HARMONY IN THE SYMPHONIES OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

THESIS

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MASTER OF MUSIC

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS--Continued

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS--Continued

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS--Continued

CHAPTER I

MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born October 12, 1872, on the border of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, in Wales. He possesses many qualities which are synonymous with the Welsh people--fantasy, imagination and great personal warmth.[1]

Vaughan Williams' first teacher in music theory was his aunt, Miss Wedgewood.[2] The first textbook on music which he studied was titled The Child's Introduction to Through Bass in Conversations of A Fortnight between A Mother and Her Daughter Aged Ten Years Old.[3] From this book

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[1]Everett Helm, "Ralph Vaughan Williams Observes 80th Birthday," Musical America, LXXII (October, 1952), 23.

[2]Ralph Vaughan Williams, Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects (London, 1953), p. 132. Vaughan Williams does not go into detail about his aunt's stature in the field of music. However, it is interesting to note that Miss Wedgewood was a descendant of Josiah Wedgewood (1730-1795), most distinguished of English pottery manufacturers, whose grandson was Charles Darwin (1809-1882), famous naturalist.

[3]Vaughan Williams' only elaboration of his first textbook is its date of publication (1819) and an excerpt from the "conversations."

he went on to John H. Stainer's Harmony. Around the age of eight, he took a correspondence course from Edinburgh University.

Together with his study of music theory, Vaughan Williams studied violin and piano, although to this day he is not a pianist, is not a piano writer and has never shown more than a passing interest in the instrument.[4] He took violin lessons from a well-known Brighton teacher, Quirke, at a preparatory school at Rottingdean. At Charterhouse,[5] he joined the school orchestra and played second violin and later viola. He participated in Haydn string quartets with a Colonel Lewin and his musical family during the holidays. On Sundays, Vaughan Williams and several boys would go to a Mr. Girdlestone,[6] one of the masters, and play through concerti grossi by the great Italian masters. The composer considers these ensemble experiences to have been a very valuable part of his musical training.

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[4]C.G.-F., "The Promenade Concerts," Musical Opinion, LXXIV (October, 1950), 35.

[5]At that time, Charterhouse was becoming an important public school whose function was to furnish scholars, athletes and Christians.

[6]Girdlestone is not identified by Vaughan Williams, nor is he to be found in the last two editions of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians; the question of dates precludes its being Cuthbert (Morton) Girdlestone (b. 1895), English lecturer and writer on music.

While still in preparatory school at Rottingdean, Vaughan Williams decided to study piano with the visiting teacher, C. T. West. This was a great landmark in his musical education:

> First he gave me the ordinary music teacher's rubbish, Petite Valse and so on; but he had the insight to perceive that I should like something better, and one day he brought me a little book which I have always considered a treasure--Novello's Bach Album.
>
> Of Bach then I knew nothing and I imagined vaguely that he was like Handel but not so good. This Bach album was a revelation, something quite different from anything I knew, and Bach still remains for me in a niche by himself.[7]

On one occasion at Charterhouse, Vaughan Williams received what he considers to be one of the few words of encouragement he ever received in his life. He and a friend, H. Vivian Hamilton, who later became well known as a pianist, gave a concert of their original compositions in the school hall. A pianoforte trio in one movement was his chief contribution to the program. After the concert, James Noon, teacher of mathematics, came up to him and said, "Very good, Williams, you must go on."[8]

In the summer of 1890 when Vaughan Williams was eighteen years old, he went to Munich and heard his first Wagner opera. Later the same year, he entered the Royal College of Music where he hoped to study composition under

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[7]Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 134.

[8]Ibid.

Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918). In preparation for Parry's tutelage Vaughan Williams studied theory with F. E. Gladstone. "Under his guidance I worked through every exercise in /Alexander/ MacFarren's Harmony, a discipline for which I have ever since been grateful."[9] With this preparatory work behind him, Vaughan Williams was accepted by Parry as a pupil. This was a great experience for the young hopeful, as it would be for any young music student in those days. Parry was something of a mannerist in that he strove constantly to discover "character" in his students' compositions. On one occasion Vaughan Williams made a mistake in writing a scale passage. After examining it Parry said, "I have been looking at this passage for a long time to discover whether it is just a mistake or whether you meant anything characteristic."[10]

Parry told his pupil to study Beethoven "as a religious exercise." Special emphasis was placed on the importance of the posthumous quartets. Owing to the fact that Parry was a very generous man, his students benefited from the loan of scores. Vaughan Williams borrowed Siegfried and Tristan and Brahm's Requiem. Consequently, his next few compositions were reminiscent of a passage at the beginning of the latter.[11]

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[9] Ibid., p. 138. [10] Ibid. [11] Ibid.

One great friend of Vaughan Williams was Richard Walthew.[12] These two played duets together at Walthew's house at Highbury. The pianoforte duet was the only way in those days of really getting to know orchestral music from the inside out, unless one was an orchestral player. This predates the advent of the radio, the gramophone and the miniature score. Vaughan Williams credits Walthew with exposing him to Carmen and to Verdi's Requiem for the first time. These works left a very deep impression on him, especially the Requiem:

> But in a 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.[13]

In 1892 Vaughan Williams went to Cambridge where he had lessons from Charles Wood[14] in preparation for the Bachelor of Music degree. He considers Wood to be "the finest technical instructor I have ever known."[15] He says that Wood was an unequalled craftsman in the field of composition and that he "managed to teach me enough to pull me through

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[12]Richard Henry Walthew (1872-1951), English pianist, conductor and composer.

[13]Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 139.

[14]Charles Wood (1866-1926), Irish musical educationist, conductor and composer.

[15]Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 141.

my Mus.Bac."[16] At this time, Vaughan Williams was studying organ with Allen Grey.[17]

An undergraduate organ student, H. P. Allen, later came to Cambridge in 1892. Allen at once took charge of the amateur University Musical Club and instituted rehearsals of such works as the Schumann and Brahms pianoforte quintets and Schubert's string quintet. Vaughan Williams gained much musical knowledge from listening to the rehearsals. Allen also made it possible for Vaughan Williams to hear a semi-public performance of one of his own compositions, a quartet for men's voices.

While at Cambridge, Vaughan Williams conducted a small choral society which held Sunday meetings for the purpose of singing Schubert's Masses. He considers conducting second to playing in an orchestra or singing in a choir as a means of realizing some of the problems which confront performers.[18]

Vaughan Williams left Cambridge in 1895 and went back to the Royal College of Music. He studied organ with Walter

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Alan Gray (1855-1935), organist, composer and teacher at Cambridge University.

[18] Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 141.

Parratt[19] and composition with Charles Villiers Stanford.[20] By this time, Parry had become Director and was no longer teaching composition. Vaughan Williams admits his own obstinacy as a student with this great teacher whom he admired very much. Stanford never was enthusiastic about Vaughan Williams' work, in fact, he found it annoying.[21] However, "his deeds were better than his words." He introduced Vaughan Williams' work to the Leeds Festival, thus presenting the young composer with an experience of great value to his musical education. Vaughan Williams says that he benefited not so much from Stanford's technical instruction but from "intangible contact with his mind and character. With Stanford I always felt I was in the presence of a lovable, powerful, and enthralling mind."[22]

He inherited from Stanford his "artistic integrity and lofty idealism," as well as his devotion to the folk songs of his native land.[23] He has also, like Stanford, been an inspiring teacher of the younger generation. A statement

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[19]Walter Parratt (1841-1924), English organist, teacher and composer.

[20]Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), Irish nationalist composer of church music, oratorios, operas and chamber music.

[21]Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 144.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 145.

made by Vaughan Williams makes a fitting interpolation at this point:

> The moment one ceases to think of human beings and dwells mentally amid schemes and systeme he is just dammed as a teacher.[24]

Vaughan Williams feels that one benefits more from his fellow students than from his official teachers.[25] He has good reason for this opinion since some of his fellow students were such men as Thomas Frederick Dunhill, John Ireland, Howard Jones, Fritz Hart and Gustav Holst. They used to meet in a little teashop in Kensington and discuss all sorts of topics from music to philosophy. He says that he learned more from these conversations than from any amount of formal teaching, but that he felt at a certain disadvantage among these companions because of their competency as opposed to his feelings of amateurism.[26]

Vaughan Williams was appointed to the only organ post he has ever held, at St. Barnabas, South Lambert, in 1895. He admits that he was not a good organist, "but this appointment gave me insight into good and bad church music which

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[24]Edward J. Dent, "Ralph Vaughan Williams," Musical Times, LXXXXIII (October, 1952), 443.

[25]Christian Mayne, "Gustav Holst-A Study," unpublished master's thesis, School of Fine Arts, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 1952, p. 17.

[26]Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 145.

stood me in good stead later on."[27] Among his other duties were training the choir, giving organ recitals and accompanying the services. These activities gave him further knowledge of music from the performers' viewpoint. He also founded a choral society and an orchestral society.

In 1896 he visited Bayreuth and there heard Wagner "practically for the first time."[28]

In 1897 Vaughan Williams went abroad for a few months to study and gain experience. He chose Berlin (against the advice of Stanford who wanted him to go to Italy and hear opera at the Scala) because Berlin was the only city at the time where it was possible to hear the Ring performed without cuts. While in Berlin, he showed his work to Herzogenberg[29] who said upon looking at it that it reminded him of Mascagni. Herzogenberg then recommended Max Bruch as a suitable teacher for Vaughan Williams. Young Vaughan Williams was a diligent and enthusiastic worker and he received much encouragement from Max Bruch. Bruch's attitude was somewhat different from that of Vaughan Williams' previous teachers. This left a deep impression on the

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[27] Ibid.

[28] F. S. H., "Ralph Vaughan Williams," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. V (London, 1954).

[29] Baron Heinrich von Herzogenberg-Peccaduc (1843-1900), Austrian composer who, with his wife, made frequent visits to her piano teacher, Johannes Brahms.

composer in that "with my own pupils now I always try to remember the value of encouragement.[30] Bruch was worried about Vaughan Williams' characteristic use of flatted sevenths, just as Stanford had been previously. Bruch would say: "Sie haben eine Leidenschaft für die kleine Septime."[31] Bruch also cautioned him against writing "Augen-musik" (eye-music) as opposed to "Ohren-musik" (ear-music).[32] During his stay in Berlin the composer seized every opportunity to hear music, especially opera.

Upon his return to London, Vaughan Williams resigned from his position as organist, making it possible for him to devote more time to composition. He supposed that he could improve his skill as a composer by doing instead of by studying, but he soon found that the music he had been taught in England and Germany did not enable him to say what he wanted to say. Consequently, around 1900, he sought the musical guidance of Edward Elgar whose prior commitments made it impossible for him to devote any time to Vaughan Williams. Instead, Elgar suggested Professor Granville Bantock who knew a great deal about the orchestra, but Vaughan Williams did not follow the suggestion. As an

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[30]Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 146.

[31]"You have a passion for the minor seventh."

[32]Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 147.

alternative to studying with Elgar personally, Vaughan Williams went to the British Museum and spent several hours studying the full scores of the Enigma Variations (1899) and Dream of Gerontius (1900). "The results are obvious in the beginning of the finale of my Sea Symphony" (c. 1905-1910).[33]

In 1900 Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp first met. Vaughan Williams asserts that he was not influenced toward folk song by Sharp and that when, in 1903, he started his collection of folk songs, he left Sharp out of his list of friends to whom he showed his finds because he thought Sharp would not be interested.[34] Vaughan Williams' first encounter with folk songs had been when he was a boy, through Stainer and Bramley's Christmas Carols Old and New. From his close association with Cecil Sharp, Vaughan Williams gained insight into the potential value of folk song as a composer's tool.

Vaughan Williams took his Doctor of Music degree at Cambridge in 1901. In 1904 he began editing the music of the English Hymnal, a task which took two years. During this time, the only "original" works he managed to compose were a few hymn tunes. It occurred to the composer that he might have been using his time unwisely because "the years were passing and I was adding nothing to the sum of musical

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[33] Ibid., p. 148.

[34] Ibid.

invention."[35] But Vaughan Williams realizes now that this period of close association with both good and bad tunes served to edify his existing knowledge of music better than "any amount of sonatas and fugues."[36] This experience apparently had a profound influence on his style. It is partly responsible for his "reckless polyphony which at times seems oblivious of harmonic consequences."[37]

In 1908 Vaughan Williams decided that he was "lumpy and stodgy." He felt that a little "French polish" was what he needed. Therefore, he went to Paris and sought out Maurice Ravel. Upon examining Vaughan Williams' work, Ravel was somewhat perplexed. He instructed Vaughan Williams, for his beginning lesson, to "écrire un petit menuet dans le style de Mozart." The student reacted unfavorably to this first assignment by saying:

> Look here, I have given up my time, my work, my friends, and my career to come here and learn from you, and I am not going to write a "petit menuet dans le style de Mozart."[38]

He relates that after this a great friendship ensued and that he profited in a large measure from Ravel's teachings. It was refreshing for Vaughan Williams to encounter a man who looked at all artistic problems with new perspective. Ravel showed him, for example, how to "orchestrate in points

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[35] Ibid., p. 153. [36] Ibid. [37] F. S. H., op. cit.

[38] Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 152.

of color rather than in lines" and that the "heavy contrapuntal Teutonic manner was not necessary."[39] His chief concentration, while studying with Ravel, was orchestration. For practice he scored some of Ravel's own pianoforte music and passages from Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin. This was Vaughan Williams' first introduction to the music of these Russian composers.[40] After three months' study he returned home and wrote a string quartet and a song cycle which contained "several atmospheric effects."[41] Vaughan Williams is convinced that this study with Maurice Ravel was worth while and that he gained a great deal from it: "My French fever soon subsided but left my musical metabolism, on the whole, healthier."[42]

When Vaughan Williams turned to Ravel for instruction, he did not intend to acquire Ravel's own style for later reproduction. Introspection had taught him that he still maintained a "clumsy and inchoate" technique. He hoped that Ravel's suppleness of mind could facilitate and ameliorate the functions of his own incommunicative mind. Upon his return home, his expressive powers were clarified:

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[39] Ibid., p. 153.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Song cycle with string quartet, On Wenlock Edge, 1909.

[42] Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 152.

> But his music does not resemble that of the iconoclastic Ravel, nor that of the staid and stodgy Germans. Neither is it like that of Parry nor Stanford. It is basically that of the Briton, Ralph Vaughan Williams.[43]

"If the Frenchman had any influence at all," writes Hubert Foss, "he made Vaughan Williams realize that he was not a Frenchman."[44]

S. P. Waddington[45] was another of Vaughan Williams' teachers who influenced him as a composer. Waddington was highly respected by Vaughan Williams, generally for his knowledge on all subjects and specifically for his mastery of the art of music. Waddington criticized Vaughan Williams severely and told him: "You try to run before you can walk."[46] The composer admits that this was true:

> I had not sufficient patience or application to study. I have learnt by trial and error, I have drawers full of these errors; attempts to run with a fatal stumble almost every bar.[47]

However, at this same time, Vaughan Williams did undertake a few months' study in retirement at a Yorkshire

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[43]LeRoy Brant, "America Holds the Hope of the Musical World," Etude, LXVII (April, 1949), 215.

[44]Hubert Foss, Ralph Vaughan Williams (London, 1950), p. 152.

[45]Sidney P. Waddington (1869-1953), English composer and teacher.

[46]Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 154.

[47]Ibid., p. 155.

farmhouse. He took several classical scores and the themes from his own "compositions" and set out to treat and develop the themes according to his classical models, being careful to choose themes which bore a structural resemblance. He found this to be a superb discipline and has since used this procedure in his own teaching. Vaughan Williams seems to recall that Charles Wood used the same method.[48]

Vaughan Williams credits George Butterworth with having helped him to realize a successful musical career also. It was on the suggestion of Butterworth that he took the sketches of a symphonic poem about London and reworked them into symphonic form, resulting in A London Symphony.

The most profound influence on the music of Vaughan Williams was Gustav Holst (1874-1934) whom he met in 1895. From the time of their meeting to the death of Holst, a period of nearly forty years, these men spent hours at a time examining each other's scores. Even in his late maturity, Vaughan Williams admits that "without Holst and Waddington to criticise me I sometimes feel lost;[49] they both had the power and the will to give all they had."[50]

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[48] Ibid.

[49] In 1950 when the composer was seventy-eight years old.

[50] Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 157.

Vaughan Williams was inarticulate as a young composer. The finding of his personal style and the perfecting of his technique took a long time. He was dubbed parish-pump composer after he found his idiom and began to write of things English. This man, who is perhaps the first and only English nationalist, helped cut the ties that bound English music to Italy and Germany. At the time when Vaughan Williams was growing up, the renascence initiated by Parry and Stanford could not escape from the German romanticism that dominated the world's music. The cutting of the ties by Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst made the escape possible.[51]

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[51] F. S. H., op. cit.

CHAPTER II

CHORD CLASSIFICATION

The harmony of Vaughan Williams defies classification in terms of traditional harmony alone, making use as it does at times, of structures of superposed fourths, so-called "added-note" chords, and random sonorities, as will appear. Therefore, the chords will be placed into two principal categories of usage, traditional and non-traditional.

Traditional Harmony

Triads

The chord used most frequently by Vaughan Williams in his symphonies is the simple triad.[1]

1) Major triads--approximately 35 per cent of all chords.

2) Minor triad--approximately 35 per cent of all chords.

3) Diminished triad--approximately 2 per cent of all chords.

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[1]These percentages are arrived at as a result of chord-by-chord analysis of A Sea Symphony (c. 1905-1910), the Pastoral Symphony (1922) and the Symphony in E Minor (1948). Based on repeated hearings of all the symphonies, these figures seem representative of the symphonies as a whole.

4) Augmented triad--approximately 7 per cent of all chords.

Major triad.--The major triad is very often used by itself, with nothing to mar its simplicity:

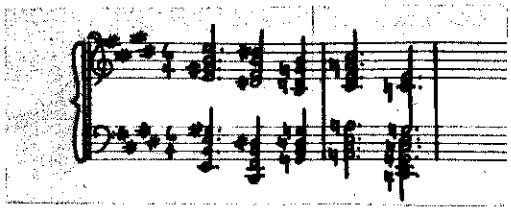

Fig. 1--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, first movement, measures 169-170.

And likewise, in a passage with more motion:

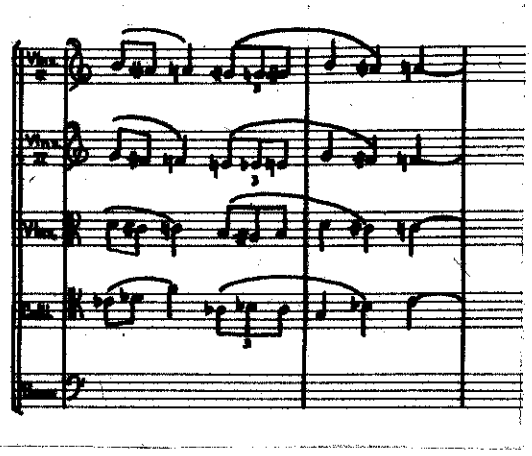

Fig. 2--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, second movement, measures 82-83.

It is found along with ornamental tones:

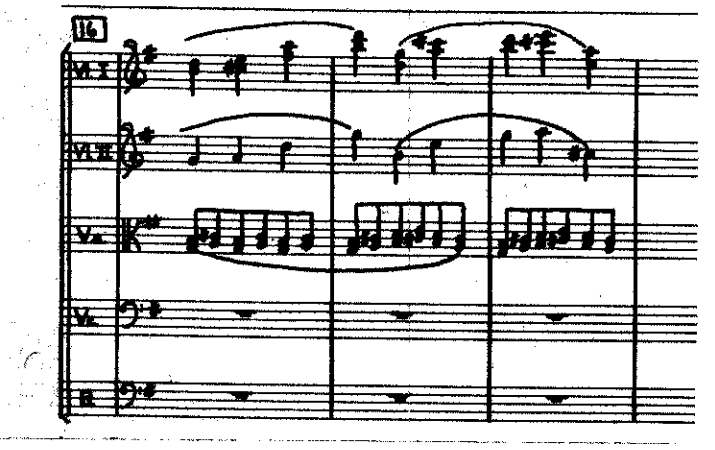

Fig. 3--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 8, fourth movement, measures 156-158.

Major triads are used to begin movements:

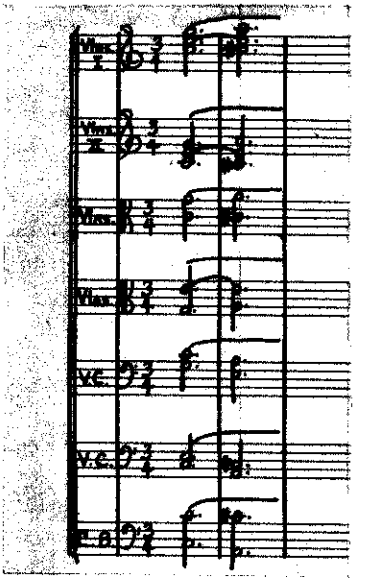

Fig. 4--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5, third movement, measures 1-2.

and to end movements:

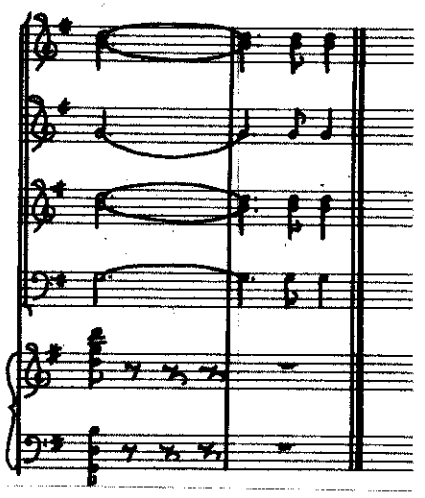

Fig. 5--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 1, third movement, measures 380-381.

The innocent major triad can be very deceptive, as in this example where the roots of major triads outline a diminished triad:

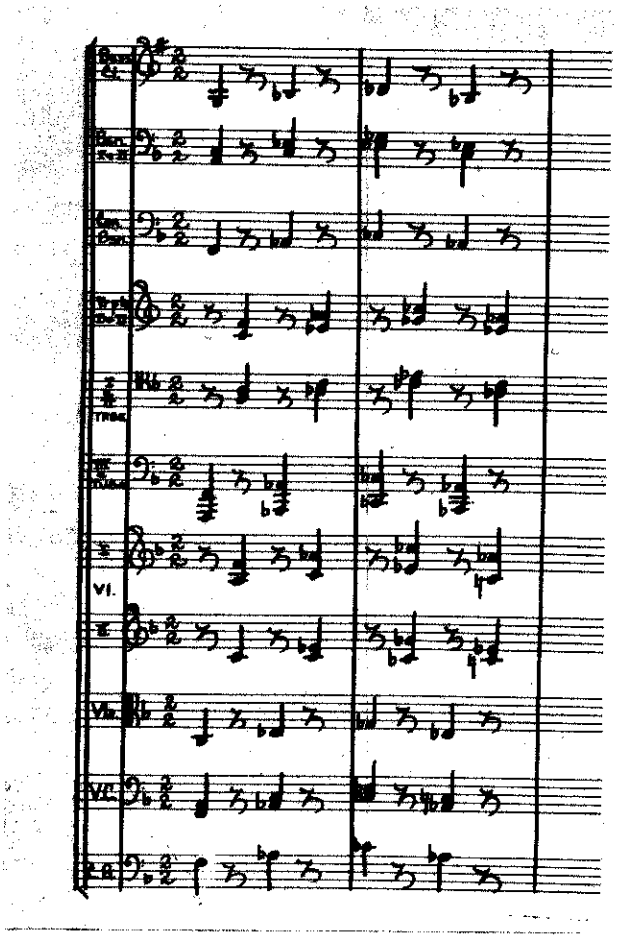

Fig. 6--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 4, fourth movement, measures 5-6.

Minor triad.--Ranking with the major triad in frequency is the minor triad. Vaughan Williams uses these two chords in much the same manner, as shown in this slow moving passage:

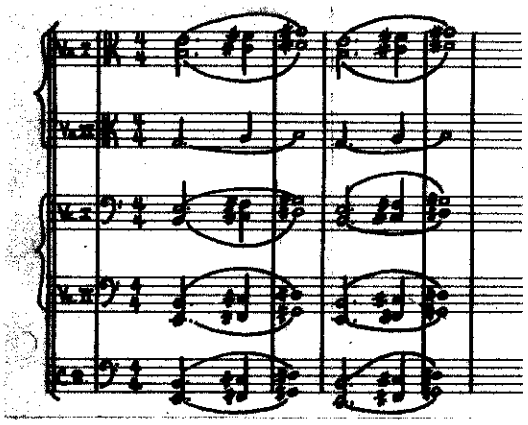

Fig. 7--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 2, second movement, measures 1-4.

and in this passage with more movement:

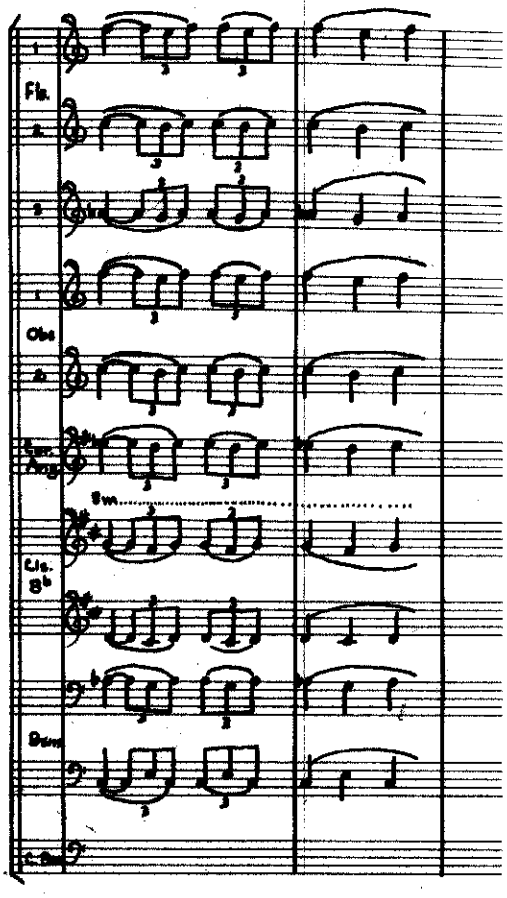

Fig. 8--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, second movement, measures 37-38.

It is used to begin movements, as shown in Figure 4, and to end movements:

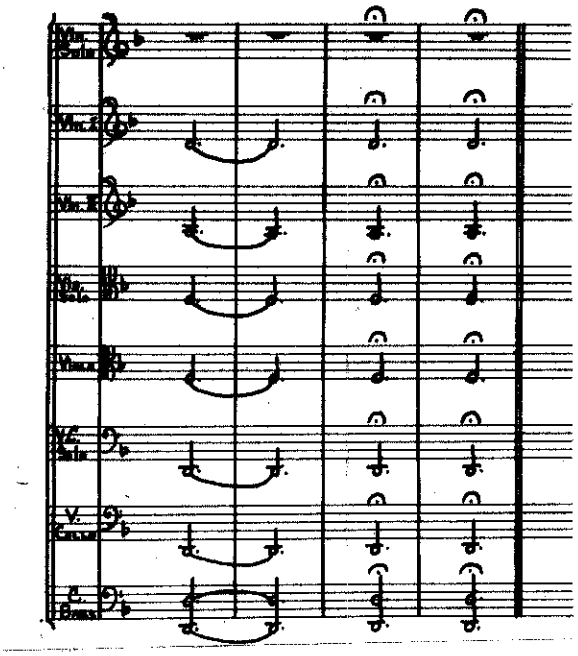

Fig. 9--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 2, third movement, measures 381-384.

The major and minor triads are used to effect a relaxation from harmonic tension. The following is a release (see Figure 10) from the tension of the previous 158 measures. (See Figure 11.)

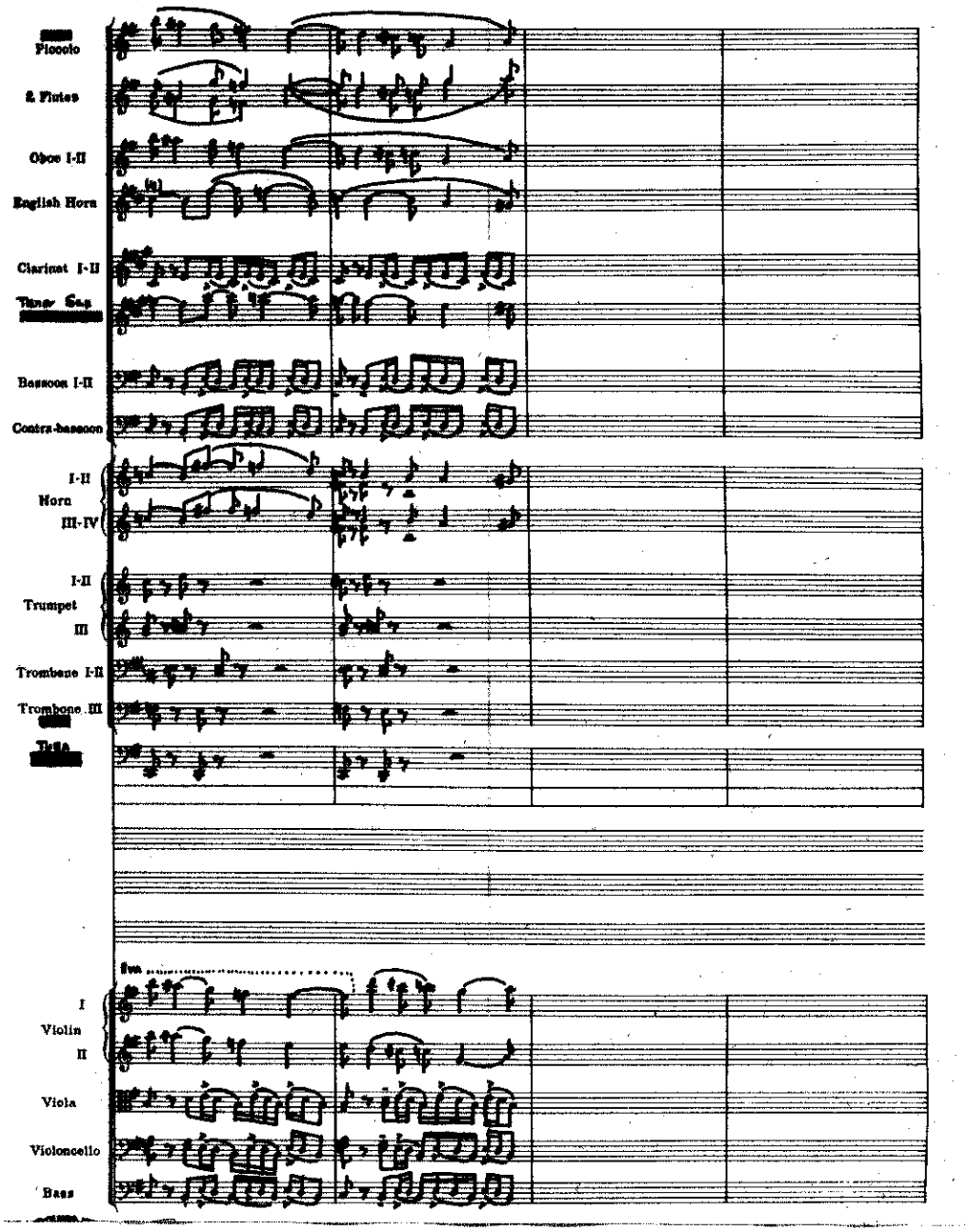

Fig. 10--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, first movement, measures 152-153.

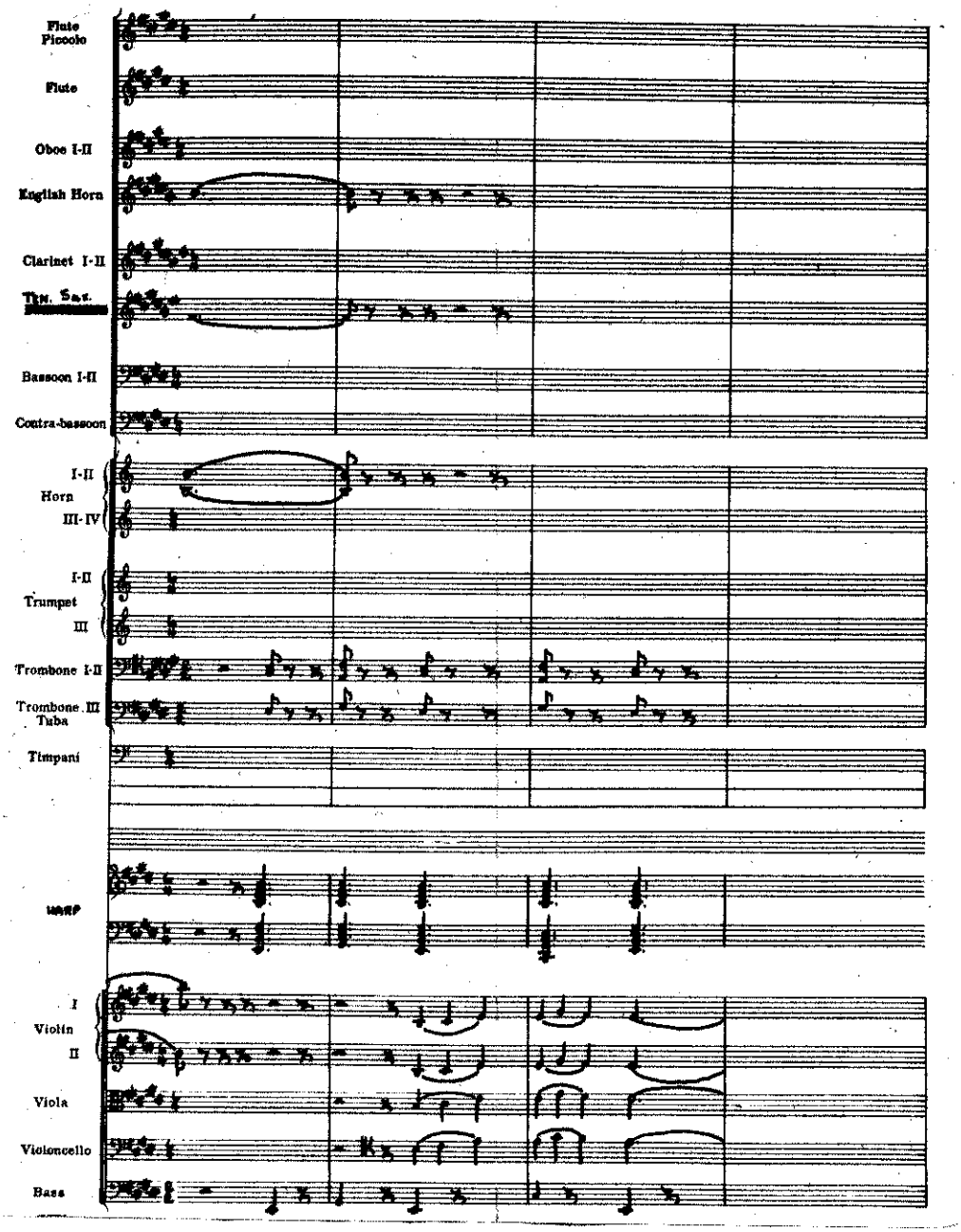

Fig. 11--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, second movement, measures 159-161.

Diminished triad.--The frequency of appearance of this triad is a mere fraction of that of the major and minor triads. (Cf. list on pp. 17-18.) It is most often found in chord streams among other triads:

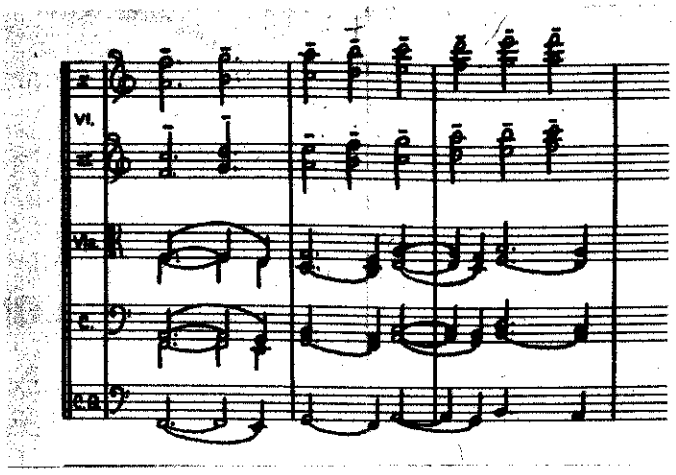

Fig. 12--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 4, first movement, measures 141-143.

Augmented triad.--This triad is used more frequently than the diminished triad, although its use is rare as compared with the major and minor triads. (Cf. list on pp. 17-18.) Its use is exemplified in these examples:

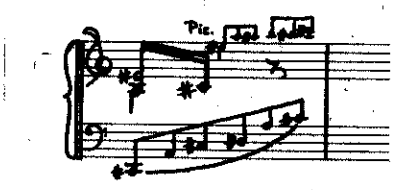

Fig. 13--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 1, third movement, measure 32.

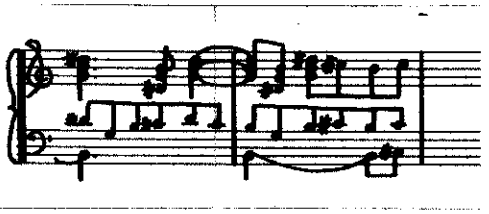

Fig. 14--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 1, third movement, measures 175-176.

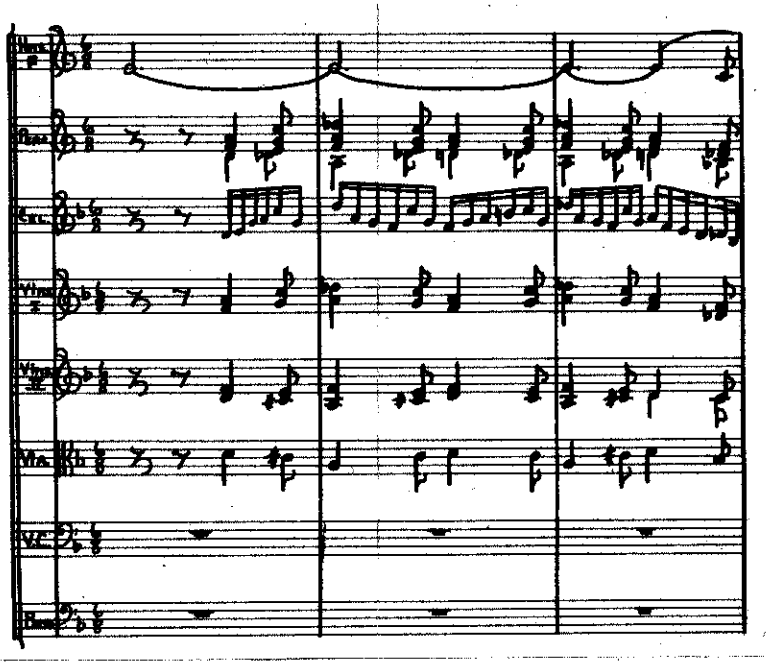

Fig. 15--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 8, first movement, measures 5-7.

Young says the following concerning Vaughan Williams' use of triads:

> Triads may be used at unaccustomed levels: high and ethereal; high but impassioned, high and anguished. In the bass the clean cut of consonant groups gives direct contrast to superimposed melody and in percussive iteration a sense of vigor and sometimes of comedy. An ample and well spaced triad used as a sheer anchor allows a maximum of tonal excursion without the fear of losing direction.[2]

Young does not cite instances, but the following examples are added to the present study to help clarify his statements:

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[2]Percy Young, Vaughan Williams (London, 1953), p. 189.

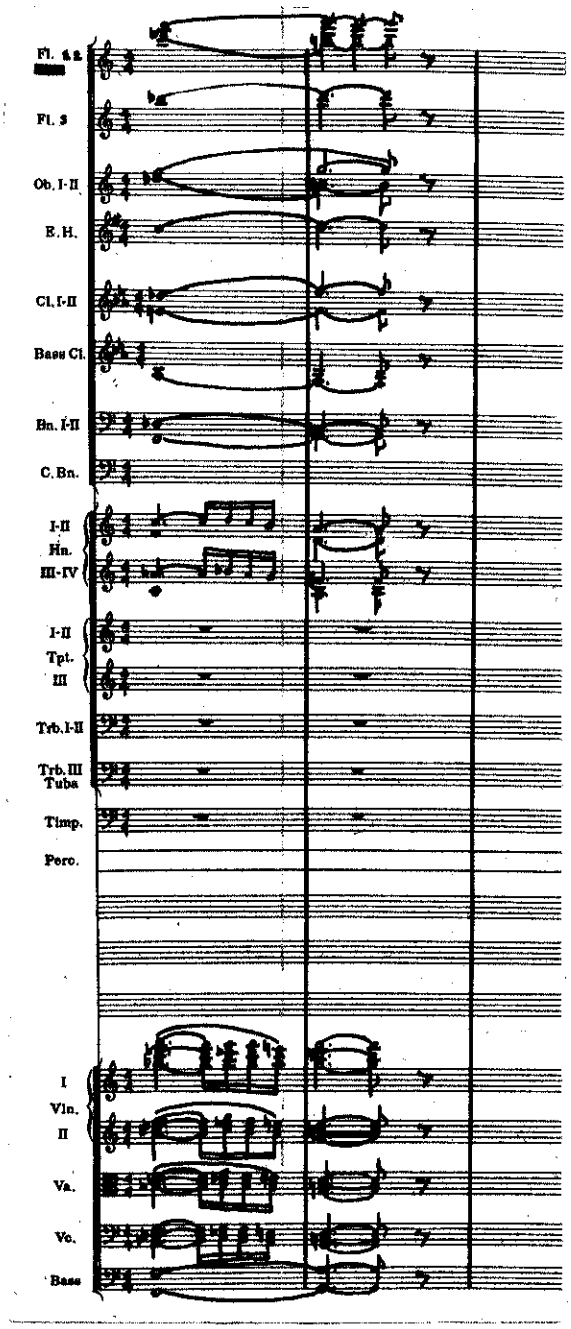


Fig. 16--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 3, first movement, measures 178-179.

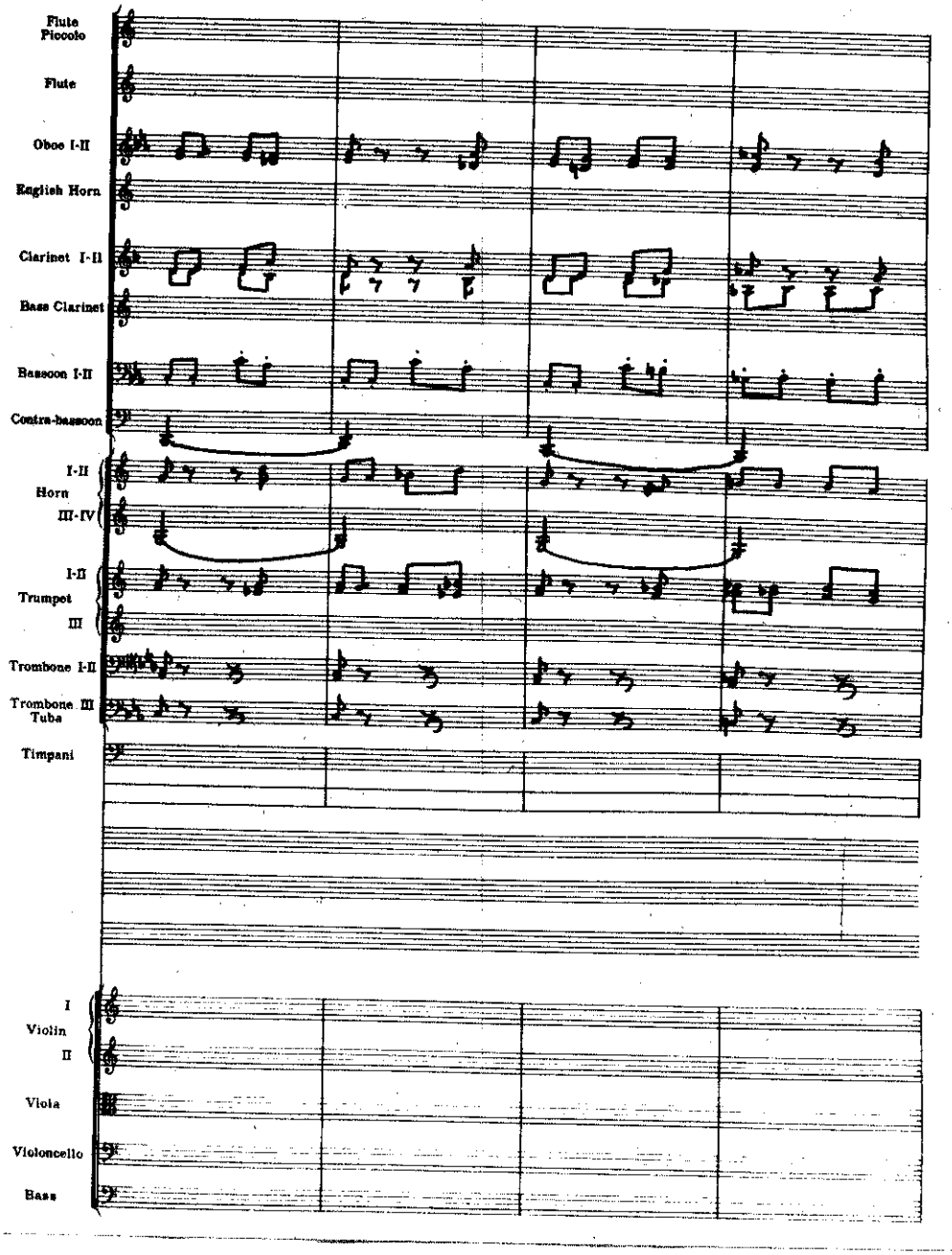


Fig. 17--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 8, second movement, measures 18-21.

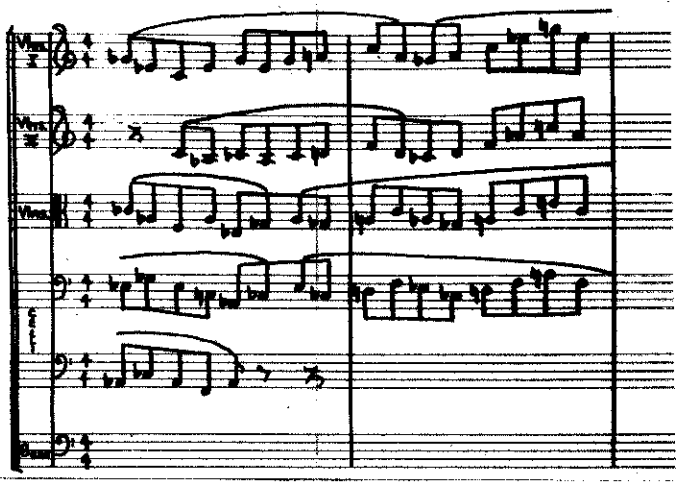
The above examples exemplify Vaughan Williams' uses of the four simple triads in contexts where they stand alone. There are many instances where these triads are used in combination with other factors; however, this point will be

dealt with later in the study where its inclusion will be more logical than at this point.

Seventh Chords

Young refers to these chords as a "blunt system of chordal speech." He says that they are "rough and homely" and that many times they are the result of "modal melodic units arranged vertically."[3]

Minor-minor seventh chord.[4]--The frequency of appearance of this chord compares with that of the augmented triad, that is, approximately 7 per cent of the time. It is used in sonorous passages free of rhythmic complication:



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[3] Ibid.

[4] Minor-minor seventh chord: In this type of nomenclature, the first word (minor) names the triad and the second word (minor) names the interval of the seventh.

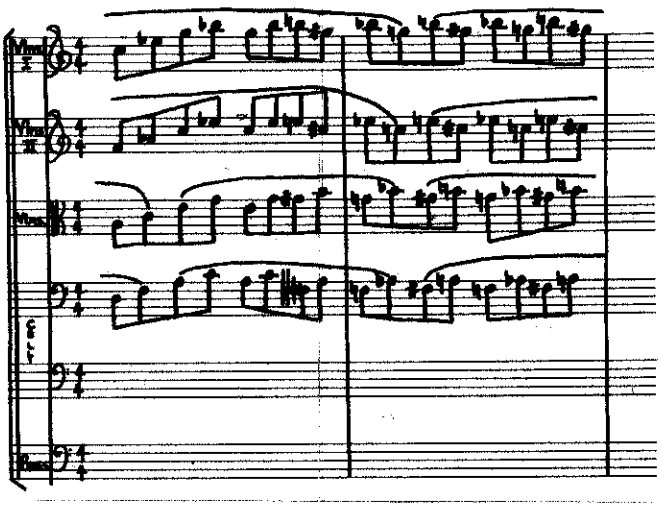

Fig. 18--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, fourth movement, measures 91-94.

This chord is used to provide a sustained background for melodic lines:

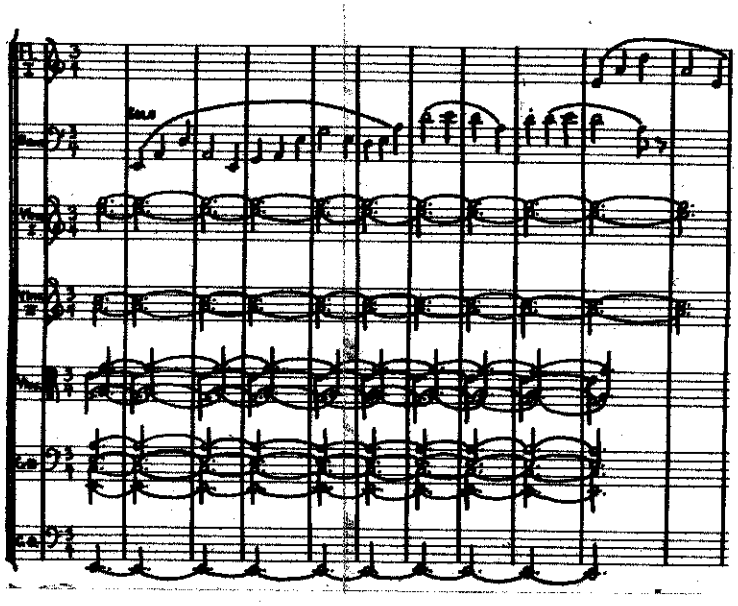

Fig. 19--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5, second movement, measures 437-447.

In opposition to the first point, it is used in passages containing rhythmic interest:

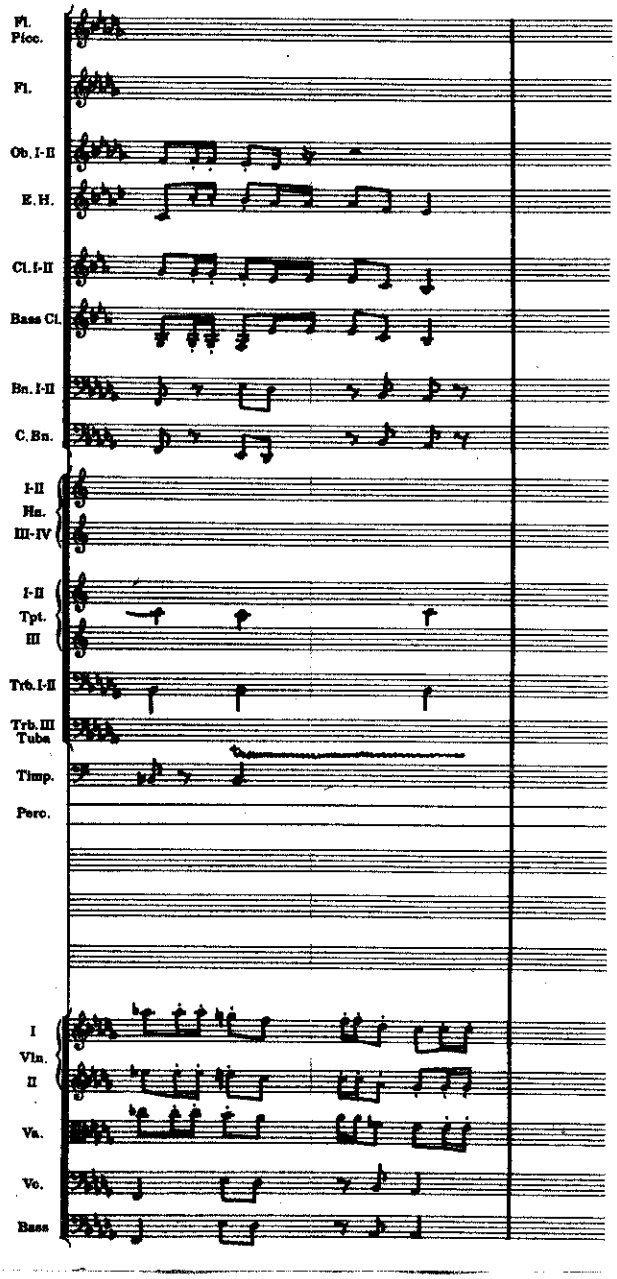

Fig. 20--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, second movement, measure 22.

Major-minor seventh chord.--This chord is used less frequently than the minor-minor seventh chord, that is, approximately 2 per cent of the time:

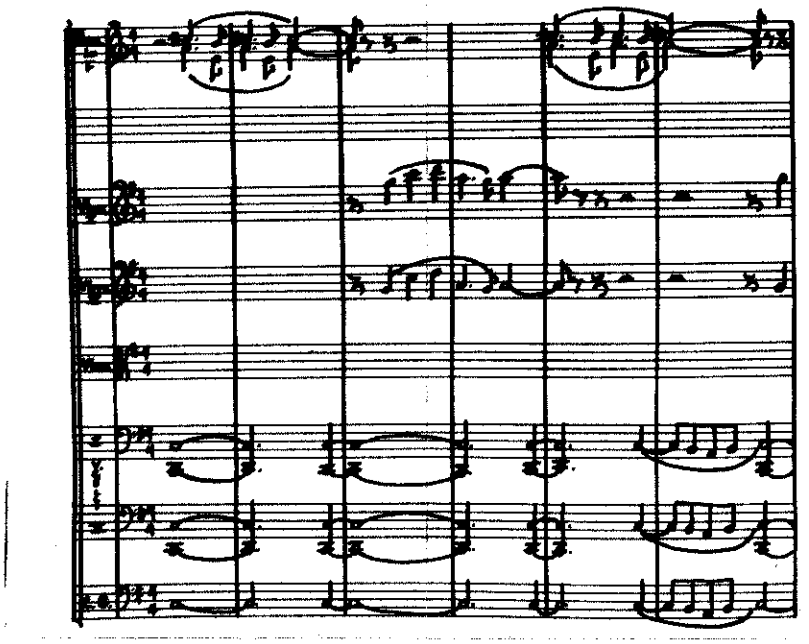

Fig. 21--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5, first movement, measures 1-6.

It is used like the minor-minor seventh, in contexts where rhythmic interest is a prime constituent of the overall musical make-up. (Cf. Figure 19.)

Vaughan Williams uses other seventh chords, but very sparingly, usually as passing chords. These chords are not constructed vertically, but are a result of contrapuntal and polytonal treatment:

1) augmented-minor seventh

2) diminished-minor seventh

3) diminished-major seventh

Ninth, Eleventh and Thirteenth Chords

These chords, like some of the seventh chords above, are rare. Their vertical existence is a result of horizontal activity:[5]

1) major-major seventh (add 9)

2) major-minor seventh (add -9)

3) major-minor seventh (add 9)

4) augmented-minor seventh (add 9)

5) major-minor seventh (add 9, 11)

6) major-minor seventh (add 9, 11, 13)

7) major-minor seventh (add 9, +11, 13)

Vaughan Williams' chief idiosyncracy, that of flatting the seventh, is exemplified in the above seventh, minth, eleventh and thirteenth chords. Out of the twelve chords discussed which contain sevenths, ten contain flat (minor) sevenths.

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[5]Chords of this type are derived by the extension of seventh chords. The numerals indicate the addition of a note (or notes) a diatonic ninth, eleventh or thirteenth above the root, which is in keeping with the homogeneous interval construction by thirds existing in seventh chords. The plus sign (+) raises the note one half-step and the minus sign (-) lowers it the same distance.

Two-Part Harmony

It is generally acknowledged that a sonority consisting of only two notes is an interval, not a chord. Nevertheless, intervals are capable of implying chords, especially in context, where the implication is more specific. Vaughan Williams uses two-part harmony often, in both melodic lines and sustained backgrounds.

An example of this type of harmony in melodic writing is as follows:

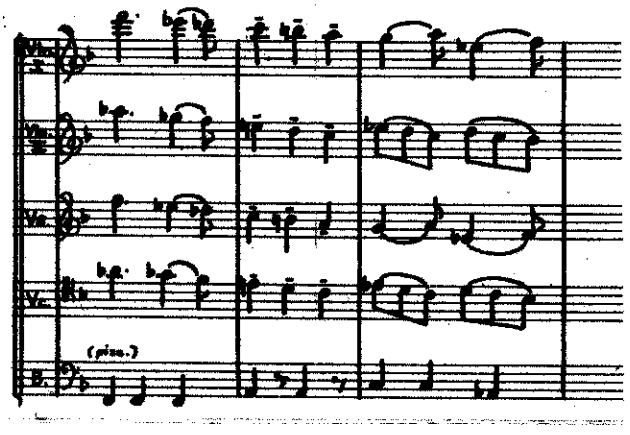

Fig. 22--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 8, first movement, measures 22-24.

"The modern composer will often throw a melody into higher relief," says Gerald Abraham, "by setting it against a background of foreign harmony."[6] Vaughan Williams accomplishes this by setting a melody against a background of two-part harmony:

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[6]Gerald Abraham, This Modern Stuff (London, 1933), p. 55.

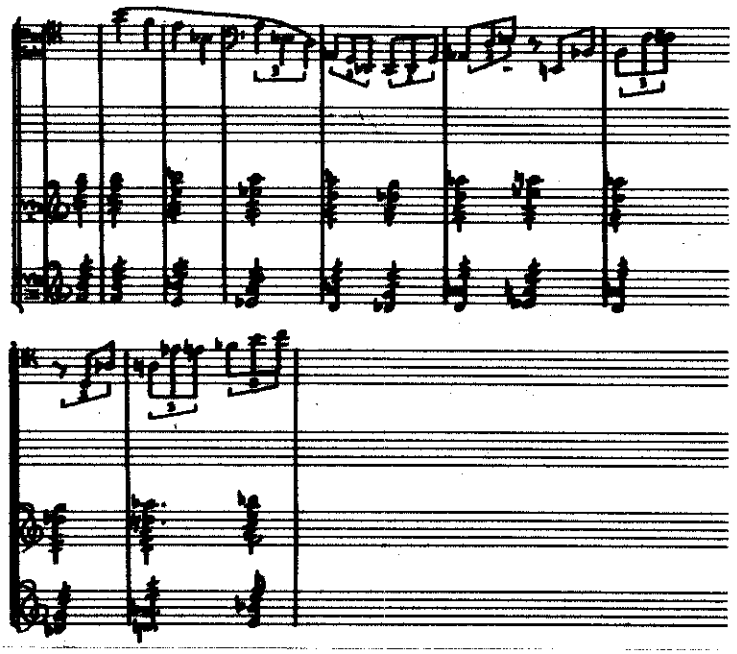

Fig. 23--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, third movement, measures 170-177.

Non-Traditional Harmony

Added-Note Chords

Another group of chords which Vaughan Williams uses only rarely is the "added-note" group. Gerald Abraham says that these chords "belong neither to the purely empirical class nor to any other definite system of harmony." He goes on to say:

> Liberal-minded theorists, however, recognize these chords as a definite type and for convenience' sake have christened them "added-note" chords. As the name implies, they consist of the notes of an ordinary chord plus an added note by way of seasoning. The modern composer finds an unseasoned common chord altogether too insipid.[7]

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[7] Ibid., p. 40.

Vaughan Williams does not find "an unseasoned common chord altogether too insipid," however, and he is certainly a modern composer, yet Vaughan Williams does make use of "added-note" chords, a circumstance which makes Abraham's generalization excessive.

Vaughan Williams makes use of many chords of this type, but, as a group, they are found only approximately 3 per cent of the time:[8]

1) major triad (add +4)

2) major triad (add 2)

3) major triad (add 6)[9]

4) major triad (add +5)

5) minor triad (add M3)

> The simultaneous sounding of major and minor third is not a mannerism of Vaughan Williams but a method of expression common to all composers of the Elizabethan-Jacobean period. The effect in contemporary music may be heightened by imaginative orchestration.[10]

6) minor triad (add 2)

7) minor triad (add 4)

8) minor triad (add 6)[11]

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[8]The numeral here, as with the extended seventh chords, indicates the relation between the added note and the root.

[9]This chord is also found in traditional harmony.

[10]Percy Young, op. cit., p. 152.

[11]This chord is also found in traditional harmony.

9) augmented triad (add 2)

10) augmented triad (add 6)

It is obvious that some of these chords will fit into other classifications (that is, C E G A: major triad with added sixth or minor-minor seventh chord in first inversion), but their appearance in context is responsible for their classification as such. For example, in the opening measure

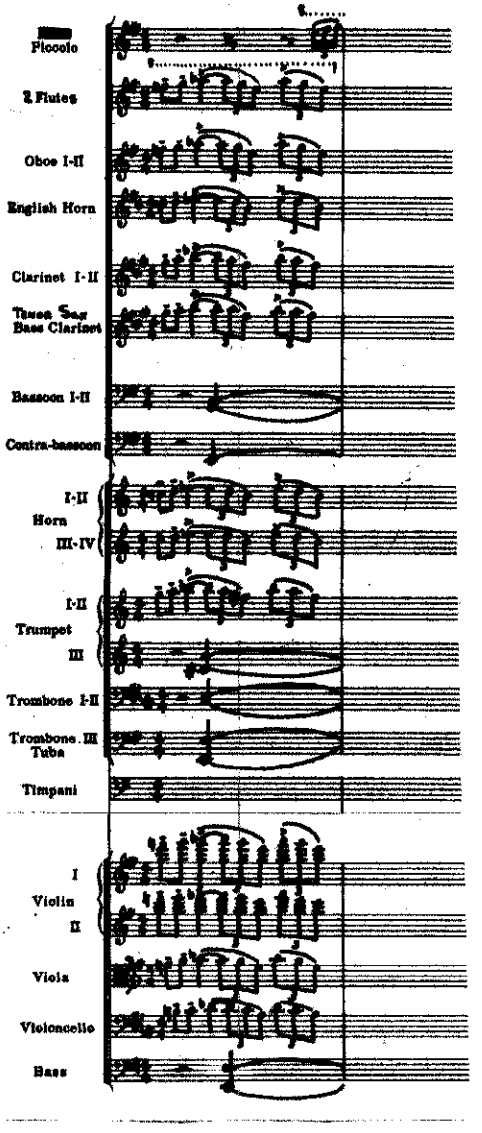

Fig. 24--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, first movement, measure 1.

of Vaughan Williams' Symphony in E Minor, a persistent melodic A-flat in the strings, horns and woodwinds is contrasted against a solid E minor triad in the low brasses (minor triad-add M3). (See Figure 24.) Another example is Figure 25:

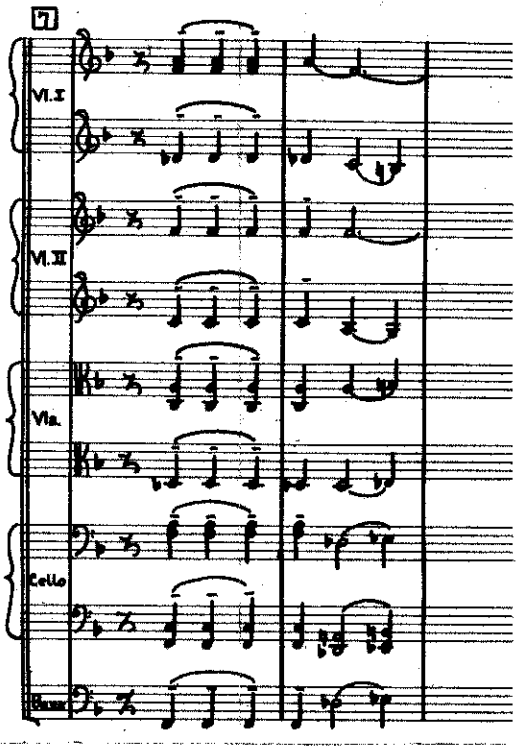

Fig. 25--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 7, fourth movement, measures 89-90.

Fourth Chords

These chords are used approximately as often as augmented triads and minor-minor seventh chords (cf. list on p. 18). This means of chord structure is by no means new, nor is it novel with Vaughan Williams. "Chords built up in fourths, instead of thirds, like all the recognized

text-book chords," says Gerald Abraham, "have fascinated quite a number of modern harmonic experimenters."[12]

As with the added-note chords, these fourth chords can be made to fit other classifications by means of such antics as omitted notes and enharmonic spellings. Their appearance in context warrants their present classification.

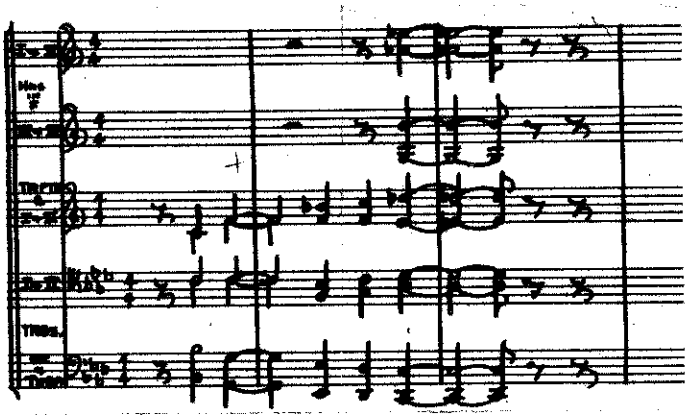

Fig. 26--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 4, second movement, measures 1-3.

Random Sonorities

This group of chords will fit into no known classification. These sonorities may be constructed at random or they may just happen, owing to the aforementioned counterpoint and/or polyphony. Gerald Abraham says:

> Sometimes a composer like Holst or Delius will use a chord "that simply never was" simply because he wants its particular flavor to express something, or it may be produced in passing by the movement of his parts.[13]

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[12]Gerald Abraham, op. cit., p. 40.

[13]Ibid.

Walter Piston has this to say:

> The intention on the part of the composer must, above all, be taken into account in considering these combinations of notes which are quite evidently used for their momentary sonority. Many examples may be found where chords of this type are used for their percussive effects alone.[14]

A striking example of Vaughan Williams' use of this sonority is as follows:

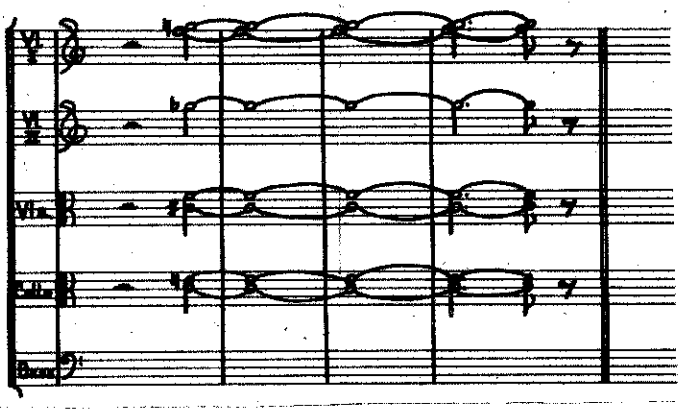

Fig. 27--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 7, third movement, measures 12-15.

The difficulty encountered in evolving a plausible system of chord use in the symphonies of Vaughan Williams has now presented itself. Homer Ulrich says:

> The separately derived style elements are unmistakable; yet the rich variety of his textures, the absence of a rigid harmonic system, and the great range of expressive content make him a composer hard to classify.[15]

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[14]Walter Piston, Principles of Harmonic Analysis (Boston, 1933), p. 49.

[15]Homer Ulrich, Symphonic Music (New York, 1952), p. 72.

Simple harmony has always been the aim of Vaughan Williams. Other factors involved in his writing tend to complicate matters, but the basic idea is that of simplicity and clarity.

Maurice Ravel once remarked when he learned that Vaughan Williams had no piano in the hotel where he worked, "sans le piano on ne peut pas inventer des nouvelles harmonies."[16] Vaughan Williams says:

> I am quite incapable, even with the pianoforte, of inventing his [Ravel's] "nouvelles harmonies." I sometimes wish that I could think of the strange chords of my old friend, Arnold Bax. I hope I am not like the fox without the tail, but I feel content to provide good plain cooking and hope that the proof of the pudding will be in the eating.[17]

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[16]"Without the piano one cannot invent new harmonies."

[17]Ralph Vaughan Williams, Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects (London, 1953), p. 154.

CHAPTER III

ROOT MOVEMENT, TONALITY AND MODULATION

Root Movement

Generally speaking, root movement is an important aspect of harmony, but it is less important in Vaughan Williams' music than in the music of other composers.

There are two main factors which determine most of the root movement in the symphonies of Vaughan Williams, namely:

1) the reciprocal movement of chords, which is but another form of parallelism. This process consists of roots which alternately ascend and descend.

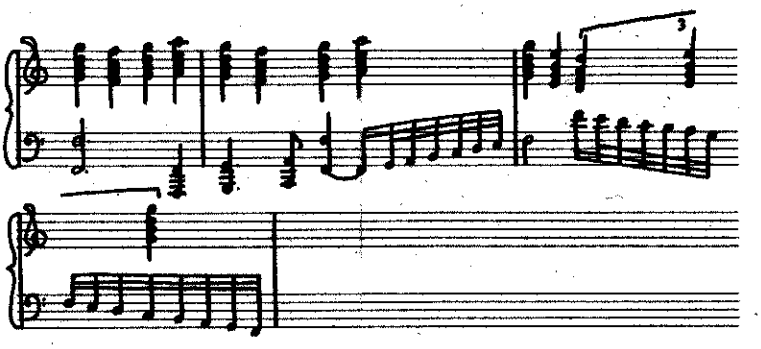

Fig. 28--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 1, fourth movement, measures 175-177.

2) the "side-slipping" of chords, or, as some prefer, parallelism. In this type of procedure the successive

roots form a scale-wise (chromatic, diatonic or otherwise) passage.

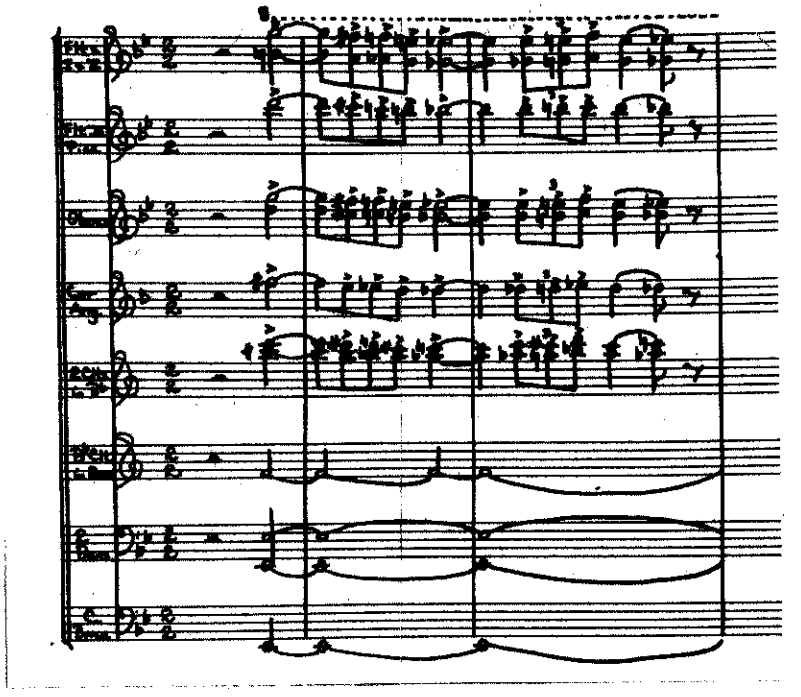

Fig. 29--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 2, first movement, measures 38-40.

The following list is a very close approximation of the frequency of root movement by different degrees:[1]

1) minor second 36%[2]

2) major second 22%

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[1]These percentages, like those in Chapter II, are derived from a chord-by-chord analysis of A Sea Symphony (c. 1905-1910), the Pastoral Symphony (1922) and the Symphony in E Minor (1948). Based on repeated hearings of all the symphonies, these figures seem representative of the symphonies as a whole.

[2]Root movement by the interval of a minor second occurs in the later works more often than in the earlier works.

3) prime 12%

4) minor third 10%

5) major third 8%

6) perfect fifth 8%

7) tritone 4%

(Each percentage pertains to the interval named and its inversion.) The above list clearly shows the use of parallelism in root movement in Vaughan Williams' symphonies, with almost 60 per cent of the roots moving in seconds.

Tonality

"Key organization," says Frank Howes, "is rarely an important feature with Vaughan Williams whose use of tonality is very fluid--was he not in some doubt whether his Fifth Symphony [sic] was in D or G?"[3] Percy Young says, "Vaughan Williams does not deny the customs of tonality. He extends the range."[4] This distinguishes him from his contemporaries "who enjoyed a less constructive approach to the same problem."[5]

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[3]Frank Howes, The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams (London, 1954), p. 60. The actual title of the symphony is Symphony in D Major.

[4]Percy Young, Vaughan Williams (London, 1953), p. 156.

[5]Ibid.

In the following discussion of tonality, the words "major" and "minor" should not be taken too literally when referring to mode. Most often the key signature specifies a tonality which is in keeping with the two modes most commonly associated with such a signature, that is, major and minor, but other modal implications and such eccentricities as a continual flatting of the seventh in major weaken the possibilities for a pure major or minor tonality.

A Sea Symphony /No. 1/ (c. 1905-1910) (1573 Measures)

First movement (439 measures).--This symphony begins with a fanfare on a B-flat minor triad (in the key of D major) (16 measures) which is the preface to "A Song for all Seas, all Ships." Juxtaposed major and minor triads a major third apart suggest the sea. The slow movement and the scherzo also begin with this progression. This is one of the many thematic and spiritual ideas which appear throughout the movement as links. The next 25 measures give a suspended key feeling (with a signature of C major). D major returns for 16 measures. With the appearance of a new theme, the key shifts to the Dorian mode on C (163 measures). A development section begins with a fanfare which is now in C minor (47 measures). D major returns (28 measures), then A minor (22 measures), B major

(6 measures) and back to a climactic D major (116 measures) in which key the movement ends.

Second movement (172 measures).--This movement begins with a short introduction which is another version of the juxtaposition of the minor triad with its major antithesis a major third higher. The key here is E minor (53 measures). Next the second subject appears in E-flat major (13 measures). A chromatically inflected A minor (63 measures) is followed by E minor (43 measures), which ends the movement with a picardy third.

Third movement (381 measures).--This movement begins in G minor (31 measures), shifts to a section with suspended key feeling (98 measures) wherein there is no signature, but several keys are suggested (D, A-flat, A, B and B-flat). Next is the trio in G minor (44 measures), then the suspended key feeling returns as before (99 measures). G minor is regained (18 measures) followed by another section with no signature, but which strongly suggests G, E and E-flat (24 measures). The next key is G major (67 measures), in which key the movement ends.

Fourth movement (581 measures).--The tonality of the short introductory section, which breaks away from the block harmony and the simple antiphony of the scherzo, is E-flat major (12 measures). There is a shift to G major

(10 measures), then back to E-flat major (22 measures). This first section continues in G minor (48 measures), A minor (91 measures, which have an abundance of accidentals, both on sustained harmony and moving parts) and G major (57 measures). The middle section is in E-flat (21 measures), the key of the opening. This moves to G major (28 measures), to a passage with suspended key feeling (47 measures), to the Phrygian mode on E (16 measures), to C minor (11 measures), to a period of extended modulation (12 measures) and then to E-flat major (22 measures). Next there is another chromatically inflected passage with no signature (47 measures) followed by the same kind of passage with a signature of one sharp (78 measures). E-flat major returns to end the symphony (49 measures).

A London Symphony (No. 2) (1914, Revised 1920) (1163 Measures)

First movement (407 measures).--The movement begins in G major (37 measures), but soon shifts to G minor (164 measures), which is the main key of the movement. It continues in G minor until seven important themes are heard before going to C major (86 measures). Next there is a shift back to G minor (25 measures), then to G major (95 measures), where the movement ends.

Second movement (140 measures).--There is no key signature at the beginning of this movement, but a rising

progression of triads suggests E major and a second group suggests A-flat major (8 measures). The tonality finally settles in E major (4 measures) and then goes to A-flat minor (46 measures). The B section of this movement in ternary form is for the most part in G major (68 measures). Next is a very short recapitulation in the key of the opening (24 measures). The movement ends in an indeterminate key, with C major suggested by the chords and A minor by the melody.

Third movement (384 measures).--The first section of this scherzo, which is specifically described as a nocturne, is in D minor (54 measures). The first episode is in B-flat modal minor (62 measures), which moves back to D minor (33 measures), then D major (36 measures). The second episode starts in C major (70 measures). It then goes to D minor (18 measures), D major (39 measures) and ends the movement in D minor (72 measures). The over-all tonality of this movement is rather clear as compared with the rest of the symphony and, for that matter, as compared with the other symphonies.

Fourth movement (232 measures).--The Phrygian mode, with its final on D, marks the opening of this movement, although structurally the key is G minor (54 measures). The tonality moves to G major (29 measures), C major (36 measures) and back to G minor (53 measures). The epilogue

begins in B-flat minor (28 measures, with no signature) and ends in G major (32 measures).

Percy Young comments on this symphony by saying that each tune "promotes its own particular harmonic order, leaving an impression of a deeper variety of color than arises merely from felicity in orchestration."[6]

Pastoral Symphony /No. 37 (1922) (701 measures)

First movement (188 measures).--The form of this movement is clearly sonata form with key relationships only unusual in that the tonalities are modal rather than major and minor. The opening is in the Dorian mode with its final on D (8 measures). The dominant is G which, at times, seems more like tonic than D because of consecutive fifths (19 measures). The second subject, composed of two sections, is in B minor (13 measures) going to A minor (19 measures). An A major cadence ends this section and the exposition (12 measures). The development is chiefly in C major (43 measures) and the incomplete recapitulation returns to the tonality of the opening (74 measures).

Second movement (128 measures).--This slow movement is, with its four main themes, entirely in C major (128 measures).

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[6]Ibid., p. 146.

Third movement (227 measures).--The main tonality of this movement is G minor (46 measures) with the trio being in G major (57 measures). G minor returns (30 measures), then G major (24 measures) and the movement ends in the opening key of G minor (70 measures).

Fourth movement (158 measures).--The tonality of this movement, which has an introductory theme and a main theme, is D minor. The first theme appears as an introduction, material for development and epilogue, keeping to the main tonality of G minor (96 measures). There are short sections in C major (21 measures), C-sharp minor (alternating with E major) (22 measures) and another in C major (19 measures).

Symphony in F Minor [No. 4] (1935) (1165 measures)

First movement (240 measures).--Percy Young says:

> Classical tonality is in the melting pot again. F minor is epigrammatic for "nearer F minor than any other old-fashioned key with which you may be acquainted." F in fact is the center around which various scales, modes, and patterns are circulated.[7]

The opening chord of this symphony should be regarded as dominant harmony in F minor. A key center is not established right away although, for all practical purposes, the tonality is F minor (48 measures). The key shifts to a modal B-flat minor with no signature (13 measures), then

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[7]Ibid., p. 156.

back to F minor (13 measures) and on to a chromatically inflected passage with a signature of one flat (6 measures). The tonality goes to D major (14 measures) for a new theme, then to E flat (with chromatic alteration, 12 measures) and back to D major (16 measures). The opening material returns, this time in C major (56 measures). This moves to F minor (10 measures), back to C major (24 measures) and then to D flat (9 measures). D major returns (6 measures) and the movement ends in D flat major (13 measures).

Second movement (138 measures).--This movement begins with a very definite F minor in the bass with a violin melody more in C major than F minor (26 measures). Next a three-part contrapuntal section by oboe, strings and clarinet gives the effect of different keys, but it is all in A major (24 measures). Some analysts would refer to this procedure as pandiatonicism. F minor is regained briefly (4 measures) followed by a passage in C, full of accidentals on sustained and moving parts (37 measures). Next comes F minor again (15 measures), B modal minor (7 measures), F minor (11 measures), Lydian mode on F (6 measures) and finally back to F minor again (8 measures) to end the movement as it began.

Third movement (323 measures).--The key of the opening is D minor (39 measures). This moves to B minor (18 measures), A flat major (34 measures), C major (10 measures)

and back to D minor (31 measures). B minor is next (16 measures) followed by E flat major (65 measures). D minor returns (40 measures), then B minor (12 measures), C major (14 measures), B minor (4 measures). The tonality now goes to A major in the basses and cellos, with the remainder of the orchestra going to C major (12 measures). There is a strong pull toward A flat owing to a reiterated figure in the low strings. The basses and cellos remain in A major, violins and violas go to A flat major and the other instruments stay in C major (8 measures). Violins and violas shift to C major, but basses and cellos remain in A major (21 measures). The movement ends in this manner. It is interesting to note that this is the only place in all of Vaughan Williams' symphonies where multiple tonality is effected by means of multiple key signatures. Chromatic alteration is usually employed to accomplish this end.

Fourth movement (464 measures).--The tonality here is a very clear F major (76 measures). This leads to B-flat major (10 measures), E-flat major (19 measures), C major (7 measures), A major (31 measures) and back to F major (33 measures). The key scheme continues through D major (12 measures), F minor (16 measures), C major (9 measures), F major (32 measures), D major (20 measures), F major (88 measures), E flat major (25 measures), F major (30 measures), A minor (24 measures), F major (20 measures) and

finally ends in the original F minor (12 measures). The reader is urged to keep in mind that these tonalities are by no means pure. They contain many accidentals, both in background and melodic material. This fact is especially true of this Symphony in F Minor. The numerous returns to F major suggest a rondo-like relationship of keys.

Symphony in D Major /No. 57 (1943) (1180 measures)

First movement (226 measures).--The key here is not established as is usually the case. Rather, it is arrived at by gravitational pull of the parts. The key signature of this symphony in D major is one sharp. This is a device which results in the flat seventh which he is said to have a passion for. In the opening, a persistent C organ point (59 measures) finally dies out to make way for a section in E major (10 measures). Here there is a tug-of-war between C major and D major, resulting in a sort of A minor. The A minor feeling is confirmed by the bass line. There is a short section in G major (17 measures) before E-flat major takes over (31 measures). G-flat major is the next key (11 measures). This goes to A major (6 measures), F major (26 measures) and back to D major with the C organ point and the one sharp signature (21 measures). In the concluding bars of the movement there is a key signature of two flats with a D major horn call pulling against a pedal C (45 measures).

It is understandable why the composer was doubtful of the key!

Second movement (471 measures).--This scherzo begins simply in C major (124 measures). A shift to B minor (38 measures), then G minor (10 measures), B-flat minor (11 measures), C-sharp minor (13 measures), E minor (95 measures) A minor (66 measures), C minor (38 measures), A minor (9 measures), C minor (32 measures) and back to A minor (35 measures) where the movement ends. The section in E minor is treated first in bright major harmony and then in sober modal harmony, chiefly Aeolian, Dorian and Phrygian.

Third movement (202 measures).--This movement opens with a C major chord which is followed by an A major chord. The first theme continues in C major (93 measures) until taken up by a second theme in the Aeolian mode (36 measures). The tonality returns to C major (52 measures), and the movement ends in A major (21 measures).

Fourth movement (281 measures).--This passacaglia begins in D major (81 measures), shifting to G major (9 measures), then to C major (23 measures, with the more often than not flat seventh). D major is regained briefly (39 measures). This gives way to D minor (9 measures), F minor (6 measures), C minor (29 measures), A major (4 measures), C major (14 measures), G major (9 measures), and back to

C major (14 measures). Finally, D major comes back to end the movement and the symphony (44 measures).

Symphony in E Minor [No. 6] (1948) (807 measures)

First movement (192 measures).--This movement begins in tonal confusion. E minor is established by the harmony, although if the melody had its way the key would be F minor (19 measures). E-flat major takes over (14 measures) and later gives way to the original E minor (9 measures). Next comes G minor (36 measures), B minor (17 measures), D minor (20 measures), G minor (13 measures) and back to E minor (30 measures). A recapitulation ends the movement in E major (34 measures). Parts of this movement can be analyzed as being in the Aeolian mode.

Second movement (138 measures).--There is much chromatic inflection in the opening section of this movement which begins in D-flat major (30 measures). The five flats are subtracted to allow C major to emerge in all its simplicity, minus the excessive chromaticism of the previous passage (66 measures). Then D-flat major appears again and stays on to end the movement (42 measures).

Third movement (371 measures).--"One would be hard put to define the key."[8] This is owing to the augmented fourths

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[8]Frank Howes, op. cit., p. 60.

in the melody which sometimes change to fifths. The key signature is one flat (63 measures). The melodic line is taken up by the low brasses and basses while the signature changes to three flats (20 measures). Next is a passage definitely in F-sharp minor (6 measures) going to one in C modal minor (7 measures). The next key is more or less F minor with much chromatic alteration (13 measures). This moves to another passage in C modal minor (60 measures). The three flats in the signature are removed, but the key is not C major nor A minor nor anything close (54 measures). The strings move chromatically on a divisi background of augmented fourths while a bassoon plays chromatic tritones up and down. (See Figure 23.) To relieve the situation a rather clear G minor takes over (24 measures). This is followed by a short passage with no signature, but full of sharps and flats (11 measures). Next comes C minor (25 measures) followed by another passage with no signature, but full of chromatically inflected lines (16 measures). G minor comes back (7 measures) and finally A-flat, with chromatic alteration, which ends the movement (65 measures).

Fourth movement (106 measures).--Again there is no signature, but the very large number of accidentals, both in sustained harmony and moving parts, rule out the remotest possibility of C major or, for that matter, any specific key (106 measures). At the end of the movement the strings

cannot decide whether to end in E-flat major or E-minor, which is the home key. The tonal ambiguity holds on until the last chord (E minor) which is not in root position.

Sinfonia Antartica (No. 7 (1953) (776 measures)

First movement (202 measures).--There is no key signature, but an abundance of accidentals is found. After the first theme is stated by several instruments in turn, there is a definite cadence in G major (56 measures). The feeling of G continues (11 measures) until D appears (26 measures). G returns (32 measures) until a signature of two flats appears. Here the first and second violins have sustained notes on C and B while the woodwinds play a chromatic melody. A clear cadence is avoided throughout this section (15 measures). The two flats are removed from the signature and the obscurity of key feeling continues (17 measures). The first really clear key to come up is E major (26 measures). It is followed by G major, which is also clear (20 measures). There is a cadence consisting of two triads, A and G, which ends the movement in G major.

Second movement (130 measures).--This movement begins in B-flat major (8 measures), shifts to D major (11 measures) and then back to B-flat major (19 measures). A signature of one sharp appears, but again the key feeling is

obscure (18 measures). Next a chromatically inflected B-flat appears (66 measures), is interrupted momentarily by a short passage in G-flat major (7 measures) and returns to end the movement "on an indefinite chord, formed by two chords swaying a chromatic semitone and finally coalescing."[9]

Third movement (148 measures).--Again there is no signature to give an insight into the composer's tonal intentions (15 measures). A clear tonal concept is lacking here until the arrival of B major (22 measures) with a signature of two sharps. Next is C major (12 measures), D minor (35 measures), F-sharp minor (27 measures) and the movement ends in a sort of B major (37 measures) with a signature of one flat.

Fourth movement (112 measures).--The tonality here is an alternation between D major and D minor (that is, with a signature of two sharps, F natural appears as often as F sharp) (36 measures). The tonality shifts from D to G major (46 measures). The next key is a sort of A-flat (7 measures) with two flats in the signature. This moves to a chromatically inflected F (23 measures). The movement ends in B minor (20 measures).

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[9]Ibid., p. 75.

Fifth movement (184 measures).--The key of the beginning is, after a fashion, F (34 measures). Next comes what seem to be A minor (33 measures), B minor (16 measures) and then a section with no signature (4 measures), but with a sustained C-flat in the low instruments and repeated C naturals in the upper ones, among other things. A nice clear A-flat (8 measures) appears next, followed by another signatureless passage full of sharps and flats (9 measures). Then comes a section with a two-flat signature (25 measures) which seems to hinge around E. The two flats disappear from the signature (55 measures) and the symphony ends. The last sixteen bars contain a G organ-point and wordless melodies by voices which finally wind up on E-flat.

Symphony No. 8 in D Minor (1956) (794 measures)

First movement (290 measures).--This symphony opens in D minor (43 measures), then goes to E-flat major (20 measures), B-flat minor (15 measures), a modal C minor (29 measures), then to C major (33 measures). E-flat major is next (17 measures), followed by E minor (9 measures), C minor (16 measures), E minor (16 measures), E-flat major (with simultaneous of major and minor third) (7 measures). E minor returns (7 measures), followed by B-flat minor (17 measures), D minor (7 measures), B-flat major

(15 measures), D major (16 measures) and finally back to D minor (17 measures) where the movement ends.

Second movement (171 measures).--This movement, which is the only one of its kind in all of Vaughan Williams' symphonies in that it is scored for woodwinds and brass only, begins in C minor (33 measures) and then goes to D minor (10 measures), A minor (20 measures), C minor (8 measures), D minor (18 measures), A-flat major (6 measures), B-flat minor (6 measures), G minor (9 measures) and ends in C minor (61 measures).

Third movement (111 measures).--This movement is unique in much the same way as the previous one, only here the scoring is for strings only. The opening is in E minor (71 measures), the middle is in F minor (11 measures) and the ending is back in E minor (29 measures).

Fourth movement (222 measures).--The tonality of the opening section of this movement is D major (with frequent use of F-natural instead of F-sharp (58 measures). It then goes to D minor (6 measures), E-flat minor (12 measures), C minor (18 measures) and back to the major-minor mixture in D like the opening bars (10 measures). This same type of tonality is shifted up to E-flat (28 measures) and then back to D (12 measures). Next B-flat major appears (11 measures), followed by G major (20 measures) and on to B minor (31

measures). E-flat major (9 measures) is followed by D major (7 measures), in which key the symphony ends.

After careful evaluation of the material gained from analysis of the tonality in these symphonies, the following points present themselves:

1) There are no specific "rules" governing key relationships, that is, the interval of key shift is of little consequence:[10]

a) minor second 13%

b) major second 13%

c) minor third 24%

d) major third 22%

e) perfect fifth 24%

f) tritone 4%

2) Vaughan Williams' "family" of keys is greatly enlarged owing to his regard for a major and a minor key with the same signature as simply two aspects of one tonality.

3) Similar to the lack of systemized procedure in the interval of key shift, a lack of pattern exists in the shift of major and minor key relationships.

a) major to major 38%

b) minor to minor 22%

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[10]These percentages are a result of analysis of <u>all</u> of the symphonies.

c) major to minor 17%

d) minor to major 19%

e) modal, involving major or minor shift 5%

4) There is not much preference shown in the use of major or minor:

a) major keys 55%

b) minor keys 51%

c) modes 4%

The reader will keep in mind that "majorish" and "minorish" are more descriptive of Vaughan Williams' tonality, and that in a vast number of cases it is uncertain as to whether the tonality is in minor or some other mode. Another analyst would possibly arrive at percentages different from those presented above.

5) Vaughan Williams uses key schemes composed chiefly of major keys (Sea Symphony: 4th movement).

6) He also uses key schemes composed chiefly of minor keys (Symphony in D: 2nd movement and Symphony in E Minor: first movement).

7) Sometimes he employs a device which can be thought of as a key scheme in "rondo form" (Symphony in F Minor: fourth movement).

8) Alternation between two keys (with a change of modality) is another device (Pastoral Symphony: third movement).

9) Except for one instance, in the Symphony in F Minor (third movement, measures 277-317), polytonality is effected by means of chromatic alteration within one key, as opposed to the use of multiple simultaneous key signatures.

The above items in some way exemplify some of the idiosyncratic manipulations of key schemes in Vaughan Williams' symphonies. The keys employed are easy to identify in many cases, but identification of the modal sections is more difficult. Even the composer is not always conscious of which specific mode he is writing in.[11] Percy Young is of the opinion that Vaughan Williams is more concerned with the musical results than he is with theoretical procedure:

> Many composers effect modality and discover it--though the fashion nowadays has altered somewhat for the better--as a handicap to melodic invention. Vaughan Williams, at his best in the Scherzo /London Symphony/, appears to catch melodies and to leave it to others to define the mode.[12]

Modulation

Vaughan Williams does not have much regard for traditional methods of modulation, according to Percy Young.[13] Young goes on to say:

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[11]See footnote No. 3, p. 45.

[12]Percy Young, op. cit., p. 145.

[13]Ibid., p. 30.

> Modulation frequently follows a delineatory path--a thought cast in minor mood taking its way through a course of keys related not by academic schedule but by mood--or atmosphere.[14]

Some theorists regard modulation as a process, consisting of an old key, transitional harmony and cadence in a new key. Others think of modulation as merely a change of tonal center, with or without a transition, common tone, common chord or chromatic alteration. The latter conception is more descriptive of Vaughan Williams' technique than the former. When he desires to change key, he does so "without tears."

The eight symphonies were analyzed from the standpoint of modulation, resulting in examination of one hundred eighty-one (181) modulations. It was learned from this analysis that, although Vaughan Williams does not modulate according to traditional methods, he does employ some very definite procedures:

The most common kind of modulation found in the symphonies is that which is effected by a continuation of Vaughan Williams' usual method of chord progression, that is, without much regard for cadence. Thus, in a progression of chords, any one chord may become a new tonal center regardless of the function of previous chords. However, the intervals of root movement and the intervals of key shift do

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[14] Ibid., p. 188.

not coincide (comparison of the list of root movement percentages on page 44 with the list of key shift percentages on page 62 will clarify this point).

Aside from the actual chords involved in Vaughan Williams' modulations, it is interesting to note the various techniques he uses in moving from one key to another:

1) In 36 per cent of his modulations, chord progression, directly from one chord to another, is found. This device is found most often in Symphony in F Minor and Symphony in D Major.

2) In 29 per cent of his modulations, the new key is connected to the old key by means of a unison (or octave, or otherwise) passage. This device is found most often in Symphony No. 8 in D Minor.

3) There is a momentary pause before going to the new key in 9 per cent of the modulations. This device is found most often in Sinfonia Antartica.

4) A held tone connects the two keys in 7 per cent of the modulations. This device is found most often in Symphony in F Minor and Sinfonia Antartica.

5) In 6 per cent of the modulations a solo instrument (unaccompanied) leads the way to a new tonal sphere. This device is found most often in Sinfonia Antartica.

Vaughan Williams uses other miscellaneous devices when modulating, but they are used only a fraction of the time as compared with those listed above:

1) At times the new key is realized by means of enharmonic spelling before the key signature changes.

2) Instances are found where accidentals appear in the old key which partially suggest direction of the modulation.

3) Sometimes Vaughan Williams writes a scalewise flourish of notes, beginning in the old key and ending on a note in the new key (this ending note is not common to both of the keys, in fact, it is usually higher than the note of the same letter name in the old key, that is, a scalewise flourish in F major ending on F-sharp, the new key being D major).

It is interesting to note one device Vaughan Williams uses when modulating, which is a point of orchestration, not harmony. Nevertheless, it may be of value to note that it is very common for him to completely change the thematic material and/or scoring when he changes keys.

CHAPTER IV

HARMONIC DEVICES

The main influence on the harmonic practice of Vaughan Williams is folk song, which in turn brings about two chief factors of his harmonic style, namely, the use of triads and parallelism. He gives melody preference over harmony and, owing to the fact that often his melodies are folk songs or folk song derivatives, the resulting harmony is not always major or minor, but modal as well. On the subject of modal harmony, Raymond Robinson says:

> The old modes are not easily harmonized by our modern system. . . . The vast repertoire of Gregorian melodies in the service books of the Roman Church were originally sung in unison. Organ accompaniments were admitted only as a support for the voices, and the chords found to be the only appropriate settings reflecting the characteristics of the modes were triads and occasional first inversions.[1]

Actually, there is no harmony at all in the musical art of the folk song; it is essentially melodic, complete without harmony.[2] Folk songs and folk dances are meant to be performed completely without chordal accompaniment. An

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[1]Raymond C. Robinson, Progressive Harmony (Boston, 1934), p. 200.

[2]Donald Tweedy, Manual of Harmonic Practice (Philadelphia, 1928), p. 162.

attempt is often made nowadays to add harmony to these tunes of the people, however, because "those who are accustomed to harmony are wont to demand it."[3]

It is the opinion of some that the ability to harmonize a simple folk tune is a severe test of craftsmanship, even that of the mature composer.[4] Vaughan Williams has certainly passed the test! He usually does not harmonize these melodies in the conventional manner (that is, supplying a harmonic background for the melody), however. Instead, he merely "thickens" the melody, so to speak. Donald Francis Tovey says the following of Vaughan Williams' melody and harmony in discussing the Pastoral Symphony:

> Across this landscape of saturated colors there float the sounds of melodies older than any folksong. These melodies are harmonized on the plan first reduced to formula by Debussy: whatever chord the melody begins with is treated as a mere sensation, and the chord follows the melody up and down the scale, instead of dissolving into threads of melodic line.[5]

The point where Tovey mentions "melodies older than any folksong" may be rather misleading if an explanation is not made at this point. The fact that the melodies sound old or archaic does not indicate that the harmony Vaughan Williams puts with them is antiquated also. Vaughan Williams has some very definite thoughts along this line:

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Donald Francis Tovey, Some English Symphonists (London, 1941), p. 86.

> It is not correct to refer to the modes as "old," or of pure modal harmony as "archaic." Real archaic harmony is never modal. When harmony grew out of organum, composers found that they could not work in the modes with the new found harmonic scheme and they began to alter the modal melodies to give them the necessary intervals with which they could work. The harmony of Palestrina and his contemporaries is therefore not purely modal; this was reserved for the 19th century.[6]

At any rate, Vaughan Williams' use of modal harmony in no way puts a stamp of antiquity on his harmonic style. The manner in which his melodies govern the harmony is a purely modern tendency:

> Another modern tendency is the "side-slipping" of chords. Classical harmony was more or less the result of the separate movement of individual parts and the touchstone of good harmony was, normally, the sense of progressive movement it gave. But the modern musician has tended more and more to keep a chord for a while, if he likes its flavor, simply moving it sideways en block.[7]

What is responsible for this particular musical characteristic of some composers? Where did the idea originate?

Modal melodies began to "swim into the ken of composers" probably in nineteenth-century Russia.[8] These nationalistic composers were confronted with all sorts of

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[6]Ralph Vaughan Williams, National Music (London, 1935), p. 46.

[7]Gerald Abraham, This Modern Stuff (London, 1933), p. 50.

[8]Ralph Vaughan Williams, op. cit., p. 46.

harmonic complications. Up to that time the general consensus was that harmony was supposed to be built from the bass up. The semiamateurish Russian nationalists evidently preferred to build their harmony from the melody downwards.[9] This neo-modal harmony is prevalent throughout Mussorgsky's Boris Godounov:

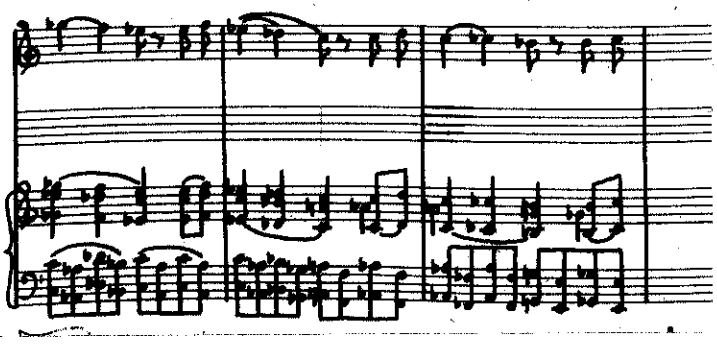

Fig. 30--Mussorgsky, Boris Godounov, Act 4, Scene 2, measures 151-153.

Debussy and the French contemporaries took the lead, along with some of the modern Italians and the modern English. The Germans seem to have overlooked this method, "possibly because their folksongs have become tinged with harmonic considerations."[10]

A very good example of pure modal harmony is Debussy's "Sarabande," from Pour le Piano:

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 47.

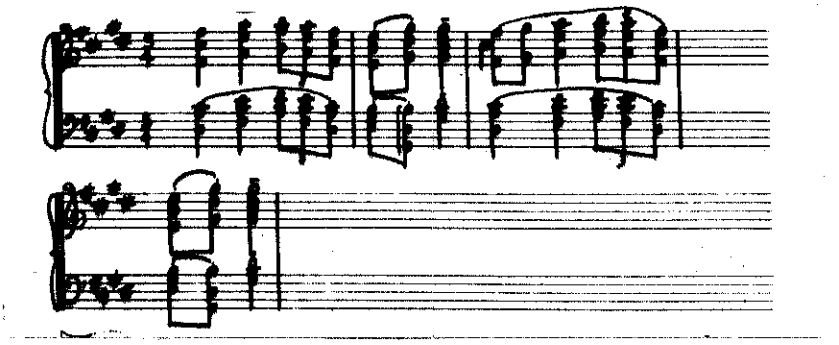

Fig. 31--Debussy, Pour le Piano, "Sarabande", measures 1-4.

Another is Ravel's Sonatine:

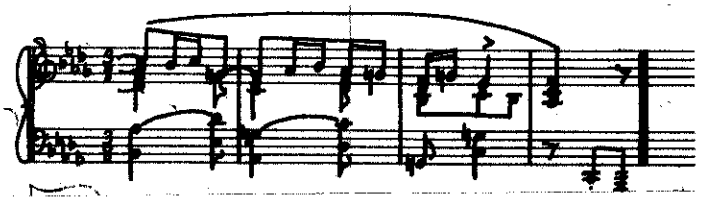

Fig. 32--Ravel, Sonatine, measures 9-12

Association with modern music has so accustomed the ear to harmony that it is difficult to think in terms of pure melody built up without any reference to harmony. Even the tunes which are whistled and hummed are accompanied by a subconscious harmonic basis. "Our most popular tunes would be meaningless unless in the back of our minds we supplied their harmonies."[11] Vaughan Williams, who is one of the foremost exponents of melodic writing wherein harmony is secondary, has this to say:

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[11] Ibid., p. 44.

> Harmonic music at all events in the 18th and 19th centuries, presupposed the existence of two modes only, the major and the minor, with all their harmonic implications of the perfect cadence, the half close, the leading note, and so on, so as to give points of repose, points of departure and the like. But in purely melodic music an entirely new set of considerations came into being. The major and minor modes hardly ever appear in true melodic music, but it must be referred to other systems, chiefly the Dorian mode, the Mixolydian mode, and the Ionian mode, this last having of course the same intervals as the major mode, but otherwise quite distinct.[12]

It has already been mentioned that Vaughan Williams' use of folk songs resulted in his use of triads and parallelism. The reason for his use of triads is easy to see, but what about parallelism? In case the reader does not completely understand the word "parallelism," the following may be of help. To begin with, parallelism has many aliases, some of them being: "consecutive similar chords," "chromatic harmony," "chord streams," "sound streams," "simultaneous harmonic streams," and so on. These all mean, at one time or another, parallelism, which is the term preferred in this study. It seems to be more descriptive of the process which is taking place.

Now, exactly what is parallelism? Gerald Abraham says:

> Whereas classical harmony was "background accompaniment to the melody," the modern usage, among other things, is that of thickening out the melody itself. . . . The true melody in this type of writing is a continuous block of sound, instead of the customary thin one-note line of sound. Sometimes the parallelism is rigid

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[12] Ibid.

> (in respect to chord types) and at other times it is modified. The difference is roughly analagous to that between a "real" and a "tonal" answer in a fugue.[13]

The chord-minded composers of the period of harmonic common practice created melody by reference to harmony. Owing to parallelism, the process is reversed now by many modern composers, Vaughan Williams included. Parallel movement gains an effect easily, and is applied whether or not any "rules" of voice leading are broken, since the melodic line, whichever it may be, "is merely adumbrated by the voices."[14] These "streams of harmony" are frequently taken over by a group of similar instruments. Examples of this phenomenon have already been cited in reference to other points. It has also been mentioned that the parallelism of Vaughan Williams employs triads, seventh chords, and others.

The process of parallelism is simply that of using consonances. It is true that the ear receives surprises and unexpected aural combinations (horizontally speaking), but they are for the most part consonant. On the other hand, there is dissonance, which Vaughan Williams also indulges in freely:

> Vaughan Williams has kept abreast of the times, has even been somewhat in advance of them. In works written after the 1920's, the national spirit was

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[13]Gerald Abraham, op. cit., p. 51.

[14]Donald Tweedy, op. cit., p. 162.

impressed upon a harshly dissonant, thickly chromatic style which came close to atonality.[15]

Dissonance is a purely relative matter in itself. The degree of apparent dissonance in any particular case may be considerably modified by various factors. Abraham lists several:[16]

1) the sophistication of the listener's ear

2) context

   a) general--the norm of dissonance in the composition as a whole

   b) immediate--the nature of the actual passage in which the discord occurs.

3) layout [voicing of chords]

4) instrumental color

Probably the chief difficulty the ordinary listener encounters in his approach to the music of Vaughan Williams is its harmonic complexity, which is aggravated by dissonance. There are several devices which Vaughan Williams uses to achieve this dissonance. One has already been discussed (use of added-note chords and random sonorities), although this device was not specifically labeled as one employed to achieve dissonance, as such.

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[15]Homer Ulrich, Symphonic Music (New York, 1952), p. 43.

[16]Gerald Abraham, op. cit., p. 32.

Another device of this type is polytonality, which is a topic for controversy among theorists. Paul Hindemith feels that polytonality is not a practical principle of composition. He says:

> The game of letting two or more tonalities run along side by side and so achieving new harmonic effects is, to be sure, very entertaining to the composer, but the listener cannot follow the separate tonalities, for he relates every simultaneous combination of sounds to a root--and thus we see the futility of the game. Every simultaneous combination of sounds must have one root, and only one; one cannot conceive of additional roots somewhere above, belonging to other tonal spheres.[17]

Walter Piston, a man who has attained more or less equal stature with Paul Hindemith as a theorist, does not seem to agree on this point:

> The conscious combination of two or more strands of music in different keys sounding simultaneously has shown that, while two keys can be heard, the employment of several defeats its own end and destroys the feeling of any tonality. Even with only two keys, the adjustment must be delicately made if the ear is to be prevented from absorbing the whole into one main tonality. The usual method is to use two keys an augmented fourth apart (as C and F-sharp) these having fewer notes in common than any other pair. Polytonal writing is most successful in the orchestra where different planes of tone-color or dynamics may be used.[18]

Also in disagreement with Hindemith is Horace Miller who goes so far as to distinguish between types:

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[17]Paul Hindemith, The Craft of Musical Composition, translated by Arthur Mendel (New York, 1937), p. 95.

[18]Walter Piston, Principles of Harmonic Analysis (Boston, 1933), p. 50.

> Polytonality subdivides into two species: harmonic and melodic. The harmonic species is that which superimposes and interweaves chords belonging to different tonalities. In this process, chords belonging to different keys are sounded together, but always with the idea of the natural and indispensable basis of the diatonic scale. Melodic polytonality superimposes two or more melodies of diverse tonalities. This is a much more difficult process . . . .[19]

For the purposes of this study, it will be assumed that polytonality does exist.

Vaughan Williams achieves polytonality in many ways. The alpha and omega of polytonality can be described as organ-point and multi-tonal parallelism. Organ-point, or pedal-point, is a sustained tone with at least two harmonies above or below it, functioning as moving scale steps in their own right, with at least one of them constituting a harmony different from that of the organ-point.[20] When the sustained tone is found in a voice other than the bass it is called an "inverted pedal."[21] The term "pedal" is carried over from the original implication of holding down an organ pedal while improvising above, although the subsequent development by composers of this device makes it seem far

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[19]Horace Alden Miller, New Harmonic Devices (Philadelphia, 1933), p. 100.

[20]Heinrich Schenker, Harmony, translated by Elizabeth Mann Borgese (Chicago, 1954), p. 315.

[21]Arnold Schoenberg, Structural Functions of Harmony (New York, 1954), p. 137.

removed from what its name implies. It is a curious psychological fact that the ear will accept any held tone, no matter what harmonies are put with it.[22] Hull says:

> Once the ear has accepted a certain thing, the effect retires into the background of the aural "retina," and only counts in a secondary way until some change or contrast has been effected. It is a partial application of the familiar addage relating to familiarity and contempt.[23]

Vaughan Williams uses organ-point in conjunction with one moving line:

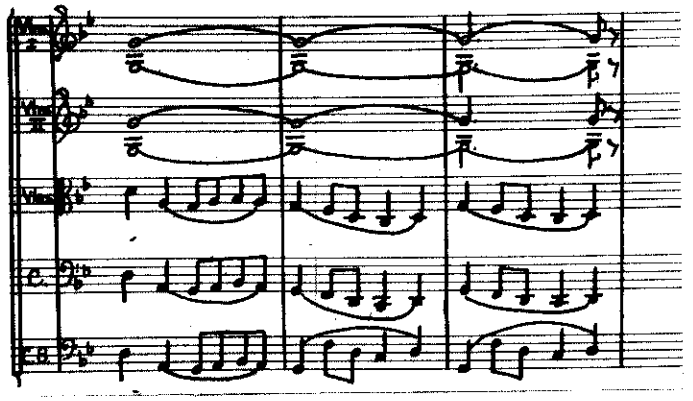

Fig. 33--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5, first movement, measures 207-209.

and with more than one line:

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[22]Donald Tweedy, op. cit., p. 212.

[23]A. Eaglefield Hull, Modern Harmony (London, c. 1915?), p. 145.

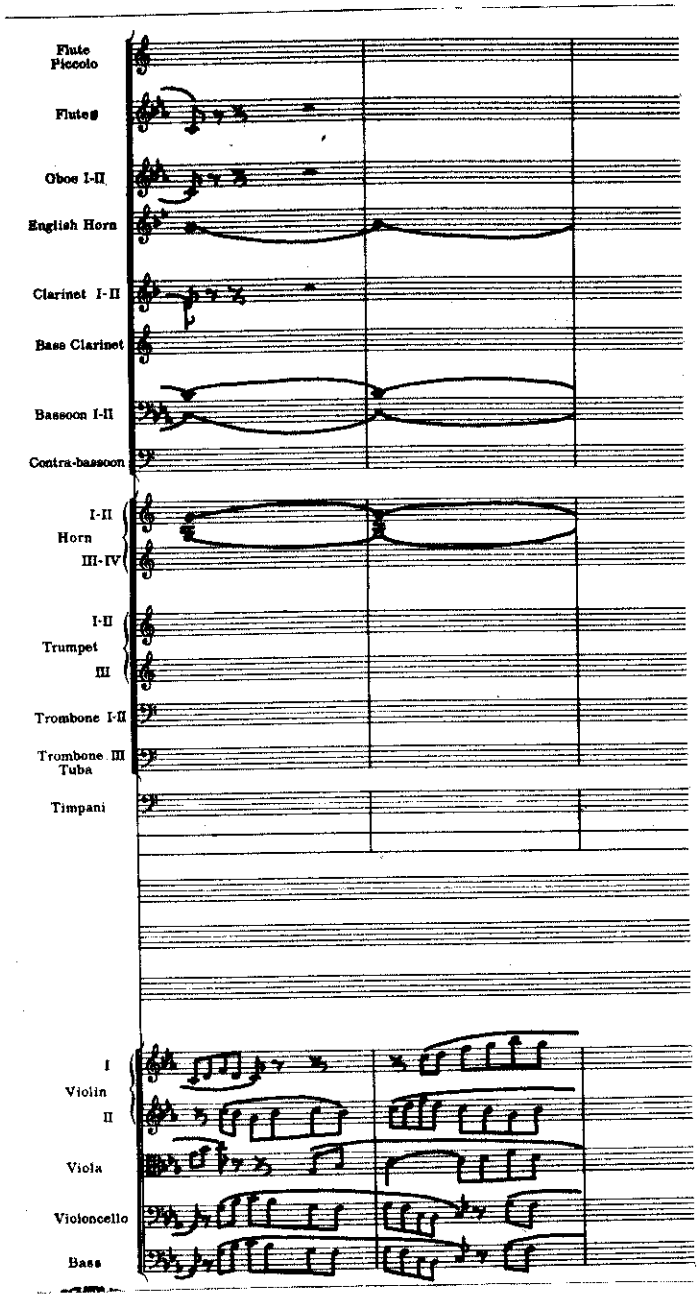

Fig. 34--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5, first movement, measures 111-112.

He also uses organ-point with a chord-stream (see Figure 28) and with more than one chord-stream:

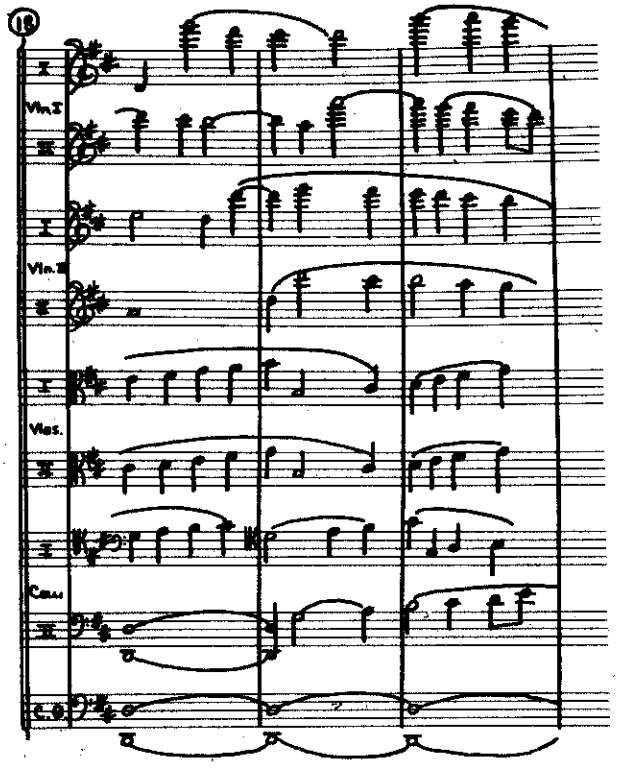

Fig. 35--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5, fourth movement, measures 273-277.

The next logical step toward a more complex polytonality is a process known as "elaboration of the pedal." A simultaneous hearing of two harmonies exists when the pedal, instead of being a single tone, is a chord or ostinato figure.[24] When it is broken into rhythmic patterns and decorated by other tones, it often attains thematic significance. In the following example, the pedal is B with A and E added as decoration:

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[24]Walter Piston, op. cit., p. 50.

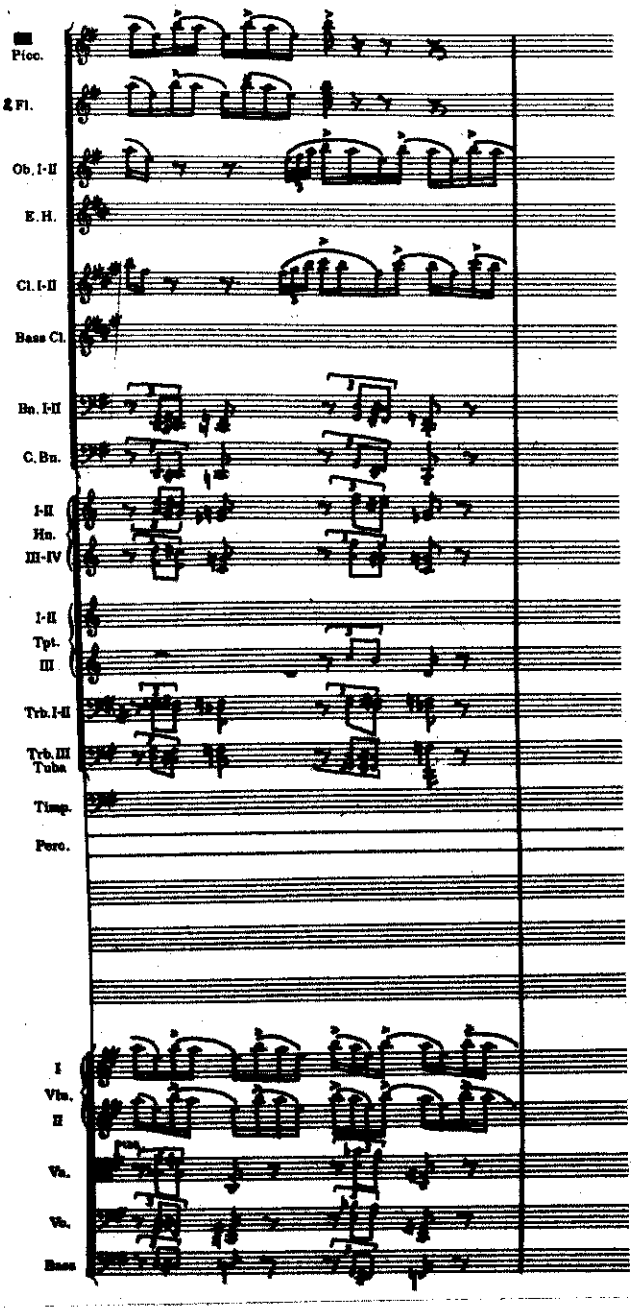

Fig. 36--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, first movement, measures 142-143.

Another device Vaughan Williams employs in his quest for polytonality is counterpoint. "As a rule Vaughan Williams' discord is entirely functional and arrives through

vigour and directness in the contrapuntal texture."[25] The counterpoint itself is not the point in question here, however. This topic could easily be subject matter for a complete study in itself. Instead, the harmonic effects produced by counterpoint are more in keeping with the purpose of this study, although counterpoint itself is the more important of the two aspects, as Walter Piston explains:

> It is unavoidable that counterpoint should make chords, but one should appreciate the fact that here the harmony is a by-product of more important considerations.[26]

And, to further complicate the situation, "the melodic threads of the contrapuntist have become composite streams of harmony, and these streams may approach and recede, coalesce or clash, just as did the individual parts of polyphony."[27] Gerald Abraham has a very apt explanation of the evolution of counterpoint up to its present use by Vaughan Williams and his contemporaries:

> Thus an evolutionary cycle has completed itself. The single part multiplied gave us polyphony. Polyphony, gradually crystallizing, produced the homophony of Beethoven and Schumann and has finally solidified into a single "thick" part--though that of course, is only

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[25]Percy M. Young, Vaughan Williams (London, 1953), p. 35.

[26]Walter Piston, op. cit., p. 51.

[27]George Dyson, The New Music (London, 1924), p. 69.

> one of a number of simultaneous developments. But evolution brings matters back, not to their starting point, but to another point in the spiral immediately above it. The single part has come back, but as a chord-line instead of a line of single notes. And evolution continues. The next step is a counterpoint of these thickened out melodies, and it has already been taken by practically every contemporary composer.[28]

The following examples show the many ways in which Vaughan Williams uses counterpoint, both single line and chordal. He writes counterpoint involving two lines:

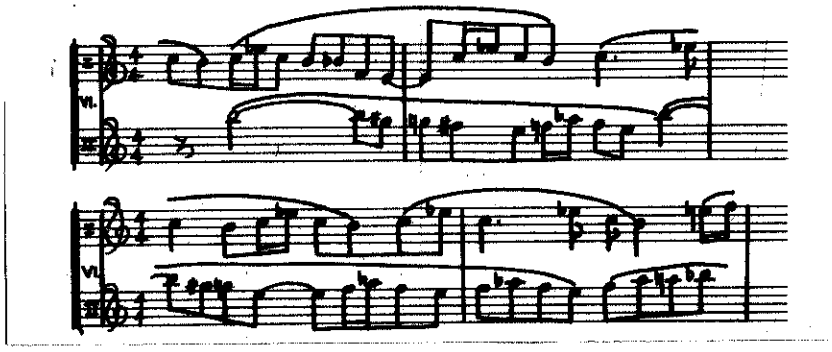
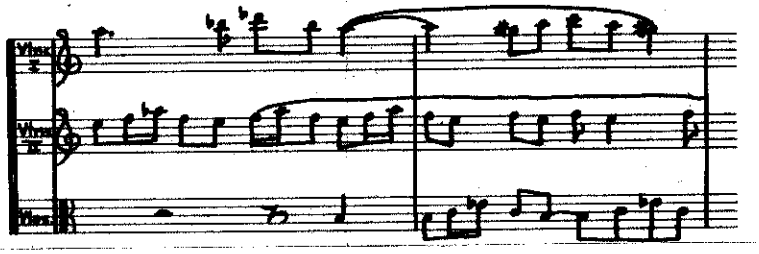


Fig. 37--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, fourth movement, measures 4-7.

three lines:



[28]Gerald Abraham, op. cit., p. 51.

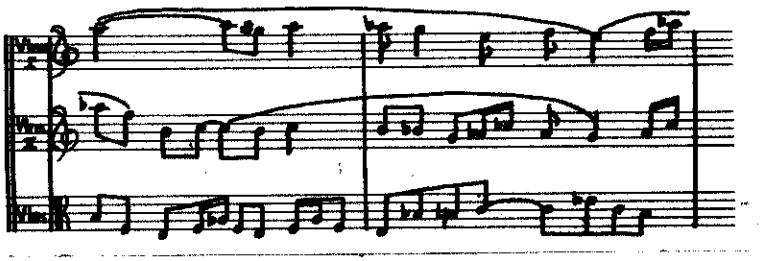


Fig. 38--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 6, fourth movement, measures 9-12.

and four lines:

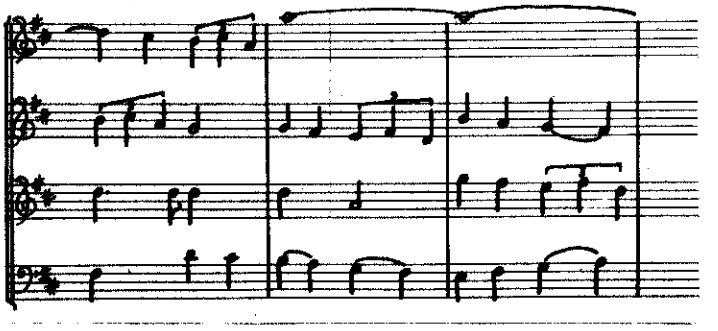


Fig. 39--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 1, first movement, measures 330-332.

He combines a melodic line with a chord-stream:

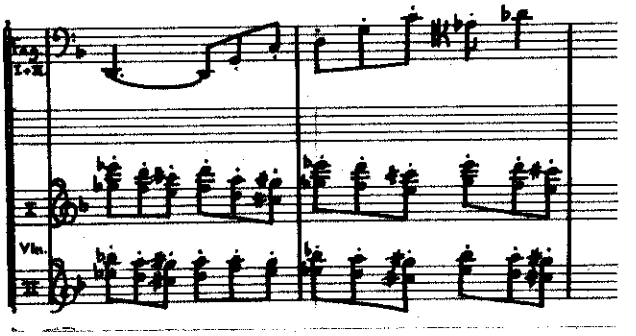


Fig. 40--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 4, third movement, measures 223-224.

and he also combines chord-streams:

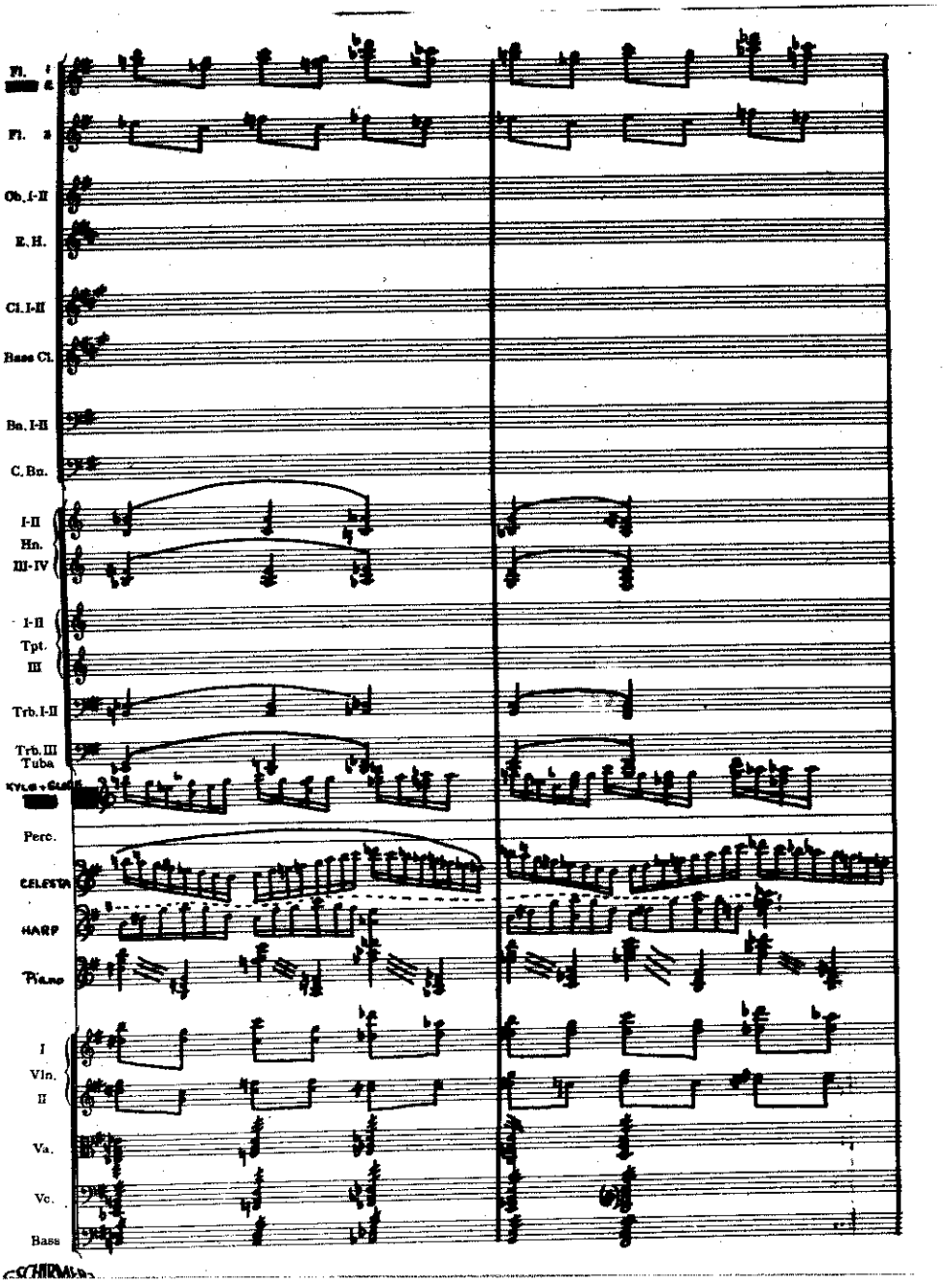


Fig. 41--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 7, second movement, measures 46-47.

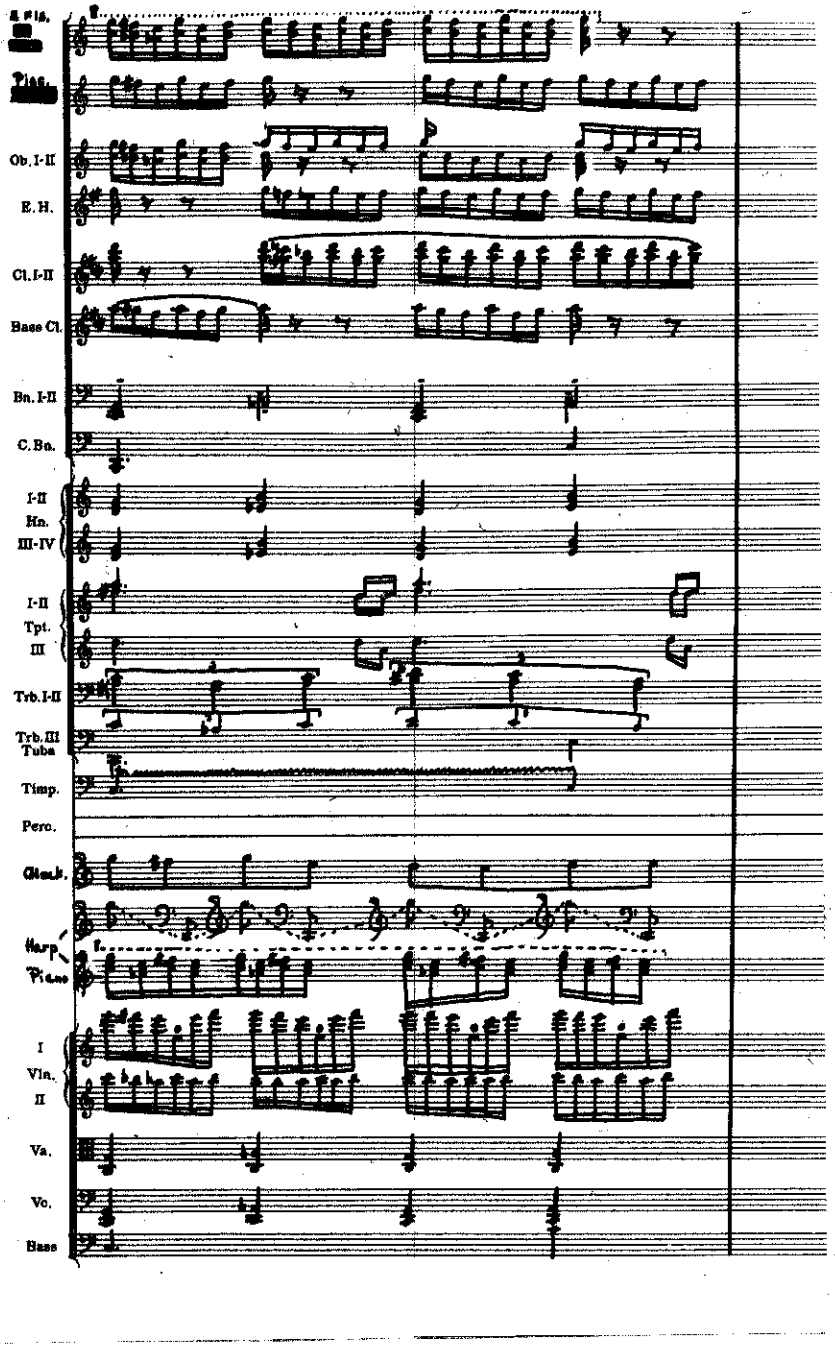


Fig. 42--Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 7, first movement, measure 120.

The above devices characterize Vaughan Williams' harmonic style. It has been shown how folk song, which is

his principal melodic working tool, affects his harmonic usage, by resulting in parallelism. Counterpoint, used in conjunction with parallelism, produces dissonance. All of these devices are employed when Vaughan Williams writes in a polytonal vein, but polytonality is not necessarily the goal of these devices. They are used singly and in combination to produce some of the harmonic effects found in Vaughan Williams' symphonies.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Ralph Vaughan Williams was afforded the very best of musical training in his early years. His family wealth made it possible for him to study with some of the outstanding composers, theorists, and instrumentalists of the day, both at home and abroad. Attendance at some of the best schools in England fostered close association with gifted, hard-working students who later became noteworthy musical minds in their own right. Part of this experience had a profound influence on Vaughan Williams, but he always maintained certain idiosyncracies and goals:

> 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" up one's sleeve.[1]

It was found that the chordal make-up of Vaughan Williams' symphonies is principally triadic. The remainder of the chords (or simultaneous vertical sonorities resulting from the movement of his parts) are seventh chords (mostly secondary sevenths, with or without homogeneous intervallic

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[1]Ralph Vaughan Williams, Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects (London, 1953), p. 144.

extensions), chords built in superposed fourths, so-called "added-note" chords, and random sonorities. The traditional chords (triads and seventh chords) are used both in a traditional and a non-traditional manner. In the manipulation of the other chords, one finds that Vaughan Williams has a certain affinity with some of his English contemporaries.

The root movement in the symphonies, owing to extensive use of parallelism, consists principally of movement by the interval of the second. Vaughan Williams' "passion" for the flatted (minor) seventh, in both melodic and harmonic writing, his simultaneous use of major and minor thirds and his liking for the modes (other than major and minor) make the tonality in the symphonies difficult to classify. His modulatory processes also defy classification in terms of traditional analysis, owing to the "free" juxtaposition of keys, without much regard for cadence.

The harmonic devices employed by Vaughan Williams, such as organ-point, "elaborated" organ-point, counterpoint (both linear and chordal) and other forms of polytonality which are more obvious than organ-point and counterpoint (multiple key signatures being one) help give the symphonies their characteristic sound.

Percy Young summarizes a few aspects of Vaughan Williams' harmonic style:

> Consecutive fifths are the rule and not the exception; counterpoint, invertible when you would, unconscious of dissonance; diatonic sevenths, unresolved, de rigeur; emancipation from the tawdry annoyance of German, French, and Italian sixths; melodies whimsical in tonality and metre; and in case of doubt, virtuous rows of major and minor triads whose presence spells modulation without tears.[2]

In the main, Vaughan Williams has invented nothing, but he has given a new and more ample significance to existing properties of musical tradition.

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[2]Percy Young, Vaughan Williams (London, 1953), p. 176.

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