Holst, includes representative letters covering forty years of correspondence between Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. Though Holst died nine years before Symphony No. 5 was premiered, the correspondence is informative as Vaughan Williams and Holst had the habit of playing their works-in-progress for each other and soliciting insightful criticism. The volume also includes Vaughan Williams's essay "The Composer in War Time."

In an essay for Alain Frogley's *Vaughan Williams Studies*,[20] Hugh Cobbe, Music Librarian of the British Library, discussed Vaughan Williams's views on the music tradition of Germany. Cobbe used letters and commentary to trace Vaughan Williams's views on the Germanic tradition.

Music historian Alan Edgar Frederic Dickinson wrote a study of Vaughan Williams's life and works. Dickinson's *Vaughan Williams*[21] preceded the publication of Kennedy's *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* by one year. Included in Dickinson's study is information regarding

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[19]Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst, ed., *Heirs and Rebels* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959; repr., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1959).

[20]Hugh Cobbe, "Vaughan Williams, Germany, and the Germanic Tradition: a view from the letters" in *Vaughan Williams Studies*, ed. Alain Frogley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[21]A.E.F. Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963).

the premiere of Symphony No. 5 and a table of revisions that Vaughan Williams made to the original published score of the symphony.

Elliott Schwartz and Lionel Pike wrote studies of the nine symphonies of Vaughan Williams. The analysis by Elliott Schwartz in *The Symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams*[22] is an abbreviated one and contains few musical examples. The analysis by Lionel Pike in *Vaughan Williams and the Symphony*[23] contains more musical examples than the analysis by Schwartz. Pike's discussion focuses heavily on material that Symphony No. 5 shares with *Pilgrim's Progress* while offering possible meanings and interpretations of the shared material.

In *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Discovery of His Music*,[24] author Simona Pakenham made brief references to Vaughan Williams's writings as they assist with an understanding of his music. While intended as a work for non-musicians, her observations are insightful as she was well-acquainted with both Ralph and Ursula Vaughan Williams.

Research on Ralph Vaughan Williams has increased significantly in the last decade. This is due in large part to the creation of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, which was founded in 1994. The *Journal of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society* contains articles[25] that focus on

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[22]Elliott Schwartz, *The Symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (Amherst, Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1964), 89-105.

[23]Lionel Pike, *Vaughan Williams and the Symphony* (London: Toccata Press, 2003), 153-199.

[24]Simona Pakenham, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Discovery of His Music* (New York: Macmillan & Co. Limited, 1957).

[25]The most notable of these articles are Stephen Schwartz, "Vaughan Williams Net Page," *Journal of the RVW Society* 6 (June 1996): 7-9; William Hedley, "Vaughan Williams: the Symphony and the Second World War," *Journal of the RVW Society* 22 (October 2001): 3-13; and "Atterberg, Sibelius and RVW's Fifth Symphony," *Journal of the RVW Society* 21 (June 2001): 18.

Symphony No. 5 and reviews of live and recorded performances of Symphony No. 5. Duncan Hinnells's article "Hubert Foss: Vaughan Williams' Jaeger?"[26] provides information regarding the working relationship between Vaughan Williams and his publisher. Reviews of eighteen recordings of Symphony No. 5 are given by William Hedley in his article "Vaughan Williams: the Symphony and the Second World War."[27]

Three collections of essays, *Vaughan Williams Studies*,[28] *Vaughan Williams in Perspective*,[29] and *Vaughan Williams Essays*,[30] have chapters that focus on aspects of Symphony No. 5 and on folk song. Alain Frogley discussed Vaughan Williams's image as it relates to nationalism, folk song, and pastoral works in "Constructing Englishness in Music: National Character and the Reception of Ralph Vaughan Williams."[31] Current studies in British folk song

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[26]Duncan Hinnells, "Hubert Foss: Vaughan Williams' Jaeger?" *Journal of the RVW Society* 7 (October 1996): 12-13.

[27]See note 25.

[28]Alain Frogley, ed., *Vaughan Williams Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See "Constructing Englishness in Music: National Character and the Reception of Ralph Vaughan Williams" by Alain Frogley, "Vaughan Williams's Folksong Transcriptions: a Case of Idealization?" by Julian Onderdonk, and "'Symphony in D major': Models and Mutations" by Arnold Whittall.

[29]Lewis Foreman, ed., *Vaughan Williams in Perspective* (London: Albion Press, 1998). See "Restless Explorations: Articulating Many Visions" by Lewis Foreman, "Through Bushes and Briars: Vaughan Williams's Earliest Folk-song Collecting" by Tony Kendall, "Encompassing His Century's Dilemmas: the Modality of Vaughan Williams" by Anthony Payne, and "Vaughan Williams and Gerald Finzi" by Stephen Banfield.

[30]Byron Adams and Robin Wells, ed., *Vaughan Williams Essays* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2003). See "Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony: Ideology and Aural Tradition" by Murray Dineen and "Hymn Tunes from Folk-songs: Vaughan Williams and English Hymnody" by Julian Onderdonk.

[31]See note 28.

and Vaughan Williams's method of collecting folk song are discussed in Julian Onderdonk's essays.[32] Anthony Payne described the use of modality in works by Vaughan Williams in "Encompassing His Century's Dilemmas: the Modality of Vaughan Williams."[33] Information regarding Vaughan Williams's practice of having his symphonic works played on the piano for a small group of musical friends is provided in Stephen Banfield's essay "Vaughan Williams and Gerald Finzi."[34]

In order to analyze Vaughan Williams's philosophy of an English composer as exemplified in Symphony No. 5, this document will include an examination of musical, social, and political influences on Vaughan Williams during and prior to the writing of Symphony No. 5 as described in biographies, articles, and Vaughan Williams's own writings. Musical, social, and political influences helped to define Vaughan Williams's attitudes and beliefs regarding the English composer. Musical influences include his study with British and foreign teachers; his work in collecting English folk song; the opinions of his fellow musicians; the music to which he was exposed; and positions that he held as teacher, conductor, editor, and church organist. Social influences include family, friends, musical acquaintances, and the places in which he lived. Political influences include experiences relevant to the two world wars and offers of musical awards that were possibly politically motivated. Biographies of Vaughan Williams, articles written about Vaughan Williams and his works, and his own writings are sources that

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[32]See notes 28 and 30.

[33]See note 29.

[34]See note 29.

contain information about the variety of influences that contributed to his philosophy of the English composer.

A discussion regarding Vaughan Williams's writings as they relate to the symphony and the English composer will also be included in this document. Vaughan Williams's own writings provide the best material for documenting his philosophy of the English composer. The writings illustrate musical ideas that he considered important throughout his life. Vaughan Williams's use of reason and argument in his writings provides an overall view of his system of beliefs.

The characteristics of Vaughan Williams's working method will be examined as described by his biographers, teachers, colleagues, and himself. The working method used by Vaughan Williams illustrates his personal approach to composition. Viewing his working method from diverse sources aids in establishing the consistency of the working method.

An analysis[35] of Symphony No. 5 will be included in this document, and selected sections of the two manuscript versions of Symphony No. 5, one of which is held by the Royal College of Music Library and the other of which is held by the British Library, will be compared with each other and with the published version of the score. Analysis of the form, motivic structure, harmonic language, and use of rhythm in the individual movements is necessary to establish how the symphony reflects Vaughan Williams's philosophy of the English composer. The sections from the manuscript versions illustrate characteristics of his working method.

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[35]The analysis does not attempt to draw connections between Symphony No. 5 and Vaughan Williams's *Pilgrims's Progress*. See Michael Kennedy, *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 160-65; and Pike, *Vaughan Williams and the Symphony*, 153-199, for discussions of shared material.

The summary will review Vaughan Williams's philosophy of the English composer and influences that contributed to his philosophy. The conclusions will show that musical traits Vaughan Williams identified as "English" in his writings are adhered to in Symphony No. 5. The musical evidence in the movements of Symphony No. 5 confirms that Vaughan Williams was able to attain his goal of developing national characteristics in Symphony No. 5.

Included in the appendices are observations regarding the premiere, the reception history, and the recorded history of Symphony No. 5; and charts outlining the major tonal and modal areas of Symphony No. 5.

CHAPTER 2

LIFE, BACKGROUND, AND WORKING METHOD

Vaughan Williams's life and background, which include musical, social, and political influences prior to and during the writing of Symphony No. 5, played a strong role in the creation of this English symphony. Vaughan Williams was aware of some of these influences on his music, such as his interest in folk song and his study with British composers. Other influences, such as his study with Ravel in France and the effect of the wars going on around him, were downplayed by Vaughan Williams or were not acknowledged as having affected any of his symphonies.

The musical and social influences helped mold a distinct working method for Vaughan Williams's large-scale symphonic works—a working method that he followed throughout his life. A unique feature of his compositional method involved playing his works-in-progress and his recently completed works for a variety of individuals connected with music and requesting feedback from them regarding his compositions. While Vaughan Williams appeared to have rarely used the suggestions offered by these musicians, he did feel a need to try his works out on a small group of trusted friends before releasing the works to a performance for the general public.

Musical, Social, and Political Influences

The musical experiences to which Vaughan Williams was exposed, the places in which he lived, the people he met, and the emotional shock of being involved with two world wars were experiences that influenced Symphony No. 5. Described by some as a late-bloomer,

Vaughan Williams absorbed a wide variety of musical experiences before he began to offer his large-scale works to England and the world. While Vaughan Williams had lived in London for many years and considered himself to be a Londoner, he was living in the countryside of Dorking during the writing of Symphony No. 5. The calendar of the Vaughan Williams family was always filled with musical and social events. Vaughan Williams had a large circle of friends, family, and acquaintances—a circle with which he was constantly involved, and a circle which continuously grew. Both of the world wars claimed time and emotion from Vaughan Williams. During the First World War, Vaughan Williams served in a number of military capacities. He was able to offer his services as a humanitarian volunteer in the Second World War.

For the purpose of this discussion, the musical, social, and political influences on Vaughan Williams's life have been divided into three periods: 1872 to 1908—early life and the years of formal study in music; 1909 to 1937—the years between the end of formal study and the writing of Symphony No. 5; and 1938 to 1943—the time period during which Vaughan Williams wrote Symphony No. 5. The period of time from 1872 to 1908 has been divided into two sections: details of this period of Vaughan Williams's life as collected by his biographers, the principal one being Ursula Vaughan Williams, and how these years were perceived by Vaughan Williams.

1872-1908: Early Years and Musical Studies as Viewed by Biographers[1]

In the Introduction to *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Pictorial Biography*, Ursula Vaughan Williams captured the essence of the composer in two sentences:

> A composer's life is his music, but he is also a human being belonging to a particular place and time. His art may transcend his circumstances, but the roots from which he has grown and his place in life nourish and shape that art, and show us the man from whose work we have already discovered both mind and heart.[2]

Knowledge of Vaughan William's childhood and musical training is necessary in order to fully understand his philosophy of the English composer.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born 12 October 1872 at the vicarage in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire. He was the third child of Margaret Wedgwood Vaughan Williams and Arthur Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams's family was one of high social standing and rich intellect. His maternal ancestors included Wedgwood artisans and the scientist Charles Darwin, while his paternal ancestors were lawyers and clergy. Vaughan Williams's father chose a vocation in the church. When Ralph Vaughan Williams was only two years of age, his father died following a very brief illness. After the death of her husband, Margaret Vaughan Williams and the three children moved to Leith Hill Place in Surrey, which was the Wedgwood family home.

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[1]Unless otherwise noted, this summary of the life of Vaughan Williams covering the period from 1872 to 1908 is based on details from Ursula Vaughan Williams's *R.V.W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*.

[2]Ursula Vaughan Williams, Introduction to *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Pictorial Biography* by John E. Lunn and Ursula Vaughan Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), no page number listed.

Vaughan Williams's earliest music lessons included the study of piano and music theory[3] with his Aunt Sophy at Leith Hill Place. Vaughan Williams exhibited an interest in composition at a young age, and he wrote his first musical composition, a four-measure piano piece entitled *Robin's Nest*,[4] at the age of six. Other early musical experiences included playing piano duets with his siblings, Hervey and Meggie, and studying violin with a German music teacher beginning at the age of seven.

In September 1883 Vaughan Williams went to Rottingdean, a preparatory school. While at Rottingdean, he continued his study of the violin and piano. It was during the years spent at Rottingdean that Vaughan Williams developed a practice of arranging musical works for various combinations of instruments—a practice he would follow throughout his musical career.

For Christmas of 1883, his mother gave him a book entitled *A Pictorial Architecture of the British Isles*.[5] This book helped him develop an interest in architecture and history that would remain with him throughout his life. This interest was reflected in his choice of history as a major at Cambridge and in his fascination with the architectural settings of the church music of the Tudor composers.[6]

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[3]Theory books that Vaughan Williams studied with his aunt included *The Child's Introduction to Thorough Bass* and Stainer's *Harmony*.

[4] The manuscript of *Robin's Nest* is held by the British Library. See Kennedy *Works*, Plate 1, for a reproduction.

[5]H. H. Bishop, *Pictorial Architecture of the British Isles* (London: Society for Christian Knowledge, n.d.)

[6]Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* was written for a performance at the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester Cathedral. Vaughan Williams had been asked to write an orchestral piece for the festival. He was well aware of the effect of music resonating on stone walls and the echo that would have resulted. These ideas were used in this work based on a theme by Thomas Tallis, a Tudor composer. It has been said that Vaughan

Vaughan Williams went to Charterhouse, a public school,[7] in January 1887. He changed his performing string instrument from violin to viola, continued the study of the piano, began the study of the organ, sang in the school choir, and played in the orchestra. He also composed and arranged music for any group of instruments that happened to be available.[8] Vaughan Williams had the opportunity to attend a number of concerts when he was a student at Charterhouse. Growing up in an era without recorded performances meant that live performances and the study of scores would be the only means of learning new music.

While at Charterhouse, Vaughan Williams considered a career as a professional orchestral string player. He felt he was much more suited to being a string player than a keyboard player. His family, though, thought a career as an organist was a more lucrative and respectable career than that of an orchestral player, so he began to devote additional time to the study of the organ.

Vaughan Williams had the opportunity to travel to Munich during the summer following the year that he completed his studies at Charterhouse. He was able to attend a performance of Wagner's *Die Walküre* and was impressed with Wagner's music. While not a first trip abroad for him, it was his first trip to Germany, a mecca for many musicians at that time.

Williams's 'celestial' Symphony No. 5 belongs to the acoustics of a cathedral, rather than to those of a concert hall. The Romanza movement of Symphony No. 5, which opens with a homophonic 16-part string section alternating with contrapuntal writing, would be heard in a different manner in a stone cathedral than in a modern performing auditorium.

[7]Boarding school for pupils age 13 to 18.

[8]John E. Lunn and Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Pictorial Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 7.

In September of 1890, he began his studies at the Royal College of Music in London. He attended two terms as a general music student before he was able to achieve his goal of studying with Hubert Parry. The friendship and encouragement of Parry contributed much to his musical development. Parry widened Vaughan Williams's musical experience by lending scores to his pupil. Vaughan Williams learned many works by playing through these scores at the piano.

Vaughan Williams entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1892. He studied history as well as music at Cambridge. Charles Wood, whom Vaughan Williams described as "the finest technical instructor"[9] he had known, was his composition teacher. Vaughan Williams's organ studies were with Alan Gray. While at Cambridge, he continued weekly composition lessons with Hubert Parry at the Royal College of Music. He received the degree Bachelor of Music from Cambridge in 1894 and a year later received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History.

While enrolled at Cambridge, Vaughan Williams had the opportunity to conduct a small choral society and to play in chamber music ensembles. It was at chamber music gatherings that he had the opportunity to become reacquainted with Adeline Fisher. The Vaughan Williams and Fisher families had been friends for many years. Ralph Vaughan Williams and Adeline Fisher would later marry.

Vaughan Williams returned to the Royal College of Music in the summer of 1895. Upon his return he met Gustav Holst, the man who would become one of the greatest influences in his musical life. Holst and Vaughan Williams soon developed a pattern of playing their works-in-progress for each other in order to receive constructive criticism. This was a discipline they would follow until the death of Holst in 1934.

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[9]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "*Musical Autobiography*," chapter in Foss, ***Ralph Vaughan***

Parry had become Director of the Royal College of Music when Vaughan Williams returned in 1895, so Vaughan Williams continued his composition studies at the Royal College of Music with Charles Villiers Stanford. Stanford's curt mannerisms and less-than-encouraging attitude meant he was a very different type of teacher than Parry. Though Vaughan Williams did not appear to have a great affection for Stanford, he later acknowledged his indebtedness to Stanford in a tribute that he wrote about his former teacher.[10]

When Vaughan Williams returned to the Royal College of Music, his official major instrument was the organ. He continued his organ studies with Sir Walter Parratt and was able to obtain a post as the organist and choirmaster of St. Barnabas church in South Lambeth. While the position at St. Barnabas church was unsatisfying in a number of ways, as he was not an outstanding organist and the amateur choir could be frustrating at times, the experience added to his musical development. The position also proved to his family that he could make a living as a professional musician.[11]

Vaughan Williams left the Royal College of Music in 1896. By 1897 he decided that he needed musical experience abroad. A number of changes would occur in his life that year beginning with his marriage to Adeline Fisher on 9 October 1897. He was happy to leave his

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Williams: A Study, 25.

[10]Ralph Vaughan Williams, Preface to *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), no page number indicated. In the Preface, Vaughan Williams indicated that the tribute was written for a broadcast in 1952 for the centenary of Stanford's birth. The work was later published as an essay in *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects* and *National Music and Other Essays.*

[11]Paul Holmes, *Vaughan Williams* (New York: Omnibus Press, 1997), 20.

position at St. Barnabas church[12] while he and Adeline traveled to Berlin for a working honeymoon.

The honeymoon was a working one in the sense that Vaughan Williams enrolled at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin in order to study with Max Bruch. The period of study with Bruch lasted a few months. Though a classically trained European composer, Bruch was interested in folk song as "folk colour in orchestral dress."[13] Vaughan Williams apparently did not gain much from the study with Bruch other than the fact that Bruch provided encouragement to him.[14]

Ralph and Adeline Vaughan Williams settled in London when they returned from their honeymoon. Due to a private income, Vaughan Williams was able to devote his efforts to studying for the Fellow of the Royal College of Organists exam[15] and writing his doctoral exercise, a setting of the Mass.[16] He was awarded the Doctorate in Music from Cambridge in 1901.

During the following years Vaughan Williams was involved with a number of projects which included editing the first of two volumes of Henry Purcell's "Welcome" songs for the

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[12]Kennedy, *Works*, 41. John Ireland filled the position, although Vaughan Williams had recommended Holst for the job.

[13]Holmes, 25.

[14]Kennedy, *Works*, 43.

[15]Holmes, 25-26.

[16]Kennedy, *Works*, 42.

Purcell Society,[17] going to the countryside and collecting over 800 folk songs,[18] and editing and composing hymns for *The English Hymnal*.[19] Rev. Percy Dearmer had contacted Vaughan Williams in 1904 and asked him to edit the music for a new hymnal for use in the Anglican Chuch. Each of these projects would be reflected in some way in his later compositions. His written thoughts about music were also being expressed at this time in contributions to the journal *The Vocalist.*

While Vaughan Williams's formal musical training ended with the completion of the Doctorate in Music, he spent many years in a self-imposed musical apprenticeship before composing his first symphony. In addition to the projects of those years, Vaughan Williams attended many concerts and recitals that featured new music.

By 1908 Vaughan Williams had decided that another trip abroad would be helpful to his musical development. A trip to France to study with Ravel might seem an unusual choice for a composer who was already leaning strongly toward nationalism in his prose writings. Vaughan Williams, however, had the ability to absorb the studies in orchestration from Ravel into his own personal style rather than becoming an imitator of Ravel. The study with Ravel also appeared to be the catalyst that he needed since major works began to flow from Vaughan Williams following the study with Ravel.

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[17]Ibid., 45-46. Per Kennedy, the second volume was published in 1910.

[18]Ibid., 29.

[19]Ralph Vaughan Williams, ed., *The English Hymnal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1906.)

1872-1908: Vaughan Williams's "Musical Autobiography"[20]

According to Hubert Foss, Vaughan Williams wrote his musical autobiography[21] for inclusion as a chapter in Foss's biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams.[22] The autobiography was written in late 1947 or early 1948,[23] when Vaughan Williams was seventy-five. The autobiography is excellent in providing details regarding how Vaughan Williams worked in the early years of his musical development; however, he may have overlooked or downplayed the degree of influence that other composers, especially foreign ones, had on his later development.

Vaughan Williams's descriptions in this autobiography of his early musical experiences shed light on the development of his philosophy of the English composer. His early experiences would help mold his compositional methods by the development of habits that he would

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[20] While this section includes a number of quotes from the "Musical Autobiography," an extended commentary is also provided. The section follows the life events of Vaughan Williams in the same order as presented in his sometimes "haphazard" essay. All quotations used in this section are taken from the chapter that appeared in Foss's biography of Vaughan Williams. In the preparation of this document, it was noted that numerous changes in punctuation and occasional changes in text occurred when the chapter appeared in Vaughan Williams's *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects* and Vaughan Williams's *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.) When a change in text occurred, it has been recorded in a footnote.

[21] Most of the autobiography deals with Vaughan Williams's early life (1872-1908). Occasional references are made in the autobiography to events that occurred beyond 1908, or influences that continued beyond 1908.

[22] Hubert Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study*, 18.

[23] This is the time period mentioned by Ursula Vaughan Williams on page 281 of *R.V.W.*; however, many writers have indicated that the work was prepared in 1950. The time period mentioned by Ursula Vaughan Williams would appear accurate based on the fact that Foss's preface to *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study* was written in June 1949. In the preface Foss thanked Vaughan Williams for having given him the musical account of his early years "many months ago." The date given in *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed. is 1950, which is apparently when the revisions mentioned in note 20 occurred.

maintain throughout his life. He was candid in his remarks; and in describing the philosophies of various teachers (the most notable being those of Charles Villiers Stanford), he may have inadvertently explained some of the reasons for his late development. Stanford rarely praised the merits of Vaughan Williams's music. Vaughan Williams, on the other hand, was extremely supportive of the musical merits of the works of his fellow British composers. Vaughan Williams felt a need throughout his adult life to have his new large-scale works performed for a handpicked music "jury" prior to public performances of the new works. The music juries resulted in generally positive feedback for him.[24] The insecurity and the need for positive feedback were possibly responses to some of the negative feedback that he indicated that he had received during his student days.[25]

In the "Musical Autobiography," Vaughan Williams acknowledged the help that he had received from his early music teachers. He had been introduced to the music of Bach while at the preparatory school in Rottingdean. Vaughan Williams noted his great admiration for Bach by stating that "Bach still remains for me in a niche by himself."[26] Vaughan Williams indicated that he owed much to his ensemble experiences at Charterhouse. He described an early lesson in

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[24]See Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 36-37. Roy Douglas indicated that his suggestion regarding a change to *Sinfonia Antartica* had not been well-received by Vaughan Williams, so he was hesitant in the future to offer his opinion regarding improvements to Vaughan Williams's works. It is possible that other musical friends were unwilling to offer their honest opinions for similar reasons. The incident described by Douglas is discussed further in the section "The Writing of Symphony No. 5."

[25]See Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study*, 27-28. Vaughan Williams indicated that typical comments from Stanford during a lesson were: "Damnably ugly, my boy. Why do you write such things?"

[26]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 21.

orchestration as having occurred at Charterhouse while he was playing viola in the second movement of Beethoven's First Symphony:

> The violas were quite close to the one horn in the orchestra, and my first lesson in orchestral texture came from hearing the holding note on the horn which accompanies the reiterated figure of the violas.[27]

One of Vaughan Williams's most memorable musical experiences at Charterhouse was having the opportunity to present his own music on a recital. Vaughan Williams and a classmate had approached the headmaster for permission to present a program of their own works. They were delightfully surprised when permission was granted. A number of classmates as well as faculty members and their wives attended the concert. The mathematics professor was quite impressed and encouraged Vaughan Williams to continue composing.[28]

Vaughan Williams credited Hubert Parry with influences that possibly led to his own search for musical identity:

> I entered as a student at the R.C.M., and was determined if possible to study composition under Parry. I had first heard of Parry some years before, when I was still a schoolboy. I remember my cousin, Stephen Massingberd, coming into the room full of that new book *Studies of Great Composers*.[1] "This man Parry," he said, "declares that a composer must write music as his musical conscience demands." This was quite a new idea to me, the loyalty of the artist to his art. Soon after that I got to know some of his music, especially

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[27]Ibid., 20.

[28]Vaughan Williams's memory of his request to present a recital of works by himself and a friend is located in an article Vaughan Williams wrote for the 1952 edition of *The Carthusian*, which is quoted on page 27 of Ursula Vaughan Williams's *R.V.W.* and is similar to the account Vaughan Williams provided in his "Musical Autobiography." However, a copy of the program reprinted on page 21 of Jerrold Northrop Moore's *Vaughan Williams: A Life in Photographs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) indicates that more works were included on the program than those by Vaughan Williams and his friend. The account given by Kennedy on page 12 of his *Works* also mentions works by other composers being on the program. The accounts by Vaughan Williams give the impression that the program included only the works of Vaughan Williams and his friend.

> parts of *Judith*, and I remember even as a boy saying to my brother that there was something, to my mind, peculiarly English about his music.[29] So I was quite prepared to join with the other young students of the R.C.M. in worshipping [*sic*] at that shrine, and I think I can truly say that I have never been disloyal to it.
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> [1]Published in 1887[30]

Vaughan Williams discussed ideas regarding musical conscience and English qualities of music in his own writings when he stated that a composer could not write music that is contrary to his nature[31] and that a composer must receive inspiration from the tradition of his own country.[32]

Parry "was always trying to discover the character revealed in even the weakest of his students' compositions"[33] said Vaughan Williams. He related that Parry would keep his students' compositions for a week before returning them to his students. In reviewing a passage in a work by Vaughan Williams in which Vaughan Williams had made the careless error of

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[29]In the additional works cited in note 20, the end of this sentence reads: "I remember, even as a boy, my brother saying to me that there was something, to his mind, peculiarly English about his music." Vaughan Williams seemed to have changed his mind regarding which of the two made the observation about Parry's music. Vaughan Williams's brother had died a number of years before the autobiography was written, so Vaughan Williams apparently corrected his own recollection. The account given in Ursula Vaughan William's ***R.V.W.*** reads: "I remember, even as a boy, saying to my mother," so at least three accounts exist about the observation regarding the "Englishness" of Parry's music.

[30]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 22.

[31]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National?," in *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed., 3. This was one of the Mary Flexner Lectures that Vaughan Williams delivered at Bryn Mawr College in the Autumn of 1932.

[32]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Some Conclusions," in *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed., 68-69. This was one of the lectures that Vaughan Williams delivered at Bryn Mawr College in the Autumn of 1932.

[33]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 23.

repeating a note and creating a gap in what was intended as a scale passage, Parry checked to see if Vaughan Williams had made an error or if he had intended the passage as something "characteristic."[34]

Vaughan Williams described Parry's philosophy of the distinction between form and color in music:

> He was always very insistent on the importance of form as opposed to colour. He had an almost moral abhorrence of mere luscious sound. It has been said that Parry's own orchestration was bad; the truth is, I think, that he occasionally went too far in his deliberate eschewal of mere orchestral effect.[35]

Parry's thoughts on form and color could be a possible reason for the length of time that it took for Vaughan Williams to find his own voice as the works that we so clearly identify as having Vaughan Williams's fingerprint occurred after his studies in orchestration with Maurice Ravel.

Vaughan Williams wrote of Parry's method of criticizing the works of his students:

> Parry's criticism was constructive. He was not merely content to point out faults, but would prescribe the remedy. The last two bars of my early song,[36] "The Willow Song,"[37] were almost certainly composed by Parry.[38]

Vaughan Williams did not indicate whether or not he relied heavily on Parry to rewrite works. As he cited only the one example, it is probable that most improvements would have been suggested to him rather than composed for him.

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[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid., 24.

[36]Versions of the autobiography cited in note 20 read "early part song."

[37]According to Kennedy's *Catalogue*, 2nd ed., the work is unpublished and is dated 19 February 1897. The manuscript is held by the British Library (MS 71492).

[38]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 24.

Vaughan Williams gave an illustration of how he and a fellow student at the Royal College of Music would learn scores by playing through them on the piano:

> I used occasionally to go to [Richard Walther's] house at Highbury and play duets with him—or, rather, he played and I stumbled behind him as best I could. In this way I learnt to know a lot of music, including, I remember, Stanford's *Irish Symphony*. In those days, before the gramophone and the wireless and the miniature score, the pianoforte duet was the only way, unless you were an orchestral player, of getting to know orchestral music, and only really got to know it from the inside; not in the superficial way of lazily listening to a gramophone record.[39]

This practice of hearing orchestral music played on the piano carried over to his adult years as Vaughan Williams had his symphonies played on the piano for a small select group of musical friends before making final revisions of the symphonies. In most cases, the pianist played the symphony from the orchestral score.

Vaughan Williams heard a performance of Verdi's *Requiem* during the time period that he was a student at the Royal College of Music. He described how the *Requiem* disturbed his prejudices about music:

> I heard Verdi's *Requiem* for the first time. At first I was properly shocked by the frank sentimentalism and sensationalism of the music. I remember being particularly horrified at the drop of a semitone on the word 'Dona.'[40] Was not this the purest 'village organist'? But in a very few minutes the music possessed me. I realized that here was a composer who could do all the things which I, with my youthful pedantry, thought wrong—indeed, would be unbearable in a lesser man; music which was sentimental, theatrical, occasionally even cheap, and yet was an overpowering masterpiece. That day I learnt that there is nothing in itself that is "common or unclean"; indeed, that there are no canons of art except that contained in the well-worn tag, "To thine own self be true."[41]

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[39]Ibid., 25.

[40]While not used in the same manner or for the same effect as Verdi's drop of a semitone, much of the development section of the first movement of Symphony No. 5 is based on a motive of a falling half-step.

[41]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 25.

These observations carried over to Vaughan Williams's later writings when he stated that "the sincere artist cannot deliberately compose what he dislikes."[42]

Vaughan Williams studied with Charles Wood at Cambridge circa 1892 to 1894. He praised Wood's merits as a technical instructor, but went on to say:

> [Wood was not] necessarily the greatest teacher. I do not think he had the gift of inspiring enthusiasm or of leading to the higher planes of musical thought. Indeed, he was rather prone to laugh at artistic ideals, and would lead one to suppose that composing music was a trick anyone might learn if he took the trouble. But for the craft of composition he was unrivalled [*sic*].[43]

While Vaughan Williams's comments appear to be general observations of the effectiveness of Wood as a teacher, the comments also affirm that Wood was unable to inspire Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams's remarks about Wood seem strongly negative when compared to his assessment of Parry. There is also the possibility that a certain amount of friction existed between Wood and Vaughan Williams as Vaughan Williams had continued to study composition with Parry at the Royal College of Music while also being a pupil of Wood.

Vaughan Williams was always nervous at the first performance of any of his new works. He gave an account of a poor performance and a bad reception of one of his early works:

> [H.P.] Allen. . . gave me an opportunity of hearing, for the first time, a semi-public performance of a composition of my own—a quartet for men's voices. At the first performance the second tenor got a bar out, and remained so nearly to the end. Allen organized an encore, and it was done all over again, this time correctly. The audience disliked it the second time even more than the first. This may seem a small episode, but it was my first experience of an essential and salutary, though unpleasant, form of

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[42]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Should Music Be National?" in *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed., 3.

[43]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 26.

> composition lesson—a performance in public, something quite different from a private rehearsal.[44]

That performance occurred when Vaughan Williams was a student at Cambridge. His experience of having a new work ruined by performers coupled with the reaction of the audience could possibly account for his continual interest in promoting performances of new works by younger composers, even to the point of chastising an inattentive orchestra during the rehearsal of a work by Benjamin Britten.[45]

Vaughan Williams stated that he had the opportunity to conduct a choral society while at Cambridge and described the vast knowledge he gained from the experience:

> If a composer cannot play in an orchestra or sing in a choir, the next best thing he can do in self-education is to try his hand at conducting, and really find out what the performers are up against. The only way to learn to conduct is to 'try it on the dog.' This is much better than any amount of class teaching, about which I have grave doubts.[46]

Vaughan Williams followed this advice in his own career as he remained active as a conductor throughout his life. He conducted the premiere performance of a number of his own works, including the premiere of Symphony No. 5.

Vaughan Williams's experience with Charles Villiers Stanford as a teacher was much less fulfilling than that with some of his other teachers; however, he did admit to being at least partially accountable for the bad experience:

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[44]Ibid.

[45]Jeffrey Aldridge cited descriptions of incidents that occurred during the rehearsals of Britten's *Our Hunting Fathers* which premiered on the same program as Vaughan Williams's *Five Tudor Portraits* in "Uncle Ralph, Uncle Wiz and Benji," *Journal of the RVW Society* 26 (February 2003): 14

[46]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography, chapter in Foss, 27.

> Stanford was a great teacher, but I believe I was unteachable. I made the great mistake of trying to fight my teacher. The way to get the best out of instruction is to put oneself entirely in the hands of one's instructor, and try to find out all about his method regardless of one's own personality, keeping, of course, a secret *eppur si muove*[47] up one's sleeve. Young students are much too obsessed with the idea of expressing their personalities.[48]

Even though Vaughan Williams was not fond of Stanford, his assessment of Stanford differed markedly from his assessment of Charles Wood as a teacher. In the case of his study with Stanford, Vaughan Williams took responsibility for the pairing of student with teacher not being a success. The fault appeared to rest totally with Wood in Vaughan Williams's description of Wood as a teacher, rather than being a fault shared with Wood's pupils. Vaughan Williams's observation regarding students being too obsessed with the desire to express their own personalities is addressed in other writings by Vaughan Williams, such as *The Making of Music*.[49]

Vaughan Williams's recollection of a typical lesson with Stanford at the Royal College of Music follows:

> The details of my work annoyed Stanford so much that we seldom got beyond these to[50] the broader issues, and the lesson usually started with a conversation on these lines: "Damnably ugly, my boy. Why do you write such things?" "Because I like them." "But

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[47]'And yet it does move.' A statement made by Galileo after being forced to retract his theory that the earth moves around the sun.

[48]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 27.

[49]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955), 57-58.

[50]Versions of the autobiography cited in note 20 read "arrived at" instead of "got beyond these to."

> you can't like them, they're not music." "I shouldn't write them if I didn't like them." So the argument went on, and there was no time left for any constructive criticism.[51]

Vaughan Williams was again expressing at an early age his opinion that a composer cannot compose what he dislikes. While Vaughan Williams felt that Stanford never liked his music, he did acknowledge Stanford's assistance with obtaining an early performance of one of his works.[52]

Vaughan Williams's overall assessment of Stanford as a teacher, however, could have been an assessment of himself by one of his own students in later life:

> When all is said and done, what one really gets out of lessons with a great man cannot be computed in terms of what he said to you or what you did for him, but in terms of the intangible contact with his mind and character. With Stanford I always felt I was in the presence of a lovable, powerful, and enthralling mind.[53]

Vaughan Williams added: "This helped me more than any amount of technical instruction,"[54] which again reinforces that Vaughan Williams believed he had not been helped by his studies with Charles Wood.

Vaughan Williams felt that even more important than the knowledge gained from teachers at a music school was the knowledge gained from one's peers:

> I was lucky in my companions in those days. Other students at the college were Dunhill, Ireland, Howard-Jones, Fritz Hart, and Gustav Holst. We used to meet in a little teashop in Kensington and discuss every subject under the sun, from the lowest note of the double bassoon to the philosophy of *Jude the Obscure*. I learnt more from these conversations

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[51]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 27-28.

[52]Ibid., 28. The work was *A Sea Symphony* which premiered at the Leeds Festival.

[53]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "A Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 28.

[54]Ibid.

> than from any amount of formal teaching, but I felt at a certain disadvantage with these companions: they were all so competent and I felt such an amateur.[55]

Of the five composers of which Vaughan Williams was so in awe, only two, Ireland and Holst, would become well-known composers, and neither of those two would be more renowned than Vaughan Williams.

Vaughan Williams continued with a discussion of his struggles with technique and orchestration—a struggle he felt he had throughout his career:

> I have struggled all my life to conquer amateurish technique, and, now that perhaps I have mastered it, it seems too late to make any use of it. Curiously, however, as regards orchestral texture, when I hear my early works, written when my knowledge was still all out of books and I had to sit for an hour wondering what to do with the 2nd clarinet in a loud *tutti*, my orchestration seems fuller and richer than nowadays, when my writing is backed by practical experience.[56]

The "now" to which Vaughan Williams referred was the date of the writing of his "Musical Autobiography" in 1948. The "early works" to which he referred were written before his study with Maurice Ravel. While Vaughan Williams credited "practical experience" with his mature orchestrations, Ravel was certainly a factor in the change.

Vaughan Williams sought advice in musical matters from a variety of sources. He admitted his willingness to request help from his students:

> [Gordon Jacob] was, at one time, nominally my pupil, though there was nothing I could teach him, at all events in the matter of technique, which he did not know better than I. Since then I have often asked his advice on points of orchestration, as, indeed, I would gladly do in any branch of the composer's art.[57]

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[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid., 28-29.

[57]Ibid., 29.

Vaughan Williams was not only willing to seek assistance from his students, but also from other musical colleagues, such as composer Arnold Bax and music editor Roy Douglas.

"Composers who think that they will achieve their aim by ranging apart and living the life beautiful make the great mistake of their lives,"[58] said Vaughan Williams. He credited his church organist position at St. Barnabas, South Lambeth as giving him "some knowledge of music from the performer's point of view."[59] He felt his work in founding a choral society and orchestral society helped him obtain "some of that practical knowledge of music which is so essential to a composer's make-up."[60]

Vaughan Williams did not indicate what prompted his desire to study abroad in 1897. Upon hearing of his plans, Stanford advised him to travel to the Scala in Italy to hear opera, rather than study with a foreign teacher.[61] Vaughan Williams disregarded Stanford's advice and went to Berlin to study with Max Bruch.[62] Vaughan Williams thought that the reason for his choice of Berlin was that it was the only place that he could hear complete performances of the *Ring*![63]

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[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Stanford felt that Vaughan Williams was already too Teutonic. However, Stanford himself had also studied in Germany, in both Leipzig and Berlin.

[62]See Christopher Fifield, *Max Bruch: His Life and Works* (New York: George Braziller, 1988), 248-249. Vaughan Williams had an earlier contact with Bruch during his student days at Cambridge. In June 1893, Bruch had traveled to Cambridge to conduct one of his works and receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Music. The seating plan of the dinner that followed the events of the day showed Vaughan Williams in attendance.

[63]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 30.

The months that Vaughan Williams worked with Bruch had a positive effect on Vaughan Williams. Of his study with Bruch, Vaughan Williams stated:

> It is difficult to say what it is one learns from a teacher. I only know that I worked hard and enthusiastically, and that Max Bruch encouraged me, and I had never had much encouragement before.[64]

Vaughan Williams continued by indicating how this affected the teaching of his own students:

> With my own pupils now I always try to remember the value of encouragement. Sometimes a callow youth appears who may be a fool or may be a genius, and I would rather be guilty of encouraging a fool than of discouraging a genius.[65]

The statement about not having had a lot of encouragement prior to his study with Bruch is questionable as all indications indicate that Parry was supportive of Vaughan Williams as a student. It is possible that Parry did not encourage Vaughan Williams to pursue a career as a composer, and this could explain Vaughan Williams's remark regarding lack of encouragement.

Vaughan Williams acknowledged his habit of using the piano as an aid to composition; however, there is no indication that he relied solely on the piano:[66]

> [Bruch] warned me against writing *Augen-musik* [eye music] as opposed to *Ohren-musik* [ear music]. This warning was wasted on me, as I habitually and unashamedly use the pianoforte when composing. (I suppose this would be considered part of my amateurishness.)[67]

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[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Accounts by Ursula Vaughan Williams describe Vaughan Williams going from his desk to his piano and playing through parts of a work in progress. Neither she nor any of Vaughan Williams's musical friends have related accounts of Vaughan Williams writing his compositions at the piano.

[67]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, *Vaughan Williams: A Study*, 30.

The remark about "amateurishness" was probably intended more as a lighthearted jab at any detractors, rather than an insincere acknowledgment of assumed weaknesses.

When Vaughan Williams returned to London from Berlin, he decided he would compose by "doing" rather than studying further at the Royal College of Music. However, by 1900 he felt that he did need some type of further instruction and wrote to Edward Elgar requesting lessons. Mrs. Elgar replied to Vaughan Williams's request and stated that her husband was too busy to give lessons to him, but added that Elgar suggested that he study with Granville Bantock. Vaughan Williams did not take the advice, but rather decided he *would* learn from Elgar by studying Elgar's scores to *Gerontius* and the *Enigma Variations* at the British Museum. He said that the results of that study can be seen in the opening of the finale of his *Sea Symphony*.[68]

Vaughan Williams felt it was both acceptable and a form of a compliment for a composer to borrow from another composer.[69] Vaughan Williams discussed how composers borrow from one another:

> Cribbing is, to my mind, a legitimate and praiseworthy practice, but one ought to know where one has cribbed from. . . .[70]

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[68]Ibid., 31

[69] The original dedication of Symphony No. 5 gives the impression that Vaughan Williams may have borrowed material from Sibelius in Symphony No. 5 as he described Sibelius as being "worthy of all imitation." However, Symphony No. 5 does not contain a direct quote from the music of Sibelius, nor is it patterned after a symphony by Sibelius. It is possible that the dedication may have referred to another work by Vaughan Williams or the dedication may have referred to an aspect of Sibelius's life other than a musical one. The dedication of Symphony No. 5 to Sibelius is discussed in detail in chapter five.

[70]Future versions of the autobiography read "but one ought to know where one has cribbed."

> Deliberate cribbing is all right and the funny thing is that what is most deliberately cribbed sounds the most original; but the more subtle, unconscious cribbing is, I admit, dangerous.[71]

Vaughan Williams wrote about his early exposure to folk song and how some people felt it was "cheating" for a composer to use material from folk song. He defended its use by saying: "If a composer can, by tapping the sources hidden in folk-song, make beautiful music, he will be disloyal to his art if he does not make full use of such an avenue of beauty."[72] Vaughan Williams's defense of the use of folk song is reflected in other writings where he stated that a composer can receive inspiration from the music of his own country.[73]

Vaughan Williams raised the question of why music should be original and explained what could cause a work to be unoriginal:

> Why should music be "original"? The object of art is to stretch out to the ultimate realities through the medium of beauty. The duty of the composer is to find the *mot juste*.[74] It does not matter if this word has been said a thousand times before, as long as it is the right thing to say at that moment. If it is *not* the right thing to say, however unheard of it may be, it is of no artistic value. Music which is unoriginal is so, not simply because it has been said before, but because the composer has not taken the trouble to make sure that this was the right thing to say at the right moment.[75]

This position is in line with why Vaughan Williams would borrow sections of his own works for material in Symphony No. 5: he thought that the music was right for that moment.

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[71]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography, chapter in Foss, 31-32.

[72]Ibid., 33.

[73]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National?" *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed., 2-3.

[74]'Right word.'

[75]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 33.

In 1904 Vaughan Williams began a project to edit a new hymnal to be used in the Church of England. The project took two years and during that time Vaughan Williams wrote little other than hymn tunes. He said of the experience:

> The years were passing and I was adding nothing to the sum of musical invention. But I know now that two years of close association with some of the best (as well as some of the worst) tunes in the world was a better musical education than any amount of sonatas and fugues.[76]

Vaughan Williams thought that the church service was one of the few opportunities the average individual had to experience quality music. He felt an obligation to replace the trivial hymns and "Victoriana" with new hymns and hymns based on English folk song.[77] The inclusion of tunes that were based on English folk song in the hymnal had the added effect of introducing a large part of the population to English folk song.

Vaughan Williams shared his thoughts on why some young composition students find it difficult to compose:

> Young composers are apt to think that what they have written is what the world has been waiting for come at last. This is an intelligible and healthy state of mind, but they are also apt to think that it is 'now or never,' and that this is the last as well as the greatest work they are going to write; and it is this attitude of mind which prevents so many students from learning to compose.[78]

The observations made by Vaughan Williams regarding young composers were a result of his own early years of study as well as his many years of teaching composition at the Royal College of Music.

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[76]Ibid., 34.

[77]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 71-72.

[78]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 34.

In 1908 Vaughan Williams decided to go to Paris to study with Ravel in order to obtain "a little French polish."[79] He summarized his opinion of the results of that study:

> [Ravel] showed me how to orchestrate in points of colour rather than in lines. It was an invigorating experience to find all artistic problems looked at from what was to me an entirely new angle.[80]

Vaughan Williams said, "I could not have written Ravel's music even if I had wanted to."[81] However, he possibly failed to realize the influence that the period of study with Ravel had on his musical development. He added, "My French fever soon subsided, and left my musical metabolism on the whole healthier."[82] The Scherzo movement of Symphony No. 5 shows influence of the study with Ravel, with its light texture and scattered points of color.

Vaughan Williams wrote of a discipline he found helpful in the development of musical themes:

> One summer I retired for a month to a Yorkshire farmhouse with several classical scores and the themes of my own 'compositions.' These themes I proceeded to treat and develop according to my classical models, choosing, of course, themes which more or less corresponded in structure. I found this a wonderful discipline, and I have passed it on to my pupils. (I believe Charles Wood used much the same method.) The difficulty is that if the pupils invent *ad hoc* themes they are so colourless that they are incapable of development, and they steadily refuse to make use of themes that they have already composed as being too sacrosanct for such base purposes.[83]

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[79]Ibid.

[80]Ibid., 35.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Ibid., 36. Future versions of the autobiography read "My French fever soon subsided but left my musical metabolism, on the whole, healthier."

[83]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 36.

It would have been helpful in understanding Vaughan Williams's compositional working method had he given an example of the development of a theme that was the result of this month's study and also the names of the classical scores that he used as models. The thought process from the initial writing of a theme through its various stages of development would have illustrated the amount of time and effort that he spent in the development of a theme, the details he considered important, and the methods he used to develop a theme.

Vaughan Williams credited Holst with being the most significant influence on his music. They had a regular practice they referred to as "field days" that covered almost forty years of their lives. This practice involved examining and critiquing each other's works. Vaughan Williams acknowledged that he received much help from Holst regarding questions of texture and orchestration. The "field days" ended with the death of Holst.[84]

The musical autobiography ends rather abruptly with Vaughan Williams discussing his tendency to over-score and describing Holst's reaction to his scoring of *Job*. A review of the history of the writing of Vaughan Williams's musical autobiography reveals possible explanations for the sudden ending. The introduction that Foss wrote to the chapter "Musical Autobiography" states that "Vaughan Williams has written for this book his own account of his early musical life."[85] The account given by Ursula Vaughan Williams in *R.V.W.*, however, indicates that Vaughan Williams was busy with the preparation of music for a film when Foss asked him for the details regarding his musical education for inclusion in the biography that Foss was preparing. In a letter to Foss, Vaughan Williams described the work he would prepare as

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[84]Ibid., 37-38.

[85]Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study*, 18.

being his "musical influences" rather than an autobiography. Vaughan Williams spent a few days in the preparation of the work, thinking that Foss would draw upon the material in writing the biography. Instead, Vaughan Williams's own prose account of his musical influences apparently appealed to Foss so much that he included the entire work as a chapter in his book.[86] Regarding possible reasons for the abrupt ending, Vaughan Williams either ran out of time and mailed Foss all that he had been able to write by the promised date, or he decided that Holst was the last significant influence on his music and ended the work with a discussion of help that he had received over the years from Holst.

While the autobiography could be taken literally, one must remember Vaughan Williams's sense of humor and the fact that he did not like to discuss his own music. An initial reading of the musical autobiography might be seen as an accurate description of Vaughan Williams's musical evolution, while future readings and comparisons with his compositions tend to indicate that Vaughan Williams wrote the autobiography rather loosely and some parts actually tongue-in-cheek.[87] It should also be remembered that Vaughan Williams wrote his musical autobiography hurriedly and at the age of seventy-five. Most of the events described in his narrative occurred some fifty to seventy years earlier. The possibility that for whatever

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[86]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 281.

[87]Vaughan Williams has been perhaps wrongly accused of having intentionally "re-written" his early history. Vaughan Williams prepared the work that appeared as his "Musical Autobiography" with the assumption that Foss would use the undertaking as supplementary material to Foss's research on Vaughan Williams's life. Had Vaughan Williams known that his hastily assembled account of musical influences would be the first lengthy biographical account of his life, he would possibly have given more or less weight to some of the influences. See Byron Adams, "'What Have We Learnt from Elgar?': Vaughan Williams and the Ambivalence of Inheritance," *Journal of the RVW Society* 28 (October 2003): 8-10 for an argument that Vaughan Williams used his "Musical Autobiography" to retrospectively revise his musical

reason some influences may have been downplayed while others may have been given more substantial influence than they actually had does not affect the validity of the musical autobiography when examining it as supporting Vaughan Williams's philosophy of the English composer. For Vaughan Williams to say that the experience of studying with a foreign teacher in a foreign country would have the impact of drastically changing his musical career would be in direct conflict with his philosophy of the English composer. An argument certainly exists that he did not consider his studies abroad to have had that tremendous of an impact on his evolution as a composer. Also, to advise young composers that they must go abroad in order to be able to write mature works would be in opposition to his philosophy. Vaughan Williams was instead absorbing all influences—foreign and British—in order to arrive at what would be his mature style.

1909-1937: Years Between the End of Formal Music Study and the Writing of Symphony No. 5[88]

With the exception of the years during which Vaughan Williams was directly involved with World War I, the years from 1909 to 1937 were prolific ones for him. Almost each year saw the completion of a number of both large-scale and small-scale works. While the amount of influence Maurice Ravel exerted on Vaughan Williams's musical style is debatable, Vaughan Williams did return to England from Paris with a renewed confidence in himself as a composer. Works for almost every genre—orchestral, solo vocal, chamber, choral, solo instrumental, wind band, solo instrument with orchestra, and opera—began to pour forth. During these years

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development.

[88]Unless otherwise noted, this summary of the life of Vaughan Williams covering the period from 1909 to 1937 is based on details from Ursula Vaughan Williams's *R.V.W.: A*

Vaughan Williams was involved as principal conductor of the Leith Hill Music Festival,[89] a festival that he helped found in 1905. He taught at the Royal College of Music from 1919 to 1939, and he continued to be active as an author and lecturer. These years also involved regular participation in rehearsals and performances of his works and works by other composers.

The friendship with Maurice Ravel continued after Vaughan Williams's brief study in Paris, and Ravel was instrumental in having some of Vaughan Williams's works performed in France. Ravel traveled to England and was a guest of the Vaughan Williams family in 1909. Upon his return to France, Ravel wrote to Adeline Vaughan Williams:

> Here I am, once again a Parisian: but a Parisian home-sick for London. I have never before really missed another country. And yet I had left here with a certain fear of the unknown. . . . I needed the warm and sensitive welcome waiting for me at Cheyne Walk[90] to make me feel at home in new surroundings, and to give me a taste of the charm and magnificence of London, almost as if I were a Londoner.[91]

Vaughan Williams conducted the premieres of *A Sea Symphony* and the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* in 1910. *A Sea Symphony* had been selected for performance at the Leeds Festival,[92] while the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* had been commissioned for the Three Choirs Festival[93] at Gloucester. Charles Villiers Stanford was instrumental in having

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Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

[89]Annual competition for amateur choirs. The choirs combined for a final concert.

[90]The location of Vaughan Williams's home.

[91]Translation of part of a letter from Ravel to Adeline Vaughan Williams dated 5 May 1909. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 86.

[92]Festival of mainly choral works. At the time of the premiere of *A Sea Symphony*, the festival was held every three years.

[93]Annual festival by the cathedral choirs of Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester. The festival was held at one of the three cities each year.

A Sea Symphony selected for performance at the Leeds Festival.[94] Although the two works premiered within weeks of each other, they are quite different in outlook and format. *A Sea Symphony* is a four-movement symphony with soprano and baritone soloists, mixed chorus, and orchestra, with texts selected from poetry by Walt Whitman. The *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* is an orchestral work for double string orchestra and string quartet, and is based on a psalm tune that was written in the sixteenth century. Vaughan Williams's imagination and versatility are illustrated by the diversity of the two works. The early acceptance and popularity of these works helped set the stage for acceptance of Vaughan Williams as a major composer.

Gustav Holst, other musicians, and non-musical friends were frequent visitors in the Vaughan Williams household during the first half of the second decade of the twentieth century. Ursula Vaughan Williams commented on interactions between this group of people:

> As always in the profession both time and place dictate to a certain extent who are to be thrown together, sharing work for some project, meeting at rehearsals, or staying at the same place for festivals: a shifting pattern with music as the centre from which they drew their light and to which they gave their ardour.[95]

The musicians and non-musicians received inspiration from each other. Vaughan Williams and Holst were beginning to be recognized as the new leaders in the field of British music, which helped enlarge Vaughan Williams's already vast circle of friends.

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[94]Kennedy, *Works*, 99.

[95]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 92.

Vaughan Williams credited his friend and fellow composer George Butterworth with the idea of writing his first purely orchestral symphony. The encouragement from Butterworth resulted in *A London Symphony*, a symphony that reflected Vaughan Williams's nationalism in its title and sounds connected with London.[96] Vaughan Williams recalled his initial response to Butterworth's idea and described the assistance he received from Butterworth during the writing of the symphony:

> From that moment the idea of a symphony—a thing which I had always declared I would never attempt—dominated my mind. I showed the sketches to George bit by bit as they were finished, and it was then that I realized that he possessed, in common with very few composers, a wonderful power of criticism of other men's work, and insight into their ideas and motives.[97]

While Holst was the musician Vaughan Williams typically turned to for advice on his works-in-progress, it appears Butterworth filled that role for *A London Symphony*.

Vaughan Williams's interest in English folk song continued during these years. He frequently wrote and spoke on the topic of folk song and encouraged his fellow composers to seek inspiration in their native music:

> The evolution of the English folk song by itself has ceased but its spirit can continue to grow and flourish at the hands of our native composers.
>
> I do not wish to advocate a narrow parochialism in music. A composer's style must be ultimately personal, but an individual is a member of a nation, and the greatest and most widely known artists have been the most strongly national. Bach, Shakespeare, Verdi, Reynolds, Whitman—their appeal may be cosmopolitan, but the origin of their inspiration is national . . . we have made the mistake in England of trying to take over 'ready made' a foreign culture, a culture which is the result of generations of patient

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[96]For example, the Westminster Chimes.

[97]*George Butterworth*: privately printed memoir and appreciation. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 95.

> development, and of attempting to fit on it our own incompatible conditions. This is merely to reap where we have not sown and the result must be failure.[98]

Ursula Vaughan Williams stated: "[Vaughan Williams] believed the remedy lay in acknowledging our own music as the natural language for our own composers."[99]

In 1912, a group of recent graduates from the Royal College of Music and some other musicians formed a group called the Palestrina Society, a society whose purpose was to examine and sing early music. The group asked Vaughan Williams to act as their conductor. This experience provided Vaughan Williams with the chance to learn music of which he had previously been unfamiliar. Exposure to these works possibly influenced his future writing style as a number of features found in the music of Vaughan Williams, such as imitative polyphony, cross relations, and the use of closely related thematic material in some of the movements of multiple movement works, are also found in music of the Renaissance period.

Vaughan Williams was involved with World War I from 1914 to 1919. Though he was forty-one years of age, he enlisted as a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps and served as an ambulance driver during much of the war. Vaughan Williams felt that it was his duty as a British citizen to serve in the war and knew he would have been unable to compose had he remained at home. Parry wrote to Vaughan Williams on 19 January 1915 regarding Vaughan Williams's decision to enlist in the Royal Army Medical Corps:

> As to your enlisting, I can't express myself in any way that is likely to be serviceable. There are certain individuals who are capable of serving their country in certain exceptional and very valuable ways, and they are not on the same footing as ordinary

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[98]Ralph Vaughan Williams, lecture on English folk song delivered at a music education conference on 10 January 1912. (Location of conference not indicated.) Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 101.

[99]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 101.

> folks, who if they are exterminated are just one individual gone and no more. You have already served your country in very notable and exceptional ways and are likely to do so again: and such folks should be shielded from risk rather than exposed to it. We may admit the generosity of the impulse, and feel—I will not say what.[100]

While the high level of esteem in which Vaughan Williams was held by the musical public of England is reflected in Parry's letter, Parry's position differed very strongly from Vaughan Williams's opinion regarding service of country. Vaughan Williams thought that a composer should live with his fellows rather than be set apart from the "ordinary" man.

Part of Vaughan Williams's time of service was spent in France, where he began initial sketches of what would become *A Pastoral Symphony*. Though much older than most of the other enlisted men, Vaughan Williams interacted easily with them during both work and leisure hours. Vaughan Williams provided music in a variety of ways during his service in the war. He accompanied vocalists and instrumentalists on the piano, played the organ at local churches, formed a choir, arranged music, and sang carols with the other servicemen.

In 1917, much to the disappointment of Vaughan Williams, someone in authority made arrangements for Vaughan Williams to be returned to England and be commissioned. Vaughan Williams preferred the comradery with the enlisted men in the trenches to holding a title of officer. He served as a second lieutenant with the Royal Garrison Artillery until the end of the war and as Director of Music for the First Army of the British Expeditionary Forces from the time of the armistice in November 1918 until his demobilization in February 1919. The time spent with the Royal Garrison Artillery possibly contributed to Vaughan Williams's early loss of

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[100]Letter from C. Hubert Parry to Vaughan Williams dated 19 January 1915. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 117.

hearing. The hearing problem was a vexation to Vaughan Williams and caused him to rely on others regarding questions of balance and orchestration in many works.

Return to civilian life was difficult for Vaughan Williams as he had lost many friends, including George Butterworth, in the war. It had been easier to deal with his losses while away from home. With his return to England, the voids were more evident. Vaughan Williams also feared that during the war years he might have lost the inspiration to compose. Fortunately, that fear was not realized.

After his demobilization, Vaughan Williams was busy revising *A London Symphony* and his opera *Hugh the Drover*, and writing *A Pastoral Symphony*. His friend Hugh Allen, who had been appointed Director of the Royal College of Music following the death of Parry in 1918, invited Vaughan Williams to teach at the Royal College of Music. Vaughan Williams held that appointment for twenty years. The position at the Royal College of Music meant Vaughan Williams was able to work closely with young aspiring composers.

Many changes had occurred in English musical life after World War I. In addition to the death of Parry, Max Bruch had died in 1920. Contemporary music from abroad by Bartók, Kodály, and Schoenberg was being heard in London. The British Broadcasting Company, an institution that would aid in the dissemination of musical works to the British population, was created in 1922.

Vaughan Williams enjoyed teaching at the Royal College of Music; however, he felt he was not a good teacher. Elizabeth Maconchy, one of his composition students, felt differently. She wrote that "he had worked out his own salvation as a composer and he encouraged his pupils

to do the same."[101] Ursula Vaughan Williams summarized Vaughan Williams's experience as a teacher: "He had the good fortune to have many receptive young composers to teach, whose minds were ready for what his experience, knowledge, and love of his art had to give them."[102] His pupils included Gordon Jacob, Ivor Gurney, Armstrong Gibbs, Imogen Holst, Robin Milford, Elizabeth Maconcy, and Grace Williams, among others. Vaughan Williams was known affectionately to many of his pupils as "Uncle Ralph."

Vaughan Williams met Sibelius, a composer whom he greatly admired and to whom he would later dedicate his Symphony No. 5, at a party in 1921. Sibelius was in London to conduct a performance of *En Saga* at the Royal College of Music, but had been unable to do so because of a sudden illness. Due to the lack of a common language in which they were both fluent, they were unable to converse at the party. Sibelius's music was becoming popular in England during the decade of the 1920s. One reason for the popularity was that critics tended to point out the "Finnish" aspects of Sibelius's music. This worked to Sibelius's benefit in England as it helped to separate him from association with the Germanic tradition.[103] The national element in Sibelius's music would have been one of the reasons that Vaughan Williams was attracted to his music.

Vaughan Williams conducted the Bach Choir from 1921 to 1928. During those years he had the opportunity to conduct music by Bach and other composers. The position also gave him

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[101]*R.C.M. Magazine*, Easter Term 1959. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 136.

[102]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 136.

[103]Laura Gray, "Sibelius and England," in *The Sibelius Companion*, ed. Glenda Dawn Goss (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 287.

the opportunity to work with an outstanding choir, soloists, and orchestra. Vaughan Williams received a complimentary letter from Stanford in 1923 following a performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*. The letter was cherished by Vaughan Williams as not only being from his former teacher, but also being from a former conductor of the Bach Choir.

Vaughan Williams made the first of three trips to the United States in May 1922. The trip was made at the invitation of Carl Stoeckel, a wealthy amateur musician.[104] On 7 June 1922, Vaughan Williams conducted the American premiere of *A Pastoral Symphony*. The symphony was performed well and was warmly received by the American audience. Vaughan Williams enjoyed the trip immensely and wrote a detailed letter to Gustav Holst regarding his impression of America.

Vaughan Williams had been involved with the English Folk Song Society since the beginning of the twentieth century. Before and after World War I, he was active as a lecturer and dancer with the English Folk Dance Society. Ursula Vaughan Williams said: "He considered it of the first importance for the musical well-being of the country that this inheritance of song and dance should become a part of every child's life."[105]

Regarding Vaughan Williams's working habits when beginning new compositions in the decade of the 1920s, Ursula Vaughan Williams said that "he liked the mixture of quiet working

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[104]Sibelius made a similar trip to the U.S. at the invitation of Stoeckel in order to conduct *Oceanides* in 1914.

[105]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 151.

hours and long walks during the early stages of a new work."[106] She wrote of the way Vaughan Williams preferred to have any new musical work performed:

> He felt that no new work could be assimilated in one performance, and he liked to separate two hearings with a classical work, so that the contrast would allow the new music to come freshly to the audience, already prepared by their first hearing, and enable them to give it their full consideration.[107]

It was in 1923 that Vaughan Williams had the opportunity to write a work for band, the *English Folk Song Suite*. Vaughan Williams composed the work for the Royal Military School of Music. While the medium of writing for a military band was new to him, he enjoyed the experience and felt that his work was a vast improvement over music available to military bands during his army days.

In the mid-1920s, Vaughan Williams and Martin Shaw edited a new English hymnal, *Songs of Praise*. Vaughan Williams found that he was once again spending much time with hymns. While Vaughan Williams felt that he had occasionally compromised in the selection of hymns for the *English Hymnal* of 1906, he decided that only quality hymns would appear in *Songs of Praise*.

In 1925 a relationship began that would have a significant influence on Vaughan Williams's life as a composer. Hubert Foss had recently been appointed Music Editor of the Oxford University Press. Foss had a far-reaching vision and was interested in new music and young composers. The relationship between Vaughan Williams and Foss was an ideal one. Ursula Vaughan Williams summarized the type of help Vaughan Williams received from Foss:

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[106]Ibid., 152.

[107]Ibid., 153.

> It meant a great deal to have a publisher who accepted works as they were written and saw to the preparation of scores so that, if more performances followed a successful first one, the music was soon available and the original manuscripts had not to be used by conductors as they so often had been in the past. It was a great gain also to avoid a situation that could easily arise when the only score was being copied, or had been submitted to a publisher for consideration and so was unavailable for a conductor.[108]

By 1928 Adeline Vaughan Williams had become extremely crippled with arthritis and was unable to climb the stairs in their London home. The Vaughan Williamses considered obtaining a flat in London, but Adeline preferred the country. In 1929 they moved to Dorking, to a house they named White Gates. Dorking was convenient to London, so Vaughan Williams continued to teach at the Royal College of Music, but he regretfully gave up his responsibilities with the Bach Choir. Vaughan Williams was still living in Dorking during the writing of Symphony No. 5.

A close friendship developed in the 1920s and 1930s with Gerald Finzi, a fellow composer who was younger than Vaughan Williams. Finzi taught at the Royal Academy of Music and frequently turned to Vaughan Williams for advice regarding music that he was writing. The relationship of the two composers was so familiar that Finzi often housesat for the Vaughan Williamses when they traveled. The association between the two composers lasted until Finzi's death in 1956.

In 1931 Vaughan Williams began work on his Fourth Symphony, a work which used a more dissonant harmonic language than that which he had used in the three previous symphonies. He was able to have a "field day" on the symphony with Holst in early January 1932, before Holst traveled to the United States. While the Fourth Symphony is sometimes

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[108] Ibid, 157.

described as the first symphony in Vaughan Williams's war trilogy[109] due to the dissonance, tension, and harshness depicted, Vaughan Williams denied that there was any connection with the developing political scene. Ursula Vaughan Williams said the symphony was more a depiction of Vaughan Williams himself:

> It has often been said that this work is related to the period in which it was written, and, though this must be true to some extent of any work by any composer who does not cut himself off from contemporary life, no one seems to have observed how far more closely it is related to the character of the man who wrote it. The towering furies of which he was capable, his fire, pride and strength are all revealed and so are his imagination and lyricism. He was experimenting with purely musical ideas; no sea or city, no essence of the country was at the heart of this score and what emerged has something in common with one of Rembrandt's self portraits in middle age.[110]

In the autumn of 1932, Vaughan Williams traveled to the United States for the second time. He presented a series of lectures, the Mary Flexner Lectures, at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. The topic of the lectures was national music. Ursula Vaughan Williams said:

> For his theme he took National Music in its widest sense and he used the opportunity to develop and crystallize into precise and definite shape many inter-related ideas about music which he had not, until then, put into writing.[111]

The student choir from Bryn Mawr College and a pianist assisted Vaughan Williams by illustrating the music which was discussed in the lectures. The visit to the United States also meant that Vaughan Williams had the opportunity to interact with his admirers in America.

A great loss occurred in Vaughan Williams's life in 1934. Gustav Holst's health, which had been fragile during much of his life, deteriorated in the early 1930s. As prescribed rest and

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[109]Symphonies 4, 5, and 6, which were written before, during, and after World War II have been described by some as Vaughan Williams's war trilogy.

[110]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 190.

[111]Ibid., 191.

diet had not helped, Holst decided to risk an operation. However, the ordeal of a major operation was too strong for Holst's heart, and he died on 25 May 1934. Vaughan Williams wrote to Holst's wife and daughter: "My only thought is now which ever way I turn, what are we to do without him—everything seems to have turned back to him—what would Gustav think or advise or do—"[112]

National Music, a book based on the lectures that Vaughan Williams delivered at Bryn Mawr College, was published in 1935. Friends who had taken the premiere of each musical work in stride were ecstatic that Vaughan Williams had written a book. He replied to a letter from Imogen Holst: "Thank you very much for your nice letter. Those lectures are only what I have been spouting for the last 20 years—now they've appeared in print I shall never be able to spout them again."[113] A friend once told Vaughan Williams that she had heard a lecture of his a number of times and had enjoyed it so much that she almost had it memorized. Ursula Vaughan Williams explained that would be quite impossible:

> The fact was that, however often 'the lecture' was given, some new idea was added, some new thought or illustration came into its substance. It was perennial only in the same way that a plant is; recognizable as the familiar growth but with fresh flowers every year.[114]

Symphony No. 4 premiered in 1935. In the program notes Vaughan Williams indicated that he had "completed" the symphony in 1934. Ursula Vaughan Williams said:

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[112]Undated letter from Vaughan Williams to Isobel and Imogen Holst. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 200.

[113]Undated letter from Vaughan Williams to Imogen Holst. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 204.

[114]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 204.

> With him the word 'completed' had en entirely fluid meaning for changes were made in details throughout the next thirty years. This was his first work without Gustav beside him all the way, and he felt the loss of that loving and critical mind more deeply than ever. Arnold Bax, to whom he dedicated the symphony, gave advice—at his suggestion some bars were omitted—and R. O. Morris was able to help with details. But the greatest ally was Adrian Boult, from whose rehearsals with the B.B.C. orchestra he learned that he had written what he intended to write, and that it came off.[115]

The practice of numerous revisions and requests for advice was typical for any of Vaughan Williams's large-scale works.

In 1935 Vaughan Williams was awarded the Order of Merit "in recognition of the distinguished contribution which [he had] made to the music of [his] time."[116] Vaughan Williams had previously turned down all awards other than honorary doctorates, as he felt the awards came with strings attached or obligations he did not care to fulfill. He decided, however, to accept the Order of Merit. Ursula Vaughan Williams described Vaughan Williams's life at the time of the receipt of the Order of Merit:

> He had reached what must have seemed the peak of his life. His music was widely known, his fellow musicians knew he was a man to whom they could turn when authority was needed in any cause; he had many friends, a comfortable income augmented now by royalties, and, except for a liability to catch cold, his health was excellent. Most important, he had an unending flow of musical thought and invention. His work absorbed him and, because he taught and conducted and went to as many concerts as possible, he had the constant stimulation of exploring the works of other composers, including those of his own students.[117]

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[115]Ibid., 205.

[116]Letter dated 17 May 1935 from Clive Wigram, representative of King George V, to Vaughan Williams. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 207.

[117]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 207-208.

Ursula Vaughan Williams's comments reinforce Vaughan Williams's own writings about musical issues that he saw as important as her observations illustrate that he was able to take his own advice regarding being involved in the community.

Of Vaughan Williams's home life with Adeline, his first wife, Ursula Vaughan Williams, his second wife, said:

> His life at home was shared with a wife devoted to him, whose interest in his music had grown deeper, more critical and more helpful through the years. She was able to discuss technical problems with him and he respected her judgements.[118]

Even though severely crippled with arthritis, Adeline Vaughan Williams continued to accompany her husband to rehearsals and performances when she was able to do so. If the work was to be broadcast on the radio, she preferred to listen to the program in her home.

In 1936 Imogen Holst was writing a book about her father. Vaughan Williams wrote to tell her about some observations that her father had made as he wanted to make sure Gustav Holst's thoughts were recorded for posterity:

> I hope the book goes well. I have been thinking of two things Gustav once said to me. I don't know if he ever wrote them to anybody—I hope he did for they ought to be recorded.
> 1) about Aristocracy in Art—art is not for all but only for the chosen few—but the only way to find the few is to bring art to everyone—then the artists have a sort of magic signal by which they recognise each other in the crowd—he put it much better than that—but that is the gist.
> 2) that the artist is born again and starts again with every fresh work—[119]

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[118]Ibid., 208.

[119]Undated letter from Vaughan Williams to Imogen Holst. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 211-212.

The observations made by Holst also relate to the bond between Holst and Vaughan Williams as the two had recognized each other as artists during their student days and had been able to share in the creation of their individual works.

Following a performance on 27 January 1937 of Vaughan Williams's *Five Tudor Portraits*, a *Times* critic commented on the versatility of Vaughan Williams:

> Since the appearance in 1935 of the severest of his orchestral works, the symphony in F minor [publications] have included such diverse things as the comic opera *The Poisoned Kiss* and the dramatic fantasy *Riders to the Sea*—which we have not yet heard. These and other works have created the impression that while Vaughan Williams' tone of voice is recognisable among living composers, one never knows what he will be at next. The voice may be used for good converse on any subject that comes his way.[120]

As with the ideas expressed by Holst regarding artists and each of their new works, the *Times* critic observed that each work of Vaughan Williams was a new beginning.

Vaughan Williams's mother died on 20 November 1937 at the age of 95. Of the relationship between mother and son, Ursula Vaughan Williams said:

> She belonged to a very different world from Ralph's. . . . She had been an ideally suitable mother for him, and there had been a lifelong mutual affection and respect between them which made a bridge even where understanding was lacking.[121]

Margaret Vaughan Williams had supported and followed her son's musical endeavors. The relationship between Vaughan Williams and his mother had been close, and the loss was a heavy one.

The years from 1909 to 1937 were full of changes for Vaughan Williams—a lengthy war, an extended stay in France, a new teaching position, trips to the United States, appointments to

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[120]Author and date not indicated. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 213.

[121]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 215.

conducting positions, a move from London to the countryside, and the loss of family and friends to death. However, through all of the commitments and disruptions, Vaughan Williams was steadily producing what was becoming a vast and diverse catalogue of musical works. During those years he went from being a lesser known British composer to a composer who was known around the world.

1938-1943: Life During the Time of the Writing of Symphony No. 5[122]

The years during the time of the writing of Symphony No. 5 were as busy for Vaughan Williams as the last three decades had been for him. He was busy composing new works and revising previous ones. When the Second World War began, Vaughan Williams volunteered his services in several capacities as a civilian volunteer. Vaughan Williams thought that one way he could serve his country as a musician was to write music for films, some of which were political in nature.

It was during the writing of Symphony No. 5 that Vaughan Williams met and became a close friend of Ursula Wood. Fifteen years later, Ursula Wood and Ralph Vaughan Williams would marry. Commentary regarding their relationship is included in this document as most sources prior to the publication of *Paradise Remembered*[123] describe Ursula Wood during the period of time prior to the death of Adeline Vaughan Williams as being simply a family friend of

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[122]Unless otherwise noted, this summary of the life of Vaughan Williams covering the period from 1938 to 1943 is based on details from Ursula Vaughan Williams's *R.V.W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*.

[123]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Paradise Remembered* (London: Albion Music Limited, 2002).

Ralph and Adeline Vaughan Williams. Ursula Vaughan Williams described the closeness of her relationship with Ralph Vaughan Williams in *Paradise Remembered*. The relationship during the years of the writing of Symphony No. 5 is significant as Ursula Wood had become an influence in Vaughan Williams life—an influence that would continue until Vaughan Williams's death in 1958.

In *Paradise Remembered*, Ursula Vaughan Williams described the events that led to their first meeting. She had attended a performance of Vaughan Williams's *Job: A Masque for Dancing* in 1933 at the Old Vic[124] and enjoyed the masque so much that she saw the work numerous times. She recognized the name of the composer, but was only slightly familiar with any of Vaughan Williams's other works. A number of years later, she wrote a scenario for a ballet. Remembering how much she had enjoyed *Job*, she decided to send her scenario to the composer of *Job*. She mailed a letter to Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music. He responded by suggesting that the scenario might work as a mime with the English Folk Dance and Song Society and placed her in touch with Douglas Kennedy, the Director of the Society. A three-way correspondence took place over a period of time until an exasperated Ursula Wood said to Douglas Kennedy, "Do tell the man to ask me out to lunch." She related that "the message was given, and when I was in London at the end of March 1938 the lunch date was arranged."[125]

Ursula Vaughan Williams recounted her first meeting with Ralph Vaughan Williams in her book *Paradise Remembered*:

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[124]Theater formally known as the Royal Victoria Hall.

[125]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Paradise Remembered*, 81.

> When Ralph Vaughan Williams collected me from my parents' flat I was charmed and surprised to see that the hat he carried was a green pork-pie, a kind I'd only seen worn by cavalry subalterns, and not the horrible bowler which I expected someone of his age to own. I was impressed, too, by someone who kept a taxi waiting. When we were in the taxi voice, eyes, hands were somehow familiar, so that I felt that I was meeting again someone I had known before, and this recognition was the same for him.[126]

Ursula Wood and Ralph Vaughan Williams went on several outings over the next few months. Regarding their third meeting, she candidly recalled that "we were finding each other's company too desirable for our circumstances, though I didn't know very much about his life before that evening, when he told me that Adeline was an invalid, a vague term on which he didn't elaborate."[127] Ursula Wood was also married.

Ursula Vaughan Williams described some of the events that occurred in Vaughan Williams's life during the time that he was beginning to compose Symphony No. 5:

> At this time Ralph was preparing music for another pageant, which E.M. Forster had written. They shared a passionate dislike of the ribbon development and the shoddy building that was encroaching on the countryside. They worked together to prepare the pageant for the Dorking and Leith Hill Preservation Society. Ralph was also starting another symphony—using music that had been accumulating for a full scale opera on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which he felt he would never finish. He was going through one of those dark patches when he felt he would never write again: there are sentences in letters about 'having dried up'. But this followed a year of hard work, the growing apprehension about the political situation, the death of [Ivor] Gurney, which must have recalled the waste and desolation of the 1914 war, and his mother's death.[128]

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[126]Ibid., 82

[127]Ibid.

[128]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 216.

Vaughan Williams's remark about 'having dried up' was in all likelihood the response to external changes that were occurring in his life. While he completed only three works in 1937, the year of his mother's death, the following year saw the completion of six works.[129]

During the time that Vaughan Williams was working on early sketches of Symphony No. 5, he traveled to Berlin to receive an award at Hamburg University. The Shakespeare Prize, which was presented to Vaughan Williams on 15 June 1938, had been created for the purpose of building British and German cultural ties.[130] When Vaughan Williams learned he had won the award, he wrestled with a decision regarding whether or not to accept it because of his abhorrence of Hitler's policies and treatment of musicians. Vaughan Williams was assured that there was no political motive attached and accepted the award as "being . . . a gesture of recognition to the whole art of music in England through me as one of its representatives."[131] A year later, though, Vaughan Williams's music was banned in Nazi Germany.[132]

At this time, England was experiencing an increase in foreign refugees, many from Germany. While Vaughan Williams welcomed and befriended many of the foreign musicians, he expressed concerns regarding the effect they might have on the musical life of Britain. Michael Kennedy quoted from a letter[133] Vaughan Williams had written to a Mr. Jani Strasser:

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[129]Kennedy, *Catalogue*, 2nd ed., 160-65.

[130]Kennedy, *Works*, 255.

[131]From a letter dated 16 August 1937 from Vaughan Williams to Professor Fiedler, a professor of German at Queen's College, Oxford. The offer of the award had been sent to Vaughan Williams through Professor Fiedler. Quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 217.

[132]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 217-18.

[133]Mr. Kennedy did not indicate the date the letter was written or Vaughan Williams's

> It seems to me that foreign artists whom we welcome here, if they are to become good citizens to our musical policy, must not try to impose their culture *en bloc*[134] on us...but join in *our* musical life and fertilize it by their own incomparable experience and tradition—not try to destroy *our* small and weak tradition, which can easily be destroyed like a weak flame, if we are not careful. . . .
>
> Your task, it seems to me, is to become musically an Englishman and to see music as we see it and then add to it your own unique experience and knowledge.[135]

The advice in the second paragraph of the letter appears to be a paradox. In the first paragraph, Vaughan Williams advised the foreign artist to "join" the musical life of the British people. It would be possible for the foreign musician to become involved in British musical life without actually being a British musician. In the second paragraph, he asked the foreign artist "to become musically an Englishman" and "see music as we see it." Based on Vaughan Williams's philosophy of finding musical roots in one's own soil, it would seem impossible to transplant a musician on foreign soil. Though Vaughan Williams went on to advise the musician to "add to it your own unique experience and knowledge," according to his own philosophy, he appeared to be asking the foreign musician to perform an impossible task.

World War II was being fought during the years that Vaughan Williams was composing Symphony No. 5. Vaughan Williams was unable to be as actively involved in World War II as he had been in World War I. He felt the same need to contribute during World War II, however, in different ways. His age precluded active service, so his contributions included assisting foreign refugees, organizing concerts for local servicemen, collecting recyclable materials, and

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connection to Mr. Strasser other than to indicate the subject of the letter was opera in Britain.

[134]'As one.'

[135]Kennedy, *Works*, 255.

composing music for films. All of these roles were efforts to help meet the needs of the people—a frequent theme in Vaughan Williams's writings.

In *Paradise Remembered*, Ursula Vaughan Williams recalled Symphony No. 5 from its early beginnings and included details regarding Vaughan Williams's volunteer work during World War II:

> Ralph had been busy with film music, *49th Parallel* in 1940, *Coastal Command* in 1942 as well as incidental music for a broadcast of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but the core and centre of his work had been his Fifth Symphony. Some of it had been written before the war, tried out as incidental music in a pageant in 1938. For a time, early in the war, he'd devoted himself to any minor war jobs in Dorking as well as to various committees—working for refugee committees—musicians, for C.E.M.A.[48] and anything that offered as well as being on the committee of the house where some refugees lived in Dorking. Like this he felt that, though he was too old for any active service, he was as involved in work relating to the war as he could be. But he had been working on the Symphony almost since I had known him.
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> [48]Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (the fore-runner of the Arts Council).[136]

While the relationship between Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ursula Wood began as a professional one 1938, the friendship grew over the years. In 1942 a tragic event occurred. Ursula Wood's husband, an army officer, died of a heart attack. Over the years, Adeline Vaughan Williams had come to know Ursula Wood as a friend of her husband. Always sympathetic to victims of misfortune, Adeline Vaughan Williams invited Ursula to join her and Vaughan Williams at their home, the White Gates, while she grieved the loss of her husband and recovered from a foot injury. When Ursula Wood arrived at the White Gates for a lengthy

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[136]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Paradise Remembered*, 127-128.

recuperation, Vaughan Williams offered her a place in his study to do her own writing. She described her familiarity with the symphony and included details regarding the evening of the premiere performance:

> Spending so much time in the study with him, I knew a great deal about that Symphony, though I hadn't been able to go to rehearsals. It was as magical and serene, as fulfilling as any music I had ever heard, perhaps more so because I had already known it, because Ralph had both written and conducted it. I had heard him conduct many of his own works by then, and there is always something special about the hand that wrote the music controlling and directing it, the long journey from invention to performance comes full circle and, in this radiant performance, fears and despairs were cancelled, beauty and serenity were all. It was still light, the evening of midsummer day, when we came out of the Albert Hall. There was a party of us, who I can't remember; Adeline's sister Cordelia and one of her nieces, but who else? We all walked down to Chelsea, to the river. The day ended for me dining quietly with Ralph, the music still in the air.[137]

Adeline Vaughan Williams had fallen a number of months before the first performance of Symphony No. 5 and injured her ankle. She did not attend the premiere; however, she had been able to attend the private performance of a piano duet version of the symphony.[138]

As he had throughout his life, Vaughan Williams continued to be active as an advocate of new music. Ursula Vaughan Williams described Vaughan Williams's involvement with the promotion of new music during the year that Symphony No. 5 was premiered:

> Ralph was always concerned with the problems facing musicians. He had become President of the Committee for the Promotion of New Music[1] when it was formed in January 1943. It gave performances of new works. First-rate players rehearsed and performed them for no fees at all, and allowed composers to hear what they had written—a service of the first importance—and though Ralph called it the 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to New Music', and found the discussions that followed

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[137]Ibid, 128.

[138]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 253. The injury occurred when Ralph and Adeline Vaughan Williams and Ursula Wood returned to White Gates following the piano duet performance of Symphony No. 5.

performances very dull, he attended many of the concerts and gave the whole scheme wholehearted support.

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[1]Later 'Society'.[139]

Throughout his life, Vaughan Williams was always interested in assisting younger composers with having their new works heard. At the time he left Cambridge and the Royal College of Music, some had expressed doubts that he would ever make a living as a composer. As a result of his experiences, he wanted to make sure that young composers did not have to struggle with questions of self worth. Vaughan Williams had a private family income and was also receiving royalties from the works that he had written. He realized most of his colleagues and younger musicians made their living by teaching or performing, and he never hesitated to assist others financially when a need arose.[5140]

The chaos created by the Second World War, the companionship of a woman almost forty years younger than himself, as well as his practical experience in previous compositions—these all contributed to the creation of Symphony No. 5. If the Fourth Symphony was more related to the character of Vaughan Williams than to the period in which it was written, how much more closely was Symphony No. 5 related to his outlook on life at the time of its writing. Vaughan Williams had experienced the loss of his mother. He felt his compositional skills were fading. He was concerned by the influx of foreign musicians. He formed a new and lasting

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[139]Ibid., 256-257.

[140]Instances regarding assistance Vaughan Williams gave to Holst can be found in letters in Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst's *Heirs and Rebels*, (Letter XV and footnote, p. 42, Letter XVII, p. 43). See "Ivor Gurney and His Friends—The Asylum Years" by Pamela Blevins in *Journal of the RVW Society* 23 (February 2002): 10, regarding assistance Vaughan Williams gave to Gurney.

relationship with Ursula Wood. If the Fourth Symphony represented the fury, strength, imagination, and lyricism of Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5 in turn might be seen as representing the reflective, contemplative, loving, and spiritual qualities of his nature.

Vaughan Williams's life experiences through the time of the writing of Symphony No. 5 influenced the man who would write Symphony No. 5. These musical, social, and political influences shaped his thoughts and philosophy of the English composer.

CHAPTER 3

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S THOUGHTS ON ENGLISH COMPOSERS, SYMPHONIC COMPOSITIONS, AND FOLK SONG

Vaughan Williams spent his compositional life molding himself into what would be described by some as the quintessential British composer of the twentieth century. His expressed thoughts on music seemed to serve as a guide in the process of turning himself into an English composer. English folk song, which was perhaps the most significant influence on his mature style, was a topic that he addressed from his earliest to his final publications. The lectures that he delivered at Cornell University in 1954 expressed his thoughts on the evolution and making of music. While the majority of Vaughan Williams's published prose works dealt with aspects of nationalism, he also wrote about non-British composers such as Bach, Beethoven, and Sibelius; and he wrote on a variety of topics such as film music and performance practices. His opinions of the works of non-British composers assist in the understanding of his philosophy of the English composer as he was emphatic regarding his likes and dislikes. Vaughan Williams's opinions on British and non-British symphonies helped to establish his philosophy of the English composer. Musical issues that he saw as important helped to shape his philosophy. As the voice heard in the writings of the middle of the twentieth century echoes the one heard in the first part of the century, it is evident that many of his views were established early in his life. The fact that he considered the topics of folk song and nationalism important enough to address in each of his books indicates that these issues were among the most significant ones in his philosophy.

Musical Issues that Vaughan Williams Saw as Important

The musical issues that Vaughan Williams saw as important are best gathered from his published literary works, letters, speeches, and spoken remarks. These documents cover works written as early as 1895 and as late as 1958, the year that Vaughan Williams died. The musical issues that are discussed in this section are divided into two categories—those dealing with nationalism and those dealing with broader topics. The act of placing his ideas in writing helped Vaughan Williams to organize his thoughts. Vaughan Williams's wide spectrum of interests is reflected in the number of issues that he considered important enough to commit to paper. Regarding Vaughan Williams and his speeches, Ursula Vaughan Williams observed that while he had a written copy of each speech, he never followed the written text verbatim. Instead, he preferred to use the written text as a guide.[1]

While sometimes overzealous in his enthusiasm for a topic, Vaughan Williams's voice was almost always one of encouragement. He wanted his fellow British composers to look within their own country for inspiration rather than to copy foreign models. Vaughan Williams wrote music for all genres and was personally involved with rehearsals and performances of his works. Many of the performers of his works were not only acquaintances, but often close personal friends. He encouraged his fellow composers to be involved with the general population rather than only socializing with the musical elite.

Vaughan Williams was firmly grounded in the belief that the English composer must receive his inspiration from the traditions of his own country. Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst set out to methodically turn themselves into British composers. For Vaughan Williams

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[1]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Paradise Remembered,* 166.

this meant that his major musical study was in England with teachers well-grounded in the British musical tradition. Following his academic training, he received inspiration from projects such as the collection of folk song; the study of music by British composers of earlier eras, which included the Tudor composers and Purcell; and the editing of the *English Hymnal*.

The subject of national music was a frequent theme in the writings of Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams used comparisons between art and science to explain why he felt music must be national:

> Science is the pure pursuit of knowledge and thus knows no boundaries. Art, and especially the art of music, uses knowledge as a means to the evocation of personal experience in terms which will be intelligible to and command the sympathy of others. These others must clearly be primarily those who by race, tradition, and cultural experience are the nearest to him; in fact those of his own nation, or other kind of homogeneous community.[2]

Vaughan Williams felt that a composer must have something of importance to say to the people of his own country before he could speak to the world. He felt that the composer who tries to be cosmopolitan from the beginning will not succeed:

> Some music may appeal only in its immediate surroundings; some may be national in its influence and some may transcend these bounds and be world-wide in its acceptance. But we may be quite sure that the composer who tries to be cosmopolitan from the outset will fail, not only with the world at large, but with his own people as well.[3]

He continued along the same line by saying, "Every composer cannot expect to have a world-wide message, but he may reasonably expect to have a special message for his own people and many young composers make the mistake of imagining they can be universal without at first

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[2]R. Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National?," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 1.

[3]Ibid., 2.

having been local."[4] By the time of the writing of Symphony No. 5, Vaughan Williams's music had received international recognition. However, he continued to keep his focus on a style that would appeal first to his countrymen.

He spoke of having roots in one's own soil:

> I am told that when grape vines were first cultivated in California the vineyard masters used to try the experiment of importing plants from France or Italy and setting them in their own soil. The result was that the grapes acquired a peculiar individual flavour, so strong was the influence of the soil in which they were planted. I think I need hardly draw the moral of this, namely, that if the roots of your art are firmly planted in your own soil and that soil has anything individual to give you, you may still gain the whole world and not lose your own souls.[5]

For Vaughan Williams, the dialect of folk song and the influences of British composers kept him grounded in the soil of his country.

Vaughan Williams stated that music cannot be successfully transplanted:

> What a composer has to do is to find out the real message he has to convey to the community and say it directly and without equivocation. I know there is a temptation each time a new star appears on the musical horizon to say, "What a fine fellow this is, let us try and do something like this at home," quite forgetting that the result will not sound at all the same when transplanted from its natural soil.[6]

While Symphony No. 5 shows some influence of Vaughan Williams's study with Ravel, especially in the Scherzo movement, it incorporates those elements into Vaughan Williams's English idiom.[7]

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[4]Ibid., 9.

[5]Ibid., 11.

[6]Ibid., 9.

[7]The Scherzo movement is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Vaughan Williams encouraged composers to develop a musical citizenship and spoke of serving the state: "We must cultivate a sense of musical citizenship. Why should not the musician be the servant of the state and build national monuments like the painter, the writer, or the architect?"[8] Vaughan Williams had strong political leanings that tended to be liberal, so he was not suggesting a communist state, but rather that musicians should represent the people and the state by the nature of their musical works.

Vaughan Williams felt that in the early part of the twentieth century British musicians had turned to an extreme by artificially using English folk song. He summarized:

> In former times, musical England came to grief by trying to be foreign; no less surely shall we now fail through trying to be English. It is useless to invent a style and then model individual utterances upon it. The national English style must be modelled [*sic*] on the personal style of English musicians. Until our composers will be content to write the music that they like best, without an ulterior thought, not till then shall we have a true school of English music.[9]

At the time Vaughan Williams was writing "A School of English Music," he had not yet found his own voice. The article was written the year before he became actively involved as a collector of folk song.[10] The influence of folk song was to play a tremendous role in the music of Vaughan Williams when he did find his personal voice.

Vaughan Williams believed that the proper compositional use of folk song was one path by which composers could free themselves from foreign influences:

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[8]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National?," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 10.

[9]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "A School of English Music," *The Vocalist* 1 (April 1902): 8.

[10]This article is a rare exception of Vaughan Williams having a complete reversal of opinion on a topic. The opinions expressed regarding folk song in this article are in direct contrast to his later opinions.

> Several of us found here in its simplest form the musical idiom which we unconsciously were cultivating in ourselves, it gave a point to our imagination; far from fettering us, it freed us from foreign influences which weighed on us, which we could not get rid of, but which we felt were not pointing in the direction in which we really wanted to go. The knowledge of our folk-songs did not so much discover for us something new, but uncovered for us something which had been hidden by foreign matter.[11]

Vaughan Williams felt that folk song was the musical root of a nation. He stated, "A supreme composer can only come out of a musical nation and at the root of the musical quality of a nation lies the natural music whose simplest and clearest manifestation is the folk-song."[12]

Vaughan Williams felt that a break with the Germanic tradition was necessary in order to establish a British tradition. Together with Gustav Holst, Vaughan Williams sought to remove influences that he perceived as Germanic[13] from his writing by embracing the English influences, such as English folk song.[14] Hugh Cobbe has shown through correspondence between Vaughan Williams and others how Vaughan Williams's attitude toward Germany changed over the years:

> [The letters show] a coherent development through the composer's career on the question of German music: an initial assumption that the German tradition lay at the heart of all that is serious in music followed by a growing determination that, though he did not belittle Germany's contribution to music . . . , he did not believe that it provided a springboard for the development of English music.[15]

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[11]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "The Evolution of the Folk-song: The Folk-song and the Composer," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 41.

[12]Ibid., 50.

[13]While Vaughan Williams appears not to have defined exactly which influences he considered Germanic, these influences might have included adherence to traditional forms, major/minor tonal structures, preference for V/I cadences, and excessive chromaticism.

[14]Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst, ed., preface to *Heirs and Rebels*, ix-x and Kennedy, Foreword to *National Music and Other Essays*, viii.

[15]Hugh Cobbe, "V. Williams, Germany, and the German Tradition," in *Vaughan Williams Studies*, ed. Alain Frogley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 97.

Vaughan Williams said that adding a bit of local color, such as a phrase of a folk song, to a longer work will not make the work national:

> I am far from suggesting that anyone can make his music 'national' by adding a few touches of local colour. Nevertheless I do hold that any school of national music must be fashioned on the basis of the raw material of its own national song; and this, in spite of the fact that one could name many composers whose music certainly reflects their own country, but who had confessedly little or no knowledge of their own folk-music.[16]

Symphony No. 5 draws on the raw material of folk song with its extensive use of modes and the structure of melodic outlines.[17]

Vaughan Williams felt that music must have a special meaning for the composer's own people. He cited examples from an American music publication that he felt lacked appeal to any audience:

> I receive from time to time a publication, issued from America, called *New Music*, consisting chiefly of compositions by young Americans. I do not pretend that I can make head or tail of what these young composers are saying, or what they are aiming at, but I am an old fogey and I realize that I am not justified in praising or blaming it. But I am justified in asking at whom it *is* addressed. Is it merely the music of a clique, or has it a genuine message to young America? All great music has the element of popular appeal, it must penetrate beyond the walls of the studio into the world outside.[18]

This was an appeal from Vaughan Williams to the young musicians of America with the hope that he could influence them to turn to other directions for inspiration.

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[16]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "The Evolution of the Folk-song: The Folk-song and the Composer," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 41.

[17]Examples are given in the analysis section in Chapter 5.

[18]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Some Conclusions," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 67.

Vaughan Williams felt it was important for a composer to find his own voice and not be an imitator of teachers, foreign composers, or native musicians. In his earliest published journal article, he stated: "A musician who wishes to say anything worth saying must first of all express himself—in fact, his music must be the natural utterance of his own natural emotions."[19] The article was written as a response to the state of music in England in 1902. He described the recent history of music in England:

> Not very many years ago, as is well known, no English musician, as such, had a chance of success; he had either to change his name or his nature; so that all our performers were "Signors," and all the products of our English composers were, in reality, imported from abroad, and suffered much dilution on the voyage. This state of affairs did not tend to annul the general verdict, that we were an unmusical nation.[20]

Vaughan Williams gave advice on how a composer could find his musical voice:

> How is the composer to find himself? How is he to stimulate his imagination in a way that will lead him to voicing himself and his fellows? I think that composers are much too fond of going to concerts—I am speaking now, of course of the technically equipped composer. At the concert we hear the finished product. What the artist should be concerned with is the raw material. Have we not all about us forms of musical expression which we can take and purify and raise to the level of great art?[21]

Vaughan Williams certainly took this advice in his own formative years as he himself went out to the countryside to collect folk songs.

Vaughan Williams often quoted other writers when their thoughts mirrored his own ideas. He quoted Cecil Sharp on the idea of self-expression for the musician:

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[19]R. Vaughan Williams, "A School of English Music," *The Vocalist* 1 (April 1902): 8.

[20]Ibid.

[21]R. Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National?," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 10.

> The creative musician cannot produce music out of nothing. . . . All that he can do and as a matter of fact does, is to make use of the material bequeathed to him by his predecessors, fashion it anew and in such manner that he can through it and by means of it express himself.[22]

Vaughan Williams said that the composer writes to be understood and cannot compose music that he finds distasteful:

> The sincere artist cannot deliberately compose what he dislikes. . . . A composer wishes to make himself intelligible. This surely is the prime motive of the act of artistic invention and to be intelligible he must clothe his inspiration in such forms as the circumstances of time, place, and subject dictate.[23]

He continued by summarizing the results of writing music that is opposed to circumstances:

> If he consciously tries to express himself in a way which is contrary to his surroundings, and therefore to his own nature, he is evidently being, though perhaps he does not know it, insincere.[24]

Vaughan Williams's thoughts express his opinions regarding the music of the modernists. He often claimed that he found it impossible to understand or appreciate their music. For him, the music appeared insincere.

Vaughan Williams felt the composer should be involved in the life of the community in which he lived. He said, "The composer must not shut himself up and think about art; he must live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community."[25] Vaughan Williams followed this piece of advice throughout his life with his continual involvement with musical, social, and political events in the community.

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[22]Cecil Sharp, quoted in "Tradition," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 59. Vaughan Williams did not indicate the exact source of his quote.

[23]R. Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National?," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 3.

[24]Ibid.

Vaughan Williams thought that study abroad was acceptable in cases where a composer had a firm goal. He said, "First, then, see your direction clear and then by all means go to Paris, Berlin, or Peking if you like and study and learn everything that will help you carry out that purpose."[26] He commented on the practice of traveling abroad to study technique:

> I find that young composers both in America and in England are inclined to say that they must go to Paris or Vienna in order to learn their technique. I am not going to argue this point for a moment, but will content myself with saying that technique is not a thing that can be added to a composer's outfit like the buttons on a suit of clothes. The technique must grow out of the desire for expression and ultimately is the discovery of the perfect balance between inspiration and realization.[27]

Vaughan Williams's study abroad certainly aided him in finding his own sense of perfect balance.

Vaughan Williams said, "A great work of art can only be born under the right surroundings and in the right atmosphere."[28] The statement was made as a response to an item he had read by a music critic saying that "it only takes one man to write a symphony,"[29] which Vaughan Williams felt was surely a misconception. Rather than name a symphonic composer for his argument, Vaughan Williams gave Bach as an example of one who had benefited from the generations of lesser composers who had preceded him. Vaughan Williams's own Symphony No. 5 would fit the definition he gave of a great work of art. The well-received symphony benefited from all influences on Vaughan Williams up to that point in his life. The

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[25]Ibid., 10.

[26]Ibid., 11.

[27]R. Vaughan Williams, "Some Conclusions," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 70.

[28]R. Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 4.

people saw it as a symphony of hope that appeared at one of the darkest times in England's history.

Vaughan Williams addressed originality in a number of his writings. The observations address originality from several angles:

> Originality is not mere novelty. . . . A composer at white heat of invention does indeed not 'trouble to say something of his own'; he knows instinctively what is the inevitable theme for his purpose. Music does not grow out of nothing, one idea leads to another and the test of each idea is, not whether it is 'original' but whether it is inevitable.[30]

He felt that too much emphasis was being placed on originality:

> Do we not perhaps lay too much stress on originality and personality in music? The object of the composer is to produce a beautiful work of art and as long as the result is beautiful it seems to me it matters very little how that result is brought about. This idea of originality, especially in subject matter, is a very recent growth.[31]

He gave Sibelius as an example of a truly original composer:

> There stand out one or two truly original figures, such as Sibelius, who have something to say that no one has said before, but who are nevertheless satisfied with the technical content which has been handed down to them by their ancestors.[32]

Vaughan Williams's thoughts on the originality of Sibelius were expressed in several of his writings.

Vaughan Williams felt that it was acceptable to borrow from other composers. In fact, he considered it a type of complement and willingly acknowledged this practice. Norman Lebrecht felt that "Vaughan Williams habitually deprecated his own originality and talked of 'cribbing'

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[29]Ibid.

[30]R. Vaughan Williams, "The Folk-song," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 27.

[31]R. Vaughan Williams, "The Evolution of Folk-song," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 44.

[32]R. Vaughan Williams, "Tradition," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 59.

kleptomanically from folk sources and other composers." Lebrecht said, "In stating the obvious, however, he deliberately concealed his innovatory gifts."[33] Vaughan Williams, though, was certainly of the belief that borrowing actually enhanced his compositional skills.

Vaughan Williams thought that music should be written with regard to the occasion. He asked, "Have we not all around us occasions crying out for music? Do not all our great pageants of human beings require music for their full expression?"[34] Vaughan Williams used sections of music that he was developing in Symphony No. 5 as his contribution to E. M. Forster's pageant "England's Pleasant Land."

Vaughan Williams wrote that music must be heard. Composers do not write works with the assumption that the work will live only in a bookcase. He said:

> [A fallacy exists] that the artist invents for himself alone. No man lives or moves or could do so, even if he wanted to, for himself alone. The actual process of artistic invention, whether it be by voice, verse, or brush, presupposes an audience; someone to hear, read, or see.[35]

Vaughan Williams's life was spent sharing music with his world. As Symphony No. 5 was written and premiered during wartime, the possibility existed that there would be no audience to hear the work when complete; however, Vaughan Williams continued to write for that audience.

Vaughan Williams was a voracious concert-goer and was concerned that British orchestras often overlooked works by their own composers in order to perform more familiar works by foreign composers. Vaughan Williams was responsible for educating many conductors

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[33]Norman Lebrecht, *Complete Companion to 20th Century Music*, rev. ed. S.v. "Ralph Vaughan Williams" (London: Simon & Schuster Ltd., 2000), 396-397 .

[34]R. Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National?," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 10.

[35]Ibid., 3.

by encouraging them to program British works. He was also one of the composers in the line of what would become the English musical renaissance of the twentieth century.

Vaughan Williams's encouragement of young musicians is illustrated by the experience of conductor Eric Wetherell. While a student at the Royal College of Music, Wetherell invited Vaughan Williams to a performance that he was conducting of Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 5. Vaughan Williams attended the performance by the Student Union orchestra and was complimentary toward Wetherell afterwards. A few years later, Wetherell applied for a conducting position and asked Vaughan Williams to be a reference. Vaughan Williams wrote:

> On the one occasion on which I heard you conduct I realised that you had the markings of a competent conductor and evidently knew your music very well.
>
> The fact that you had not attended conducting classes I think is, on the whole, an advantage as I cannot see that they do any good. Practical experience is the only way to learn.[36]

The incident is important in two ways. First, it confirms Vaughan Williams's interest in encouraging the work of younger musicians. Second, the written response reveals Vaughan Williams's feelings on the study of conducting—that one learns best by doing.

The musical issues that Vaughan Williams considered important were lived out in his daily life. Vaughan Williams felt that English composers should look for inspiration within England rather than patterning their works after foreign models. He considered that a break with the Germanic tradition was necessary in order to establish an English tradition. Vaughan Williams said that the English composer must develop a musical citizenship and have roots in his own soil. He advocated that a composer must be involved with his community and should write music with regard to occasion. Study abroad was acceptable for an English composer as long as

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[36]Eric Wetherell, "Eric Wetherell Pays Tribute," *Journal of the R.V.W. Society* 1

there was a purpose involved. Vaughan Williams felt that a composer must find his own voice and must write to be understood. He said that a composer must be able to speak to the people of his own country before he could write to the world. Some of these ideas began in Vaughan Williams's youth. Others were molded during his academic career and continued to be developed as he matured as a composer. Two traits that his character and writings exhibited were consistency and discipline—traits that also were extended to his symphonic writing.

The Symphony as Seen by Vaughan Williams

The majority of the British musical population came to know Vaughan Williams through his symphonies and other large-scale works. Vaughan Williams was beyond the age of forty when his first orchestral symphony was premiered. The late beginning had its advantages, though, as Vaughan Williams was able to absorb a number of influences and arrive at a mature style by the time that he wrote his first orchestral symphony.

Vaughan Williams grew up in an era before recorded performances of symphonies were available and in an area of England where access to performances of symphonies would normally involve travel to a major city. He described his introduction to symphonic literature as being in the form of piano duet arrangements of Haydn symphonies which he played with his brother and sister.[37] The practice of learning symphonies by playing through them on the piano

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(September 1994): 5.

[37]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, *Vaughan Williams: A Study*, 20.

continued in Vaughan Williams's college years.[38] Extremely active in concert attendance during his adult years, Vaughan Williams was well-acquainted with new symphonic literature that was being written in England and other parts of the world. An instrumental composer's reputation is usually related to his symphonic output, and Vaughan Williams's symphonies would help establish his role as the leading British composer of his time.

Vaughan Williams's Views on Non-British Symphonies

Vaughan Williams's essay "Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony" was his lengthiest commentary on a non-British Symphony. The essay was published in 1953 in a collection of miscellaneous essays entitled *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects*. In the essay, Vaughan Williams went into great detail regarding his views on Beethoven's compositional process. Vaughan Williams qualified the intent of the essay in the opening paragraph: "This is not intended to be a learned disquisition nor an official guide to this mighty composition. Nor is it an analysis; though I shall go through the work as a whole showing its structure as it appears to me."[39] Vaughan Williams had planned to conduct the Leith Hill Music Festival in Beethoven's Choral Symphony in 1940. He spent the autumn of 1939 restudying the work. When war broke out, it was obvious that the work would not be performed; however, he continued to prepare remarks that he would have delivered to the

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[38]Ibid., 25.

[39]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony," in *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 1.

festival choirs to help them better understand the work they would be performing.[40] According to Ursula Vaughan Williams, this was a method that he had used in the past to help clarify his own thoughts on a major work that he planned to conduct.[41]

Beethoven was not one of Vaughan Williams's favorite composers. In his discussion of Beethoven, Vaughan Williams stated that his own preferences in music were the music of Bach and the composers who preceded Bach. He said, "The early nineteenth-century idiom is naturally repugnant to me."[42] While not particularly fond of Beethoven in general, Vaughan Williams continued by saying he considered Beethoven's Choral Symphony, along with Bach's St. Matthew Passion and Bach's B Minor Mass, as being the best of all choral music. Vaughan Williams included his overall assessment of Beethoven's Choral Symphony:

> For me there are certain passages in the Ninth Symphony which I find hard to swallow, but I do not include in this indigestible matter the choral finale, though even here there are certain things which stick in my gizzard.
>
> I understand that the pious Beethovenite always makes an exception of this finale; but then I am not a pious Beethovenite. To me, the finale is potentially the greatest movement of the four.[43]

Vaughan Williams did not care for Beethoven's ornamentation of melodies and described what he felt was an artificial process:

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[40]Ralph Vaughan Williams, Preface to *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects*, no page number listed.

[41]Ursula Vaughan Williams, Preface to *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed., xiii.

[42]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony," in *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects*, 1. The remark by Vaughan Williams reflects his philosophy of the English composer as he had sought to remove Teutonic influences from his own music.

[43]Ibid., 2.

> A great melody is for all time. When Beethoven, and often, Mozart, start ornamenting their melodies they seem at once to make them of their period and there they remain. Surely if a melody is to be ornamented at all the ornament should grow naturally out of the original thought, and not be mechanically added to it by a stereotyped process.[44]

Vaughan Williams used Bach's method of ornamentation for comparison. He stated: "When Bach adds ornament to a melody I feel that this is the direct outcome of his overflowing emotion."[45] He cited a passage from a chorale prelude by Bach and commented that Bach's procedure seemed to him "an irrepressible exfoliation under the direct influence of deep emotion; not a plastered-on ornament according to a conventional formula."[46]

Vaughan Williams then appeared to apologize for going into such detail in order to point out what he perceived as weaknesses in Beethoven's Choral Symphony:

> I daresay I have laid too much stress on these minutiae which trouble me, but one is especially keenly alive to the faults of what is otherwise supreme. Also it is so much easier to explain one's criticisms than to voice one's wonderment. . . .
>
> In the presence of this work one, perhaps, only dares to point out one's disappointments and is left dumb in the presence of its greatnesses.[47]

Vaughan Williams discussed the awkwardness of the key of D Major for the voices in the finale:

> One could almost wish that Beethoven, while writing his voice parts, had had at his elbow a practical, uninspired, competent English choir-master. But 'almost' is not 'quite'. The English choir-master would probably have pointed out, with justice, that though D major is an ideal key for the 'Joy' tune when played by instruments, it is by no

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[44]Ibid., 4.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., 6.

[47]Ibid.

> means so when sung by voices, owing to the awkward *tessitura*, which is either too high or too low.[48]

In these comments, Vaughan Williams was drawing on his own practical experience as an English choirmaster. Vaughan Williams had no qualms about altering the choral parts in Beethoven's original work to fit the competency level of his choirs:

> For a performance which I had hoped to prepare before the War, I made the experiment of modifying the voice parts in a few places—chiefly by adding alternative notes for second sopranos and tenors—so that those under the rank of Archangel could take part in it.[49]

Vaughan Williams commented on Richard Wagner's interpretation of 'meaning' in Beethoven's Choral Symphony:

> Then there is Richard Wagner's attempt to give the whole work a 'meaning', as was the fashion in that materialistic age, the age of 'romanticism'. That is, a 'meaning' which can be touched, tasted and handled. The Ninth Symphony has, indeed, a meaning, but it is a meaning beyond the world of facts and words; it means itself and can be expressed in its own terms and no other.[50]

Vaughan Williams's remarks about Wagner and Beethoven's Choral Symphony match his feelings about critics attempting to define the meaning of his own works.

Vaughan Williams justified why he felt that the first, second, and fourth movements of Beethoven's Choral Symphony were the best movements:

> A composer is most truly himself and at his greatest when he is least his superficial self, when he casts off all the trappings of his technique and period and enables his thought to stand out in all its nakedness. So, paradoxically, the first two and, with reservations, the last movement of this Symphony are the least 'Beethovenish', and therefore to my mind, the finest.

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[48]Ibid., 8.

[49]Ibid., 9.

[50]Ibid., 9-10.

> In the first two movements, at all events, Beethoven transcends even himself. The music is like no other music, either before or since. It seems sometimes to have come straight from the eternal source of truth without human intervention.[51]

Vaughan Williams apparently enjoyed the final movement of Beethoven's Choral Symphony enough to borrow from it. He stated: "I cribbed. . . the opening of my F minor Symphony[52] deliberately from the finale of the Ninth Symphony. . . ."[53]

Vaughan Williams explained the reasons for his reservations regarding the quality of the third movement:

> In the slow movement, as it seems to me, we relapse on to the 'Beethovenish' Beethoven; the Beethoven whom the early nineteenth century called the 'sublime' Beethoven; the Beethoven who made strong men with whiskers brush away a silent tear. That is the reason, I suppose, why I care for this less than the other movements. I know it is all my fault.[54]

He admitted that he was puzzled over other parts of Beethoven's Choral Symphony:

> No, there is no doubt about it, I do not understand Beethoven—that is plain. It is not the 'obscure' parts which puzzle me but the plain-sailing ones. No, I do not understand Beethoven; and yet when I turn to the Finale, I sometimes think that I understand him better than the inner circle.[55]

He described some sections as being trite by stating: "There are to my mind plenty of banalities in the Ninth Symphony—banal chiefly because they seem to me out of place."[56]

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[51]Ibid., 10.

[52] Symphony No. 4

[53]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," in Foss, 33.

[54]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony," in *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects*, 11.

[55]Ibid., 12.

[56]Ibid., 13.

Vaughan Williams's description of the opening of the first movement of Beethoven's Choral Symphony could very well be a description of the lack of a clearly defined tonal center in his own Symphony No. 5, which he was composing during the period that he was writing this essay:

> If you read a text-book on composition you will probably be advised to start a symphony with a good square melodic subject which would from the first clearly define the principal key. Beethoven's first movement is, as we discover later, in D minor. However, he starts off with the chord of A—major or minor?—nobody knows. Where is it leading to?—nobody knows.[57]

Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 5 opens with a nebulous modal/tonal center, and the key of D Major is not established until the end of the symphony.

In Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 5, the Scherzo movement precedes the slow movement for the first time in a symphony by Vaughan Williams. He was possibly influenced by the order of the movements in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as the Scherzo movement preceded the slow movement in the Choral Symphony.

Vaughan Williams commented on Beethoven's treatment of melody: "In Beethoven the melodic outline is ever present, but it does not always leap to the eye. . . ." Vaughan Williams stated that the reason the melody is not obvious visually is that "in the score . . . it is divided up between the instruments."[58]

Vaughan Williams was impressed by Beethoven's use of what he described as a modal-sounding cadence. The chords F major to D minor (III-i) occur before the repeat sign at the end of the first section of the second movement of the Choral Symphony. Beethoven used a

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[57]Ibid., 14.

[58]Ibid., 28

progression of the chords C major to A minor to F major to D minor to move from the key of C Major to the key of the opening of the movement—D minor. Vaughan Williams felt that Beethoven was looking back to Palestrina or anticipating Moussorgsky. He did not recall a similar progression in other works by Beethoven.[59] It was natural that any modal sound would appeal to Vaughan Williams as he was attracted to the modes in his own works.

Vaughan Williams raised questions regarding the possible reasons for the greatness of Beethoven's Choral Symphony:

> Is it not really an adventure into new territory, an imperfect and experimental work of art, stepping forward into an unknown region, but occasionally retreating on to familiar ground? Is not the symphony great, perhaps because of its experiments, hesitations and imperfections, the sudden changes of style, the tentative nature of some of the choral writing?. . . . Was Beethoven looking into a region where even he could not see clearly? Are not the great moments great for the very reason that the composer is seeing, as in a glass darkly, what no one has ever seen before or since?[60]

Some of these observations about the Choral Symphony could apply to Vaughan Williams's journey into a new symphonic region in his own Fourth Symphony.

Vaughan Williams felt that Beethoven, though essentially German, transcended his frontier of Germany and appealed to the world. He said:

> Beethoven has an universal meaning, but to the German, who finds in it that same spirit exemplified in its more homely form in those Volkslieder which he learnt in his childhood, he must also have a specialized meaning.[61]

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[59]Ibid., 31-32.

[60]Ibid., 32.

[61]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Should Music Be National?" in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 9.

These observations coincide with other writings by Vaughan Williams where he states that a composer must appeal to his countrymen before he can appeal to the world.[62]

Vaughan Williams admired at least parts of both the 3rd and 5th Symphonies of Beethoven. He said:

> The opening theme of the 'Eroica' Symphony is just an arpeggio, and not original at that, but what a wonderful foundation for a great movement! The famous drum passage at the end of the Scherzo of Beethoven's C minor Symphony would not, without its context, be evidence of the mind of a great composer; but coming where it does, as a sort of resurrection from the abyss, at the end of the Scherzo, and then building up on those reiterated drum taps into the glorious outburst of the finale, does it not reveal the master mind at work?[63]

At the time of the writing of his musical autobiography, Vaughan Williams said of Beethoven, "To this day the Beethoven idiom repels me, but I hope I have at last learnt to see the greatness that lies behind the idiom that I dislike. . . ."[64]

Vaughan Williams's thoughts on other non-British composers are not as thorough or lengthy as his comments on Beethoven and his symphonies. Michael Kennedy stated that Vaughan Williams did not care for the music of Berlioz or Liszt: "Vaughan Williams disliked intensely the mid-nineteenth-century group of composers such as Liszt and Berlioz. . . . [He] claimed that Berlioz was 'just second-hand Meyerbeer.'."[65] In his essay "What Have We Learnt

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[62]Michael Kennedy, Foreword to Ralph Vaughan Williams, *National Music and Other Essays*, 2nd ed., vi.

[63]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "What Is Music?" in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 12.

[64]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," chapter in Foss, 23.

[65]Kennedy, *Works*, 375-376.

from Elgar?," Vaughan Williams described both Berlioz and Saint-Saëns as "second-rate."[66] Vaughan Williams, in his essay "Composing for the Films," referred to Dvorak's music as having "five endings to each movement."[67] In a letter to Michael Kennedy dated 26 January 1957, Vaughan Williams said, "I have no particular use for Bruckner. I have never got over the first symphony I heard of his, in which 4 Wagner tubas played what sounded like old English glees. . . ."[68]

The great admiration that Vaughan Williams felt for the symphonies of Haydn dated back to his childhood and the playing of duet versions of the symphonies with his brother and sister. He stated, "Since those early times I have never wavered in my admiration of Haydn."[69] Vaughan Williams described Haydn as a Croatian rather than a Germanic or Teutonic composer:

> That Haydn's musical ancestry is different from that of his German so-called compatriots is obvious in all his characteristic work. Of course before he attained maturity he followed the lead of his teachers and even in latter life, in the enormous amount of his output, there is a certain proportion of mere journeyman work, and it is noticeable that in these the national characteristics are not so apparent.[70]

Vaughan Williams felt that many themes used by Haydn were derived from Croatian folk songs as Haydn favored "irregular metres and characteristic phrases."[71]

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[66]R. Vaughan Williams, "What Have We Learnt from Elgar?," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 251.

[67]R. Vaughan Williams, "Composing for the Films" in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 161.

[68]Quoted in Kennedy, *Works*, 388.

[69]R. Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," in Foss, 20.

[70]R. Vaughan Williams, "The Evolution of the Folk-Song," in *Nat'l Music*, 2nd ed., 48.

[71]Ibid., 49.

Vaughan Williams had conducted Schubert's Unfinished Symphony in B minor, D. 769 and Great Symphony in C, D. 944 at the Leith Hill Music Festival and described these two symphonies as being in a set of works classified as giving "our hearers the best music which our short rehearsal time allowed."[72] One reason Vaughan Williams was attracted to Schubert was the connection with folk song. Vaughan Williams said, "Schubert came from the humbler classes and [was] doubtless imbued from childhood with the popular music of [his] country."[73] Vaughan Williams also felt that "Schubert's melodic inspiration can be traced to the popular dance and march composers popular in Vienna in his time. . . ."[74] Vaughan Williams commented on the tremendous volume of works by Schubert: "Schubert, all his short life, poured out music, good, bad, and indifferent. Thus quantity breeds quality."[75]

Vaughan Williams contributed an article entitled "Brahms and Tschaïkowsky" to the October 1902 issue of *The Vocalist*. Vaughan Williams said that he had grouped the two composers together as a reaction to the "Brahms clique" and "Tschaïkowsky coterie" that were popular in England at the time of the writing of the article. He felt that the two composers had nothing more in common than living at the same time and "their association in the English mind today is purely accidental."[76]

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[72]R. Vaughan Williams, "The Leith Hill Music Festival," in *Nat'l Music*, 2nd ed., 274.

[73]R. Vaughan Williams, "The Folk-song Movement," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 35.

[74]R. Vaughan Williams, "What Have We Learnt from Elgar?," in *National Music,* 2nd ed., 254.

[75]R. Vaughan Williams, "Sibelius," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 264.

[76]R. Vaughan Williams, "Brahms and Tschaïkowsky," *The Vocalist*, Vol. 1, No. 7, (October 1902): 200.

Vaughan Williams said that Tchaikovsky's greatest fault was taking emotionalism too far. He felt the reason that Tchaikovsky did this was that sentimentality came easily for Tchaikovsky. Vaughan Williams wrote that Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 seemed to be his best symphony, though he said the public would disagree with that assessment. He considered Symphony No. 4 the best because it was "much more manly and much less gentlemanly than anything else"[77] written by Tchaikovsky.

Vaughan Williams perceived the music of Brahms in various ways during his lifetime. In his student days at the Royal College of Music, he included Brahms on a short list of "the only composers worth considering."[78] In his early adult years in 1902, he wrote regarding what he perceived as weaknesses in Brahms's music.[79] In an essay written about Stanford in 1952, he said, "Though a great admirer of Brahms, [Stanford] did not imitate his awkward execution."[80] In Vaughan Williams's mature years, Brahms appeared to be back among his favorite composers. In a letter to Michael Kennedy dated 26 January 1957, Vaughan Williams responded to a question from Kennedy regarding who had been the greatest man in his lifetime. Vaughan Williams said the question was difficult to answer, but included Brahms as one of four possibilities.[81]

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[77]Ibid, 199.

[78]R. Vaughan Williams, "A Musical Autobiography," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 183.

[79]R. Vaughan Williams, "Brahms and Tschaïkowsky," *The Vocalist*, Vol 1, No. 7, (October 1902): 198-200.

[80]R. Vaughan Williams, "Charles Villiers Stanford," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 196.

[81]Kennedy, *Works*, 358.

In the article for the October 1902 edition of *The Vocalist*, Vaughan Williams described Brahms's music as having "a certain long-windedness and laboriousness which often verges on the dull" and felt that Brahms "over and over again. . . fails to get half-way in the direction that he set out to attain. . . ." Vaughan Williams continued with a discussion of Brahms's Fourth Symphony. Vaughan Williams felt the first movement was "characteristic of Brahms at his best." He described the second movement as containing "a series of lovely melodies which should serve as an excellent object lesson to those extraordinary people who pretend to think Brahms cannot write tunes." He wrote that the subjects of the third movement were rather heavy, giving "the impression of an elephant dancing." He defended the fourth movement, which he described as "a kind of chaconne, or a series of variations and transformations of a short, striking, musical phrase. . ." that is not "a mere contrapuntal exercise" but rather "a strong emotional utterance full of the most wonderful melody and the deepest feeling." Vaughan Williams considered the chief fault of the symphony was its orchestration and felt that Brahms was "almost wilful [*sic*] in his determination to give the wrong tune to the wrong instrument."[82]

Vaughan Williams made no secret that he did not care for the music of Mahler and described him as "a very tolerable imitation of a composer."[83] The remark was made in reference to Vaughan Williams's feeling that a composer must be involved with music rather than living apart from it. He said that "intimate acquaintance with the executive side of music in

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[82]R. Vaughan Williams, "Brahms and Tschaïkowsky," *The Vocalist*, Vol 1, No. 7, (October 1902), 198-200.

[83]R. Vaughan Williams, "Musical Autobiography," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 187.

orchestra, chorus, and opera"[84] had even brought Mahler to the point of being committed to the everyday aspects of music. In the essay "Composing for the Films," Vaughan Williams referred to Mahler's music as having "interminable codas."[85]

Vaughan Williams gave his general opinion of the music of Stravinsky and Prokofiev: "One may almost say that every other two bars of their compositions could be cut out without losing any music: some people might feel inclined to add that the same is true of the pairs of bars which remain!"[86] The reason for Vaughan Williams's dislike of the music of Stravinsky appeared to be related to Stravinsky's change in style:

> Possibly Stravinsky is too intent on shocking the bourgeois to have time to think about making his own people 'feel at home'. Cosmopolitanism has to a certain extent ousted nationalism. He seems deliberately to have torn up his roots and sold his birthright, cutting himself off from the refreshing well-spring of tradition.[87]

In a letter to Michael Kennedy dated 26 November 1957, Vaughan Williams said, "Most of Stravinsky bores me. I wish he even shocked me. . . . He always makes a nasty sour sound with his orchestra, but I do like the *Symphony of Psalms*. . . ."[88] Vaughan Williams found merit in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* as he described that work as one that represented "the real and

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[84]Ibid.

[85]R. Vaughan Willams, "Composing for the Films," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 161.

[86]R. Vaughan Williams, "Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 104.

[87]R. Vaughan Williams, "The History of Nationalism in Music," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 57.

the great Stravinsky which will remain fresh and alive when all the clevernesses [*sic*] of his instrumental works have become stale from familiarity."[89]

The high regard in which Vaughan Williams held the music of Jean Sibelius is evident in his dedication of Symphony No. 5 to Sibelius and in his published tribute to Sibelius. Vaughan Williams found little to criticize in the music of Sibelius. He said:

> Sibelius never writes wrong notes: he never directs his fiddles to play the wrong side of the bridge, he never looks round for different kinds of mutes so that his brass may make uglier and uglier noises, he never puts his clarinets into bags: his harmonic language vocabulary is hardly different from that of Beethoven or Schubert. Yet (or is it therefore?) his music sounds absolutely new, and will remain new when the twelve tones have become intolerably old-fashioned.[90]

While Vaughan Williams's remarks may have been as much a criticism of the modernists as a tribute to Sibelius, his admiration of the music of Sibelius was evident.

Trends are apparent in Vaughan Williams's opinions of the music of non-British composers. Those composers who had close ties to nationalism in their respective countries received the highest praise. Those composers who experimented with modern techniques, especially those who seemed to have rejected an earlier style that Vaughan Williams found

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[88]Kennedy, *Works*, 390.

[89]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "The History of Nationalism in Music," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 58.

[90]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Sibelius," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 261.

acceptable, received harsh criticism, while those composers who avoided both extremes were paid tribute when they exhibited nationalistic traits.

Vaughan Williams's Views on Composers of British Symphonies

Michael Kennedy made the following observations regarding views composers have of each other and the nature of the views held by Vaughan Williams:

> Creative artists are by nature absorbed by their own creative processes. It is therefore debatable whether their opinions on the work of others are particularly instructive as criticism. But the opinions certainly tell us much about their holder. Vaughan Williams's views on other composers were as forthright as Stravinsky's, Britten's, and Mahler's.[91]

Regarding Vaughan Williams's opinions on composers of his own generation and those who were younger, Kennedy said:

> About his contemporaries and his juniors he was usually discreet. In the case of the new generation he reserved judgement, for he pretended he could not understand them and he complained of the lack of tunes.[92]

The observations made by Kennedy reveal character traits of Vaughan Williams. While opinionated on any issue, especially issues dealing with music, Vaughan Williams was also sensitive to the feelings of those around him. The majority of his negative remarks about the music of other composers dealt with the music of foreign composers. For those foreign composers who were living at the time of his remarks, he probably felt that his personal opinion regarding their musical compositions would matter little to them. He was stating how he

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[91]Kennedy, *Works*, 375.

[92]Ibid., 376.

honestly felt. In some instances he even qualified his remarks by stating it was probably his own fault that he could not appreciate their music. The music of many of his fellow British composers fit into his definition of national music, so he would have had little need to criticize their works. For those British composers who in his opinion had denied their inheritance and sought their inspiration outside of England, he claimed he did not understand their works.

Edward Elgar was one of the British musical leaders of the generation that preceded Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams admired the music of Elgar, particularly music that exhibited any relation to folk song, and acknowledged that Elgar had influenced his own compositions in a number of ways. Vaughan Williams described Elgar as one of "the pioneers who led the way to the great resurgence of music . . . in England."[93] The music of Elgar that most appealed to Vaughan Williams was that which showed some evidence of the traits of folk song. Vaughan Williams commented:

> Elgar confessedly knows and cares little about English folk-song. . . . In the days when Elgar formed his style, English folk-song was not 'in the air' but was consciously revived and made popular only about thirty years ago. . . . Now, in the music of Elgar, in that part of it which seems to me most beautiful and most characteristic, I see that same direction [of the idiom of folk-song] clearly pointed out.[94]

As Elgar followed the Germanic tradition more closely than did Parry or Stanford, Vaughan Williams chose traits to admire in Elgar that best fit his perception of the English tradition.

Vaughan Williams's essay "What Have We Learnt from Elgar?" was written following the death of Elgar. Vaughan Williams wrote:

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[93]R. Vaughan Williams, "A Minim's Rest," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 168.

[94]R. Vaughan Williams, "The Evolution of Folk-song: The Folk-song and the

> Elgar has the one thing needful, and all his philosophical, literary, and technical excellences fall into their proper place: they are a means to an end. But to say he has beauty is only half the truth: he has that peculiar kind of beauty which gives us, his fellow countrymen, a sense of something familiar—the intimate and personal beauty of our own fields and lanes; not the aloof and unsympathetic beauty of glaciers and coral reefs and tropical forests.[95]

Commenting on Vaughan Williams's assessment of the music of Edward Elgar, Byron Adams stated that:

> Vaughan Williams deftly removes Elgar from the realm of the literary and moves him into that of the pastoral. In other words, Vaughan Williams recasts Elgar as a pastoral nationalist, a veritable Dvoŕák of Albion—and thus a suitable precursor of his own musical idiom and nationalistic preoccupations.[96]

Vaughan Williams credited Elgar as having frequently achieved a "bond of unity with his countrymen."[97] Relating to one's countrymen was certainly a goal that Vaughan Williams sought in his own music. This bond also meant that Elgar was able to inspire his fellow musicians. Vaughan Williams admitted that he and other composers had learned much from Elgar by real and unintentional borrowing from Elgar's music:

> Real cribbing takes place when one composer thinks with the mind of another even when there is no mechanical similarity of phrase. When, as often happens, this vicarious thinking does lead to similarity of phrase the offence is, I think, more venial. In that case one is so impressed by a certain passage in another composer that it becomes part of oneself.[98]

Composer," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 41.

[95]R. Vaughan Williams, "What Have We Learnt from Elgar?," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 251. This essay originally appeared as an article in the Elgar memorial edition of *Music and Letters* in 1935.

[96]Byron Adams, "'What Have We Learnt from Elgar?': Vaughan Williams and the Ambivalence of Inheritance," *Journal of the RVW Society* 28 (October 2003): 8.

[97]R. Vaughan Williams, "What Have We Learnt from Elgar?," *Nat'l Music*, 2nd ed., 252.

[98]Ibid.

Vaughan Williams held his teacher Hubert Parry in very high esteem. Vaughan Williams and Parry held similar positions on many musical issues. Parry's thoughts on nationalism and style were quoted by Vaughan Williams in his essay "Should Music Be National?":

> True style comes not from the individual but from the products of crowds of fellow-workers who sift and try and try again till they have found the thing that suits their native taste. . . . Style is ultimately national.[99]

Vaughan Williams included Parry as a pioneer in the British musical renaissance. Parry was numbered in a line of British composers who Vaughan Williams said "realize that vital art must grow in its own soil and be nurtured by its own rain and sunshine."[100] Parry, however, was not without faults in Vaughan Williams's opinion. In a lecture on composers as teachers, he described Parry as being "sometimes musically inarticulate and clumsy." In the same speech, he said Parry "potentially . . . was among the greatest. But something stood in the way of complete realization."[101] Vaughan Williams did not elaborate on what he felt had obstructed Parry's development.

Vaughan Williams had a high regard for the music of his former teacher Charles Villiers Stanford. Vaughan Williams said:

> Stanford was a great composer, a great teacher, a skilled conductor, and as befits a true Irishman, a lovable, quarrelsome, and generous man.

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[99]Hubert Parry, undated inaugural address to the Folk Song Society of England. Quoted in Vaughan Williams, "Should Music be National?," in *National Music,* 2nd ed., 2.

[100]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "A Minim's Rest," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 168.

[101]Vaughan Williams delivered a talk on Parry and Stanford in the winter of 1957 at the Composer's Concourse as part of a series of lectures on composers as teachers. The lecture is reprinted in *Heirs and Rebels*, 97.

> He has written some of the most beautiful music that has come from these islands. He realized that all art which is worth while must spring from its own soil. He made an exhaustive study of his own Irish folk music. . . .[102]

Regarding specific traits of Stanford as a composer, Vaughan Williams said:

> Stanford had none of the clumsiness of his contemporaries. . . .Stanford's orchestration, though perhaps unadventurous, is a model of clarity: every stroke tells. It was the fashion . . . among a certain class of journalists about fifty years ago to describe Parry, Stanford, and others who ruled at the Royal College of Music as 'academic', which apparently meant that they founded the emotion of their music on knowledge and not on mere sensation.[103]

Vaughan Williams also observed weaknesses in Stanford's music. He said, "Stanford was occasionally too clever. His very facility sometimes betrayed him. . . . His very facility prevented him from knowing when he was genuinely inspired and when his work was routine stuff."[104]

Vaughan Williams held his contemporary Arnold Bax in such high esteem that he dedicated his Fourth Symphony to Bax. Upon receiving the manuscript of the Fourth Symphony, Bax wrote to Vaughan Williams: "This is the finest tribute of affection and comradeship that has ever been paid me and I shall value it all my life."[105]

Arnold Bax had commented regarding the music of Vaughan Williams in the years following World War I:

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[102]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Charles Villiers Stanford," in *National Music*, 195.

[103]Ibid., 196.

[104]See note 377.

[105]Undated letter from Arnold Bax to Ralph Vaughan Williams. Quoted in Kennedy, *Works,* 247-248. The letter was written in response to the receipt of the manuscript of Symphony No. 4 that Vaughan Williams had mailed to Bax for Christmas 1935.

> There appear to be certain signs of revolt against postwar fads in all the arts, and for my own part I am heartily glad of it. Those amongst my British contemporaries whom I most respect and for whose work (notably that of Vaughan Williams) I have the greatest sympathy, have developed their own personal styles, regardless of any of the heady excitements emanating from Austria or Russia.[106]

Bax's position on modern music and his remarks regarding the response of his contemporaries to new innovations would certainly have placed him in line with Vaughan Williams's own views of the British composer. By the 1930's, Vaughan Williams considered Bax to be more "worthy" than a number of continental composers.[107]

Vaughan Williams had a great respect for Bax throughout his life. Vaughan Williams gave the inaugural address for the Bax Memorial Lectures in 1955. The topic of the address was "Some Aspects of the English Folk Song."[108] In a letter to Michael Kennedy dated 1 July 1956, Vaughan Williams said of Bax: "He had, perhaps, more musical invention than any of his contemporaries but, as you say, it was quite undisciplined."[109]

Vaughan Williams does not appear to have written, or to have made, spoken recorded remarks about William Walton's symphonies. In *RVW: A Biography*, Ursula Vaughan Williams indicated a number of performances of music by Walton that Vaughan Williams attended.

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[106]Arnold Bax, "I am a Brazen Romantic," *Musical America* 7 (July 1928): 9. Quoted in Lewis Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and His Times*, 2nd ed. (Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Co., 1988), 240.

[107]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "A Matter of Opinion," *Radio Times* (6 January 1933): 13. Letter from Vaughan Williams to the *Radio Times.* Quoted in Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and His Times*, 2nd ed., 377. The list of composers included Hindemith, Poulenc, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Szymanowski, Conrad Beck, and Norbert van Hannenhaim. Vaughan Williams stated that most on the list were not worthy to stand with Bax.

[108]Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and His Times*, 2nd ed., 364.

[109]Quoted in Kennedy, *Works*, 386.

Among those performances were symphonies by Walton. Vaughan Williams included Walton on a list of English composers who had "achieved fame" and "served their apprenticeship at home,"[110] and so he obviously respected the music of Walton.

Kennedy noted that English composer Edmund Rubbra was among those of the new generation of composers that Vaughan Williams admired. He stated that Vaughan Williams especially enjoyed Rubbra's Symphony No. 3. In a letter to Kennedy dated 22 April 1955, Vaughan Williams mentioned to Kennedy that he liked Rubbra's Symphony No. 6. Vaughan Williams had heard the symphony two times and expressed a desire to hear it again.[111]

The one unusual reaction of Vaughan Williams to a British Symphony was his response to his initial hearing of Holst's *Choral Symphony*. In an undated letter to Holst following the premiere of the *Choral Symphony* on 29 October 1925 at Queens's Hall by the Royal Philharmonic Society, Vaughan Williams said, "I felt vaguely disappointed after the Phil. . . . Not perhaps disappointed—I felt cold admiration. . . . I think it is only because it *is* a new work & I am more slowly moving than I used to be & it's got to soak in."[112] Vaughan Williams then listed items that he liked and disliked in the performance.[113] Most of his criticisms dealt with the performance, not the music. He continued:

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[110]R. Vaughan Williams, "Should Music Be National?," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 11.

[111]Kennedy, *Works*, 384.

[112]Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst, *Heirs and Rebels*, 60-61.

[113]Comments regarding the performance: Leeds Chorus could not sing; Grecian Urn was pattered instead of being sung; and words sounded common in the Scherzo.

> I couldn't bear to think that I was going to 'drift apart' from you musically speaking. (If I do, who shall I have to crib from?)—I don't believe it is so—so I shall live in faith till I have heard it again several times & then I shall find out what a bloody fool I was not to see it all first time.[114]

Vaughan Williams had written a work, *Flos campi*, about the same time that Holst wrote the *Choral Symphony*. Holst's reply to Vaughan Williams's letter expressed his reservations about *Flos campi*:

> I couldn't get hold of Flos a bit and was therefore disappointed with it and me. But I'm not disappointed in Flos's composer, because he has not repeated himself. Therefore it is probably either an improvement or something that will lead to one.[115]

A letter from Vaughan Williams to Holst following a broadcast of the *Choral Symphony* on 11 April 1934, almost a decade after his first letter, was more complementary of the *Choral Symphony*:

> I *wholly* liked the Urn[116] for the first time. I'm not sure that it is the Urn—but it's *you*, which is all I know & all I need to know.
>
> The scherzo is what I always thought it was; you at your best.
>
> I am not so sure about the finale. I love the big tune, but some of it seems to be just getting through the words. I wonder if a cut of one or two of the poets would be possible or advisable?[117]

The relationship between Benjamin Britten and Vaughan Williams was one that showed occasional tension. Britten had been a student at the Royal College of Music when Vaughan Williams was a teacher at the college. While Britten was not a pupil of Vaughan Williams, Vaughan Williams sat on Britten's composition juries. Britten had the impression that Vaughan

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[114]Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst, *Heirs and Rebels*, 61.

[115]Ibid., 62.

[116]The second movement of the *Choral Symphony*

[117]Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst, *Heirs and Rebels*, 85.

Williams did not approve of his student works; however, writings by Vaughan Williams do not support that belief. When Vaughan Williams wrote of composers growing in the soil of their own countries, he included the name of Britten: "All the composers of this renaissance from Parry to Britten, different and often antagonistic as their aims are, have this in common. . . ."[118]

Kennedy saw connections between the Englishness of the music of Elgar, Britten, and Vaughan Williams: "It is impossible to define what qualities in music are distinctively national. Elgar, Britten, and Vaughan Williams are 'English' in style, but how to isolate the virus that causes that Englishness is inexplicable in verbal or musical terms of any precision."[119] Though Vaughan Williams may have had less in common with Britten than with many of the other composers of the younger generation, Vaughan Williams and Britten did have their English roots in common.

An observation made by Hubert Foss explains one of the reasons why the symphonic writing of English composers appealed to Vaughan Williams while that of many composers from the continent did not appeal to him:

> The reason why foreign artists and orchestras find English music difficult to perform—the freedom of its rhythmic flow is disturbing to them, and the nature and sources of its inspiration are unknown to them. . . . English music is predominantly vocal in style, European predominantly instrumental. . . . When an Englishman writes for the instruments of the orchestra, their parts are inclined to be vocal, just as when so many European composers write for the voice, the part is liable to be instrumental. . . . What English music lacks in virtuosity or excitement, indeed all its other obvious defects, it makes up for by its purely musical quality.[120]

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[118]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "A Minim's Rest," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 168.

[119]Kennedy, *Works*, 169.

[120]Hubert Foss, *Music in My Time* (London: Rich & Cowan Ltd., 1933), 179-180.

As with Vaughan Williams's observations about non-British symphony composers, there are common traits in his thoughts on the composers of British symphonies.[121] The common threads were nationalism and finding roots in one's own soil. The composers who sought to transplant their roots elsewhere or who adopted modern techniques were overlooked as they did not fit Vaughan Williams's philosophy of the English composer.[122]

Vaughan Williams's Thoughts on the Making of Music

Vaughan Williams thoughts about the basic mechanics of music are summarized in *The Making of Music.*[123] This book was published in 1955 and is a 61-page volume consisting of six chapters plus an epilogue. The six chapters are Vaughan Williams's edited version of four lectures that he delivered at Cornell University during the autumn months of 1954. The epilogue of the book is an adapted version of a lecture Vaughan Williams delivered at Yale on 1 December 1954.[124] In these lectures, Vaughan Williams gave music students in the United

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[121]Kennedy observed that though Vaughan Williams and Holst "shared a muse. . . they were, in fact, drifting apart musically" around the time of the *Choral Symphony*. See Kennedy, *Works*, 186. This possibly accounts for Vaughan Williams's initial lack of enthusiasm for Holst's symphony.

[122]An example is Frederick Delius. Michael Kennedy described Delius's music as being in "a European, post-Wagner tradition, curiously un-English English music and it is not surprising that it was in many cases foreign musicians who played and conducted it on its introduction to England. . . ." Kennedy quoted Vaughan Williams as having said, "Delius always sounds to me like the curate improvising, I'm afraid. His music doesn't grow. It is addition, not multiplication." See Kennedy *Works*, p. 109 and p. 378.

[123]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955).

[124]Ibid., v.

States a detailed view of his thoughts on the basics of musical craftsmanship. Although Vaughan Williams did not mention Symphony No. 5 or any of his other symphonies in *The Making of Music*, the volume is extremely insightful as Vaughan Williams used the work to explain his ideas on the development and the making of music—ideas which resulted in Symphony No. 5 and his other musical compositions. As the lectures were given when Vaughan Williams was eighty-four, four years prior to his death in 1958, they should represent aspects of his lifelong philosophy concerning the making of music.

Vaughan Williams opened the lectures at Cornell by asking the question, "Why do we make music?" In his reply, he stated, "One thing we can be certain of: we do not compose, sing, or play music for any useful purpose." He continued, "Music is just music, and that is, to my mind, its great glory. How then do I justify music? There is no need to justify it, it is its own justification; that is all I know and all I need to know."[125] The rhetorical questions and answers that Vaughan Williams gave would certainly have made an impression on the audience. As Vaughan Williams spent his entire life in the making of music—performing, listening, and composing—it would seem that music justified the very existence of the man who stood before them. Was he not the great provider of music for various occasions? Would these works have not been written for useful purposes? Vaughan Williams, however, felt that music differs from the other arts in that writers use words for laundry lists as well as books, and artists use paint to paint houses as well as to paint pictures.

Vaughan Williams provided the audience with his definition of music: "Music is a reaching out to the ultimate realities by means of ordered sound. By 'ordered sound' I mean

sounds of a definite pitch in a definite rhythm and, perhaps we should add, with a definite harmony."[126] He then continued by questioning the meaning of music: "But it may be asked what does music mean? A lot of nonsense is talked nowadays about the "meaning" of music. Music indeed has a meaning, though it is not one that can be expressed in words."[127]

Vaughan Williams felt that "ordered sound" grew out of "excited speech." He gave an example of an experience that occurred when he was a student at Cambridge. The voice of the preacher of a sermon he had heard outdoors and in Gaelic, a language he did not understand, followed the melodic contours that are common to many British and Scottish folk songs. As the man's voice rose with excitement over the sermon topic and the need to project his voice outdoors, his speech followed definite melodic patterns. Vaughan Williams said, "This experience has convinced me that these melodic formulae come spontaneously to the minds of primitive singers."[128] According to Ursula Vaughan Williams, Vaughan Williams did not associate the melodic patterns of the sermon with specific folk songs until a number of years later when he became involved in the collection of folk song.[129] The example given by Vaughan Williams illustrates his opinion that a composer receives his inspiration from the tradition of his

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[125]Ibid., 1.

[126]Ibid., 3.

[127]Ibid.

[128]Ibid., 5.

[129]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 39.

own country. The types of melodic patterns he described would be musical fingerprints found in his own compositional output, including Symphony No. 5.[130]

Vaughan Williams discussed definitions of rhythm. After giving a number of definitions by others, which he said he found unsatisfactory, he said, "Perhaps the word is indefinable. . . . Without being able to explain it, those who are naturally musical can appreciate rhythm, or the want of it, in a piece of music."[131] He continued:

> The Greek word *rhythmos* means "flow"; so flow may be taken to be an essential part of rhythm. An orderly succession of sounds at regular intervals is also a part of rhythm, but it is not, as many people imagine, the whole of rhythm. The ticking of a clock, for example, is not rhythmical, because it has no periodic accents. . . . This gives us another principle of rhythm, that of strong and weak accent. . . .[132]

Rhythmic ideas play an important role in Vaughan Williams's symphonies, especially Symphony No. 5, as they are connections within and between movements.[133]

After the discussion of rhythm, Vaughan Williams proceeded to discuss musical form, which he said was "nothing more than rhythm on a large scale." He said:

> We often hear people say, "I know nothing about musical form, but I like a good tune when I hear it." They do not realise that to appreciate the simplest tune requires a knowledge of form. The physical ear can hear only one sound, or a vertical group of sounds, at a time; the rest is a question of memory, co-ordination, and anticipation. When the first note passes on to the second, the hearer must not only keep the first note in memory, but co-ordinate it with the second, and so on to the third; and occasionally he has to anticipate what is to come. . . . Musical form is not a series of mysteries or trade

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[130]See discussion of "Finding Roots in One's Own Soil" beginning on page 115 for examples.

[131]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music*, 6.

[132]Ibid., 8-9.

[133]For example, the rhythm of a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note which is heard in the first measure of the symphony, is used extensively in the first movement and returns at the end of the final movement.

> secrets but is simply the development of a power natural to the human ear and the human mind. To understand a big symphonic work there is no need to look up textbooks or memorise regulations; one need only develop the qualities of attention, memory, and co-ordination to the utmost. One thing, however, is needful: the whole passage, whether it be a folk tune or a symphony, must grow, organically, from its roots.[134]

Vaughan Williams added, "It is the content which settles the form of any organic structure."[135] The imagery that Vaughan Williams used in his discussion of musical form agrees with his treatment of form and his use of motivic development in Symphony No. 5. Each movement grows from motives heard in the opening measures.

Vaughan Williams continued with a discussion of harmony. He said he was not certain that harmony should be included as a fundamental aspect of music because in his understanding, harmony did not exist for primitive people, only melody existed for them. When harmony did enter the picture, he felt it was only right for the period in question if it fit emotionally. He gave examples of brief passages of works by Mozart[136] and Haydn[137] that he felt anticipated Wagner, but he said that he felt the passages he quoted were purely experiments for Mozart and Haydn, and the harmonies "had no emotional significance for them."[138]

Vaughan Williams did not care for atonal or 12-tone music. It may be significant that he did not bring up his feelings on 'modern' music in his discussions of melody, harmony, and emotion in music. Possibly he avoided the issue of 'modern' music in order not to offend the

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[134]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music*, 11.

[135]Ibid., 12.

[136]Adagio Introduction to the String Quartet in C major.

[137]Prelude to *The Creation*.

[138]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music*, 15.

audience as atonal and 12-tone music would have been popular issues on American campuses when he visited the United States in 1954. Vaughan Williams did give an illustration of the results of students mimicking Debussy:

> Debussy's strange atmospheric effects still thrill us, though they are by now the common property of every conservatory student. And when these same students write out bits of Debussy, under the impression that they are composing, their efforts fall dead even before the ink is dry. The moral of all this seems to be that any musical phrase, to be a complete artistic whole, must be the result of a personal emotion.[139]

Vaughan Williams turned to a discussion of musical notation. He stated that artists who create visual art have the benefit of being both composer and performer. On the other hand, composers can only hope that their notations on the page are correctly interpreted by the performer. He said:

> A picture is the finished article; but this is not so with a page of music, which is, at the best, a rough description of what the composer hopes will happen if the sounds he has indicated by certain symbols are produced in actuality. Until this takes place the music does not exist. A page of music should be compared, not to a picture, but to a map, which indicates by certain conventional signs where north and south are, the direction of a road, what sort of road it is, how high the hills are, whether they are steep or gradual, where there are buildings, and so on. The expert map reader, like the expert score reader, may be able to tell fairly exactly what sort of country he may expect to find, but he cannot possibly experience the beauty of the trees, the intense emotion of a wonderful landscape, the exhilaration of rushing down hill on a bicycle, or the delightful relaxation when he reaches the comfortable inn, indicated, in England at all events, by the magic letters "P.H."[140] So it is with the score reader.[141]

The illustration Vaughan Williams gave is drawn from his own life experience as he, Holst, and others spent many days in walking the English countryside, from which he received much inspiration for his work.

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[139]Ibid.

[140]Abbreviation for 'Public House'.

Vaughan Williams stated that in early times, the composer and performer were one and the same. When a time came that the composer wanted his composition dispersed, a method had to be derived to convey the music to another performer:

> The composer has a vision and he wants others, out of earshot, to share that vision; so he crystalises that vision into definite musical sounds. Then he devises a series of black dots, circles, and so on which will explain what sounds must be made in order to realise his vision. This is what is called musical notation. It is notoriously inadequate, so that those who translate these symbols into music are bound by their personal equation and each performs slightly differently. Thus come about what we call the different renderings by great performers or conductors of the same music. Those who are going to translate these black dots into sound must first find out how to use them adequately. Also, they must learn to realise, when the sounds are made, the connection between the various notes which they produce and the ultimate meaning of it all. Then, and then only, can they realise in sound the vision that has passed through all these stages and back again to arrive once more at the magic casements and the fairyland which lies beyond them.[142]

With Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 5, there also arose the additional problem of making sure that the copyists interpreted the notes from the manuscript accurately due to the sometimes illegible manuscript of the composer![143]

Vaughan Williams then posed a question regarding the sources of inspiration for the composer. He replied, "Now inspiration and originality do not necessarily mean something no one has ever heard before. To my mind the most original of present-day composers is Jean Sibelius. All he says in his great moments seems to me absolutely new; but his actual method of diction is purely traditional."[144] The comment about "present-day composers" is at best overstated as Sibelius, though still living at the time of the writing of *The Making of Music* in

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[141]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music*, 18-19.

[142]Ibid., 19-20.

[143]Douglas, *Working with Vaughan Williams*, 11.

[144]Ibid., 20.

1955, had not written a major work since 1926. Perhaps Vaughan Williams should have more properly described Sibelius as a "living" composer.

Vaughan Williams also cautioned young composers regarding originality and added observations regarding how difficult it can be to find one's own musical voice:

> I beg all young composers not to try to be original, within the narrow sense of the word. Originality will come of itself if it is in one's nature. This does not mean that the composer must be careless and thoughtless. It is hard, indeed, to find a true expression of one's vision. But the artist must not rest until he has discovered the *mot juste*.[145] If another composer has said the same thing before, so much the worse for the other composer. The originality, or perhaps I should say the personality, of music depends very little on the actual outline of the notes. It derives from something more subtle, which perhaps we cannot define but can recognise at once.[146]

Vaughan Williams's advice to young composers is certainly a reflection of what occurred in his own musical development as the many years of effort between the end of his formal student training and his study with Ravel resulted in the birth of his own musical personality.

Regarding the use of an instrument to realize the composer's ideas, Vaughan Williams was quite supportive:

> We are told in textbooks that a composer must write down his ideas without going near an instrument. Indeed "composing at the pianoforte" was described by R. O. Morris[147] as "not quite playing the game." Nevertheless it is a practice that I hope all young composers will indulge in freely, when they are in the mood and the teacher is out of earshot. Inspiration does not necessarily come from the brain. Unfortunately, one cannot play the pianoforte with one's solar plexus, but I see no reason why ideas should not ooze out of the finger tips. Maurice Ravel used to blame me for trying to compose without using a pianoforte,[148] saying, "How then can you invent new harmonies?" I do not

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[145]'Right word.'

[146]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music*, 21.

[147]Composer and brother-in-law of Vaughan Williams.

[148]Vaughan Williams lived in a hotel while he was studying with Ravel and did not have daily access to a piano to assist him with composition.

> suggest to composers that they should invent, like the young genius in the films, with one hand holding a pen and the other improvising at the pianoforte, but I see no moral harm, and great artistic advantage, in making certain of our ideas by trying them over and exploring their possibilities at the pianoforte.[149]

Vaughan Williams was also supportive of having a work played on instruments other than those for which the work was intended, as with having his symphonies played on the piano.

Vaughan Williams asked, "Where does craft end and art begin?" He answered:

> Craft by itself can do nothing, I admit, and in some ways is a dangerous thing. When a composer of great skill finds his invention at a low ebb, he can still write music which almost deceives the elect, and he himself sometimes cannot tell whether he is inspired or whether he is doing mere routine work. Nevertheless, the most inspired composer is impotent unless his craft keeps pace with his art.[150]

Vaughan Williams certainly experienced times when he was not certain his craft was keeping pace with his art. One of the reasons he gave for having piano play-throughs of his own symphonies was to obtain feedback from his friends regarding whether or not a new symphony had something to say to an audience.

He said it had become the fashion to teach children to paint without teaching them technique. He continued by describing the teaching of music theory in England:

> Fortunately, in music we still believe, to a certain extent, in technique. But, in England at all events, we are no longer allowed to speak of harmony and counterpoint but must call our theoretic studies "paper work." I am glad to say that I was brought up in the traditional manner. I worked right through MacFarren's *Harmony* and the Cherubinic system of counterpoint and have never regretted it. At a recent meeting of modern composers the only thing they all agree on was that the only sure foundation for musical composition was strict counterpoint.[151]

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[149]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music*, 22-23.

[150]Ibid., 23.

[151]Ibid., 24.

Vaughan Williams taught composition at the Royal College of Music from 1919 to 1939. The changes he described were probably recent to the writing of *The Making of Music*.

Vaughan Williams's discussion of the choice of medium for "the means by which we make the necessary noises"[152] provides a description of how he in turn thought of instrumentation for his symphonies. He said the chief means was the human voice:

> [The human voice] has been called the perfect instrument—perfect in the sense that there is a minimum of mechanism between the initial impulse and the result. The voice in this respect is unlike the oboe or horn, in which the connection is not so direct between the performer's will and the sound he makes.
>
> The scope of the human voice is, of course, limited. . . . On the other hand, the art of singing is nearly universal; most people can sing a bit. Moreover, the technique and the nature of the human voice is very much what it was two thousand years ago. This is why choral music has remained in the straight road much more than has instrumental writing. In *a cappella* singing there are no instrument makers to lure the composer aside with exciting new devices. . . . Music for voices deals with something essential, not with the tricks of presentation.[153]

In this comment regarding "new devices," Vaughan Williams gave his audience a sense of his opinion regarding devices for added effect in modern music.

Vaughan Williams continued by asking questions regarding the creation of new music and the development of instruments. He asked, "Was it the inventions of instrument makers which enticed composers into new styles of music or was it the imperious demands of the composers for fresh means of expression which led the instrument makers to see what they could do to help?"[154]

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[152]Ibid.

[153]Ibid., 24-25.

[154]Ibid., 25.

While Symphony No. 5 does not have any "unusual" instrumentation, Vaughan Williams did use a wind machine and vibraphone in Sinfonia Antartica, vibraphone and tubular bells in Symphony No. 8, saxophones and tam-tam in Symphony No. 9, and human voice without text in the Pastoral Symphony. None of his symphonies make unusual demands of the performers.

Vaughan Williams made observations regarding the characteristics of instruments and the results in orchestral playing:

> Hubert Parry used to say that the beauty of the French horn was partly due to its human fallibility. Is not this true, to a certain extent, of all instrumental playing? Does not the thrill of sixteen violins playing together come from the fact that they are not scientifically in tune with each other? Would not the wonderful surge of the opening of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony be lost if the violoncellos and basses moved from note to note with mathematical exactness at the same moment? An orchestra must not become a perfect machine.[155]

Vaughan Williams made comments in other writings regarding whether a melody was suited to the instrument to which it had been given in other composers' orchestral works.

Vaughan Williams's narrative then turned from the mechanics of music to a philosophical discussion of the making of music. Regarding what Vaughan Williams described as the social foundations of music, he wrote:

> We must not suppose that composers invent their music out of the blue, without forerunners or surroundings. The innovators are the small men who set the ball rolling. The big men come at the end of a period and sum it up.[156]

This is related to discussions in other writings of Vaughan Williams when the point is made that a great work involves the right surroundings and the right atmosphere.

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[155]Ibid., 29-30.

[156]Ibid., 45.

Vaughan Williams discussed the folk song movement and its influence on British composers:

> Music, like language, derives ultimately from its basic beginnings. . . . About fifty years ago Cecil Sharp made his epoch-making discovery of English folk song. We young musicians were intoxicated by these tunes. . . . We had critics, who took the curious line that, though it was perfectly right and proper for a Russian or a Norwegian to build up his style on his own national melodies, if an Englishman tried to do so, he was being what they described by that appalling, invented word "folky."[157]

Vaughan Williams argued in other writings that a composer must receive his inspiration from his own country.

Vaughan Williams ended *The Making of Music* with advice to all musicians:

> All vital art is creative art; and musical appreciation especially demands active participation rather than passive acceptance on the part of the hearer. When we listen to a symphony as we should do, we are actually taking part, with the composer and the performers, in the creation of that symphony.[158]

He said that if one becomes "a merely passive listener . . . he will have lost one of the great assets of his spiritual life, the vision of the ultimate realities through the making of music."[159] Vaughan Williams said that "a foolish fellow once labelled music as the universal language. . . . Music, it is true, has a universal vocabulary, but each composer uses this vocabulary as his own nature and the circumstances of his surroundings dictate."[160]

Vaughan Williams shared advice to young composers about staying in line with their national traditions:

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[157]Ibid., 51.

[158]Ibid., 53.

[159]Ibid., 54.

[160]Ibid., 57.

> All young composers long to be individual and are inclined to defy the tradition in which they were brought up. This is very right and proper, but when they plunge into unknown waters, let them hold fast to the life-line of their own national tradition; otherwise the siren voices from foreign shores will lure them to destruction. Musical invention has been described as an individual flowering on a common stem. Now, young composers, do not try to be original; originality will come of itself if it is there. However individual your flowering may be, unless it is firmly grafted on the common stem, it will wither and die. I have all honour for those adventurous spirits who explore unknown regions; I cannot always follow them, but I admire their courage. Sometimes, however, I ask myself whether those composers have not even more courage who find new and unheard-of beauties along the beaten track. Try the beaten track first; if an irresistible impulse leads you into the jungle, be sure that you know the way back.[161]

He encouraged Americans to build a music tradition as they had built scholarly and literary ones. He said, "Until lately [American music] was dominated by foreign influences, but a change has come over the scene."[162] He continued, "The real foundations of your art were neglected, with the result that for years American music consisted of watered-down imitations of European models."[163]

Vaughan shared his view of the state of music in England and America:

> I think that both our countries are now returning to the true path. I do not wish to advocate a back-to-folk-song policy. . . . Our music can also be enriched from foreign models, but it must be an enrichment of our native impulse and not a swamping of it. We have been too apt to think that though we could beat the foreigner at business and sport, the foreigner must necessarily beat us in questions of art. We thought that if we imitated his tricks of diction, we should achieve his inspiration, forgetting that these are only an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,[164] rooted in an age-old tradition.[165]

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[161]Ibid., 57-58.

[162]Ibid., 59.

[163]Ibid., 61.

[164]Vaughan Williams used the Anglican definition for a sacrament of the church when he said, "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."

[165]Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music*, 61.

The Making of Music was the final lengthy prose work by Vaughan Williams. The views that he expressed showed that he felt that almost all aspects of art music had roots in folk music.

Folk Song: Finding Roots in One's Own Soil

Vaughan Williams shared his thoughts on music with England and the world. The themes that permeated his writings were folk song and nationalism. From his description of the very basics of music to his advice to an American audience, the dominant idea was to seek inspiration from one's own country. For Vaughan Williams, this inspiration came primarily from English folk song.

Questions arise regarding exactly which characteristics of English folk song most appealed to Vaughan Williams. The editor of the journal *English Dance and Song* asked Vaughan Williams to write an article describing his early experiences with folk song. Vaughan Williams believed his first exposure was at the age of ten when his family visited an aunt's home. The family would gather around the piano and sing carols from Stainer and Bramley's collection *Christmas Carols Old and New*. He said that his true awakening to folk song, though, was upon hearing the "Lazarus" tune in *English County Songs* in 1898. He described his reaction to the tune:

> When one comes across something great and new, if it is great enough, one's attitude is not of surprise but of recognition, "but I have known this all my life." I felt like this when I heard later Wagner, when I first saw Michael Angelo's "Night and Day" when I first visited Stonehenge. I immediately recognized these things which had always been in my unconscious self. The tinder was there, it only wanted the spark to set it ablaze. I believe

> this is true of all great art, however new and strange; it does not cause amazement but one greets it as an old friend.[166]

Vaughan Williams then wrote of the effect the experience had on his own composition:

> By this time I was thoroughly obsessed by the folk song. I went Berserk on the flat 7th and the sharp 6th and the mixolydian cadence. My revered master, Stanford, one of the greatest teachers, was much worried by my flattened leading notes. He declared, if I remember right, that the flat 7th was purely theoretical and was in practice always corrected by "musica ficta." Later on, when I went to Max Bruch, he was equally worried.[167]

Vaughan Williams continued by relating the experiences that lead to his own collection of folk song:

> Then, one day about 1900, Miss Lucy Broadwood asked me to see the songs she had collected in Sussex. Then indeed I saw the flattened cadence in all its glory but still I was a doubting Thomas and I wanted first-hand evidence. In 1903 the chance came. I was at that time, greatly daring, giving a course of lectures on folk song in a town in Essex. I knew precious little about it and the little knowledge I had was entirely out of books. I was like a psychic researcher who has never seen a ghost. But soon the ghost walked. At the end of the lectures a lady from a neighboring village asked me to a tea-party to which some of the older people were to be invited. At that party I heard "Bushes and Briars" sung by a shepherd and my education was complete.[168]

What makes English folk songs "English" other than the fact that the texts are in the English language? It is difficult to define the attributes that distinguish the folk songs of one country from another. Traits that are seen in the folk songs of many countries are strophic form, simple style, monophonic texture, and what is thought to be the favoring of modes and/or pentatonic scales over major/minor tonalities. Some of the characteristics that are used when

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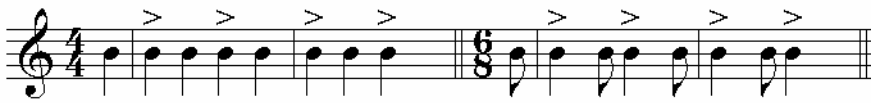
[166]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Let Us Remember Early Days," *English Dance and Song* 6/3 (February 1942): 27.

[167]Ibid.

[168]Ibid., 28. The account given here differs from the one given on pg. 66 of Ursula Vaughan Williams's *R.V.W.: A Biography*. That account indicates that he returned to the village

describing the folk songs of a particular country include preferences for rhythmic patterns which often reflect the language structure of the country, the frequency of use of melodic patterns, and preferences for certain modes over others.

English folk song tends to follow iambic meter of alternate unstressed and stressed syllables. Rhythmic patterns that are frequently found in English folk song include:[169]



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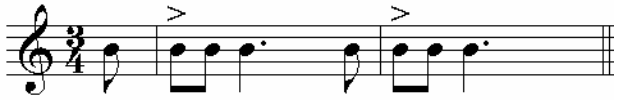

In his years of collecting folk song, Cecil Sharp noted some melodic patterns that tend to appear with a degree of frequency in English folk song:[170]

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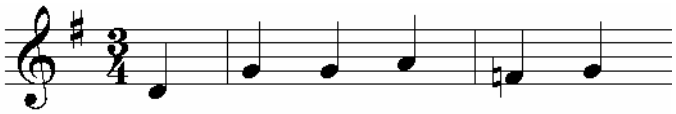
the following day to hear *Bushes and Briars*.

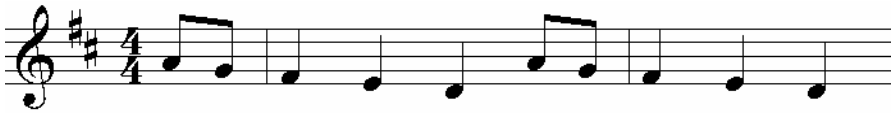
[169]See Bruno Nettl, *Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), 66-67.

[170]Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions*, 4th ed. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1965), 102-104.

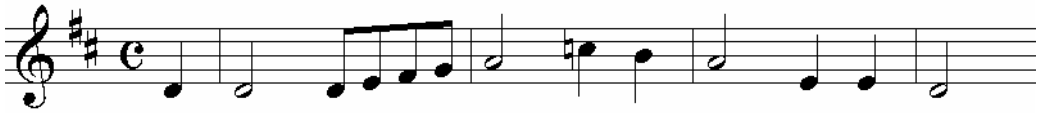
Example 1: Initial interval of ascending fourth[171]



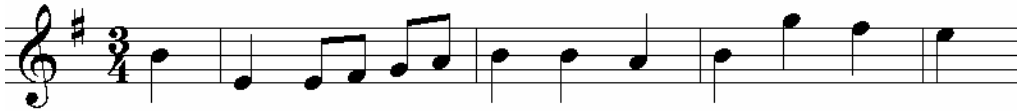
Example 2: Initial descending scale passage[172]



Example 3: Initial ascending passage to a minor 7th above the tonic[173]



Example 4: Ascending scale passage from tonic to dominant[174]



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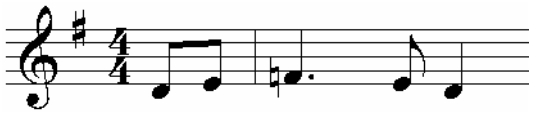
[171]This interval occurs as the opening interval in some of the folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams, such as *Harvest Song*.

[172]This pattern occurs as the opening phrase in some of the folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams, such as *The Saucy Sailor Boy*.

[173]This type of pattern occurs as the opening phrase in some of the folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams, such as *Tarry Trowsers*.

[174]This pattern occurs as the opening phrase in some of the folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams, such as *Lovely Joan*. Though identified by Sharp as a pattern that is found in

Example 5: Ending pattern for a phrase[175]



Some of the folk songs collected or transcribed by Vaughan Williams, such as those found in *Songs Collected from Sussex*[176] and *Carols from Herefordshire*[177] show similar patterns, with folk songs beginning with the interval of an ascending fourth being the most common. Some of the folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams open with gapped passages that are missing one note in what would have been a 5-note scale passage, so they do not fit the patterns identified by Sharp.

Folk song collector Cecil Sharp felt that folk songs of a particular country share a number of traits because they frequently have a common "ancestor." As folk songs were learned through an oral rather than a written tradition, an early folk song would be modified by various singers over the years.[178] The first phrase of "God Rest You Merry," a tune collected by both Vaughan Williams and George Butterworth, illustrates variations. The first illustration (Ex. 6) was

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folk song, this pattern is common in all western music.

[175]This pattern occurs as the opening phrase in some of the folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams, such as *Ratcliffe Highway*. This pattern also occurs as the opening phrase in some of the folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams, such as *The Turtle Dove*.

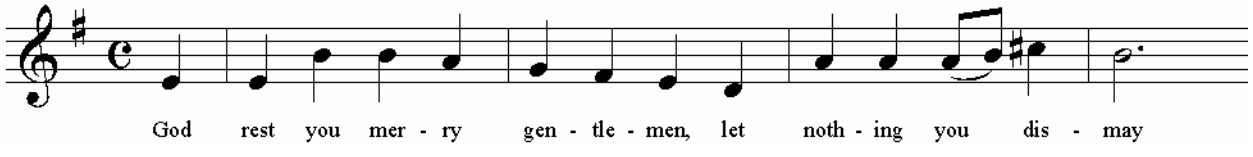
[176]"Songs Collected from Sussex," *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 4 (1914): 279-347. This collection contains songs collected by Vaughan Williams and others. Often multiple variations of the same tune were noted by different collectors.

[177]"Carols from Herefordshire," *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 4 (1914): 7-51. These songs were collected by Ella M. Leather on phonograph records and later transcribed by Vaughan Williams.

[178]See Cecil J. Sharp, "Origin" and "Evolution" in *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions*, 4th ed. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 6-41, regarding the evolution of folk

collected by Butterworth in Shropshire in 1908, the second (Ex. 7) by Butterworth in Sussex in 1909, the third (Ex. 8) by Vaughan Williams in Herefordshire in 1909, and the final example (Ex. 9) was collected by Vaughan Williams in Cambridgeshire in 1907.[179] The text of seven verses of "God Rest You Merry" is provided in *Songs Collected from Sussex*; however, musical examples of the versions of the song that were collected by Vaughan Williams do not bear text. Some of the verses have 14 syllables for the passages listed below, while other verses have 13. Vaughan Williams made the following remark regarding examples 8 and 9: "I have noted the following variants of this carol." Vaughan Williams did not explain the notation of the harmonic placement of notes E and A on beat 4 of the second full measure of example 8. Although a tie is not indicated between the note E on beat 3 of measure 2 and the note E on beat 4, a possible reason for the notation of beat 4 is that the note E would be tied from beat 3 on the verses with 13 syllables, while the note A would be sung on the verses with 14 syllables. Vaughan Williams did not provide an explanation for the question marks in example 9. A possible explanation is that the question mark between the notes B and C# in the first complete measure and between the notes A and C# in the third full measure indicates that the intervals that are noted are questionble.

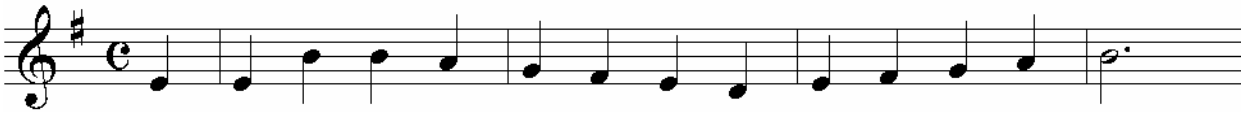
Example 6: *God Rest You Merry* collected in Shropshire



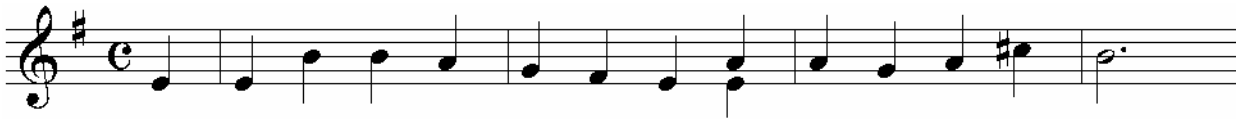
songs.

[179]"Songs Collected from Sussex," *Journal of the Folk-song Society* 4 (1914): 338-340.

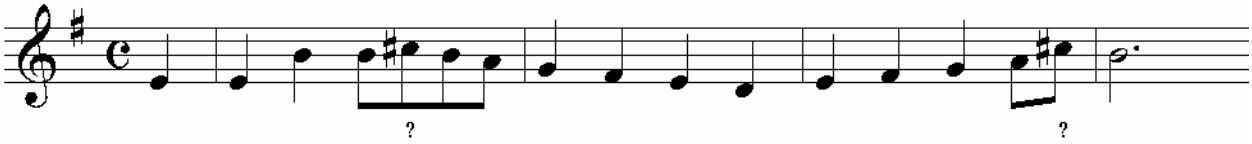
Example 7: *God Rest You Merry* collected in Sussex



Example 8: *God Rest You Merry* collected in Herefordshire



Example 9: *God Rest You Merry* collected in Cambridgeshire



Regarding a preference for modes, scholarship has shown that of the more than 850 folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams, approximately 60% were tonal (based on major or harmonic minor keys) and approximately 40% were modal (based on church modes, pentatonic scales, or melodic material that was so gapped that it was impossible to assign a specific mode or key).[180] Research has also shown that Vaughan Williams and other collectors possibly misrepresented the quantity of modal as opposed to tonal songs by favoring modal ones when selecting songs for publication in journals and collections. For example, "Folk-Songs from the Eastern Counties,"[181] which is a collection of fifteen folk songs from Essex, Norfolk, and Cambridgeshire that Vaughan Williams collected and set to piano accompaniments, contains only two songs in major keys. The collectors may have been selective, also, when making a

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[180]Julian Onderdonk, "Vaughan Williams and the Modes," *Folk Music Journal* 7 (1999): 613.

[181]Cecil Sharp, ed. *Folk Songs of England* (London: Novello & Co., Ltd., 1908).

decision regarding whether or not to collect a song. They considered folk song to be the voice of rural people. If a song exhibited too many traits that the collector considered urban characteristics, such as following the principles of major or harmonic minor tonal systems too closely or having a modern text, the song would possibly not have been collected.[182] This would have increased the percentage of modal songs if any of these "urbane" songs were excluded.

The selectiveness that was used in collecting folk songs supports the argument that it was the modal qualities of the songs that were the most attractive to Vaughan Williams, and by his own account, these would be the most useful to him in his own works.[183] The modes, melodic patterns, and rhythmic patterns that Vaughan Williams observed while collecting folk songs were the characteristics that in his mind made the folk songs "English." While these traits can be found in the folk songs and art music of other countries, they defined the body of literature known as "English folk song" for Vaughan Williams.

English folk song would also prove to be of great importance to Vaughan Williams in his discussions of national music. In a lecture entitled "English Folk Song" that was delivered to the Oxford Folk Music Society on 16 November 1910, Vaughan Williams described how he felt folk song was indigenous:

> Folk-songs, and especially those of [one's] own nation, must be interesting to the musician, since they represent national characteristics in their very simplest form. The unconscious utterances of unlettered people must of necessity be the outcome of their own characters unaffected by extraneous influences, and this is true of the folk-songs of any nation, whether they are bad, good, or indifferent. In them we should expect to find on a small scale just those qualities and limitations which we find, fully developed, in the cultivated music of the same nation, and to the musician this fact ought to be a touchstone

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[182]Onderdonk, 613-621.

[183]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Let Us Remember Early Days," *English Dance and Song* 6/3 (February 1942): 27-28.

> of sincerity, a guide which shall show him whether the cultural music of any nation is developing on lines which the personal characters of its creators allow of, or whether it is something exotic, which is likely to lead nowhere and to perish in its infancy.[184]

Vaughan Williams's remarks also show an early preference for national music over modern or experimental music.

In the same lecture, Vaughan Williams advocated that the study of folk song could lead to the establishment of a national music in England:

> The study of our own folk-songs may help to show us how we may develop on the lines most congenial to our own characters. We cannot, if we wished, create a 'national' style artificially. . . . I would advise all musicians and lovers of music to study their own folk-songs; it will probably fill a blank in their musical horizon, and help to suggest to them their own limitations and qualities, and their general tendencies as a musical race.[185]

The fact that Vaughan Williams spent a decade of his life collecting approximately 850 folk songs in England meant that it was quite natural for him to absorb traits that he admired into his own musical idiom. Musicologist Elsie Payne identified two folk songs, "Bushes and Briars" (Ex. 10) and "The Captain's Apprentice" (Ex. 11), that were favorites of Vaughan Williams. Patterns from these two folk songs consistently appear as melodic framework in the works of Vaughan Williams,[186] and a number of the patterns appear in Symphony No. 5.[187]

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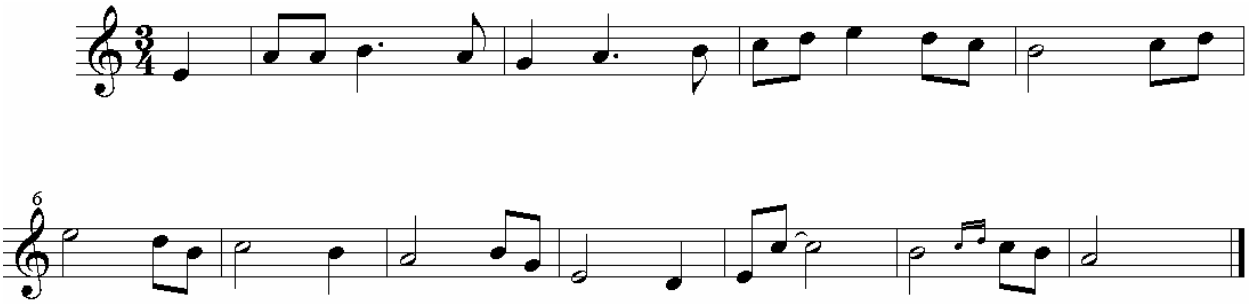
[184]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "English Folk Song," lecture delivered to the Oxford Folk Music Society 16 November 1910 and printed in *The Musical Times* 52-816 (February 1911): 101-102.

[185]Ibid., 104.

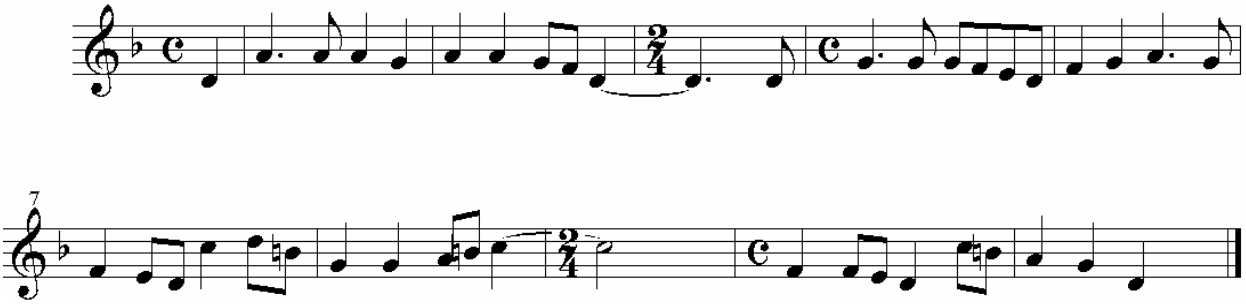
[186]Elsie Payne, "Vaughan Williams and Folk Song." *The Music Review* (May 1954): 103-126.

[187]Examples are discussed in the Analysis section which begins on page 154.

Example 10: English folk song "Bushes and Briars"



Example 11: English folk song "The Captain's Apprentice"



Vaughan Williams described folk song as being "purely intuitive," "purely oral," "applied music," and "purely melodic."[188] In his various discussions of folk song and nationalism, Vaughan Williams mentioned a number of composers, such as Borodin, Brahms, Dvoĺák, Grieg, and Moussorgsky, and a number of countries, such as France, Germany, Russia, and Croatia. With rare exception, examples chosen to illustrate his lectures and writings concerning nationalism were chosen from the folk songs of England. For Vaughan Williams to advise British composers to look within their own country for inspiration did not mean that he felt that they had to go to the countryside and gather examples of folk song to quote in their music. Instead, he was encouraging them to take advantage of what had been around them since

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[188]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "The Folk-song," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 23.

birth. Even an urban Londoner would have had some exposure to the folk music of Britain in the form of song or dance.

Symphony No. 5 mirrors Vaughan Williams's expressed philosophy of the English composer with its roots in British soil, its expression of Vaughan Williams's musical voice, and its appeal to the English people. Symphony No. 5's appeal to the British people is evident from reviews of the symphony.[189] Symphony No. 5 has its roots in the British soil of folk song with its preference for modal over tonal centers and its use of melodic contour similar to those found in English folk song, especially in the first and third movements;[190] and its use of dual or ambiguous tonalities[191]—traits that can be found in folk song that Vaughan Williams collected for publication. Vaughan Williams said, "The composer must love the tunes of his own country and they must become an integral part of himself."[192] For Vaughan Williams, this meant that he composed music that exhibited traits which were common in English folk song without directly quoting a folk song, thereby making English folk song a part of his musical voice.

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[189]See Appendix A regarding the reception history of Symphony No. 5.

[190]Modal centers and melodic contour are discussed in the Analysis section which begins on page 162.

[191]For example, Vaughan Williams identified "Awake, Awake" in *Carols from Herefordshire* as "Dorio-Mixolydian" and "The Man that Lives" in *Carols from Herefordshire* as "Dorian(?)." Similar examples can be found in other folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams.

[192]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "The Folk-song," in *National Music*, 2nd ed., 27.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXTUAL AND COMPOSITIONAL HISTORY OF SYMPHONY NO. 5

Previous Symphonies

Each of the four symphonies that preceded Symphony No. 5 had a character of its own. Instead of being an evolutionary process of musical development with each symphony being more mature than the one that preceded it, the symphonies can be seen as Vaughan Williams's musical response to his world. The first symphony, *A Sea Symphony*, which involves vocal soloists, chorus, and orchestra, was written during the years of Vaughan Williams's early involvement with choral groups and choral festivals. Choral festivals typically included the performance of oratorios and other large choral works with orchestral accompaniment. The second symphony, *A London Symphony*, which contains many sounds associated with London, was written when Vaughan Williams was residing in London. The third symphony, *A Pastoral Symphony* was begun during World War I and was completed after the war ended. The slow tempi and quiet nature of this symphony have caused it to be described as Vaughan Williams's war requiem.[1] The Fourth Symphony was written at a time when new musical ideas were being tried out in Europe. It was Vaughan Williams's response to the music of the modernists. To the average British listener, the Fourth Symphony, with its dissonant opening section, must have seemed quite avant-garde.

Vaughan Williams's first three symphonies bear descriptive titles—Sea, London, and Pastoral. While these works are not programmatic in any sense, the descriptions the titles

[1] Kennedy, *Works*, 155.

convey were certainly ideas that Vaughan Williams kept in his mind as he wrote each symphony. The sea, the city of London, and the pastoral countryside of England[2] are also topics that a non-British listener might easily identify with a nationalistic British composer.

Vaughan Williams's First Symphony, *A Sea Symphony*, is a massive work for soprano and baritone soloists, mixed chorus, and full orchestra. Written between 1903 and 1909, the symphony was premiered on 12 October 1910 at the Leeds Festival at Leeds Town Hall under the direction of Vaughan Williams.[3] The symphony was dedicated to Ralph Wedgwood, who was a cousin of Vaughan Williams. The text used in *A Sea Symphony* is taken from poetry of the American poet Walt Whitman. The poetic devices used by Whitman in these free verse poems—word repetition by having successive lines begin with the same word or a homonym;[4] lines of variable lengths,[5] with no two consecutive lines sharing the same meter;[6] lines that do not

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[2]As ideas for *A Pastoral Symphony* began while Vaughan Williams was stationed in France during World War I, it is highly likely that he also had rural parts of France in mind.

[3]Kennedy, *Catalogue*, 2nd ed., 48.

[4]For example, in the first movement:
See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and blue,
See, thy steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port,
See, dusky and undulating, the long pennants of smoke.

[5]For example, in the third movement:
After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad myriad waves hasening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship

[6]See notes 4 and 5.

rhyme,[7] though some consecutive lines end with the same consonant sound and occasionally the same word is used at the end of two or more lines in a stanza—aided in the creation of a symphonic setting of the text. If Vaughan Williams had selected poetry that had lines that rhymed and were of similar lengths, it would have been much more difficult for him to adapt the texts to fit symphonic forms. The sequences created by the word repetitions became distinct motives in the symphony. In many cases, individual lines of text in the poetry were given their own unique themes in the symphony.

Vaughan Williams preferred that his Second Symphony, *A London Symphony*, be thought of as a symphony by a Londoner, rather than a symphony that tells a story. The symphony was premiered at Queen's Hall, London, on 27 March 1914. The Queen's Hall Orchestra was under the direction of Geoffrey Toye. The symphony was dedicated to the memory George Butterworth after a second revision of the symphony in 1920.[8] Programs have been written about the symphony portraying a day in London from dawn until late night. Michael Kennedy quoted program notes written by the composer in 1920 that indicate that the symphony was not meant to be descriptive and should be heard as absolute music; however, Kennedy also cited Vaughan Williams's program notes for a performance by the Liverpool Philharmonic Society in 1925 that do give weight to the symphony being descriptive of London.[9] In the notes from 1925, Vaughan Williams indicated that the *allegro* of the first movement "may perhaps suggest the noise and hurry of London, with its always underlying calm." He said that the second movement

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[7]See, for example, the ending words of the first seven lines of the fourth movement: space, beauty, darkness, above, waters, intention, thee.

[8]Kennedy, *Catalogue* 2nd ed., 67-72.

[9]Ibid., 71-72.

had been described by some as "Bloomsbury Square on a November afternoon" which "may serve as a clue to the music, but it is not necessarily an 'explanation' of it." Regarding the third movement, he stated, "If the hearer will imagine himself standing on Westminster Embankment at night, surrounded by the distant sounds of the Strand, with its great hotels on one side, and the 'New Cut' on the other, with its crowded streets and flaring lights, it may serve as a mood in which to listen to this movement." He said, "At the end of the finale comes a suggestion of the noise and fever of the first movement—this time much subdued—then the 'Westminster Chimes' are heard once more."[10]

A Pastoral Symphony, Vaughan Williams's Third Symphony, was premiered at Queen's Hall, London, on 26 January 1922. Adrian Boult conducted the Royal Philharmonic Society orchestra.[11] *A Pastoral Symphony* bears no dedication. This work for full orchestra uses a non-texted soprano voice in the fourth movement. Work on the symphony began in the summer of 1916 when Vaughan Williams was an ambulance driver in northern France. A long break had occurred in Vaughan Williams's compositional writing because of his involvement in World War I. Ideas for this contemplative symphony began in the noise and horror of war. Of the nine symphonies, *A Pastoral Symphony* is probably the least appreciated and understood due in part to the slow tempo markings and the symphony's dynamic markings rarely reaching fortissimo.

The Symphony in F Minor, Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony, did not bear a descriptive title. The symphony was premiered on 10 April 1935 at Queen's Hall by the B.B.C.

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[10]Ibid., 72.

[11]Ibid., 86-90.

orchestra and was conducted by Adrian Boult. The symphony was dedicated to Arnold Bax.[12] The fact that this symphony bore no title other than 'Symphony in F Minor' did not prevent critics from saying what they thought Vaughan Williams meant by this symphony. Many felt that Vaughan Williams was predicting war, when in fact the work was very much in line with other works that he had composed during years preceding the symphony, for example, the *Piano Concerto* and *Job*. The violence and chromaticism that are heard in the Satan sections of *Job* and the chromaticism in the third movement of the *Piano Concerto* are evident in the Symphony in F Minor.

Ursula Vaughan Williams wrote of Vaughan Williams's reaction to interpretations regarding the meaning of his Fourth Symphony and added her own comments regarding why she felt the symphony was a credo of tenacity:

> The questions about the "meaning" of the music persist, and used to infuriate the composer when he read in concert notices that it meant war—or deep personal conflict—or whatever the critic felt it might be about. No creative mortal wants to discuss the many threads that weave together in heart and mind to grow through technical expression, to the sound that only he has known before rehearsal brings it to other ears. About this symphony his own comment was "I don't know if I like it, but it is what I meant." Written at a time when Europe was darkening with the threat of war, by a man who had read history as an undergraduate, it is a personal statement of great strength, in no way particularised, and its meaning is indeed too precise for words, beyond temporal limitations, and the simplification of words.[13]

Vaughan Williams strongly objected to critics writing of what they perceived as being the hidden meaning in any of his works. He preferred that each work stand on its own merit without the need for interpretations regarding what he might be trying to say in the work.

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[12]Ibid., 147-148.

[13]Ursula Vaughan Williams, liner notes to *Vaughan Williams Symphonies Nos. 3 & 4, Fantasia on Greensleeves* performed by Leonard Slatkin and the Philharmonia Orchestra, 1993.

The Writing of Symphony No. 5

The majority of the details in this section deal solely with Symphony No. 5. Some of the details, however, are related to the writing process for Vaughan Williams's large-scale works in general.

Vaughan Williams established a pattern for working out his compositional ideas in his early career—a pattern that he followed throughout his life. He was methodical in his writing habits and composed large-scale works on a regular basis. During the time of the writing of Symphony No. 5 and each of the preceding symphonies, he was also busy with the preparation of other works. Some of his practices, such as listening to his symphonies played on the piano before having the parts prepared for an orchestral performance, date back to his study with Hubert Parry. As a student at the Royal College of Music, Vaughan Williams was accustomed to hearing large-scale orchestral works played as piano reductions and learned many works in that format while studying with Parry. Vaughan Williams always felt a need for criticism of his works-in-progress. His habit of 'trying his works out' on individual musicians or small groups of musicians is associated with his friendship with Gustav Holst and their many "field days" together. At a point when many other composers would have considered a work complete, the insecurity that Vaughan Williams dealt with throughout his life regarding whether his work was 'good enough' resulted in a compulsion of making numerous revisions to compositions.

A number of details regarding Vaughan Williams's working methods are available in written correspondence[14] and spoken remarks by Vaughan Williams's fellow composers. The

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BMG 09026-61194-2

[14]Music Librarian Hugh Cobbe has been working with the correspondence of Vaughan Williams that is held by the British Library. Vaughan Williams was known for his almost

most prominent sources are letters and remarks by Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, and Gerald Finzi. Details range from how Vaughan Williams composed to insights regarding his constant encouragement of younger composers.

According to Michael Kennedy's *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 2nd edition, Vaughan Williams officially began work on Symphony No. 5 in 1938.[15] However, some of the ideas that Vaughan Williams used in the symphony had possibly been in existence as early as 1906, when Vaughan Williams began sketches for his morality,[16] *The Pilgrim's Progress*.[17] Vaughan Williams had been disappointed throughout his life that his stage works were not well-received by the public.[18] He had come to the conclusion that *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a work that had been in progress through much of his professional career, would not be performed. Never one to waste good musical material, he decided to use parts of the morality in his new symphony.[19]

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indecipherable handwriting. The volume of letters, when published, will add much to the field of research on Vaughan Williams.

[15]Kennedy, *Catalogue*, 2nd ed., 173.

[16]Vaughan Williams preferred that the terminology 'morality' rather than 'opera' be used for this work.

[17]Kennedy, *Catalogue*, 2nd ed., 192.

[18]A number of Vaughan Williams's stage works were premiered by the Royal College of Music, which unfortunately resulted in the works carrying the stigma of having been written for amateurs. Vaughan Williams, however, was often more delighted by the student productions of his stage works than the ones by professional opera companies.

[19]See pages 206-207 of Kennedy's *Catalogue*, 2nd ed. for a list of specific sections that Symphony No. 5 shares with *The Pilgrim's Progess*. Kennedy pointed out that the music functions differently in the two works, mainly in the way the music is developed.

Each of Vaughan Williams's previous symphonies had a unique character, so it is not unusual that the ideas used in this symphony would differ very much from those used in the previous symphony. The opening and closing sections of Symphony No. 4 were very bold and fortissimo, and contrasted greatly with Symphony No. 5's serene and pianissimo opening and closing sections. Symphony No. 4 was not warmly embraced by early audiences as they felt the symphony did not reflect the composer that they had known in the first three symphonies. In choosing his ideas for Symphony No. 5, Vaughan Williams either consciously or unconsciously returned to a style that was more receptive to audiences.

Vaughan Williams was always prepared for new ideas to use in his compositions. Ursula Vaughan Williams noted that he had the habit of carrying a manuscript notebook and pencil in his pocket so he could jot down ideas that he could work on later.[20] However, he also had a tendency to misplace ideas that he had jotted down. Roy Henderson, a baritone who premiered some of Vaughan Williams's music, stated: "Vaughan Williams often used to write bits of music, which he would leave and go onto something else. About five years later he would find it, and say 'I must finish this.'"[21] Henderson's description of a visit to Vaughan Williams's home explained how these pieces of manuscript were sometimes lost:

> I remember going to see him at his house in Dorking one day, and I could hardly put my feet down on the floor without stepping on bits of music scattered all over the place. It wasn't a question of 'however did you write that?' as much as 'how did you find it?' This was before he married Ursula. She managed to tidy up his music. . . .[22]

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[20]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 37.

[21]Roy Henderson, "RVW Remembered," interview by Stephen Connock, *Journal of the RVW Society* 7 (October 1996): 3.

[22]Ibid.

While often lacking in organization in his work space, Vaughan Williams was disciplined in his writing habits throughout his professional career. Michael Kennedy indicated that at the beginning of the twentieth-century, Vaughan Williams spent an average of eight hours a day working on his own compositions.[23] Ursula Vaughan Williams described his average work day around the time of the writing of Symphony No. 5:

> Being at The White Gates so much I was able to see how Ralph managed to get through the immense amount of work he undertook. He was usually up by six in the morning and so he had an hour and a half of quiet time for music before breakfast. After breakfast he took his letters to read to Adeline and then he read *The Times*. By nine he was back in his study and there he stayed until lunch at half past twelve. The afternoon was a quiet time, a little reading aloud, a sleep, gardening, or a walk, then tea and more study or sometimes more gardening or letter writing till supper time, a flexible feast adjusted to fit in with any broadcast to which they wanted to listen. If there was no music or no play they cared for, Ralph would read, sleep, and perhaps go back to the study for another hour before bedtime.[24]

From the early part of the twentieth-century to the time of the writing of Symphony No. 5 and beyond, Vaughan Williams spent a specific portion of his day on his musical compositions, a discipline that resulted in a sizable catalogue of works.

Even with this disciplined work regimen, Vaughan Williams still had to deal with the everyday interruptions of family, friends, musical commitments, and the chaos of World War II during much of the time that he was involved with the writing of Symphony No. 5. Ursula Vaughan Williams described the constant stream of house guests and family illnesses in her book *R.V.W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. Vaughan Williams handled visitors

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[23]Kennedy, *Works*, 44.

[24]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 264

graciously, as he felt he could learn something from each of them or in turn be of some type of help to his guests. Vaughan Williams was usually able to continue to compose around these interruptions without a need to retreat to a quiet setting in order to work.

In her autobiography, Ursula Vaughan Williams mentioned that when she first met Vaughan Williams, she assumed he needed absolute peace and quiet in order to compose. She described an instance that occurred during the month she spent at the home of Ralph and Adeline Vaughan Williams in Dorking while recovering from an injury to her foot:

> Life there was very quiet. . . . The best thing that happened was Ralph's invitation to bring whatever work I was doing into his study. This was surprising to me for I had thought seclusion and concentration, solitude and silence, were necessary for his work. He had cleared a space for me among the piles of paper and odd bits of gardening stuff, such as bean pods ripening, which might be used for seed, in the round bow of the small square room. . . . It was a curiously successful arrangement, for we were easily silent together, or when one of us had something to say, to ask, we did so without it disturbing each other. When Ralph got up from his table and spent a few minutes, or a quarter of an hour, working at the piano he didn't mind my being there to hear his experiments or confirmation of his thought. These mornings spent together were a consolidation of affection, a comfort and pleasure to each of us.[25]

The illustration also confirms that Vaughan Williams did not compose works directly at a piano, but rather used the piano to play through or revise what he had written.

As Vaughan Williams spent many years in the writing of his symphonies, each symphony could not help but be influenced by other works, large and small, that he happened to be working on at the same time. Vaughan Williams completed and began a number of works during the time

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[25]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Paradise Remembered*, 120.

that he was writing Symphony No. 5. Among these works were: *England's Pleasant Land*;[26] *Serenade to Music*; *Partita for Double String Orchestra*; *The Bridal Day*; *Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus'*; *Flourish for Wind Band*; *Six Choral Songs to be Sung in Time of War*; *Valiant for Truth*; music for the film '*49th Parallel*'; *Household Music: Three Preludes on Welsh Hymn Tunes*; *England, My England*; *A Call to the Free Nations*; music for the film '*Coastal Command*'; *Five Wartime Hymns*; the *Airmen's Hymn*; *Nine Carols for Male Voices*; *Incidental Music for 'The Pilgrim's Progress'*; music for the film '*The People's Land*'; music for the film '*Flemish Farm*'; Concerto in A Minor for Oboe and Strings;[27] and the String Quartet (No. 2) in *A* Minor.[28] It was typical of Vaughan Williams to have numerous works in progress at one time. Some were written for specific events or with specific performers in mind. Some works were commissioned, while still others were written as a service to his country during wartime.

Early sketches of Symphony No. 5 are held by the British Library. Vaughan Williams's preliminary ideas about the symphony are jotted in a 6-stave scholastic interleaved manuscript music book. Initial ideas of other works are also in the manuscript book.[29] Example 1 shows Vaughan Williams's ideas for the opening section of the Preludio movement of Symphony No. 5.

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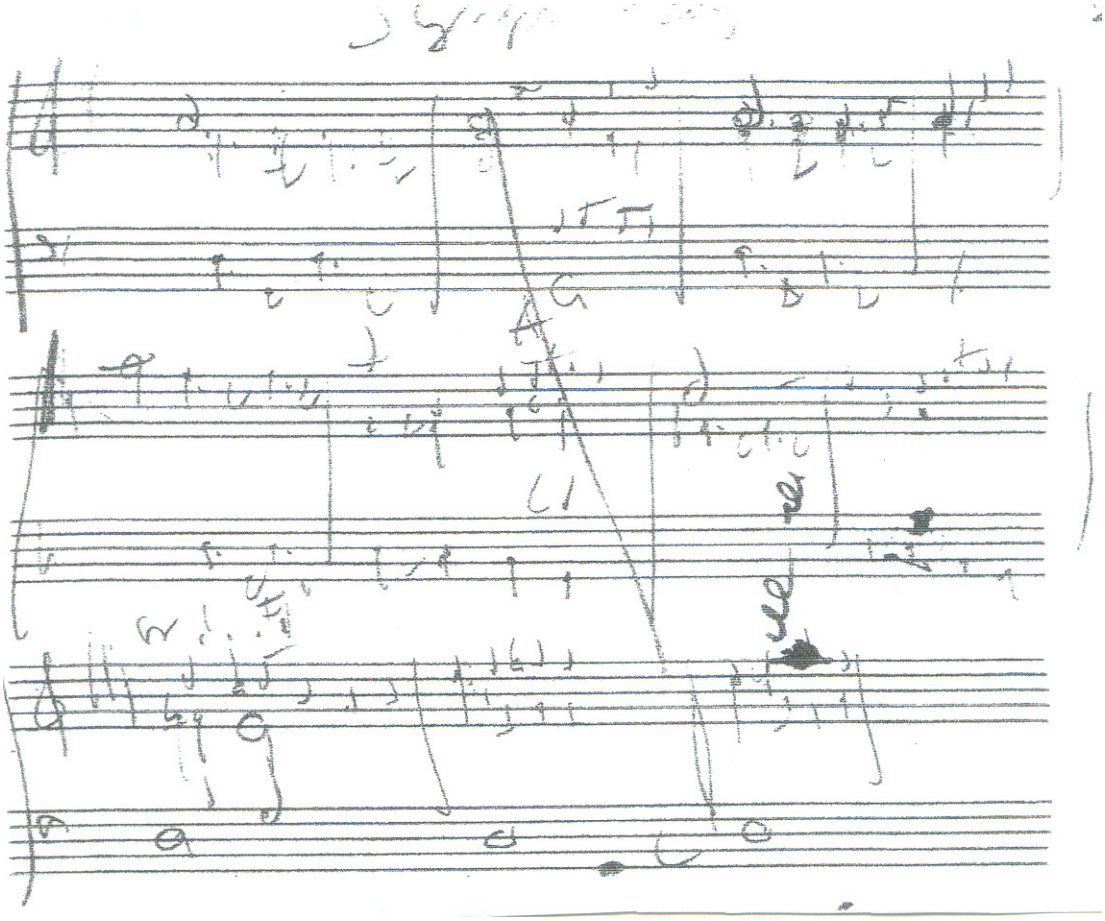
[26]Vaughan Williams used small parts of Symphony No. 5 in his contributions to this pageant with music by various composers. See page 162 of Kennedy's *Catalogue*, 2nd edition for a list of specific sections.

[27]See Kennedy, *Works*, 347. Kennedy indicated that Vaughan Williams used some material that he discarded from Symphony No. 5 in this work.

[28]Kennedy's *Catalogue*, 2nd edition contains a complete list of works covering this time period.

[29] Ralph Vaughan Williams, sketchbook, MS 50371A, Music Collection, British Library, London.

Example 12: Sketchbook, page 2.



Examples of Vaughan Williams's process of revision and development can best be seen by comparing the autograph full score[30] that is held by the Royal College of Music with the partly autograph full score,[31] and that score in turn with the published score.[32] Vaughan

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[30]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Symphony No. 5 in D," score, MS 4231, Royal College of Music, London.

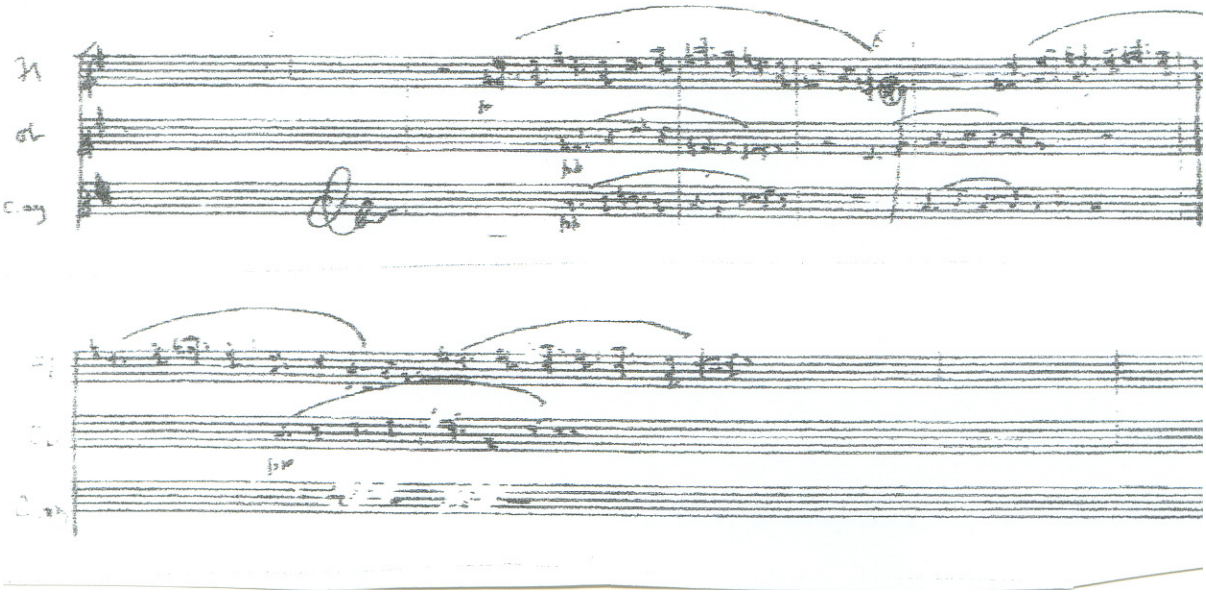
[31]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Symphony No. 5 in D," score, MS 50372, Music Collection, British Library, London.

[32]R. Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5 in D Major (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

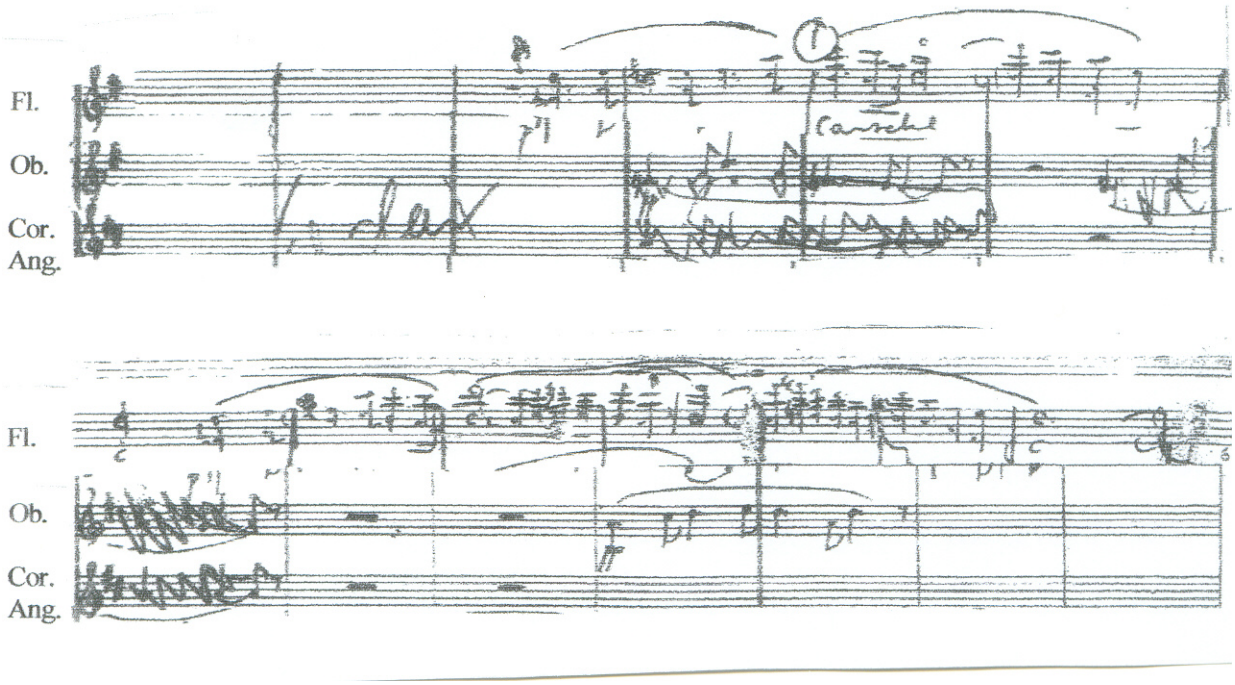
Williams continued to make revisions during the preparation of the partly autograph full score.

Examples 2 - 4, measures 10-18 of the Preludio movement, illustrate a typical revision:

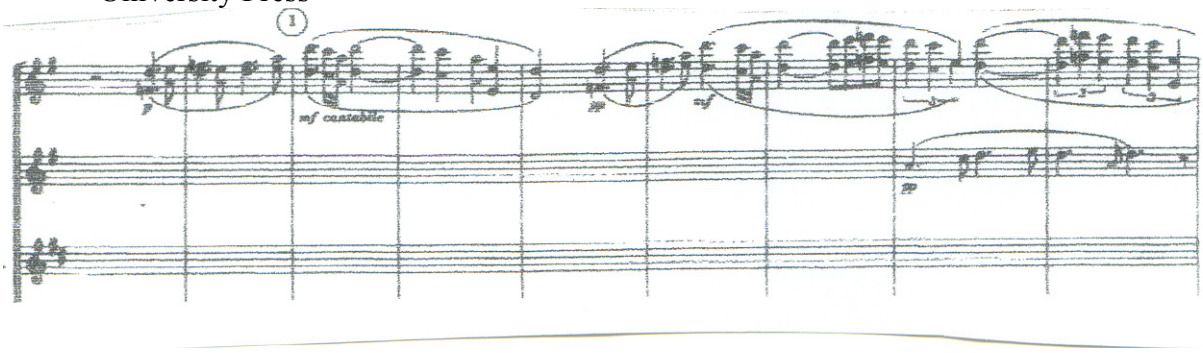
Example 13: Symphony No. 5: Preludio, measures 10-18, MS held by Royal College of Music



Example 14: Symphony No. 5: Preludio, measures 10-18, MS held by the British Library



Example 15: Symphony No. 5: Preludio, measures 10-18, score published by Oxford University Press



In the autograph score, Vaughan Williams indicated lines for the oboe and the English horn to play. In the partial autograph score, he changed his mind about these lines and marked through the notes, however, he left the final two measures of the oboe line, probably in error as the material is based on the material that he removed from the score. The two bars for the oboe are in the published score. What makes these two bars appear to be an oversight is that the two

measures are the only two measures assigned to the oboe for thirty measures. The line is marked pianissimo, and it does not come through in the orchestration. The motive, while related rhythmically to material around it, is not related melodically to the music that Vaughan Williams left in the score, but rather to the melodic material that he removed from the score. It appears that Vaughan Williams's process of revision allowed for the possibility of oversights and mistakes to occur in the published score.

Roy Douglas worked with many of Vaughan Williams's major works from 1944 until Vaughan Williams's death in 1958. While their collaboration began the year after Symphony No. 5 was premiered, Douglas's observations and insights shed much light regarding Vaughan Williams's compositional working methods in regard to the symphony. Douglas's duties included preparing Vaughan Williams's illegible scores for performance and publication; playing Vaughan Williams's symphonic works on the piano for groups of friends that Vaughan Williams had invited to critique the works; and assisting Vaughan Williams with questions of balance in rehearsals as Vaughan Williams's hearing had become impaired. Douglas said his exact position was difficult to describe. He stated, "At one time I coined the phrase 'musical midhusband', as my job was to assist the composer in bringing his creations into the world of music."[33] Vaughan Williams's handwriting and musical notation were notoriously difficult to read. Douglas said, "His friends and relations were only too well aware that his handwriting was not easy to decipher, and his musical writing was usually just as illegible. He was ruefully conscious of the difficulty his writing caused, and used to joke about it himself. . . ."[34]

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[33]Roy Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 1.

[34]Ibid., 2.

The personal relationship between Roy Douglas and Ralph Vaughan Williams began over questions Vaughan Williams had regarding film music. Vaughan Williams had begun composing music for films and had written to Roy Douglas and asked him to contact him by telephone. Roy Douglas phoned, and they made an appointment for Douglas to visit White Gates and give Vaughan Williams a lesson in scoring for films. When Douglas arrived and they were chatting, Vaughan Williams asked Douglas which music academy he had attended. Douglas stated that he had not received academic music training. Regarding why Vaughan Williams would request help from a self-taught musician half his age, Douglas said:

> The notion of this famous seventy-year-old composer seeking advice from an obscure musician exactly half his age might seem unlikely and almost absurd. But throughout his long life V.W. was always eager to learn from anyone who could enlighten him on some aspect of music hitherto unfamiliar to him.[35]

Douglas described their early working relationship and commented on Vaughan Williams's unconventional methods of orchestration:

> I was still not entirely at ease in his company, partly because I had not mastered the feeling of being overawed by his position of eminence as the greatest living British composer, and partly because his somewhat gruff manner and slightly forbidding appearance were rather terrifying at first—only later did one see the twinkle in his eye and realize his own shyness. I feel reasonably certain that, at the same time, V.W. was still a little nervous of me in a way: he had the idea that I was an expert on the subject of orchestration, and I think that for quite a long time he was afraid I might disapprove of his unconventional methods of scoring. Unconventional they were indeed, but his methods of scoring are, of course, part of what makes his music sound like that of no other composer.[36]

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[35]Ibid., 6.

[36]Ibid., 9.

Symphony No. 5 appears to be the only symphony that Vaughan Williams wrote without a close musical friend to rely upon for feedback during the stages of its development. Gustav Holst filled that role with the majority of the previous symphonies. Roy Douglas filled that role beginning with the late stages of Symphony No. 6. Vaughan Williams may have relied on a variety of musicians to critique Symphony No. 5 as it developed, possibly his student Michael Mullinar or his former editor, Hubert Foss, but he does not appear to have used only one person in that role.

Upon completion of a symphony, Vaughan Williams would have the symphony played through on piano for a small group of friends. He would then ask for their suggestions and then make whatever alterations he felt necessary. Michael Mullinar prepared a two-piano reduction of Symphony No. 5. The British Library holds two copies of the two-piano version.[37]

Based on correspondence between Gerald Finzi and Ralph Vaughan Williams and the recollection of Ursula Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5 had at least two separate piano play-throughs prior to its orchestral premiere. In a letter from Gerald Finzi to composer Howard Ferguson dated 23 December 1941, Finzi wrote:

> I had one of V.W's characteristic little notes to say that there was a run-through of his new Sym: on two pianos at Trinity college, with Foss & Alan Richardson playing, 'to see whether he liked it well enough to go on with it. Your criticism wd be valued'!!! There was noone [*sic*] else there, beyond Colles & the two pianists' wives, & needless to say the 'sketch' which he mentioned in his letter proved to be the finished work, scored & all.[38]

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[37]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Symphony No. 5 in D," piano reduction of score, prepared by Michael Mullinar, BL 50371, Music Collection, British Library, London.

[38]Stephen Banfield, "Vaughan Williams and Gerald Finzi," in *Ralph Vaughan Williams in Perspective*, ed. Lewis Foreman (London: Albion Press, 1998), 209.

Ursula Vaughan Williams recalled that three or four people were invited to a play-through on 31 January 1943 at Abinger Hall. The pianists were Margery Cullen, the Leith Hill Festival's Hon. Secretary, and Ivy Herbert, a local musician. Both Adeline Vaughan Williams and Ursula Wood were in attendance.[39]

It is probable that numerous revisions occurred between the two play-throughs on piano, especially as there are numerous changes in the manuscripts. It is unknown when these changes in the manuscripts occurred. Additional information supporting the idea that Vaughan Williams was still working on the Symphony after the play-through in 1941 came from Ursula Vaughan Williams as she was a guest in Vaughan Williams's home during 1942 and recalled that Vaughan Williams was working on Symphony No. 5 in his study while she was staying at White Gates, Dorking.[40]

In an undated typescript, Herbert Howells described Vaughan Williams's practice of gathering a small group of friends to hear informal renditions of his new works:

> Having completed a symphony, he would gather five or six of us together to hear, assess and (by his own command) to declare our immediate verdict upon the newly-created work. Under threat of a great man's humility we had an impregnable line of defence—the certainty that no word of ours would shake his own private creative assurance.[41]

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[39]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 253.

[40] Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Paradise Remembered*, 128.

[41]Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells (1892-1983): A Celebration*, 2nd ed. (London: Thames Publishing, 1996), 304.

However, an incident related by Roy Douglas[42] raises the question of whether or not Vaughan Williams's musical friends were willing to give him honest feedback on his works. Douglas had made a suggestion regarding the structure of *Sinfonia Antartica*. He recalled the tone of Vaughan Williams's response:

> My suggestion was not at all well received, in fact this was probably the only time in the whole of our association when he appeared almost displeased with me. This understandably discouraged me from offering my opinion again, except on comparatively minor points.[43]

Sir Adrian Boult spoke of Vaughan Williams's abilities as an orchestrator: "It has been said very often that Vaughan Williams was a person who learned the hard way. He didn't have the gift of scoring, of writing for instruments in the way his friend and colleague Holst had, for instance."[44] Boult continued by relating an event that occurred before an early performance of *A Sea Symphony* at Oxford. Vaughan Williams, Hugh Allen, and Mary Venables, a violinist, spent a day at the home of Hugh Allen:

> [They were] going through the string parts of the *Sea* Symphony and making them, well, playable. . . . Vaughan Williams, already in those early days but as he went on, too, always used an India rubber considerably more than a pencil. And his simplifications had a great deal to do with the greatness of his music."[45]

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[42]The incident was mentioned in footnote 24 on pg. 22. The text of Douglas's recollection is given above.

[43] Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 37.

[44] Sir Adrian Boult, *Boult on Music: Words from a Lifetime's Communication* (London: Toccata Press, 1983), 67. Boult's remarks were made during a talk entitled "The *London* Symphony" which was given during a concert intermission in July 1965.

[45] Ibid., 67-68.

Boult made observations regarding Vaughan Williams's working method: "[Vaughan Williams] was never tired of learning. He was always picking someone's brains, always getting some orchestral player to come and play parts to him. . . . He went on learning all of his life."[46]

During the years of close association with Roy Douglas, Vaughan Williams's usual policy was to take a score home for revision after hearing the score played on the piano. He would then send the score to Douglas to have a legible copy of the score prepared after correcting "all actual errors of notes, etc." and "all obvious errors in judgment."[47] Vaughan Williams also requested a list from Douglas of any other items he might consider to be incorrect in the manuscript. A letter dated February 1947 from Vaughan Williams to Roy Douglas regarding Symphony No. 6 illustrates Vaughan Williams's practice of making revisions during any stage of a work:

> I have been foolish enough to write another symphony. Could you undertake to vet[48] and then copy the score? If in the course of this you have any improvements to suggest I would receive them with becoming gratitude.[49]

This was the beginning of their work together on what would be the final four symphonies by Vaughan Williams. Based on the appearance of the partial autograph manuscript, which has pieces of manuscript paper taped on top of a larger one, a similar revision process occurred with Symphony No. 5.

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[46]Ibid., 76.

[47]Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 10.

[48]To subject to expert appraisal.

[49]Quoted in Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 9

Henry Wood had been offered the premiere of Symphony No. 5; however, the premiere was conducted by Vaughan Williams, possibly in order to relieve Wood from the pressure of a crowded schedule.[50] Ursula Vaughan Williams described the typical anxiety that Vaughan Williams experienced at the first performance of one of his works:

> I think that many people suppose that first performances are all rejoicing excitement for composers, but it's not at all the case. There is a lot of terror, an exposed feeling as something that has for so long been a private expression is made public and must be seen in the context of its time and place and as the inheritor of a musical tradition. But this is not so much a matter of immediate concern as is the actual performance—will that difficult opening come off? (Ralph's criterion was always: does it come off?)—will the harp be heard enough?—and so on and so on. One waits for all the places about which there have been questions in rehearsal. All this tends to lessen the impact of a new work for those closest to it. Indeed the greatest impact may well be at a first rehearsal when the tunes long heard on the piano sweep into their proper volume on the instruments the composer heard in his mind as he wrote.[51]

Ursula Vaughan Williams had observed many premieres of Vaughan Williams's works. Her description agrees with Vaughan Williams's own comments in his "Musical Autobiography" regarding performance anxiety.

By the time of the premiere of Symphony No. 5, Vaughan Williams knew there would be the inevitable proliferation of reviews by critics who would try to explain what they felt he was attempting to say in his new symphony. He detested hearing or reading of what music critics considered to be the meaning of his symphonies. While Vaughan Williams did not write program notes for Symphony No. 5, Ursula Vaughan Williams's commentary regarding his notes for the following symphony document his feelings on meaning in music:

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[50]Michael Kennedy, "Conducting Vaughan Williams," *Journal of the RVW Society* 24 (June 2002): 2.

[51] Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Paradise Remembered*, 177.

> Ralph's programme notes for the [6th] symphony were, he said, severely practical, a map for the listener to use rather than a series of picture postcards. He was passionately anxious to discourage the critics from inventing 'meanings'. He would have liked to print Mendelssohn's saying that 'the meaning of music is too precise for words' on every concert programme at which his works were played.[52]

In an article for the third volume of the *Journal of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society*, David Tolley expressed his views on Vaughan Williams and meaning in his music:

> Vaughan Williams himself would argue against attaching any 'meaning' to his work, meaning being personal to the hearer; but the creative impulse is often governed by influences unconsciously adopted, unrecognised in motivation."[53]

The ability of Vaughan Williams to take advice from conductors, especially after he developed problems with his hearing in later life, is illustrated in this description of his working relationship with John Barbirolli:

> The Fifth and Sixth Symphonies [of Vaughan Williams] were John's favourites. In 1952, when Vaughan Williams was approaching eighty, John included in his season all six of the symphonies then written. They had become close friends and Vaughan Williams made certain revisions for the occasions, seeking his advice. While rehearsing [with the Hallé Orchestra], they would try different balances in certain parts and the composer adopted some of the conductor's ideas and suggestions.[54]

The Oxford University Press was partly responsible for Vaughan Williams's request for Roy Douglas to prepare a legible copy of the score of Symphony No. 6. This was due to the difficulty that had occurred with the preparation of the score of Symphony No. 5 for performance:

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[52]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 283.

[53]David Tolley, "RVW and the Nation's Heritage," *Journal of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society* 3 (July 1995), 14-15.

[54]Harold Atkins and Peter Cotes, *The Barbirollis: a Musical Marriage* (London: Robson Books, 1983), 123.

> Apparently a great deal of time had been wasted at the first rehearsal of V.W.'s Fifth Symphony in correcting wrong notes in the band parts, as the copyists had worked from his MS score, and the O.U.P. doubtless thought that, with a more readable score of No. 6, there was a better chance of getting more accurate band parts.[55]

Douglas wrote regarding the problems he faced with Vaughan Williams's scores: "He wrote his scores in ink and apparently very quickly and many unintentional discrepancies found their way on to the pages."[56] The manuscript scores of Symphony No. 5 were also written in various colors of ink. Regarding errors in the scores, Douglas supplied the following explanation:

> These innumerable small errors were not really caused by carelessness in the sense of 'not bothering'; they were more the result of his very agile mind running away with his pen—something which happens to many composers. Apart from the creative aspect of writing a full score, the actual physical labour is long and tedious, necessitating hundreds of thousands of separate movements of the pen, and it is very easy for a composer to miss the insertion of small but important details—such as *arco*, *senza sordini*, or a change of clef—in the string parts when his attention has switched to the balancing of the wind parts. Also, V.W. would frequently change the harmonies, or the notes in scale-like passages, while scoring a work, and would make these alterations perhaps in the strings, forgetting that he had left the passages in the wind as they had been in his reduced score or piano sketch.[57]

Another difficulty for Douglas was the manner in which Vaughan Williams corrected his manuscripts:

> One of Vaughan Williams less endearing habits was that, when he wanted to erase something from an ink-written score, he would take a brutal pocket-knife and scrape the notes away, and with them some of the surface of the paper; he would then write in ink on top of this rough surface, with results which can be surmised.[58]

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[55]Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 11.

[56]Roy Douglas, article in the *R.C.M. Magazine* (1959). Quoted in Douglas's *Working with R.V.W.*, 12.

[57]Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 16-17.

[58]Ibid., 41.

Symphony No. 5 was published by Oxford University Press in 1946. Vaughan Williams had an informal arrangement with Oxford University Press from the mid-1920s onward that anything he wrote, almost regardless of style or genre, would be published.[59] The score of Symphony No. 5 was revised in 1951 with a number of modifications. The revisions were incorporated into the first LP recording of the symphony in 1954.[60] Roy Douglas assisted with the revision, however, as Vaughan Williams asked him to go through the score "carefully and [suggest] alterations in any places where in your opinion the texture (and especially the orchestration) does not 'come off'",[61] it would seem that Douglas was working with the published score rather than any of the manuscripts. Specific revisions that occurred before the revised score was published are listed in A. E. F. Dickinson's book on Vaughan Williams. The list includes one change in harmony, a number of alterations of texture and dynamics, and corrections of misprints.[62] The revised copy of the score was published in 1961.

Vaughan Williams commented on the art of composition:

> Only the merest amateur imagines that a composer when he sets out to write a piece of music sits down and deliberately writes out bar one complete, followed by bar two complete and so on; Beethoven's notebooks disprove this, nor does anyone who knows

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[59]Duncan Hinnells, "Hubert Foss: Vaughan Williams' Jaeger?," *Journal of the RVW Society* 7 (October 1996): 13.

[60]Michael Kennedy, *Catalogue*, 2nd ed., 173.

[61] Letter dated September 1951 from Vaughan Williams to Roy Douglas. Quoted in Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.*, 21.

[62] See Appendix B in A. E. F. Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963), 494-495. Dickinson lists the date for final revisions as being "around 1955." Either Vaughan Williams worked with the score again before the revised score was published, or the year 1955 is a misprint as both Douglas and Kennedy identify 1951 as being the year the revisions occurred.

> think that ideas invariably spring from a composer's head 'ready for wear,' or that there are never any lucky accidents.[63]

As we have seen, the compositional working methods used by Vaughan Williams in Symphony No. 5, while methodical, sometimes resulted in errors making their way into the published score. There was always the problem of his sometimes illegible manuscript. Vaughan Williams's need to revise during each stage of the writing of the symphony meant that corrections might not always appear in the printed score. He obviously did not always proofread by comparing the final score with his intended corrections. There are instances in the published score where multiple instruments are playing the same line of music, and dynamic changes occur in one part, but not in others. For example, the flute and violin lines in measures 33-40 of the Preludio[64] and measures 51-64 and 166-168 in the Romanza[65] indicate dynamic changes in one part, but not in the other part. Beginning with his 6th symphony, Vaughan Williams had the assistance of Roy Douglas, an able musician who would check with him regarding probable errors. Symphony No. 5, however, did not receive that type of close attention to detail in its final stages before the first publication. It is ironic that a composer so concerned with having the best musical work possible in its developing stages would have had a working method which inadvertently allowed some errors to appear in the published score.

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[63]R. Vaughan Williams, "What Have We Learnt from Elgar?" in *Nat'l Music*, 254-255.

[64]Both parts are marked *mf* at measure 33. The flute part is marked *p* at measure 40, while no change in dynamic level is indicated in the violin part.

[65]The flute and violin crescendo to *ff* in measure 166. A decrescendo is indicated in the flute part in measure 168 while no change in dynamic level is indicated in the violin part.

CHAPTER 5

SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN D

The Dedication

The two manuscript versions of Symphony No. 5 in D carry the following dedication: "Dedicated (without permission and with the sincerest flattery) to Jean Sibelius whose great example is worthy of all imitation." The dedication was shortened to read as follows in the printed score: "Dedicated without permission to Jean Sibelius." While the rewording of the dedication might give the impression that Vaughan Williams had mentioned to Sibelius that he planned to dedicate the symphony to him and Sibelius had objected, that apparently was not the case. Sibelius wrote highly of Vaughan Williams in an undated letter to the composer W. Kurt Atterberg:

> I heard Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams' new symphony from Stockholm in Malcolm Sargeant's excellent performance.[1] This symphony is a wonderful work. There is life throughout—in the words of the poet—you feel that its creator had passed on the purest of attributes. Through our newspapers we learned about the dedication, which made me proud and deeply grateful. Dr. Williams has no idea what pleasure he has given me. The wording of the dedication[2] did not appear in our newspapers, which is why I only got to

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[1]The date of the performance was 30 September 1943.

[2]Sir Adrian Boult had written to Atterberg, who resided in Sweden, and asked him to send a message to Sibelius. As England and Finland were technically at war at the time of Boult's letter, direct communication with Finland would probably have been impossible. Sweden was neutral during World War II. The difficulty with communication between England and Finland would also account for the unusual wording of "without permission" in the dedication. The message that Boult sent regarding the dedication indicated that the dedication read: "Dedicated (without permission and with sincerest flattery) to Jean Sibelius, whose great example is worthy of imitation." Boult's version omitted the words "the" and "all."

> know about it through you. . . . I would be very grateful if you would give Sir Adrian Boult my warmest regards and through him, Dr. Vaughan Williams.[3]

A number of parallels exist between the lives of Vaughan Williams and Sibelius. Both came from prominent families, lost fathers at an early age, and grew up in their mother's family home. Vaughan Williams and Sibelius had their earliest music lessons from family members, and both studied piano and violin. Each considered a performing career on his respective instrument but pursued a career as a composer instead. Both composers attended prominent national schools of music and later traveled to Berlin for further study. Vaughan Williams and Sibelius exhibited an interest in folk song during some point in their careers. Finally, both became known to the general public through their compositions in large symphonic forms.

In *RVW: A Biography*, Ursula Vaughan Williams wrote of the first meeting between the two composers:

> It was at a party that he met Sibelius (who was to have conducted an R.C.M. performance of *En Saga*, though illness had in fact prevented him from doing so). Ralph had been leaving when Sibelius asked who he was. They had been introduced earlier but Sibelius was not familiar with the English pronunciation of the name. When he realized it was a fellow composer whose work he admired, he rushed down the stairs to waylay him in the hall. It was, however, rather a disappointing meeting for they failed, partly through shyness and partly because their only common language was inadequate French, to make real contact with one another though they were both full of goodwill.[4]

This meeting occurred during Sibelius's trip to England in January 1921 and was the last of his five trips to Britain.

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[3]"Atterberg, Sibelius and RVW's Fifth Symphony," *Journal of the RVW Society* 21 (June 2001): 18. From copies of Atterberg's correspondence that Charles Long obtained from the *Musikmuseet* in Stockholm.

[4]Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.*, 139.

Music critics and biographers have written of their ideas concerning the meaning of the dedication of Symphony No. 5 in D to Sibelius. Opinions range from there being little significance to there being a significant, but unknown, reason for the wording of the dedication.

James Goodfriend, music editor of *Stereo Review*, said in his program notes to a performance of Symphony No. 5 by Andre Previn and the London Symphony:

> This [dedication] has provoked a lot of looking and searching to find something in the 5th Symphony, or in Vaughan Williams's music in general, for which to thank Sibelius. But the search seems fruitless, there is nothing. There exists probably no connection between the two except that they were, apart from Mahler and Nielson, the only great symphonists this century has produced—or is likely to produce; music has turned elsewhere. But what a difference between the two! Sibelius hammering away at the form, clarifying, economizing, progressing in such an unmistakable line that critics were able to describe his '8th Symphony' in some detail, even though he never wrote an 8th Symphony. And Vaughan Williams, unpredictable, expansive by turns, always writing "what I meant," so sure of his larger framework that he could always do different things within it.[5]

Mr. Goodfriend's interpretation of the dedication takes only musical considerations into account. While this would be a natural assumption based on the fact that Sibelius and Vaughan Williams were musicians, the original dedication was so broad that it could have referred to Sibelius as being a "great example" in a sense other than a strictly musical one.

Simona Pakenham, in *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Discovery of His Music*, described the public's interest in the wording of the dedication:

> [It] was enough to send everybody to that Promenade with their ears pricked to detect echoes of the great Finnish composer in Vaughan Williams's work: but there is only one passage, a great windy passage in the development of the first movement, that could conceivably bear his influence. The music is typical Vaughan Williams throughout.[6]

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[5]Program notes to *Vaughan Williams Symphony No. 5 in D Major*, performed by Andre Previn and the London Philharmonic. Notes by James Goodfriend. RCA, 1972.

[6]Simona Pakenham, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Discovery of His Music*, 131.

To have narrowed the similarities down to one select passage of music gives more weight to the assumption that the dedication had deeper meaning than acknowledging a brief 'borrowing' of material from Sibelius.

Other writers, such as English music critic and scholar Gerald Abraham, commented on general similarities between the two composers. Abraham felt that Vaughan Williams was imitating the symphonic procedures of Sibelius in his Symphony No. 4 in F minor. Abraham stated that Vaughan Williams was not the only British composer to emulate Sibelius. Bax and Walton were other composers that he included in that category. Abraham said that Vaughan Williams returned to his earlier method, "with new emotional warmth," in Symphony No. 5.[7]

Michael Kennedy spoke of a possible connection between the fifth symphonies of both composers:

> Its original dedication to Sibelius talked about flattery and imitation, although a passage for strings in the first movement, the similarity of the opening to the opening of Sibelius's 5th Symphony, and the use of germinal motifs are the only possible justifications for such terms.[8]

The fact that even Vaughan Williams's close friend Michael Kennedy did not know of the exact meaning of the dedication is significant. While the wording of the original dedication could have meant anything from Vaughan Williams acknowledging his admiration of another nationalist composer to Vaughan Williams making a comment that might inspire Sibelius to leave 'retirement,' it can be assumed that the whimsical side of Vaughan Williams's personality enjoyed all of the speculation regarding the true meaning of the dedication.

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[7]Gerald Abraham, *A Hundred Years of Music*, 4th ed. (London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1974), 268-69.

[8]Kennedy, *Works*, 279.

Biographer Hubert Foss believed that the similarity between the two composers may be found in their individuality:

> As for the flattering imitation of Sibelius, it is enough to say that no composer of symphonies today could (none should) be unaware of that great corpus of Finnish music, whether he admire it (as the English do) or neglects it (as the Germans and French do). The influence of Sibelius upon contemporary composers I am not here called upon to assess. But I have found but little trace of that influence during my study of Vaughan Williams's D major. Maybe there is some central Sibelian principle of symphonic writing, though it would seem to be so elusive as to have passed through the filter of even Cecil Gray's acute analysis. The sole part of resemblance that I can detect between the Finn and the Englishman is that each of them has, in his own way, evolved a symphonic manner individual to himself, by the process of devising from his own mind a new symphonic method for each major conception. By the similar process of walking, each along his different path, the two composers have arrived at entirely different destinations.[9]

Foss's observation regarding the uniqueness of the two composers offers one of the best possible interpretations of the dedication.

On the occasion of Sibelius's ninetieth birthday, Vaughan Williams wrote a tribute that appeared in the *RCM Magazine* and *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*. This tribute is the best evidence we have in understanding Vaughan Williams's admiration of Sibelius:

> A young composer is like a sponge, absorbing all that comes his way; but out of that absorption will grow something new and individual if the young musician has it to give. Thus the line goes on; Bach learned from Buxtehude, Beethoven from Haydn, Wagner from Weber, and so shall we, I believe, write our own music, not by breaking with tradition, but by adding to it. John Stuart Mill used to be much worried because he thought that all the melodies in the world would soon be exhausted. But Sibelius has shown us that there is an inexhaustible store of juice in the old orange if we only know how to suck it.
>
> Sibelius first became known in this country through those popular pieces *Finlandia* (which has been made into a hymn tune) and *Valse Triste*, which was at one time played almost nightly by every restaurant band. We, of the Prigs Brigade, were duly shocked. I remember myself writing in those days about 'the sentimentalities of *Finlandia*.' Then the symphonies swam into our vision, and we realized that we had been entertaining, or rather refusing to entertain, an angel unawares. The putting on of the angelic nature did

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[9]Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study*, 146.

> not mean the discarding of the earthly. Sibelius's head and heart are in the heavens, but his feet are firmly planted on the ground. There is a popular element in all great music, and that of Sibelius is no exception. The man that hobnobbed with the man-in-the-street in *Finlandia* had the same mind as he who sublimated human experience into the mysticism of the Fourth Symphony.[10]

Vaughan Williams's words give weight to Hubert Foss's interpretation of the dedication, as Vaughan Williams could very well have been describing himself in this passage.

Vaughan Williams continued with a description of Sibelius's treatment of thematic material and form:

> There is an occasional tendency to accuse Sibelius of formlessness. His symphonies are described as 'so called' and are said to be nothing but O.D.T.A.A. [One damn thing after another], but what marvellous D.T.s they are, so what does it matter? But it does matter. The beauty of a theme depends almost entirely on its position in the scheme. Many a lovely tune in symphonies or overtures by minor composers is lost, like rivers in the sand, because they were not skilfully [*sic*] placed: and the converse is true—the opening of the *Eroica* symphony is just an arpeggio, but what a wonderful germ for a great growth. It is the nature of Sibelius's themes that they give form to a whole movement. True, we cannot often analyze their form, but we feel instinctively that the whole is satisfactory; it begins right, it goes on right and it finishes right. Of course, we cannot always trace a neat pattern, but just as we often find in the lesser examples of symphonic music a precise pattern without any large sense of form, so in Sibelius, his sense of form need not depend on a precise pattern. He does not plan his work according to the accepted symphonic structure of first subject, second subject, development, recapitulation, and the rest of the test-book jargon.[11]

Once again, Vaughan Williams could be describing his own work as so many of his works, including Symphony No. 5, are difficult to fit into traditional forms.

In this tribute to Sibelius, Vaughan Williams stated why he believed Sibelius became so popular in England:

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[10]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Sibelius," *National Music*, 2nd ed., 262.

[11]Ibid, 262-263.

> The impact of Sibelius on musical thought in England came just at the right moment. Wagner and Brahms seemed to be leading nowhere, we were all like kittens running after our own tails. This impasse was felt on the continent as well as in England, but in middle Europe it led to a complete revolt against all the traditions, and to a wondering around in the desert. They missed Sibelius—so much the worse for them. For us, in this country, the fresh air of his art permeated both our thought and our action, and we have discovered that it is possible to be absolutely new and yet within the strict tradition.[12]

Vaughan Williams pointed out that Sibelius was appreciated in Britain because he created something new within the old tradition instead of revolting against tradition. The "fresh air" was in all likelihood the national aspect of Sibelius's music.

Michael Kennedy wrote that Sibelius admired Vaughan Williams's music and listed a number of reasons that he felt explained their mutual admiration:

> Both were almost feudal figures, dominating the musical life of their respective countries at a critical emergent stage of their cultural history. Both were strongly influenced by a feeling for the traditions, the landscape, the history, of their countries. They were proud to be mouthpieces for the artistic and even the social aspirations of their times. They glorified in their 'insularity', in the knowledge that they found expression for what their countrymen felt but could not say. They knew, too, that the impatient youth of their countries would one day scrutinize their reputations—and they were unafraid.[13]

Evidence indicating that Vaughan Williams went to great lengths to study the symphonies of Sibelius prior to the composition of Symphony No. 5 in D is found in Vaughan Williams's correspondence. In a letter of 25 July 1937 from Vaughan Williams to Gerald Finzi, Vaughan Williams made the following request:

> Could you send me a list of all gramophone records, pfte duet or solo arr of Sibelius symphonies
> I want these
> (a) because, as you know, I can't read a full score
> (b) because, being no longer able to compose, and having by my mode of life

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[12]Ibid, 263.

[13]Kennedy, *Works*, 333-334.

> unfitted myself for any useful occupation I think it is time I learnt something about music[.][14]

The contents of this letter certainly suggest that Vaughan Williams spent a great deal of time studying the symphonic works of Sibelius during the year before he began the sketches of Symphony No. 5 in D. This possible time devoted to the study of the scores of Sibelius is reminiscent of the time Vaughan Williams spent in the British Museum studying the score of Elgar's *Gerontius* prior to the writing of his first large-scale symphonic works.

While there appears to be no evidence that Vaughan Williams gave a specific reason for the changing of the wording of the dedication, a number of interesting possibilities exist:

1) Vaughan William's former publisher at Oxford University Press, Hubert Foss, may have suggested the change in the wording.
2) Vaughan Williams could have been influenced by the reaction of other friends to the dedication.[15]
3) The rewording reads better.

Overview of Symphony No. 5

Symphony No. 5 is of a length comparable to that of the two previous symphonies. The duration of Symphony No. 5 is approximately 37 minutes, while that of Symphony No. 4 is approximately 33 minutes and that of the 3rd Symphony (*Pastoral*) is approximately 35 minutes.

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[14]Stephen Banfield, "Vaughan Williams and Gerald Finzi," chapter in Lewis Foreman, ed., *Ralph Vaughan Williams in Perspective* (London: Albion Press, 1998), 212.

[15]Following a play-through of the symphony on two pianos on 16 December 1941, composer Gerald Finzi described the tribute as "a rather flowery dedication (which I do hope he'll scrap) to Sibelius." Gerald Finzi in a letter to Howard Ferguson, quoted in Stephen Banfield, "Vaughan Williams and Gerald Finzi," in *Ralph Vaughan Williams in Perspective*, ed.

The 1st Symphony (*Sea*) is approximately 67 minutes in duration and the 2nd Symphony (*London*) is 44 minutes in its last version, but the 2nd Symphony was between 55 and 60 minutes in its original version.[16] As Vaughan Williams made three revisions of the London Symphony, mainly to reduce its length, he seemed to have settled into a duration of 30 to 45 minutes being a comfortable length for the attention span of a 20th century audience.

Symphony No. 5 is scored for a smaller orchestra[17] than those used in Vaughan Williams's previous symphonies. A possible reason for the smaller orchestra is due to the fact that fewer orchestral players would have been available during World War II. A work written for a large orchestra with additional instruments might have had a lesser chance of being performed during the war years. However, it is more likely that the smaller orchestra was more suited to the overall character of this symphony.

The symphony has some unusual movement titles for a 20th century symphony—Preludio for the first movement, Romanza for the third movement, and Passacaglia for the fourth movement. The unusual word choice and spelling for the title of the opening movement invites questions. "Preludio" is the Italian and Spanish spelling of the English word "Prelude." The spelling chosen by Vaughan Williams would tend to indicate a universal appeal or a return to music of an earlier era. The word "prelude" has carried various meanings over the centuries. From approximately 1450 to 1650, the term was used for a short keyboard piece in free style which could be used for a specific liturgical or secular function, such as setting the mood or

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Lewis Foreman, 209.

[16]Approximate timings are those listed in Kennedy, *Works*.

[17]The instrumentation for Symphony No. 5 is: Flute I, Flute II and Piccolo, Oboe I, Cor Anglais, Clarinets I and II, Bassoons I and II, Horns I and II, Trumpets I and II, Tenor

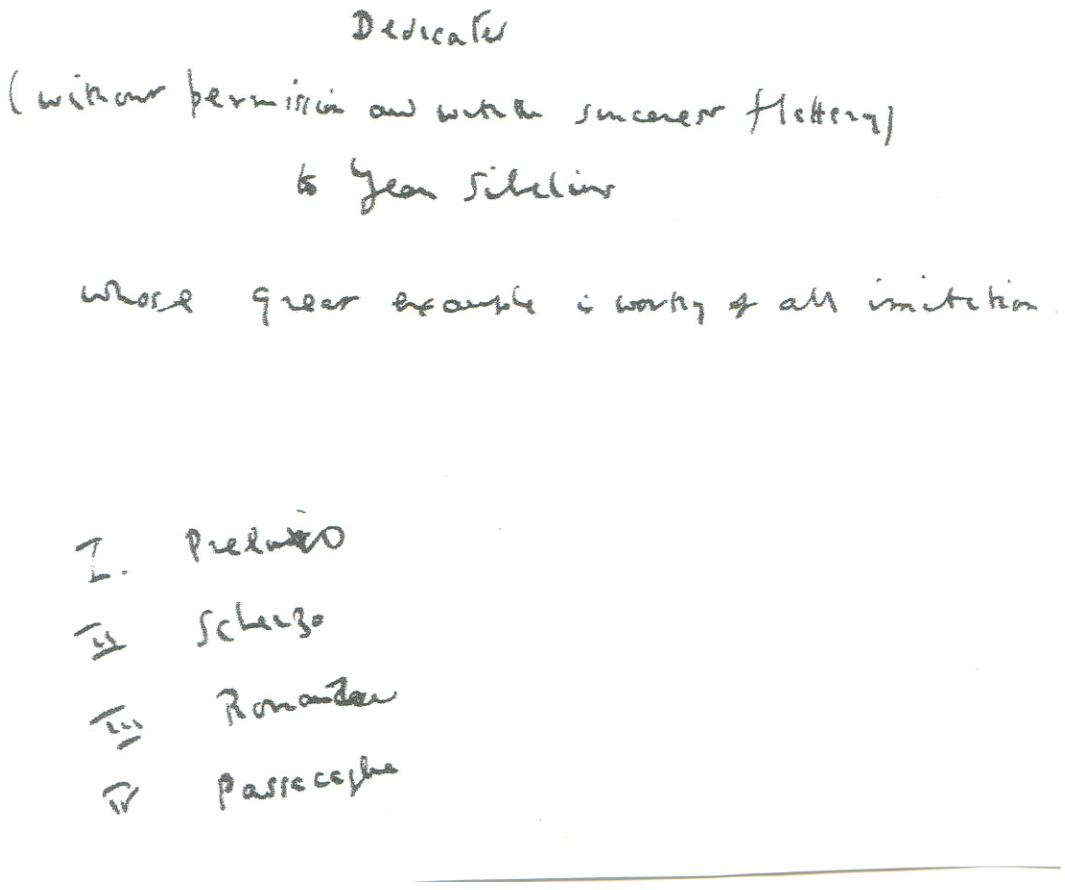
establishing the key for a work that followed. From 1650 to 1750, the word was often used for the first movement of a set or series of movements. Beginning with the nineteenth century, the term was used for an independent work, often for piano, but was frequently found as a set of preludes in various keys.[18] The word has also been used for a piece that precedes the opening of an opera and introduces thematic material from the opera.[19] As Vaughan Williams was extremely fond of the music of Bach and his predecessors, the term "Preludio" is most likely his tribute to an earlier era. The use of the spelling "Preludio" for the title of the first movement was possibly an afterthought as the autograph copy (Ex. 16) appears to have originally read "Prelude." The second "e" was written over as "i" and an "o" was added.

Trombones I and II, Bass Trombone, Timpani, Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass.

[18] Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Prelude." (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap University Press, 1969.)

[19] Don Randel, ed. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, s.v. "Prelude." (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap University Press, 1986.)

Example 16: Title page of autograph copy of manuscript held by the Royal College of Music



While not the first time that Vaughan Williams had used the word "Prelude" for a movement title, it was the first time that he had used the term to name the movement of a symphony. Still another reason for the unusual title of the first movement is that the Preludio, while patterned after sonata form, does not strictly follow that form.[20]

[20]The form of the "Preludio" is discussed in the analysis section of that movement beginning on p. 162.

As with the title of the first movement, the title of the third movement also appears to have been changed on the title page of the manuscript (Ex. 16).[21] It appears to have originally been spelled "Romance" and was changed to "Romanza." "Romanza" is the Italian spelling of a musical work that has carried various meanings over the years. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the word was sometimes used for the title of a slow movement of a symphony. The work could be in any number of musical forms and was usually lyrical in nature.[22]

Vaughan Williams's title for the fourth movement dates back to the Baroque period. While the form of the "Passacaglia" movement of Symphony No. 5 is extremely loose when compared with works from the Baroque period bearing this title, the movement does make use of variation. It differs from most works by that name of the Baroque era in that Vaughan Williams did not use an exact ostinato throughout the work. Vaughan Williams was not the only symphonist to use a passacaglia for a movement in an orchestral work, though he was one of the few composers to give a movement this title.[23]

Preludio

The Preludio is based on the sonata form with measures 1 to 91 being the exposition, measures 92 to 163 being the development section, and measures 164 to 237 being the recapitulation. The longest section is the 91-measure exposition. The development and

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[21]The change in spelling of the title of this movement and the first movement resulted in all four movements having Italian spellings rather than a mix of English and Italian—a good reason to change names.

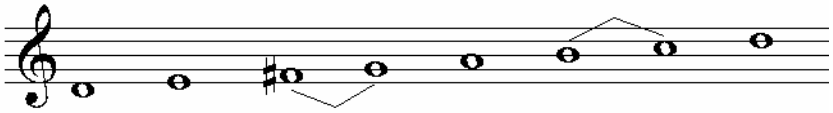
[22]Randel, ed. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, s.v., "Romanze."

[23] Examples include the first movement of William Schuman's Symphony No. 3 and Webern's Op. 1, which is entitled Passacaglia.

recapitulation are of almost equal length with the development section having 72 measures and the recapitulation being 74 measures in length.

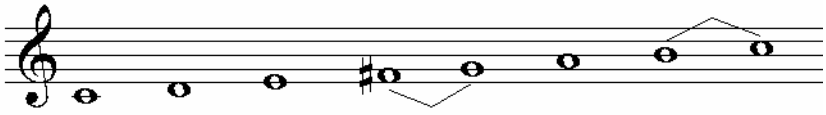
The first movement of Symphony No. 5 in D Major bears a key signature of one sharp. If one were to assume that the first movement of a symphony would be in the designated key of the title of the symphony, then the idea Vaughan Williams used was similar to works by early 18th-century composers whose works would frequently bear key signatures one sharp or flat less than the key designated in the title of the work. A key signature of one sharp less than the key of the work would create a lowered 7th scale degree. In the case of D major, a lowered 7th scale degree would result in the notes of the D mixolydian mode (D-E-F#-G-A-B-C-D).

Example 17a: D mixolydian mode



However, the C pedal point heard in the first five measures, with melodic decoration added beginning in measure 6, makes a strong argument for the note C being the final of the mode of C lydian (C-D-E-F#-G-A-B-C).

Example 17b: C lydian mode

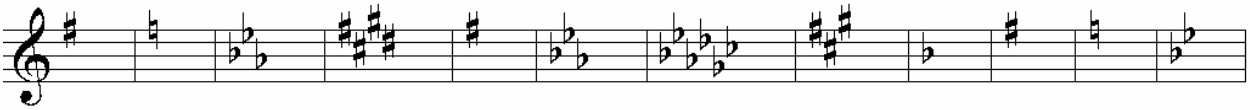


A sense of dual modality continues through the first forty-seven measures of the A section of the exposition and returns for the beginning and end of the recapitulation. The use of dual tonalities had been used by Vaughan Williams in his Fourth Symphony; however, the approach used in Symphony No. 5 is much more subtle than that used in the previous symphony.

Vaughan Williams indicated twelve key signature changes in the first movement, however, there are more tonal center changes than those indicated by key signature changes.

Example 18: Key signatures used in the Preludio listed in the order in which they appear.

m.1	m.29	m.40	m.60	m.70	m.87	m.118	m.129	m.135	m.164	m.175	m.185
C lyd	C ion	C aeo	E maj	E aeol/	C aeo	E-flat	F# aeo	A phry	C lyd	C ion	B-flat
D mix	D dor	F dor		maj/phry		aeo				D dor	Maj



The harmonic language of the Preludio is predominantly modal with tonal center changes occurring frequently. The use of modes illustrates Vaughan Williams's love of "English" sounds such as those that occur in folk song, particularly flatted sixth and seventh scale degrees.

The opening of Symphony No. 5 is tonally ambiguous,[24] an element that it shares with the opening of Vaughan Williams's 4th Symphony. Apparently, Vaughan Williams was not

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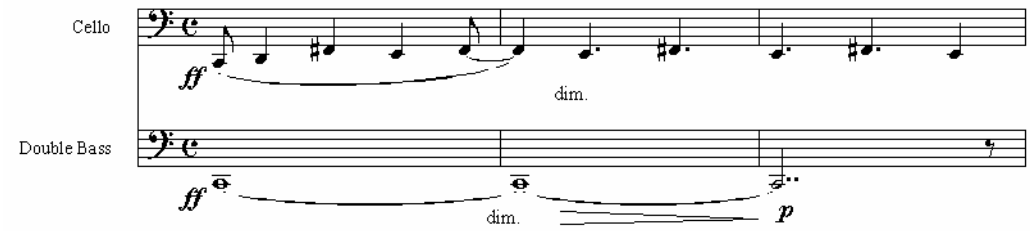
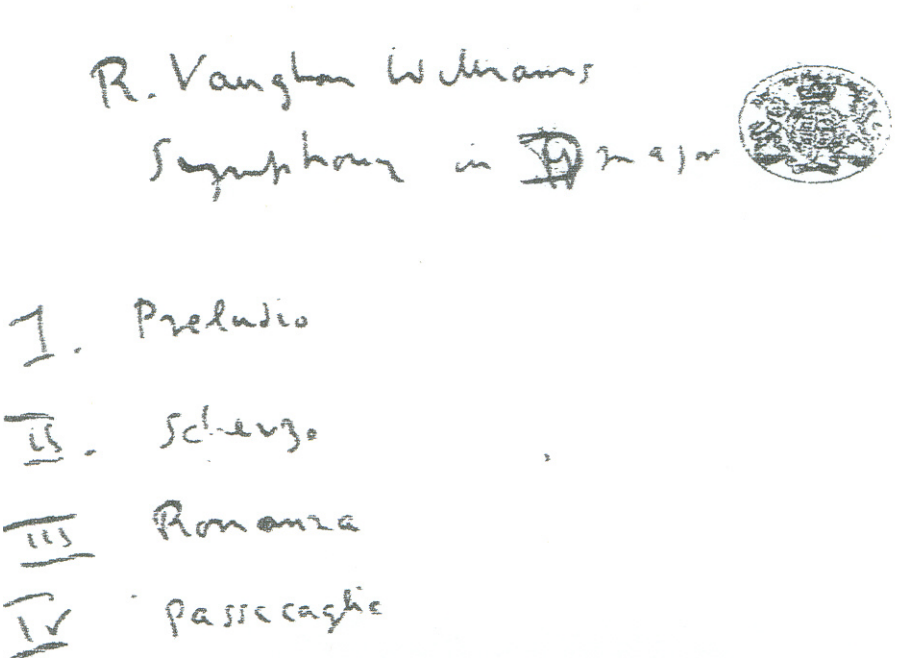
[24]In searching for a reason for the use of the word "imitation" in the original dedication of Symphony No. 5 to Sibelius, Kennedy and other writers have mentioned the opening horn call of the first movement of Sibelius's 5th Symphony in E-flat as being a possible similarity. However, another possible tie is Sibelius's 4th Symphony. The opening of Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 5 uses four pitches that were used by Sibelius in the opening of his 4th Symphony. In both works, the lowest note is C, which forms a tritone with the note F# that is heard above the note C. Both works use the mode of C lydian in their opening measures. While the treatment of the material by Sibelius is linear as opposed to the harmonic impression created by Vaughan Williams, each work has a sense of tonal ambiguity.

Example 19: Sibelius, Symphony No. 4 in A minor, 1st mvmt., m. 1-4, cello and bass.



certain which key to call the overall one for the symphony as the title page originally read 'G' and was crossed through with 'D' added.

Example 20: Portion of title page of manuscript held by the British Library



The A section of the Preludio opens with only the sound of a pedal point[25] which is in the lower strings on the note C (Ex. 21). Two beats later, the horns play the pitches D and F#. While the opening chord of the Preludio might be viewed as a D^4_2 chord, the chord does not function as a dominant seventh chord since it does not resolve.

Three motivic groups are used in the opening measures of the Preludio—one in the horns, one in the upper strings, and one in the lower strings. The rhythmic motives heard in the horn

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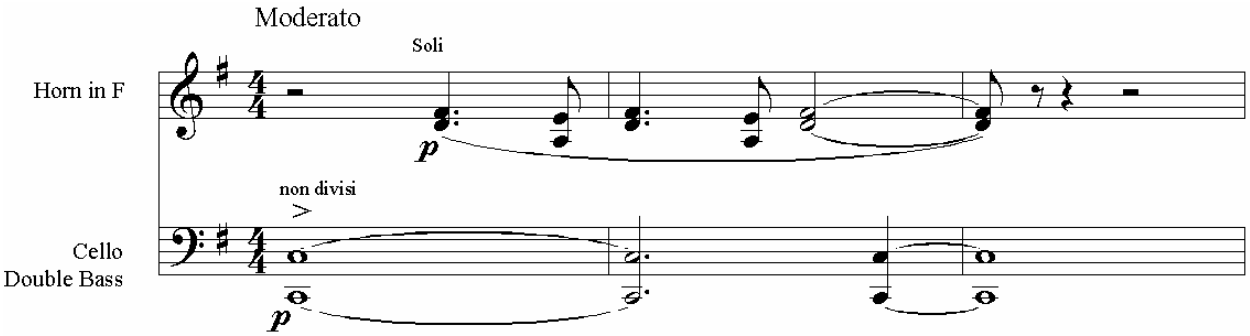
[25]In the autograph manuscript, the pedal point is marked '*p*.' In the later partially autograph manuscript, the pedal point is marked '*fp*.' In the corrected score of 1969, the pedal point is marked '*p*,' but with an accent mark (>).

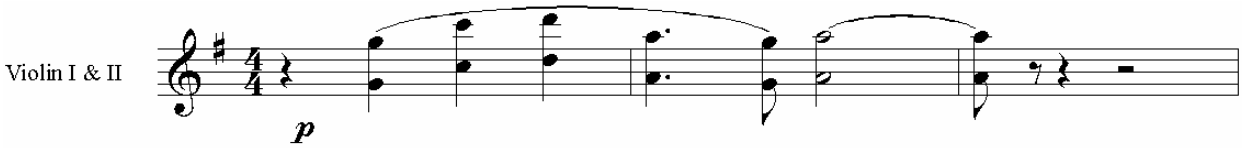
call—a dotted quarter followed by an eighth note and later a dotted quarter followed by two sixteenth notes—are motives used throughout the exposition and recapitulation.

Example 21: Preludio, m. 1-3. Horn call and pedal point in cello and bass.



The horn call is answered by a two-measure motive in the upper strings (Ex. 22). The intervals of melodic fourths (G up to C, and D down to A) and seconds (C-D and A-G) are dominant in this passage and throughout the first movement. The motive ends with the same rhythm and pitch intervals as the 1st horn in the horn motive.

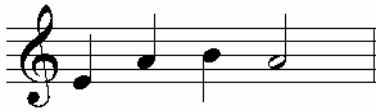
Example 22: Preludio, m. 3-5. Violins I & II.



The melodic use of a fourth is a characteristic of folk song and a melodic device that Vaughan Williams used throughout Symphony No. 5. Vaughan Williams used the following

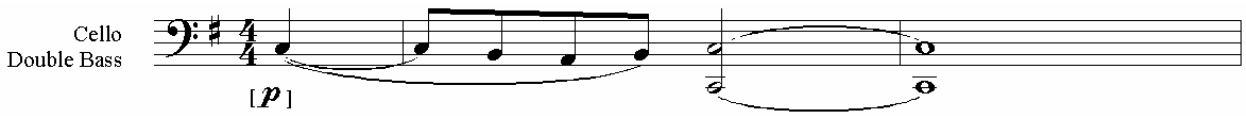
example of a melodic formula[26] that is commonly used in the opening bars of English folk song in his discussion of how ordered sound developed from excited speech in *The Making of Music*.

Example 23: Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music*, page 4.



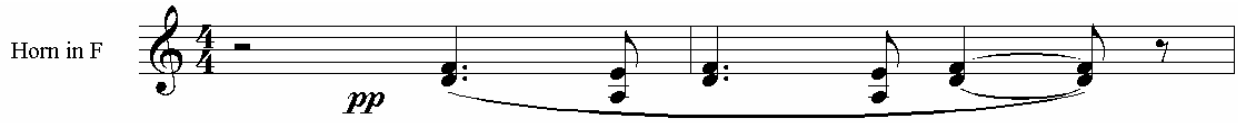
The horn call and upper string motive are repeated, however, melodic material is added to the upper string motive and to the C pedal point (C-B-A-B-C).

Example 24: Preludio, m. 5-7. Cello & Bass



The tonality changes to a duality of C ionian (C-D-E-F-G-A-G-C) and D dorian (D-E-F-G-A-B-C-D) in the ninth measure, however, with no change in the key signature. The opening horn call motive is heard again, however, this time played by the clarinets as an ostinato and in the dorian mode. The ostinato version of the motive is heard in measures 9 through 20 in various wind instruments in addition to the dorian version of the opening horn call which is played by the horns in measures 14 through 18.

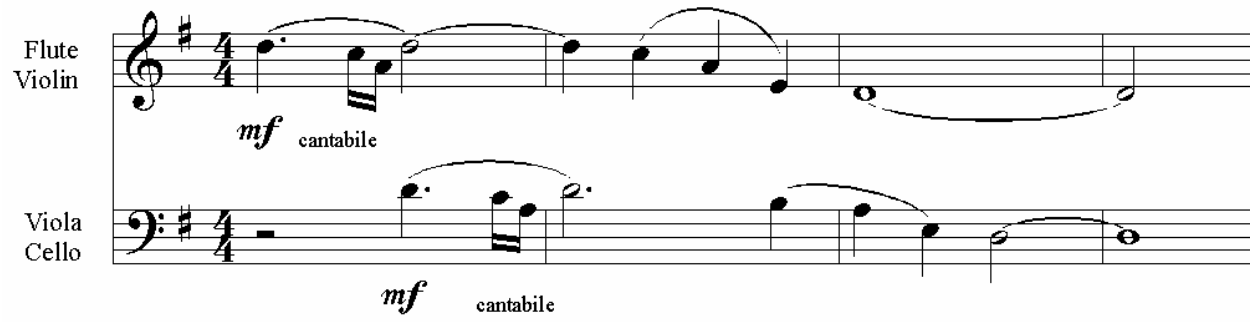
Example 25: Preludio, m. 14-15. Horn call in D dorian.



[26]While this melodic formula also occurs in tonal music, Vaughan Williams's study of folk song identified the formula as one that often occurs in English folk song, especially in the opening measure.

A new motive, which is pentatonic in sound, is heard in canon beginning in measure 12 (Ex. 26). The beginning of the motive has the same rhythm as the opening horn motive, however, the eighth note of the horn motive is now two sixteenth notes. The motive also shares the first three pitches of the 2nd horn part with the addition of the note C. It covers the range of an octave and uses intervals of seconds, thirds, and fourths. This motive is first played by the flutes and upper strings, followed two beats later by the lower strings. The motive is slightly altered when played by the lower strings as Vaughan Williams changed the fifth note of the passage from C to B in measure 13.

Example 26: Preludio, m. 12-15. Flute, Violins I & II, Viola, and Cello

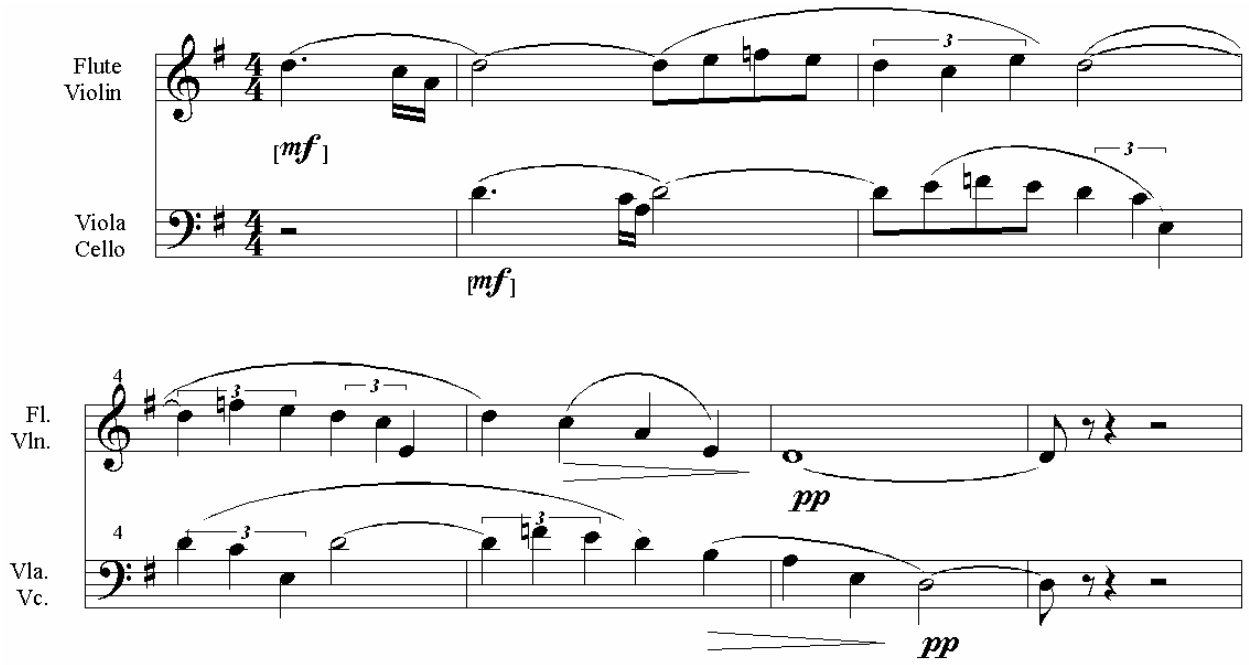


Vaughan Williams repeated the motive in measure 15 in the upper strings and flutes[27] and measure 16 in the lower strings (Ex. 27). He extended the figure by adding two and a half

[27]The flutes did not play with the violins in this passage or the preceding one in the original manuscript held by the Royal College of Music. The flute line was added with a piece of manuscript paper pasted over the original flute part on the page where the repetition of the motive occurs in the partially autograph copy held by the British Library.

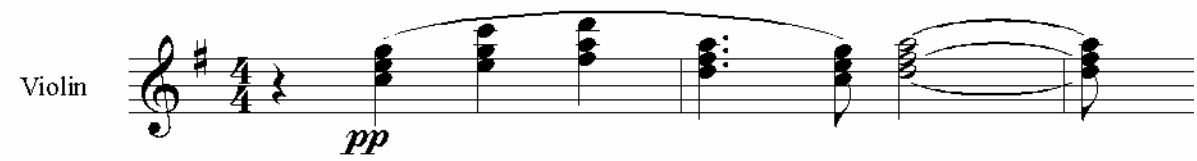
measures in the middle of the motive. The additional melodic material features triplets which set up cross rhythms.

Example 27: Preludio, m. 15-21. Flute, violin, viola, cello.



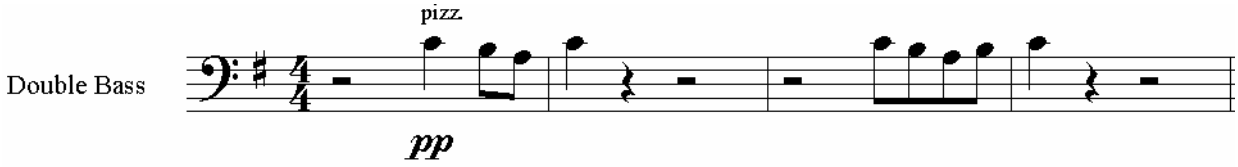
The two versions of the horn call are played by the horns in measures 21 through 27. This time the pedal point is given to the viola. The string motive first heard in measure 3 is heard again in measure 23, only this time it is harmonized in thirds.

Example 28: Preludio, m. 23-25. Violin I & II



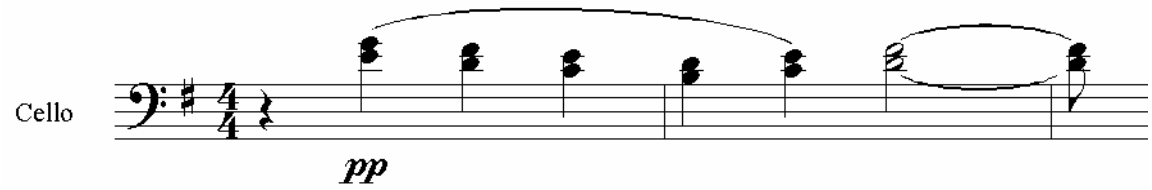
The lower string ostinato changes to pizzicato fragments which are heard intermittently in measures 22 to 29.

Example 29: Preludio, m. 22-25. Bass



A new motive is heard in thirds in the cello in measures 23 to 25.

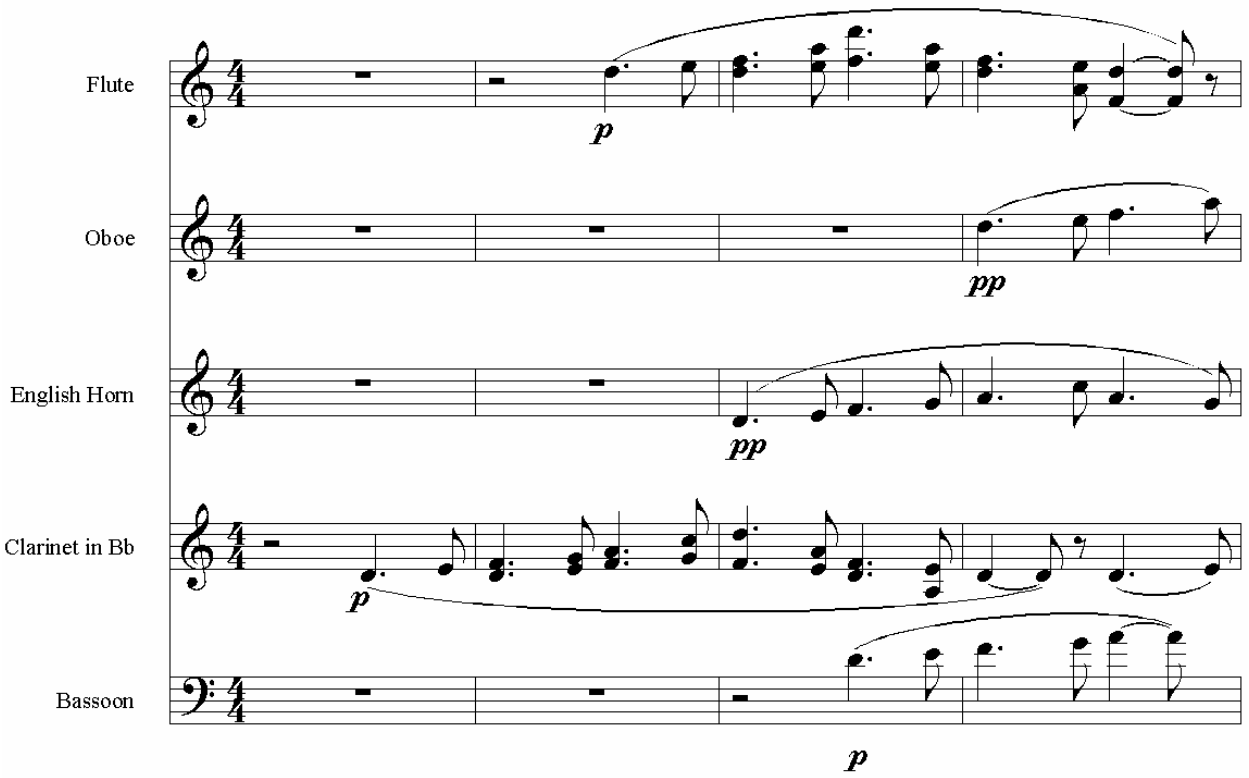
Example 30: Preludio, m. 23-25. Cello



Vaughan Williams began the motive again two measures later, however, changing the F# to F-natural. This motive combined with triads in the upper strings leads to the key change to no sharps or flats at measure 29. The Preludio had actually been in D dorian/C ionian since measure 9, with a brief return to D mixolydian/C lydian in measures 21-24. The key signature change officially established the change in modes.

At the key signature change, the woodwinds have imitative entrances that begin with scale passages (Ex. 31). The rhythm is that of the opening horn motive.

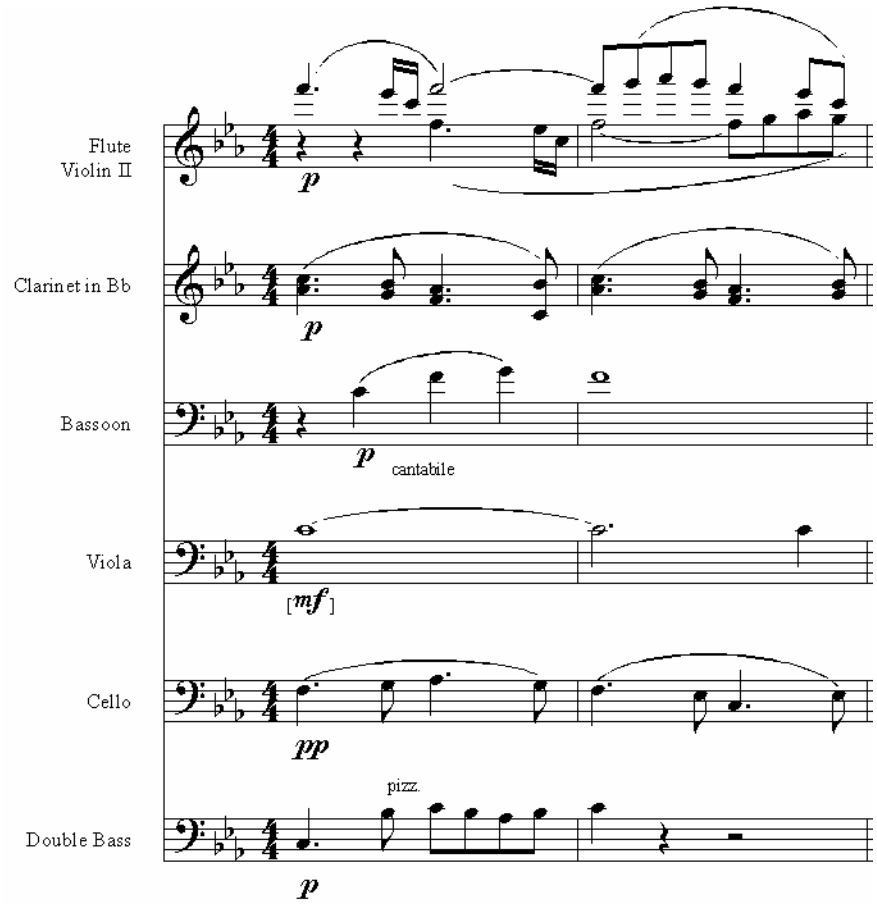
Example 31: Preludio, measures 28-31. Flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon



This passage in the woodwinds continues with the horn motive, the ostinato motive in the lower strings, and the string and flute motive from measure 12, once again in canon, but with entrances two measures apart rather than two beats apart, being added.

A key signature change to three flats occurs at measure 40 (Ex. 32) where melodic and rhythmic motives heard previously are combined.

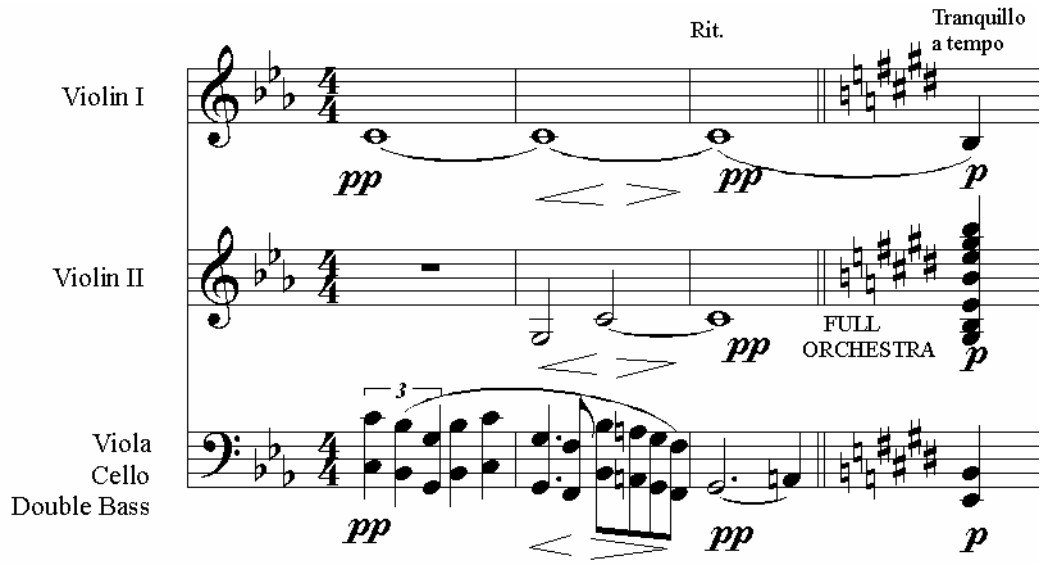
Example 32: Preludio, measures 40-41. Fl., cl., bsn., vln., vla., cello, bass.



The tonality of this section is that of F dorian/C aeolian, however, the mode change is not clearly established until measure 45 when the note D-natural appears. By measure 48 the tonality has changed to C dorian.

The B section of the exposition begins with the key change to E major at measure 60. The progression used to move from C dorian to E major sounds like a plagal cadence in E major with the minor form of the subdominant chord being used. The note C in the violin part, which is the final of the C dorian mode, moves down a half-step to the note B. The lower strings move stepwise from G to A-natural to B. The *ritardando* in the measure preceding the key change to E major adds to the effectiveness of the progression.

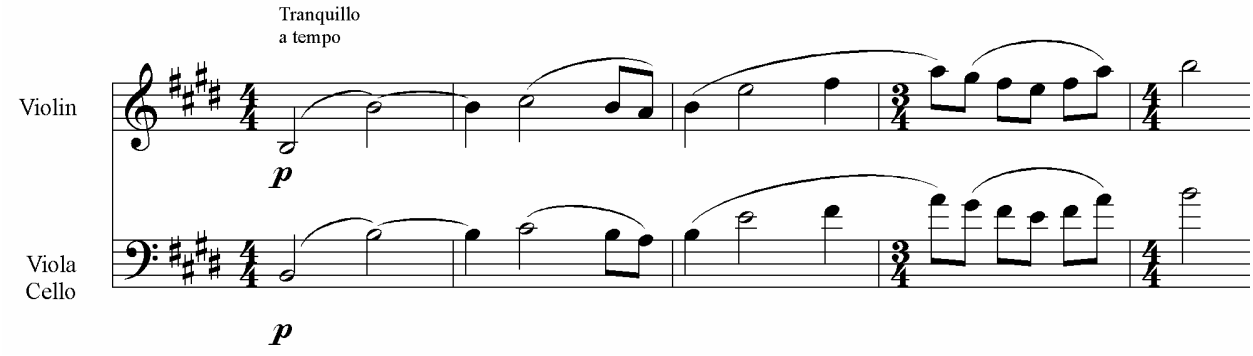
Example 33: Preludio, measures 57-60. Violin, viola, cello, bass



The B section contrasts in a number of ways with the A section. It is the first time that a major tonality has been used in the Preludio. Following 59 measures of modal harmony, the bright sound that is unquestionably a major key and the addition of the trumpets and timpani to the orchestration add to the distinction between these two parts of the exposition. A further differentiation between the two areas occurs in the texture. The writing in the B section is predominantly homophonic as opposed to the polyphonic A section.

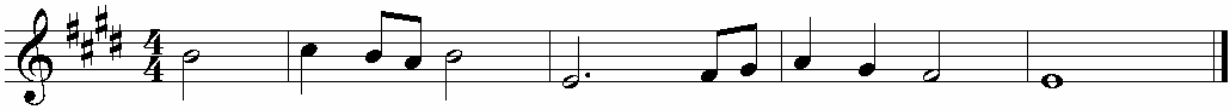
The first theme of the B section is introduced in the strings in measure 60 (Ex. 34). The theme is a flowing majestic one and shares motives with the thematic material heard in the upper strings in measures 7 to 9 in the A section. Both themes contain a rising fourth followed by a rising major second and a four-note descending scale passage followed by an ascending major second. Heard against the theme in E major are passages featuring dotted quarter notes followed by eighth notes in the winds—the same rhythmic motive heard throughout the A section.

Example 34: Preludio, m. 60-64. Violin, viola, cello



It has been pointed out by a number of writers[28] that the melodic contour of the first theme in the B section is almost identical to that of the "Alleluia" section of Vaughan Williams's hymn tune *Sine nomine* (Ex.35). In the third measure of example 34, the melodic line ascends a perfect fourth rather than descending a perfect fifth, as in the end of the second measure to the beginning of the third measure of example 35. This creates an octave transposition of the melody.

Example 35: Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Sine nomine*, excerpt



The B section is in the key of E major only nine measures before the music begins a shift to the key of E minor in measure 69. It is almost as if Vaughan Williams was able to write only a brief passage in a major tonality before being compelled to return to a modal sound.

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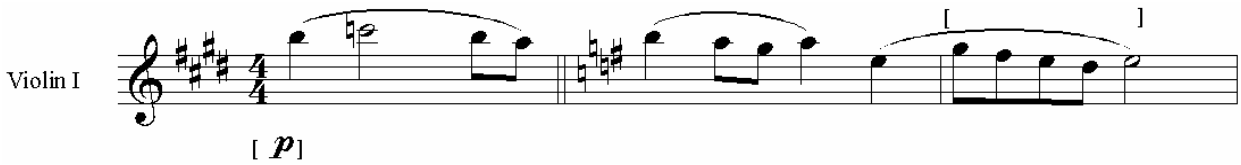
[28]James Day, *Vaughan Williams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 204; Kennedy, *Works*, 281; Pike, 198; and others.

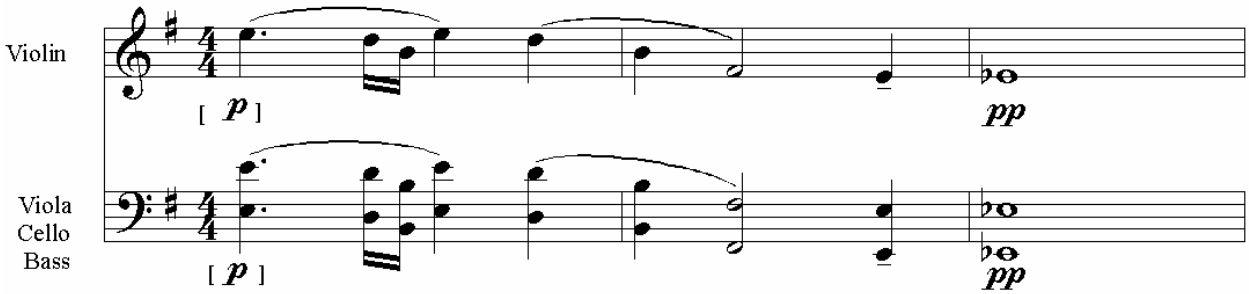
The E minor theme shares a five-note melodic pattern (m. 71) with the lower string ostinato pattern that was in the A section.

Example 36: Preludio, m. 69-71. 1st violin.



A codetta begins at measure 77 and serves as a transition to the development section. The string motive from measure 12 is played by the woodwinds at measure 77 and answered by the strings at measure 79. A descending minor second is added to the end of the motive.

Example 37: Preludio, measures 79-81. Violin, viola, cello, bass

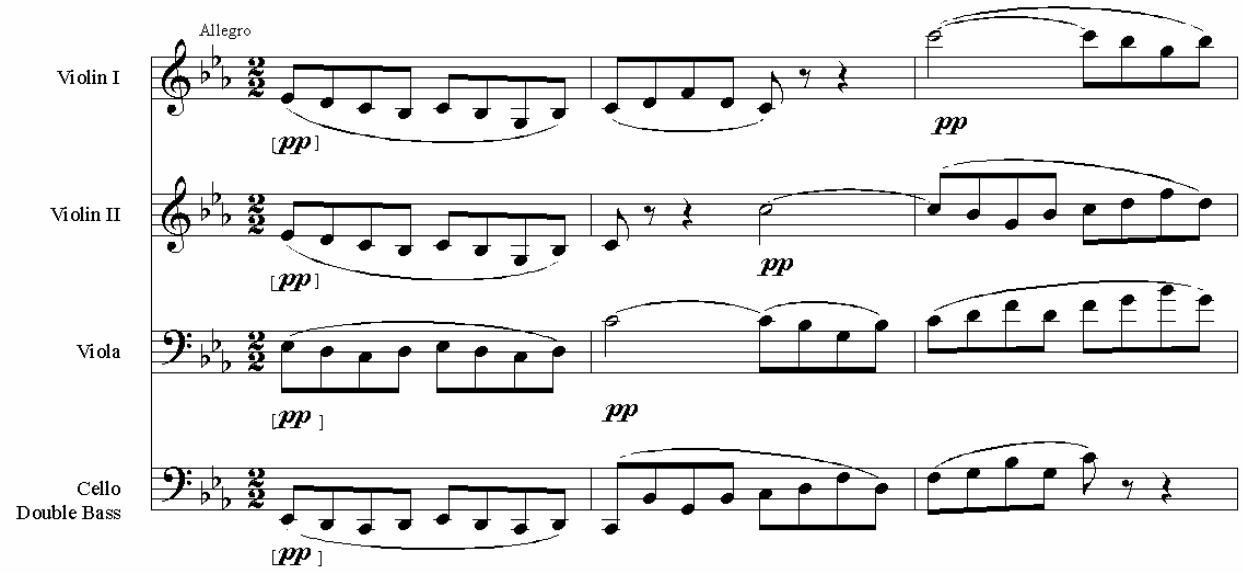


The bassoons play a minor key version of the horn motive at measure 80. The motive from measure 12 is repeated by the winds at measure 83 with the strings answering two beats later. The descending minor second that was added to the motive serves as a transition to the key of C aeolian. This minor second motive will be used extensively throughout the development section. The major and modal versions of the horn motive used throughout the exposition differed by a minor second. The bassoons play the minor key version of the horn motive again at measure 87. They are accompanied by the strings playing melodic material from the ostinato

figure from the A section of the exposition. This motive will be expanded by interval size, length, and range in the development section.

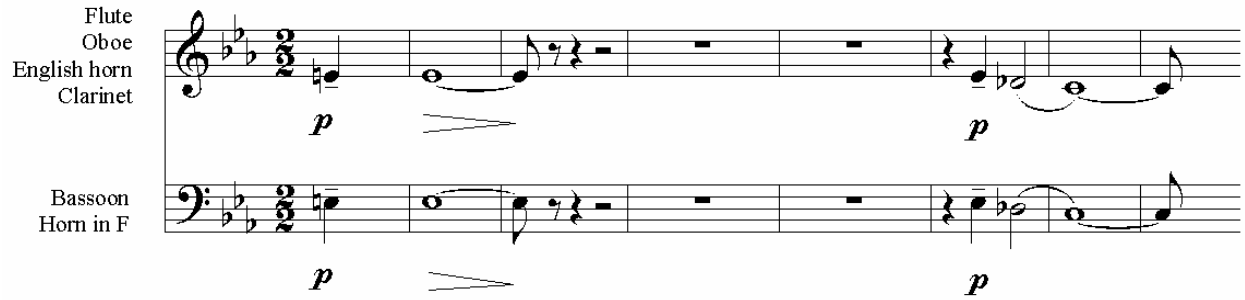
The development section begins in measure 91 with a tempo change to allegro and a time signature change to 2/2. A background in the strings of running eighth notes with a pentatonic sound is heard through most of the development. The melodic patterns used in the string passages are built mainly on seconds and thirds. The interval of a fourth is used infrequently. When the interval of a fourth does occur, it is usually at the end of a three to four measure series of eighth notes.

Example 38: Preludio, m. 92-94. Violin, viola, cello, bass



The first of a series of motives of a descending half step, a descending whole step followed by a descending half step, and a descending half step followed by a descending whole step begins at measure 97 of the development section.

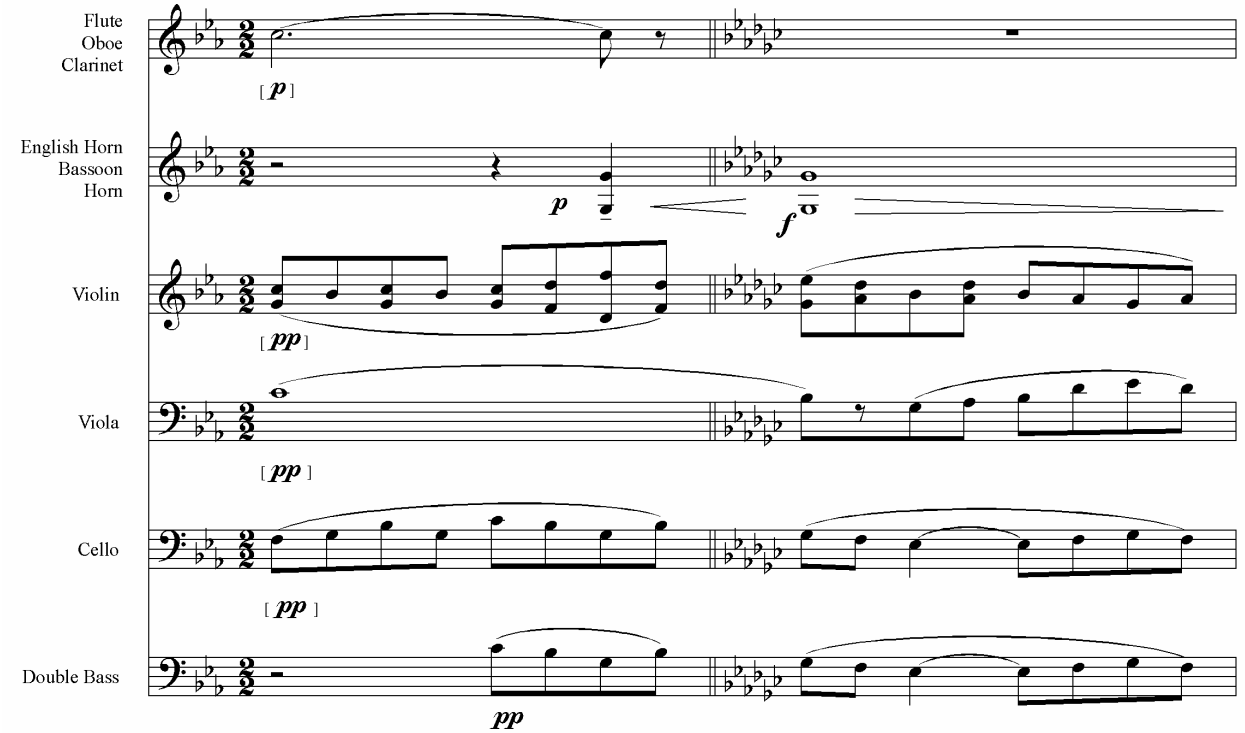
Example 39: Preludio, m. 97-104. Flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon, horn.



In measures 104 to 110, Vaughan Williams developed the descending second motive in the winds by using it in stretto and by expanding it to a series of falling seconds. He added the interval of a descending third near the end of each series of descending seconds.

Vaughan Williams used the descending second motive to modulate from C aeolian in measure 117 to E-flat aeolian in measure 118.

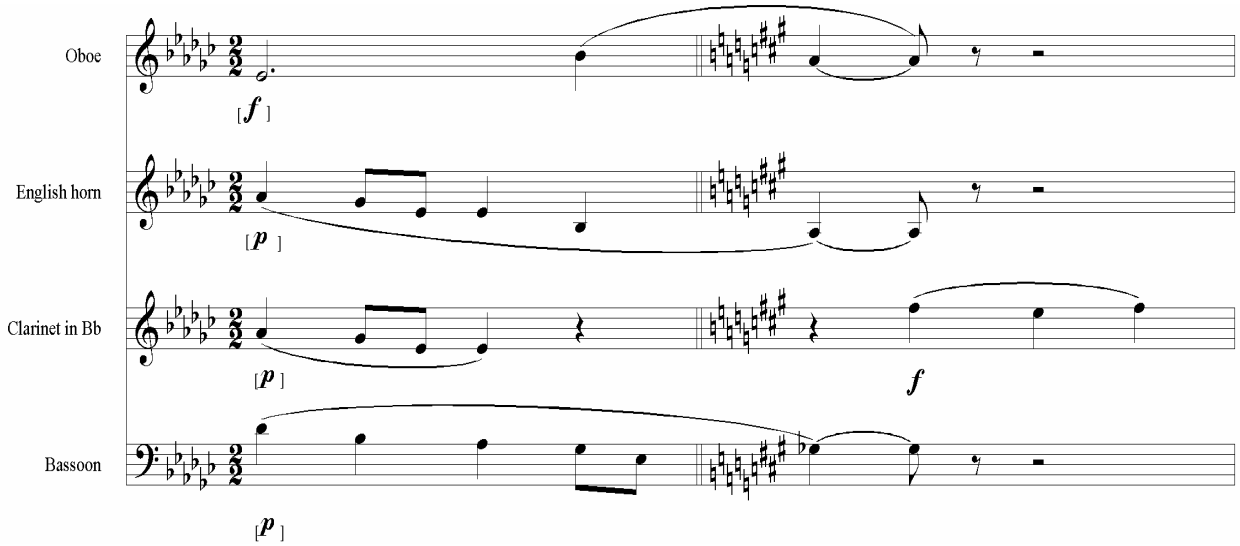
Example 40: Preludio, m. 117-118. Fl., ob., Eng. hrn., cl., bsn., hrn., vln., vla., cello, bass



Beginning at measure 120, the woodwinds have repeated contrapuntal entrances of the three-note descending second motive. Each entrance begins on a weak beat.

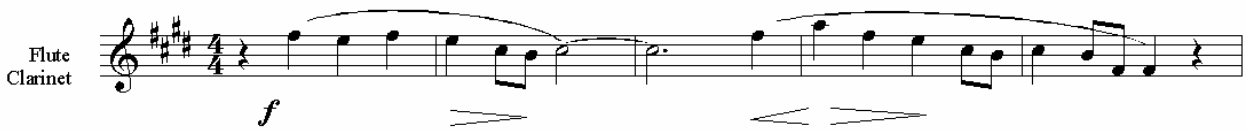
Vaughan Williams used an idea similar to the one he used in measures 117 to118 to change from e-flat aeolian to f-sharp aeolian in measures 128-129.

Example 41: Preludio, m. 128-129. Oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon



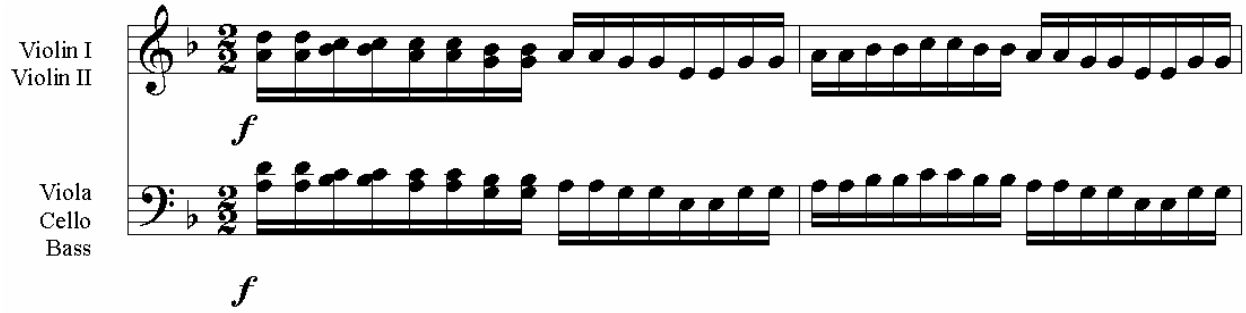
At measure 129, Vaughan Williams introduced a new theme in the woodwinds. Based on a pentatonic scale, the theme uses the pitches F#-A-B-C#-E. Emphasis is given to intervals of a major second, a minor third, and a perfect fourth.

Example 42: Preludio, m. 129-133. Flute, clarinet



Vaughan Williams once again used the descending second motive to aid in moving to a new modal center of A phrygian beginning in measure 137. A sixteenth note ostinato pattern begins in the strings at measure 138.

Example 43: Preludio, m. 138-139. Violin, viola, cello, bass

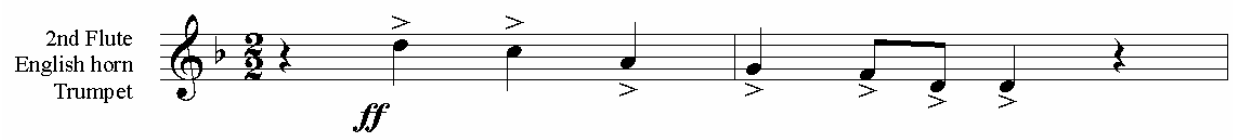


Against the sixteenth note passages in the strings, the winds have ascending sequences built on the descending second motives.

The passage beginning in measure 138 in A phrygian, which has an agitated feeling in the strings through much of the section, can be seen as a substitute for a dominant preparation for the return to the mode of D mixolydian for the beginning of the recapitulation. As the movement has been modal with the exception of a limited number of measures in E major up to this point, a mode based on a note a fifth above one of the modes used in the opening measures of the movement would be a likely choice of tonal area for the section preceding the recapitulation.

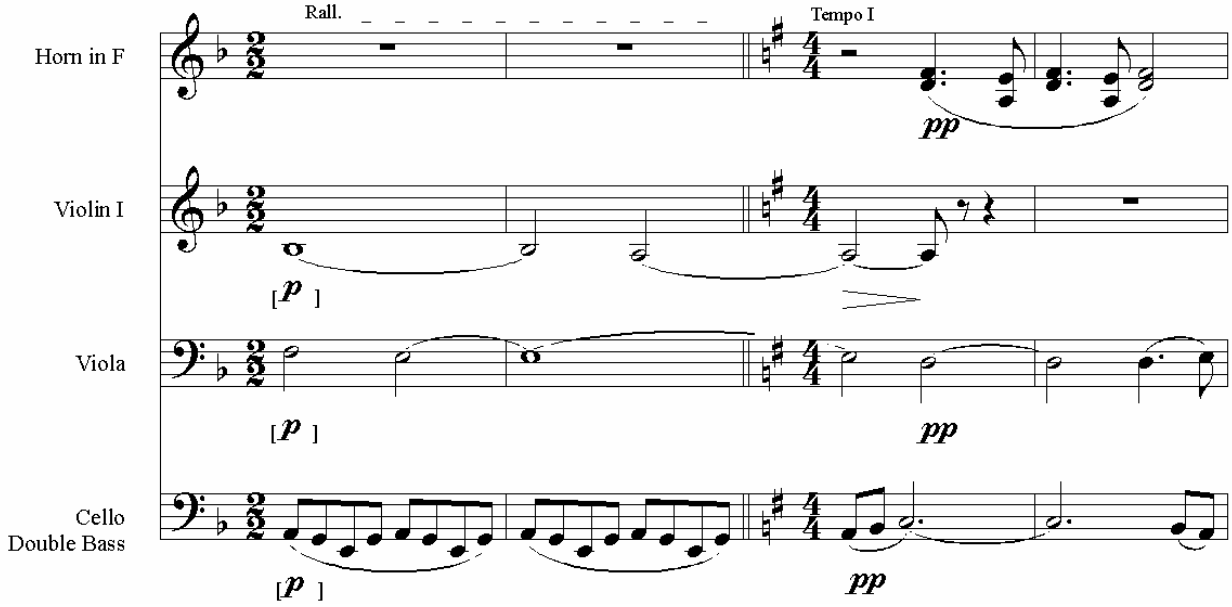
Beginning in measure 151, the winds have imitative entrances in stretto. The motive is pentatonic and similar in melodic contour to the ending of the pentatonic theme that began at measure 130. The ending interval of the motive is changed to a minor third; however, the rhythmic emphasis of the last three pitches remains the same.

Example 44: Preludio, m. 151-152. 2nd flute, English horn, trumpet



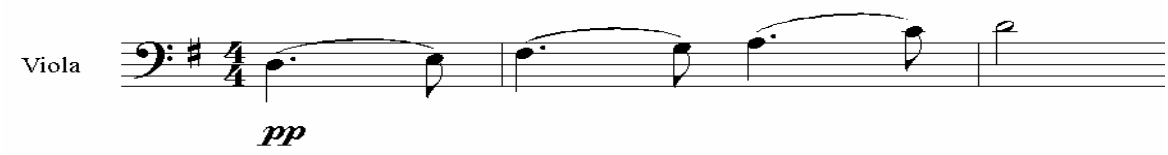
The ostinato figure in the strings is modified to eighth notes at measure 157 and the dynamic level has moved from *fortissimo* to *piano* as the development section comes to an end. Falling half steps in the violin and viola and an ascending scale passage in the lower strings are used in the transition from the development to the recapitulation (Ex. 45). The note A that is tied across to the beginning of the third beat in the first measure of the recapitulation gives a very brief triadic sound to the horn motive.

Example 45: Preludio, m. 162-165. Horn, violin, viola, cello, bass



The recapitulation begins at measure 164 with a pedal point on C, the horn motto theme, and a return to Tempo I. This time there is a sustained note D followed by a scale passage in the viola part, so that for part of two measures there are two pitches—C and D—sounding as pedal points. The scale that is played by the viola in Ex. 46 is the mixolydian version of the scale that was heard in the woodwinds at measure 28. Imitative entrances by the woodwinds follow the viola scale passage beginning in measure 166.

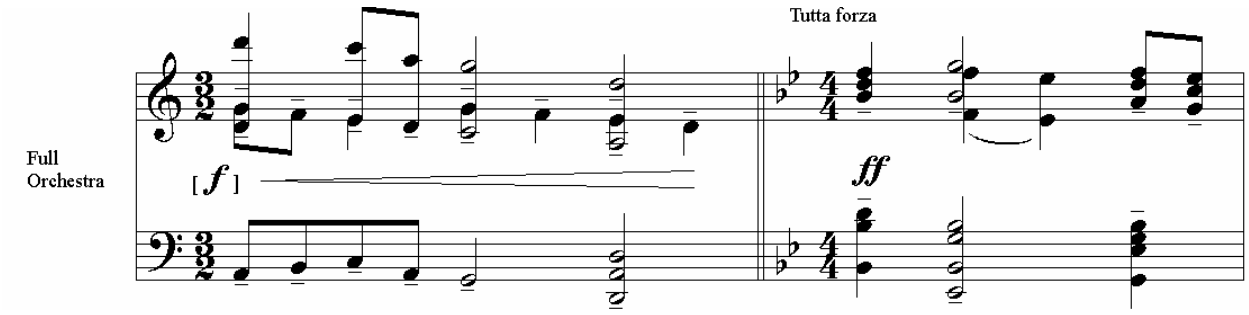
Example 46: Preludio, m. 165-167. Viola



The themes from the A section of the exposition appear in the recapitulation in their original modes. Imitative entrances of a motive heard in the bassoon in measure 40, which share the first three pitches of the string motive from measure 3, begin at measure 175. The trombones enter with this motive at measure 179. This is the first time that the trombones have been used in the orchestration of the Preludio.

The first theme from the B section of the exposition returns in measure 185 with a key change to B-flat major, a time signature change to 4/4, and a dynamic level of *ff*. For this key change, Vaughan Williams used three pitches from the Dorian mode (D-E-A) and arranged them as open fifths beginning on the note D. The note E then resolves to D, leaving an open fifth using two notes common to the D dorian mode and B-flat major scales.

Example 47: Preludio, m. 184-185. Full orchestra, reduction



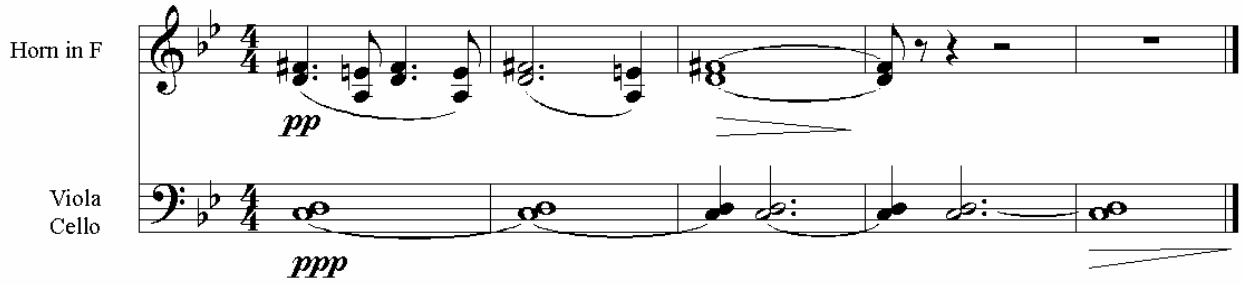
The choice of B-flat major for the return of the first theme of the B section would appear to be an unusual one according to traditional harmony; however, based on note relationships in the opening measures of the Preludio, it may be a logical choice. The key of B-flat is a tritone

away from the key of E that was used for this theme in the exposition. A tritone was created in the first measure of the Preludio with the note C in the lower strings sounding with the F# in the 1st horn. The notes C (final of the C lydian mode) and D (final of the mixolydian mode) were heard in the opening measure of the Preludio and will be sounding in the closing measure of the Preludio. The key choices for the B theme could also be seen as revolving around that relationship as the note E is a whole step above D and B-flat is a whole step below C.

Vaughan Williams treated the B section differently in the recapitulation by having the entire orchestra playing *fortissimo* as opposed to the dynamic level of *piano* in the exposition. The strings had the majority of the melodic material in the exposition. In the recapitulation, the melodic material is spread out over the entire orchestra. Instead of going to the parallel minor key for the second theme of the B section, Vaughan Williams used the material in several keys and modes—G major to G aeolian to G major to E-flat major to G aeolian.

The movement ends with pedal points on C and D and the horn motto (as seen in Ex. 48). The dual modality that was set up in the opening of the Preludio has not been resolved; however, as the dynamic marking is *ppp*, the dissonance fades away.

Example 48: Preludio, m. 233-237. Horns, viola, and cello



Structural devices that Vaughan Williams used in the Preludio were accelerandos or ritardandos at the beginning and the end of the major sections of the movement. Key changes

occurred frequently with many modal/tonal areas lasting ten measures or less. The use of modes rather than major/minor tonal areas facilitated these frequent changes as a dominant/tonic relationship was not required. He could subtly move from mode to mode by the alteration of one note. While Vaughan Williams often blended one modal section into another, the occasional strong shift in tonal centers such as moving from C dorian to E major in the exposition, created a contrast with the subtle shifts in modal centers.

Vaughan Williams used ostinato figures throughout the first movement, most often in the lower strings and bassoon. Canons and imitative entrances are common features of this movement. Stretto created by the use of imitative entrances separated by a few beats is used throughout the Preludio. When Vaughan Williams used canon in the Preludio, the second entrance frequently occurred on a different beat of the measure than the first entrance. Often only the first measure or two of the second entrance would be an exact imitation of the first entrance, and then he would modify the melodic material.

By the use of dual modal centers, Vaughan Williams incorporated modern techniques while still relying on what he viewed as traits of traditional English folk songs for much of his inspiration. Vaughan Williams was able to use his own advice of not setting out to do something original for the sake of novelty. The outcome was that the Preludio bears Vaughan Williams's own distinct stamp of musical expression.

Scherzo

The form of the Scherzo movement is like that of a modified 5-part rondo with the sections being: A—measures 1-140; B—measures 141-292; A —measures 293-346; C—measures 347-423; and A —measures 424-471. The A section is 140 measures in length, the B

section is 152 measures, the A section is 54 measures, the C section is 77 measures, and the A section is 48 measures in length. The A section subdivides into *a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d*, a binary form. The B section subdivides into *e-c-e-a-e*, a 5-part rondo. The A section subdivides into *a-b* followed by a transition that hints at both *a* and *b*, a modified ternary form. The C section subdivides into *f-a-f-a-f*, a 5-part rondo. The A section consists of *a*. The initial motive (*a*) returns in the A and A sections in its original mode. An unusual feature of this rondo form is the lengthy B section. Another modification made by Vaughan Williams to the rondo form is that motive *a* is found in both the B and C sections of the Scherzo.

As with the opening of the Preludio, the modality of the opening of the A section of the Scherzo is unclear. The opening motive consists of a series of ascending fourths[1] using the notes E, A, and D, then the motive is repeated with the notes G and C added. With a pandiatonic sound to an opening that focuses on the note E, a modal center is not clearly defined. When the flute, bassoon, 2nd violin, and bass enter with *b* at measure 32, the missing notes of F and B are filled in and Vaughan Williams appears to be working with the phrygian mode. Another characteristic in common with the Preludio is that a number of key signatures are used in the Scherzo. As with the Preludio, more tonalities are used than those indicated by key signature changes.

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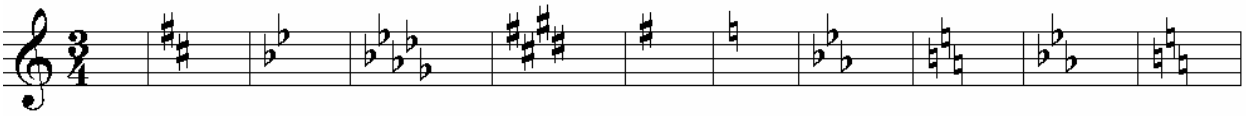
[1]The Scherzo of Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony also begins with a unison motive built on ascending fourths (D-G-C).

Example 49: Key signatures used in the Scherzo listed in the order in which they appear

m.1	m.125	m.163	m.173	m.184	m.197	m.292	m.358	m.396	m.405	m.437
E phry/ ambig	B aeo	G aeo	B-flat aeo	C# aeo	E aeo	E phry/ ambig	C aeo	A aeo/	C aeo	E phry/ A aeo/ dor



The published score of Symphony No. 5 indicates the tempo for the Scherzo as being "presto misterioso"; however, neither of the manuscript versions of the symphony bear the word "misterioso." The Music Department at Oxford University Press indicated that in a letter dated 14 November 1951, Vaughan Williams wrote that he had sent a revised copy of the symphony to them and asked that requested parts and score be updated. One of the revision sheets indicates: "Page 30: Presto misterioso"[2]

The *a* motive moves from the lower strings to the upper strings in the opening bars of the Scherzo. The strings are muted in the opening of the movement and remain muted until measure 347. A hemiola effect is created beginning in the fourth measure. Vaughan Williams used hemiolas throughout the Scherzo.

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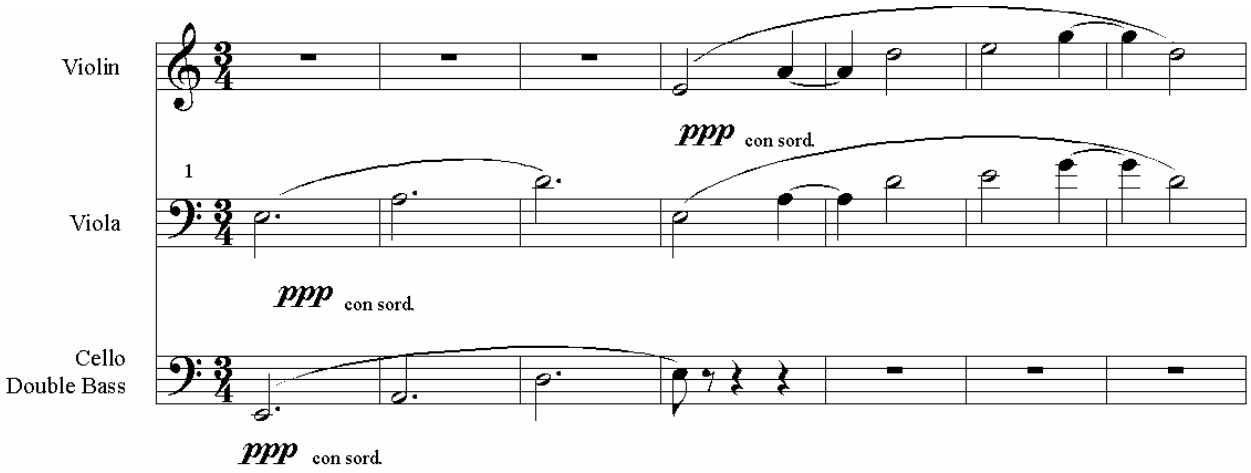
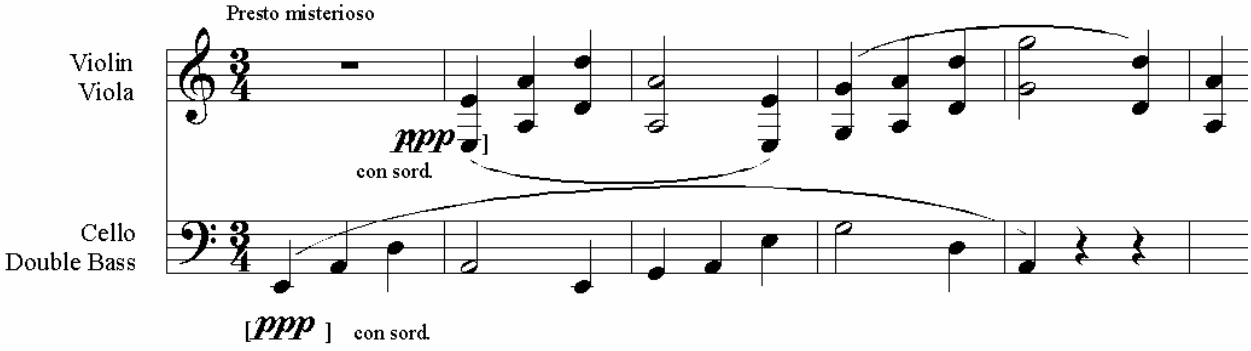
[2]Emily Chelu of the Music Department of Oxford University Press responded to inquiry regarding when the word "misterioso" was added to the score.

Example 50: Scherzo, m. 1-7. Violin, viola, cello, bass.



In addition to the dominant feature of ascending and descending fourths, the constantly shifting metrical patterns of irregular phrase lengths dominate the opening of the movement. The unison motive continues until a two-voice canon begins at measure 22 between the cello and bass and the 1st violin and viola. The second voice of the canon is slightly modified.

Example 51: Scherzo, m. 22-26. 1st violin, viola, cello, bass.

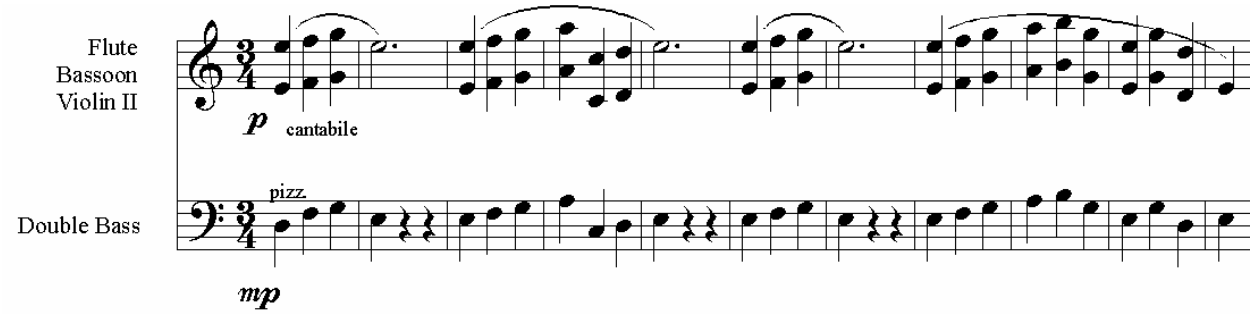


The 2nd violin has a separate part during the canon between the other string instruments (Ex. 52). The first four pitches of the 2nd violin line foreshadow the beginning of the theme of the *b* section.

Example 52: Scherzo, m. 22-23. 2nd violin.

The theme of the *b* section is presented by the flute, bassoon, 2nd violin, and bass beginning in measure 32 (Ex. 52a). The theme is in the mode of E phrygian. The flute, bassoon, and 2nd violin have legato phrases while the bass is marked pizzicato. The opening of the theme, with its stepwise motion, contrasts with the ascending fourth motive of the *a* section. The end of the theme of the *b* section has the notes E-G-D-E in common with the motive of the *a* section. The theme of the *b* section begins with a two-measure motive. The second and fourth phrases of the theme expand this motive by adding melodic material between the first and second measures of the motive.

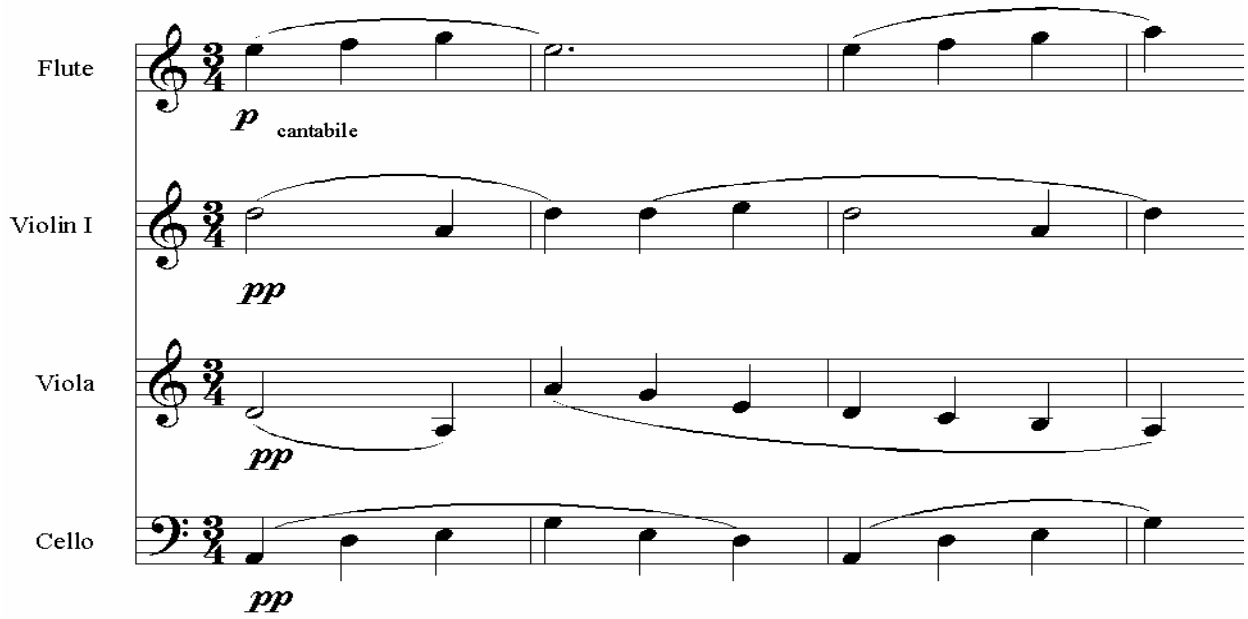
Example 52a: Scherzo, m. 32-42. Flute, bassoon, 2nd violin, bass.



When the *b* section begins, the cello continues with a six note ostinato figure that began at measure 26, repeating every 2 measures. The pitch D is heard as the second and final notes of

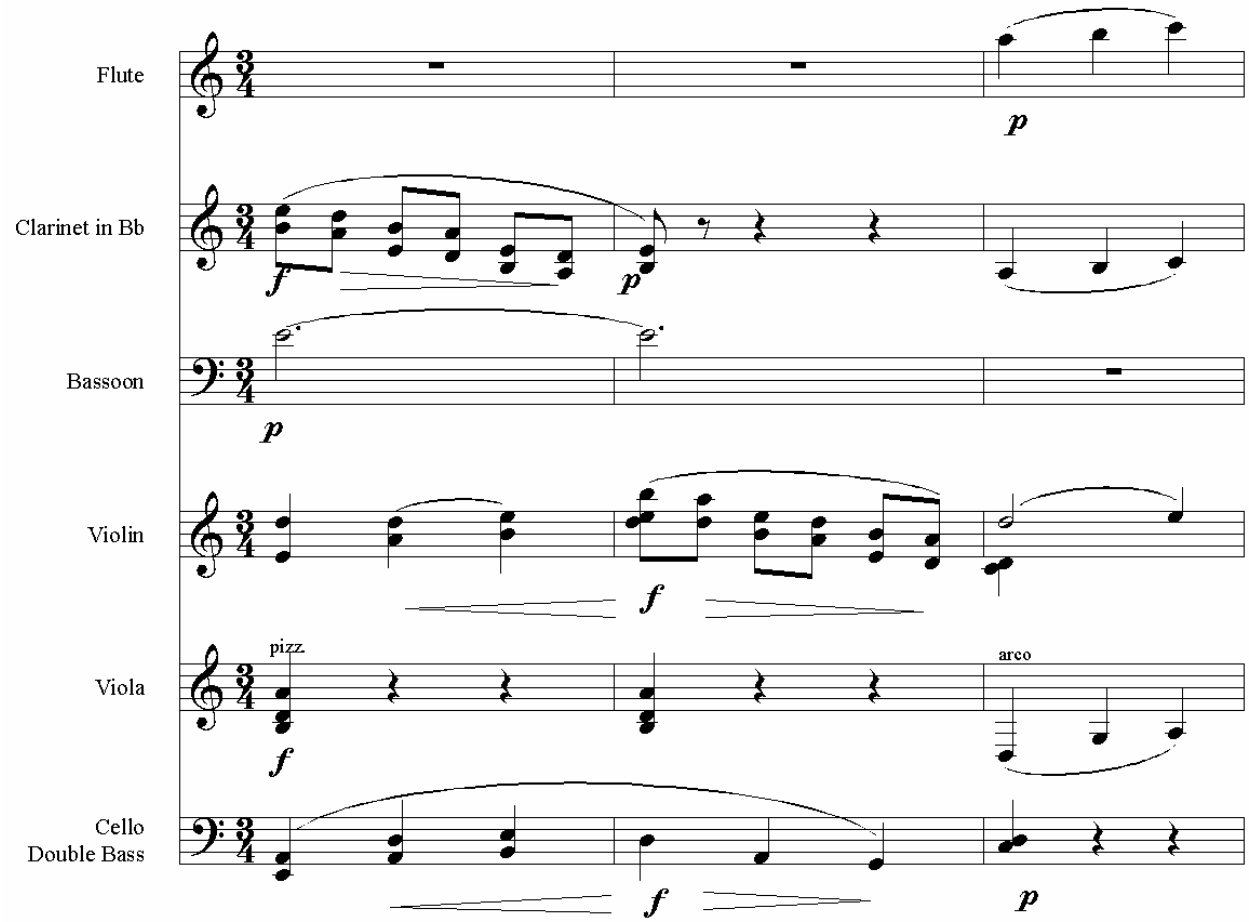
the six note ostinato figure. The 1st violin has a pattern with the note D on the first beat of each measure. In the second measure of the passage, the viola has an A aeolian/dorian scale passage. The focus on the note D in the accompanying material, the scale passage in the viola, and the E phrygian theme combine to create the impression of ambiguous modality. Vertical intervals of major seconds and minor sevenths are dominant in the passage.

Example 53: Scherzo, m. 32-35. Flute, 1st violin, viola, cello.



Vaughan Williams used a short 2-measure passage in measures 42 and 43 (Ex. 54) to move to a setting of the theme of the *b* section in the mode of A aeolian.

Example 54: Scherzo, m. 42-44. Flute, clarinets, bassoon, violins, viola, cello, bass



In measure 44, the theme of the *b* section is heard in the flute, piccolo, and clarinet. This combination of instruments creates a different harmonic effect[3] than that created by the flute and bassoon. The ostinato passages continue in this section, but the ostinato moves to the 1st violin and viola. The 2nd violin, cello, and bass provide a pizzicato accompaniment to the melody. Harmonic major seconds continue to occur in this section but without a strong sense of dual modality.

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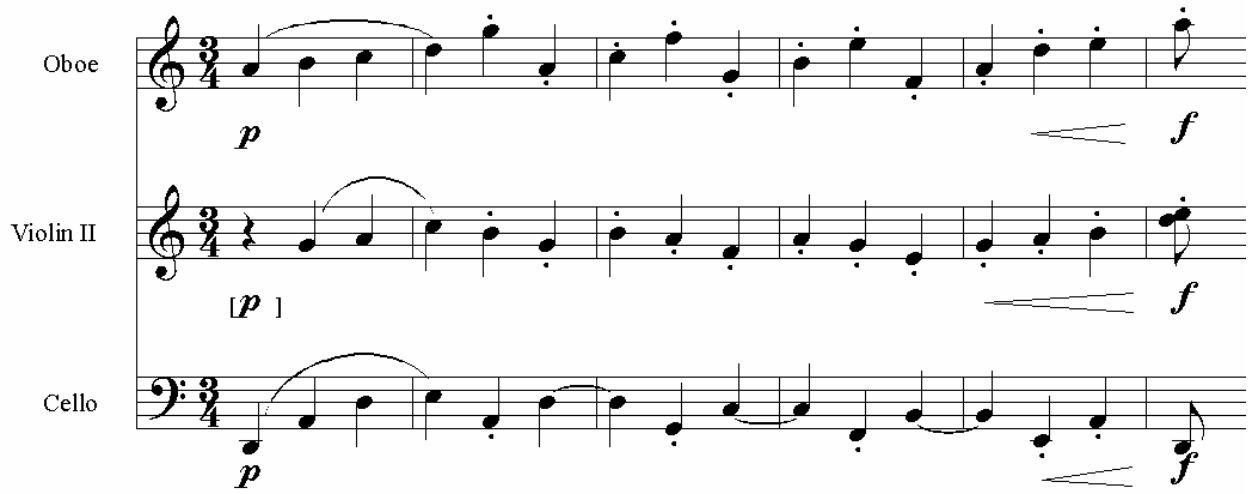
[3]While the flute, piccolo, and clarinet in A are playing unison pitches 1, 2, and 3 octaves apart, the clarinet is in the chalumeau (lowest) register, which creates odd harmonics, such as the 12th with the fundamental. This combination of instruments gives the impression of a mutation

At measure 54, motives from the end of the aeolian version of the second theme are repeated with staccato articulation. The accompanying material creates a number of harmonic major seconds.

Example 55: Scherzo, m. 54-59. Oboe, 2nd violin, cello.



In measures 59 to 64, Vaughan Williams used an eighth note figure that alternates between winds and strings to return to the phrygian mode. The figure is similar to the one he used to change to the aeolian mode. The horns and the cello accompany this figure with dotted half-notes on open fifths (D-A and E-B), as seen in Ex. 56. The dotted half note changes to a hemiola in the last two measures.

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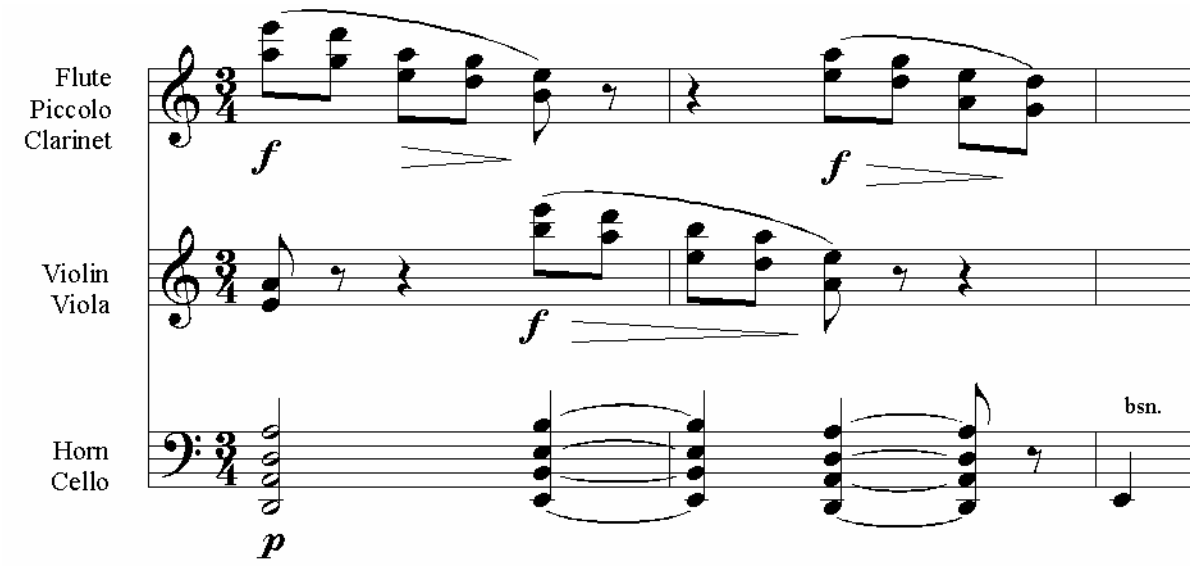
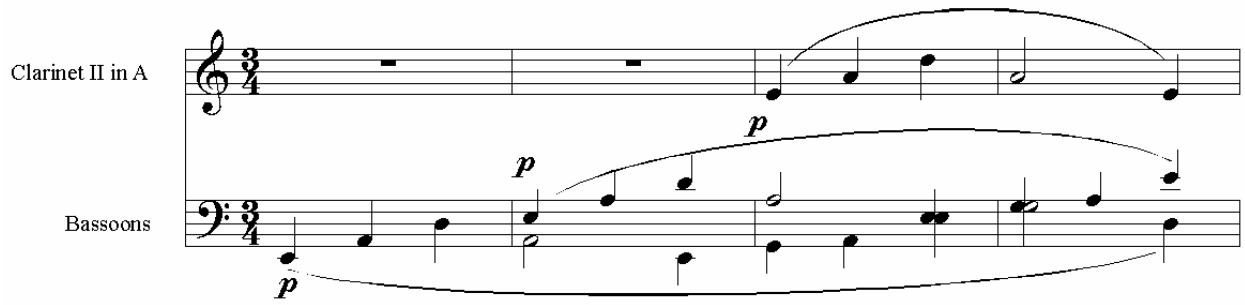
stop on the organ.

Example 56: Scherzo, m. 63-64. Fl., picc., cl., vln., vla., horn, cello



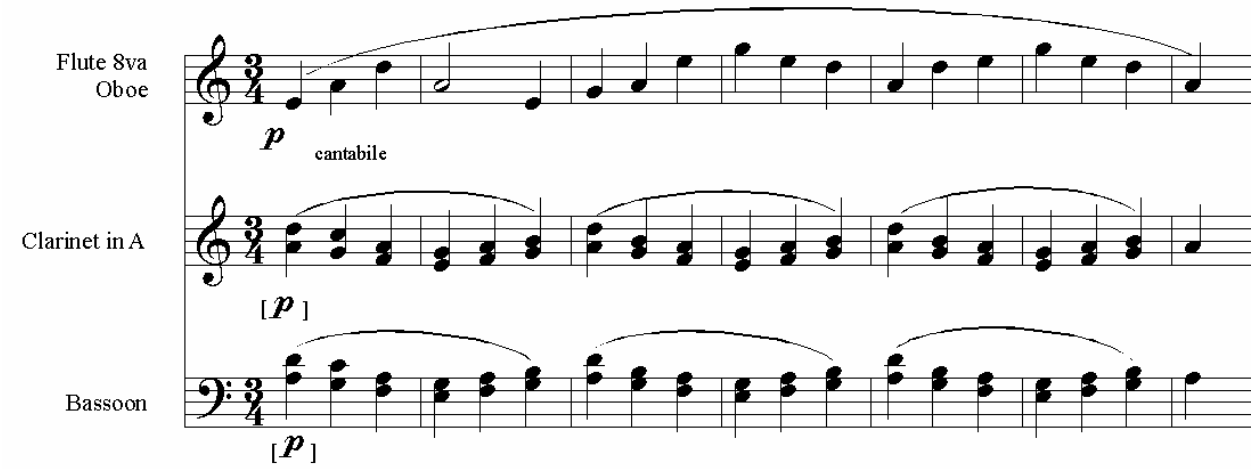
The return to the phrygian mode is also a return to the motivic material of the *a* section with the ascending fourths in the bassoon and clarinet occurring as imitative entrances, as seen in Ex. 57. Harmonic intervals of seconds and sevenths are common, as in beat 3 of measure 66, beats 1 and 3 of measure 67, and beats 1 and 3 of measure 68.

Example 57: Scherzo, m. 65-68. Clarinet and bassoon.



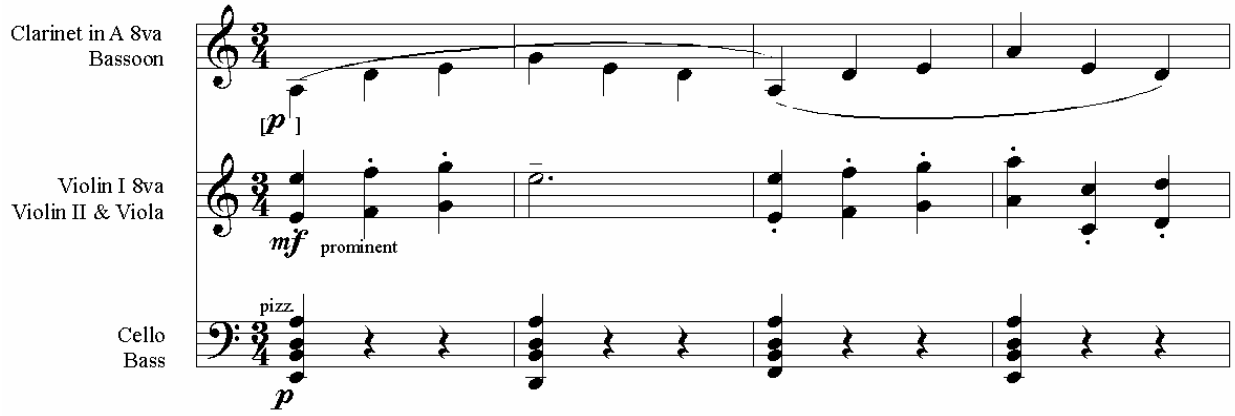
The motive occurs again at measure 75 with a homophonic setting of the material, as seen in Ex. 58.

Example 58: Scherzo, m. 75-81. Flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon.



A brief staccato setting of the *b* section is played by the upper strings in measures 81-84, with a pizzicato accompaniment in the lower strings, and the ostinato pattern in the clarinet and bassoon.

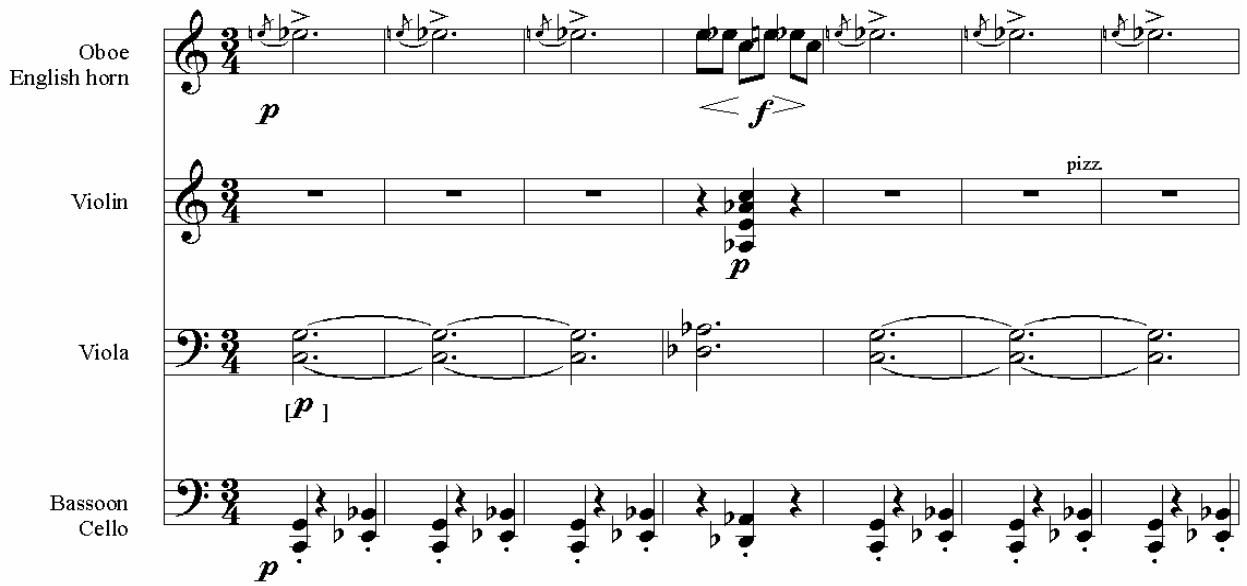
Example 59: Scherzo, m. 81-84. Clarinet, bassoon, violins, viola, cello, bass.



Vaughan Williams once again used the eighth-note passage to return to A aeolian in measure 87. The horns and bass accompany the passage with a hemiola pattern.

The *c* section begins at measure 98 (Ex. 60) where a motive of a descending second is introduced by the oboe and English horn.[4] The notation is that of a grace note followed by an accented dotted half note. The figure uses the notes E and E-flat and occurs three times. A measure of eighth notes in the oboe and English horn connects three more repetitions of the grace note and dotted half note figures. The passage, with the addition of staccato open 5ths in the cello and bassoon and sustained 5ths in the viola, creates an oriental sound. The *c* section is also used in the B section of the Scherzo. As in the A section, it feels like an interruption to the surrounding material.

Example 60: Scherzo, m. 98-104. Oboe, English horn, bassoon, violin, viola, cello.



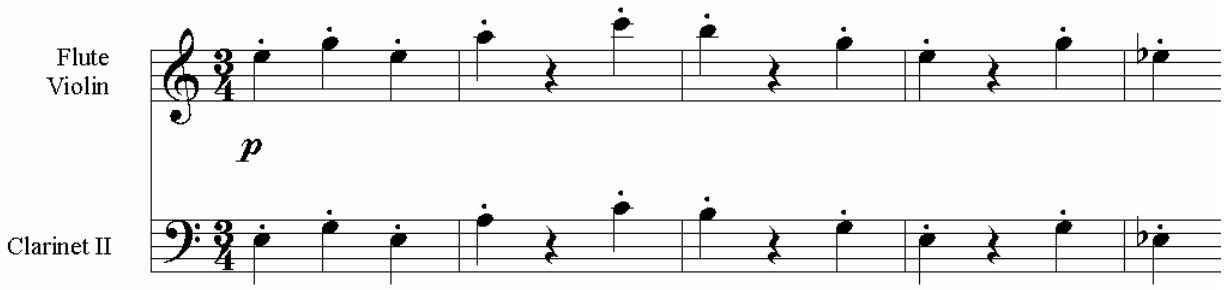
The staccato open fifth motive in the bassoons and cello is also used in other sections of the Scherzo independent of the grace note motive.

The *d* section begins in the flute, 2nd clarinet, and violin in measure 105 (Ex. 61). While the theme used in the *b* section was predominantly stepwise, with few leaps, the motive used in

[4]A motive of a descending second was used extensively in the Preludio.

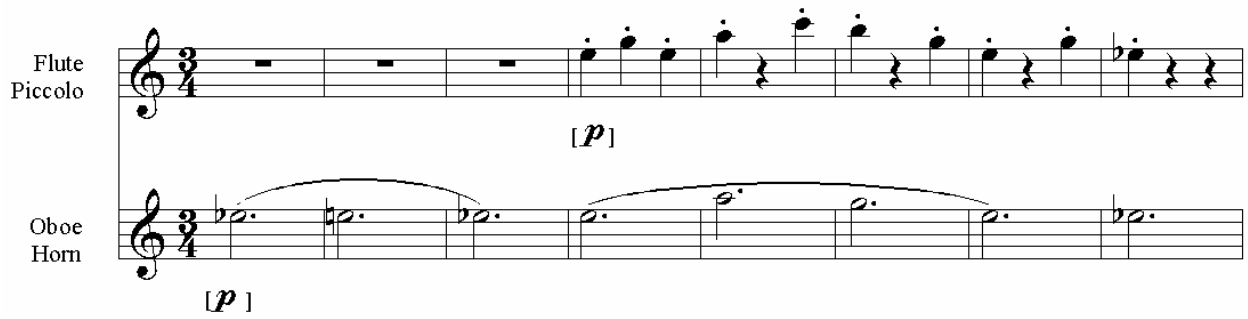
the *d* section has only one interval of a second. However, the motive is derived from the melodic material of the theme of the *b* section, having all but two pitches in common with the first appearance of that theme. Intervals of major and minor thirds are the most frequently used intervals in the motive in the *d* section. The motive uses the notes E-natural and E-flat that were heard in the grace note figure of section *c*. The first note of the motive is E-natural, and the final note of the motive is E-flat. A staccato quarter note figure in the lower strings and a pedal point in the 1st clarinet accompany this theme.

Example 61: Scherzo, m. 105-109. Flute, 2nd clarinet, violins.



A countermelody of dotted half notes begins as the motive ends in measure 109 (Ex. 62) and continues when the motive is repeated in measures 112-116. The countermelody features the notes E-natural and E-flat. Beginning with measure 112, in every measure except measure 114, the countermelody is sustaining the first beat of each measure of the motive for the duration of a measure.

Example 62: Scherzo, m. 109-116. Flute, piccolo, oboe, 1st horn.



The *c* section begins again at measure 117 in the 1st horn and oboe. It is accompanied by staccato open fifths in the 2nd clarinet, 2nd horn, cello, and bass; an ostinato in the 2nd violin; and open 5ths in tremolo in the viola.

The first key signature change occurs at measure 125 when the motive of the *d* section is heard in B aeolian in the bassoon and 2nd violin. The motive is accompanied by sustained pitches in the 1st violin and a pizzicato figure in the viola and cello.

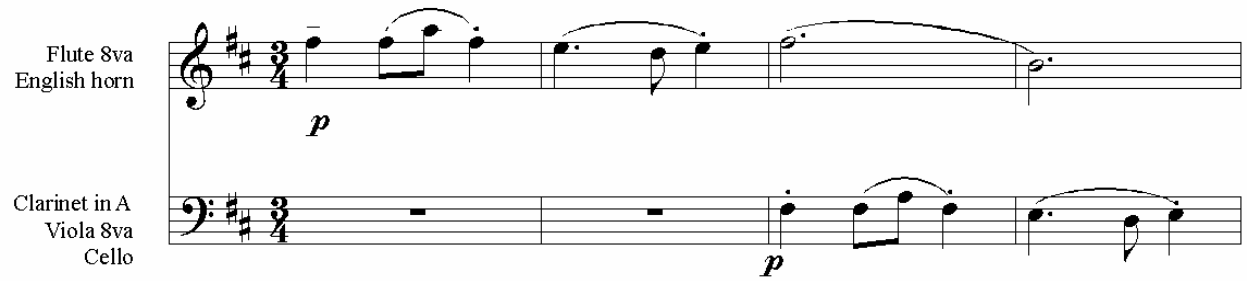
The descending eighth note figure that was introduced in measure 101 is used as an interlude before a repeat of the motive of the *d* section by the flute, oboe, 1st bassoon and viola at measure 132 with an accompaniment of pizzicato figures and a dotted half note countermelody. The descending eighth note figure is heard in sequence. It is similar in melodic structure to the figure that connects the series of grace note figures in the *c* section.

Vaughan Williams gave the *d* section motive to a number of combinations of instruments and varied the accompanying material slightly each time the theme was presented. An extended version of the motive is given to the violins at measure 135.

The B section of the scherzo begins when the *e* section is introduced in measure 141 in the flutes and English horn (Ex. 63). The *e* section motive begins with the first three pitches of

the motive of the *d* section. The clarinet, viola, and cello repeat the first two measures of the passage two measures later.

Example 63: Scherzo, m. 141-144. Flute, English horn, clarinet, viola, cello.



The *c* section is heard again in measures 145 to 147. The oboe and horn are accompanied by ostinato eighth note figures in the violin and cello and a pedal point followed by eighth notes in the viola. The grace note motive is heard two measures later, but for only one measure.

The *e* section returns at measure 151 where the motive is played by the 1st clarinet and bassoons. The motive is accompanied by eighth notes in the upper strings, pizzicato fifths in the cello and bass, and a dotted half note figure in the 2nd clarinet.

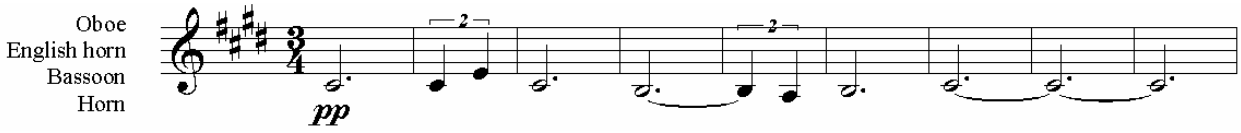
A transitional section begins in measure 156. The transition features ostinato patterns, staccato open fifths, and a pedal point. Vaughan Williams used the transition to move from G aeolian to B-flat aeolian.

At measure 173 the key signature changes to five flats. The *a* section returns at measure 174. The strings play two-measure length eighth note ostinato passages with the 1st violin and viola alternating with the 2nd violin and cello. Against this is heard the ascending fourth motive of the *a* section in the trombones. The motive begins with dotted half notes then changes to half notes. Open fifths return in the clarinet, bassoon, horn, and bass in measure 181. This leads to a

key signature change to four sharps in measure 184. The ascending fourth motive continues in the low brass at the change to the mode of C# aeolian at measure 184.

The *e* section returns at measure 188 (Ex. 64). The material that began as a four measure motive when the *e* section was first heard in measure 141 becomes a fully developed theme in this section. The English horn, clarinet, bassoon, horn, and bass have an augmented version of the *e* section theme. The upper four instruments play long notes in unison while the bass is pizzicato. Against this is eighth note motion in the upper strings. When the theme returns in a harmonized version, it functions as a chorale.

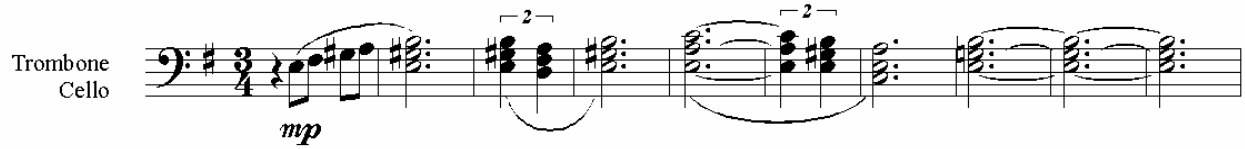
Example 64: Scherzo, m. 188-196. Oboe, English horn, bassoons, horns.



Vaughan Williams used the open fifth idea once again beginning at measure 194 for a modulation to a key signature change to one sharp at measure 197. The mode is E aeolian. The string accompaniment in the violins, viola, and cello changes to short eighth note phrases with each instrument having its own line. The English horn, clarinet, bassoon, and horn have the *e* section theme beginning at measure 199. The open fifth material occurs from measure 206 to measure 212 and signals a brief tonality change to E major.

The trombones and cello have the theme beginning at measure 214 (Ex. 65). Now in its harmonized version, it functions as a chorale and is a combination of E major and E natural minor as it features pitches E-F#-G#-A-B of the major key and pitches E-F#-G-A-B-C-D-E of the minor one.

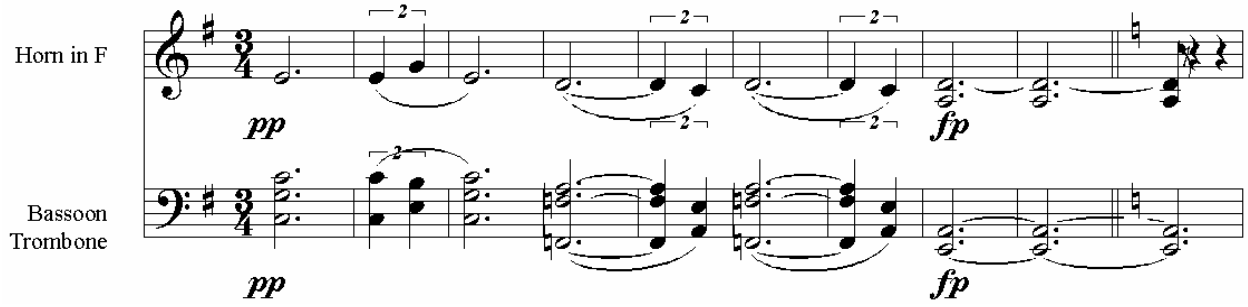
Example 65: Scherzo, m. 214-222. Trombones and cello



The chorale is preceded by a two-beat eighth note flourish in the cello. The violins and viola imitate the flourish in material that accompanies the chorale. The open fifths return in measure 220. The function of the open fifths is to separate the two phrases of the chorale. The flute and oboe have bits of the string flourish beginning in measure 220. The second phrase of the chorale begins in measure 223. The open fifths are played in the last three measures of the chorale.

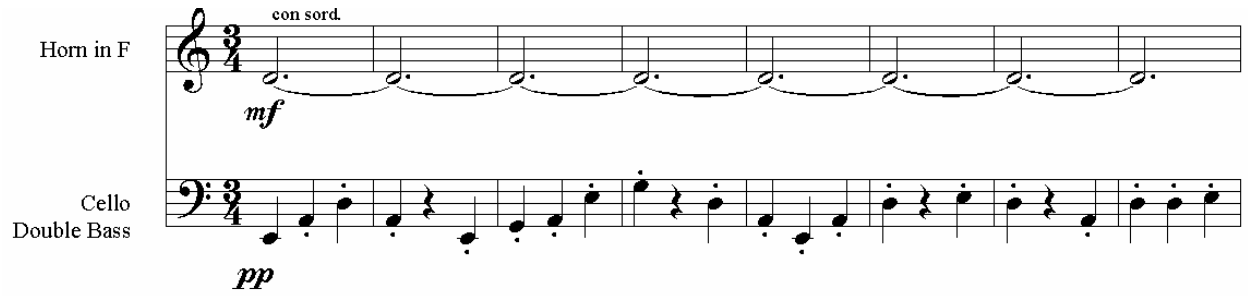
The chorale moves to the woodwinds in measure 232 where it is played in thirds with a flourish in the cello and a pedal point in the violins and viola as the only accompaniment. Open fifths in the trombones and lower strings and running eighths in the violins are heard at the end of the phrase. The second phrase of the chorale is heard in the woodwinds at measure 241 and once again it ends with open fifths as accompaniment. The chorale moves to the brass at measure 250. This time two phrases of the chorale are heard without a break between the two phrases. Motives from the chorale are used beginning at measure 283 (Ex. 66) to function as a retransition to a key signature change of no sharps or flats for the A′ section. The sustained chord that precedes the A′ section is a quartal one built on the first three pitches of the ascending fourth theme of the *a* section - the notes E-A-D.

Example 66: Scherzo, m. 283-293. Bassoon, horn, trombones.



The cello and bass begin the A′ material at measure 293 (Ex. 67) with a staccato rhythmic variation of the ascending fourth motive. The horns have a pedal point on the note D. With the emphasis on the note E in the ascending fourth motive in E phrygian, the D pedal point sets up a dual modality similar to the opening of the Preludio.

Example 67: Scherzo, m. 293-301. Horn, cello, bass.

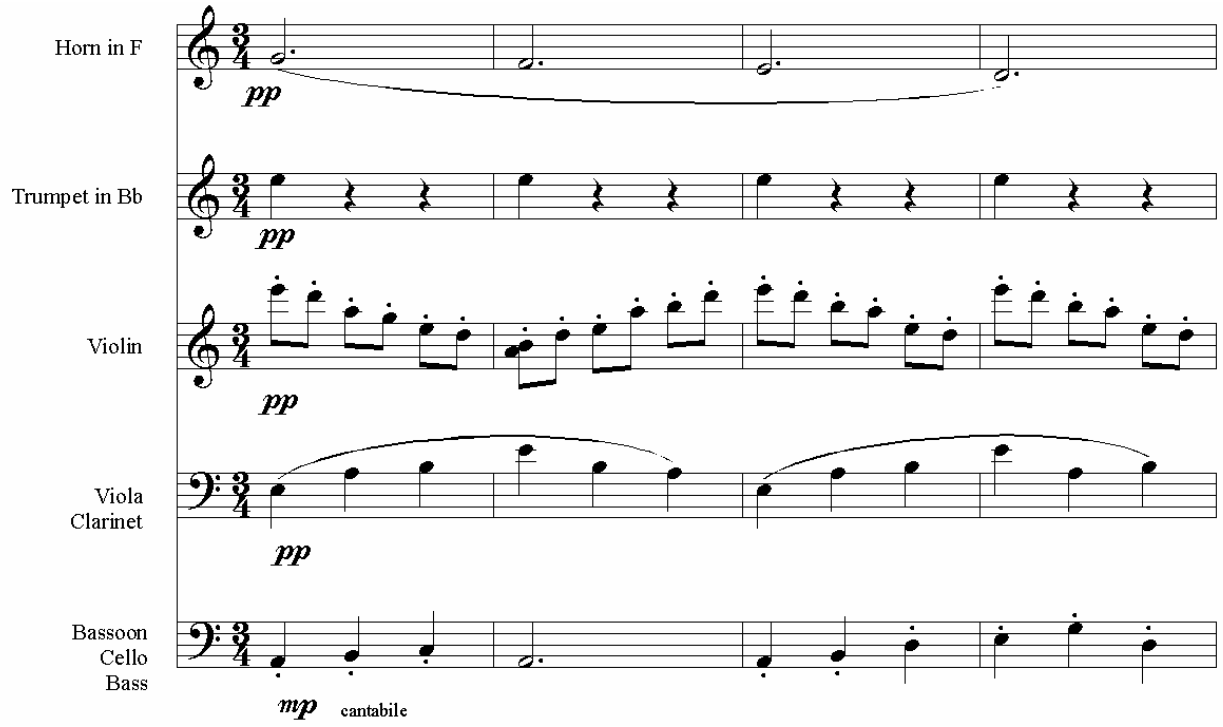


The material continues with imitative entrances by the viola, 2nd violin, and 1st violin. The clarinet and bassoon have the motive when they enter in measure 314. They are accompanied by two lines in the strings—unison 1st violin and viola, and unison 2nd violin and cello. There is no pedal point this time. The *b* section begins in the flutes and piccolo beginning at measure 325.

A transitional section in the mode of A aeolian begins at measure 335 (Ex. 68). The section combines motives from the *a* and *b* sections. Against these motives is heard a countermelody on the horn, an ostinato in the clarinet and viola, and running eighth notes in the

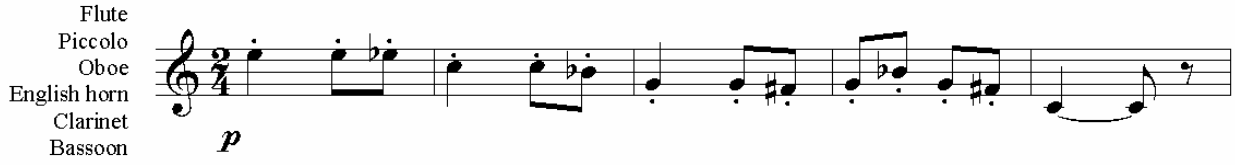
violins. The trumpet part acts as a pedal point with a repeated pitch of a quarter note on E followed by two quarter rests.

Example 68: Scherzo, m. 335-338. Hrn., tpt., vln., cl., vla., bsn., cello, bass



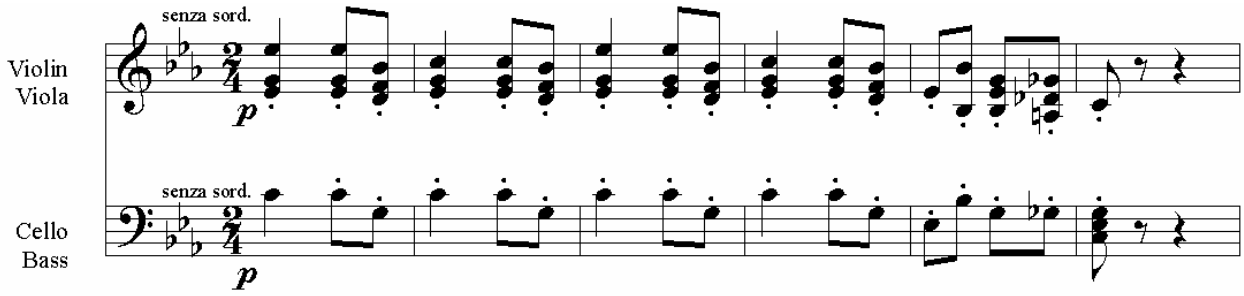
The C section begins at measure 347 (Ex. 69) where the time signature changes to 2/4. Mutes are removed from the string instruments at measure 347. This is the first time the strings have played without mutes since the beginning of the Scherzo. The *f* section is presented in the woodwinds. The first three pitches of the motive (E - E-flat - C) are derived from the eighth note figure in the motive of the *c* section.

Example 69: Scherzo, m. 347-351. Flute, piccolo, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon



Antiphonal writing between groups of instruments dominates the *f* section. A key signature change to three flats occurs at measure 358 (Ex. 70) for the mode of C aeolian. A variation of the motive initially heard at the beginning of the *f* section is played by the strings.

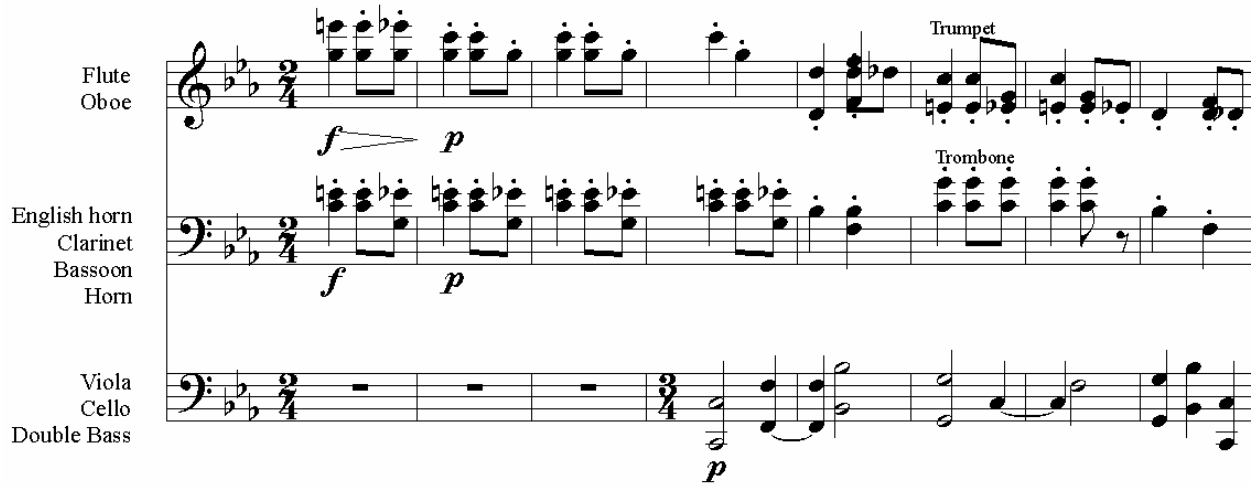
Example 70: Scherzo, m. 358-363. Violin, viola, cello, bass.



The bassoon and horn have the motive in measure 363. The pitches played by the bassoon are the same as the minor version of the horn call that the bassoon played before the development section of the Preludio. The clarinet, oboe, and English horn are added to the motive a few measures later. The trumpets and trombones have the motive in measure 369. At measure 374 the woodwinds and horn take the motive. The instruments are *forte* on beat one with a decrescendo to *piano*.

The *a* section returns at measure 377, as seen in Ex. 71. The meter in the viola, cello, and bass parts changes to 3/4 at measure 377 while remaining 2/4 in the other instruments. This results in a number of cross rhythms. The dominant rhythmic motion in the 3/4 section is a hemiola effect with entrances beginning with ascending fourths. Motives from the *f* section are interspersed in the *a* section. The dual meter sections accommodate the two contrasting motives.

Example 71: Scherzo, m.374-381. Fl., ob., Eng.hrn., cl., bsn., hrn., tpt., tb., vla., cello, bass

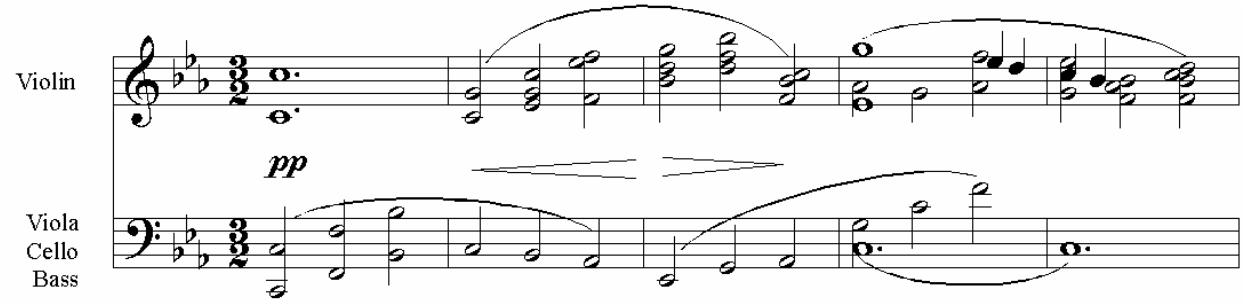


The meter in the violin part changes to 3/4 in measure 382 while remaining 2/4 in the winds.

The *f* section returns at measure 389, and the strings return to 2/4. At measure 401 the *a* section begins, and the time signature in the strings changes to a meter of 3/4. Once again the *f* and *a* sections overlap and the time signature changes accommodate the two motives. The final *f* section begins at measure 410 where the meter changes to 2/4 for all instruments. Motives from the *a* section are interspersed four measures later when the bassoon, trombone, bass trombone, and bass change to a meter of 3/4. In measure 415, the horns and trumpets change to 3/4 for two measures of *a* section material.

All instruments change to a meter of 3/2 at measure 423. The A section begins in measure 424 (Ex. 72); however, the mode of C aeolian is not the traditional one for the *a* section motive. The motive is augmented and chorale-like for five string parts and seems to anticipate the writing for strings in the third movement of the symphony.

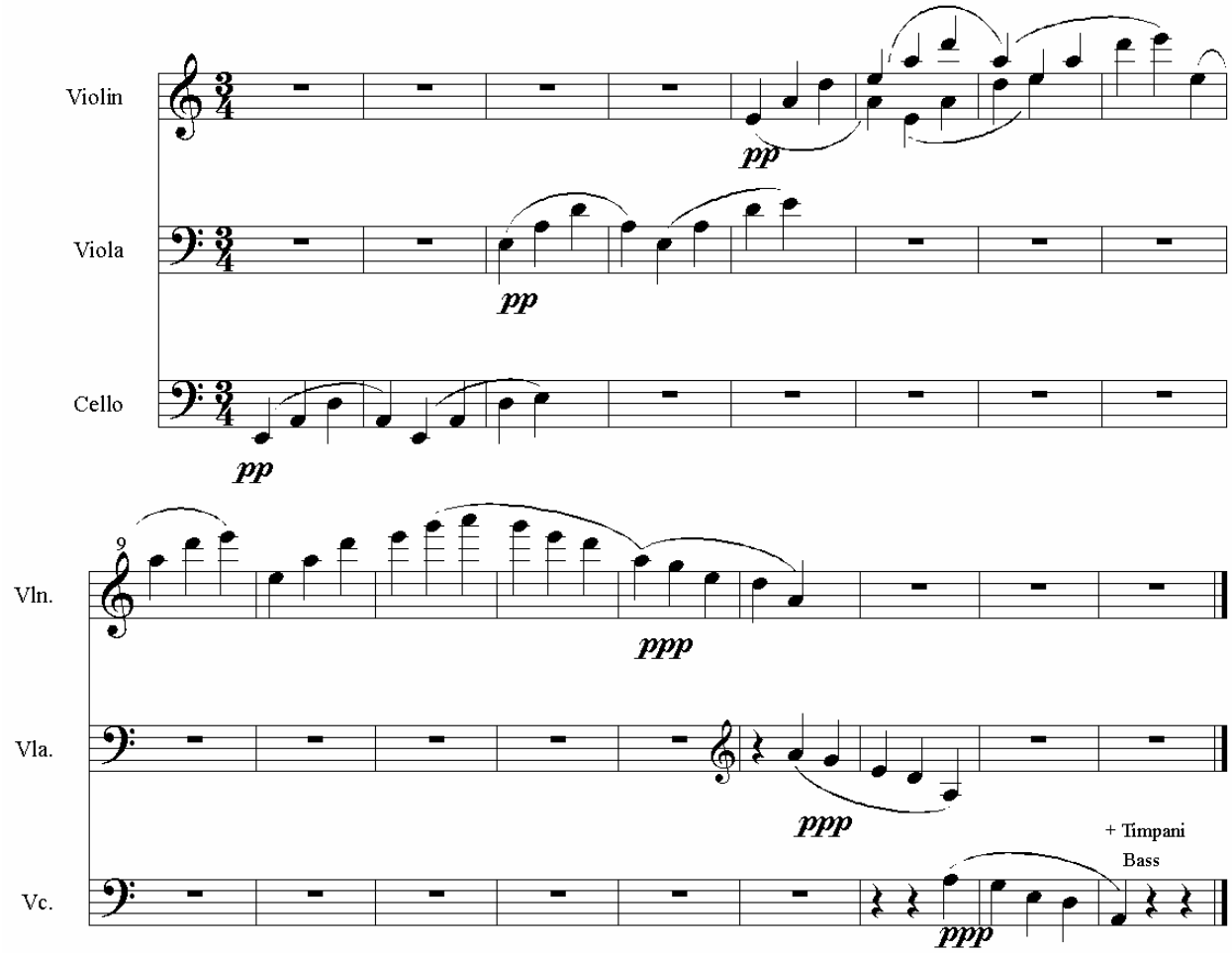
Example 72: Scherzo, m. 424-428. Violin, viola, cello, bass.



The chorale ends on a sustained A minor $^{4}_{3}$ chord for a bassoon solo based on the *a* section material and in the initial mode. The chord held by the strings changes to an A minor chord in root position and the upper strings sustain the chord through part of a flute solo that is almost identical to the bassoon solo. While the bassoon and flute use opening modal sounds of E phrygian/pentatonic moving to A aeolian/dorian, the sustained chords on A minor in the strings create a feeling of A aeolian/dorian being a dual mode with E phrygian/pentatonic.

The strings end the movement with imitative entrances from low to high strings on the motive based on rising fourths and then a return from high to low strings reversing the direction and the intervals of the motive (Ex. 73). The timpani, cello, and bass play the final note, A, which fits with the changes in the intervals of the motive.

Example 73: Scherzo, m. 455-471. Violin, viola, cello, bass, timpani.



In the Scherzo, Vaughan Williams adapted a traditional 5-part rondo form to meet his unique needs. In addition to having the *a* section material of the first part appear in each of the five large divisions, he allowed the *a* section material to overlap and be interspersed in the *f* section of the large C section. The chorale in the lengthy B section used major/minor tonalities, but the majority of the material in the sections that preceded and followed the chorale was modal or pentatonic. A variety of motives and motives of irregular phrase lengths were used in the scherzo. A characteristic feature of the melodic material was a series of rising fourths. As with the Preludio, the Scherzo featured canon, imitative sections, and ostinato passages. Mixed

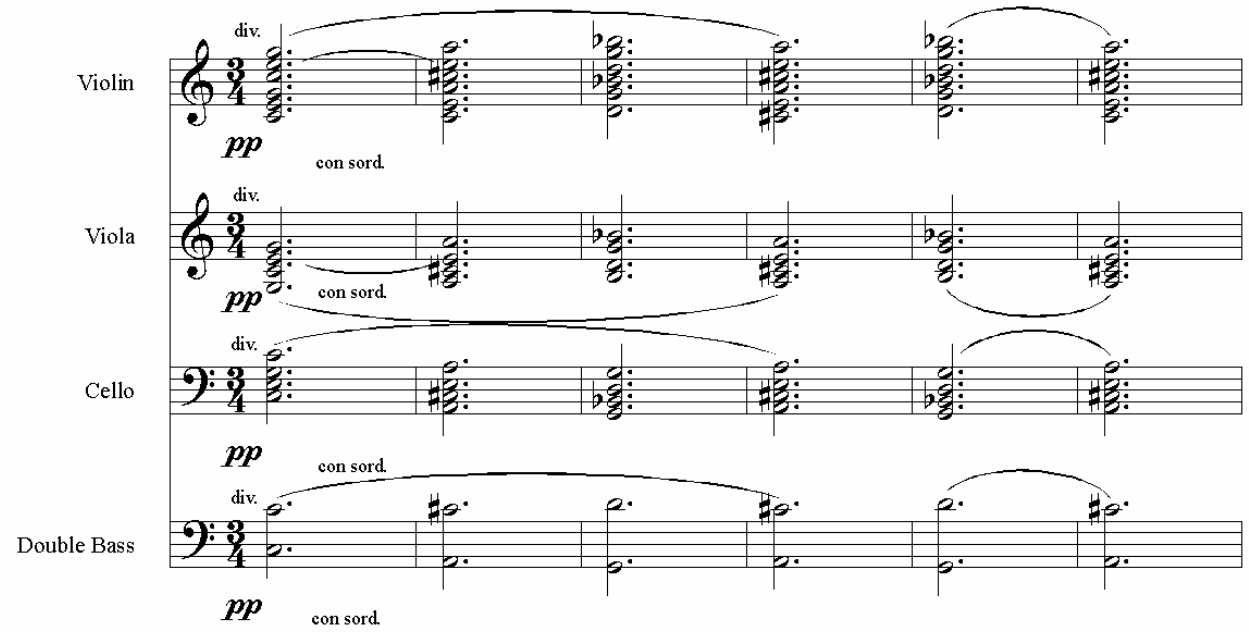
meters, rhythmic augmentation, and hemiolas added to the rhythmic interest. Perhaps the most impressive feature of the Scherzo is the orchestration. A light texture, the use of points of color, antiphonal sections, and the scoring for a variety of families of instruments are features of the orchestration.

Romanza

The Romanza movement is in a binary form that in some ways resembles that of a Scarlatti sonata, with measures 1-38 being the A section; measures 39-93 being the A″ section beginning with modes a fifth higher than the original dual modes of A mixolydian and G dorian; measures 94-147 being the B section, which begins in the dual modes of B dorian and F# mixolydian; and measures 148-202 being the return of the A section with the B theme in the original mode of A aeolian. The A section is 38 measures in length. The repeat of the A section in dominant modes is 55 measures in length. The B section is 54 measures. The final A section is 55 measures in length. An introductory chordal passage and three distinct motivic areas are presented in the A section. The motivic areas from the A section are presented again in the repeat of the A section in the same order in which they were initially presented. The major differences between the two sections are that the chordal passage and first motivic area are presented a fifth higher in the repeated section, and the second and third motivic areas are extended in the repeated section. Motives from the A section are developed in the B section. All three of the motivic areas eventually return in the final A section in their original modes. The motives, however, are presented in a different order than in the earlier A sections. There are no key signature changes indicated in the score of the Romanza; however, many tonalities are used in the movement.

The Romanza begins with a sixteen-part string chordal section moving from the chords of C major to A major to G minor to A major, with the last two chords repeated (Ex. 74). The progression is an introductory one that precedes the entrance of the first theme. The progression, transpositions, and modifications of the progression are used melodically and harmonically throughout the movement. The tempo marking at the opening of the Romanza is *Lento* and all of the strings are muted. Vaughan Williams created a feeling of dual modality by using chords from the A mixolydian (A-(B)-C#-D-E-(F#)-G-A)[1] and G dorian (G-A-B flat-C-D-E-F-G) modes.

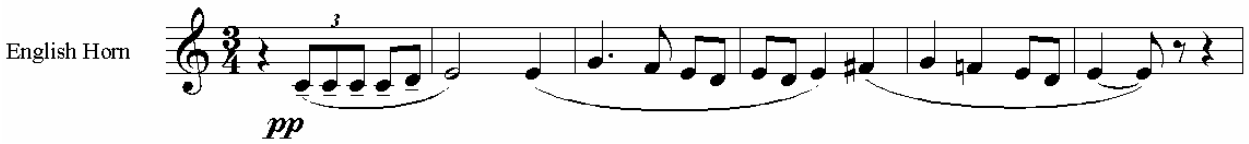
Example 74: Romanza, m. 1-6. Violin, viola, cello, bass..



[1]The notes B and F#, which would be the second and sixth steps of the A mixolydian mode, are not used in the chord progression.

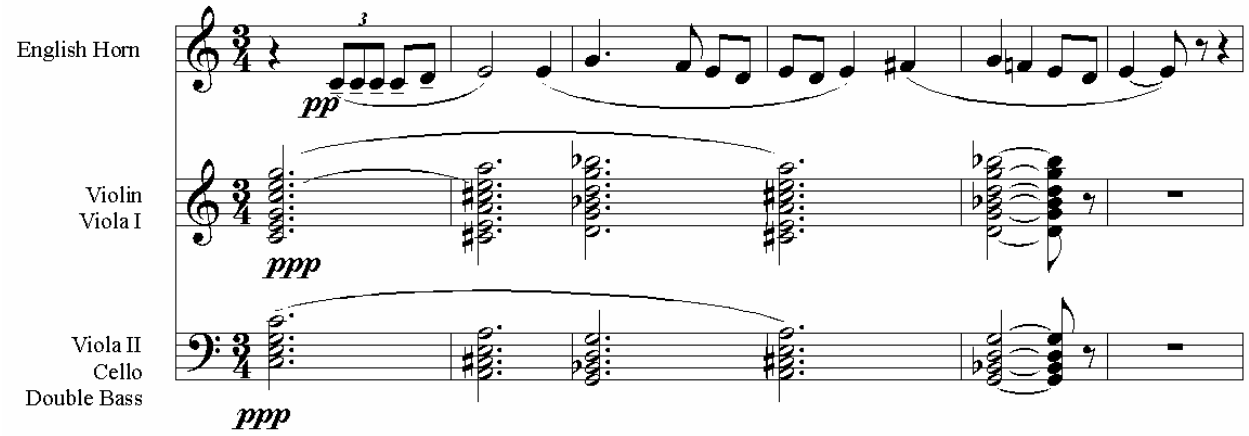
The chord progression is repeated and heard with the first theme, which is an English horn solo that begins at measure 7 (Ex. 75). The opening of the theme moves upward by step as does the highest part of the chord progression in the strings. The emphasis at the beginning of the English horn solo is on the note C, with the note E being the focal point of the theme. Both F-natural and F-sharp are used in the theme as both C and C# are used in the chord progression.

Example 75: Romanza, m. 7-12. English horn.



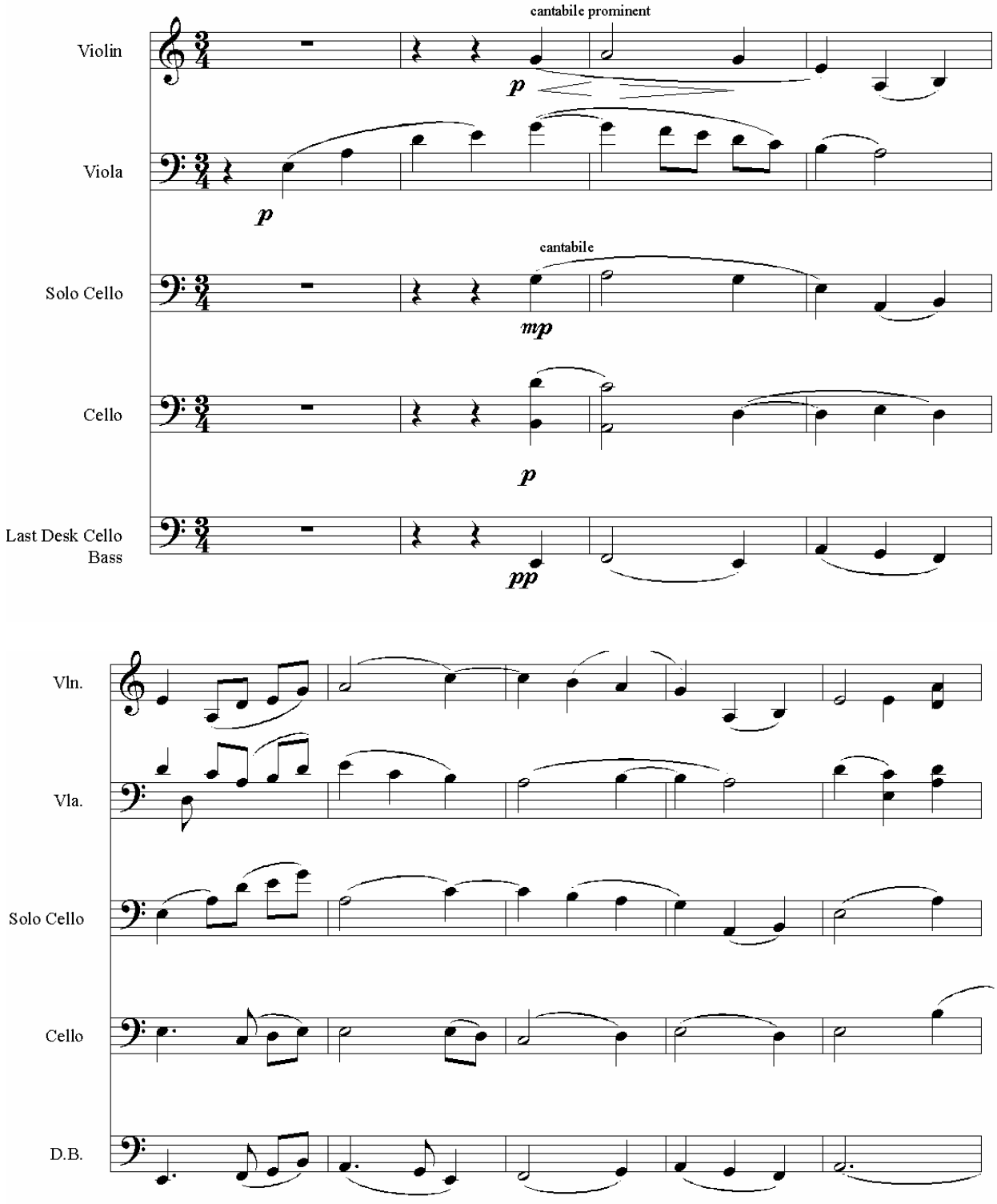
When combining the pitches used in the chord progression and the first theme, Vaughan Williams appeared to be using E dorian (E-F#-G-A-(B)-C#-D-E) and A phrygian (A-B flat-C-D-E-F-G-A).

Example 76: Romanza, m. 7-12. English horn, violin, viola, cello, bass.



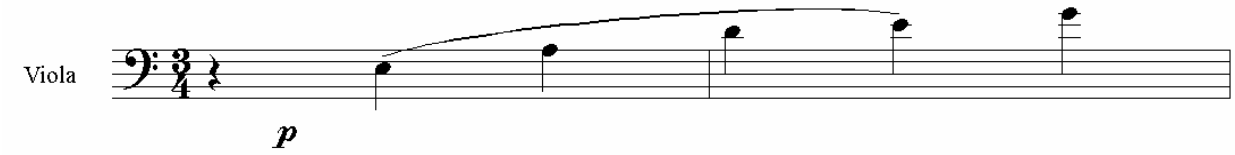
The modality changes to A aeolian at measure 12 where a second theme begins in the strings (Ex. 77). The interval of an ascending fourth is prominent.

Example 77: Romanza, m. 12-20. Violin, viola, cello, bass.

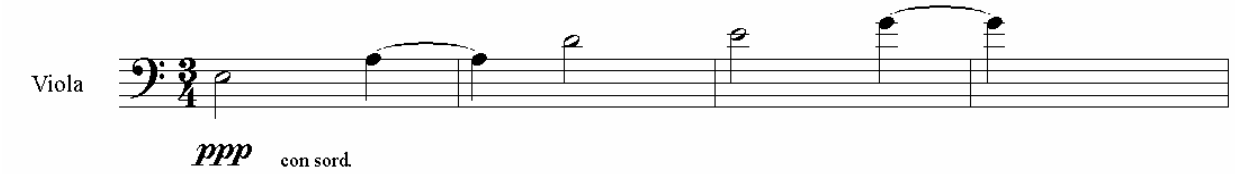


As seen in examples 78 and 79, the opening motive in the viola is the same melodically as measures 4-6 of the Scherzo.

Example 78: Romanza, m. 12-13. Viola

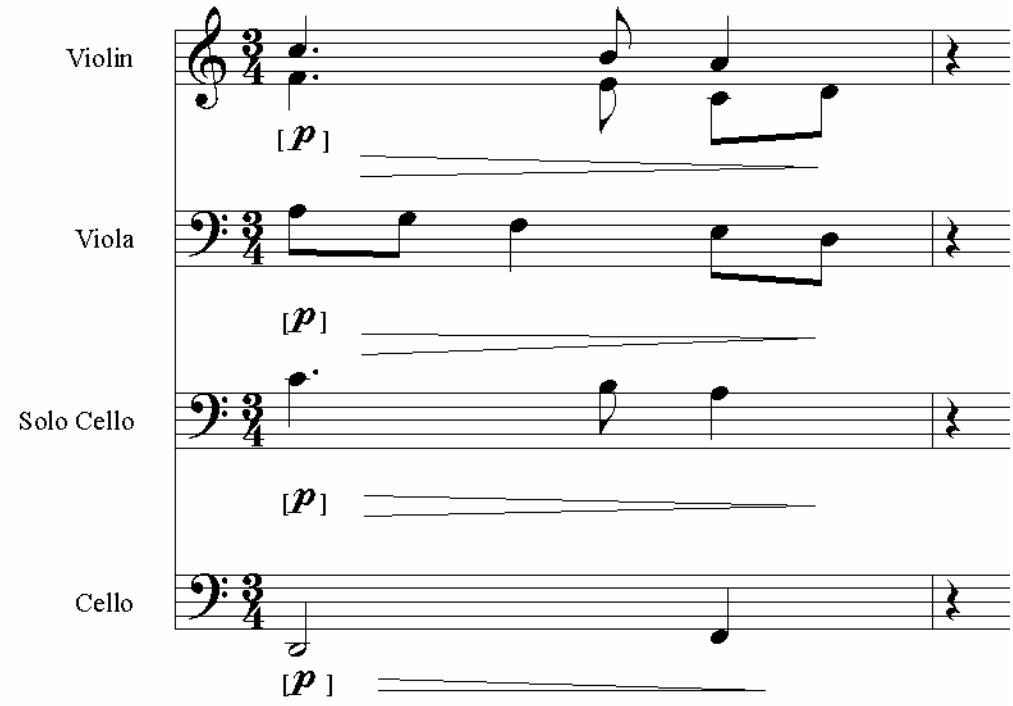


Example 79: Scherzo, m. 4-6. Viola.



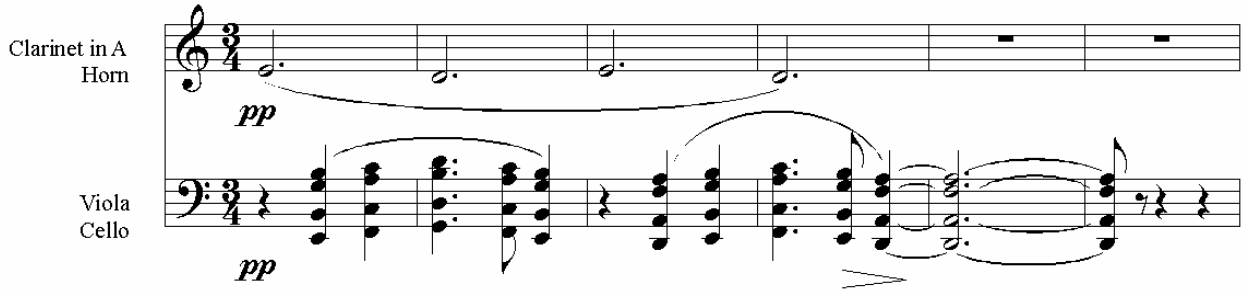
The second theme, which has been in A aeolian, moves to D dorian and comes to a rather abrupt end at measure 28.

Example 80: Romanza, m. 28-29. Violin, viola, cello, bass.



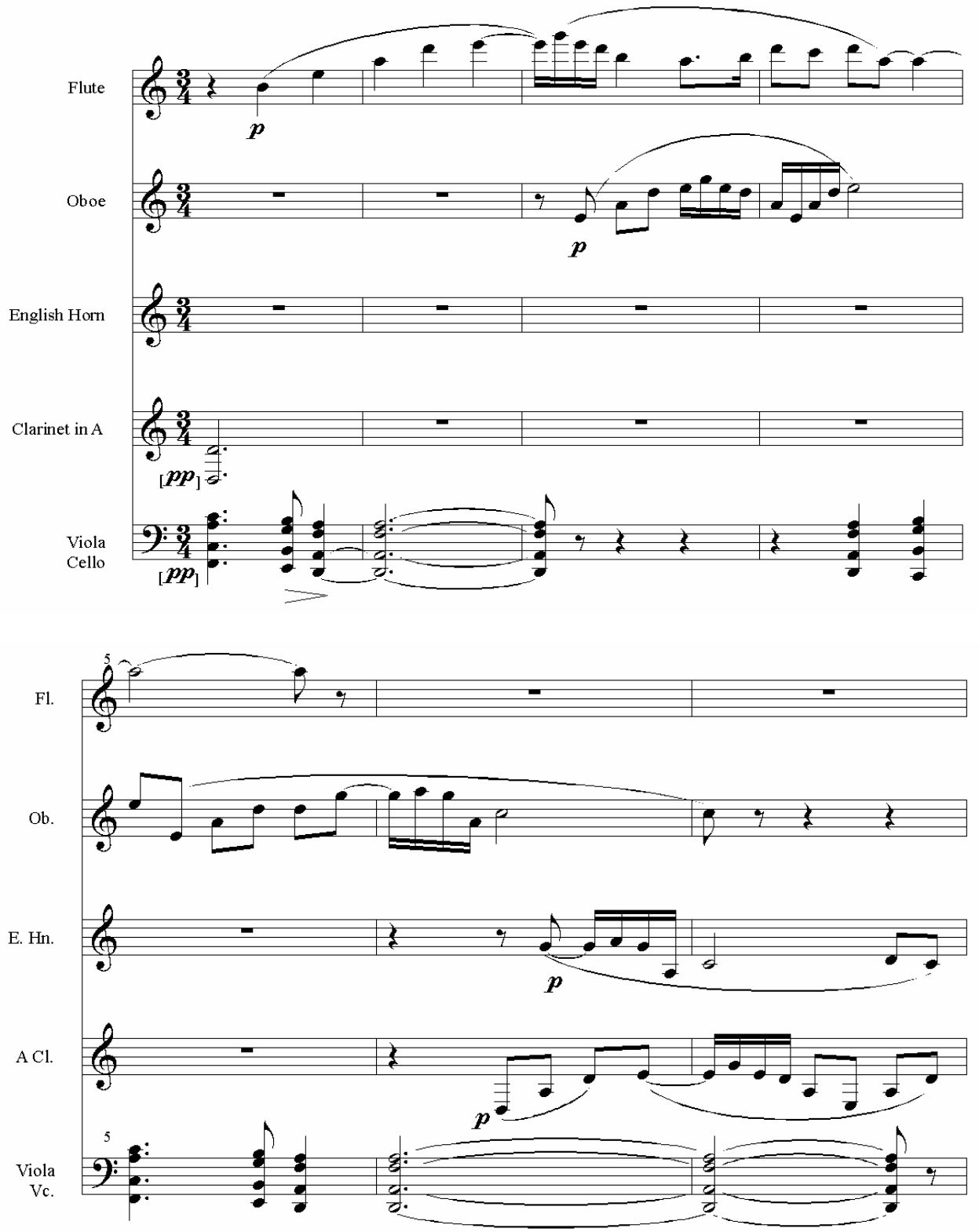
A transitional section begins at measure 29 (Ex. 81) and lasts until measure 38. At measure 29, the strings have a triadic passage in parallel motion that is accompanied by sustained pitches in the clarinets and horn. The triadic passage is a rhythmic diminution and harmonic modification of the opening chordal section. The mode is E phrygian, which moves to D dorian.

Example 81: Romanza, m. 29-34. Clarinets, horns, viola, cello.



When the triadic passage is repeated, it acts as an accompaniment to solo flute and oboe passages that begin at measure 32 (Ex. 82). The flute and oboe passages begin with rising fourths. Both instruments begin with the motive from the viola part in measure 12, however, the flute has an additional fourth that precedes the motive. The contrapuntal writing for the solo winds contrasts with the chordal writing in the strings. The passage that began at measure 29 in E phrygian ends in measure 38 in D dorian.

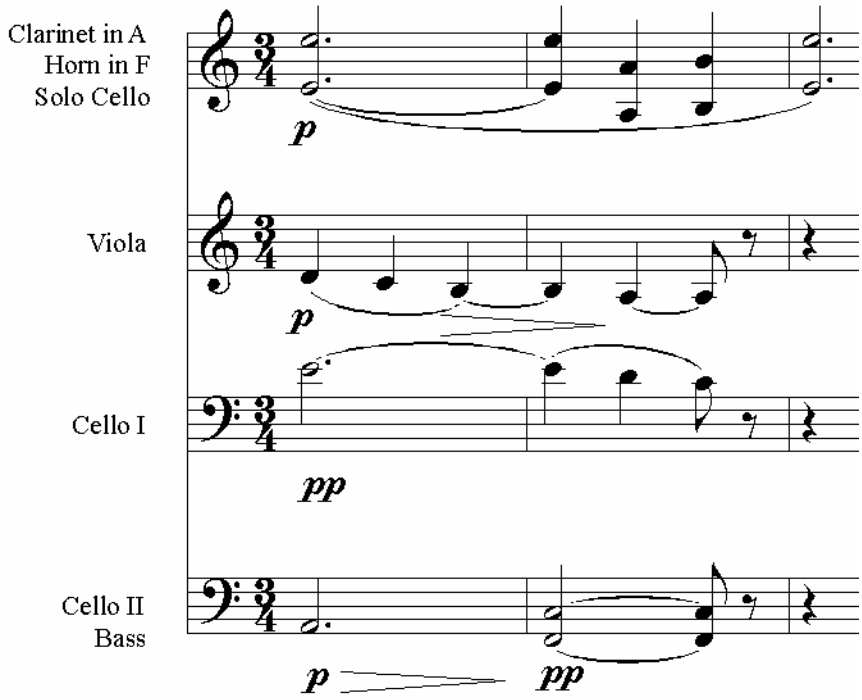
Example 82: Romanza, m. 32-38. Flute, oboe, clarinet, English horn, violin, viola, cello.



At measure 39, the A section is repeated. The introductory chordal section returns transposed to the chords of G major, E major, D minor, and E major - chords a fifth above those in the opening measure of the Romanza. The progression is played by the woodwinds, horn, and bass. The first theme, which was initially played by the English horn, is played by unison violin, viola, and cello in an abbreviated version beginning at measure 43. The theme is played a fifth higher than when initially heard. The modal implications are a blend of B dorian (B-(C#)-D-E-(F#)-G#-A-B) and E phrygian (E-F-G-A-B-C-D-E).

The second theme returns in measure 47 with additional melodic material. It might appear that Vaughan Williams decided to complete the theme that he began in the initial A section. Winds are added to the orchestration. The theme is in the same mode as the first presentation—A aeolian. The writing is more polyphonic than the first setting of the theme and there is a wider range of dynamics in use (*pp* to *f* as opposed to *mp* with crescendo and decrescendo markings in the first setting). Vaughan Williams, however, as seen in Ex. 83, left this section sounding as incomplete as the first setting since the A aeolian section ends on an F major chord with the note B functioning as a nonchord passing tone.

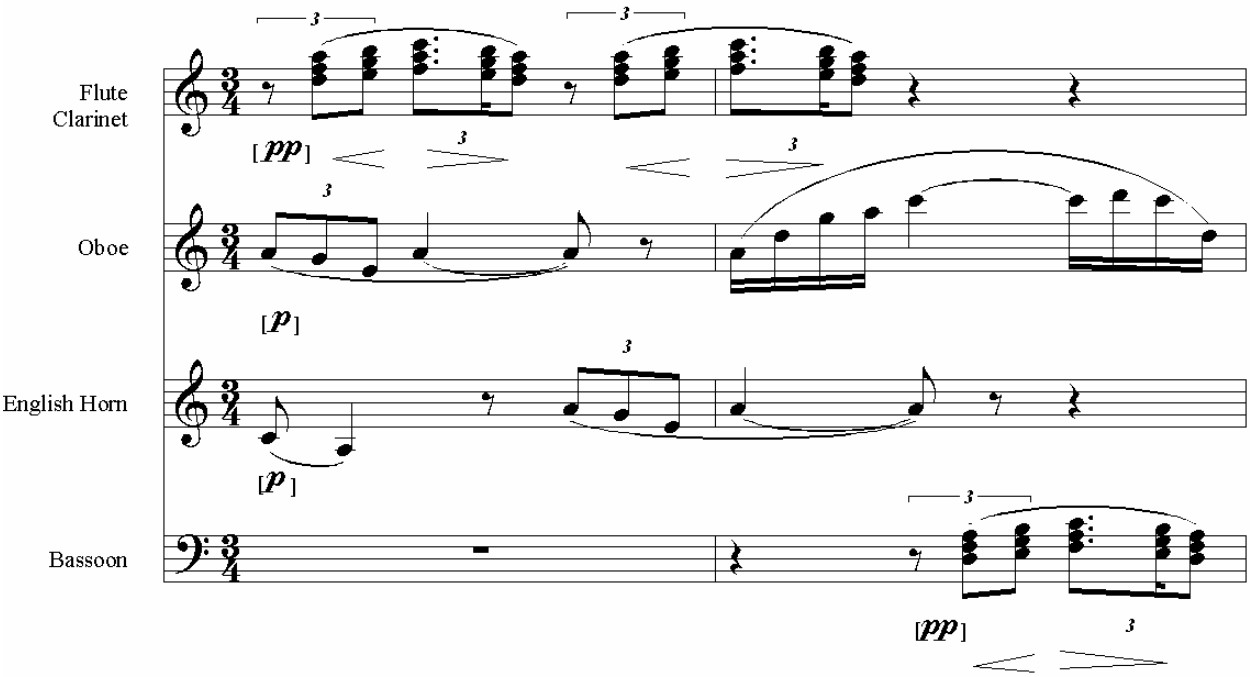
Example 83: Romanza, m.67-69. Clarinet, horn, viola, cello, bass.



A transition section begins at measure 72. The oboe and English horn have a lengthy pentatonic duet using mainly the pitches E-G-A-C-D. The exception is the note B in the oboe part in measure 74. The duet is an extension and variation of the melodic material that began at measure 32 in the first transition section. The solo instruments are accompanied by rhythmic diminution and harmonic modification of the introductory chordal progression played by low woodwinds and by descending scale passages in the lower strings. The chordal passages move back and forth from E phrygian to D dorian. The oboe and English horn play measures 83 to 87 unaccompanied. This light texture gives the impression of chamber music in the middle of the slow movement of the symphony. Almost every phrase of the duet passage begins with an ascending fourth. A triplet figure is introduced in measure 83 of the duet.

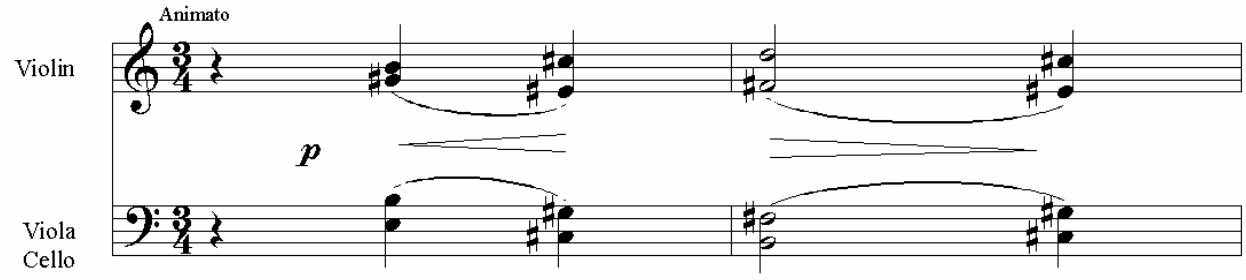
The English horn and oboe are joined by the other woodwinds beginning in measure 89 (Ex. 84) where the modality shifts to D dorian. The additional instruments have triplet motives written in parallel motion, similar to the motion in measure 29 in the strings. The section features cross rhythms between the solo instruments and other woodwinds and serves as a transition to the B section of the movement.

Example 84: Romanza, m. 89-90. Flutes, oboe, English horn, clarinets, bassoons.



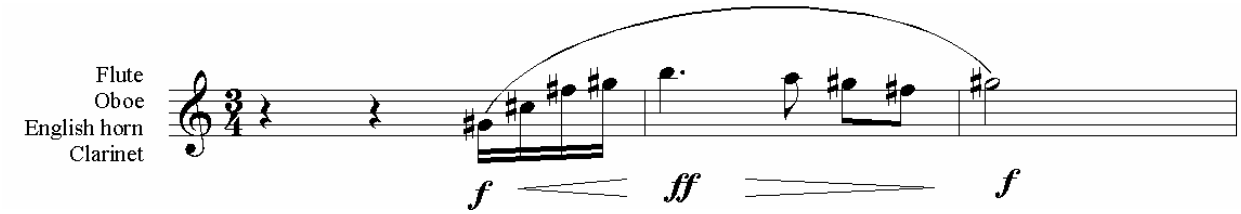
The B section begins with a tempo change to *animato* at measure 94 (Ex. 85). The melodic material in the strings beginning at measure 94 is another rhythmic variation based on the opening chord progression in the strings. The material is presented in diminution.

Example 85: Romanza, m. 94-95. Violin, viola, cello.



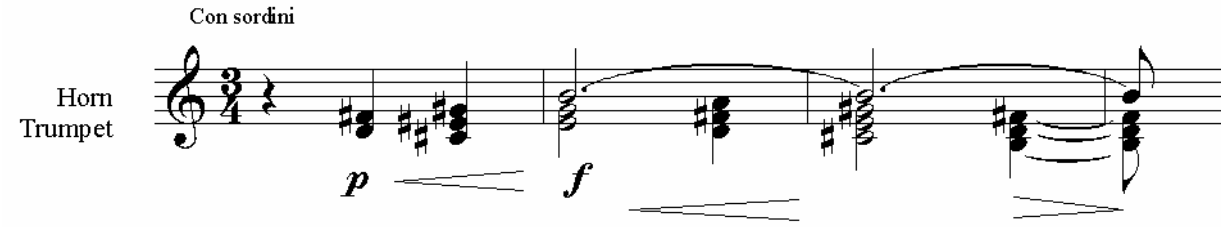
When the progression is repeated, a unison figure is added in the upper woodwinds. The figure is based on melodic material from the second theme, which began at measure 12, and on melodic material from the opening English horn solo. The notes G#-C#-F#-G#-B in measures 97-98 are a transposition of the notes E-A-D-E-G in the viola line in measures 12-13, and the notes A-G#-F#-G# are a transposition of the last four notes of the English horn solo (F-E-D-E) from measures 11-12.

Example 86: Romanza, m. 97-99. Flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet.



A triadic motive is heard in the horns and trumpets beginning at measure 100.

Example 87: Romanza m. 100-103. Horns, trumpets.

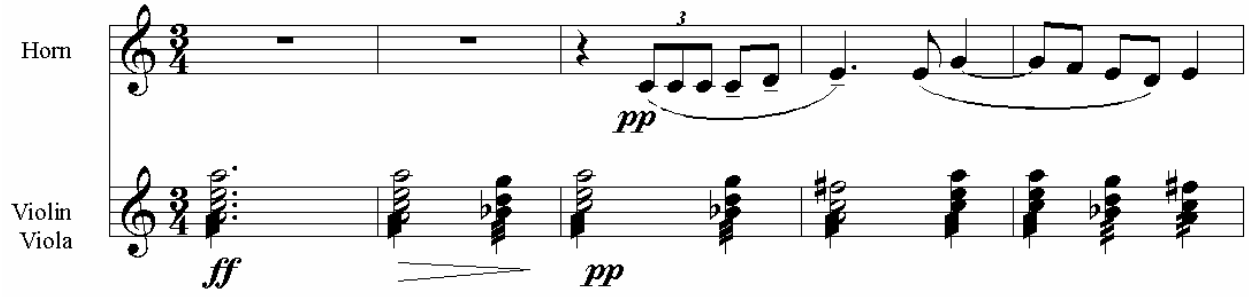


With the entry of the motive in the brass, Vaughan Williams was working with three planes of sound—the sixteenth note passage in the woodwinds, the open harmony triadic motive in the strings, and the close harmony triadic motive in the brass.

This passage, with its change in tempo and dynamics, contrasts greatly with the lyrical A section. Tension builds with the tremolo in the strings beginning in measure 107 and continues until the fortissimo chord at the *poco meno mosso* at measure 114.

A chord progression and the first theme begin in measures 114 and 116 (Ex. 88). This is not the return of the A section; however, as the harmonic background differs from that heard in the A section. While the horn plays the same pitches as the opening solo in the English horn, the chords have changed to A minor, G minor, and F# diminished. The strings play tremolo instead of sustaining pitches, and the melodic direction of the uppermost string voice has been reversed.

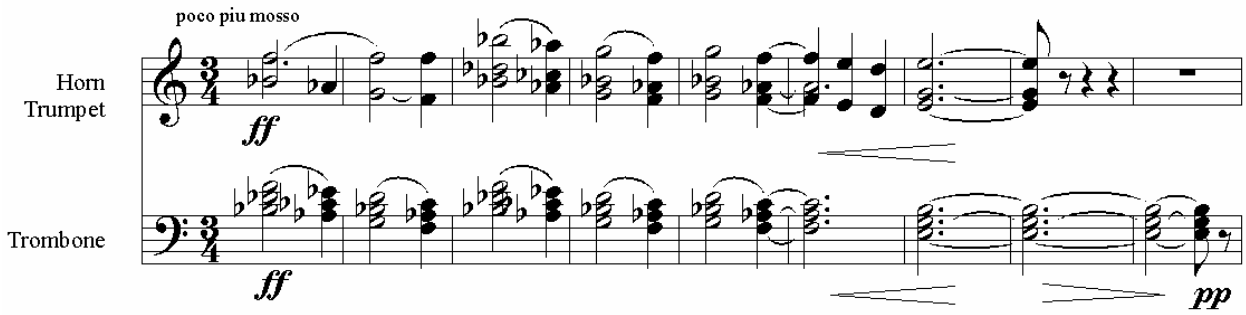
Example 88: Romanza m.114-118. Horn, violin, viola.



The cello joins the horn at measure 119, and the theme goes to the trumpet at measure 121.

The melodic material at the tempo change to *Poco più mosso* at measure 124 (Ex. 89) is based on descending major and minor seconds and has intervals in common with those heard in the first theme at measure 9.

Example 89: Romanza, m. 124-132. Horns, trumpets, trombones.



At *Tempo I* in measure 130, the motives heard in the transition section return in the strings and woodwinds. The motives used in this passage had been treated as solo passages in the A sections. In this setting, the motives are played by groups of instruments at a dynamic level of *fortissimo*. The entrances are heard in stretto.

A chordal passage based on the opening one is heard in the clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, and bass at measure 135 with chords moving from E-flat major to C major, B-flat minor, and C major. The passage repeats in measures 141-146 with the chords that were used at the opening of the movement, however, it is heard against a passage that features ascending fourths and descending seconds, rather than the first theme.

The A section returns at measure 148 with a return to the aeolian modality for the second theme, which begins quietly and eventually adds the entire orchestra to the orchestration.[2] A solo violin follows with melodic material from the transition section at measure 178. The opening chordal progression returns at measure 183 transposed as A major, F# major, E minor, and F# major in the clarinets, bassoons, horns, and bass. The violin then plays a mixture of the

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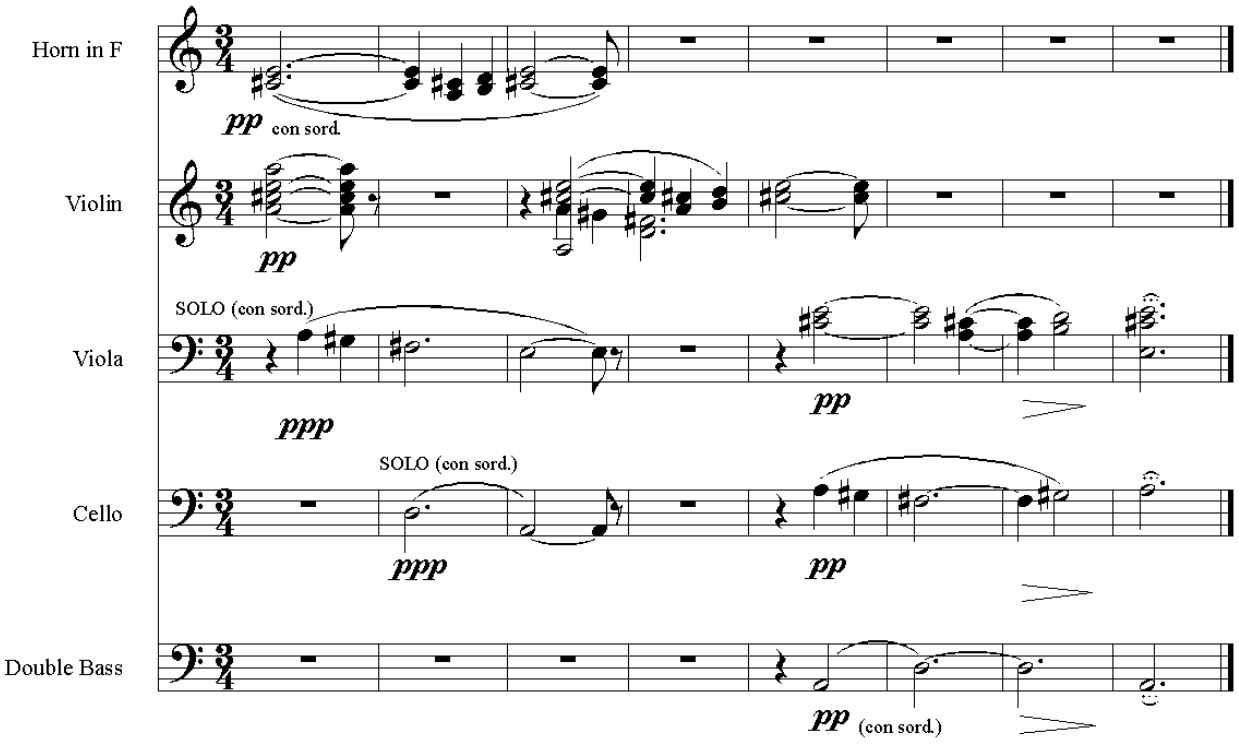
[2]The timpani passage from measures 165-170 is one measure off in the printed score. The passage should begin at measure 164. The error occurred in the preparation of the partially autograph copy of the score that is held by the British Library. Apparently the error was not

transitional material and theme one. The opening chordal progression and theme one follow with the horn playing theme one and the chords being played by the upper strings. The pitches are the same as in the opening of the movement. Three measures of melodic material from theme two are added to the end of the horn solo. The passage is imitated in the strings. As seen in Ex. 90, the movement ends with the impression of IV^7-I in A major. The final chord of A major is the dominant of D major, which begins the final movement.

Example 90: Romanza, m. 195-202. Horns, violin, viola, cello, bass.



The Romanza exhibited Vaughan Williams's talent as a lyrical writer. The theme that was first heard in the English horn was extended and developed throughout the symphony, not dissimilar to the way a folk song might be interpreted by various singers. Vaughan Williams used meter changes and contrapuntal sections in the Romanza to provide a contrast with the

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noticed before the score was printed.

lyrical sections. The texture of the Romanza was predominantly homophonic as compared to the Preludio and Scherzo movements, as the first two movements featured much imitation, stretto, and polyphonic writing. The harmonic language of all three movements featured blending of modes and frequent shifts of modality. The Scherzo had numerous staccato passages while most of the passages in the Romanza were legato. In common with the Scherzo was the use of planes of sound. All three movements began with dual or ambiguous modality, and all three movements began and ended quietly.

Passacaglia

The movement entitled Passacaglia is a series of variations on two distinct, but equally important themes. The passacaglia theme[3] is first heard in the cello in measures 1 to 7. The countermelody[4] is first heard in the flutes and 1st violin in measures 8 to 14. The movement has three major sections plus an epilogue. The first section includes measures 1 to 67 and features variations on the passacaglia theme and the countermelody. The second section includes measures 68 to152. The emphasis at the beginning of the second section is on the countermelody. When the passacaglia theme appears in this section, it is usually in the form of

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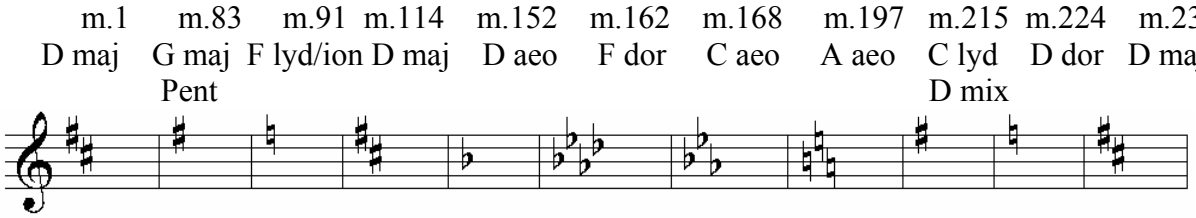
[3]The first theme heard in the movement will be referred to as the "passacaglia" theme in this discussion as this theme initially functions as a ground bass.

[4]The term "countermelody" is used in this chapter to describe the second theme of the movement. Vaughan Williams used this theme as prevalently as the passacaglia theme. From the second to the eighth presentation of the passacaglia theme in section one, the themes are used in conjunction with each other. In the first presentation of the countermelody, the themes are heard note for note against each other until the passacaglia theme varies in the final measure of the theme. In the second section of the movement, this second theme is presented before motives from the passacaglia theme are heard. For ease in distinguishing between the two themes in this discussion, the word "countermelody" is being used when referring to the second theme of the movement, though neither theme is secondary in importance to the other.

motives from the original theme. Motives from both themes are developed in this section. The third section includes measures 153 to 215. The time signature changes to 4/4 for this section, and the tonality shifts from D major to D aeolian followed by a number of modal centers. This section features variations of the passacaglia theme and the countermelody and development of motives from these themes. The epilogue includes measures 216 to 281 and begins with a theme from the first movement.

Vaughan Williams used eleven key signatures in the Passacaglia. As with the Preludio and Scherzo, there are more modal/tonal center changes than indicated by key signature changes.

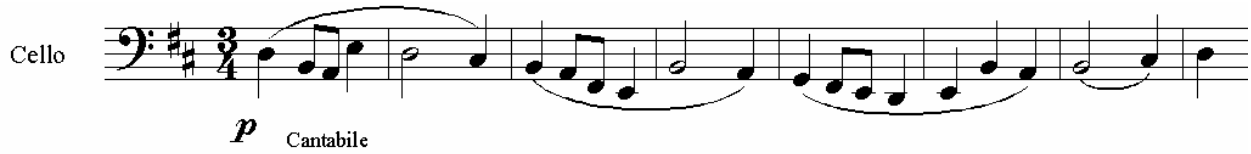
Example 91: Key signatures used in the Passacaglia in the order in which they appear.



The cello opens the movement with the seven-measure passacaglia theme (P1) (Ex. 92). The passacaglia theme is presented ten times in the first section. The nine repetitions are actually variations on the passacaglia theme as none are exact repetitions and one is incomplete. The theme covers the range of an octave plus a major second and features both skips and stepwise motion. The theme can be divided into four groups of pitches. The first group is a motive of six notes. The second group, which has six pitches, and the third group, which has five pitches, use the same rhythm as the initial six-note motive. The fourth group has four notes followed by one note as Vaughan Williams used elision by having the last note of the passacaglia theme function as the first note of the repetition of the theme. The passacaglia theme begins and ends on the tonic of the key of D major. Vaughan Williams's passacaglia theme differs from a

typical baroque one in that it contains mainly quarter notes and eighth notes and moves at a rapid tempo. The tempo marking is *Moderato* with the quarter note equal to 120.

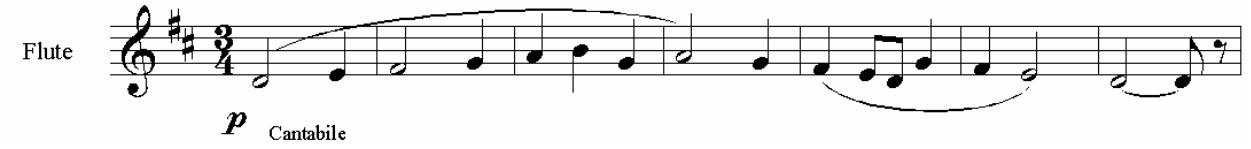
Example 92: Passacaglia, m. 1-7. Cello.



The first theme of the Scherzo was also a seven-measure one and was played by unison strings in its first presentation.

The countermelody begins at measure 8 with the flutes and 1st violin (Ex. 93).[5] The theme is in the low range of the instruments. The countermeloly contrasts with the passacaglia theme as the motion in the countermelody is predominantly stepwise and covers the range of a major sixth. The general motion of the passacaglia theme descends until the last two measures, while that of the countermelody ascends and then descends. Both themes have a descending scale passage of A-G-F#-E-D in common (measure 4, beat 3, through measure 5 of the passacaglia theme and measure 4 through measure 5, beat 2, of the countermelody.)

Example 93: Passacaglia, m. 8-14. Flute.[6]



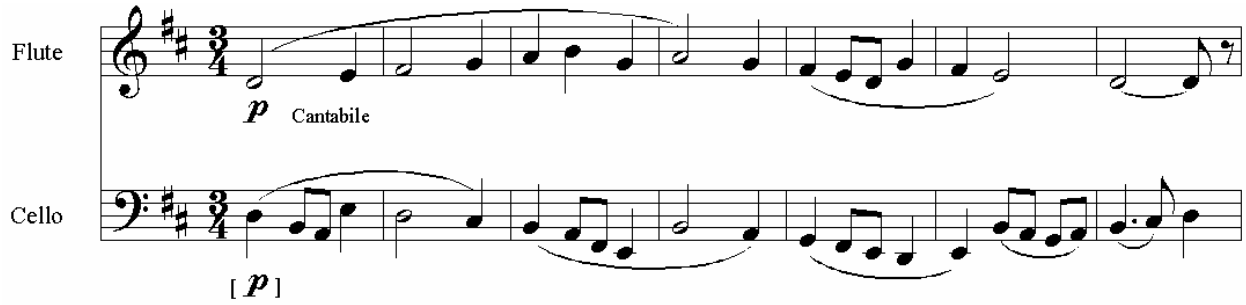
[5]In the score, the articulation in the flute part differs from that in the violin part.

[6]The example given is that of the flute part only. The violin part continues with the second setting of the countermelody which begins in the last measure of the first setting of the countermelody.

The first repetition of the passacaglia theme (P2) begins at measure 8 in the cello with the last two measures of the original theme being altered rhythmically and melodically. The notes that are added in the last two measures result in melodic decoration of the theme.

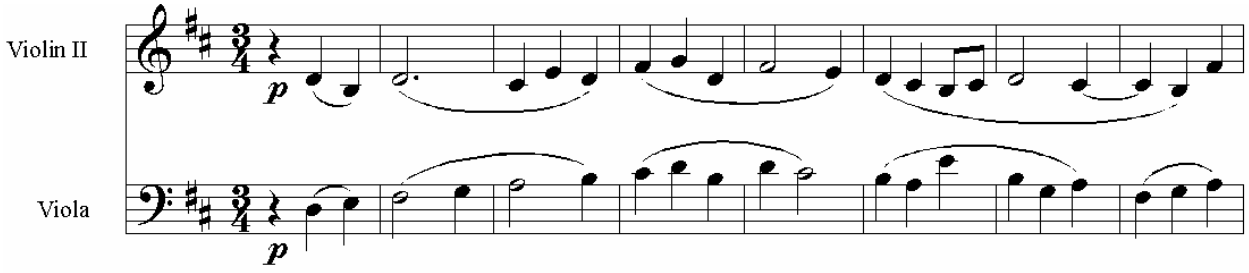
When the two themes are heard together in measures 8 to 14, a number of harmonic intervals that can be reduced to seconds, sevenths, and a tritone result between the passacaglia theme (P2) and the countermelody (CM1). The melodic and rhythmic changes that occur at the end of P2 allow the two themes to end together.

Example 94: Passacaglia, m. 8-14. Flute and cello



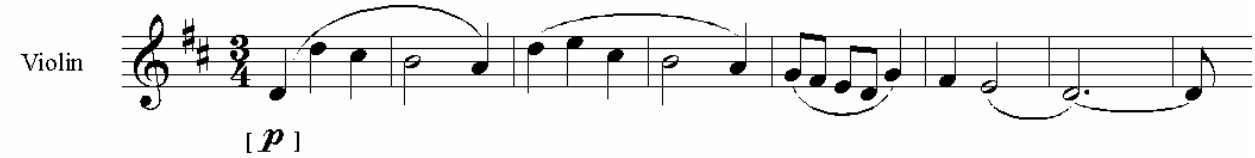
In addition to the passacaglia theme (P2) and the countermelody (CM1), additional supporting material is played by the 2nd violin and viola beginning at measure 7 (Ex. 95). Much of the supporting material in the viola follows the melodic contour of the countermelody. The viola line covers the range of the passacaglia theme. The initial pitches of D and E in the viola line precede the initial entry of the countermelody on the pitches D and E by one bar. This is similar to the beginning of the Scherzo where the 2nd violin line (Scherzo, m. 23) hints at the entry of the second theme before that entry is heard (Scherzo, m. 32).

Example 95: Passacaglia, m. 7-14. 2nd violin and viola.



The third entrance of the passacaglia theme (P3) is at measure 14. More melodic decoration is added to the theme. The second entrance of the countermelody (CM2)[7] begins in measure 14 with the 1st violin and 1st viola playing the theme (Ex. 96). The theme is varied by expansion, transposition, and rearrangement of motives, and by extension of range. The motive in measures 14-15 is a transposition of the last four pitches of CM1 and is also a retrograde version of the last four notes of P1. The motive is expanded in measure 16 with the addition of the note E. Other writers[8] have pointed out that this version of the countermelody resembles parts of the alleluia section of the chorale tune *Lasst uns erfreuen* (Ex. 97). Vaughan Williams, though, said the resemblance was not intentional.[9] Unintentional use was quite possible as composers often use similar melodic lines in their works.

Example 96: Passacaglia, m. 14-21. Violin.

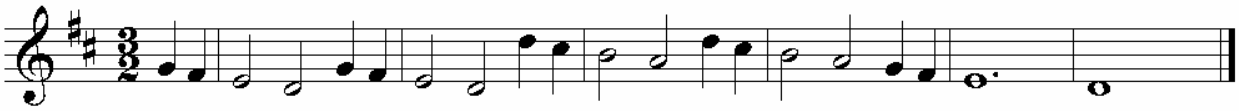


[7]CM2 can also be viewed as a continuation or second phrase of CM1.

[8]Howes, Kennedy, and others.

[9]Kennedy, *Works*, 282.

Example 97: *Lasst uns erfreuen*, Refrain.



The horn has a motive built on fourths followed by stepwise motion and the leap of a fifth (Ex. 98). It is heard against the passacaglia theme and countermelody in measures 14 to 20, and is developed in the second section of the movement. Additional supporting material is in the 2nd violin and 2nd viola in measures 14 to 20.

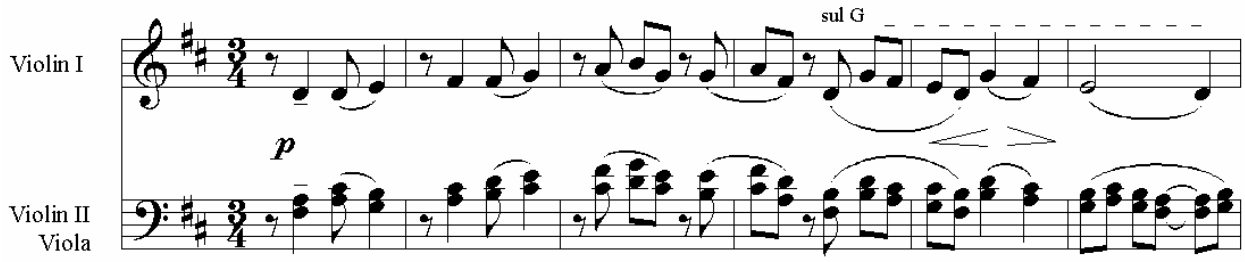
Example 98: Passacaglia, m. 14-21. Horn.

CM3 begins at measure 20 in the 1st clarinet and is harmonized mainly in thirds. The next repetition of the passacaglia theme (P4) begins at measure 22 in the viola and cello. The viola part changes to different material at measure 27 at which point the bassoon is added to the passacaglia line. P4 is identical melodically with P2; however, there are slight variations in articulation.

The horn has CM4 beginning at measure 28. A melodically decorated and abbreviated version of the passacaglia theme (P5) begins a measure later in the bassoon and cello. The sixth appearance of the passacaglia theme (P6) is at measures 34-41 in the upper woodwinds and 1st violin. The articulation has been changed to marcato and the dynamic level to *forte*. The horns, bassoons, cello, and bass have the countermelody (CM5) beginning in measure 34. In this variation, Vaughan Williams reversed the themes by giving the passacaglia theme to the upper instruments and the countermelody to the lower ones.

A syncopated version of the countermelody (CM6) appears in measure 42 in the 1st violin. It is altered melodically and is harmonized in the 2nd violin and viola parts.

Example 99: Passacaglia, m. 42-47. 1st and 2nd violin, viola.

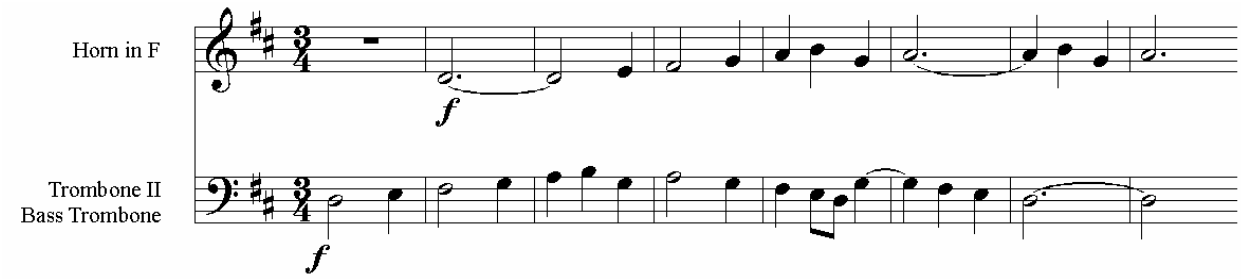


The eighth entry of the passacaglia theme (P8) is played by the bassoon, 1st violin, and viola, beginning at measure 48. The bassoon is marked staccato and the strings pizzicato. CM7 is in the 2nd violin. The bassoons, 2nd horn, and lower strings play the ninth entry of the passacaglia theme (P9) at measure 54. Motives based on the rhythms of the passacaglia theme are taken up by the flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, 1st horn, and violins. The beginning of the passacaglia theme (P10) is heard again beginning in measure 62. All parts are marked *ff*. The first major section ends at measure 67. The wide variety of ideas used in the treatment of the two themes in the first section illustrates Vaughan Williams's imagination and skill in the handling of melodic material.

The tempo changes to *allegro* with the dotted half note equal to 60 at measure 68, which is the beginning of the second section of the movement. The entrances of the countermelody and passacaglia theme are not numbered in the discussion of this section due to the large number of imitative entrances in stretto. The countermelody begins the second section. The countermelody is heard in the 2nd trombone and bass trombone (Ex. 100). There is a slight rhythmic modification to the end of the phrase of the countermelody. Other instruments follow with

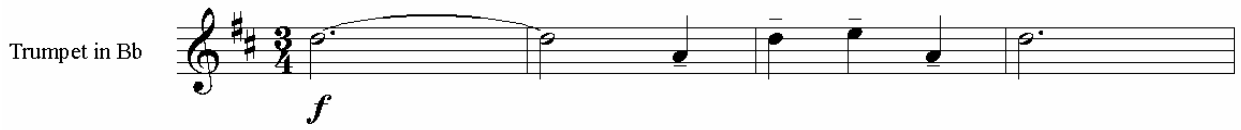
imitative entrances of the beginning of the countermelody. Some of the entrances are expanded versions of the countermelody.

Example 100: Passacaglia, m. 68-76. Horn, 2nd trombone, bass trombone.



The trumpets enter with a motive in measure 69 (Ex. 101). The opening is similar to the motive played by the horn in measure 14; however, instead of being played *piano*, it is marked *forte*.

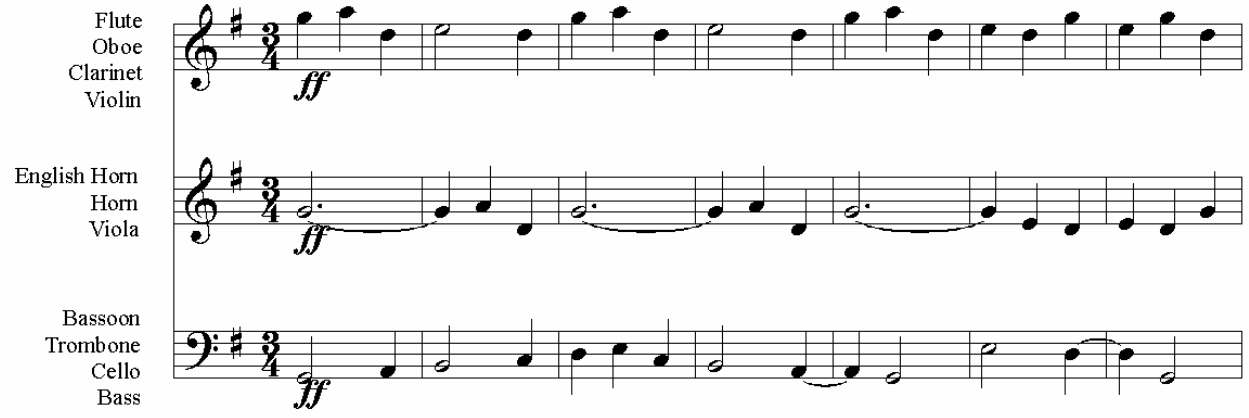
Example 101: Passacaglia, m. 69-72. Trumpet.



The clarinets, 1st trumpet, and 2nd violin enter with the beginning of the countermelody in measure 72. The upper woodwinds and 1st violin have entrances that imitate the first three measures of the trumpet motive beginning in measure 73. The bassoons, bass trombone, and bass enter at measure 74 with an expanded version of the countermelody.

A key signature change to G major occurs at measure 82. The bassoon, bass trombone, cello, and bass have the beginning of the countermelody in the new key (Ex. 102). Imitative entrances in the trombones and trumpets follow. Against the countermelody are two variations of the motive that was played by the trumpet in measure 69.

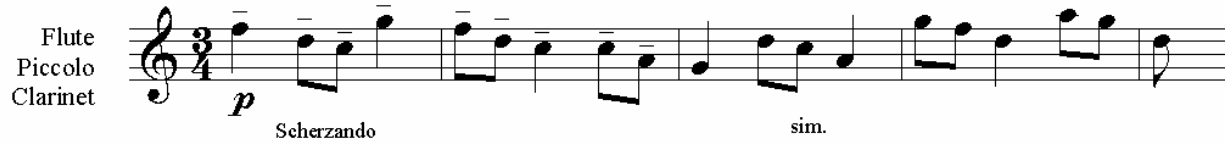
Example 102: Passacaglia, m. 82-88. Fl., ob., E.hrn., cl., bsn., hrn., btb., vln., vla., cello, bass



The key signature changes again in measure 91, where the F# of the G major section is cancelled. With a focal note of F, the modes in use appear to be F lydian and F ionian as both B-natural and B-flat appear in this section.

With the mode change to F lydian/ionian, the character of the movement changes to that of a Scherzando. The flute, piccolo, and clarinet have a pentatonic motive that begins with a rhythmic modification of the first five notes of the passacaglia theme (Ex. 103). Against this motive is a string accompaniment with the pattern of a rest followed by two quarter notes which creates a feeling of duple versus triple meter.

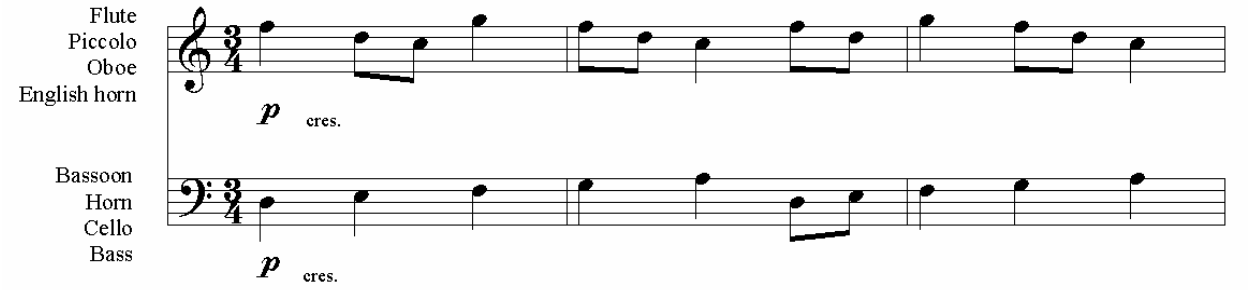
Example 103: Passacaglia, m. 91-95. Flute, piccolo, clarinet.



The oboe, English horn, bassoons, and first trumpet take the pentatonic motive at measure 95. Against this pentatonic motive is a pizzicato accompaniment for strings. The 2nd bassoon, 1st horn, cello, and bass have parts of the pentatonic motive at measure 99.

With the shift to the dorian mode at measure 103, the pentatonic motive is played by the flute, piccolo, oboe, and English horn against a scale passage built on the first five pitches of the countermelody played in the dorian mode.

Example 104: Passacaglia, m. 103-105. Flute, picc., oboe, Eng. horn, 2nd bsn., cello, bass.



The pentatonic motive is repeated several times in stretto beginning at measure 108. This section leads to a key signature change of two sharps and a tempo marking of *Tempo primo (moderato) (3 beats in a bar)*.

In the measure following the key change to D major, imitative entrances of the countermelody begin, first by the horn and 2nd trumpet at measure 115, then upper woodwinds at measure 119, and 1st trumpet at measure 121. The winds are accompanied by tremolo in the strings. The dynamics range from *forte* to *fortissimo*.

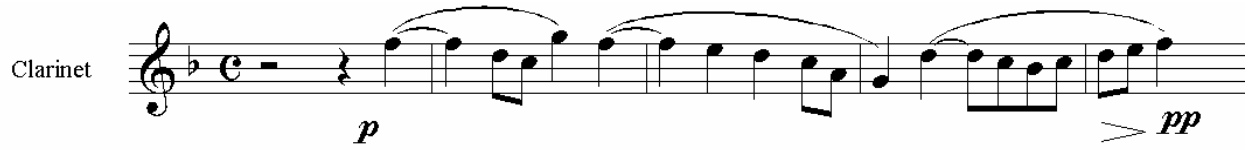
The pentatonic motive is extended with a descending scale passage beginning with the entrance at measure 124. Rising scale passages enter beginning with measure 126 in the bassoon, 1st trombone, and bass. The piccolo and 1st violin take the scale passages in measure 132. Against the pentatonic motive and scale passages are heard two descending sequences in the English horn and horn. Other sequences are added in measure 138 with the bassoon, bass trombone, and bass playing one sequence, and the trumpet and viola another sequence. A change in the melodic material at measure 145 to a rhythmic variation of the motive first heard in

the trumpet part in measure 69 leads to a cadence in D major at measure 149 for the end of the second section of the movement.

While the first section of the Passacaglia is a series of variations on two themes, the second section is a large development section. The first part of the second section is in D major and focuses on the countermelody. The second part is modal and uses motives from both the passacaglia theme and the countermelody. The third part returns to the key of D major. The majority of the melodic material is based on the countermelody. Occasionally motives from the passacaglia theme are used in the third part.

The third major section of the passacaglia begins at measure 153 where the D major chord that was heard in measure 152 changes to a D minor one and the meter changes to 4/4. Over *pianissimo* tremolo on the notes D and F in the violin, the passacaglia theme is heard as a clarinet solo (Ex. 105). The passacaglia theme is in the minor mode and is varied rhythmically and expanded melodically.

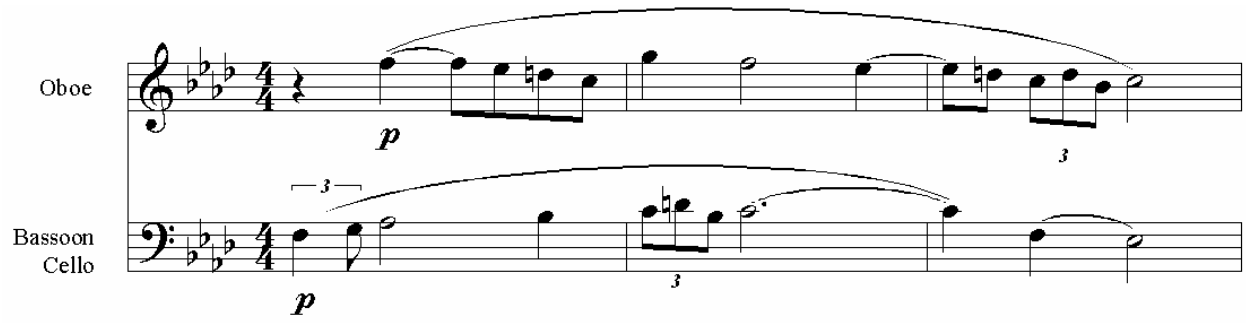
Example 105: Passacaglia, m. 153-157. Clarinet.



The minor version of the passacaglia theme is heard in the flute at measure 157. The clarinet provides a supporting contrapuntal line while the violins play a D minor chord in tremolo and the viola sustains pitches. This leads to a key signature change to four flats in measure 162 (Ex. 106).

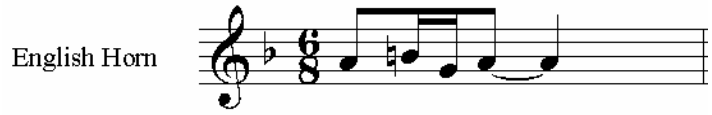
The modality changes to F dorian at measure 162. Instrumental solos based on the modal version of the countermelody continue at measure 162 with the addition of triplet figures.

Example 106: Passacaglia, m. 162-166. Oboe, bassoon, and cello.



The triplet figure in measure 163 in the bassoon and cello parts is a motive that will continue throughout this section. The double auxiliary melodic pattern is identical with a cadential pattern used by Vaughan Williams in other works, such as *In the Fen Country*.

Example 107: *In the Fen Country*, m. 6. English horn.



The pattern is similar in idea to some that are commonly used for the decoration of pitches in English folk song.[10] The interval between the first and second pitches of the example from folk song (Ex. 108) is a minor third instead of a major second. The interval of a perfect fourth, rather than a major third, occurs between the second and third pitches.

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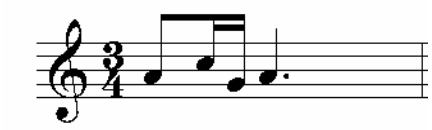
[10]See Elsie Payne, "Vaughan Williams and Folk Song," *The Music Review* (May 1954): 103-126 for a discussion of various melodic and rhythmic patterns found in the works of Vaughan Williams that are also found in folk song.

Example 108: Cadential pattern from folk song "The Captain's Apprentice."[11]



A key change to three flats and the modality of C aeolian occurs at measure 168. Numerous motives based on material that was heard in the oboe, bassoon, and cello parts beginning in measure 162 enter in stretto. The modality changes to C dorian at measure 185. Motives based on material from the passacaglia theme and the countermelody are played as imitative entrances. The key signature changes to no sharps or flats at measure 197. Sequences built on rising scale passages, similar to those of the countermelody in measure 8, begin at measure 199 where the modality moves to A aeolian. The scale passages use various rhythmic patterns. The patterns continue until measure 206 where a three beat crescendo from *piano* to *fortissimo* leads to the climactic point of the movement. A series of sequences based on the first four notes of the Passacaglia theme are heard in unison against alternating F major and F minor chords in the trumpets and trombones beginning at measure 207 (Ex. 109). The half note figure that moves from F major to F minor recalls the conflict of the major/minor versions of the horn call in the Prelude.

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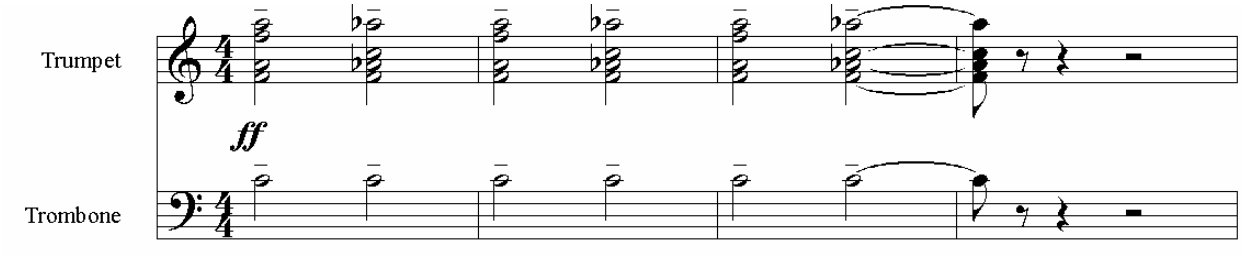
[11]Ibid., 106.

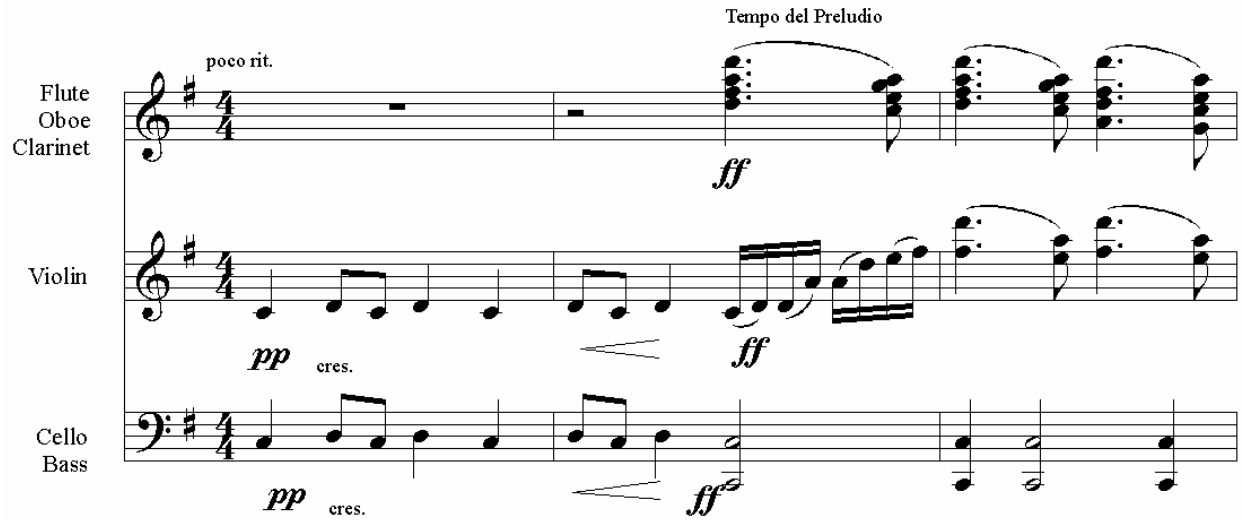
Example 109: Passacaglia, m. 207-210. Trumpets and trombones.



The sequences descend and the dynamic level diminuendos to a *pianissimo* for the end of the third section. Like the second section, the third section is a large development section. The section begins with light texture and builds to full orchestra. The melodic material changes with each change in mode. The section is almost entirely modal, with hints of F major at the climax of the movement.

The rhythmic and melodic pattern set up in measure 214 in the strings is used to return to the opening Preludio music which begins the epilogue. A key change to one sharp occurs at measure 215 (Ex. 110) where the tonality moves to a dual one of C lydian and D mixolydian.

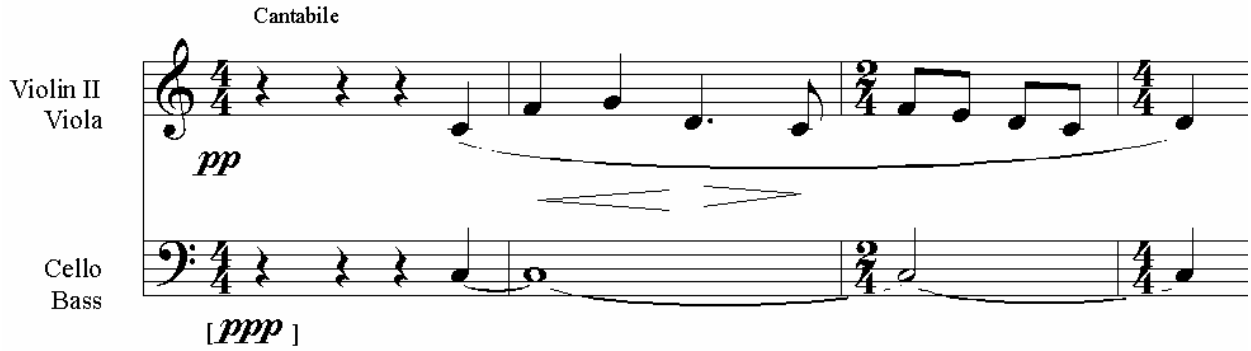
Example 110: Passacaglia, m. 215-217. Fl., ob., cl., vln., cello, bass.



The epilogue opens with a return of the motive of a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note from the Preludio. It is presented *fortissimo* and decrescendos before the return of the horn call in D in measure 223. An addition to the instrumentation used in the Preludio is the timpani playing the pedal point on the note C. After the horn call, the *fortisimmo* dynamics and the note F-natural return. The horn call is played in d minor in measure 231 and is answered by the clarinet in measure 232.

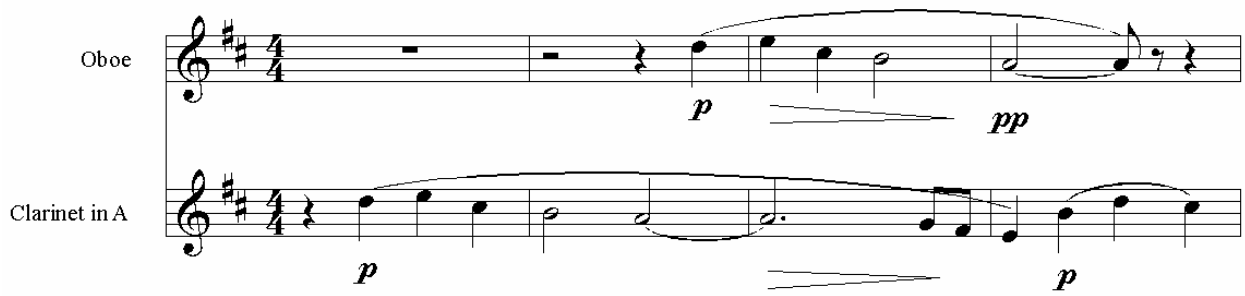
The second half of the first theme from the Preludio is played by the 2nd violin and viola at measure 233 (Ex. 111). This passage in the Passacaglia is a fifth lower than it is in the Preludio.

Example 111: Passacaglia, m. 233-236. 2nd violin, viola, cello, bass.



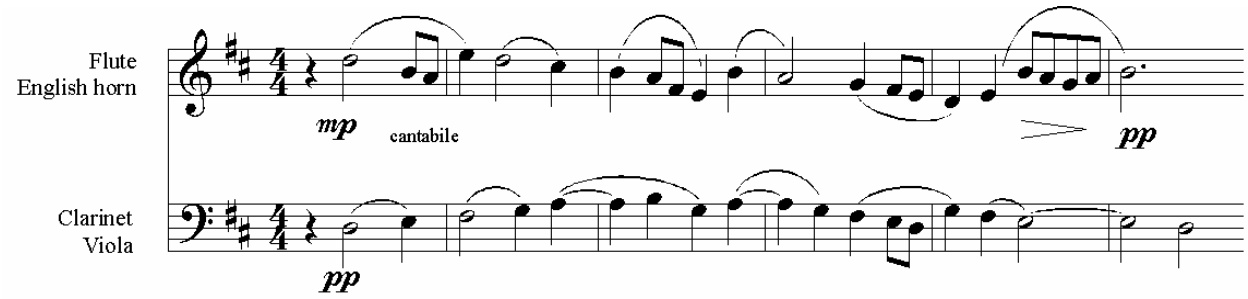
The countermelody from the opening of the passacaglia is played in unison beginning in D minor by the violin, solo viola, and solo cello in measure 236 before changing to D major at the key signature change in measure 238. The strings finish the theme and become supporting material for the woodwind solos beginning at measure 246.

Example 112: Passacaglia, m. 246-249. Oboe, clarinet.



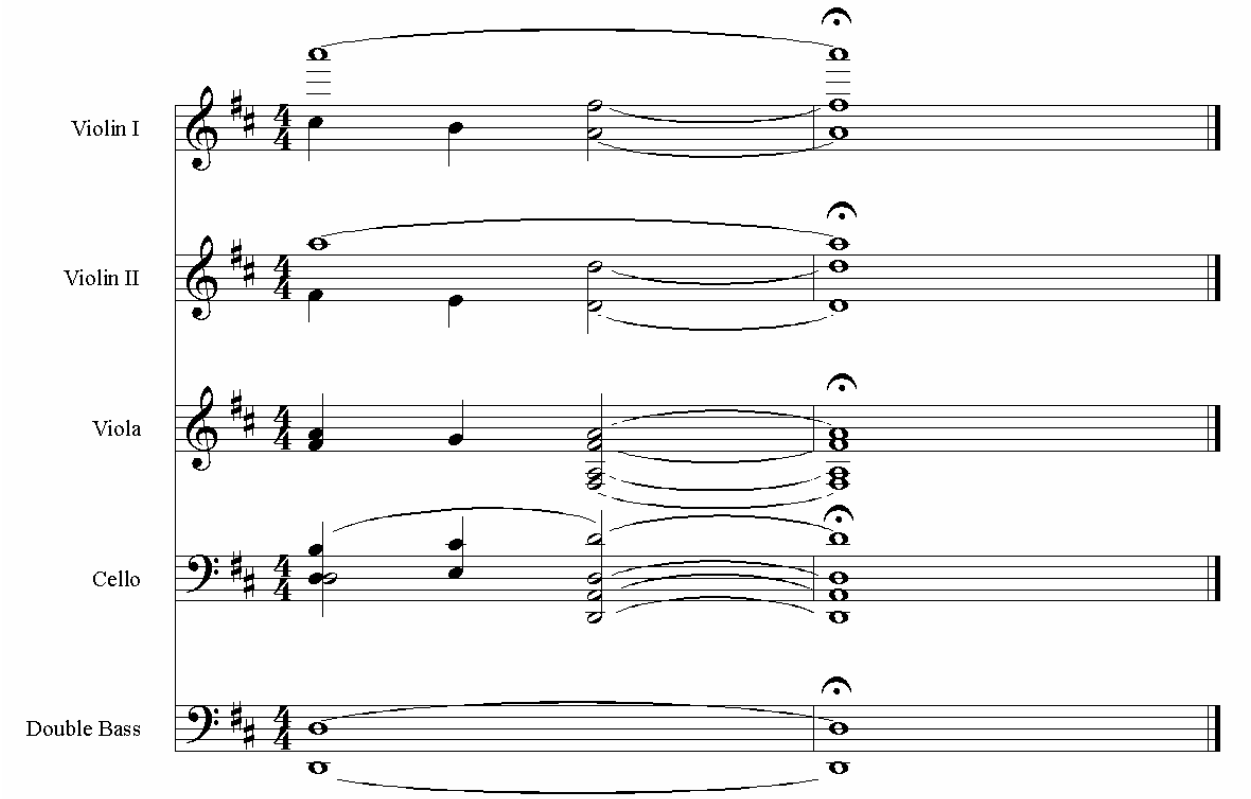
The flute and English horn present the passacaglia theme at measure 262 while the clarinet and viola play the countermelody. They are accompanied by scale passages in the strings.

Example 113: Passacaglia, m. 262-267. Flute, English horn, clarinet, viola.



A pedal point on the note D begins at measure 267 in the bass and lasts until the end of the movement. Scale passages begin in the clarinet in measure 268. The strings finish the movement with a ten-part *pianissimo* passage based on the countermelody. The passage uses an extreme range of pitches for the strings. The penultimate chord (V^{13}) has all of the pitches of a D major scale with the exception of the note F#. It resolves to a D major chord on beat three of measure 280.

Example 114: Passacaglia, m. 280-281. Violin, viola, cello, bass.



In his article "The Soporific Finale," Vaughan Williams stated that the final movement of a symphony often puts the audience to sleep. He offered a number of devices that composers could use to prevent an audience from becoming drowsy. One of these devices was to restate musical material from the opening movement. Vaughan Williams said, "[A composer] can imitate Schumann's pianoforte Quintette, and reintroduce a subject out of the first movement in conjunction with those of the last."[12] Vaughan Williams followed his own advice in Symphony No. 5. The return of thematic material from the first movement also results in the resolution of the conflict that was created by dual modalities in the Preludio. The tension of the penultimate

[12]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "The Soporific Finale," *The Vocalist* 1 (April 1902): 31.

chord (a thirteenth chord built on the note A) and earlier dissonances resolves to a definitive D major chord.

Musical style is a composer's characteristic manner of expression, particularly as that expression relates to melody, harmony, and rhythm. In a speech to the Folk Song Society in 1898, Hubert Parry said, "Style is ultimately national."[13] While the movements of Symphony No. 5 used titles and forms that can be found in all western music, Vaughan Williams made these elements his own by the use of his unique style. His style shows a use of melodic patterns that frequently share traits with English folk song, a use of hemiola and cross rhythms, a considerable use of contrapuntal devices, a preference for modal systems over tonal ones, and a use of ambiguous modal/tonal areas—elements that help define Vaughan Williams's English style.

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[13]Statement made in 1898 in an address to the Folk Song Society. Quoted in Kennedy, *Works*, 8.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Vaughan Williams's expressed thoughts, both written and spoken, his actions, and his experiences all were factors in Vaughan Williams becoming a distinctly English composer. His writings indicate that he was consistently able to follow his own advice. Vaughan Williams said that composers must be planted in their own soil. He found his voice in elements of English folk song, a tradition of his country. Vaughan Williams believed that composers should be involved with the community and that their music should be an expression of the community. He was involved as a conductor of amateur music groups, such as the Leith Hill Music Festival, and professional music groups, such as the Bach Choir. He was involved in musical activities during World War I by composing and arranging works for his fellow servicemen to perform. Vaughan Williams said that music must be heard. His work with the Committee for the Promotion of New Music helped new works by his fellow composers to be heard. Vaughan Williams felt that travel abroad in order to study music was acceptable as long as it would assist in carrying out a purpose. He traveled to Germany to study with Bruch and to Paris to study with Ravel. The study with Bruch resulted in an increase of self-confidence. The study with Ravel resulted in a view of orchestration as points of color. The most important musical issue for Vaughan Williams was that music should be national. This was evident in the series of lectures on national music which were later published as *National Music*.

In many ways, Vaughan Williams was like the example of the sponge that he had used to describe Sibelius. Vaughan Williams was able to soak up all that he could from diverse sources,

such as musical study in England and abroad, English folk song, work with the English hymnal, his love of Tudor music, and his friendship with Gustav Holst; but he would remain recognizably Vaughan Williams to listeners both during and after his lifetime by his unique treatment of melody, harmony, and rhythm, which would become his English style.[1] Each symphony represented his own solutions in providing interest to symphonic forms. In *A Sea Symphony* he used the poetry of Walt Whitman as a vehicle for his setting of symphonic forms. *A London Symphony* incorporated sounds associated with London into a day in the life of a Londoner. *A Pastoral Symphony* used orchestral color, continuous melody, and a textless soprano voice to provide interest in a symphony of four slow movements. In Symphony No. 4, Vaughan Williams expanded his harmonic language to one that was more dissonant than that heard in his previous symphonies. Vaughan Williams said, "To be truly a master of one's craft implies the absolute fitting of the means to the end—the knowing what you want to say and the being able to discover the best and fullest way of saying it."[2] In Symphony No. 5, Vaughan Williams was able to preserve, modify, and expand the symphonic tradition that he had inherited by keeping symphonic format, by changing traditional forms to meet his own needs, and by expanding symphonic musical vocabulary to include elements commonly found in English folk song.

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[1]A point of comparison can be with the American author William Faulkner. Faulkner's wide variety of works reflect a uniform style, and the mature and best works were those written about his 'postage stamp' of America.

[2]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "The Romantic in Music." *The Music Student*, Vol. IV No. 6 (March 1912): 247.

Vaughan Williams was not writing in a vacuum. The desire of other British composers to be identified with things "English" is evident in the titles of some of the orchestral works of composers of the generation previous to Vaughan Williams, those of his own generation, and those of the following generation. Example's include Parry's Symphony No. 3 (The English); Elgar's *Cockaigne Overture (In London Town)*; Holst's *St. Paul's Suite*, *A Somerset Rhapsody*, and *Egdon Heath*; Butterworth's *The Banks of Green Willow*; Bax's *London Pageant*; Jacob's *William Byrd Suite*; Walton's *Variations on an Elizabethan Theme*, Finzi's *A Severn Rhapsody*; and Britten's *Suite on English Folk Tunes*.

Vaughan Williams's compositional life was like a river with many tributaries of varying size. These tributaries included his teachers—Parry, Wood, Stanford, Bruch, and Ravel; the music of other composers—music that he studied and music that was played on concerts he attended or radio broadcasts that he heard; English folk song that he collected; Tudor music, such as that of Tallis; nationalism in England and abroad; political issues, such as the treatment of immigrant musicians; and any other ideas to which he was exposed. Some of these tributaries, such as folk song and nationalism, were strong throughout his compositional life. Others, such as Wood and Bruch, were possibly only minor influences. Still others, such as Ravel and the music of the modernists, Vaughan Williams sometimes tried to consciously reroute.

Vaughan Williams's love of Tudor music, his work on the English Hymnal, his study of the organ, and his fascination with English folk song are all manifested in Symphony No. 5. The love of Tudor music can be seen in the scoring of the opening of the Romanza, as the scoring is reminiscent of the scoring for strings in Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*, and in the extensive use of contrapuntal sections throughout the symphony. English cathedral anthems of the Tudor period, such as William Byrd's *Be Unto Me, O Lord, A*

Tower of Strength, frequently featured homophonic sections alternating with contrapuntal ones. The work on the English Hymnal can be seen in the use of fragments of the hymn tunes *Lasst uns erfruen* in the Passacaglia and *Sine nomine* in the Preludio. Both of these hymn tunes were included in the English Hymnal and may have been so ingrained in Vaughan Williams's subconscious that he was unaware of his use of similar melodic material in Symphony No. 5. His study of the organ is evident in sections of the Scherzo movement that are scored in planes of sound and families of instruments, which create an effect similar to an organist's change of manual.

The fascination with English folk song, however, is the influence that is most obvious in Symphony No. 5. This influence can be seen in Symphony No. 5's numerous modal as opposed to tonal centers; shifts in modality with the modality frequently remaining ambiguous; the choice of motives that share characteristics with English folk song; the basic contour of some of the longer themes following those found in English folk song; and the constantly shifting metrical patterns in sections of the symphony. The preference for modal over tonal centers was seen in Vaughan Williams's selection of modal folk songs over tonal ones when selecting folk songs for publication, although he had collected more tonal than modal ones in the field. Ambiguous or dual tonality was noted by Vaughan Williams in some of the folk songs that he collected, such as *New Garden Fields*[3] and *Awake, Awake.*[4] The use of motivic material beginning with the interval of a rising fourth, a characteristic found with some regularity in English folk songs such

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[3]Noted as having Dorian and Mixolydian influences in "Songs Collected from Sussex," *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 4 (1914): 334.

[4]Noted as being Dorio-Mixolydian in "Carols from Herefordshire" in *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 4 (1914): 7.

as *The Truth Sent from Above*, can be found throughout Symphony No. 5. *The Captain's Apprentice*, one of Vaughan Williams's favorite folk songs, features a number of metric changes in a four bar section of the folk song. While any one of these English folk song traits can also be found in numerous twentieth-century compositions and compositions from earlier periods, the important point is that these features are all attributes that Vaughan Williams himself closely identified with English folk song.

The slant of scholarship on Vaughan Williams has changed in various ways over the years. Those writing during his lifetime, such as Foss, Young, and Howes, sometimes tended to be overly flattering. Adjectives such as "visionary" and "mystical" were frequently used. The definitive works by Ursula Vaughan Williams and Michael Kennedy have been described as viewing Vaughan Williams as he chose to be remembered. Recent scholarship, such as articles in the anthologies[5] compiled by Byron Adams and Robin Wells, Lewis Foreman, and Alain Frogley, attempts to place Vaughan Williams and his music in historical perspective.

Vaughan Williams was a musical pilgrim who determined deliberately to become an English composer. In a lecture entitled "English Folk Song" that was delivered in the early part of the twentieth century, Vaughan Williams said:

> Music has been called the universal language, and to a certain extent this is true. The greatest music is universal in its appeal, and we want our English music to be world-wide in appeal also, and not merely parochial. But the great composers have achieved universal admiration, not by sinking their personal—and therefore their national—characteristics, but by developing them.[6]

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[5]See footnotes 28, 29, and 30.

[6]Ralph Vaughan Williams, "English Folk Song," lecture delivered to the Oxford Folk Music Society 16 November 1910 and printed in *The Musical Times* 52-816 (February 1911):

The observation regarding national composers in general was a theme used throughout Vaughan Williams's writings. It was also his hope that other English composers would follow a similar path and develop their own inherent English qualities. The development of English national traits was the philosophy that Vaughan Williams adhered to in Symphony No. 5—a symphony that summarized Vaughan Williams's philosophy of the English composer.

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APPENDIX A

OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE PREMIERE, THE RECEPTION HISTORY, AND THE RECORDED HISTORY OF SYMPHONY NO. 5[1]

The Premiere

Vaughan Williams conducted the premiere of Symphony No. 5 on 24 June 1943 at Royal Albert Hall in London. Writers who commented on Symphony No. 5 at the time of its premiere often mentioned that the serene other-worldly quality of the symphony seemed to indicate that this might be a valedictory symphony for the seventy-one year old composer. Those writing after the end of the war liked to point out that it seemed as if Vaughan Williams had been predicting the end of World War II. Both views were mistaken as Vaughan Williams was to write four additional symphonies, and early sketches of Symphony No. 5 date from 1938,[2] a year before England entered the war in September1939.

Frank Howes, music critic for *The Times*, described the premiere of Symphony No. 5 in his book, *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams*:

> When Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony was produced for the first time at a Promenade Concert during the war, . . . the audience fell under its spell. Its serene, almost religious character seemed to be alien to the mixed programme and casual audience of a Prom, yet there was no doubt that its greatness and its peculiar spiritual quality were at once recognized. Comment at a more superficial level was that the composer had gone back to his earlier style and that the violence of the previous symphony had been exorcized. Opinion came to rest upon the view that it was the

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[1]This appendix is not intended to be all-inconclusive, but rather a sampling of observations regarding the premiere, the reception history, and the recorded history of the symphony.

[2]The parts of the symphony that Vaughan Williams borrowed from his morality *Pilgrim's Progress* were possibly in progress during much of Vaughan Williams's compositional life.

> summary of a life's work; that if nothing else of his survived, future generations would get a very good idea of Vaughan Williams's style and message from this symphony alone.[3]

Adrian Boult wrote to Vaughan Williams following the premiere: "[Symphony No. 5's] serene loveliness is completely satisfying in these times and shows, as only music can, what we must work for when this madness is over. I look forward to another performance and to the privilege of doing it myself some time soon."[4]

Edward Heath, former Prime Minister of Britain, wrote a detailed description of the premiere of Symphony No. 5. Heath served in the Royal Artillery during World War II. He recalled:

> When I was on a short leave near London I did hear the first performance of a work which has made a lasting impression on me, Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony in D. The Proms still continued in the Albert Hall, despite the bombing, and on 24 June 1943 I managed to get there for the concert beginning at 7 p.m. For once there was no question of queuing; the audience was thinly scattered about the hall. A note at the bottom of the programme explained that in the event of an air-raid warning we would be told immediately. Those of us who wished could take shelter, but the concert would continue. That night, Vaughan Williams, then over seventy, conducted his own work. None of us knew what to expect. . . . Vaughan Williams mounted the platform, almost stumbled his way through the orchestra, and there on the podium, bulky, slightly stooped, craggy, almost unkempt, he began the work. He had never been noted for his conducting, but the bareness and simplicity of his gestures seemed all of a piece with the nobility of the music that followed. Here was what we were searching for: spiritual refreshment at a time of strife, to remind us that the values we held dear were still what really mattered, despite what was going on outside. An air-raid warning had been given before the concert began, but all that slipped from our minds as we listened, absorbed, to this quiet, almost diffident restatement of faith. . . . We were not very many that night in the Albert Hall, but we had been present at a fresh flowering of Vaughan Williams's genius.[5]

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[3]Frank Howes, *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 41.

[4]Quoted in Holmes, *Vaughan Williams*, 100. The date of the letter is not indicated in the quotation.

[5]Edward Heath, *Music: A Joy for Life* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1976), 73-74.

The Reception History

Hubert Foss, Vaughan Williams's publisher at Oxford University Press, assessed Symphony No. 5 in his biography of Vaughan Williams. In his assessment, Foss described the reception history and gave a number of possible reasons for the popularity of Symphony No. 5:

> Public appreciation of the D major was more immediate than that of perhaps any other single work by the composer. The circumstances of time and place can be partly discounted—the fact of the composer's age, the availability of music through radio, the contrast of the music's peace with the noise of war. . . . The character of the Symphony itself was, I think, mainly responsible for its first wide appeal.
>
> The D major Symphony is in every way different from the recent war in Europe. It is democratic, universal, in its attitude to mankind; it is slow, contemplative, kindly, and philosophical in outlook. There is never an attempt to dominate. . . . The philosophy persuades, as the philosophy of a wise thinker of experience in life.[6]

Arthur Benjamin wrote to Herbert Howells in a letter dated 29 December 1944: "I heard VW's fifth symphony over the air from New York. What beauty of sound and thought! All the old clichés (and why not? They are his own) and all the placid philosophy of his early works came as a surprise after the dynamic 4th. What an unpredictable composer he is!"[7]

Sir Adrian Boult recorded the following for the B.B.C. in 1947. The occasion was the celebration of the seventy-fifth birthday of Vaughan Williams. Boult's assessment describes how Vaughan Williams was viewed by the British public in the years immediately following the premiere of Symphony No. 5:

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[6]Foss, 144-145.

[7]Palmer, *Herbert Howells (1892-1983): A Celebration*, 34.

> At the present time, though he holds no official position, Ralph Vaughan Williams is the undisputed leader of English musical life. I think everyone will agree that his magnificent output has for the last forty years enriched the whole world of music, but just as a man, too, we all respect and love him and we listen to what he says. It is natural that his music is valued at a different height by different critics, and perhaps the insular position and attitude of England make all our work less apt for export. It is indeed probable that there are a number of his works which no-one could expect a foreigner to understand unless he already knew some of Vaughan Williams' preceding output, and could thus have some idea of the development of his, and our, musical language.[8]

In the same tribute, Boult summarized his opinion of Symphony No. 5. Boult described how he felt Vaughan Williams had composed a prophetic and visionary work in Symphony No. 5: "Vaughan Williams, like all great artists, is a prophet. . . . And when Europe was plunging into war, Vaughan Williams was looking ahead to the world we hoped would emerge, and his deep study and pre-occupation with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* gave him material for a wonderful vision of peace and beauty in his Symphony No. 5, in D."[9]

In a letter dated 4 October 1954 from John Barbirolli to Ursula Vaughan Williams, Barbirolli said:

> By the way, you might tell him that he has been much in our thoughts during this last tour as we have given several performances of No. 5. What a heavenly work it is. Sometimes I think perhaps one of the loveliest of them all.
>
> The performance in Salisbury Cathedral was an experience I don't think I shall ever forget, and I think he would have been touched had he been there to see how deeply moved the players themselves were by it. In fact, at the end of the slow movement, I saw quite a few of them perilously near to tears.[10]

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[8]Sir Adrian Boult, *Boult on Music* (London: Toccata Press, 1983), 63-64.

[9]Ibid, 65.

[10]Harold Atkins and Peter Cotes. *The Barbirollis: A Musical Marriage* (London: Robson Books, 1983), 146-47.

Charles Reid, one of John Barbirolli's biographers, said:

> Soon after [Vaughan Williams's] death and a good decade before Barbirolli's the sway of [Vaughan Williams's] outstanding works–especially the fourth, fifth and sixth symphonies–began to slacken. Those symphonies were very much of their day, and in that day were attuned to certain Anglo-Saxon ways of looking at life and feeling it. Many surmise and some prophesy that time will restore them to something like their old favour. Barbirolli never wavered, either in heart or mind. He had copied and grappled with Vaughan Williams during years when much of his sound was far from axiomatic to many listeners and players.[11]

In December 1968, Sir Adrian Boult was interviewed by Robert Layton. When asked if he felt that Vaughan Williams was sadly neglected abroad with the exception of Scandinavia, Boult said: "I don't really know enough to say that. I certainly think he is not done enough. I've done V.W. abroad. . . . [Bruno Walter] was a great Vaughan Williams enthusiast: he did the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, both in America.[12]

Michael Kennedy, in liner notes to recordings of the symphonies that preceded and followed Symphony No. 5, made observations that also apply to Symphony No. 5: "Everything he wrote, whether you like it or not, contains some essential part of his personality: he did not know how to be false or untrue to his own artistic conscience."[13]

Writers commenting many years after the premiere were often better able to place the symphony in perspective without writing an interpretive program of the symphony. Christopher Palmer offered his opinion of how the symphony might have appeared to those hearing it in

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[11]Charles Reid, *John Barbirolli: A Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), 321-322.

[12]Adrian Boult, *Boult on Music: Words from a Lifetime's Communication* (Musicians on Music No. 1. London: Toccata Press, 1983), 74.

[13]Michael Kennedy, liner notes to *Vaughan Williams Symphony No. 4, Symphony No. 6*,

1943. His view placed the symphony in the context in which it was heard: "For those who, in the stress and strain of the times, sought relief, solace and reassurance that beyond the intolerable present the eternal values remained, it must have come as manna from heaven. In a world of rampant disorder and destruction it stood as a symbol of order prevailing somewhere in the universe."[14] Palmer acknowledged the chaos of the world in which the symphony premiered without adding an interpretation of what he thought Vaughan Williams was trying to say.

Biographer James Day described Symphony No. 5 as "one of Vaughan Williams's greatest and most economically-laid-out achievements."[15] He included Symphony No. 5 in a list of works written after the death of Holst that confirmed Vaughan Williams "was still full of ideas for striking and unusual instrumental effects"[16] without guidance from Holst regarding the improvement of new works.

Compared to other orchestral works[17] that were premiered around the time Symphony No. 5 was written and performed, Symphony No. 5 might have sounded dull to audiences.

Sir Adrian Boult and the New Philharmonia Orchestra, 1968, 1984. EMI CDC 7472152

[14]Christopher Palmer, brochure notes for Vaughan Williams, *Symphonies Nos. 4 & 5*, Andrew Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, 1992, Teldec 4509-90844-2.

[15]James Day, *Ralph Vaughan Williams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 207.

[16]Ibid, 65.

[17]Schoenberg - *Violin Concerto* (1940); Stravinsky - *Symphony in C* (1944); Shostakovich - *Symphony No. 7 'Leningrad'* (1942); Shostakovich - *Symphony No. 8* (1943).

However, other than pointing out that the symphony seemed to state that Vaughan Williams was turning away from the modernity of Symphony No. 4, reviews tended to be extremely positive.

The Recorded History

At least nineteen recordings have been made of Symphony No. 5, with the earliest one being that of John Barbirolli in 1944. With the exception of the one American recording, all of the recordings have been made by British Orchestras. Recordings have been made by Kees Bakels (1996 Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra), Adrian Boult (1953 London Philharmonic Orchestra and 1969 London Philharmonic Orchestra), John Barbirolli (Hallé 1944 and 1962), Andrew Davis (1992 BBC Symphony Orchestra), Alexander Gibson (1982 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra), Bernard Haitnik (1994 London Philharmonic Orchestra), Vernon Handley (1986 Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra), Richard Hickox (1997 London Symphony Orchestra), Neville Marriner (1990 Academy of Saint Martin-in-the-Fields), Yehudi Menuhin (1987 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra), Roger Norrington (1996 London Philharmonic Orchestra), Andre Previn (1971 London Symphony Orchestra, 1988 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and 1995 Symphony Orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music), Gennadi Rozhdestvensky (1980 BBC Symphony Orchestra), Leonard Slatkin (1990 Philharmonia), and Bryden Thomson (1987 London Symphony Orchestra).[18] The frequency with which recordings were released–1944, 1953, 1962, 1969, 1971, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1987 (2), 1988, 1990 (2), 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996 (2), and 1997–with eight recordings produced in the decade of the 1990s, illustrates the continued interest in Symphony No. 5.

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[18]See William Hedley's article "Vaughan Williams the Symphony and the Second World War, *Journal of the RVW Society* 22 (October 2001) for reviews of recordings.

APPENDIX B

MAJOR TONAL/MODAL CENTERS

Preludio

Exposition

A section

m. 1	m. 9	m. 40	m. 48
C lydian	C ionian	C aeolian	C dorian
D mixolydian	D dorian	F dorian	

B section

m. 60	m. 69	m. 87
E major	E aeolian/major/phrygian	C aeolian

Development

m. 92	m. 100	m. 112	m. 118	m. 129	m. 138
C aeolian	G aeolian [pentatonic]	C aeolian [pentatonic]	E-flat aeolian	F# aeolian	A phrygian ['dominant' preparation]

Recapitulation

A section

m. 164	m.175
C lydian	C ionian
D mixolydian	D dorian

B section

m 185	m. 189	m.197	m.203	m.210
B-flat major	G major to G aeolian to G major	E-flat major	G aeolian	E-flat mixolydian

m. 212	m. 216	m. 224 to 232	m. 233-237
D aeolian	F aeolian	C aeolian D mixolydian	C lydian D mixolydian

The exposition and the recapitulation feature dual modal centers. The movement ends with the notes C and D sustained in the bass and viola. The Preludio, with the variety of modes and keys visited, shows the influence of the folk idiom on Vaughan Williams.

Scherzo

A section

a		b		
	m. 1 pentatonic & ambiguous E phrygian		m. 32 E phrygian	m. 44 A aeolian

a		b		
	m. 65 pentatonic & ambiguous E phrygian		m. 81 E phrygian	m. 87 A aeolian

c		d	
	m. 98 C aeolian		m. 105 A aeolian

c		d
	m. 117 C phrygian	m. 125 B aeolian

B section

e

m. 141
B aeolian

c

m. 145
C aeolian

e		Transition
	m. 151 B aeolian	m. 156 G aeolian

a

m. 174 B-flat aeolian	m. 184 C# aeolian

e

m. 188 C# aeolian	m. 197 E aeolian	m. 214 E major E natural minor

A' section

a

m. 293
E phrygian
D pedal point
pentatonic/ambiguous

b

m. 325
E phrygian

Transition

m. 335
A aeolian

C section

f

m. 347
C major/minor/lydian

m. 358
C aeolian

a

m. 377
C phrygian
pentatonic/ambiguous

f

m. 389
E-flat dorian

a

m. 401
G aeolian
pentatonic/ambiguous

f

m. 410
C phrygian/ambiguous

A" section

a

m. 424	m. 438
C aeolian	E phrygian (bsn solo)
	A aeolian/dorian

The Scherzo movement features ambiguous and dual modalities as did the Preludio.

Romanza

A section

m. 1
A mixolydian
G dorian
ambiguous

m. 7 (A theme)
E dorian/aeolian
A phrygian
ambiguous

m. 12 (B theme)
A aeolian

m. 29 (Transition)
E phrygian/D dorian

A′ section

m. 39
E mixolydian
D dorian
ambiguous

m. 43 (A theme)
B dorian/aeolian
E Phrygian
ambiguous

m. 47 (B theme)
A aeolian

m. 72 (Transition)
Pentatonic
E phrygian & D dorian

m. 89
D dorian

B section

m. 94
F# mixolydian
B dorian

m. 114
A phrygian
E phrygian/aeolian

m. 130
E phrygian

m. 135
C aeolian

m. 144
A major/minor

A″ section

m.148
A aeolian

m. 182
F# aeolian

m. 189
A major/aeolian/phrygian

The Romanza features constantly shifting modal centers and ambiguous and dual modalities.

Passacaglia

Section 1

m. 1
D major

Section 2

m. 68
D major

m. 82
G major

m. 91
F lydian
F ionian
Pentatonic

m. 103
D dorian
Pentatonic

m. 114
D major

Section 3

m. 153
D aeolian

m. 162
F dorian

m. 168
C aeolian

m. 185
C dorian

m. 199
A aeolian

m. 207
F major
F minor

Epilogue

m. 216
C lydian
D mixolydin

m. 223
D dorian

m. 238
D major

While having some sections with dual modalities, the Passacaglia features many clearly defined tonal/modal centers, with the key of D major being the most frequently used key in the movement.