

# Abstracts

Meinhard Saremba: »We should know and love each other through our art...«. Ideals, crisis awareness and aspects of interpretation in the life and works of Vaughan Williams

Throughout his life, German composers' music played an important role for Ralph Vaughan Williams. Fostering friendly relationships with other nations became an integral part of his cultural values. This attitude and the appeasement policy of the 1930s led to his controversial acceptance of the Shakespeare Prize in Hamburg in 1937/38. Although he supported his native England during the world wars, he embraced other cultures and concerning the »Home Music« movement, he suggested that it was »right even to learn from the enemy«. As a keen follower of the »Federal Union« he even emphasized: »We should know and love each other through our art – and it must be our own art, not a colourless cosmopolitanism. I believe that one's community, one's own language, customs and religion are essential to our spiritual health. Out of these characteristics, the »hard knots«, we can build a united Europe and a world federation.« However, a huge movement in Britain towards promoting nostalgia and »Englishness« hijacked the interpretational sovereignty of Vaughan Williams and reduced his broad views to simplistic »green and pleasant land«-fantasies, although, as Enoch Powell phrased it, it would be better to be »cured of the British Empire, of the pitiful yearning to cling to relics of a by-gone system«. Based on Vladimir Paperny's cultural theory, one might speak of Culture A (the adamant authoritarian autocracy of the Empire) and Culture B (the breakdown of the Empire beyond belief). Vaughan Williams' output is all too often related to the idyllic and self-conscious aspects of Culture A, less to the works that came along with the rise of Culture B (such as *Riders to the Sea*, symphonies 4 and 6 etc.). The British focus on Englishness has had a detrimental effect on the appreciation of his achievements in other countries. German orchestras played his works occasionally, mainly under the baton of English conductors. This only led to outstanding results when an artist like Roger Norrington, in his Vaughan Williams's concert series, followed the platform planning of authentic interpreters like Adrian Boult. In addition to a regular involvement with Vaughan Williams's achievements, it is imperative to place his orchestral works on an international level as one of the greatest 20th century symphonists alongside Mahler, Sibelius and Shostakovich.

Florian Csizmadia: Ocean, city and country. The first three symphonies by Vaughan Williams

Ralph Vaughan Williams is known today as one of the most important European composers of symphonies in the 20th century. However, he was in some sort of way a late developer as composer and found his way to the symphony via choral music: His first symphony, *A Sea Symphony*, is a vocal symphony that merges elements of the oratorio with those of the four-movement symphony. Together with the two following orchestral symphonies, *A London Symphony* and the *Pastoral Symphony*, it forms a trilogy that covers musically three aspects of Vaughan Williams's England: the ocean, London as a modern metropolis and the countryside. However, the three works are not to be understood in a purely programmatic sense but have spiritual and metaphysical undertones thus underlining Vaughan Williams's claim that music should be an expression of »what lies beyond sense and knowledge«.

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Annika Forkert: Beast and the Beauty. Symphonies nos. 4 and 5

Vaughan Williams's middle symphonies, nos. 4 and 5, are often seen as two opposing poles, as extensions of the composer's double character. Between the pivot of »Englishness« on the one hand and New Music on the other, the two symphonies also toy with the tensions between new and old, German and English, and not least modernism and romanticism. Through analysis of their key motives and reception, the chapter offers a reading of both pieces as two facets of one single attempt by Vaughan Williams to respond to contemporary challenges in composition, both at home and in Europe.

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Habakuk Traber: Contours for postmodernism. On the symphonies No. 6 to 9

The author deals with Ralph Vaughan Williams's »Postwar Symphonies«, Symphonies No. 6 to No. 9, which were composed in close succession, touching only briefly on the *Sinfonia antartica*. The article is based on studies, texts and lectures given by the author in connection with a concert series in which Sir Roger Norrington performed Vaughan Williams's entire symphonic oeuvre (with the exception of the Symphony No. 7) with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin.

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David Manning: Instrumental Music. Concerti, ballet/masque and non-symphonic orchestral music

This chapter surveys Vaughan Williams's non-symphonic orchestral works and the music for dancing. Some of Vaughan Williams's best-known music is discussed – the *Tallis Fantasia*, *The Lark Ascending*, the *Fantasia on Greensleeves* – along with many of this composer's more neglected scores. The early works are afforded particular attention as many have been published and recorded for the first time only recently; they demonstrate how Vaughan Williams's musical language gradually emerged. Later works are then discussed including concertos, suites, and Masques for dancing; this may be a diverse repertoire, but a dynamic relationship between the old and the new emerges as a recurrent theme.

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Rupert Marshall-Luck: Folktunes, Landscape and Turbulence. The Songs and Chamber Music of Vaughan Williams

Vaughan Williams's songs and chamber music span the whole of his compositional career; yet only a few works from these genres appear with any degree of regularity in concert programmes and in recordings. Beginning with a brief overview, this essay proceeds to a detailed examination of five works that are representative of three areas which were principal subjects of the composer's exploration and which, therefore, may be said to be in some measure representative of his work: the influence of folk tunes; the influence of Impressionism; and the expression of strife or struggle.

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Panja Mücke: »A continuity with the past«. Vaughan Williams's operas

Ralph Vaughan Williams was part and major protagonist of a renewal movement in English music, which was aware of its national rootage and regarded national colouration of music as essential for composition and the international acceptance of music culture. With his operas, Vaughan Williams draws upon several previous models of English theater and thus establishes an intertextual link to various stages of English theater history such as 17th century Masque, 18th century Ballad Opera, 19th century Savoy Opera, Shakespeare's poetry and current plays in English. In each of his four operas, he evaluates a differently accentuated and customized opera concept.

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Norbert Abels: Vaughan Williams and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Views of a life's work

Norbert Abels follows the process of formation of a late theatric opus by Ralph Vaughan Williams. After first reading the classical novel *The Pilgrim's Progress*, it took the composer half a decade to end his Opus Magnum, as he considered it himself. The »Morality« originally by the baroque Puritan preacher and author is here looked at in both a text-critical and a musicological manner. Vaughan Williams composed it surpassing two World Wars questioning the purpose of the modern existence. By now the piece's aesthetic qualities have been heavily misjudged, and thus it was rarely performed. This essay intends to rediscover this piece.

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Erik Dremel: The vocal as a principle of musical genesis. Vaughan Williams's choir and church music

This article gives an overview of Vaughan Williams's choral music, categorized according to ecclesiastical-sacred and spiritual-secular themes and performance contexts. The principles of vocal music and vocal articulation in these pieces, which are determined by breathing and voice, are particularly examined. The vocal principle is also found in other works by Vaughan Williams like the symphonies etc. It is becoming evident that Vaughan Williams wants to evoke through his music a special relation to spiritual themes in his works based on spiritual texts. With modality and other compositional techniques he attempts new ways to this relation of text and music.

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Arne Stollberg: The voice of the ice sphinx. Pastoralism and Anti-Pastoralism in Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia antartica* and in his film music for *Scott of the Antarctic*

In Ralph Vaughan Williams's music for the film *Scott of the Antarctic* and the *Sinfonia antartica* developed from it, the superficially exhibited heroism surrounding the expedition team of Robert F. Scott is subtly undermined. The exotically inflected vocalises of the womens' voices – literally a siren's song representing the strange and seductive realm of the Antarctic – unveil an erotic obsession behind the ambitions of the South Pole explorers that ultimately leads them towards death. In contrast to this, the beginning of the film as well as the fourth movement of the symphony (»Intermezzo«) portray an equally feminized pastoral idyll connected to the English countryside, which is destroyed by Scott's adventurous spirit revealing itself as an irrational and compulsive drive.