

Ralph Vaughan Williams:

A guide to his music for Concert Promoters, Performers & Students.

Contents

Benedicite (The) (for chorus and orchestra)	2
Burley Heath (for orchestra)	3
Concerto in A Minor for Oboe & Strings.	4
Dona Nobis Pacem (for soloists, chorus and orchestra).....	5
English Folk Songs (English Folk Song Suite) (for military band or orchestra).....	6
Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis (for orchestra)	7
Five English Folk Songs (for unaccompanied mixed chorus)	8
Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus (for strings and harp).....	9
Harnham Down (for orchestra)	10
In the Fen Country (for orchestra)	11
On Christmas Night (for soloists, chorus and orchestra)	12
Piano Quintet in C minor (quintet)	13
Romance in D Flat for Harmonica (with strings and pianoforte)	14
Sancta Civitas (for chorus and orchestra)	15
Sea Songs (for military & brass bands or full orchestra).....	16
Serenade for small orchestra in A minor (for orchestra)	17
Serenade to Music (for 16 solo voices and orchestra).....	18
Six Studies in English Folk Song (for Cello & Piano).....	19
String Quartet No. 1 in G minor (Quartet).....	20
Sonata in A Minor for Violin & Pianoforte	21
Symphony No. 5 in D Major (for full orchestra).....	22
The Lark Ascending (for violin and orchestra)	23
The Running Set (for medium orchestra)	24
The Solent (for orchestra).....	25
The Sons of Light (for mixed chorus and orchestra).....	26
Toward the Unknown Region (for chorus and orchestra)	27
The Wasps – Overture (for orchestra)	28
Willow-Wood (for chorus and orchestra)	29

Benedicite (The) (for chorus and orchestra)

For soprano solo, mixed chorus (SATB), (Children's chorus) & orchestra. 1929

Duration: 15'

Text: Apocrypha (The Song of the Three Holy Children).
John Austin, 1613 – 69, (Hark, my soul, how everything,)

This is one of three works specially composed for & dedicated to, the then **Leith Hill Musical Competition** (now the **Leith Hill Musical Festival**) & first performed in Dorking in 1930 conducted by the composer, the other works being: **The Hundredth Psalm & Three Choral Hymns**.

Benedicite is a fairly short choral piece but from the composer's middle maturity, coming before such works as **Five Tudor Portraits & Dona Nobis Pacem**, for which he is better known. It is an extremely characteristic piece which pulls no punches stylistically.

Moderately difficult.

Orchestra:

Full; 2(2+picc).2. 2. 2./ 4.2.3.0./ timp. perc. Cel.(ad.lib) pno. Strings.

Reduced; 2.1.2.1./ 2.1.1.0./ pno. Strings.

Or

Strings / piano.

Publisher: **Oxford University Press.**

Performance materials: Vocal score (sale) / Full score / Orch. Parts (hire)

Arrangements: Sop. Solo, female chorus (ssaa) & orch. (OUP).
(Arr. Jean Storry)

Burley Heath (for orchestra)
[Impression for Orchestra No1 – In the New Forest]
Ed. James Francis Brown.

Composed 1902.

Duration: 6'

This was the intended first movement of a suite of *Three Impressions 'In the New Forest'* (the other movements being *The Solent & Harnham Down*), but was left seemingly incomplete in manuscript by the composer, with this first publication of the score being edited and rendered performable only in 2013.

Vaughan Williams came to know the New Forest as his wife, Adeline's family, the Fishers, lived at Brockenhurst and Ralph was able to explore this haunting & somewhat melancholy area on foot & bicycle, **Burley** being a small village near Ringwood in the south west of the forest.

It is also the first of his works inspired by 'places' & he went on to compose several others during the early part of his career with the best known being **In the Fen Country** of 1904 & the later **London Symphony**.

Stylistically, this piece comes before the composer fully found his distinctive voice but nevertheless, it is characteristic in some of the melodic & harmonic invention & is an attractive & subtle work even if abandoned by VW in his quest for a more personal style.

Orchestra:

2.1.ca.2.2/4.2.0.0/timp/strings

Publisher: **Oxford University Press.**

Performance materials: (2013)

Study Score: 978-0-19-339939-6

Score & parts (Hire) 978-0-19-339547-3

Concerto in A Minor for Oboe & Strings.

Composed 1944.

Duration: 20'

1. Rondo Pastorale – *Allegro moderato*. A minor.
2. Minuet & Musette – *Allegro moderato*. C minor.
3. Finale (Scherzo) – *Presto – doppio più lento – lento – presto*. E minor.

Described by its publisher as 'A capricious, lyrical & nostalgic work, it is often considered to be Vaughan Williams's most successful work in this form.'

Written in dark times, the *Concerto* shares much in mood & style with the **5th Symphony** of the previous year (perhaps employing some unused material from that work) & also sharing the feeling of hope for the future as well as looking backwards to an Arcadian, pastoral world where the oboe/pipes sound & the dance form *Minuet & Musette* second movement underline that feeling.

However, the writing for the oboe is quite challenging and requires a master of the instrument to do the concerto justice, particularly in the *Finale* where the weight of the work really lies.

Vaughan Williams's writing for the strings is here at his highest level too, effective & masterly.

The *Concerto* was first given in Liverpool in September 1944 with **Léon Goossens**, perhaps the most outstanding oboist of the time, as soloist.

Moderate / difficult.

Publisher: Oxford University Press.

Performance Material:

Oboe + Piano. ISBN: 9780193692312. Pub. 1947

Min. Score. O/P.

Full score + parts. ISBN: 9780193692329. OUP Hire only.

Dona Nobis Pacem (for soloists, chorus and orchestra)

A Cantata for soprano & baritone soloists, mixed chorus (SATB) & orchestra.
Composed 1936 (& 1911*)

Duration: 36'

Text taken from Biblical & other sources:

1. **Agnus Dei.** *Lento.* (From the Liturgy). Soprano & chorus.
2. **Beat! Beat! Drums!** *Allegro moderato.* (From *Drum Taps*, by Walt Whitman). Chorus.
3. **Reconciliation.** *Andantino.* (From *Drum Taps*, by Walt Whitman). Baritone, soprano & chorus.
4. **Dirge for two veterans.*** *Moderato alla marcia.* (From *Drum Taps*, by Walt Whitman). Chorus.
5. **The Angel of Death.** *L'istesso tempo.* (Speech by John Bright. 1811-89, in the House of Commons 23/2/1855, during Crimean War.) Baritone & soprano.
6. **We looked for peace.** *Poco animato.* (Jeremiah 8:15-22). Chorus.
 - **O man, greatly beloved.** (Daniel 10: 19). Baritone.
 - **The glory of this latter house.** (Haggai 2:9). Baritone.
 - **Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation...** *Andante – poco animato- poco più lento.* (Adapted from Micah 4:3 / Leviticus 26:6 / Psalms 85:10 & 118:19 / Isaiah 43:9 & 46:18-22 / Luke 2:14). Soprano & chorus.

With the rise of the fascist dictators in Germany, Italy & Spain in the 1930s. RVW could not help drawing on his own war experiences of 1914 – 1918 in this Cantata which is a plea for peace in dangerous times. This is an ‘anthology’ work, somehow pre-echoing **Britten’s War Requiem** of 30 years later, combining liturgical & secular war poetry & a speech made in an earlier conflict.

The Cantata covers a range of emotion from deep grief to a sort of optimistic hope in a peaceful future, with the *Dirge** (composed in 1911 but never previously published) fitting well into the structure in spite of its earlier origin.

The popularity & relevance to the mankind of this Cantata, together with its appeal to choral societies, has made *Dona Nobis Pacem* into a modern choral classic – it seems, regrettably, perpetually topical!

Orchestra:

3, (pic).2.2.2.db/4.4.5.1/timp.perc.bells.hp.organ/strings. or strings & piano or reduced orchestra: 1.1.0.0/2.1.0.0/timp.hp.org./strings.

Publisher: Oxford University Press.

Performance materials: Vocal score. 9780193388611
Full score. 9780193850682

All versions of orchestral parts on hire.

English Folk Songs (English Folk Song Suite) (for military band or orchestra)

Suite for military band transcribed for full orchestra by Gordon Jacob.
1923. (Transcription, 1924)

Duration: 11'

This Suite is perhaps the best known of a number of works that Vaughan Williams (& his friend, **Gustav Holst**) composed to try to extend the repertoire of the **military band** which at the time seemed to be limited to orchestral transcriptions & poorer quality music. It also provided another route to bringing **English folk song** to a wider public. The Suite has, in its orchestral transcription, become one of RVW's most popular works & an ideal addition to any programme of lighter 'favourites' for any orchestra of reasonable standard.

The Suite is in 3 movements, incorporating the following folk songs:

1. **March:** Seventeen come Sunday. (Allegro. F minor)
(Dives & Lazarus – bass, Seventeen Come Sunday, Pretty Caroline.)
2. **Intermezzo:** My Bonny Boy. (Andantino – allegro scherzando. F minor)
(My Bonny Boy, Green Bushes.)
3. **March:** Folk Songs from Somerset. (Allegro. B flat.)
(Blow away the morning dew, High Germany, The trees so high, John Barleycorn.)

Orchestra:

(Full) 2.picc.1.2.1./2.2.2.0.0/timp./cym. bass drum. side drum. perc./ strings.

(Reduced) 2.picc.0.1.0./1.2.0.0./ timp./ perc./ strings.

Publisher: *Boosey & Hawkes*

Performance materials:

Full score. (Jacob) ISMN 9790051508228

Parts. (Jacob) ISMN 9790060061269
Boosey & Hawkes, New York.

Arrangements Solo Piano (Michael Mullinar) 1949. ISMN 9790060809217

Symphonic Band ISMN 9790051615117 (B & H / N.Y.)

String Orch. (Stephen Bulla) F.S. ISMN 9790051778454
Parts. ISMN 9790051778461
(B & H / N.Y.)

Brass Band (Frank Wright) F.S. BBJ. 863a.
Parts. BBJ. 863. (B & H)

Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis (for orchestra)

For double string orchestra with solo quartet. 1910. (rev. 1913 / 1919)

Largo sostenuto.

Duration: 15'

Memorably first performed at the Gloucester **Three Choirs Festival** in 1910, conducted by Vaughan Williams, this has become one of its composer's most popular, best loved and regarded works. This early masterpiece is now a cornerstone of the English string orchestra repertoire.

Based on the **Thomas Tallis** (1505 – 85) Psalm Tune *Why fumeth in fight* (1567) contained in Archbishop Parker's Psalter which Vaughan Williams first came across as Music Editor of the **English Hymnal** published in 1906.

The critic Fuller Maitland wrote of the first performance that "one is never quite sure whether one is listening to something very old or very new" and Vaughan Williams weaves a magical web of sound using solo strings, quartet and the full string orchestra.

Orchestra:

Solo string quartet (2 violins / viola / cello)

Orchestra 1: 1st. / 2nd. violins / viola / cello (tutti) / cello (last desk) / bass.

Orchestra 2: 2 first violins / 2 second violins / 2 violas / 2 cellos / 1 bass.

(Note to conductor: The second orchestra consists of 2 First Violin players, 2 Second Violin players, 2 Viola players, 2 'Cello players and 1 C'Bass player. These should be taken from the 3rd. desk of each group (or in the case of the C'Bass by the 1st. player of the 2nd. desk), and should, if possible, be places apart from the First Orchestra. If this is not practicable, they should play sitting in their normal places. The solo parts are to be played by the leader in each group.)

Publisher: **Faber Music.** (Originally **Goodwin & Tabb**, 1921. Reissued **Curwen**, 1924)

Performance materials: Full Score 0571 51407 3 Faber.
Orchestral parts. Faber Hire Library.

Miniature score. Boosey & Hawkes.

Arrangements: 2 Pianos. (Maurice Jacobson) Faber.
Organ. (Peter Beardsley) (unpublished)
Flute band (L.R. McArthur) UMP.
Choral (abridged) (Steve Block) (unpublished)

Five English Folk Songs (for unaccompanied mixed chorus)

Freely arranged for unaccompanied mixed chorus (SATB) and published in 1913.

This collection of folk song arrangements was a major landmark in Vaughan Williams's mission to popularise English folk song and make it available for both amateur and professional singers to perform.

These five songs are:

1. *The dark-eyed sailor*. (Andante quasi allegretto). G major.
2. *The springtime of the year*. (Adagio). E modal minor. (The text from a long ballad also known as *Lovely on the water* – First 2 verses).
3. *Just as the tide was flowing*. A major. (Words slightly revised).
4. *The lover's ghost* or *Well met, my own true love*. (Lento ma non troppo). C sharp minor. (Words amplified from broadside versions).
5. *Wassail song*. (*Gloucestershire*). (Vivace). A major.

Vaughan Williams had already set many folksongs for voice and piano but this set for chorus sees his settings on a new level with part-writing, polyphony and florid lines but all the time managing to retain the essence of the original song.

To recall the composer's words, "There is no original version of any particular tune....in one sense any particular tune is as old as the beginning of music; in another sense it is born afresh with the singer of today who sang it."

Moderate / difficult.

Publisher: Stainer & Bell.

Ref. D53. ISMN: 9790220217111

(Also available individually & in some other arrangements – unison / male voices).

Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus (for strings and harp)

For Strings and Harp (2 if possible).

Composed 1939.

Duration: 13'

- Introduction & Theme. *Adagio*. B modal minor.
- Variant 1. B modal minor.
- Variant 2. *Allegro moderato*. B modal minor.
- Variant 3. D modal minor.
- Variant 4. *L'istesso tempo*.
- Variant 5. *Adagio*. B modal minor.

(Note on score: These variants are not exact replicas of traditional tunes, but rather reminiscences of various versions in my own collection and those of others). (RVW).

First performed in 1939 at a World Fair concert in New York, this is perhaps Vaughan Williams's most **English** work.

The choice of the word **Variants**, rather than **Variations** is the key element of the work with the tune itself being known in various parts of the British Isles: as *The Star of the County Down*, in Ireland; as *Gilderoy*, in Scotland; as the carol, *Come all ye faithful Christians*, as well as appearing in *The Thresher*, & *Cold blows the wind*. Vaughan Williams himself collected it as a variant, *The Murder of Maria Martin...* in 1905.

In this work, VW continues in the **folk tradition**, producing his own **Variants** in a continuous stream of music, trying the tune out in different metres, modes & settings – his own musings & reflections on it – ending with a *forte* re-statement, a characteristic solo cello *arpeggio* & a thoughtful conclusion in quiet chords.

In recent years, this work has become one of the composer's most widely- played shorter works & is of medium difficulty. (Differences in the parts for violas & cellos allow performance by orchestras with smaller forces).

Orchestra:

hp(s). strings – vn1.vn2./vla1.vla2./vc1.vc2./cb.

Publisher: Oxford University Press.

Performance materials:

Study Score: 9780193690806

Score & parts on hire: 9780193690813

Arrangement: Concert Band (Stephen Gregson)

Full score (Allegro Music).

Harnham Down (for orchestra)

[Impression for Orchestra]

Ed. James Francis Brown

Composed 1904-7

Duration: 7'

This short orchestral work was intended as the second of another set of pieces, **In the New Forest** (*Two Impressions for Orchestra* – the first, *Boldre Wood* has not survived). In reality, Harnham Down itself is slightly away from the New Forest towards Salisbury.

The score is prefaced with a quotation from *The Scholar Gipsy* (1853) by **Matthew Arnold** (1822 – 1888):

“Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn –
All the live murmurs of a summers’day.”

The composer returned to this poem later in life (late 1940s) in *An Oxford Elegy*, setting more lines by Arnold and lifting the main theme from this early *Impression*.

Harnham Down received its one and only performance on 12th. November 1907 at the Queen’s Hall with the New Symphony Orchestra, under Emil von Reznicek but RVW took the view that it was too ‘Teutonic’ and redolent of the likes of Brahms, Delius and particularly, Wagner and although he had a point, the work also has hints of the authentic Vaughan Williams in many places. Even so, he was soon off to his studies with Ravel in Paris. This is an atmospheric and haunting miniature for small orchestra, is of medium difficulty and inhabits a similar world to various short pieces by Delius, Moeran, etc.

Orchestra:

2.1.ca 2.2/ 2.0.0.0/strings

Publisher: Oxford University Press. (2013)

Performance Materials:

Study Score: 978-0-19-339940-2

Score & parts (hire) 978-0-19-339546-6

In the Fen Country (for orchestra)
Symphonic Impression for Orchestra.
1904. (rev. 1905, 1907, orchestration rev. 1935).

Duration: 14'

Thomas Beecham conducted the premiere of this work at the Queen's Hall in 1909 & it remained in his repertoire. In fact, it is the earliest of Vaughan Williams's orchestral pieces that the composer seems to have been happy with unlike other similar short orchestral pieces, (**Harnham Down & The Solent**) from around the same period, which have only recently emerged.

Vaughan Williams collected his first 'real' **folk song** in late 1903 & this song, **Bushes and Briars**, seems to be 'infused' into the melodic material of this Symphonic Impression & could be considered as his first piece to employ the influence of **English folk music**.

This atmospheric & skilfully - orchestrated 'pastoral' Impression provides a powerful & brooding take on a landscape that Vaughan Williams knew very well as a Cambridge student and makes an excellent 'filler' in any programme.

Orchestra:
3.2.ca.2.bc.2 / 4.2.3.1 / timp./ strings (with violin solo)

Publisher: **Oxford University Press.**

Performance Materials: Study score (o.p) / Full score / Orch. Parts (hire)

On Christmas Night (for soloists, chorus and orchestra)

A Masque with dancing, singing & miming. (Freely adapted from Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* by Adolf Bolm & RVW).

Composed 1926.

Duration 30'

This Masque was first produced in Chicago on Boxing Day, 1926. It was later performed as an orchestral suite, *A Christmas Carol Suite*, & as a ballet at Cecil Sharp House in December 1929, conducted by Imogen Holst.

Loosely based on Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Vaughan Williams incorporates folk & traditional carols & tunes as well as folk & Morris dances including *Haste to the Wedding*, *Jamaica*, *Putney Ferry*, *Bacca Pipes*, *The Triumph* & *Sir. Roger de Coverley*.

Carols include: *A Virgin Most Pure*, *On Christmas Night*, *The First Nowell*, *Past Twelve o'clock* & *God Rest You Merry*.

This 'Charmingly seasonal work' interweaves the folk dances & carols in a highly imaginative & flowing score for dancers & singers with the backdrop of Dickensian London. It is of moderate difficulty & suitable for both amateur & professional performers.

Orchestra:

1, (picc). 1.1.1. / 1.1.1(tenor).0./timp.percussion(2 players) harp. celeste (opt.) piano. strings. *Offstage:* xylo, bells, piano.
+ mezzo-soprano, baritone soloists, SATB Chorus.

Publisher: Oxford University Press.

Performance Materials: All for hire from above.

ISBN: 9780193391833.

1957 / 1969. Vocal score / Piano arrangement by Roy Douglas.

Piano Quintet in C minor (quintet)

For violin, viola, cello, double bass & piano.

1903 (rev. 1904/5)

Duration: 30'

1. Allegro 2. Andante 3. Fantasia (quasi variazioni).

This quintet is unusually scored for the same forces as Schubert's '**Trout**' Quintet with a double bass adding extra body & resonance to the sound. **Michael Kennedy** regarded this quintet as one of RVW's best 'early' works & is one of the composer's more characteristic & passionate pieces. Obviously influenced by his teachers (**Parry & Stanford**) RVW's personality & character is never very far below the surface & the piece is written in a flowing & symphonic style.

First performed in London in 1905, the Quintet had a few further performances until being withdrawn by the composer in 1918. He later 'mined' the work for the Variation theme, using it in his **Violin Sonata** of 1954.

It was one of the first of RVW's early chamber works to be revived in the late Twentieth Century with a performance at the **Royal College of Music** in November 1999 & was published soon afterwards. Since then it has gained a foothold in the chamber music repertoire & has also been recorded.

Publisher: **Faber Music.**

Performance materials: Piano score + string parts. (Sale)
0-571-51953-9

Romance in D Flat for Harmonica (with strings and pianoforte)

Harmonica accompanied by an orchestra of strings and pianoforte.

Composed 1951.

Duration: 6'

Andante tranquillo – poco animando – allegro moderato.

In his later years, Vaughan Williams was no stranger to musical experimentation & the exploration of new paths & sound worlds. In other works of this period, such as ***Sinfonia Antartica, Hodie & Symphony No.8***, the composer introduced radical instrumental palettes to colour his new compositions.

Commissioned by the harmonica virtuoso, **Larry Adler**, who had also asked other composers to write for his instrument, VW came up with this short *Romance* which delighted Adler, received much press publicity at the time & seems to have divided admirers of VW ever since. First given by Adler in New York in 1952, performances quickly followed in Britain.

The harmonica has a virtuoso part which very much explores the range & possibilities of the instrument whilst maintaining Vaughan Williams's characteristic style throughout.

Perhaps the composer was casting his mind back to his experiences in the Great War & to his friend & comrade Harry Steggle – another accomplished exponent of the harmonica?

Moderate / difficult.

Orchestra:

Piano / Strings.

Publisher: Oxford University Press. (1953)

Performance material:

Score & parts (Hire). 9780193693265.

Harmonica + piano. (Allegro Music).

Sancta Civitas (for chorus and orchestra)
(The Holy City)

An Oratorio for tenor and baritone soloists, mixed chorus (satb) semi-chorus, distant chorus and orchestra. 1923/5.

Duration: 32'

Text: The Bible (Authorised Version) – Revelation, (from ch. 18 / 19 / 21 / 22.) with additions from Taverner's Bible (1539) & other sources.

(The score is headed with a quotation from Plato's *Phaedo* in Greek:
A man of sense will not insist that things are exactly as I have described them. But I think he will believe that something of the kind is true of the soul and her habitations, seeing that she is shown to be immortal, and that it is worthwhile to stake everything on this belief. The venture is a fair one and he must charm his doubts with spells like these.)

'Sancta Civitas' was in fact the composer's favourite of his choral works but tended to baffle the critics after initial performances when it was criticised for its austerity & textural complexity. Interestingly, it received generous praise from **Elgar!**

This is one of Vaughan Williams' most **visionary & mystical** works with a forward sweep that requires considerable control by conductor & considerable discipline from the chorus & orchestra. The composer specified the placement of the choral forces & tempos:

'The semi chorus should sit behind the full chorus & consist of about 20 singers (6,6,4,4). The distant choir should if possible be out of sight & must have a special conductor. It should consist of boy's voices if possible. The distant trumpet must be placed with the distant choir. The tempo marks are approximate. The pace must be free & elastic throughout.'

This multi-layered work possesses some of the austerity of the earlier **Mass in G minor** while the dissonances somewhat foreshadow later works such as **Job** & the **F minor (fourth) Symphony**.

Orchestra:

3.picc. 2. ca. 2.2. cbsn./ 4.3.3.1./ timp. perc.(2) pno. hp. / strings

Publisher: Faber Music. (originally Curwen)

Performance materials: Vocal score (arr. Havergal Brian) sale 0 571 52245 9
Full score / Orch. Parts (hire)

Sea Songs (for military & brass bands or full orchestra)

Quick March for Military & Brass Bands.

(Transcribed by the Composer for Full Orchestra, 1942).

Composed 1923.

Duration: 4'

This short march comes between two other of Vaughan William's works for military band, the *English Folk Song Suite** composed in the same year and the much more complex *Toccata Marziale* of the following year. To quote from the biography by his second wife, Ursula, "He had been particularly happy to undertake (writing works for wind band) as he enjoyed writing in a medium new to him. A military band was a change from an orchestra, and in his not-so-far-off army days he had heard enough of the 'ordinary...light stuff' to feel that a chance to play real tunes would be an agreeable & salutary experience for the bandsmen."

**Sea Songs* could well have originally formed the final movement.

The first performance was likely to have been at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in April 1924.

The 'Sea Songs' used in the march are *Princess Royal*, *Admiral Benbow* & *Portsmouth*.

Orchestra:

2.2.2.2./2.2.2.0/timp./perc./strings. Or 2.0.1.0./0.1.2.0./timp./perc./strings.

Publisher: Boosey & Hawkes.

Performance Materials:

Full score – Symphonic Band. ISMN: 9790060077937

Score & parts – Symphonic Band. ISMN: 9790060077913

Score & parts – Full Orchestra. ISMN: 9790060837128

Full score – Concert Band. ISMN: 9790051661628

Score & parts – Concert Band. ISMN: 9790051661619
(Arr. Robert Longford.)

Serenade for small orchestra in A minor (for orchestra)

Ed. Julian Rushton.

Composed 1897/8.

Duration: 30'

1. (Prelude (Andante sostenuto))
2. Scherzo (Allegro)
3. Intermezzo & Trio (Allegretto – Trio (poco più mosso))
4. Romance (Andantino – Appassionato)
5. Finale (Allegro)

Vaughan Williams's first large orchestral work was first performed by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra conducted by Dan Godfrey in April 1901. Although part of the composer's portfolio in his early years, he withdrew it after a later performance in 1908 & it was only finally published in 2012!

This Serenade, accomplished in its orchestration & structure, sits firmly in the late romantic 'serenade' tradition of Brahms, Dvořák, & Stenhammar but with a few pre-echoes of the later, more familiar RVW.

This very attractive piece would be ideal in any programme for a good amateur chamber orchestra & is moderately difficult.

The fourth movement, 'Romance' which was added to the Serenade slightly later, would make an excellent short stand-alone item with a timing of about 9'.

Orchestra:

2.2.2.2/2.2.0.0/timp/strings

Publisher: Oxford University Press.

Performance materials:

Study score. 9780193379565

Score & parts (Hire) 9780193385597

Serenade to Music (for 16 solo voices and orchestra)

For 16 solo voices (4s, 4a, 4t, 4b) & orchestra. 1938.

Duration: 14'

Text: William Shakespeare – The Merchant of Venice, Act 5, sc.1.

This is perhaps Vaughan Williams' best-known & best-loved choral work, composed in homage & dedicated to **Sir Henry Wood** for a concert at the **Queen's Hall** celebrating his jubilee as a conductor on 5th. October 1938.

Although written for the 16 solo voices, the work is now usually performed with either 4 soloists (satb) & chorus or with all vocal parts sung by the chorus. (Moderately difficult.)

This Serenade is Vaughan Williams' most lyrical & beautiful word settings & in its original solo voices version creates a shining & magical atmosphere with its silvery orchestral sheen illuminating the nocturnal text to create a unique & original work.

Orchestra:

(Full)

2. (picc.) 1. ca. 2. 2. / 4. 2. 3. 1. / timp. perc. hp. str. (with violin solo)

Publisher: **Oxford University Press**

Performance materials: Vocal score (sale) 978 0 19 336002 0
Orch. Score & parts. (hire)

Arrangements:

(Reduced / chamber) Arr. Roy Douglas. 978 0 19 339354 0

(Strings / piano) Arr. Denis Williams 978 0 19 339353 0

(Orchestra only version) 978 0 19 369385 2

2. 1. ca. 2. 2. / 4. 2. 3. 1. / timp. tri. hp. str. (with violin solo)

Six Studies in English Folk Song (for Cello & Piano)

Composed 1926

Duration: 10"

First performed at an **English Folk Dance Society** festival in 1926, this is not a mere suite of folk song transcriptions but a set of individual pieces that use a particular song as a springboard for further melodic exploration.

The Six Studies are:

1. Adagio (E modal min) *Lovely on the water. (The springtime of the year)*
2. Andante sostenuto (E fl) *Spurn Point.*
3. Larghetto (D modal min) *Van Dieman's Land.*
4. Lento *She borrowed some of her Mother's gold.*
5. Andante tranquillo (C maj) *The Lady and the Dragoon.*
6. Allegro vivace *As I walked over London Bridge.*

This suite is one of the few smaller instrumental works by Vaughan Williams and is also available in arrangements for various other wind & string instruments (see below).

Publisher: Stainer & Bell.

Performance Materials: Piano part (H 47) + Cello part. (H 50)

Arranged for other instruments using the above piano part:

- Bassett horn (H 327)
- Bassoon (H 164)
- Clarinet (H 51)
- Cor Anglais (H 166)
- Saxophone Eb (H 173)
- Tuba (H 174)
- Violin (H 48)
- Viola (H 49)

(Accompaniment also available in an arrangement for small orchestra by Arnold Foster) (1957)

Orchestra:

2.1.2.2./0.0.0.0./ harp (or pft.)/ strings. (not solo part) Hire Library- HL301

String Quartet No. 1 in G minor (Quartet)

Quartet - for 2 violins, viola & cello.

1908 (Revised 1921)

Duration: 28'

1. Allegro moderato
2. Minuet & trio
3. Romance; andante sostenuto.
4. Finale, Rondo capriccioso.

The first of Vaughan William's String Quartets to be published in his lifetime, it was premiered by the **Schwiller Quartet** in 1909 but seemed to confuse the critics at the time. It was the first work that Vaughan Williams finished after his period of study with **Ravel** in Paris in 1907 & shows a new confidence & sureness in his writing although he later admitted that he was suffering from a 'bad attack of French fever.'

Moderately difficult, the quartet, unusually, has indicated solos and shows the composer's style evolving with the use of his own **folk-like** invention in its themes.

This quartet makes a good alternative to, or complements, the quartets of **Debussy & Ravel** in a programme.

Publisher: **Faber Music.** (Previously, F & B Goodwin, 1923 / J. Curwen.)

Performance materials:

Study score	0571 51414 6
Parts	0571 51415 4

Sonata in A Minor for Violin & Pianoforte

Composed 1954.

Duration: 23'

1. Fantasia (Allegro giusto)
2. Scherzo (Allegro furioso ma non troppo)
3. Tema con Variazione (Andante – allegro (6 variations))

First performed in a BBC broadcast on RVWs 82nd. birthday (12/10/1954), by violinist, Frederick Grinke, the dedicatee, who made the first recording, with Michael Mullinar (piano) for both.

The Sonata has attracted criticism for its thick chordal writing in both violin & piano parts attracting the occasional comment that it is really a concerto in disguise but strong musical personality is at the heart of this distinctive piece together with a strong rhythmic drive in the scherzo, middle movement .

The composer raided his bottom drawer for the theme for variations in the final movement – a theme from his then unpublished and unknown *Piano Quintet in C minor* of 1903.

This Sonata is a vital and dynamic work, especially for a composer in his early eighties. With no other Sonatas in his published output and little in the way of late chamber music, it is fascinating to hear VW writing on such an intimate scale and would make a distinctive and attractive addition to any programme of twentieth-century violin and piano music.

Publisher: Oxford University Press.
(OUP Archive – Allegro Music)

Violin & Piano score + violin part.

Symphony No. 5 in D Major (for full orchestra)

For full orchestra. 1943. (composed 1938 – 43) Revised by the composer, 1951)

Duration: 37'

1. Preludio. *Moderato*.
2. Scherzo. *Presto*.
3. Romanza. *Lento*.
4. Passacaglia. *Moderato*.

This symphony, first performed during the darkest days of the Second World War, is perhaps the best loved of all RVW's symphonies. When the composer conducted the first performance at a Promenade Concert in June 1943, it was regarded as a sort of benediction, giving a glimpse of a peace that perhaps lay some time in the future.

The symphony has particularly strong thematic links to the Morality, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which RVW had been working on for many years & which would not be completed & performed until 1951 & themes throughout all four movements of the symphony occur in that larger work.

The dedication of this symphony, 'To Jean Sibelius – without permission,' demonstrates RVW's high regard for the Finnish master, his influence in this particular work being limited to some of the string writing & the overall clarity of the orchestration.

The 5th Symphony represents the high water mark of the composer's writing in his more lyrical & modal styles & a good performance can result in a powerful experience for audience & performers.

Difficult.

Orchestra:

2.(pic).1.ca.2.2/2.2.3.0/timp/strings

Publisher: **Oxford University Press.**

Performance Materials: (In new edition, Ed. Peter Horton. 2008)

Full Score (hardback) 9780193359420

Study Score (paperback) 9780193368248

Score & parts (Hire) 9780193694163

The Lark Ascending (for violin and orchestra)
Romance for Violin and Orchestra

Composed 1914. Revised 1920 & 1925.
Duration 15'

Andante sostenuto – Allegretto tranquillo (quasi andante).

The score is prefaced with extracts from *The Lark Ascending* by George Meredith (1828 – 1909):

He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake ...

For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup,
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes....

Till lost on his aerial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings.

In the early 21st. Century, this has probably become Vaughan Williams' most popular work, performed widely in the concert hall, recorded countless times and topping classical charts. But this was not always the case & the composer would have been surprised by its popularity.

This Romance was composed in 1914 but because of RVW's war service & the aftermath, was not taken up again until the early 1920s being first performed in the version for violin & piano by its dedicatee, Marie Hall, at Shirehampton in December 1920.

Serenely beautiful & atmospheric, *The Lark Ascending* is of moderate difficulty.

Orchestra: (Chamber orch.)
2.1.2.2./1.(2).0.0.0./triangle/strings + solo violin.

Arrangements:
(Reduced Chamber orch.)
1.1.1.1./1.0.0.0./triangle/strings (3/4 first/2 second/2 violas/2 celli/1 bass) + solo violin.

Publisher: **Oxford University Press.** 1926.

Performance Materials:

Full score: (sale)	9780193692039 (2005)
Violin + Piano (sale)	9780193360099 (New ed. 2008)
Orchestral parts (hire)	9780193692022

The Running Set (for medium orchestra)

Founded on Traditional Dance Tunes for medium Orchestra. *Presto*.
1933.

Duration: 5''

This **folk dance** of British origin was discovered in the USA by **Cecil Sharp** & can be danced with various traditional tunes. Vaughan Williams here combines several tunes to make a continuous 'set.' The composer directed the premiere at the Royal Albert Hall for the National Folk Dance Festival in 1934.

The piece uses the following folk tunes:

Barrack Hill
The Blackthorn Stick
Irish Reel
Cock o' the North

Needing only modest orchestral resources, *The Running Set* would make a fine addition to any popular orchestral programme, especially for a **Summer Proms** type of concert or as a rousing **Encore!** (Easy / moderate)

Orchestra:

1. picc. 2(1 opt.)2.2 / 2(1 opt.)2(1 opt.)0.0 / perc.(side-drum / triangle) / pft. (opt.)
hp.(opt.) / strings

Publisher: **Oxford University Press.**

Performance Materials: Full score / Orch. Parts (hire) (1952)
978-0-19-369340-1

(Arr. 2 pianos by Vally Lasker & Helen Bidder)
Allegro Music – Archive 11082

The Solent (for orchestra)

[Impression for Orchestra No.2. – In the New Forest]
Ed. James Francis Brown.

Composed 1902/3

Duration: 12'

Originally intended to be the second movement of the *Three Impressions 'In the New Forest,'* this work became the most famous of the composer's unheard scores and was the source of many self-quotations which were incorporated into various later works from the *Sea Symphony* 1910 to his last symphony, *No.9* of 1958 (with the **Solent** 'theme' being played on solo clarinet at the beginning of this Impression).

The score, which may have had a private run through by Henry Wood in June 1903, is prefaced with 2 lines by the poet Philip Bourke Marston (1850-87):

"Passion and sorrow in the deep sea's voice,
A mighty mystery saddening all the wind?"

Again, **The Solent** represents the first example of Vaughan Williams using the sea as a metaphor for spiritual struggle, continued in **Toward the Unknown Region** and **A Sea Symphony** later in the decade. This *Impression* contains much characteristic writing for brass and strings and pre-echoes several later works.

Orchestra:

2.1.ca 2.2/4.2.3.1/timp/strings

Publisher: **Oxford University Press** (2013)

Performance materials:

Study Score: 978-0-19-339941-9

Score & parts (hire) 978-0-19-339548-0

The Sons of Light (for mixed chorus and orchestra)
Cantata for mixed chorus (satb) and Orchestra.

Composed 1950.

Duration: 25'

Text: Ursula Wood (Ursula Vaughan Williams) – (1912-2007)

1. Darkness and Light. (Allegro maestoso – allegro alla Marcia – tranquillo – allegro moderato).
2. The song of the Zodiac. (Allegro pesante).
3. The Messengers of Speech. (Maestoso – maestoso alla Marcia).

First performed in the Royal Albert Hall in May 1951 by a massed youth choir of 1,150 voices with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, this substantial cantata was commissioned by & dedicated to Bernard Shore, then Ministry of Education Music Staff Inspector.

The composer asked the poet, Ursula Wood, (soon to become Mrs. Vaughan Williams) to write verses inspired by Greek & other legends including Apollo's sun chariot, the passage of sun, moon & stars, the zodiac & ending with rejoicing at the completion of creation.

This is a key work in RVW's final compositional phase, with a colourful, percussion-rich, orchestration, rhythmic drive, subtlety & sympathetic choral writing for the young voices: music for the brave new age of the 1950s, uplifting, positive & life-affirming. Obviously, this would be a good choice for youth choirs, particularly as the work has a secular text & is of moderate difficulty. Additionally, reduced or string accompaniments are available.

Orchestra:

(Full) - 2.(picc).2(ca).2.2.cb./4.3.3.1./timp.perc.xly.gloc.cel.hp.(or piano).strings.

(Simplified) - 2(picc.opt).2(11opt).3(111opt).2(11opt).
/(3sax.opt)/2.3(111opt).3(111opt).1(or euph)/timp.pft.strings.

Or, Piano + strings. (Arr. Arnold Foster.)

Publisher:

Oxford University Press. 1951 / 1969

Performance materials:

Vocal score. (sale)	9780193395015
Full score + parts (hire) Full:	9780193395039
Full score + parts (hire) Simplified:	9780193395022
(Piano + strings) – (hire)	

Toward the Unknown Region (for chorus and orchestra)
Song for chorus (SATB) & orchestra. 1907. Rev.1919.

Duration: 12'

Text: Walt Whitman (Whispers of heavenly death, 1870)

Vaughan Williams conducted the premiere at the Leeds Festival of 1907 where it was very well received by the critics & public alike.

It shows the composer writing with a new found confidence & sureness, although firmly in the tradition of such pieces as **Parry's** *Blest Pair of Sirens* and some of the shorter cantatas of **Stanford**, this work strides forward into the world that is recognisably the Vaughan Williams of the future.

Its short duration makes it a suitable 'filler' in a choral programme & should be within the range of most good choirs, with the additional benefit of needing no extra soloists.

Orchestra:

3.2.ca.2.bc.2 / 4.3.3.1 / timp./ 2hp(pft) org. strings

Reduced orch:

2.1.2.2 / 2.2.0.0 / timp. / hp. or pft. Strings

Publisher: **Stainer & Bell.** (Originally, Breitkopf & Hartel)

Performance materials: Vocal score (sale) / Full score / Orch. Parts (hire)

The Wasps – Overture (for orchestra)

Composed 1909

Duration: 9'

Allegro vivace.

The Overture & complete incidental music for the Aristophanes play was composed to a commission from the Cambridge Greek Play Committee, for a 1909 production at the New Theatre. Vaughan Williams extracted an orchestral suite including the Overture, which was first performed at the Queen's Hall, London, in July 1912 with the composer conducting. Since then, this Overture has become one of Vaughan Williams's most popular orchestral works.

The sound world of the Overture represents a new departure for the composer resulting from his recent studies with Ravel in Paris, showing a new mastery in his writing for wind & brass, perhaps influenced from studies of the scores of Borodin & Rimsky-Korsakov.

The Wasps music shows a new-found skill with the integration of the influence of English folk song into Vaughan Williams's melodic invention, in that a folk-like quality pervades the thematic material, especially in this overture.

The Wasps Overture makes a lively opener to any concert. Moderately difficult.

Orchestra:

2(2+pic).2.2.2/4.2.3.0/timp.perc(bd.cym.tgl.tamb.sd)harp.strings.

(Reduced)

2(2+pic).1.2.1/2.1.0.0/timp.perc(bd.cym.tgl.tamb.sd)harp.strings.

Publisher: Faber Music. (Originally Schott / Curwen)

Performance materials: Score & parts: (Hire)
Miniature Score: (Sale) Boosey & Hawkes. (B & H 8836)

Arrangements: Piano duet (Constant Lambert) Curwen. (1926)
(Concert / Brass arrangements. USA only)

Willow-Wood (for chorus and orchestra)

Cantata for baritone or mezzo-soprano solo, women's voices, ssaa (ad lib) & orchestra (or pianoforte accompaniment.)

Composed 1902/3, revised, orchestrated, 1903, further revision & chorus added, 1908/9.

Duration: 14'

Text: Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) – The House of Life. (Four interlinked sonnets) XLIX, L, LI, & LII.

This Cantata, composed at around the same time as the song cycle, **The House of Life** (1902/3) inhabits a musical dream world of Pre-Raphaelite poetic images with VW providing an imaginative & delicate orchestral palette enhanced by the female chorus singing mostly wordlessly. The music is dark & richly chromatic, creating an atmosphere of passion & elation.

First performed in the version for voice & piano in 1903, the revised & orchestrated version had its only performance at a Music League festival concert in Liverpool in 1909 after which the composer wrote on his MS score, 'Complete flop.'

Willow-Wood was one of the first of Vaughan Williams' previously- unpublished earlier works to be published & performed in the new century & throws a new light on his range & compositional personality. A good performance will create a unique & heady musical atmosphere, confounding the composer's unfortunate reaction!

Orchestra:

2.1.ca.2.2 / 4.2.3.1 / timp. hp. / strings.

Publisher:

Stainer & Bell. (Originally, Breitkopf & Härtel. 1909)

Performance materials:

Vocal score (sale)

ISMN9790220221378

Full score / orchestral parts (hire.)