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## ABSTRACT

Benjamin Britten, Herbert Howells, and  
Silence as the Ineffable in  
English Cathedral Music

John-Bede Pauley

Silence's expressive potential came to the fore in twentieth-century arts and letters as never before. Its role in Christian theology and spirituality has a much longer history, but by the beginning of the twentieth century, its expressive potential had not been significantly recognized in liturgical choral music. This study examined the relationship between twentieth-century musical silence and the expression of silence as the ineffable in Anglican choral music (referred to as English cathedral music or ECM) of the middle of the twentieth century. The *oeuvres* of Benjamin Britten and Herbert Howells, two composers successful in both secular and liturgical repertoires and prominent in mid-twentieth-century ECM, were analyzed.

This study examined perceptions and expressions of silence in areas of thought and creativity closely related to ECM: Anglican theology, twentieth-century music, and twentieth-century literature. It found that twentieth-century Anglicanism had an ethos of restraint about expressing silence, but the High Church wing (closer to Anglicanism's Catholic roots) was more open to expressing silence as the ineffable than the Evangelical wing. Howells's High Church background and Britten's Evangelical background help account for Howells's interest and Britten's lack of interest in silence as the ineffable. This difference between Howells and Britten also became apparent by examining the silence-related literature they selected or avoided. Howells's *oeuvre* thus became the focus of the remainder of the study.

Howells's perceptions of, and techniques for expressing, silence as the ineffable—some of which are unique to him—were identified and compared with the perceptions and techniques of important continental composers interested in silence: Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Anton Webern, and Olivier Messiaen. This study analyzed Howells's more direct expressions of silence in several secular works before analyzing the more nuanced expression of silence in his ECM.

Benjamin Britten, Herbert Howells, and  
Silence as the Ineffable in  
English Cathedral Music

by  
John-Bede Pauley

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Music  
Durham University  
2013

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## Acknowledgements

This work, including its deficiencies, is mine. But I am happy to list those who have helped along the way. I am grateful to the faculty, staff, and students of the School of Music at Indiana University (IU) and the Music Department of Durham University (Durham). Most notably, I extend my thanks to Bennett Zon, my thesis supervisor. Among the other mentors, colleagues, and supporters who have helped in the realization of this project are J. Peter Burkholder (IU), who offered words of encouragement and helpful ideas at the beginning stages of this study; fellow scholars of British music at IU, Chris Holmes and Alison Mero; and Karen Nichol, Departmental Administrator (Durham). My gratitude also to Anastasia Scrutton (Keele University) and Helen Deeming (Royal Holloway, University of London) for helpful comments on early drafts of this thesis; to all the scholars at St. Chad's Senior Common Room—including, notably, Sara Maitland, whose splendid book on silence was published while I was at Durham—who supplied ideas from other disciplines as well as thoughts on my project that both challenged and encouraged; and to the two examiners for the *viva voce* exam, Timothy Day and Max Paddison, who offered helpful comments and suggestions for post-submission clarifications. And for giving me the opportunity to sing (Thursdays and Sundays during term) much of the music studied in this work, I thank the Chapel Choir of University College, Durham from 2006 through 2008, especially the choir director, Chris Jacklin.

I am very grateful to those who provided invaluable help in archival research, locating difficult-to-find scores and manuscripts, and sharing their expertise in the areas of silence, English cathedral music, and the lives and works of Benjamin Britten and Herbert Howells. For access to choral performance libraries to examine scores, my thanks to Anthony Cleeve, Durham Cathedral Choir Librarian; Tim Jones, Choir Librarian of St. Paul's Cathedral, London; and to Jason Walsh, Durham Cathedral Choir lay clerk. I am also grateful to Timothy Day for sharing thoughts from his research on recordings of English cathedral choirs, to James O'Donnell, Organist at Westminster Abbey, for helpful conversations on choral music in general and its role in the daily life of one of England's important choral foundations, and to James MacMillan for many productive conversations on music and theology. Though my research on Kenneth Leighton's role in twentieth-century English cathedral music did not find its way into this project, I express my thanks to the Special Collections staff of the Edinburgh University Library and to Josephine Leighton, Kenneth Leighton's widow, for making Leighton's manuscripts available for study. I thank those who offered thoughts in the area of musical silence: Jenny Doctor (University of York), Katharine Ellis (Royal Holloway), Carol Harrison (Durham), Nicky Losseff (University of York), Stuart Sim (Northumbria University), and Berndt Wannewetsch (Aberdeen University). For my research on Benjamin Britten, I am much indebted to Nicholas Clarke and all the staff of the Britten-Pears Foundation who provided the



opportunity for many productive hours examining original documents in that collection. For support, sharing expertise, and locating manuscripts related to my research on Herbert Howells, I thank Paul Andrews; Jonathan Harrison, St. John's College, Special Collections Librarian; the Herbert Howells Trust for an award to support travel for research; Peter Horton, Reference Librarian at the Royal College of Music; Christopher Jeens, Gloucester Cathedral archivist; the staff of the Rowe Music Library, King's College London; and Joseph Wisdom, St. Paul's Cathedral, Librarian.

I was blessed with much gracious hospitality that made extended research trips possible. My thanks to my Benedictine confreres at Ealing Abbey; my Benedictine confrere at Osmotherley, Fr. Damian Humphries of Ampleforth; the Britten-Pears Foundation, Aldeburgh, England; and the Dominican friars at Cambridge University. Others I thank for facilitating my work are the staffs of the CSB/SJU libraries and Information Technology Services, particularly Janine Lortz, Interlibrary Loan librarian. I add my appreciation to Jeremy Borum for his fine engravings of passages from music scores and to Alisa White for helpful suggestions on unlocking the mysteries of word documents.

I have been, and continue to be, blessed with patient and understanding colleagues in the Music Department of the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University (CSB/SJU). Very helpful as well has been the support and encouragement of the CSB/SJU administration. To all of them, I offer my deep appreciation.

Finally, I express my gratitude to Abbot John Klassen for permitting me to undertake this course of study and to my monastic confreres for keeping the cycle of prayer going "for confreres away at school." I thank as well my family, my parents, my siblings, and brother-in-law for their encouragement, and my nieces for their reminder that life moves on regardless of a doctoral thesis.

### Statement of Copyright

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## Introduction

This thesis examines the expression of silence as the ineffable in the mid-twentieth-century English cathedral music (ECM) of Benjamin Britten and Herbert Howells. This research shows that musical silence played a restrained yet significant role in British music of the era and an even more restrained role in ECM. It shows that Howells worked within that restraint to express silence as the ineffable in both the secular and sacred works of his *oeuvre*. It shows that though Britten was capable of expressing silence as the ineffable, he was not interested in developing that aspect of silence in his *oeuvre*. This thesis thus situates Howells as a contributor to an important twentieth-century musical development, both in ECM and in twentieth-century music in general.

The ineffable is defined as that which “cannot be expressed or described in language; too great for words; transcending expression; unspeakable, unutterable, inexpressible.”<sup>1</sup> Though twentieth-century writers and artists expressed an interest in silence to a degree as never before, including silence as the ineffable, silence is neither a major characteristic of Britten’s and/or Howells’s *oeuvres*, nor of twentieth-century ECM. But this is the period through which silence in ECM passed from being expressed rarely and by means of a limited range of techniques to being explicitly acknowledged and expressed by means of a wide array of compositional techniques. Understanding silence in this transitional period and how the transition occurred means analyzing the ECM *oeuvres* of Britten and Howells, the two major contributors to ECM in the middle of the twentieth century.

Though the latter part of this thesis explores a particular aspect of silence, namely silence as the ineffable, it begins by exploring silence in general, with its vast array of associations. This is partly because Western arts and letters have yet to develop language that can reliably distinguish between types of silence. This imprecision is a benefit where the expression is artistic and thus prefers polyvalence, allusion, and evocation rather than precise description. Since there was even less scholarly and philosophical reflection on silence in the first half of the twentieth century, Britten and Howells were more fully able to employ silence’s polyvalence. This thesis shows that Howells did this by expressing his perception of a non-theist ineffability in musical language that spoke to those who perceive the ineffable from a theist perspective. Silence’s polyvalence also allowed Howells to connect the relative silence or quiet of country landscapes—which quiet is an observable, physical fact of no metaphorical importance in itself—with the quiet of contemplative stillness.

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). “1. Incapable of being expressed or described in words; inexpressible. 2. Not to be spoken because of its sacredness; unutterable.” *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Random House, 1987). The ineffable is usually thought of as positive and therefore excludes understanding the unspeakable as associated with horror, such as the horrors of twentieth-century genocidal acts.

## Defining Silence?

Silence eludes definition. It “cannot be pointed to or defined. [It] is always just ahead of our critical discourse, seducing us to follow it just one step further in the attempt to catch it, but never there to be caught.”<sup>2</sup> Many dictionary definitions privilege silence’s negative qualities: the absence of sound, prohibition of speech, refusal to communicate.<sup>3</sup> But this avoids the many references to silence as capable of communicating, which makes it positive. Deborah Tannen’s and Muriel Saville-Troike’s collection of essays on silence dispenses with most dictionary definitions in the introduction since the very first sentence asserts that silence is a component of human communication.<sup>4</sup>

Though silence eludes definition, the concept of silence exists and does so with an enormous range of cultural and political significances. Therefore, Rachel Muers’s theological reflection on silence suggests it not be thought of “*as such* in abstraction” but in terms of “particular silences.”<sup>5</sup> Conceptualizing silence as particular silences that vary according to contexts and perceptions accounts for the array of philosophical speculations on silence. Though such speculation did not begin in earnest until the twentieth century,<sup>6</sup> there is now enough literature on the subject to identify a spectrum that runs loosely from bracketing silence,<sup>7</sup> which means ostensibly taking no notice of silence, to regarding it as having its own ontological existence.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Loevlie, *Literary Silences in Pascal, Rousseau, and Beckett* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 9. “Everyone thinks they know what [silence] means, but on examination it turns out that there is an enormous range of understanding.” Sara Maitland, *A Book of Silence* (Bodmin, Cornwall: Granta, 2008), 25. Cheryl Glenn’s exploration of rhetoric and silence devotes an entire chapter to “defining silence” without relying on dictionary definitions at all, many of which her study refutes. Cheryl Glenn, *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 9. “[T]here can be no such thing as a definitive work” on silence. Bernard Dauenhauer, *Silence, the Phenomenon and its Ontological Significance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), viii. Adam Jaworski, a sociolinguist, reaches the same conclusion from the perspective of his discipline, asserting a non-essentialist approach both to terms in his own field and to silence. Adam Jaworski, *The Power of Silence: Social and Pragmatic Perspectives* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1993), 29-34. Max Picard’s classic reflection on silence has many “Silence is ...” statements, but none of them claim to be definitions. Max Picard, *The World of Silence* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), xix-7. Stuart Sim’s *Manifesto for Silence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) also approaches the topic of silence without citing dictionary definitions.

<sup>3</sup> Nicky Losseff and Jenny Doctor, Introduction to *Silence, Music, Silent Music* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Deborah Tannen’s and Muriel Saville-Troike’s *Perspectives on Silence* (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex, 1985), xi.

<sup>5</sup> Rachel Muers, *Keeping God’s Silence: Towards a Theological Ethics of Communication* (Malden, Massachusetts: Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Before the twentieth century, silence was generally mentioned in relation to discussions of the sublime. “the silence of Ajax in the Underworld is great and more sublime than words (*Odyssey XI. 543 ff., at Perseus*).” *Longinus on the Sublime*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), 61. Vacuity, darkness, solitude, and silence are privations that contribute to a sense of delightful terror in Edmund Burke’s sense of the sublime. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 40, 71. Immanuel Kant regards silence as more eloquent than speech when confronted by the sublime, which involves a sense of being overwhelmed when “our concepts completely break down” Immanuel Kant, *Kant’s Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 1914), 110; Sim, *Manifesto*, 94.

<sup>7</sup> “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.” Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears & B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 89. Edmund Husserl proposes bracketing (“a certain refraining from judgment”) when faced with the futile effort of establishing a philosophical starting point. *The Essential Husserl: Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*, ed. Don Welton

## Two Levels of Silence: First-Level Silence.

This thesis regards silence as existing not “*as such* in abstraction” but as “particular silences”<sup>9</sup> that are experienced, perceived. This perception takes place on two levels. First-level silence has to do with whether silence is perceived as existing at all. Though these distinctions are not absolute, first-level-positive silence is the perception that silence exists in its own right, independent of sound; is perceived as pre-existing perception and continuing to exist after perception of it has ceased. Some writers even refer to silence as noumenal.<sup>10</sup> Silence is first-level-neutral if it is merely the absence of sound, a place-holder that can only be said to exist in the context of sound and has no existence unto itself. If silence is perceived as not existing at all, it is first-level negative. (See Table 0.1)

Table 0.1

|   | Negative                                  | Neutral   | Positive  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>First-Level Silence (perception of whether silence exists)</b> | True silence is perceived as not existing | Silence is perceived as existing only as the absence of sound | Silence is perceived as existing in its own right |

From the human, physiological perspective, there is no such thing as true silence. This was John Cage’s famous observation in the anechoic chamber at Harvard: the complete absence of sound means hearing one’s own nervous system and blood circulation.<sup>11</sup> Since human ears never experience silence, all silence is first-level-negative from the human perspective. Silence does not actually exist. What the human race experiences as silence is relative degrees of quiet. Indeed, writers on silence use the terms “silence” and “quiet” interchangeably (though the discussion in the chapter on silence in Scripture reveals a nuanced distinction between the two terms). This study’s discussion of silence is not silence but that which is perceived to be silence.

One can claim that all silence is first-level-neutral. This perspective generally describes silence as merely the absence of sound or as nothing but a place-holder. This is a view markedly

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(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 64. Karl Popper implies silence rather than launching into an infinite regression of essentialist definitions. *A Pocket Popper*, ed., David Miller (London: Fontana, 1983), 94-97.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-François Lyotard does not merely theorize about the unsayable and the formless, he joys in it for the sake of imparting “a stronger sense of the unrepresentable.” Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 81. Heidegger seems to regard silence as existing unto itself, though it is only authentic when it exists in dialogue with speech. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (London: Harper & Row, 1962), 208. Silence is “a complex, positive phenomenon” that even has “a certain preeminence” over discourse because it “prepares the way for discourse to appear and allots it room in which to appear.” Bernard Dauenhauer, *Silence, the Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), vii, 146. Silence is “a positive, a complete world in itself. Silence has greatness simply because it is. It *is*, and that is its greatness, its pure existence.” *The World of Silence* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Muers, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Stan Link, “Much Ado About Nothing,” *Perspectives in New Music* 33:1/2 ((Winter - Summer 1995), 242, 254.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth Silverman, *Begin Again: A Biography of John Cage* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 117.

different from that expressed by writers who regard silence as first-level-positive and refer to the power, the qualities, and/or the character of silence. Many no doubt agree with musicologist Stan Link that silence only seems “like a stimulus or phenomenon even when it isn’t.”<sup>12</sup> Link claims “we ... determine and define silence for ourselves.”<sup>13</sup> Where “the modus operandi of sound is perceptual, the saliency of silence is in thought. Silence is where *we* are, not where it is.”<sup>14</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelly, for example, identified silence and solitude in relation to his experience of the sublime on gazing at Mont Blanc.

And what were thou [Mont Blanc], and earth, and stars, and sea  
If to the human mind’s imaginings  
Silence and solitude were vacancy?<sup>15</sup>

A difficulty in regarding silence solely or primarily as first-level-neutral is that once one allows perception to overrule the physiological fact that true silence does not exist to human perception, why should that perception limit itself solely to silence that is first-level-neutral? Silence can also be perceived as first-level-positive, existing unto itself. It is no surprise that the most significant philosophical reflections on silence come from phenomenologists, those who are “content with describing the phenomena without asking what connection to an external reality those experiences might have.”<sup>16</sup> Once silence is regarded as what one experiences it to be, both first-level-neutral silence and first-level-positive silence are possible.

### **Second-Level Silence.**

Second-level silence has to do with the quality of one’s experience of silence. If one experiences silence as pleasant, it is second-level-positive. If unpleasant, it is second-level-negative. If one takes no notice of silence, it is second-level-neutral. An example of second-level-positive silence would be consciously to enjoy the quiet of the countryside after a long and noisy journey. The awkward silence in a tense conversation would be a second-level-negative experience of silence. Second-level-neutral silence encompasses silences of which one takes no notice—turning off the radio without thinking of doing so in order to focus on reading an engaging novel, for example—and silences perhaps noticed but experienced as neither positive nor negative, such as the silence of commuters reading newspapers and magazines on a train, though such a silence could easily shift to positive or negative, depending on how one reacts to it.

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<sup>12</sup> Link, “Much Ado,” 242.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Mont Blanc,” *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Neville Rogers, vol. II: 1814-1817 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 80.

<sup>16</sup> Steven Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism from Rousseau to Foucault* (Phoenix, Arizona: Scholargy Publishing, 2004), 43-44.

Once one notices silence as having an existence and quality of its own (first-level-positive) it is difficult to imagine that it will be perceived as neutral for long. It inevitably becomes tinged with either positive or negative associations: relishing the peace and quiet that allows one to read or reflect (second-level-positive) or longing for conversation, hoping the silence will soon end (second-level-negative). That a neutral silence can rarely stay neutral for long means perception of silence as first-level-positive only really includes second-level-positive and second-level-negative. So, first- and second-level-positive silence will sometimes be referred to simply as positive silence. First-level-positive, second-level-negative silence will sometimes be referred to simply as negative silence. First-level-neutral silence (silence as a mere placeholder) and second-level-neutral silence (one takes no notice of silence) are effectively the same thing and will be referred to simply as neutral silence.

To summarize, this thesis makes no further reference to first-level-negative silences because silence is perceived as existing and because this thesis follows those writers who approach silence from a phenomenological perspective. Neutral silence is silence of which one takes no notice in the moment. On perceiving silence as if it has its own qualities and characteristics (first-level-positive), it inevitably becomes tinged with either negative associations (second-level-negative) or positive associations (second-level-positive). (See Table 0.2)

Table 0.2

|  | <b>Negative</b>                                  | <b>Neutral</b>  | <b>Positive &amp; Positive</b>                                       | <b>Positive &amp; Negative</b>                                       |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <b>First-Level Silence (perception of whether silence exists)</b>        | True silence is perceived as not existing        | Silence is perceived as existing only as the absence of sound                                       | Silence is perceived as existing in its own right                    | Silence is perceived as existing in its own right                    |
| <b>Second-Level Silence (the quality of one's experience of silence)</b> | That which does not exist cannot be experienced. | <b>Neutral</b> only: That which is not noteworthy is experienced neither positively nor negatively. | <b>Positive:</b> Experiencing silence as beneficial and/or pleasant. | <b>Negative:</b> Experiencing silence as harmful and/or threatening. |
| <b>Abbreviated term</b>  |  | <b>Neutral</b>  | <b>Positive</b>  | <b>Negative</b>  |

### **On Narrowing the Scope of Silence to Contemplative Stillness**

\*\*\*It might be suggested that this thesis could avoid referring to silence in general, with its vast polyvalence and ambiguity, and focus instead on one kind of silence, using a term such as contemplative stillness. Part of the response to this suggestion is stated above in the observation that artists (including Britten and Howells) prefer metaphor, ambiguity, and polyvalence rather than limiting the range of possibilities for perceiving and interpreting their work. As the following pages

show, it is fairly clear that Howells did not perceive contemplative stillness in the same way as those who take part in the liturgy from the perspective of Christian faith. Moreover, every individual who listens to Howells's music from a Christian perspective will have his or her own sets of associations with silence, including some who find contemplative stillness rather frightening, others who associate stillness with nothing at all, and still others who have a superficial understanding of contemplation.

Another reply to the suggestion that focusing on the concept of contemplative stillness rather than silence would make things clearer is in the fact that even narrowing the focus to contemplative stillness involves ambiguity. Contemplative stillness can be neutral in the sense that one stills one's thoughts as a means to an end. In this instance, contemplative thoughts or perceptions are the focus, not the silence. But contemplative stillness can also be positive silence when it is perceived as part of a contemplative, mystical experience because words and thoughts fail, leaving only the silence of the contemplative mind.

The word "silence" in the opening chapters of this thesis is, in fact, much broader in scope than in the closing chapters. The musical, theological, liturgical, and literary contexts discussed in subsequent chapters necessarily limit the range of possible association with silence in the ECM of Britten and Howells. But retaining the term "silence," even within a contextual hermeneutic, retains some of silence's polyvalence and ambiguity, which are the very characteristics that attract composers such as Britten and Howells.

### **Defining "English Cathedral Music."**

ECM is that body of choral literature written primarily for Anglican liturgical services from the Tudor era on. It is primarily Anglican, though composers and musicians from other traditions and with no religious backgrounds have also contributed to this repertoire.<sup>17</sup> ECM exists beyond England and in worship communities other than cathedrals. Much of the repertoire written in the late Victorian period was written with schools and parish churches in mind more than cathedrals.<sup>18</sup> And two composers, Thomas Tertius Noble and Healey Willan, though educated in England, devoted much of their careers as composers and musicians to serving parish churches in North America, Noble as organist and choirmaster at St. Thomas's Church, Fifth Avenue, New York, and Willan as precentor at the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene in Toronto, Canada. Therefore the words "English" and "cathedral" must be understood flexibly when referring to ECM. But this repertoire

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<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Temperley, "Cathedral Music," in *The Athlone History of Music in Britain: The Romantic Age 1800-1914*, 171-213 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988): 210-213. The Roman Catholic William Byrd, for example, composed for both Anglican and Roman Catholic liturgies. And the twentieth-century revival of the Tudor masters, which transformed "national perceptions of our musical history and heritage" (Patrick Russill, quoted in Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* [Bridgend, Wales: Seren, 2006], 36), was thanks in great part to another Roman Catholic musician, Richard Runciman Terry. *Ibid.*, 172. John Tavener is an Orthodox Christian.

<sup>18</sup> Temperley, "Cathedral Music," 172.



comes primarily from English composers and is made up for the most part of “those two elaborate types of composition, the ‘Service’ and the Anthem, which are the outstanding features of [Anglican] Cathedral usage in contrast to that of Parish churches which is ordinarily of a simpler and more congregational character.”<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the term “heritage” is best applied to ECM<sup>20</sup> if it is understood to include a few characteristics that generally remain constant regardless of changes in stylistic periods. The ECM heritage has developed, and generally maintained, certain characteristics as a response to its liturgical role and the fact that it draws from scriptural and Christian texts, including the language of the *Book of Common Prayer*. One such characteristic, directly related to silence as the ineffable, is the fact that ECM is more likely than secular music to express or refer to the ineffable. Arguably, all music is already about the ineffable because it communicates without being translatable into language.<sup>21</sup> All music is also associated with the ineffable because its immateriality “has been interpreted as a warrant of its ability to reach the transcendental realm,”<sup>22</sup> which is generally associated with the ineffable. But ECM (and all music associated with religion) is more likely than secular music not only to be the ineffability of all music but to strive to represent or allude to the ineffability of the divine.

Also characteristic of ECM are restraint and sobriety as well as ECM’s association with the distinctive rhetorical style of the *Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>23</sup> ECM composers are generally perceptive about ECM’s liturgical role, which calls for reticence and tends to avoid virtuosic display lest it detract from the focus on the liturgical action. This quality of restraint in liturgical music in general tends to have a particularly strong emphasis in Anglican liturgy and spirituality, a characteristic that is discussed in chapter one. In spite of the characteristics of sobriety and restraint, however, ECM is not meant to be nondescript. Many works from the ECM repertoire are very well crafted, demand professional skill by the performers,<sup>24</sup> and can often stand on their own as concert

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<sup>19</sup> Edmund H. Fellowes, *English Cathedral Music from Edward VI to Edward VII* (London: Methuen, 1941), v. For a thorough study of music in the Anglican parochial context, see Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Fellowes, *English Cathedral Music*, 10-14. Robert Saxton also suggested the term “heritage” rather than “tradition” at the Musical Modernism in Britain Study Day, 26 April, 2008, at Oxford University, sponsored by the Royal Musical Association.

<sup>21</sup> George Steiner, *Language and Silence. Essays 1958-1966* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), 65. Music is “the silence of words, just as poetry is the silence of prose.” Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 139.

<sup>22</sup> Jan Christiaens, “Sounding Silence, Moving Stillness: Olivier Messiaen's *Le banquet céleste*,” in Losseff, *Silence, Music*, 53.

<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Temperley, “Anglican and Episcopalian Church Music,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, (London: Macmillan, 2001), 663.

<sup>24</sup> “[T]here has never been lacking,” writes Edmund Fellowes, if a bit idealistically, “a plentiful supply of men and boys well qualified for the skilled task of singing music which is often of an elaborate and difficult character.” Fellowes, *English Cathedral Music*, 10.

pieces. This tension of aspiring towards high creative standards while avoiding attention is one of the characteristics of ECM many find appealing.

Another musical characteristic of ECM has to do with timbre. Until the very end of the twentieth century, ECM was generally written with the timbre of men-and-boys choirs in mind. The fact that the treble lines were sung by boys rather than women has generally been regarded as influencing the way composers wrote for the repertoire.

Early- and mid-twentieth-century British composers had a sense that to contribute to ECM was to write for, and uphold the standards of, a particular repertoire.<sup>25</sup> Successful ECM composers—those who have received more than one commission, for example, or whose works continue to have a place in choral services—chose to engage in a dialogue between their own musical voices and what they perceived to be this distinct body of music with its own conventions and limitations, while sacrificing the standards and musical integrity of neither. As Kenneth Leighton put it, the

composer needs above all a sense of purpose within society, and this can in my experience be found in the field of church music and in the field of music for young people and for amateurs. Here certain limitations are necessarily imposed, but music thrives on limitations, and the rewards more than compensate for the restrictions.<sup>26</sup>

When Howells and Britten wrote ECM, they knew they were not simply adding works to the repertoire but were contributing to its organic development. This would have been all the more apparent where it was a question of contributing to a commonly agreed upon characteristic of the repertoire, such as writing for boys' voices rather than women's or expressing the ineffable by means of musical silence.

### **Why Britten and Howells?**

Of the many ECM composers of the twentieth century, this study concentrates on only two: Britten and Howells. They are two composers whose most enduring ECM works—most of which are still performed often enough to be considered standard works of ECM repertoire<sup>27</sup>—were written mostly from the 1940s through the 1950s, a period in which ECM moved from a Victorian/Edwardian idiom into a greater openness to twentieth-century musical influences.<sup>28</sup> Other composers contributed to this development. But mid-twentieth-century ECM was largely what these two composers decided to make it. During this period, Howells wrote “Like as the Hart” (1941) and

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<sup>25</sup> *The Musical Times* 67 (April 1, 1926): 305; H. C. Colles, “Dr. Colles on Amateurs’ Responsibility,” *The Times* 30 September 1935; Edmund Fellowes, *English Cathedral Music*, 10; Jeremy Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 257-58.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth Leighton, “Composing Today,” in *Twenty British Composers*, ed. Peter Dickinson (London: Chester Music, 1975), 8.

<sup>27</sup> John Patton and Steve Taylor, *A Century of Cathedral Music, 1898-1998: A Comparison with Previous Music Surveys* (Winchester: J. Patton, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> Erik Routley, *Twentieth Century Church Music*, (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1966), 55.

the three most popular of his Evening Services: King's College, Cambridge ("Collegium Regale," 1944), Gloucester ("For the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, Gloucester," 1946), and St. Paul's Cathedral, London ("For St. Paul's Cathedral," 1951).<sup>29</sup> In the same period, Britten wrote *A Ceremony of Carols*, Op. 28 (1942); *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Op. 30 (1943); the "Festival Te Deum in E, Op. 32" (1944); "Hymn to St. Peter, Op. 56a" (1955), and, just before Britten effectively abandoned ECM, "Jubilate Deo in C" (1961). It is also in this period that the twentieth-century's interest in silence's role in music becomes more apparent and more widely appreciated, which contributed to a shift in ECM's approach to silence.

Howells was much more prolific in contributing to ECM than was Britten. Moreover, the two effectively exchanged places concerning their contribution to ECM at about the same time. During the 1940s and 1950s, Britten, though not a prolific composer of ECM, wrote his most important contributions to the repertoire and might conceivably have made ECM a major part of his *oeuvre*. His contribution to ECM began to taper off during the 1950s, however. Conversely, Howells's emphasis moved during the 1940s from secular music to ECM. On balance, then, it was Howells who renewed "musical fitness and strength within the Anglican church" following World War II.<sup>30</sup> That Howells made this a well thought-out focus of his career is attested to by his underlining of the following remarks in his copy of Sir Thomas Armstrong's *Church Music Today* (an "occasional paper" published in 1946 for the Church Music Society):

[Very serious] is the general lack of creativeness and vitality affecting the art of church music as a whole; We should modify old forms freely, but with a sense of fitness; There is certainly a danger in thoughtless and irresponsible change, and in the confusion of styles that results [from] the attempt to satisfy a merely temporary or partisan desire for novelty and variety.<sup>31</sup>

Though Britten wrote relatively little music specifically for liturgical use, his entire career made considerable use of the "distinctively Christian heritage of plainsong and hymn tunes in a wide variety of works covering the whole of his career,"<sup>32</sup> and he wrote many works that set Christian texts or were based on Christian themes. Nonetheless, Britten seems to have left no statements that specifically reflect an awareness of ECM as a repertoire with its own sense of organic development.

For Howells it is otherwise. He made several statements in addition to the 1946 statement, quoted above, on the qualities of ECM. In 1917, at the beginning of his career, he celebrated securing the post as a young assistant organist at Salisbury Cathedral in a letter to Harold Darke, then organist of St. Michael's Cornhill. He wrote in terms that indicate he saw ECM—both the repertoire and the performing forces in cathedrals—as a continuing musical heritage. In his opinion, it was a

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-7.

<sup>30</sup> Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Centenary Celebration* (London: Thames Publishing, 1992), 166.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Armstrong, *Church Music Today* (Church Music Society, 1946), quoted in Palmer, *Centenary*, 166.

<sup>32</sup> Graham Elliott, *Benjamin Britten: The Spiritual Dimension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 74.

musical heritage that had fallen into disrepute in many cases at that point in time.<sup>33</sup> Though his post at Salisbury Cathedral was soon to end because of ill health, and though the direction of his career took him away from a focus on ECM for several decades, there is already a sense of dedication to ECM at the outset of his career. He wrote of the “good, hard, sound musical work” called for in ECM and his joy at the opportunity to contribute to this repertoire.

Over two decades later, as Howells was returning to a focus on writing for the ECM repertoire, the more seasoned and experienced composer spoke in a 1943 radio broadcast with greater clarity of the importance of ECM as an “abiding line of development”<sup>34</sup> in British music and as having its own musical characteristics. Because Howells’s comments were delivered to a wide audience in a radio broadcast, he did not embark on a detailed or exhaustive examination of ECM’s musical characteristics. But the few comments about the qualities of this repertoire are very important for the purposes of this study since they refer to ECM’s stillness and quiet *gravitas*. These comments are explored more fully in the final chapter.

### **Outline of this Study.**

Chapters one through three, comprising the first part of this thesis, explore perceptions and expressions of silence in areas that provide a context for understanding silence in twentieth-century ECM. Chapter one explores silence’s role in twentieth-century Anglicanism. Chapter two surveys musicological research and reflection on silence. Chapter three gives an overview of important twentieth-century composers in whose *oeuvres* silence plays a significant role. Because substantial research on silence in twentieth-century literature already exists, there is no need for a chapter devoted to that topic in the first part of this thesis. The research on silence in twentieth-century literature is summarized in chapters five and six in relation to the poets and writers important to Britten and Howells, respectively. All of the part-one chapters reveal an increased interest in silence in twentieth-century arts and letters. The chapter on Anglican liturgy and spirituality reveals that Anglicanism embraced silence’s expressive potential but with a sense of restraint. This helps establish that if, as in the case of Howells, a composer chose to express musical silence in ECM, it will not be obvious, which calls for analysis sensitive to nuance. Chapter one also presents the difference between Low Church and High Church Anglicanism in appreciating and understanding silence, a difference that is important in contrasting Britten’s and Howells’s perceptions of silence because of their backgrounds, Britten having been raised Low Church, Howells, though not raised High Church, nonetheless educated and trained in the more liturgically-oriented perspective of cathedral liturgies.

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<sup>33</sup> Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend, Wales: Seren, 2006), 50.

<sup>34</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 395.

Chapter two surveys musicological literature on silence and identifies two general perspectives: an approach that sets up taxonomies of musical silence and one that resists them. Writers who have followed the former approach have identified types of silence solely for the context of the study in which these types of silence appear or as preliminary efforts at establishing a taxonomy broad enough to account for all types of musical silence in all stylistic periods. The taxonomy-resisting approach takes issue with a lack of dramatic force that apparently results from identifying and following typological lists of musical silence. This study opts for the taxonomic approach and develops a broad taxonomy of musical silence that is helpful as a first step in analyzing all types of musical silence. Chapter three looks at the importance of silence in the *oeuvres* of several prominent twentieth-century composers, most notably Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Anton Webern, and Olivier Messiaen.

The second part of this thesis examines the responses of ECM's two major mid-twentieth-century composers to the twentieth-century interest in silence as the ineffable. It establishes that this phenomenon is not reflected in Britten's music and is in Howells's. Though Britten certainly deserves a prominent place among twentieth-century composers, this thesis shows that Howells, who rarely attracts notice in scholarly accounts of twentieth-century music, was in the company of important twentieth-century composers where the development of musical silence is concerned.

Chapter four establishes Britten's and Howells's perspectives in relation to the themes discussed in chapter one concerning silence and Anglicanism. It shows that both Britten and Howells were raised as Anglicans, continued to perceive themselves as Anglican throughout their lives, and were influenced by Anglicanism's perception of silence. This chapter also presents Britten's Anglican identity as Low Church and Howells's as fairly High Church, which helps account for their different perspectives on silence.

Chapter five begins with a brief overview of silence in twentieth-century literature and discusses the importance of silence as the ineffable in several poets whose texts Britten set to music. It finds that Britten ignored or avoided this aspect of these writers' *oeuvres*. This is particularly striking in the case of T. S. Eliot, a poet for whom Britten had a very high regard and in whose *oeuvre* silence is very important. This discussion provides the final body of evidence that Britten did not direct his artistic expression to silence as the ineffable, which shifts the focus of the remainder of this study entirely to Howells. Howells did mine the riches of silence in the poetry of de la Mare and other poets throughout his career. This is the subject of chapter six.

Chapter seven applies observations made in chapter three (on silence in the *oeuvres* of Debussy, Ravel, Webern, and Messiaen) to Howells's perspective on, and musical techniques for expressing, silence. This chapter establishes that Howells's expression of silence plays a role in the twentieth-century's interest in, and development of, techniques for expressing musical silence.

Indeed, the explicitly-recognized role of silence in the late-twentieth-century ECM of composers such as John Tavener, Jonathan Harvey, and James MacMillan was due in part to Howells's contribution to silence's role in ECM.

The final chapter analyzes silence in particular works of Howells's ECM. Some of Howells's ECM silences are already part of what Howells identified as characteristics of ECM, such as the quality of restraint. But he also developed his own techniques for expressing silence as the ineffable, one of which this study describes as his ineffability chord. Though Howells used the ineffability chord rarely, he used it consistently enough to establish it as one of his contributions to musical silence in twentieth-century music in general and twentieth-century ECM in particular.

## Chapter One Silence in Anglican Liturgy and Spirituality.

### Introduction.

This chapter shows that Christianity's perception of silence has evolved from mostly negative or neutral to guardedly positive. This perception is guardedly positive because Christianity has a deep ambivalence about silence. In Anglican Christianity up to and through the first half of the twentieth century, this ambivalence leaned towards restraint where silence is concerned, discouraging pronounced, explicit expressions of silence. This produced a creative tension for ECM composers influenced by twentieth-century music's interest in silence. To establish the basis of Anglicanism's view of silence, this chapter examines texts related to Anglican liturgy: the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible, the *Book of Common Prayer*, twentieth-century official statements on liturgy, and hymnody. The Old Testament, read daily in the liturgy, gives a mostly negative view of silence. But this is offset by a slight shift away from the negative in New Testament readings and by prayers in the *Book of Common Prayer* that favor quiet and stillness as positive. Two important twentieth-century official statements on liturgy express an entirely positive view of silence, even suggesting the importance of silence as the ineffable in the liturgy. Silence plays a limited role in hymnody, but silence as the ineffable in a popular hymn, "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind," fostered a positive perception of silence as the ineffable in twentieth-century Anglicanism.

A discussion of early-twentieth-century Anglican spirituality further supports the theme of Anglicanism's ambivalence about silence. Anglicanism's close identification with patristic/monastic spirituality—which this discussion shows continued into the twentieth century—resulted in a perspective that did not encourage theological/spiritual reflection on silence as the ineffable. Catholicism's post-medieval mystic literature developed an important theology of silence as the ineffable, but this development has had little influence in Anglicanism. Nonetheless, Anglicanism's patristic/monastic roots have fostered liturgical stillness that is open to the ineffable. This stillness, more subtly expressed than silence in much Catholic mystical literature, is apparent in Anglicanism's ethos of the way Scripture and prayers are read in the liturgy and thus provides a basis for ECM's development of silence.

Finally, this chapter discusses silence and Churchmanship. It shows that Low Church Anglicanism (which has much in common with Protestant theology) was significantly less interested in silence as the ineffable than High Church Anglicanism, which emphasizes Anglicanism's Catholic roots. Chapter four relates this research to Britten's Low Church identity and to Howells's High Church identity.

These themes draw on “unlikely material for a work of musicology, but all of which [sheds light on] a complicated social and spiritual context.”<sup>1</sup> Some of the research might seem specialized, especially since neither Britten nor Howells seems to have had religious faith. But as chapter four shows, Anglican identity was very important to Britten and Howells. Moreover, though neither composer was a theologian, both were theologically literate by the standards of the general population, which accounts for an awareness of Anglicanism’s perceptions of silence in their lives and *oeuvres*.

Some research in this chapter might seem historical in the sense that it describes a cultural inheritance apparently irrelevant to new intellectual currents at the time. Christianity, however, proposes a first-century world-view in dialogue with every succeeding era, all of it cumulative. Anglicanism has been one of the Christian traditions that has vigorously encouraged this perspective, especially in the twentieth century, thanks in part to the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement. Chapter four’s discussion of Britten’s and Howells’s cultural, intellectual identification with Anglicanism shows that they appreciated Anglicanism’s sources not as historically irrelevant but as informing everyday contemporary life. Both composers loved the language of the Authorized Version of the Bible and the *Book of Common Prayer*<sup>2</sup> and regarded it not as quaint and archaic but as integral to the poetic and religious imagination of contemporary England. They drew un-self-consciously from this language in selecting texts. Britten’s Cantic II and his church parables were meant to be performed in churches, not concert halls, which effectively made them a modern development of the medieval mystery play. He regarded England’s “wonderful lyric tradition of poetry,” much of it Christian in content, as part of his identity as a twentieth-century composer.<sup>3</sup> Religious texts comprise the second largest category of texts he set to music.<sup>4</sup> Howells’s ECM was not a contribution to a heritage industry but a commitment to ECM’s continuing, organic development. Moreover, this chapter shows the prevalence of Anglican identity among Britain’s educated classes in the first half of the twentieth century, which made identifying with the Anglican ethos all the more natural for Britten and Howells. None of this diminishes the importance to ECM of twentieth-century developments in intellectual history. But such is the complexity of twentieth-century Anglicanism’s intellectual and spiritual context that regarding its sources as historically irrelevant would result in a skewed understanding of what silence meant and how it inspired.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15. Kerry McCarthy employs the same quote as well as a similar methodology in her study of William Byrd’s *Gradualia in Liturgy and Contemplation in Byrd’s Gradualia* (London: Routledge, 2007), xii.

<sup>2</sup> John A. Florance, “Benjamin Britten’s Religion,” Britten-Pears Foundation, Aldeburgh, 7; Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Centenary Celebration* (London: Thames Publishing, 1992), 166.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Britten, *Britten on Music*, Paul Kildea ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 211.

<sup>4</sup> Boris Ford, ed., *Benjamin Britten’s Poets: The Poetry He Set to Music* (Manchester, England: Carcanet, 1994), xiii.



## Christianity and Silence.

As between speech and hearing, on the one hand, and silence on the other, Christianity privileges the former. The Genesis story (shared with Judaism and Islam) establishes a striking contrast with the ancient Greek and Norse myths. Prometheus stole fire from Olympus and gave it to humans. Fire is a symbol of speech or language since both fire and language have the power “to illumine or consume, to spread and to draw inward.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Montaigne assigned to Homer the rank of God himself because, by his language, he produced several deities by his authority.<sup>6</sup> The God of Genesis, however, freely gives Adam the right to name the beasts, to break the silence of the wild. Humans have the power of naming not by theft or trickery. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism “are highly verbal narrative faiths, their adherents speak directly with their God ... All three religions see the creative capacity of language as ‘innocent’ rather than as arrogant; as divine rather than demonic.”<sup>7</sup> Relevant to a study of silence in ECM is the reference to Christ, the second Person of the Trinity made incarnate, as the Word, the *Logos* (not the Silence) made flesh (John 1:14). The Christian vocation involves silencing all sounds and voices other than the divine voice,<sup>8</sup> but the divine voice is thought of as being heard.

[I]n theology everything stems from hearing, hence, from *auditus Verbi*, whereas in gnosis everything is the intellectual self-production of the individual. This is the real reason why the only authentically Christian heresy is gnosis: the pretension of a self-redemption of man who does not need the intervention of ... God. A theology that is based, as is its nature, on Revelation, cannot but be first of all listening, hence *humilitas*.<sup>9</sup>

Accounts of the early Church are about *kerygma*, “preaching of the good news about [redemption],”<sup>10</sup> rather than silent meditation. Little wonder that it is almost a cliché to name silence as one of the characteristics that distinguishes Eastern religions from Christianity. “Poor little talkative Christianity,” as one of E. M. Forster’s characters put it in *A Passage to India*.<sup>11</sup>

But Christianity is a religion of paradox. Among the paradoxes are the doctrine of the Trinity (God being three persons yet one nature);<sup>12</sup> the Incarnation (God transcending creation while existing

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<sup>5</sup> Steiner, *Language and Silence*, 56.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Maitland, *A Book of Silence*, 120.

<sup>8</sup> “Be still then, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10, Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer: 1662 Version (Includes Appendices from the 1549 Version and Other Commemorations)* (London: Everyman’s Library, 1999), 382.

<sup>9</sup> Archbishop Forte (Archbishop of Chieti-Vasto since 2004 and president of the Italian Bishops’ Commission for the Doctrine of the Faith, Proclamation and Catechesis), <http://www.zenit.org/article-28150?l=english>, accessed 27 January 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Campbell Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 10.

<sup>11</sup> E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), 141.

<sup>12</sup> “There is but one ... God ... And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons.” Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer: 1662 Version (Includes Appendices from the 1549 Version and Other Commemorations)* (London: Everyman’s Library, 1999), 552.

in, and subject to, it);<sup>13</sup> and so on. Another paradox is that logos-centric Christianity develops an important role for silence. Christian theology includes apophatic mysticism that asserts the ineffability of God as being best expressed by silence or saying what God is not. (Cataphatic theology, by contrast, concerns “what we affirm about God”<sup>14</sup> by commenting on divine activity in creation.) This paradox offers a creative tension that finds expression in such terms as St. John of the Cross’s “silent music.”<sup>15</sup>

Though silence has a place in Christianity, its development has been relatively slow, and it has even been ignored or regarded with suspicion in some Christian traditions. Evelyn Underhill, the early-twentieth-century Anglican scholar of mysticism and spirituality, articulates uneasiness about too much silence in Anglican worship. She approved of silence in liturgy as an ordered response to the priest’s prayer. But “wordless prayer could never by itself suffice to express [the] Church’s full life of adoration” because it would leave “too much of our human nature behind [and deprive the individual soul of] the education which it should receive by and through the common vocal worship of the Church.”<sup>16</sup> She also expresses reservations about wordless prayer by itself because “it is only appropriate to the spiritually mature.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Silence and World-Views Ancient and Modern.**

Important in understanding the evolving role of silence in Christian texts and spiritualities is the distinction the music historian Quentin Faulkner makes between what he calls the world-conscious view and the self-conscious view. The former was dominant in the ancient world, the latter in the modern era,<sup>18</sup> but both have been present in every era,<sup>19</sup> including the twentieth century. Characteristics of the world-conscious or primitive<sup>20</sup> world-view relevant to this study are the belief that divine teachings and laws are given not to individuals but to entire peoples; the individual finds meaning by being integrated into his tribe/community; and an emphasis on symbolism, myth, ceremony, and ritual. Relevant characteristics of the self-conscious stance are that science supplies or eventually will supply answers to the working of the universe; the individual finds meaning as an individual member of a democratic polity that best guarantees the right to pursue happiness; and an

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<sup>13</sup> “The Son . . . took Man’s nature.” Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 165.

<sup>15</sup> St. John of the Cross, *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans., E. Allison Peers (Whethampstead, U.K.: Anthony Clarke, 1964), 2:27.

<sup>16</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *Worship* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 95-96

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Quentin Faulkner, *Wiser Than Despair: The Evolution of Ideas in the Relationship of Music and the Christian Church* (Westport, Connecticut; London: Greenwood, 1996), 2.

<sup>19</sup> The Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah, and Socrates exemplify the self-conscious view in generally world-conscious cultures since they maintained certain principles as nobler and more valid than adherence to the prevailing norms of the local community. Faulkner, *Wiser Than Despair*, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Faulkner dismisses pejorative associations with the word “primitive” since primitive cultures are potentially as capable as modern cultures of fostering stable and humane societies. Faulkner, *Wiser Than Despair*, 2-3.

emphasis on organization, efficiency, and the idea of progress. Primary benefits of the world-conscious stance are security and knowing one's place in the community and the cosmos. Primary benefits of the self-conscious view are a sense of freedom, initiative, and adventure. The very title of one of Anglicanism's primary texts, *The Book of Common Prayer* (not individual prayer), is an indication of the importance of the world-conscious view in Anglicanism, even in the twentieth century.

An appreciation of silence as it relates to experiences of the ineffable did not flourish until the self-conscious perspective became dominant since that world-view emphasizes the spirituality of the individual. A group can refer to God as ineffable, but there is no certainty that every member of the group would simultaneously perceive the ineffable. Since the self-conscious world-view lies at the heart of the Protestant Christian traditions, one would expect significant developments in the spirituality of silence in those traditions. But the self-conscious world-view (and thus Protestantism) favors reason, *ratio*, and *logos* over symbolism, mystery, and what the ancients referred to as *simplex intuitus*, "the ability of 'simply looking' ... to which the truth presents itself as a landscape presents itself to the eye."<sup>21</sup> Theologies/spiritualities of silence fare better in the Orthodox and Catholic traditions, including Anglicanism's High Church wing.

But Anglicanism's penchant for silence differs from Catholicism's. As is discussed below in the sections on spirituality, Anglicanism's reliance on the theological perspective of the patristic/monastic era meant fostering theological reflection mostly in relation to liturgical prayer rather than private prayer, hence less of an incentive to develop a strong spirituality of silence, which is best experienced individually. Post-medieval Catholicism produced mystical literature that explored silence in isolation from liturgical prayer (though not dismissing the importance of liturgical prayer). This difference is important in understanding how twentieth-century High Church Anglican composers tended to approach silence and how Roman Catholic composers tended to approach it.

An example of the distinction between the world-conscious and the self-conscious perspectives as they are manifested in the Catholic and Protestant traditions respectively is the difference in how one would perceive what Catherine Pickstock refers to as the liturgical stammer: the repetition of words in liturgy. The Protestant, self-conscious world-view would view it as linguistic redundancy. Pickstock claims liturgical reformers of the Roman Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council in the 1960s reflected a more Protestant, *logos*-centric than Catholic perspective in their aim to return to what they perceived as the simple Eucharistic *agape* of the primitive Church. They overlooked the fact that "earlier liturgies only existed as part of a culture that was itself ritual

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<sup>21</sup> Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), 11.

(ecclesial-sacramental-historical) in character.”<sup>22</sup> This culture valued the “shock of defamiliarizing language,”<sup>23</sup> an example of which is the “apophatic liturgical ‘stammer’” and oral spontaneity and ‘confusion’”<sup>24</sup> that silences linear logic’s rational discourse. An important example of a liturgical stammer that was undoubtedly too ancient and too scriptural to be deleted by the Vatican II reformers is the *Sanctus* of the Eucharistic liturgy. An additional insight into how silence can be perceived not by literal silence but by words spoken, such as the three-fold *sanctus*, is supplied not by a theologian but by the twentieth-century playwright Harold Pinter, who is known for using silence in his plays.

There are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is being employed. This speech is speaking of a language locked beneath it. That is its continual reference. The speech we hear is an indication of what we don’t hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smokescreen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness ... One way of looking at speech is to say it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness.<sup>25</sup>

The language “locked beneath” the angels’ “holy, holy, holy” in the Isaiah passage is Isaiah’s language of nakedness that is heard when the angelic stammer and flow of words stops and Isaiah says “Woe is me!” One way of reading the “holy, holy, holy” of the angels is as a sort of merciful buffer against Isaiah perceiving his spiritual nakedness too quickly. As repeated in the threefold *sanctus* of the Eucharistic liturgy, both the word, *sanctus*, and the defamiliarizing effect of its seemingly pointless repetition represents the unutterable, the ineffable. This is why so many centuries of Catholic liturgical practice followed the threefold *sanctus* with the priest’s silence in the next part of the Mass. That this liturgical stammer is so central to the Western liturgical tradition, and that this tradition is retained by Anglicanism, in spite of the less liturgically-minded perspective of Low Church Anglicanism, helps explain Anglicanism’s ambivalent acceptance/wariness of silence.

### **Vetero-Testamentary Silence.**

Many take for granted that Anglicanism is characterized by a sense of restraint, which would include not over-emphasizing silence. Rather than take Anglican reserve for granted, this thesis marshals evidence that establishes the textual/theological bases of this characteristic. This section begins that project by exploring perceptions of silence in the Old Testament.

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<sup>22</sup> Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 176.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Harold Pinter, “Between the Lines: An Account of a Speech to the Seventh National Student Drama Festival in Bristol,” *Sunday Times*, 4 March 1962, quoted in John Russell Brown, *Theatre Language: A Study of Arden, Osborne, Pinter and Wesker* (London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1972), 18-19.

The Authorized Version<sup>26</sup> and the Miles Coverdale Psalms<sup>27</sup> are the only translations of Scripture at issue in discussing Anglicanism of the first half of the twentieth-century. These were effectively the only translations many Anglicans in this period would have known at all.<sup>28</sup> Along with the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, these translations have been very important in forming the cultural consciousness of England and the entire Anglophone world from the seventeenth century to today.<sup>29</sup>

The methodology used in analyzing silence's role in these texts is to gather scriptural passages that use forms of the words "quiet," "silence," and "stillness" and categorize them as neutral (silence as a mere placeholder and not noticed), first- and second-level negative (perceiving silence as existing unto itself and experienced as unpleasant), or first- and second-level positive (perceiving silence as existing unto itself and experienced as pleasant). This methodology does not account for all silence-related passages, particularly where forms of "silence," "quiet" or "stillness" are not used. For example, Ezekiel 3:26 mentions silence without using the word by stating that Ezekiel shall be struck "dumb, and [no longer] a reprover." This methodology also calls for a degree of subjective interpretation. But it gathers a significant collection of passages, many of which are clear in associating silence with either positive or negative experiences, so that prevailing perceptions become apparent.

Appendix 1.1 lists silence-related vetero-testamentary (Old Testament) passages. When all of these texts are taken together, the general perspective on silence in the Old Testament leans towards the second-level-negative<sup>30</sup> and the neutral.<sup>31</sup> Silence as first- and second-level-positive is rare.<sup>32</sup> Where there are vetero-testamentary accounts of ineffable experiences of God, they are

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<sup>26</sup> Generally referred to as the King James Version in the United States.

<sup>27</sup> The Coverdale Psalter was the officially authorized translation of the Psalms for the first Book of Common Prayer of 1549. Stella Brook, *The Language of The Book of Common Prayer* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1965), 148).

<sup>28</sup> It was not until 1966 that Convocations and Church Assembly of the Church of England authorized versions of the Bible other than the Authorized Version. R. C. D. Jasper, *The Development of the Anglican Liturgy, 1662-1980* (London: SPCK, 1989), 231.

<sup>29</sup> By Act of Parliament, the Authorized Version and the Coverdale Psalter were incorporated into the *Book of Common Prayer* of 1662 and were thus the "authorized" texts for worship in the Church of England. David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2003), 488. This version of the BCP remained the only official service-book of the Church of England for over three hundred years, maintaining its effective dominance throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 764; Long, *Music of the English Church*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), 21.

<sup>30</sup> For example, silence as a metaphor for death: Psalm 115:17 ("The dead praise not thee, O Lord: neither all they that go down into silence"); silence as punishment for evil: Jeremiah 8:14 ("the Lord our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord"); silence as privation: Lamentations 3:28 ("He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne [the yoke of suffering] upon him").

<sup>31</sup> Neutral silences include purely functional silences, such as King Eglon telling Ehud to keep silence until the courtiers have left (Judges 3:19) and the silence of the listening disciple, which is very important in biblical wisdom literature.

<sup>32</sup> A few passages suggest silence associated with an experience of God as positive: Habakkuk 2:20 ("the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him") and Zechariah 2:13 ("Be silent ... before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation"). But these passages are quickly followed by references to the sound of rejoicing and refer not to individuals but the entire people. This suggests the silence is a neutral silence for the sake of listening to

connected not with silence but with sound—with one exception, to be discussed presently. Also, encounters with the divine are generally by individuals whose sense of dread in the encounter means experiences of the ineffable, associated with silence or not, are preferably avoided. Less austere terms for silence such as “quiet” and “stillness” are generally associated in the Old Testament with positive experiences.<sup>33</sup> But these terms are not used in association with experiences of divine ineffability.

One vetero-testamentary near-encounter between an individual and God connects the usual dread awe with unusual silence. In I Kings 19:12, after Isaiah has experienced a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire, there is a still small voice. The author of this passage intended it to be taken as unique, a conceptual *hapax*, analogous to what Scripture scholars refer to as a *hapax legomenon*, the occurrence only once of a word in the works of an author or a single text. Only this once in the Old Testament is there an occurrence of a theophany that focuses on hearing rather than seeing and involves hearing at a very quiet level. This passage lists the wind, earthquake, and fire as the usual divine calling cards for the purpose of emphasizing how different this is: hearing rather than sight, extreme subtlety rather than overpowering force.

Several commentaries over the past half century support the interpretation of this passage as a strikingly new statement on silence.<sup>34</sup> A couple of commentaries from the first half of the twentieth century do not seem interested in the uniqueness of this theophany,<sup>35</sup> which indicates that if early-twentieth-century Anglicans consulted the commentaries referenced, they too might have passed over the enigmatic passage without much thought. But this particular reference to silence took on a life of its own in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because of John Greenleaf Whittier’s “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind,” discussed below.

The Authorized Version and the Coverdale Psalter subtly schooled the English-speaking world in the notion that vetero-testamentary silence tends to be neutral or negative; that experiences of the ineffable are permitted only to a few and come with immense responsibilities; and that quiet

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instruction so that the entire people can re-ground itself in the terms of its covenantal relationship with God. The subsequent act of worship is described in terms of sound, not silence.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Psalm 4:4 “Commune with your own heart and be still” and Psalm 23:2 “He leadeth me beside the still waters”.

<sup>34</sup> This theophany seems an admonition not to expect the spectacular “in breaking of Yahweh into history anticipated in the traditional liturgy of the cult with the accompaniments of storm, earthquake, and fire ...” John Gray, *I and II Kings: A Commentary*, 3rd ed. (S C M Press, 1977), 410. “That the Lord is not in the mighty wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but rather in the gentle whisper of the breeze is a lesson for the fiery Prophet.” Raymond E. Brown, R. Murphy, and J. Fitzmyer, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: G. Chapman, 1968), 195. This is an “enigmatic theophany in which traditional manifestations of divine presence ... are reduced to mere precursors of a mysterious ‘sound of fine silence.’” Raymond E Brown, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Chapman, 1993), 172.

<sup>35</sup> One commentator sees the contrast from dramatic to “calm” as a suggestion to the prophet that he needed to moderate his own violence in his conflict with idolatry. J. R. Dummelow, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (New York: MacMillan, 1909), 225. A 1928 commentary offers nothing more than two attempts to translate this enigmatic passage and a reference to another scriptural passage: “a still small voice, or ‘the sound of a light whisper’ (cf. Job 4:16).” Charles Gore, H. L. Leighton Goudge, Alfred Guillaume, ed., *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, Including the Apocrypha* (London: S.P.C.K., 1928), 263.

and stillness are safer concepts than the more austere concept of silence as long as they do not venture too closely to the ineffable.

### **Neo-Testamentary Silence.**

Neo-testamentary texts reflect a shift in the perception of silence from the negative column to the neutral. Indeed, there is not enough material in the negative column (see Appendix 1.2) to warrant a discussion of second-level-negative silence. The shift to the positive column is not dramatic, though the absence of references in the New Testament to the silence of death is a dramatic shift in its own right.<sup>36</sup>

The element of dread awe, whether connected with silence, continues into the New Testament and does so in very important passages, such as the appearance of the angel to Mary in Luke 1:29.<sup>37</sup> What follows these statements of a dread awe, of being “sore afraid,” is the reassurance to “fear not” or “be not afraid” (Luke 1:13, 30; 2:10; Matthew 17:7). This fact alone suggests a new dispensation in the relationship between God and humankind, which involves joining humanity to the divine through the Incarnation.<sup>38</sup> By means of the Incarnation, the divine becomes human and the human divine, so all who are made part of this body exist in the paradox of living a quotidian existence that is also *terribilis*, to be “sore afraid” in the presence of dread majesty and paradoxically to be on intimate terms with God as *abba*,<sup>39</sup> a familiar name for father. The dread awe of the Old Testament can no longer be quite so terrifying. If and when silence is associated with that sense of awe, then, it is likewise not so terrifying as in the Old Testament.

As the New Testament presents the beginning of the end of an unmitigated sense of dread awe when in the divine presence, it also presents the beginning of the idea that silence has to do with the mysterious, the ineffable. Though the “still small voice” in I Kings 19:12 points in this direction, the relevant neo-testamentary passages make the statement much more clearly. Romans 16:25, for example, refers to “the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.” (The Vulgate translation uses the word *taciti*, and some modern translations use the word “silence.”)

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<sup>36</sup> Greek thought, especially that of Plato, is an influence in neo-testamentary literature. The platonic concept of the divine was of one supreme, remote, being, even beyond being itself. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Silence: A Christian History* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 25-26. This view naturally encourages associations of the divine with ineffable silence.

<sup>37</sup> The appearance of the angel to Zechariah in the same chapter of the Lucan narrative (Luke 1:12) also records that that the angelic visitation was startling. Two more instances: A few verses after the Annunciation passage, the shepherds are “sore afraid” when the angels appear to them (Luke 2:9). The voice from the cloud at Jesus’s transfiguration causes the disciples to fall on their faces and to be “sore afraid” (Matthew 17:6).

<sup>38</sup> “[Y]e have received the Spirit of adoption ... The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God: ... and joint-heirs with Christ.” Romans 8:15-17..

<sup>39</sup> Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6.

### The Silence of St. Paul.

An important silence-related passage is St. Paul's II Corinthians 12:2-4. "I knew a man," writes Paul of himself, who "was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." It is as though Paul gathers the hints of silence as the ineffable in passages about Jesus<sup>40</sup> and Mary<sup>41</sup> and makes it dazzlingly apparent. Even here, however, the idea of actually perceiving anything by means of silence seems too novel, given the fact that nothing in all Scripture that predates Paul's account supports this notion (except the unusual "still, small voice" of I Kings 19:12). Paul therefore refers to the experience as hearing unutterable words rather than perceiving silence. Where Paul makes silence explicit is in his assertion that he must remain silent about what he heard, for it "is not lawful for a man to utter" these unspeakable words.

Because Paul records this experience of silence as the ineffable, it becomes part of Christian spirituality. But nothing in the New Testament suggests that Paul's experience is to become the norm.<sup>42</sup> This passage nonetheless hints that something new has been instituted<sup>43</sup> and merely awaits further development, which, in the light of subsequent Christian history, proves to be the case. If, as this passage hints, the new dispensation means one can experience the unutterable nature of the divine and live to tell about it, experiences of the ineffable are now part of Christian vocabulary.

The fact that II Corinthians 12:2-4 relates what cannot be related is a paradox that either invites the development of a tradition around silence and the ineffable or attempts to explain it as unique to the time and the person. The Orthodox, Catholic, and High Church Anglican theological perspectives developed the former view into the notion that silence is a form of divine communication. The Low Church tradition inclined to the latter view. Protestant commentaries claim that Paul's experience was unique to him and therefore not the basis for a theology of silence;<sup>44</sup> that it might best be regarded as a continuation of the signs and wonders unique to the early

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<sup>40</sup> Jesus's silence before Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:12-14) turns vetero-testamentary associations of silence with death on their head since the trial and crucifixion leads not to the silence of the tomb but to resurrection. All three synoptic Gospel accounts record Jesus' forty-day sojourn in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-2, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-2) for solitude and silence.

<sup>41</sup> The silence in the Annunciation passage (Luke 1:26-38) is the absence of objection typical in prophetic-call narratives. (Jeremiah 1:6; Joshua in Judges 6:15; and Moses in Exodus 3:10-14). After the Annunciation, all of the Gospel accounts record a striking silence on Mary's part after her *fiat mihi*, especially in light of her importance in the Christian narrative. The few remaining comments Mary makes are infrequent, almost laconic.

<sup>42</sup> While the New Testament does not go so far as to suggest that most Christians experience the ineffable, it suggests the Holy Spirit expresses the ineffable on their behalf, making "intercessions for us with groaning which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

<sup>43</sup> Paul's account is the only autobiographical ascension account in Jewish-Christian literature. Also unusual: Unlike Old Testament accounts, Paul hears rather than sees, is not called to bring back a message, and registers no fear. Bernard McGinn, "Communicating the Incommunicable: Mystical Ineffability from Origen to Catherine of Siena," Keynote Address at "Language and Silence—16<sup>th</sup> Annual Postgraduate Medieval Conference," University of Bristol, 26-27 February 2010.

<sup>44</sup> *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 1131.



Church;<sup>45</sup> and that it would therefore not apply to the post-apostolic Church.<sup>46</sup> This distinction is yet another indication of Anglicanism’s ambivalence concerning silence as the ineffable.

### **Silence in the Book of Common Prayer.**

Liturgy has helped develop silence’s role in Christianity by selecting and thus emphasizing scriptural texts related to silence as the ineffable. The Church of England’s liturgical text is the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP), which has existed in various versions authorized by Parliament. The BCP version in use at the beginning of the twentieth century was the 1662 BCP, “over ninety per cent of which was the book which Thomas Cranmer had crafted and got authorized in 1552.”<sup>47</sup> The BCP, like the Authorized Version/Coverdale Psalter, was a text that had been integral to English identity for several centuries, in use on a daily and weekly basis in the lives of many, and certainly at pivotal events and seasons in the lives of most, of the English population across those centuries. The 1662 BCP has also been required reading for degrees in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature along with the works of writers who include “Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton, together with the general advice that most of the corroborative books of the Bible” be included.<sup>48</sup> Even those who sought to “stretch” the 1662 BCP into something more Catholic<sup>49</sup> knew the texts of the 1662 BCP thoroughly.

Only one use of the word “silence” in the BCP is related to silent prayer. In “The Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests,” the congregation is given an opportunity for silent prayer: “the Congregation shall be desired, secretly in their prayers, to make their humble supplications ... for the which prayers there shall be silence kept for a space.”<sup>50</sup> But this silence is not intended to lead to a perceived experience of divine ineffability since it is meant to be rather busy with the silent making of humble supplications. Other than this one instance of silent prayer, the BCP passages that use the word “silence” are direct quotations from Scripture. This goes without saying where the incorporation of the entire Psalter into the BCP is concerned. Where Scripture passages were selected as lectionary readings or for inclusion in various rites of the BCP, however, they present a rather consistent use of the word “silence” as second-level-negative (see Appendix 1.3). I Peter 2:15,

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<sup>45</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1754), 673.

<sup>46</sup> This view is expressed by “cessationist” theologians such as Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1979).

<sup>47</sup> Colin Buchanan, “The Winds of Change,” in *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, 229.

<sup>48</sup> Paul G. Stanwood, “The Prayer Book as Literature,” in *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, 140.

<sup>49</sup> Not too long after the beginning of the Oxford Movement in 1833 and continuing into the twentieth century, those of the High Church and Catholic wing of the Church of England began “stretching and pushing the reformed liturgy of [the 1662 BCP] to be as similar as possible to the unreformed Tridentine rite of the Church of Rome.” Buchanan, “The Winds of Change,” 229, 231; Bryan Spinks, “The Prayer Book ‘Crisis’ in England,” in *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, 239-243.

<sup>50</sup> *Book of Common Prayer: 1662 Version*, (Everyman’s Library, 1999), 522.

for example (“For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”), which is experienced as second-level-negative by those put to silence.

Though the word “silence” in the Authorized Version/Coverdale Psalter tends to be connected with emotional and rhetorical intensity, the overall character of the BCP, regardless of whether the concept of silence is present, is not given to emotional intensity. It is famous for its “directness, simplicity, and harmony.”<sup>51</sup> Words and phrases the celebration of the liturgy causes to be repeated frequently present a sense of noble *gravitas* and restraint as the ideal of Christian living. For example, the general Confession, said daily at Evening Prayer, sets as the standard of Christian living “a godly, righteous, and sober life.”<sup>52</sup> This general air of restraint helps explain why “silence” in its first- and second-level-positive sense is more rare than words such as “quiet.” The word “silence,” which often carries a more intense connotation of silence than words such as “quiet,” is so rare in the BCP.

The BCP’s characteristic of restraint (and thus an avoidance of the more extreme word “silence”) also reflects the liturgical ethos of the early Church, so familiar to early Anglican theologians, including the compilers of the BCP, who distinguished themselves from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century continental Protestant Reformers by emphasizing the authority of early Church Councils and the Latin and Greek Fathers.<sup>53</sup> To quote two Church Fathers who address this characteristic of restraint in liturgical music, Clement of Alexandria states that liturgical music must be “austere and temperate.”<sup>54</sup> Basil of Caesarea, commenting on the harmonious melodies of the Psalms writes that “[I]f somewhere one who rages like a wild beast from excessive anger falls under the spell of the psalm, he straightaway departs, with the fierceness of his soul calmed by the melody.”<sup>55</sup> Quentin Faulkner’s study of music in the early church sums up the musical ideal as conceived by the early Church Fathers as noble.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Stanwood, “The Prayer Book as Literature,” 142.

<sup>52</sup> *Book of Common Prayer: 1662*, (Everyman’s Library, 1999), 84.

<sup>53</sup> William Haugaard, “From the Reformation to the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. S. Sykes, J. Booty, and J. Knight (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1988), 24; Henry Chadwick, “Tradition, Fathers and Councils,” in *The Study of Anglicanism*, 105. See also, Clifford Dugmore, *The Mass and the English Reformers* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1958), vii. On the Carolines’ synthesis of Patristic sources with fourteenth-century English and other spiritualities, see Martin Thornton, *English Spirituality: An Outline of Ascetical Theology According to the English Pastoral Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publications, 1986), 231-243.

<sup>54</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Paidagogos* 2, 4, quoted in Johannes Quasten, *Music & Worship in Pagan & Christian Antiquity* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Pastoral Musicians., 1983), 68.

<sup>55</sup> St. Basil of Caesarea, “Homily on the First Psalm,” in Oliver Strunk and Leo Treitler, ed., *Source Readings in Music History* (New York: Norton, 1998), 121-22.

<sup>56</sup> Quentin Faulkner, *Wiser than Despair: The Evolution of Ideas in the Relationship of Music and the Christian Church* (Westport, Connecticut; London: Greenwood, 1996), 68.

**Quiet in the Book of Common Prayer.**

Intense silence can be perceived as unsettling, even sinister. Sara Maitland’s book-length reflection on the many aspects of silence devotes an entire chapter to silence’s “dark side.”<sup>57</sup> Apparently, the word “silence” was regarded as too intense in the sixteenth century since it makes almost no appearance in the BCP. However, the BCP freely uses less intense silence-related words to connote first- and second-level-positive silence. One passage that refers to quiet as second-level positive is prayed on a daily basis. This frequency gives the passage (and thus second-level-positive silence) authoritative weight. The passage in question is the second collect of Evening Prayer. “Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that [we may] pass our time in rest and quietness.”<sup>58</sup>

Other appearances of forms of the word “quiet” in the BCP might not be spoken or heard as frequently, but to list them reveals that they appear in rites and prayers that cover many aspects of national and personal life. As the list in Appendix 1.3 indicates, quietness in the BCP is sought for the nation<sup>59</sup> and governance of the state,<sup>60</sup> for the Church,<sup>61</sup> as one of the qualities clergy are charged to maintain “among all Christian people,”<sup>62</sup> as a characteristic of a good marriage,<sup>63</sup> in illness,<sup>64</sup> and, in day-to-day life, in the tranquility of one’s soul.<sup>65</sup>

**Silence and Church of England Documents: 1922.**

Since the Authorized Version/Coverdale Psalter and the BCP present a somewhat ambivalent view about silence, the 1922 report, *Music in Worship*, commissioned by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York,<sup>66</sup> is a startling document. It not only explicitly mentions silence, doing so in terms that are entirely second-level-positive (well before the Roman Catholic Church’s statement on silence in the liturgy in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of 1963<sup>67</sup>), it makes these comments in connection with music:

[T]he value of silence in church services should be more generally known and considered by church musicians. A good silence is, to speech and to music, as a good frame is to a picture. Too prolonged a silence may easily defeat its end, but there should always be enough silence to direct the mental ear to the music itself. Silence can give heightened value to the meanings

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<sup>57</sup> Maitland, *A Book of Silence*, 80-115.

<sup>58</sup> *Book of Common Prayer: 1662*, (Everyman’s Library, 1999), 89.

<sup>59</sup> “For restoring Publick Peace at Home.” *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 538.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 305, 307.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 311, 317.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>66</sup> Church of England, Archbishops’ Committee on Music in Worship, *Music in Worship: Report of the Archbishops’ Committee on Music in Worship* (London, 1923).

<sup>67</sup> The Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, paragraph 30, states that an aspect of active participation by the people is to observe “a reverent silence.” Elizabeth Hoffman, ed., *The Liturgy Documents* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1991), 15.

of all utterance, especially all musical utterance. Besides this it tends to reverence and to a wholesome fear.”<sup>68</sup>

This statement expresses the typically Anglican wariness about silence that is too pronounced (“too prolonged”). It reinforces the fact that silence is polyvalent since it lists different ways in which silence can be perceived. Silence that directs the mental ear is the ascetical silence of the listening disciple encountered in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament and developed in the monastic tradition. This listening silence is fostered by silence that acts “as a good frame” or “fore and after silence.”<sup>69</sup> The 1922 statement also mentions silence as related to wholesome fear, which alludes to the scriptural instances that record a sense of unutterable awe when in the presence of the divine. This is important because without any preamble on Christianity’s ancient ambivalence about silence, the 1922 Commission simply makes the connection between silence and the ineffable and moves on. This awareness accords with the increasingly explicit appreciation of silence in arts and letters of this period.

No doubt the primary reason for mentioning silence in connection with “direct[ing] the mental ear” is to connect silence with the ascesis of listening. But the object of one’s listening in this statement is not liturgical texts but “music itself.” What the 1922 Commission came close to suggesting was that compositional choices in liturgical music can be worthy of focused attention just as the texts they set are worthy of reflection. Listening to the “music itself” would therefore involve asking such questions as why a composer uses this chord and not another, why a certain passage is sung only by the trebles, and so on.

It is difficult to determine whether the reference to silence’s ability to heighten the meaning of musical utterance applies solely to framing silence or embraces the concept of silence’s role within a musical work as well. The 1922 statement certainly leaves open the possibility of the latter. It is reasonable to assume the members of the 1922 Commission were familiar with the important role of silence in the *oeuvres* of Debussy and Webern. But the commissioners also knew—perhaps only subliminally—that proposing pronounced musical silence within ECM would not accord with Anglicanism’s wariness about pronounced expressions of silence.

### **Silence and Church of England Documents: 1951.**

The Anglican archbishops sought a revision of the 1922 report, which became a new report in its own right. The 1948 Committee (whose report was published in 1951) took as its main consideration “the music and worship in the ordinary parish church.” The explicitly stated emphasis

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<sup>68</sup> *Music in Worship* (1922),17. Curiously, this statement appears in the section entitled, “The Choice and Regulation of Music in Relation to Smaller Town and Village Churches with Slight Musical Resources.” It applies, however, to cathedral services as well.

<sup>69</sup> Dauenhauer, 9-16.

was congregational worship.<sup>70</sup> Silence plays a minimal role in this document because parish congregations had historically taken a more vocal role in worship.

Brief though the mention of silence is, it is affirmed and regarded as first- and second-level-positive (perceiving silence as existing in its own right and beneficial). “[M]usic,” the report states, “is by no means essential to worship; neither, indeed, is the spoken word. Many would agree ... that times of silence have brought them closer to God, and given them a deeper assurance of His presence, than those of the sung or spoken word.”<sup>71</sup> If silence can “give [one] a deeper assurance ... than [music can]” of divine presence, it can clear away sounds and thereby betoken, and leave room for an experience of, the ineffability of the divine. The next step would be to conclude that silence as the ineffable can play this role not apart from music or, as the 1922 report suggests, by framing music, but within it. This is a conclusion the 1951 report does not reach.

A final observation from the report has to do with its comment on the English cathedral service’s “gravity of style.” After quoting a Roman Catholic writer (unidentified) who takes issue with the “profound decadence of the religious spirit in musical composition [that was] worldly and theatrical” during the era of Haydn and Mozart, the 1948 Committee, almost with an audible sigh of relief, states that because the English cathedral service is “anchored to a Prayer Book in the vernacular, [it] preserves a gravity of style that never lost touch with the true tradition.”<sup>72</sup> The 1951 report affirms the 1922 report’s mention of liturgical gravity (“noble simplicity, an eloquent reticence, and a religious awe”<sup>73</sup>). Here is another indication that whereas Anglicanism was uncomfortable with pronounced silence, the quiet *gravitas* that stills the din of the worldly, the theatrical, and the anxious is central to Anglicanism’s ethos.

### Silence and Hymnody

In addition to the Authorized Version and the BCP influencing perspectives on silence, hymns can occupy a very important role in shaping the spirituality of many worshippers because they are “so eminently singable, so easily memorized, so popular, so varied and wide-ranging.”<sup>74</sup> The Latin maxim, *lex orandi lex credendi* (what is prayed shapes what is believed) can include as a corollary, *lex cantandi lex credendi*<sup>75</sup> (what is sung shapes what is believed).

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<sup>70</sup> Church of England, Archbishops' Committee on the Place of Music in Church, *Music in Church. A Report of the Archbishops' Committee on the Place of Music in Church* (Church Information Board: Westminster, 1951), vi.

<sup>71</sup> *Music in Church* (1951), 17. It is also worth noting what the report says about the opposite of silence, which is sound that makes a cacophony: “[U]nlike some secular music, in which restlessness and cacophony betoken an unsettled and uncertain age, church music should be the expression of strong faith and assurance.” *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>72</sup> *Music in Church* (1951), 66.

<sup>73</sup> *Music in Worship* (1922), 23.

<sup>74</sup> Long, *Music of the English Church*, 332.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Atwell, “The English Hymnal A Hundred Years On: The View from Primrose Hill,” <http://www.smvph.org.uk/music/the-english-hymnal.html> -- accessed December 2009.

The importance of hymnody in general is related to the importance of which hymnal is used. The 1906 edition of *The English Hymnal* was intended to be one of the major hymnals of the Church of England. *Hymns Ancient & Modern* remained the chief hymnal after *The English Hymnal* made its appearance,<sup>76</sup> but the latter hymnal was considered superior by “the more cultured and intellectual type of congregation” because of the excellence of both words and music.<sup>77</sup> Since both Britten and Howells were sensitive not only to excellence in music but also to excellence in poetic texts, it is safe to assume that when they reached for a hymnal, it was *The English Hymnal*. Too, Howells would have had a preference for *The English Hymnal* since his close friend and mentor, Ralph Vaughan Williams, was its editor.<sup>78</sup> The focus here is therefore on *The English Hymnal*.

The influence of Methodism, in which the hymns of Charles Wesley played an important role, meant the inclusion of a number of Wesley’s hymn texts in *The English Hymnal*. Noteworthy is the fact that though a constant characteristic of these hymn texts is their expression “of personal religious feeling and experience,”<sup>79</sup> none of them link this expression with silence, quiet, or stillness. This is another indication that Low Church Anglicanism, which is close to Methodism, tended to ignore silence as the ineffable.

Older hymns tend to be more objective in tone and were favored by the High Church wing. If silence is mentioned at all in these hymns, it is generally presented as neutral. The silence in the fifth-century “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,” for example, is for the sake of pondering nothing earthly-minded in order to be open to holy awe. But there is no indication that this silence refers to holy awe.

One of *The English Hymnal*’s recent hymns that involves silence is John Greenleaf Whittier’s “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind” (number 383 in *The English Hymnal*). It has the following: “O Sabbath rest by Galilee! / O calm of hills above, / Where Jesus knelt to share with thee / The silence of eternity / Interpreted by love.” Since Whittier was a Quaker,<sup>80</sup> it is natural that he inscribed into his text the Quaker view, which gives positive silence prominence, a development that occurred apart from either High Church or Low Church differences where silence is concerned.<sup>81</sup> The text’s inclusion in *The English Hymnal*, allied with the engaging quality of Hubert Parry’s hymn-tune, Repton, meant the hymn was popular and thus became an important catechesis (*lex cantandi*)

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<sup>76</sup> Long, *Music of the English Church*, 399.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Andrew Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music: From Gregorian Chant to Black Gospel* (Oxford, England ; Batavia, Ill., Lion Pub, 1992), 234; Donald Gray, D. (2005). “The Birth and Background of *The English Hymnal*,” in *Strengthen for Service: 100 Years of the English Hymnal, 1906-2006*, ed. A. Luff (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005): 3-5.

<sup>79</sup> Faulkner, *Wiser than Despair*, 164.

<sup>80</sup> Edward Wagenknecht, *John Greenleaf Whittier: A Portrait in Paradox* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 167-68.

<sup>81</sup> Daniel N. Maltz, "Joyful Noise and Reverent Silence: The Significance of Noise in Pentecostal Worship," in Tannen, *Perspectives on Silence*, 130.

on silence in twentieth-century Anglicanism. Whittier’s text makes one of the clearest statements one would hear in Anglican liturgy in favor of regarding silence as related to the ineffable. The “silence of eternity” is the silence of ineffability since eternity is a concept that eludes rational discourse, especially when used as a shorthand reference to the Christian *eschaton*. Another link between silence and the ineffable is in the ending of the hymn: “Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire, / O still, small voice of calm.” This is a reference to that rare silence-as-the-ineffable Old Testament passage at I Kings 19:12.

### **Defining Christian Spirituality and Mysticism.**

This part of the discussion is a development of the preceding sections on liturgical texts since liturgy is integral to Anglican spirituality.<sup>82</sup> But it discusses Anglican spirituality in contrast with post-twelfth-century Catholic spirituality. The latter also valued liturgy but produced spiritual literature less reliant on liturgy and that developed an important role for silence as the ineffable. Though much of this research concerns historical periods well before the twentieth century, the influence of the Anglican and post-twelfth-century Catholic spiritual perspectives continued into the twentieth-century. Indeed, some twentieth-century spiritual literature that emphasizes silence gained a wide audience, such as Thomas Merton’s *Seven-Storey Mountain*, which became a best-seller the year after its 1948 publication<sup>83</sup> and was published in the United Kingdom in 1949 under the title, *Elected Silence*.<sup>84</sup>

Though scholars agree that defining such terms as “mysticism” and “spirituality” is challenging,<sup>85</sup> they nonetheless supply definitions suitable for this thesis. Philip Sheldrake offers the modern definition of Christian spirituality as, in broad terms, “a conscious relationship with [the Triune] God, in Jesus Christ, through the indwelling of the Spirit and in the context of the community of believers.”<sup>86</sup> This basic Christian spirituality is expressed in different forms of Churchmanship, denominations, creeds, traditions, and so on. Basic Christian spirituality thus has a number of spiritualities. High Church Anglicanism and Low Church Anglicanism can be regarded as two spiritualities within Christian spirituality.

As for the term “mysticism,” historian David Knowles defines it as “an incommunicable and inexpressible knowledge and love of God or of religious truth received in the spirit without precedent

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<sup>82</sup> For the importance of liturgy in the Anglican tradition, which distinguishes Anglicanism from continental Protestantism, see Ramsey, *The Anglican Spirit*, 7 and Thornton, *English Spirituality*, 50.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), 247.

<sup>84</sup> Merton wrote other works, published in Britain as well as the United States, that refer to silence: *Silence in Heaven: A Book of the Monastic Life* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1956), and *The Waters of Silence* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1950.)

<sup>85</sup> To cite only two statements on the difficulty of defining the terms: David Knowles, *What Is Mysticism?* (London: Burns & Oates, 1967), 9; Philip Sheldrake, *A Brief History of Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 1-2.

<sup>86</sup> Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998), 60.

effort or reasoning.”<sup>87</sup> The words “incommunicable” and “inexpressible” hark back to the “unutterable,” ineffable words mentioned by St. Paul in II Corinthians 12:2-4, one of the foundational texts in Christian mystical literature.<sup>88</sup> An important aspect of the definition of “mysticism,” then, is an experience that is ineffable. In contrast to general, un-defined uses of the term “mysticism,” most Christian writers firmly insist that mysticism involves not only experience but also theological understanding and the importance of shaping one’s life in accord with that understanding.<sup>89</sup>

Christian spirituality and mysticism are not two distinct phenomena as much as different degrees along a continuum, that continuum being consciousness of the divine<sup>90</sup> or “the transcendental order; whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood.”<sup>91</sup> At one end of the continuum, there is little inclination to regard oneself as spiritual, much less as a mystic. But the smallest “mustard seed” of faith<sup>92</sup> in Christian teachings places one on the continuum as defined here. Those on the other end of the continuum are more conscious of a colloquy between the individual and God, that colloquy gradually shifting from words, images, and concepts into the incommunicable, the ineffable. As St. Augustine of Hippo put it, “Before thou didst feel God, thou didst think that thou couldst express God,” which is to be on the spirituality side of the spectrum. But if one moves towards the mystical side, “thou beginnest to feel Him, and then feelest that what thou dost feel thou canst not express.”<sup>93</sup>

### **Silence, Mystical Theology, and Mysticism.**

Scripture’s hints about associating silence with the ineffable give way to clarity in the patristic era.<sup>94</sup> During these centuries, a mystical vocabulary developed that has generally remained consistent. But “verbal similarities [between pre- and post-twelfth-century spiritual/mystical

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<sup>87</sup> Knowles, *What is Mysticism*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> Harvey Egan, *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 10; Harvey Egan, H. D. (1990). *Christian Mysticism: The Future of a Tradition* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 26; William Johnston, *Mystical Theology: The Science of Love* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), 11-12; Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, 368.

<sup>89</sup> This applies to the term “spirituality” as well. The very title of McIntosh’s study, *Mystical Theology*, makes the point that the experiential phenomena, such as feelings or more dramatic manifestations of spiritual consciousness such as visions, while they may be experienced by those who claim mystical consciousness, are adventitious to mysticism in the Christian sense and are contrary to Christian mysticism when not accompanied by growth in Christian theological understanding and practice. Mark McIntosh, *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 10. See also Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology*, v. 1: *The Word Made Flesh* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 208.

<sup>90</sup> McGinn “Communicating the Incommunicable.”

<sup>91</sup> Underhill, *Mysticism*, xiv.

<sup>92</sup> Luke 17:6.

<sup>93</sup> Augustine of Hippo. *Saint Augustine: Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, tr. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, vol. VIII, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1888), 488.

<sup>94</sup> St. Ignatius of Antioch, in the year 107, wrote that God revealed himself “in His Son Jesus Christ, Word of His own from silence proceeding.” Ignatius of Antioch, “Letter to the Church at Magnesia,” in *Early Christian Writings*, tr. Maxwell Staniforth (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 73.



literature] serve only to reinforce contemporary confidence in the error of supposing that we retain the theology which once sustained [the early apophatic tradition].”<sup>95</sup> The consistent vocabulary refers to two different perspectives: mystical theology, which flourished in the pre-twelfth-century West, and mysticism, dominant in the twelfth century and after. This distinction is influenced by the distinction between the world-conscious and self-conscious world-views. But Anglicanism continued to be heavily influenced by mystical theology of the patristic/monastic perspective<sup>96</sup> into the twentieth century, which is discussed further below.

After silence as the ineffable made its appearance in the patristic era, it became a “forgotten patristic understanding.”<sup>97</sup> For pre-twelfth-century writers, “‘the mystery’ is still the objective fact of God in Christ into which all are drawn through Scripture and liturgy.”<sup>98</sup> There was not a sense of intense mystical experiences by only a few as in later mystical literature.<sup>99</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius’s fifth-century work, *Mystical Theology*, conceived of the mystical life as realized in and through the liturgy, thus corporately and objectively, not individually and subjectively. The patristic view also integrated both cataphatic and apophatic theology,<sup>100</sup> not regarding them as “*alternative* spiritualities,”<sup>101</sup> but as one theology of praise.<sup>102</sup>

Post-twelfth-century mystical writers shifted to a perspective that privileged the subjective, individual, and experiential.<sup>103</sup> The Church Fathers’ language about the “indescribable wonder of God (who cannot *be* experienced *in se*) becomes [among later mystics] the language of having a wonderfully indescribable experience of God.”<sup>104</sup> Connected with this shift was the development of an intensity about first-level-positive silence. This intense experience of silence became associated

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<sup>95</sup> Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 267.

<sup>96</sup> Haugaard, 24.

<sup>97</sup> David Vincent Meconi, "Silence Proceeding," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 5, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 60. The influential St. Augustine’s admonition against referring to God even as ineffable (Augustine of Hippo, *Christian Instruction*, tr. John J. Gavigan, vol. 2, *The Fathers of the Church* [New York: Fathers of the Church, 1947], 31) would have influenced silence as the ineffable’s near-disappearance in the West as well as the fact that the world-conscious view took little interest in subjective experience, where silence as the ineffable has a better chance of flourishing (though St. Augustine’s autobiographical *Confessions* is something of an anomaly, so intensely personal is this work).

<sup>98</sup> Patristic mysticism “refers to the personal life of the Christian who knows God as revealed in Christ by belonging to the fellowship of the ‘mystery’. This means the mystery of Christ as expressed in the Bible and the liturgy as well as in personal Christian living.” Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 46-7.

<sup>99</sup> Monastics had their own approach to liturgy and reading Scripture, but it was the same openness to divine revelation through liturgy and Scripture expected of all Christians. Monastics simply undertook to follow this way of life with a greater singleness of purpose.

<sup>100</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius: *The Complete Works*, tr., Colm Luibheid (London: SPCK, 1987), 139. For a discussion of this integrated view in Gregory of Nyssa’s theology, see Andrew Louth, "The Cappadocians," in *The Study of Spirituality*, ed., Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold (London: SPCK, 1986), 166-167.

<sup>101</sup> Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 201.

<sup>102</sup> Apophatic and cataphatic mysticism were “not concerned primarily with intellectual, academic matters [but] with the creature’s response of praise and worship to the Love of God.” Louth, *Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, 166.

<sup>103</sup> The spiritual dramas of one’s inner experience became “the new locus of meaning in mystical theology.” McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*, 67.

<sup>104</sup> McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*, 68.

with *kenosis* (unknowing, the dark night of the soul, and so on), privileging the language of negative experiences.<sup>105</sup>

### **Silence, Mystical Theology, and Anglican Liturgy.**

The importance to the sixteenth-century English reformers of patristic mystical theology<sup>106</sup> continued well beyond that period because that perspective was inscribed into the BCP and also because works of the English reformers continued to be read and appreciated as both theology and literature in the twentieth century.<sup>107</sup> Needless to say, Anglican theologians from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries knew post-twelfth-century continental theology but were not interested in developing “systematic theology as either the scholastics or Protestant orthodoxy understood it.”<sup>108</sup> Similarly, though seventeenth-century Anglican theologians read Meister Eckhart and other fourteenth-century Rhineland mystics, which meant familiarity with associating the divine nature with such images as the “Abyss” or the “Silent Desert,”<sup>109</sup> these concepts did not make significant inroads into Anglican spirituality.<sup>110</sup> The “most glaring omission” in Anglican spirituality is the absence of any noteworthy influence by the mystics of the Counter-Reformation, the “monumental systems of St. Ignatius Loyola, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa of Avila.”<sup>111</sup> These writers developed a perspective on silence as first- and second-level-positive to a degree never quite seen before. St. John of the Cross connected silence with music in his term, *musica callada* (silent music).<sup>112</sup>

That the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century emphasis on patristic, mystical theology rather than systematic theology and mysticism continued into the twentieth century includes the enduring importance of monastic theology in Anglicanism as well, since monastic theology, which gave the Church of England its ethos,<sup>113</sup> is grounded in patristic theology.<sup>114</sup> The following quote from

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<sup>105</sup> Turner, *The Darkness of God*, 248-51. This negative use of the term “silence” would nonetheless be first- and second-level positive silence because, though attended by difficulty, it indicates progress spiritually.

<sup>106</sup> Haugaard, 24.

<sup>107</sup> Michael Ramsey, *The Anglican Spirit* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2004), 17; T. S. Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London: Faber, 1928).

<sup>108</sup> “Anglicans have never been very good at systematic theology as either the scholastics or Protestant orthodoxy understood it.” Geoffrey Rowell, “Spirituality in the Anglican Tradition,” *An Introduction to Christian Spirituality*, ed. R. Waller and B. Ward (London: SPCK, 1999), 136.

<sup>109</sup> Cyprian Smith and Oliver Davies, “The Rhineland Mystics,” in *The Study of Spirituality*, 318.

<sup>110</sup> Thornton, *English Spirituality*, 54.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>112</sup> *Musica callada, la soledad sonora* (silent music, sounding solitude). St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, in *The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross, Doctor of the Church*, vol. II, trans. E. Allison Peers (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1953), 27, 84-86.

<sup>113</sup> John-Bede Pauley, “The Monastic Quality of Anglicanism: Implications for Understanding the Anglican Patrimony,” in *Anglicans and the Roman Catholic Church: Reflections on Recent Developments*, ed. Stephen Cavanaugh, 161-183 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011).

<sup>114</sup> Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* (New York: Fordham, 1993).

Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1961 to 1974, attests to monasticism's generally neutral perspective on silence in twentieth-century Anglicanism.

Silence enables us to be aware of God, to let mind and imagination dwell upon his truth, to let prayer be listening before it is talking, and to discover our own selves in a way that is not always possible when we are making or listening to noise. There comes sometimes an inner silence in which the soul discovers itself in a new dimension of energy and peace, a dimension which the restless life can miss.<sup>115</sup>

Though this passage nowhere mentions monasticism, it presents silence as neutral and as a gentle asceticism that enables one to listen, in keeping with monastic spirituality and mystical theology. By contrast, the Counter-Reformation mystics were more inclined to describe silence in terms that are first-level-positive since it is described as an agent that guides the soul through a dark night of privation and thus a more extreme form of kenotic asceticism.

### **Monasticism, Silence, and *Lectio Divina*.**

Though Anglicanism has not developed its own tradition of expressing silence as the ineffable, there is a practice from its monastic roots that favors a neutral silence that in turn leaves open the possibility of experiencing silence as the ineffable. This monastic practice is *lectio divina* (divine reading), which is reading Scripture reflectively, stilling the discursive, the analytical, and the interior faculties,<sup>116</sup> often repeating a phrase or even a single word (monologistic prayer). Whether the Latin term was widely known or understood before the English Reformation, it was not well known afterwards. And monastic *lectio divina* ideally takes place in solitude, not in the liturgical assembly, though the readings on which one reflects are generally the readings from the liturgy. But elements of this monastic practice have continued in Anglicanism in part because of the poetic language of the Authorized Version and the BCP, which the Anglican ethos encourages clergy and lectors to read, in the context of the liturgy, with a sense of *gravitas*, allowing reflective, if brief, silences that foster stillness. A prayer in the BCP that has subtly schooled generations in *lectio divina* is the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent. In its 1549 BCP version it urges that all “heare, read, marke, learne, and inwardly digeste” Scripture.<sup>117</sup> *Lectio*'s repetition of the same idea (attending to a scriptural passage) again and again is either a pointless linguistic redundancy or an apophatic stammer. In the patristic/monastic/Anglican context, it is the latter.

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<sup>115</sup> Michael Ramsey, *Be Still and Know: A Study in the Life of Prayer* (Boston, Massachusetts: Cowley Publications, 1993), 67-8.

<sup>116</sup> André Louf, *The Cistercian Way* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1983), 77. See also, García Colombás, *Reading God: “Lectio divina”* (Schuyler, Nebraska: BMH Publications, 1993), 53.

<sup>117</sup> The First Prayer-Book of King Edward VI 1549, Collect of the Second Sunday in Advent, (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden, & Welsh, 1888), 33.

This monastic practice provides a link to the observation made by philosopher Josef Pieper on the difference between *ratio* and *intellectus*.<sup>118</sup> Pieper attacks the “exclusively discursive” epistemology of Kant, which claims that human knowledge is realized in intellectual work, in *ratio*, which is “the power of discursive thought, of searching and re-searching, abstracting, refining, and concluding.”<sup>119</sup> He reclaims what the ancients referred to as *intellectus*, which “refers to the ability of ‘simply looking’ (*simplex intuitus*), to which the truth presents itself as a landscape presents itself to the eye.”<sup>120</sup> Silence that allows for leisure in a contemplative sense fosters *intellectus* that opens one to the possibility of seeing how worthy of veneration things really are.<sup>121</sup> Perceiving things as they really are by means of *intellectus* is similar to apprehending knowledge without precedent effort or reasoning, which is David Knowles’s definition of mysticism *tout court* (without distinction between mystical theology and mysticism).<sup>122</sup>

### Anglican Liturgy and Stilling Emotions.

Anglicanism’s quieter, subtler development of silence is also in its restraint of emotional expression. Patristic/monastic/Anglican emphasis on liturgy does not mean absence of emotion. On the contrary, the emotions at issue are meant to be very profound. Theologian Don Saliers distinguishes between “deep emotions which define the Christian life” and “mere sentiment or ... passing enthusiasms.”<sup>123</sup> Christianity and “all serious moral and religious ways of life” seek to school their adherents in “acquiring and ordering of deep emotions.”<sup>124</sup> Where a spirituality emphasizes liturgy, therefore, that will likely be where much of this schooling takes place.

Through much of Christian history, liturgy and liturgical music have tended to downplay the role of emotional spontaneity in favor of cultivating deeper emotion. Liturgical music in the earliest days of the Church was apparently characterized by a degree of spontaneity and ecstatic utterance.<sup>125</sup> But by the time of the Church Fathers, the ecstatic element had faded from the liturgy.<sup>126</sup> If there is

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<sup>118</sup> Pieper’s philosophical perspective resonated with at least some of mid-twentieth-century England’s literate population. Faber and Faber decided to publish it in an English translation (1952, and it was positively reviewed. “Be Still and Know,” Review of *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, by Josef Pieper, *Times Literary Supplement* (London), reproduced in Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press, 1998), 137.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>122</sup> Knowles, *What is Mysticism*, 13.

<sup>123</sup> Don E. Saliers, *Soul in Paraphrase: Prayer and the Religious Affections*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Akron, Ohio: OSL Publications, 1991), 5.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. See also Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*; Robert Campbell Roberts, *Spirituality and Human Emotion* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1982).

<sup>125</sup> Faulkner, *Wiser than Despair*, 51.

<sup>126</sup> This was partly the influence of the Greek doctrine of music’s ethos. Faulkner, 64 et seq. The importance of Neopythagorean concepts in general in early Christianity has been demonstrated by F. J. Dölger, *Die Sonne der Gerechtigkeit und der Schwarze* (Münster, 1919), 42, quoted in Johannes Quasten, *Music & Worship in Pagan & Christian Antiquity* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 1983), 67.

any truth to the oft-mentioned observation that there is an English national characteristic of reserve, its deepest roots might be found in its centuries-old religious heritage, beginning with the patristic/monastic ethos of liturgical restraint.

A liturgical ethos of restraint fosters liturgical music that is open to the development of silence. Observations by a non-liturgical writer, Vladimir Jankélévitch, are apt: “[R]eticence must be considered a privileged form of silence: for the silence that is no longer ‘tacit’ or simply ‘taciturn,’ but ‘reticent,’ is a special form of silence, the one that arises quite suddenly, at the brink of mystery, at the threshold of the ineffable, where the vanity and impotence of words have become all too obvious.”<sup>127</sup> Jankélévitch connects his use of the word “reticence” with brachyology, conciseness of speech. His use of “reticence,” then, does not imply timidity or fear but a conciseness born of perceiving the ultimate impotence of words, which is the same awareness underlying Christian apophatic theology. The liturgy’s use of words, when correctly understood, is characterized by reticence and therefore constitutes a privileged form of silence. Anglicanism’s reticence about expressing silence is paradoxically an encouragement to express the silence reticence. It is only this “privileged form of silence”<sup>128</sup> that early-twentieth-century Anglicanism encouraged. But it is silence. The ECM composer who recognizes this and crafts his music to this quality of reticence is already expressing musical silence.

### **Silence and Churchmanship.**

So far, this chapter establishes that Anglicanism has shied away from pronounced, explicit expressions of silence as the ineffable. The rest of this chapter discusses two perspectives on silence within Anglicanism’s reserve concerning silence. Low Church spirituality tends to ignore silence as the ineffable. High Church spirituality favors it.

Differences in world-conscious and self-conscious perceptions of silence, discussed above, have general correlations to forms of Churchmanship in the Church of England, also referred to as wings of, or parties in, the Church of England. The Low Church wing is also known as the Evangelical wing. High Church Anglicans are sometimes referred to as Tractarians (a reference to the Oxford Movement’s *Tracts for the Times*<sup>129</sup>) or Anglo-Catholic and include Anglo-Papalists at the more extreme end of that wing. Simply put, the Low Church wing inclines towards Protestantism, the High Church towards Anglicanism’s Catholic roots. Contrasting characteristics relevant to this study are the Low Church emphasis on sermons, the High Church emphasis on sacraments and liturgy; the Low Church giving pride of place to proclamation and taking no interest

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<sup>127</sup> Jankélévitch, 141.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years, 1833-1845* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 79-80.

in silence as the ineffable, the High Church also valuing proclamation but silence as well; the Low Church tendency away from praying to saints and praying for the dead, the High Church tendency towards those practices; and the Low Church preference for hymn texts that express the believer's subjective experience, the High Church preference for more objective hymn texts.

Since both High Church and Low Church Anglicanism strongly affirmed the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith and their primary concern were the spiritual welfare and destiny of the individual Christian soul,<sup>130</sup> they clashed not so much with each other as with a third wing, the Broad Church party or the Liberal wing or Latitudinarian party. The Broad Church party took the self-conscious world-view further by giving priority to human reason over revelation and had the “unfailing capacity to adapt the concepts of religion [to] the prevailing secular *Zeitgeist*.”<sup>131</sup> Liturgy and thus liturgical music were “largely extraneous to the principal Broad Church concerns.”<sup>132</sup>

That identifying Churchmanship is anything but a precise science is apparent when looking for characteristics of Churchmanship in cathedral liturgies, which should ideally celebrate liturgy for the entire diocese and thus avoid identifying too closely with a particular form of Churchmanship. Nonetheless, High Church emphasis on liturgy fostered developments of ritual and ceremony in cathedrals (regular celebrations of the Eucharistic liturgy, for example, as well as processions and vestments). As for liturgical music, though the early days of the Oxford Movement were not marked by liturgical or musical grandeur, by the end of the nineteenth century, the prominent role of the liturgical choir and interest in its repertoire in both High Church parishes and cathedrals owed much to the Oxford Movement's emphasis on liturgy.<sup>133</sup>

### **Low Church Spirituality and Silence.**

Though the Low Church wing rarely identified fully with continental Protestantism, it was nonetheless influenced by it, which warrants discussing continental Protestantism's spirituality and silence. The continental Protestant perspective unmoored itself from the liturgical tradition and thus from mystical theology and the Pastristic/monastic view of silence. Luther had no time for either mystical theology or mysticism. He “assailed asceticism in *Judgment on Monastic Vows* and mysticism in the person of [Dionysius] in *The Pagan Servitude of the Church*.” He warned that by reading these books, the Christian, “so far from learning about Christ ... will be led to lose what [he

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<sup>130</sup> William J. Gatens, *Victorian Cathedral Music in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>133</sup> ECM had experienced barren years from around the 1740s to the 1840s. Kenneth Long devotes only eight pages to this period in the four hundred and eighty pages of his *The Music of the English Church* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), 309-316; Erik Routley, *A Short History of English Church Music* (London and Oxford: A. R. Mowbrays, 1977), 41. Bernarr Rainbow, *The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church, 1839-1872* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001).

knows].”<sup>134</sup> Evangelical Protestantism tends towards a self-conscious (rather than world-conscious) world-view by emphasizing the subjective experience of simply hearing and appropriating the good news (*evangelium*) of salvation, which in turn involves proclaiming it to others. It is only recently that Protestantism has ceased to regard even the word “spirituality” with suspicion.<sup>135</sup> Much of Evangelical Protestant history, well past the first half of the twentieth century, took little or no interest in mapping progress along scales of perfection (St. John Climacus or Walter Hilton), dark nights of the soul (St. John of the Cross), or any spiritual method (such as the Ignatian spiritual exercises).

Related to the emphasis on preaching in worship is the emphasis not only on the *Logos*—the Word mentioned in John 1:1—but *logos*, words used persuasively. The prominence of the sermon in Protestant worship and its primary function, which is to persuade its listeners to accept the gospel, mean an emphasis on the discursive rather than the reflective, *ratio* rather than *intellectus*. Romanticism’s influence injected an emphasis on emotion in the theology and preaching of some Protestant traditions, but the word was still the main focus of worship. Protestantism’s emphasis on preaching results in what might be called a form of visual silence. “Images or ritual forms which get in the way of dependence on the word ... are questioned or rejected.”<sup>136</sup>

Protestantism’s emphasis on Scripture means emphasis on a text that is predominantly cataphatic. Apophatic theology’s high regard for silence has had almost no authoritative support in Protestantism. Protestantism’s ethos of hymn singing (Lutheran and Methodist hymnody, especially) and even noise making (such as the “‘let out’ souls” Ives observed at New England camp meetings<sup>137</sup> or the “old glory time din” of late twentieth-century Pentecostals<sup>138</sup>) means Protestantism has privileged sound as an expression of praise rather than privileging silence as attentive listening.<sup>139</sup> The noise-making extremes of Protestantism might be said to have their own form of apophatic stammering. But the point of this “stammer” is noisy expression of individuals’ experiences of prayer, not a liturgically communal expression of the deeper, ordered emotions mentioned by Saliers.

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<sup>134</sup> “The Pagan Servitude of the Church,” in *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1951), 342-43.

<sup>135</sup> Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 207.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>137</sup> Charles Ives, *Memos*, ed. John Kirkpatrick (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 132-3.

<sup>138</sup> Maltz, “Joyful Noise and Reverent Silence,” 124.

<sup>139</sup> The Quaker tradition, with its emphasis on silence, has been less likely to influence the Low Church wing. Richard A. Baer, “Quaker Silence, Catholic Liturgy, and Pentecostal Glossalalia – Some Functional Similarities,” in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler, 150-64 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Co., 1976). Britten’s sister, Beth, said Benjamin considered becoming a Quaker. Beth Britten, *My Brother Benjamin* (Bourne End: Kensal, 1986), 200. Britten’s pacifism would have drawn him to the Quaker tradition. But there is no indication that he gave any thought to the Quaker understanding of silence.

### High Church Spirituality and Silence.

The Catholic type of spirituality “is one in which the gospel is mediated through concrete, sacramental instruments ... The stress is on the glory of God rather than on his name... The medium is not the ear but the eye. The sacraments fulfill what the word proclaims.”<sup>140</sup> If the medium of Protestantism is the ear and that of Catholicism the eye, it is a paradox that whereas one can speak of a visual silence in ear-oriented Protestantism, there is an aural silence in eye-oriented Catholicism. Evangelization is important in Catholicism as well, but recognition of different charisms in the Church, including those that stress silence, means Catholic evangelization can be regarded as directly linked both to preaching and to the silent, contemplative prayer of the cloister, as evidenced in declaring the contemplative Ste. Thérèse de Lisieux a patron of missionaries.

The structure of the Mass calls for silence at certain points, particularly in the Canon of the Mass. The opening of the Mass can present a sense of *ratio* because of the readings, the homily, and the prayers and petitions. But as one moves into the Canon of the Mass, the text is prescribed and limited and functions as the “form” by which the sacramental “matter” is consecrated. This matter—bread and wine—is not aural but silent.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, much of this limited, prescribed text was said silently in Catholic, and in many Anglo-Catholic, parishes in the first half of the twentieth century.

Catholic/High Church spirituality favors silencing the analytical mind. St. Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* seems to contradict this since it is one of the most analytical, systematic approaches to theology. But Aquinas likened his work to straw<sup>142</sup> after he had a mystical experience. The both/and of Catholic Christianity values reason but also the silencing of reason. The “liturgical worship of Catholic and Episcopal [Anglican] churches ... permits the analytical mind—the focused, objectifying dimensions of man’s intellect—to rest, thus freeing other dimensions of the person, what we might refer to as man’s spirit, for a deeper openness to divine reality.”<sup>143</sup>

### Conclusion.

This chapter establishes the theological context in mid-twentieth-century ECM for silence as the ineffable. It establishes Anglicanism’s ambivalence about silence as the ineffable by examining perceptions of silence in the Authorized Version of the Bible, the Coverdale Psalter, the BCP, official statements on silence in the liturgy, and hymnody. This ambivalence limited silence’s

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<sup>140</sup> Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 209.

<sup>141</sup> Some of the other sacraments are silent as well: laying on of hands (ordination), anointing with oil (confirmation and anointing the sick). Too, the gesture of signing the cross, with or without a voiced invocation of the Trinity, is, of itself, a silent gesture that accompanies these sacraments.

<sup>142</sup> Ralph McInerney and John O’Callaghan, “Saint Thomas Aquinas,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2009 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta (ed.), [www.plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2009/entries/aquinas/](http://www.plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2009/entries/aquinas/) – accessed 20 April 2010; Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 9.

<sup>143</sup> Richard Arthur Bauer, “Quaker Silence, Catholic Liturgy, and Pentecostal Glossalalia – Some Functional Similarities,” in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Co., 1976), 152.



expression in Anglican liturgy, regardless of Churchmanship. But this chapter also shows Anglicanism's development over time towards a more explicit recognition and appreciation of silence as first- and second-level-positive. This chapter also establishes the Low Church avoidance of silence as the ineffable and the High Church openness towards it.

The next chapter explores the twentieth-century interest in silence as reflected in late-twentieth-century musicological literature. It also draws from this literature to develop a taxonomy of musical silence. As this chapter establishes the liturgical/spiritual context in which musical silence could best develop in mid-twentieth-century ECM, the next chapter's taxonomy of musical silence helps analyze and appreciate how that musical silence is expressed.

## Chapter Two Silence and Musicology

### Introduction – Defining Musical Silence

This chapter provides a review of musicological literature on the topic of silence. It discusses important works on the topic mostly in chronological order. The literature reveals two approaches. One proposes identifying and listing types of silence in taxonomies, though the proposed taxonomies are either intended solely for the context of the article in which they appear or are preliminary efforts at establishing a taxonomy that would account for all types of musical silence. The other approach resists taxonomies as lacking dramatic force and being too expository.<sup>1</sup> This thesis takes the taxonomic approach, and this chapter proposes a taxonomy of musical silence arranged on a multi-tiered spectrum according to the following uses and perceptions of musical silence. One tier of the spectrum distinguishes between literal silence (rests, *caesurae*, and so on) and the use of musical sound as a representation of silence. Another tier draws from the introduction's taxonomy of basic silence and arranges types of silence from neutral silences to first-level-positive silences (perceived, or capable of being perceived, as existing in their own right and thus able to communicate their own qualities, whether positive or negative). The third tier arranges silences from those that escape notice to those that are readily apparent. The remaining tier identifies silence on a spectrum from purely functional silences (not intended to convey meaning), through silences that communicate something about the music's internal logic and structure, to silences that are meant to convey extra-musical meaning.

To define musical silence, Bruno Nettl's tentative definition of music as "humanly organized sound"<sup>2</sup> is a starting point. This definition can be expanded to read "humanly organized sound and silence." Musical silence exists in two forms. The first is what is perceived as literal silence: the cessation of sound indicated in musical notation by rests, articulation markings, *caesurae*, and so on. The other form of musical silence is the use of sound as a metaphor for silence, which is discussed below.

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<sup>1</sup> Naomi Waltham-Smith, "Review of *Silence, Music, Silent Music*," *Music & Letters* 90:2 (May 2009): 319. A third, newly developing approach relies on empirical research. Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis's "Silences in Music Are Musical Not Silent: An Exploratory Study of Context Effects on the Experience of Musical Pauses," *Music Perception* 24, no. 5 (2007): 485-506, is one of the early empirical studies. Such studies are too recent and too few in number to receive more than a well-deserved mention in this survey of the literature.

<sup>2</sup> Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 17. Nettl's definition apparently draws from Edgard Varèse's definition of music as "organized sound." Edgard Varèse, "Organized Sound for Sound Film," *The Commonweal* 33 (December 13, 1940), also quoted in Donald J. Grout, J. Peter Burkholder, et al. *A History of Western Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 884.

John Cage's *4' 33"* tests the limits of the proposed definition of musical silence. This silence occurs within the parameters Cage predetermines in the score.<sup>3</sup> It is so extreme an example of organized silence that as one becomes aware of ambient sounds in the performance space ("wind stirring outside, raindrops pattering the tin roof"<sup>4</sup>), the realization dawns that humans do not experience true silence at all but perceive it as if it exists. Nonetheless, *4' 33"* does organize the conditions in which the perception of silence takes place, even organizing this experience of silence into three separate "movements."<sup>5</sup>

Musical silence can also include silence that precedes or follows a work's performance. Not every silence that precedes or follows a work's performance can properly be identified as musical silence since not all of these silences bear a relation to the organized sound of the musical work itself. The silence as a conductor lifts her baton, for example, is not generally thought of by composer, performers, or audience as a silence meant to convey anything. There are some silences before and after a work, however, that are meant to be part of the organized sound. In performing Charles Ives's *The Unanswered Question*, for example, the silence the performers and audience are expected to inhabit before the first note sounds is as organized and intended as is the first sound one hears.

### **The Purely Musical and the Extra-Musical.**

Before defining categories of musical silence, a discussion of the conventional concepts of the purely musical and the extra-musical is necessary. The conventional concept of the purely musical is "the realm of musical notation and sound prior to audition"<sup>6</sup> and without reference to social contexts. It can include implicitly metaphysical claims for music as well. An even more thorough way to think of the purely musical would be to remove any text from a score. If a work sets a text, for instance, the text is removed. The work's title is removed, especially if it is programmatic. Debussy's *Jardins sous la pluie*, for example, would have a non-descriptive identification so that the sounds and silences would not automatically be associated with rain, gardens, and French Impressionism. Descriptive directions would be dropped as well, such as "with a lilt" or *Der Vorhang geht auf*. Even the name of the composer would be removed.

This is obviously a contrived and artificial way of reading and listening to music. Any apparently autonomous work is "always formed, performed and heard as part of a socially significant

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<sup>3</sup> The score "consists only of three Roman numerals, each followed by a numerically specified duration (all three add up to the four minutes and thirty-three seconds of the title) plus the word "tacet," indicating the performer or performers ... are to remain silent." Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: Norton, 1991), 362.

<sup>4</sup> Silverman, 118.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Julian Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10.

activity.”<sup>7</sup> Even more fundamentally, music itself is “extra-musical” “since notes, like words, have emotional connotations.”<sup>8</sup> For example, the triadic shape of the military trumpet fanfare “lends a sense of strength and pride even to a lyric tune like The Star-Spangled Banner; the grave dignity of the sarabande is sensed even when played without accompaniment, in the lonely purity of a fugue subject like that in B flat minor from the second book of the *Wohltemperirte Clavier*.”<sup>9</sup>

That the purely musical and the extra-musical are inextricably intertwined is evident when considering the idea of the musical topic. Julian Johnson, borrowing from Kofi Agawu,<sup>10</sup> describes a topic as “both a specifically musical, technical element [the purely musical] and an extra-musical component, defined by its relationship to broader non-musical discourses [the extra-musical].”<sup>11</sup> The interrelation of purely musical and extra-musical is so thorough that when the technical, purely musical component of the topic (the signifier) begins to shift, the extra-musical idea it references (the signified) can be regarded as shifting as well.<sup>12</sup>

Intertwined as the purely musical and the extra-musical are, it is impossible to claim that a distinction between them is completely meaningless. For example, Mozart’s use of a minuet in Figaro’s *se vuol ballare* of *Le nozze di Figaro* is associated with eighteenth-century nobility and therefore comments on the irony of a servant singing a minuet while offering to give a count dance lessons. But the aria can be enjoyed solely as a delightful melody in triple meter.

It is impossible to resolve the “irreconcilable confrontation of these two positions,”<sup>13</sup> the view of music as abstracted from social contexts and the view of music as socially grounded and socially alterable. But this confrontation arises in the following discussion. The best approach, then, is to employ this “purely musical”/“extra-musical” distinction as a heuristic device, not to be taken too literally or rigidly.

### **Musical Silence and Meaning.**

The musicological literature that explores silence presents three possible uses of musical silence along a spectrum that runs from musical silence without meaning at all through musical silence used in a purely-musical way to musical silence used to convey extra-musical meaning.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 33.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 7.

<sup>10</sup> Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>13</sup> Susan McClary, “The Blasphemy of Talking Politics During Bach Year,” in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, ed. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 15.

<sup>14</sup> Current discussion in music aesthetics presents a choice between the formalist view (articulated in the nineteenth century by Eduard Hanslick) and hermeneutic attempts, “represented in recent years by Carl Dahlhaus, Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, Roger Scruton and others, to keep alive interactions of music with other ways of understanding and

The first category on the functional-to-extra-musical spectrum includes all silences that are not usually intended to be noticed as silence. Such is the case with a rest that is intended for no other purpose than to allow time to make a registration change on an organ or the rest implied in the execution of a *marcato* bowing or a *staccato* articulation. Though usually functional, these functional silences can shift further along the spectrum. For example, a rest could be both a functional pause that allows the registration change on an organ while placing it at a dramatic moment of purely-musical or extra-musical import.

Next along the spectrum are silences that have purely-musical meaning. Unlike functional silences, these silences are perceived, or are readily open to perception, by those who are attuned to silence's expressive role in music. Purely-musical silences are perceived and interpreted, however, in the context of music's own syntax, "its own vocabulary and symbolic means."<sup>15</sup> An example of a purely musical silence would be one that occurs at an unexpected moment in a four- or eight-bar phrase. It would startle the listener into taking note of the musical syntax itself and the role the silence plays in that syntax. This kind of silence functions without need of being associated with "broader non-musical discourses."<sup>16</sup>

The third use of musical silence along the spectrum is that which is meant to convey extra-musical associations. Included in this last manner of using musical silence is musical silence that implies silence as an expression of, or metaphor for, some other concept than silence *qua* silence. This includes using silence as a metaphor for, or instantiation of, an experience of the ineffable; a silence meant to suggest awkwardness; a suspenseful silence; and so on. This manner of using musical silence does not regard silence as neutral, the mere cessation of sound-producing vibrations. It regards silence as having its own communicative potential, even to the extent of communicating concepts other than silence. Ellen T. Harris focuses on this use of silence in her studies of Handel's musical silence that expresses not silence itself but the sublime.<sup>17</sup> All of these silences are extra-musical because they convey certain meanings only when understood in relation to texts, cultural contexts, and/or evidence of compositional intent not indicated by the musical score alone, such as a composer's comments about the work.

Yet another type of musical silence with extra-musical associations is musical silence that explicitly text paints a text or program that refers to silence. An example of this text-painting or madrigalistic use of musical silence is the quarter-note rest at rehearsal 30 that follows the phrase,

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experiencing the world and ourselves." Andrew Bowie, "Philosophy of Music," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Music Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 621. This thesis accepts the latter perspective.

<sup>15</sup> George Steiner, "The Retreat from the Word," in *Language and Silence*, 42.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen T. Harris, *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, Harvard University Press, 2001); Ellen T. Harris, "Silence as Sound: Handel's Sublime Pauses," *The Journal of Musicology* 22 (Fall 2005): 521-558.

*elle se tut* (“she fell silent”), in Claude Debussy’s *La Damoiselle élue* (Example 2.1). This is a dutiful text-painting of a word that indicates silence. An example—an extreme example—of a program work on silence is John Cage’s *4’33”*, especially when one knows the extra-musical context of Cage’s interest in silence.<sup>18</sup> Because the madrigalistic and/or programmatic uses of musical silence obviate the need for analysis, these uses of silence rarely gain the attention of writers on the topic and are not explored in this study.

Example 2.1<sup>19</sup>

The musical score for Example 2.1 is titled "30 Un peu animé". It features a vocal line for "La Damoiselle" (Soprano) and an orchestral accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics "il vien-dra" and "El-le se tut:". The orchestral parts include Harp I, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello/Double Bass. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *pppp*, along with performance instructions like *div.*, *pizz.*, *arco*, and *unis.*.

Referring to these uses of musical silence as being arrayed along a spectrum is a reminder that nearly any instance of musical silence could be interpreted as being at various points along the spectrum. The silence used to effect a *staccato* articulation, for example, could be perceived as purely functional. It could also be intended as a purely musical gesture if it re-states a musical phrase in a different way, for example. Finally, given the composer’s intent and/or the cultural context, it could convey extra-musical associations.

<sup>18</sup> Silverman, 116-19. Cage’s original title for *4’33”* was *Silent Prayer*. Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (London: Harper Perennial, 2007), 401. Cage’s notion of prayer seems to have been influenced by the Japanese, Zen concept of *ma*, which regards silence as first- and second-level-positive. Understood this way, *4’33”* both relates the composer’s experience of *ma* (just as Richard Strauss’s *Ein Heldenleben*, for example, is said to describe Strauss’s experiences) and is an experience of *ma*.

<sup>19</sup> Engraved from Claude Debussy, *La damoiselle élue: poème lyrique d’après Dante-Gabriel Rossetti, pour voix de femmes, solo, chœur et orchestre*. (Paris: Durand, 1948), 67.

**Musical Silence as a Musical Topic or Gesture.**

Musical silence acts as a musical topic or gesture only when the musical silence is regarded as conveying meaning because of extra-musical associations. This observation helps draw a distinction between literal silence and sound as silence. Literal silence can be used functionally, to convey purely musical meaning, or to convey extra-musical meaning. Sound as silence always relies on extra-musical meaning and is therefore always used as a musical topic. In the case of literal silence, the silence itself is the signifier. (The signifieds are determined by context.) Sound as silence is a double signifier. Musical sound is the signifier of silence, which is the signified. But silence in turn becomes a signifier that opens up the potential of the polyvalent array of silence's signifieds.

Why is double signification needed? If musical sound is regarded as signifying silence that, in turn, signifies the ineffable, for example, or the quiet of the pastoral or an abyss of non-existence, why not remove silence from the equation altogether. Thus (where the symbol  $\approx$  means signification in the approximate sense that exists between sign and signified),

“sound  $\approx$  silence  $\approx$  the ineffable”

would become the more direct

“sound  $\approx$  the ineffable.”

The answer, of course, is the artist's love of allusion and metaphor. A direct reference from sound to the ineffable or any other signified would lack ambiguity and polyvalence and would “suppress three-quarters of the enjoyment in a poem which is made up of the happiness of gradually divining.”<sup>20</sup>

Though the use of topics in the Classical period had not always been as patently self-evident as some of the literature might suggest<sup>21</sup> (it was never as direct as “signifier = signified”), it did tend to be more so than was the case in the Romantic period. Romantic composers retained the morphology of musical topics while displacing their conventional associations.<sup>22</sup> Ariane Jessulat provides a specific example by demonstrating that the Baroque era's musical question, a mere recitative formula, became “a symbol of instability, transition, and fateful change” in the Romantic period.<sup>23</sup>

Though twentieth-century music often challenged and sometimes rejected the Romantic aesthetic, Romantic appreciation of ambiguity where topics are concerned led naturally into both Modernist and Postmodernist perspectives. Modernism challenged what it regarded as worn forms

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<sup>20</sup> Walter De la Mare, *Behold, This Dreamer: Of Reverie, Night, Sleep, Dream, Lovedreams, Nightmare, Death, the Unconscious, the Imagination, Divination, the Artist, and Kindred Subjects* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 614.

<sup>21</sup> Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, 137.

<sup>23</sup> Ariane Jessulat, *Die Frage als musikalischer Topos: Studien zur Motivbildung in der Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Studio Verlag, 2000), 194-203, quoted in Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 8.

inherited from the past, but it paradoxically used those very forms and did so while rejecting the unified, objective visions of reality that formed the cultural basis of these forms and techniques.<sup>24</sup> Modernism asserted a different perspective of ambiguity than did the Romantic era, but both eras appreciated morphological continuity while conveying referential discontinuity, which is what Agawu describes in the changing use of the musical topic from the Classical era to the Romantic.<sup>25</sup> Postmodernism is even more interested in reclaiming forms and techniques (morphologies) from the past and is satisfied with nothing less than taking what are regarded as self-evident signifieds and coloring, modifying, and altering them by particular concerns.<sup>26</sup>

When musical silence functions as a musical topic it adds another possibility to Agawu's observations about the interrelation of the purely musical and extra-musical. Agawu's observation that when the technical, purely musical component of the topic (the signifier) begins to shift, the extra-musical idea it references (the signified) can be regarded as shifting as well,<sup>27</sup> can also work the other way. As the twentieth century developed an awareness of silence's (the signified's) expressive potential, silence as a concept shifted and expanded, bringing different facets of polyvalent silence to the fore. Silence had always tended to signify the ineffable, and doubt or unbelief in the divine sufficient to make the infinite silences terrifying<sup>28</sup> in a non-theist sense was not new. But the twentieth century brought these kinds of ineffable silences more fully into artistic expression than had been the case before. As different understandings of silence as the ineffable were expressed, the technical, purely musical component of the topic expanded as well. Silence's morphology as literal silence seems to have been perceived as too limiting. More needed to be communicated about silence than mere literal silence. Twentieth-century composers looked for ways to make longer, more developed statements about silence and thus developed sound-as-silence techniques, which have come to be more fully recognized as part of musical silence's morphology. Discussions in later chapters on Howells's use of musical silence show that he took part in this twentieth-century development of sound-as-silence techniques.

### **An Early Musicological Exploration of Silence.**

The first sustained musicological reflection on silence, Thomas Clifton's 1976 article, "The Poetics of Musical Silence,"<sup>29</sup> proposes a taxonomy of musical silence. Though this methodology is often followed in the subsequent literature, Clifton's taxonomy has had no influence in later

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<sup>24</sup> Lawrence Gamache, "Defining Modernism: A Religious and Literary Correlation," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 25, no. 2 (1992): 65.

<sup>25</sup> Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, 137.

<sup>26</sup> Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 8.

<sup>27</sup> Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, tr. A. J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin Books, 1966), 95. *Le silence éternel des ces espaces infinis m'effraie.*

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Clifton, "The Poetics of Musical Silence," *The Musical Quarterly* 62 (April 1976): 163-181.



musicological explorations of silence.<sup>30</sup> Clifton's article is worth a closer look, however, because it identifies issues that recur in the musicological literature on silence. Clifton wrote his article in 1976 when music's relationship to subjectivity tended to be avoided. During that period, "[t]oo much emphasis on feeling or ascription of meaning," it was thought, "could only obscure what was truly musical about music, its articulation of style, form, and structure."<sup>31</sup> The word "subjectivity" in that period still conveyed the notion of the "private monad" or the "nugget of inner being that extends itself outward to others."<sup>32</sup> Postmodernism's view of subjectivity—a process in which one occupies a series of socially defined positions, of multiple relationships<sup>33</sup>—had yet to establish a strong footing in musicology. Clifton's essay, true to its period, tends to keep musical silence at a significant distance from "the whole array of interior states of mind and body."<sup>34</sup> Or rather, it does so when Clifton writes of his own perception.<sup>35</sup> He allows that distance to disappear when quoting others.<sup>36</sup> In doing so, Clifton apparently foresaw, and made room for, the increased role subjective perceptions and extra-musical, and cultural associations would have in subsequent explorations of musical silence.

It seems not to have occurred to Clifton that certain aspects of a common language of musical silence will be variously emphasized or not depending on stylistic periods, cultural contexts, and compositional idioms. His essay includes nearly all stylistic periods but does so without any discussion of the cultural context of the composers, performers, and listeners. Since much subsequent musicological literature on silence does explore cultural contexts, the absence of that exploration in Clifton's essay helps explain its lack of influence.

Clifton's essay raises other questions that remain important in the literature. First, he establishes the importance of attempting to corral the vast polyvalence of silence by means of taxonomies or typologies. Second, and related to this, Clifton states a caution that taxonomies are of value only when regarded as heuristic devices rather than as precisely descriptive or prescriptive. Finally, though Clifton's essay accords a mere glance at musical silence considered philosophically,

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<sup>30</sup> Clifton's essay is cited by Andrew Edgar, in "Music and Silence," in *Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Adam Jaworski (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter 1997): 311-329, where Edgar gives a good summary of Clifton's "three broad categories" (312), though these categories do not influence Edgar's analysis. Ellen T. Harris makes no reference to Clifton in her studies. Among the twelve essays collected in Losseff's *Silence, Music, Silent Music*, Clifton's article warrants a brief mention by only one of the contributors (Julie P. Sutton, "The Air Between Two Hands: Silence, Music and Communication," 171, 172).

<sup>31</sup> Lawrence Kramer, "Musicology and Meaning," *The Musical Times* 144 (Summer 2003), 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Clifton does associate musical silence with emotion and metaphor. But his emotions and metaphors serve to illustrate a response to the music's own structure and characteristics—the purely musical. He mentions surprise, for instance, at the sense of time being abruptly interrupted by the timpani blow followed by silence at bar 148 in the third movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 7. Clifton, "Poetics," 165.

<sup>36</sup> Clifton quotes Leo Smit, for example, who recounts observing Igor Stravinsky's expression of fierce anger in the silences of a work (unidentified in Clifton's quote) that Stravinsky played for Smit. Clifton, "Poetics," 167.

this is enough to justify addressing the issue this early in the overview of musicological literature on silence.

Though the title of Clifton's essay apparently evokes Aristotle's *Poetics*,<sup>37</sup> Clifton identifies himself with the pre-metaphysical perspective of Heideggerian phenomenology with its avoidance of definition and precise taxonomies, its suspension of the conventions of definitional logic for the sake of experiencing and accepting "felt strangeness."<sup>38</sup> This helps explain why Clifton makes no attempt to define silence. The only two philosophical writers Clifton mentions in his brief introduction are Martin Heidegger and Georges Gusdorf. Heidegger is also implicitly present in the opening lines of the article because of the analogy Clifton draws between focusing on musical silence and the seeming perversity of studying the spaces between trees in a forest. This is undoubtedly an allusion to Heidegger's *Lichtung*, the "clearing" or disclosed-ness that is a characteristic of Heidegger's *Dasein* (Being), even to the extent that the *Lichtung* is equated with *Dasein* itself.<sup>39</sup> The point Clifton makes in quoting both Heidegger and Gusdorf is to assert that authentic silence has a context. "Keeping silent authentically is possible only in genuine discoursing."<sup>40</sup> And as Gusdorf puts it, silence "has meaning only at the core of an existing communication as a counterpart to it."<sup>41</sup> "Made" silences (as distinct from the "real" silence of outer space) are "contingent upon a sounding environment," according to Clifton.<sup>42</sup> Clifton implicitly raises the issue of whether first-level-positive silence (silence that exists unto itself) exists in music. He does not address this question, and most subsequent writers take it for granted that first-level-positive silence does exist in music.

### **Narrowing the Scope and Context: Stylistic Periods.**

Because Clifton's essay ambitiously takes on musical silence in nearly all periods of Western art music, too many questions are left unasked. For instance, if both Berlioz, in the closing bars of the "Queen Mab" Scherzo of *Roméo et Juliette*,<sup>43</sup> and Haydn, in the ending of the final movement of his String Quartet in E-flat, Opus 22, No. 2,<sup>44</sup> employed Clifton's category of temporal silence, does the difference of stylistic periods of these two works account for the very different uses of silence? Is there any indication that the respective stylistic periods encouraged the respective composer to

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<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics: A Translation and Commentary for Students of Literature*, tr. Leon Golden (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1968), 3.

<sup>38</sup> George Steiner, *Heidegger* (London: Fontana, 1992), 11, 67.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 125. Steiner, *Heidegger*, 26-27, indicates that the German word, *Lichtung*, as used by Heidegger, is meant to refer to a forest clearing and that being suddenly thrust into the center of this clearing is a metaphor of Heidegger's own astonishment at the very fact of existence, of being in Being. See also David Cooper, *Heidegger* (London: Claridge Press, 1996), 29.

<sup>40</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (London: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 208.

<sup>41</sup> Georges Gusdorf, *Speaking-La Parole*, tr. Paul Brockelman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 90; quoted in Clifton, "Poetics," 164.

<sup>42</sup> Clifton, "Poetics," 163.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

think of musical silence's expressive potential in a particular way? Would Berlioz have been at all inclined to use musical silence in the service of playful wit, as Haydn did? If so, would it nonetheless be the same understanding of musical *bon esprit* associated with Haydn's works? If use of silence in music is conscious on the part of the composer, what record does he leave of how he perceived silence and how he expected his audience to perceive it?

There are constants in the use of musical silence across all stylistic periods, and the categories can be defined in such a way that they account for all stylistic periods, as is done below. But the post-Clifton musicological literature on silence gradually shifted from works that consider a wide array of stylistic periods to those that consider only one period, the works of only one composer, or specific works of a composer. Musicological study of silence is too recent to determine whether this shift represents a consensus that has developed among musicologists, even if tacitly. But it is worth noting that none of the earlier explorations on musical silence, all of which tend to cut rather wide swathes across stylistic periods,<sup>45</sup> have established themselves as methodological models for later scholars.

### **Early Subjective Perceptions of Musical Silence.**

Clifton's essay remained for nearly twenty years the only significant effort at understanding musical silence.<sup>46</sup> During that time Lewis Jones wrote a long essay in his 1992 book, *Silence and Music and Other Essays*.<sup>47</sup> Whereas Clifton was reluctant to mention extra-musical associations of "human significance," however, Jones does so unabashedly in a series of subjective sense impressions. This subjectivity is also apparent in the fact that while Jones's essay apparently purports to explore musical silence in all periods, it dismisses twentieth-century repertoire, which is where musical silence first attains prominence. The essay can be enjoyed as one writer's personal reflections on a few favorite works rather than as a scholarly analysis, which perhaps explains why Jones's work has not been mentioned in subsequent critical literature on musical silence.

Vladimir Jankélévitch's chapter on music and silence in his *Music and the Ineffable*,<sup>48</sup> which appeared in the original French between the publication of Clifton's and Jones's essays, reflects a more subjective approach as well. Though inventive and often poetic in its expression, the reader must usually rely solely on Jankélévitch's subjective assertions without any evidence. An intuitive

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<sup>45</sup> Vladimir Jankélévitch's chapter, "Music and Silence," in *Music and the Ineffable*, 130-55, written in the original French in 1983, focuses on composers associated with late Romanticism (Rachmaninoff), nationalism (Mussorgsky and Bartók) and with Impressionism (Debussy and Ravel). That Jankélévitch's book was not translated into English until 2003 means its influence among Anglophone scholars was limited during the period between Clifton's article and more recent studies.

<sup>46</sup> This comment applies to Anglophone scholarship. Anglophone musicological research on silence includes very few references to foreign-language scholarship on the topic.

<sup>47</sup> Lewis Jones, *Silence and Music and Other Essays* (Burgess Hill, Sussex: The Book Guild Ltd., 1992).

<sup>48</sup> Jankélévitch, 130-55.

response to this intuitive writer is to suspect that his assertions are generally correct; that, for example, Jankélévitch is correct in stating that Borodin sought in *In the Steppes of Central Asia* to convey, in the “obstinate horizontal monotone of a dominant pedal,” the Russian steppes’ “gray uniformity” of sand and silence, its *ennui*.<sup>49</sup> But silence’s polyvalence means that a pedal tone in a work of program music about a desert can convey *ennui* to one person and spiritual freedom and adventure to another, which would be the case for a Russian *starets*, for example. And why are the lakes Rimsky-Korsakov is said to carve out in the midst of the swarming landscapes of his operas zones of “solitude and silence”?<sup>50</sup> Why are they not lakes of *ennui* or of exhaustion or of anticipation or of any other feelings one can associate with silence?

### **Gaudibert’s Taxonomic Approach.**

Clifton’s first attempt at a taxonomy of musical silence had an important successor in the non-anglophone world in Eric Gaudibert’s 1995 French article, *Les silences: essai sur les différentes catégories du silence musical*.<sup>51</sup> Gaudibert’s article, though extremely spare, is worth a more focused examination because it provides a basic structure this thesis adapts in order to arrive at its proposed taxonomy. Before constructing a taxonomy of musical silences, Gaudibert makes an oblique reference to the question of philosophy and musical silence. As in Clifton’s essay, Gaudibert appeals to the phenomenological perspective. Commenting on the paucity of signs for indicating silence in musical notation and observing that these signs seem thin and colorless (*sans épaisseur, sans couleur*), Gaudibert decides that the only approach will be phenomenological.<sup>52</sup> There ends the philosophizing. Brief too is Gaudibert’s echo of Clifton’s caveat against employing taxonomies as anything more than mere heuristic devices. Taxonomies, he notes, can be reductive.<sup>53</sup> That is all he says on the matter.

As to the taxonomy itself, Gaudibert proposes seven categories of musical silence. Since his perspective is that of a composer, it is not surprising that his article is more pragmatic than scholarly or reflective. It amounts to little more than a list that has been fleshed out a bit, sometimes not fully enough to make his meaning clear. Gaudibert gives no more justification for his project than the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 134. The program notes at the first performance (April 8, 1880) read as follows: “In the silence of the monotonous deserts of Central Asia are heard for the first time the strains of a peaceful Russian song. From the distance we hear the approach of horses and camels and the melancholy notes of an oriental melody. A caravan emerges out of the boundless steppe, escorted by Russian soldiers and continues safely and fearlessly on its long way, protected by the formidable military power of the conquerors. It slowly disappears. The tranquil songs of conqueror and conquered merge in harmony, echoes of which linger on as the caravan disappears in the distance.” Sergei Dianin, *Borodin* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 114.

<sup>50</sup> Jankélévitch, 136.

<sup>51</sup> Eric Gaudibert, “Les silences: essai sur les différentes catégories du silence musical,” *Cahiers du CIREM: Musique et Silence* (Rouen, Université de Tours, 1994): 113-120. (Listed in the table of contents as “Les différentes catégories du silence musical.”)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

value of gathering diverse musical examples, otherwise distanced from each other, into one multi-colored bundle (*un faisceau multicolore des musiques éloignées les unes des autres*).<sup>54</sup> But this is justification enough since his effort goes further than anyone else's in attempting a taxonomic scheme of musical silence.

### **Gaudibert's Taxonomy and This Thesis's Taxonomy.**

The following discussion re-arranges the order of Gaudibert's seven categories to present a spectrum of musical silence organized according to three concurrent tiers. One tier arranges the spectrum from functional musical silences, on one end of the spectrum, through purely musical or formalist silences, and finally to musical silences that convey meaning by extra-musical associations on the other end of the spectrum. Another tier runs from neutral silence on one end and first-level-positive (silence perceived as existing unto itself, with its own qualities) on the other. Roughly parallel with these two tiers is the third that runs from silences that escape notice to those that are readily apparent to the listener. Arranging Gaudibert's spectrum along these tiers, the list is as follows:

Integrated  
Punctuative  
Dramatic  
Interrogative  
*Pathétique*<sup>55</sup>  
Underlying  
Silence of the Abyss/Vacant

These categories are arranged along the spectrum as presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

|  |                    |                 |                  |                   |                               |                                 |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Spectrum 1: <b>First-Level-Neutral</b> to <b>First-Level-Positive</b>                          |                    |                 |                  |                   |                               |                                 |
| Spectrum 2: <b>Functional</b> to <b>Purely Musical Meaning</b> to <b>Extra-Musical Meaning</b> |                    |                 |                  |                   |                               |                                 |
| Spectrum 3: Silences that <b>Escape Notice</b> to <b>Readily Apparent</b> Silences             |                    |                 |                  |                   |                               |                                 |
| <b>Integrated</b>  | <b>Punctuative</b> | <b>Dramatic</b> | <b>Interrog.</b> | <i>Pathétique</i> | <b>Underlying<br/>silence</b> | <b>Silence of<br/>the Abyss</b> |

Gaudibert identifies integrated silence as purely functional and thus neutral and offers two examples.<sup>56</sup> The first is the silence that breaks up the singer's line in *recitativo secco*, especially when the recitative is rapid. Breaking up the quick-flowing stream of words would be natural in speech; so too in singing. Most singers will either give thought to where these silences occur or will have an intuitive command of where they should occur. But these silences are meant to slip by

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Maintaining the French *pathétique* seems preferable since the usual English definitions (moving, passionate, and so on) do not seem to capture Gaudibert's use of the term, sketchy though Gaudibert's use of the term is.

<sup>56</sup> Gaudibert, 117.

unnoticed in masterful performances. Gaudibert’s other example of integrated silence is a group of articulations that rely on silence for their effect but focus the listener’s attention on the quality of the sound, not the silence. *Staccato* and *portando* are two instances. The silence that helps execute these articulations is so brief it cannot generally have its own expression.

Tempo is a factor in integrated silence. The same articulations in a very slow tempo could well be intended to call attention to the silences, thus shifting them into a different category. An example of a *staccato* marking that might call attention to the silence as well as the sound and thus move beyond the integrated silence category would be a melodramatic use of slow, staccato notes in a minor key and at a soft dynamic level, suggesting ominous stealth or suspense. The fact that these staccato silences are repeated would place them in the category of repetitive silence, discussed below.

There is an integrated silence of a slightly different nature that Gaudibert does not identify. This silence occurs when a voice or voices in a several-voice texture fall silent while others continue to sound. Clifton’s registral silences,<sup>57</sup> when a voice in a certain register—a high register usually—goes silent for a while, or Gaudibert’s mention of voices in polyphony that are silent to “aerate” the texture<sup>58</sup> are examples. This is different from sonic exuviation, a sound-as-silence technique discussed in the next chapter, because sonic exuviation is an obvious silencing of certain voices at a noisy climax. Sonic exuviation is so obvious, indeed, that it generally conveys some kind of extra-musical meaning. The art of this kind of integrated silence, on the other hand, is that it is not readily apparent. Indeed, it might not be intended to be noticed or to convey anything at all. If it can be interpreted as conveying anything dramatically and/or rhetorically, however, it moves to the purely-musical-meaning-to-extra-musical-meaning side of the spectrum. This warrants a new category: integrated silence with dramatic or rhetorical intent.<sup>59</sup> An example of an integrated silence with rhetorical intent would be a high-register voice dropping out for a while and returning at an important moment in a phrase.

Punctuative silence is the most natural of musical silences. It articulates music’s phrases, its syntax. It might or might not be written in the score. If it is written, it might be in the form of a *caesura* or a *fermata*.<sup>60</sup> The example Gaudibert gives is not a specific musical work but various *rubato* interpretations of a specific musical work. He notes several performances of a dramatic passage leading to the coda in Chopin’s Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23 (Example 2.2). Artur Schnabel adds no perceptible punctuative silence. Krystian Zimerman adds a significant silence in

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<sup>57</sup> Clifton, “Poetics,” 171-78.

<sup>58</sup> Gaudibert, 117.

<sup>59</sup> See Table 2.2 below for the revision of Gaudibert’s taxonomy.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

the middle of bar 200. Vladimir Horowitz (in a 1957 recording) adds a silence and a break (*caesura*) before bar 206.<sup>61</sup>

Example 2.2<sup>62</sup>

Though Gaudibert does not make this observation, the varied interpretations he presents of the Chopin passage point to the fact that it is somewhere in the category of punctuative silence that silences shift from serving the music without being noticed to making comments on the music, as it were, sometimes dramatically. A silence executed by a *caesura*, for instance, can simply give a sense of rounding out a phrase or it can arrive at a moment that creates enormous dramatic tension, thus calling attention to the silence itself. Gaudibert’s definition of punctuative silences would include the silences used to rhetorical effect in Arcangelo Corelli’s instrumental music where silences demarcate formal and harmonic boundaries. Even those who know nothing about the Baroque interest in rhetoric can sense that these silences play a rhetorical role in furthering the musical argument of a passage. For example, in the openings of his slow-tempo movements, Corelli’s punctuative silences present a sense of retarded or impeded motion in an ongoing harmonic progression. The rests in bars four and eight of the *Adagio* movement of his op. 2, no. 7 are instances of this stylistic technique (Example 2.3). Another example is Corelli’s “pre-cadential”

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. Gaudibert supplies no bibliographic references to the particular recordings he discusses.

<sup>62</sup> Engraved from Frédéric Chopin, *Ballade in G Minor*, Op. 23, *Anthology of Romantic Music*, ed. Leon Plantinga (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), 203.

silence, inserted between a dominant chord and a marked *Adagio* passage leading to a temporary tonic or a final tonic cadence (the first quarter-note rest in bar 31, Example 2.4).

Example 2.3<sup>63</sup>

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Example 2.3. The first system includes staves for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), and Violoncello & Contrabasso (Vc. & Cb.). The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The second system continues the notation for the same instruments, starting at measure 6. The music is in 4/4 time and features a prominent silence in the second measure of the second system.

Example 2.4<sup>64</sup>

The image displays a musical score for Example 2.4, starting at measure 29. It includes staves for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The score shows a significant silence in the second measure of the first system.

An important example of a punctuative silence with a particularly dramatic rhetorical intent is the one with which Ellen T. Harris opens her study of Handel's pauses.<sup>65</sup> This is the silence at bar 92 before the final "hallelujah" of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" (Example 2.5). This mere two-quarter-note silence can be treated as a perfunctory punctuation, a comma. But it can, and probably should, be performed as a punctuation with enormous dramatic import. The dramatic impact of this silence can be perceived from the perspective of the purely musical alone, though this silence before the

<sup>63</sup> Engraved from Harris in "Silence as Sound," 529 and 534, taken from Arcangelo Corelli, op. 2 no. 7, *Adagio*, *Les Oeuvres Arcangelo Corelli* (London: Augener, 1952-65) I: 98.

<sup>64</sup> Engraved from Harris in "Silence as Sound," 529 and 534, taken from Arcangelo Corelli, op. 1 no. 9, *Allegro-Adagio*, *Les Oeuvres Arcangelo Corelli*. A catalog of punctuative silences with rhetorical intent in late-Baroque music is provided in Raphaëlle Legrand's *Pauses fonctionnelles et silences expressifs*, "Cahiers du CIREM: Musique et Silence": 28-36.

<sup>65</sup> Harris, "Silence as Sound," 521-24.



final cadence of Handel’s chorus is open to a number of extra-musical interpretations: the theology of the text, the extra-musical associations of this famous work’s reception history, its place in British culture and politics, and so on. The musical logic of these final measures is determined by the gradual acceleration of rhythmic motion, quarter notes on “King of Kings,” then eighth notes on “forever and ever,” then sixteenth and eighth notes on “hallelujah” as the sopranos sound and sound again the tonic. Then the silence throws this logic aside and opens into a breathtaking, vertiginous moment. Then, the listener is safely caught up into the reassuring triumph of the final, plagal cadence.

Example 2.5<sup>66</sup>

The image shows a musical score for the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. It features four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, along with a Piano accompaniment. The lyrics for all parts are: "lu - jah! Hal-le-lu - jah! Hal-le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah!". The score is in G major and 4/4 time. The vocal parts are written in treble clef, while the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a prominent bass line. The vocal parts enter in a staggered fashion, with the Soprano and Alto parts starting first, followed by the Tenor and Bass parts. The piano accompaniment provides a steady accompaniment throughout the piece.

Gaudibert describes dramatic silence by presenting several metaphors. Dramatic silence is a crossroads (*carrefour*), a point at which the curtain can rise. It leads the listener to feel that all is open, that a deliverance or a rebirth or a realization is at hand (often by being poised on the dominant).<sup>67</sup> One example Gaudibert suggests is the bar-long *fermata* with the score indication, *Touchée par ce grand amour* before an equally dramatic glissando in Ravel’s *Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête* from *Ma mère l’oye* (Example 2.6). He also mentions the closing bar of Movement 13, *Prestissimo*, of Franz Liszt’s Piano Sonata in B Minor, S. 178 (Example 2.7).

<sup>66</sup> Engraved from G. F. Handel, *The Messiah*, “Hallelujah Chorus,” (New York: G. Schirmer, 1912), 203.

<sup>67</sup> Gaudibert, 114.

Example 2.6<sup>68</sup>

*La Bête tombe évanouie de désespoir* *Touchée par ce grand amour, la Belle la relève et lui accorde sa main.*

Vif *ff* *pp* *glissando* *8<sup>va</sup>* *1<sup>er</sup> Mouvt* *pp très expressif*

The musical score for Example 2.6 consists of two systems. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It starts with a 'Vif' tempo and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The right hand plays a series of chords, while the left hand plays a simple accompaniment. A 'glissando' is indicated over a series of notes in the right hand, which then continues as an 8va glissando. The second system is marked '1<sup>er</sup> Mouvt' and begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and the instruction 'très expressif'. The tempo is slower, and the music features a series of chords in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

Example 2.7<sup>69</sup>

*8<sup>va</sup>* *tremolando* *sf* *Andante sostenuto* *p* *col Ped.*

The musical score for Example 2.7 consists of two systems. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right hand plays a series of chords, while the left hand plays a simple accompaniment. A 'tremolando' is indicated over a series of notes in the right hand, which then continues as an 8va tremolando. The second system is marked 'Andante sostenuto' and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction 'col Ped.'. The tempo is slower, and the music features a series of chords in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

The notation used in these examples is a *fermata*, one of the two notations Gaudibert lists as an example of punctuative silence. The only distinction between his understanding of a punctuative silence and a dramatic silence by crescendo is that the latter clearly conveys a sense of drama. By arranging Gaudibert's categories along a spectrum that moves from silences that go unnoticed to those that are expressive, Gaudibert's category of dramatic silence is better identified as a form of punctuative silence intended to have a dramatic or rhetorical effect.

Gaudibert identifies another form of dramatic silence, which this study identifies as a category in its own right: repetitive silence. Gaudibert's discussion of repetitive silence conveys dramatic expectancy by an emptying out, *un épuisement* (*diminuendo*). It is not the quality of emptying out that leads to the creation of a new category, however, but the quality of the repeated silences. The example Gaudibert gives is the series of repeated silences at the very end of Wagner's

<sup>68</sup> Engraved from Maurice Ravel, *Ma mère l'oye, Entretien entre la Belle et la Bête* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1912), 22.

<sup>69</sup> Engraved from Franz Liszt, *Piano Sonata in B Minor*, S. 178 (Frankfurt: C. F. Peters: 1945), 34.

prelude of *Tristan und Isolde* (Example 2.8). Gaudibert hears this as a dramatic silence because he hears it as conveying a sense of dramatic expectancy.

Example 2.8<sup>70</sup>

Repetitive silence can convey meaning without benefit of any extra-musical association and is thus more comfortably situated in the “Purely Musical Meaning” part of this thesis’s taxonomy. To take Wagner’s *Tristan* prelude as an example, because of the musical parameters in which these repetitive silences occur, it is possible to hear them as conveying drama tinged with a sense of resignation without being aware of any extra-musical data. The tonality of the entire prelude is ambiguous enough that the listener is not sure whether a tonal resolution will occur. In this context, the *diminuendo*, the last Gs, and the last repeated silences are eloquent in their own right. The uninformed listener might not expect an entire opera to follow, but the prelude is a musical distillation of the idea of resigning oneself to something powerful, which is what the opera is about: *Tristan and Isolde* confronted with *Liebeshod*.

One could claim that repetitive silence is simply a series of punctuative silences. But repeated silences are generally more likely to claim the listener’s attention, to assert that the silences occur with intent. This is especially so in the context of Western music that tends to focus on sound rather than silence, which means that repeated silences are all the more striking. Repetitive silence

<sup>70</sup> Engraved from Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 20.

includes silences that empty out, as in Gaudibert’s example from Wagner’s prelude; that build up; and that contribute to any number of other expressive qualities music conveys. Gaudibert does not supply an example of repetitive silences by build-up. An example is the series of three silences that begin nine bars after rehearsal Z in Jean Sibelius’s *Symphony No. 7* (Example 2.9). Each silence is followed by a crescendo as the strings play F-sharp and B-flat, pitches that, in the chromatic context of this passage, increase the sense of indeterminacy and growing tension.

Example 2.9<sup>71</sup>

The image shows a musical score for five string instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The score is marked 'Affettuoso'. It consists of five staves. The first three staves (Vln. I, Vln. II, and Vla.) show a series of silences followed by crescendos. The dynamics are marked as *f*, *cresc.*, *ff*, *mp*, *mf*, and *cresc. f*. The Vc. part starts with *f*, then *dim.*, and *p*. The score is in 4/4 time and features a chromatic sequence of pitches (F-sharp and B-flat) that increase the sense of indeterminacy and growing tension.

An example of expressive repetitive silence that is less about drama, more about humor is Franz Josef Haydn’s *String Quartet No. 30* in E-flat Major, op. 33, “The Joke,” No. 2, Hob.III: 38. At the end of the final movement, beginning at bar 155, Haydn uses a series of silences that help account for the musical joke (assuming listeners with the proper sense of humor) (Example 2.10). Without embarking on a harmonic and motivic analysis of this passage, suffice it to say that this is a work that knows how it should end and knows the audience knows how it should end, and uses silence to play with those expectations.

<sup>71</sup> Engraved from Jean Sibelius, *Symphony No. 7 in C Major, op. 105* (London: British & Continental Music Agencies Ltd, 1925), 74.

Example 2.10<sup>72</sup>

Gaudibert does not define the category he identifies as interrogative silence (*le silence interrogatif*).<sup>73</sup> Interrogative silence seems to be an unexpected silence that does not simply surprise but also captures the listener's attention. (*Il captive par son intervention inopiné.*) Because of the sketchiness of Gaudibert's discussion of this category of silence, and because the musical examples do not clarify matters, this category is dropped from the taxonomy developed here.

Gaudibert's *silence pathétique* category is further towards the expressive end of the spectrum because Gaudibert describes this silence in terms that suggest consistently strong emotions, whether it is the anguish of a sigh that breaks the word *sospiri* in Gesualdo's Madrigal no 3, Livre V (Example 2.11), the *expressif et douloureux* (expressive and mournful) melody—including the silences that break up the melody—Debussy wrote as the score indication of his *Des pas sur la neige* (Example 2.12), or the menacing, mysterious silence that begins Franz Liszt's Sonata in B Minor, S178/R21 (Example 2.13). But rather than standing apart as a category in its own right, *silence pathétique* can be included in the slightly expanded understanding of the category of punctuative

<sup>72</sup> Engraved from Josef Haydn, Quartet for Two Violins, Viola and Violoncello, E-Flat Major, Hob. III: 38 (Op. 33/2), ed. Wilhelm Altmann (London: Ernst Eulenburg), 18.

<sup>73</sup> Gaudibert, 115.

silence or in the category of repetitive silence, depending on whether the passage in question employs, respectively, a single silence or a series of repeated silences.

Example 2.11<sup>74</sup>

Canto  
I - tene ò miei so - spi - ri

Quinto  
I - tene ò miei so - spi - ri

Alto  
I - tene ò miei so - spi - ri

Tenore  
I - tene ò miei so - spi - ri

Basso  
I - tene ò miei so - spi - ri

Example 2.12<sup>75</sup>

Triste et lent ♩ = 44

Piano

*pp*

*p expressif et douloureux*

*più pp*

*Ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé*

*m.d.*

*pp*

*expressif*

<sup>74</sup> Engraved from Carlo Gesualdo, “Itene o miei sospiri,” Madrigals, Book V, No. 3, *Madrigale für fünf Stimmen* (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1980), 19.

<sup>75</sup> Engraved from Claude Debussy, *Complete Preludes, Books 1 and 2, Des pas sur la neige* (New York: Dover, 1989), 22.

Example 2.13<sup>76</sup>

The image shows a musical score for piano, divided into two sections. The first section is marked 'Lento assai' and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction 'sotto voce'. The music is in a 4/4 time signature and features a sparse, atmospheric texture with long intervals and a sense of suspension. The second section is marked 'Allegro energico' and begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. This section is characterized by a more rhythmic and active texture, with a clear change in tempo and energy. The score is written for piano with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

Gaudibert’s discussion of the two categories of silence “specific to music of the twentieth century,”<sup>77</sup> underlying silence and vacant silence or silence of the abyss, is even more oblique and sketchy, in some ways, than his discussion of the other categories. For this reason, and because twentieth-century musical silence is covered in the chapter on twentieth-century musical silence, informed by David Metzger’s fuller exploration of musical silence,<sup>78</sup> this discussion offers only a few observations about these categories. Gaudibert describes underlying silence (*le silence entretenu*) in poetic terms as the silence in Anton Webern’s work that presents music as held by a thread, fragile, in danger, hovering over a boundary between silence and sound.<sup>79</sup> Gaudibert’s silence of the abyss has to do with the “new aesthetic, born around 1910” in which the listener loses certitudes and moorings and has access to “a window open onto an abyss” (*une fenêtre ouverte sur un gouffre*).<sup>80</sup> Two bars of absolute emptiness before rehearsal number 42 in Edgard Varèse’s *Arcana*<sup>81</sup> supply Gaudibert’s example of this kind of silence.

The adaptation of Gaudibert’s taxonomy is presented as Table 2.2. To summarize, this new taxonomy has fewer categories than Gaudibert’s and arranges those categories along three tiers. It also makes a distinction between literal silence and sound as silence, a distinction Gaudibert does not make. Sound as silence is discussed more fully in the next chapter.

<sup>76</sup> Engraved from Franz Liszt, *Piano Sonata in B Minor*, S. 178 (Frankfurt: C. F. Peters: 1945).

<sup>77</sup> Gaudibert, 113.

<sup>78</sup> David Metzger, “Modern Silence,” *The Journal of Musicology* 23 (Summer 2006): 331-374.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* A literary exemplar of this Modernist sense of an abyss of consciousness and memory is Luigi Pirandello, who will be discussed in the chapter on silence in twentieth-century music.

<sup>81</sup> Edgard Varèse, *Arcana*, (New York: Franco Colombo, Inc., 1964), 114.

Table 2.2

|  |  |                    |   |                   |                             |
|--|--|--------------------|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Spectrum 1: <b>First-Level-Neutral</b> to <b>First-Level-Positive</b>                            |  |                    |   |                   |                             |
| Spectrum 2: <b>Functional</b> to <b>Purely Musical Meaning</b> to <b>Extra-Musical Meaning</b> . |  |                    |   |                   |                             |
| <b>Literal Silence</b>   |  |                    |   |                   | <b>Sound as<br/>Silence</b> |
| Spectrum 3: Silences that <b>Escape Notice</b> to <b>Readily Apparent Silences</b>               |  |                    |   |                   |                             |
| <b>Integrated</b>  | <b>Integrated<br/>w/ dramatic<br/>or rhetorical<br/>intent</b> | <b>Punctuative</b> | <b>Punctuative<br/>w/ dramatic<br/>or rhetorical<br/>intent</b> | <b>Repetitive</b> |                             |

### **Resisting Taxonomies: Stan Link’s “Much Ado About Nothing”.**

Stan Link’s 1995 article, “Much Ado About Nothing,” was the first step towards the position that resists the taxonomic approach. Link’s article accomplishes this implicitly by being one of the first articles on musical silence—if not the first—that proposes no taxonomy at all. Perhaps because of this approach, the scope of musical silence “Much Ado” considers is limited to the musical rest. The thoughtfulness and creativity of “Much Ado” furthers the discussion on musical silence in a way no one had heretofore done by reflecting on the question of musical silence and meaning.

Link gives a couple of passing nods to silence as noumenal.<sup>82</sup> But the essay consistently describes silence in terms that are first-level-neutral: nothing more than “the absence of sound,”<sup>83</sup> silence “is *the* featureless landscape,”<sup>84</sup> and so on. In spite of the first-level-neutral language, however, Link’s perspective often shades into what can only be regarded as first-level-positive and second-level-negative silence (silence experienced as existing unto itself and as unpleasant). It seems banal to say that some people are comfortable with silence, some are not. But Link’s essay serves as a reminder that differing perceptions about silence have to do with individual temperament and psychological disposition. “Much Ado” tends to identify strongly with those who are not comfortable with silence, even to the extent that it is not clear whether Link has ever experienced silence as first- and second-level-positive. One example of Link’s perspective is in his claim that the time of silence, unlike sound, “makes us notice the passage of time in general.”<sup>85</sup> This statement does not take into account the many references in poetic and mystical literature that connect the experience of silence with losing track of time. Link is not absolutist in his view of silence as negative. He implies that silence does not always occasion discomfort.<sup>86</sup> But in this same passage, he catalogues a number of negative experiences of silence, but no positive experiences. Link

<sup>82</sup> Link, “Much Ado,” 242, 254

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.



acknowledges that musical silence will not generally be of the same cast as the unpleasant non-musical silences he mentions. But his language softens only slightly the negative effect of silence when encountered in music. Silence “in a musical context usually lacks such a punitive cast, and might be somewhat less severe.”<sup>87</sup> The suggestion is that music is all about sound, not sound and silence, and that music’s sound keeps predominantly negative silence at bay. Most of those who reflect and write on silence tend to have an explicitly first-level-positive view of it. Link is an exception. Thanks to his essay, he comes close to expressing a viewpoint that helps make sense of Britten’s relationship to silence since Britten also had a largely second-level-negative view of silence, as the second part of this thesis shows.

### **Explicitly Resisting Taxonomies: John Potter and Naomi Waltham-Smith.**

Articulation of the taxonomy-resisting perspective became explicit in John Potter’s 2007 essay, “The Communicative Rest”<sup>88</sup> and in Naomi Waltham-Smith’s 2009 review of the collection of essays on musical silence, *Silence, Music, Silent Music*,<sup>89</sup> that includes Potter’s essay. Of the twelve essays collected and edited by Losseff and Doctor, Waltham-Smith praised two, John Potter’s and another essay on musical silence by Stan Link,<sup>90</sup> discussed below. Potter’s essay uses the language of resisting the proposal of a taxonomy.<sup>91</sup> The word “resist” implies a temptation, which Potter connects to giving in to an “academic appeal” and “a composerly control of the music.” Potter, writing from the perspective of a performer, argues that categorizing musical silence—and his concern is specifically with the narrower type of musical silence accomplished by notating the musical rest—runs the risk of “reducing such powerful communicative devices to simple functions.” Identifying categories of musical silence would “deny the ambiguities involved in the creative performer’s role of story-teller.” He goes further by claiming that the performer must feel free to “conspire” with the audience in a project to “own the music” in the moment, “taking control of the materials away from the composer and his or her score.”<sup>92</sup> Potter posits not one but two consequences of following the taxonomic approach. One is that of denying the creative ambiguity of musical silence by a taxonomic reductionism. The other is that of ceding control to the composer and the score, which would apparently happen if a taxonomy of musical silences were regarded as supplying a standard check-list from which the composer chooses (and which the performer is expected to follow and the listener to understand).

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>88</sup> John Potter, “The Communicative Rest,” in Losseff, *Silence, Music*, 155-68.

<sup>89</sup> Naomi Waltham-Smith, “Review of *Silence, Music, Silent Music*,” *Music & Letters* 90:2 (May 2009): 317-20.

<sup>90</sup> Stan Link, “Going Gently: Contemplating Silences and Cinematic Death,” in Losseff, *Silence, Music*, 319.

<sup>91</sup> Waltham-Smith, 319.

<sup>92</sup> Potter, “The Communicative Rest,” 168.

The first temptation in Potter's list is one Gaudibert and other writers who devise various taxonomies recognize and warn against.<sup>93</sup> The difference between those who employ taxonomies and those who do not is that the former generally convey a sense that because musical scholarship should catch up with the phenomenon of musical silence,<sup>94</sup> the pragmatic approach of listing or categorizing is the best way to encourage its development. No one claims that his or her taxonomy is exhaustive or sufficient unto itself. Moreover, Potter implicitly concedes that freedom from the risks of categories of musical silence is a luxury the composer cannot afford when he mentions the "composerly control" a taxonomy can give.<sup>95</sup> The vast majority of music Potter performs was and is written by composers who organize the seemingly infinite possibilities of sound according to controls (rules of voice leading, conventions of tonal harmony, and so on). Why not allow some degree of mutually agreed upon control for silence? In practice, Potter, an informed performer, does take into account the composer's intent in using silence and apparently follows it. For example, he objects to the interpretations of some singers of J. S. Bach's *Johannes-Passion*, scene 25a, bars 1-4 as glossing over Bach's carefully structured rhetoric.<sup>96</sup>

Potter's critique of the taxonomic approach as leaning towards too academic a division and subdivision of categories is one that needs to be taken seriously. One response to this critique is the simplification of Gaudibert's taxonomy offered above. The hope is that this simplification and adaptation will move the discussion towards a taxonomy of basic types of musical silence rather than a too-detailed list that could indeed treat musical silence as reductionist.

### **Resisting Taxonomies: Stan Link and Film Music.**

The other essay from the Losseff/Doctor collection of essays Waltham-Smith endorsed was Stan Link's "Going Gently: Contemplating Silences and Cinematic Death."<sup>97</sup> As in Link's earlier essay, this essay does not explicitly refute the value of a taxonomic approach to musical silence. But Waltham-Smith's comments on the essay link it with Potter's as establishing a stand against, or at least as raising a challenge to, the taxonomic approach. Waltham-Smith states that these essays benefit "from a detailed consideration of examples chosen for the dramatic force of their storytelling" rather than relying on taxonomic structures.<sup>98</sup> Since Waltham-Smith's piece is a review, it

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<sup>93</sup> Gaudibert, 113.

<sup>94</sup> Gaudibert, for instance, asks why traditional analysis fails to take silence into account and why musical notation has produced such a paucity of signs to indicate silence. Gaudibert, 113. Anna Danielewicz-Betz, in "Silence and Pauses in Discourse and Music," Ph.D. Thesis, Saarbrücken, University of Saarland, 1998, 1, comments that there is no precedent for a study such as hers. Her focus is narrower in that she undertakes, apparently for the first time, a functional comparison of silence and pauses in discourse and music. But as noted above, Clifton's article seems to be the first sustained musicological reflection on musical silence whether in general or according the narrower scope of Danielewicz-Betz's study. And Harris, in "Silence as Sound: Handel's Sublime Pauses," 522, note 2, comments on the "surprisingly few modern discussions of notated silence in music."

<sup>95</sup> Potter, "The Communicative Rest," 168.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>97</sup> Link, "Going Gently," 69-86.

<sup>98</sup> Naomi Waltham-Smith, "Review of *Silence, Music, Silent Music*," *Music & Letters* 90:2 (May 2009): 319.

should not be asked to provide a full justification for rejecting the taxonomic approach. What Waltham-Smith does offer, however, is a statement of her preference for analyses that have dramatic force through story-telling and are thought-provoking. Story-telling is more important to her than what she refers to as mere “exposition.”<sup>99</sup>

Stan Link’s “Going Gently” is a delight on those terms. Whereas John Potter pays careful attention to the composer’s intent (his rhetoric of almost conspiring against the composer’s score notwithstanding), Stan Link achieves the Ricoeurian program of taking no notice of the composer’s intent.<sup>100</sup> In the context of “Going Gently,” however, this approach is arguably best since the music being analyzed is drawn from film scores. A film score composer would fail to serve the demands of the genre if he asserts his intent over that of the director and actors and strives to communicate directly—as directly as music can communicate—to the audience. The film score composer must generally supply music that is auxiliary to the director’s intent. And since all of the films Link explores are strongly narrative in character, Waltham-Smith is correct in pointing out the effectiveness of Link’s story-telling approach.

Rather than discredit the taxonomy-resisting approach, this thesis argues in favor of incorporating some of its insights into the taxonomic approach. Potter is correct in cautioning against a too-academic approach to musical silence that divides and subdivides categories as if to construct a rigid checklist of musical silences. And both Waltham-Smith and Link offer helpful reminders that the use of musical silence in some genres justifies not only an almost-conspiracy against the composer’s intent but a straightforward disregard of it.

### **The Importance of Context: Ellen T. Harris and Handel.**

While the taxonomy-resisting position coalesced from 1995 to 2009, two works by Ellen T. Harris continued the taxonomic approach to musical silence. In a 2001 monograph, *Handel as Orpheus*,<sup>101</sup> and a 2005 article, “Silence as Sound,”<sup>102</sup> Harris focuses on the chamber cantatas of George Frideric Handel. She cites several taxonomies of musical silence as useful<sup>103</sup> and outlines a taxonomy of musical silence from the instrumental works of Arcangelo Corelli that appear to have influenced Handel’s use of silence.<sup>104</sup> But the importance of Harris’s work in relation to this discussion is that she looks at musical silence within a much narrower context than taxonomic approaches had so far taken. Her research focused not only on a particular stylistic period, the late

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> One must not expect to appropriate from a text (or a musical score) “the inner life of another ego,” the other ego being that of the writer of a text or composer of a score. Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory : Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 92.

<sup>101</sup> Harris, *Handel as Orpheus*.

<sup>102</sup> Harris, “Silence as Sound.”

<sup>103</sup> Danielewicz-Betz; Legrand, “Pauses fonctionnelles”; Gaudibert; Harris, *Handel as Orpheus*, 193.

<sup>104</sup> Harris, “Silence as Sound,” 527-530.

Baroque, and a particular composer, Handel, but on the even narrower range of a particular genre of Handel's *oeuvre*, his chamber cantatas composed during his years in England. The years in question are those of England's Augustan Age, a period in England's literary rather than musical history. This focus on English literature is important because the role of silence in literature and drama of the period is one of the major facets of the cultural context by which Handel and his contemporaries understood silence.

Harris's methodology influences that of this study, which, because of its larger scope than Harris's chapter-length essay and article, begins by developing an over-arching taxonomy of musical silence. This thesis then follows Harris's lead by focusing on two composers (rather than Harris's one composer) writing for a particular repertoire, ECM, at a particular time. Harris focuses on the interrelation of literature and music, this thesis focuses on the interrelation of literature, music, and, because ECM is liturgical, theology.

### **Conclusion.**

This chapter establishes that most of the musicological literature on silence analyses musical silence by establishing musical-silence taxonomies. Because the scope of this study is more extensive than most scholarly works on musical silence, it undertakes the construction of a taxonomy broad enough to account for all expressions of musical silence. Analysis of the role of silence in the repertoire on which this study focuses calls for application of only parts of the taxonomy since, as the literature review reveals, the common language of musical silence develops varied emphases and inflections according to differences of cultural context and composers' personal experiences and outlooks.

The next chapter explores further the latest development in the literature on musical silence, which is the role of sound as silence in twentieth-century music. Earlier scholarship generally focused on the compositional use of literal silence to express tense pauses, serene stillness, and so on. In 2006, David Metzger published an essay on the prominence of musical silence in the *oeuvres* of several Modernist composers.<sup>105</sup> In the following year, Jan Christiaens and Matthew Hill contributed two essays on the role of silence in specific works of Olivier Messiaen.<sup>106</sup> These analyses thus added to the discussion a type of musical silence that had not really been recognized.

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<sup>105</sup> Metzger, 331-374.

<sup>106</sup> Jan Christiaens, "Sounding Silence, Moving Stillness: Olivier Messiaen's *Le Banquet Céleste*," in Losseff, *Silence, Music*, 53-68; Matthew Hill, "Faith, Silence and Darkness Entwined in Messiaen's 'Regard Du Silence,'" in Losseff, *Silence, Music*, 37-52.

## Chapter Three Twentieth-Century Musical Silence

### Introduction and Seeing Into the Distance.

This chapter provides an introduction to the important role silence plays in the *oeuvres* of several prominent twentieth-century composers: Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Anton Webern, and Olivier Messiaen.<sup>1</sup> Debussy not only launched musical Modernism,<sup>2</sup> he also launched musical silence's unique role in twentieth-century music by making silence prominent in his music. This chapter discusses Debussy's use of musical silence, its connection with the music of Ravel, Webern, and Messiaen, and how Ravel, Webern, and Messiaen further developed twentieth-century perspectives on, and techniques for expressing, musical silence.<sup>3</sup> To give a sense of how important silence was in twentieth-century music, a section of this chapter gives an overview of other twentieth-century composers in whose *oeuvres* silence plays a major role.

This chapter also develops further the notion of sound as silence. Sound as silence has a long history. For example, Léonin used *longues pédales [qui] sont comparables à du silence stylisé qui donne tout leur relief aux méandres des autres voix*.<sup>4</sup> But techniques for using sound to convey silence achieved unprecedented prominence in the twentieth century.

Before exploring the development of musical silence in the twentieth century, this chapter's introduction discusses an aesthetic perspective referred to here as *telaesthesia*, which inspired twentieth-century expressions of musical silence relevant to this study. *Telaesthesia* is defined here as perception, by means of the sense of sight, of distant vistas, this perception generating intellectual and/or artistic reflection. Moreover, the telaesthetic experience is associated with the ineffable (transcending expression) while paradoxically inspiring expression. The dictionary definition of *telaesthesia* or *telaesthesia*—"an impression supposedly received at a distance without the normal operation of the organs of sense"<sup>5</sup>—would more correctly be *paratelaesthesia*, the Greek prefix *para-* indicating "beyond."

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<sup>1</sup> Important though John Cage is in understanding twentieth-century musical silence, his contribution to the subject has to be limited to a footnote for two reasons. First, his *4' 33"* was not written until 1952, well after both Britten and Howells had established their own aesthetic perspectives. Second, Cage's *4' 33"* argues for the non-existence of true silence, which means expressions of musical silence ought to have ended after *4' 33"*. But *4' 33"* was not a dead-end for musical silence. If it established anything about musical silence, it freed composers, performers, and audiences from having to argue whether silence truly exists. It does not exist. Therefore, everyone can get on with expressing silence as if it exists.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Salzman, *Twentieth-Century Music: An Introduction* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 20; Mary H. Wennerstrom, *Anthology of Twentieth-Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1988), v.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Ives, a contemporary of Debussy, also contributed to twentieth-century musical silence. This chapter discusses examples of his perspectives and techniques. But the degree to which Ives was influenced by Debussy concerning silence or instead was an American original, so to speak, is not entirely clear. Also, Ives's influence in early-twentieth-century Britain and Europe was scant at best.

<sup>4</sup> André Souris, *Conditions de la musique et autres écrits* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1976), 65.

<sup>5</sup> *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1972).

Perceiving telaesthetically is linked to Pieper's perception by *intellectus*, discussed in chapter one. Indeed, Pieper's description of perceiving by *intellectus* likens it to looking at a distant vista, a landscape.<sup>6</sup> Telaesthesia occurs not only when looking at something in the distance but also by "simply looking," *simplex intuitus*.<sup>7</sup> To perceive a distant field by means of *ratio* is not *telaesthesia*. Perception by *ratio* might ask such questions as who owns the field; is it used for pasturage or for growing crops; what is its market value; what is the quickest way to get to the field; and so on. "Simply looking" at a distant vista is to engage the poetic imagination that sees a distant field or any distant vista apart from its everyday associations and thus gives it a sense of "otherness." This poetic imagination, which has already moved beyond the scope of the immediate and transforms, with silence's help, the distance into an "otherness," has no difficulty reaching beyond the distant in quest of "that 'besieging Eternity' or whatever it is that lies behind and beyond the flux of ephemera that envelop man's temporal life."<sup>8</sup>

The connection between telaesthetic perception and perception by *intellectus* is also important because of chapter one's discussion of *intellectus*'s connection with reflective reading of texts (a form of *lectio divina*) in Anglican liturgy. The same intuitive perspective is at work whether reading a scriptural passage reflectively or taking in a distant landscape by *intellectus*. Telaesthesia returns to the discussion in chapter four in connection with Howells's non-theist spirituality translating effortlessly into the theist language of Anglican spirituality.

*Telaesthesia* is related to silence because one perceives great distances by sight, not by sound. True, sound covers great distances. But the sense of sight (assuming an open line of sight) can extend further, beyond hearing. As for sounds in the immediate vicinity, if they are not so loud that they clamor for attention, the sense of hearing in the telaesthetic experience brackets those sounds into a neutral quiet. Telaesthetic perception, moreover, transforms this neutral quiet or silence into first- and second-level-positive silence because this quiet plays its role in drawing perception away from one's immediate surroundings to the distant vista, cooperating with sight to transform the distant vista into an "otherness" that is literally and symbolically remote from immediate, everyday reality. The silence where one stands is a reflective silence in the telaesthetic experience.

What this means is that the composer who wishes to express the telaesthetic relies on silence. The composer cannot sketch the silence of the distant vista in his notebook as the artist can. A composer faces the same challenge when attempting to express by sound anything perceived visually: pictures at an exhibition, *jardins sous la pluie*, and so on. But the increased importance of silence in the telaesthetic experience provides a greater challenge to the composer. This chapter's

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<sup>6</sup> Pieper, *Leisure*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 138

discussion turns next to an overview of silence’s role in the *oeuvres* of prominent twentieth-century composers. Some of these composers were delighted to respond to the challenge of expressing the *telaesthetic*.

### Debussy and Twentieth-Century Musical Silence.

Twentieth-century musical silence concerns two streams of musical silence. One is literal silence, employing the term “literal” to mean what is perceived as actual silence. This is simply the continuation of what Metzger refers to as the “age-old ... expressive quiet experienced in tense pauses and serene stillness.”<sup>9</sup> The other stream is sound as silence. Both streams flow from Debussy because of his importance in twentieth-century music in general and the importance of musical silence in his *oeuvre*. Though late Romantic music has its delicate *pianissimos* and intimate chamber music, it tends towards the grandiose rather than quiet. Claude Debussy, reacting in part to late Romanticism’s delight in gigantism, charted a significantly different course. Influenced in his early years by Wagner, the mature Debussy strove to distance himself from that influence.<sup>10</sup> This resulted in Debussy launching music’s Modernist revolution in structure and materials.<sup>11</sup> An aspect of this revolution was the discovery of a significant role for musical silence. Vladimir Jankélévitch identifies Debussy’s overall aesthetic with silence, music floating “on a peaceful, silent sea,” and claims the motto of Debussy’s music could be “from silence to silence, across silence.” “[S]ilence suffuses [Debussy’s music] in each of its parts.”<sup>12</sup> François Lesure wonders if any other composer “made such telling use of silence as a means of expression.”<sup>13</sup> He identifies Debussy’s empty bars in *Pelléas et Mélisande* as examples of Debussy’s “love for this type of emotion” and points out Debussy’s lavish directions on achieving musical silence: “losing itself,” “scarcely,” “almost nothing.”<sup>14</sup> Debussy was also drawn to texts that mention silence. His *Romance: Silence ineffable*, for example, sets a poem by Paul Bourget that opens with *Silence ineffable* and concludes by referring to *musique et silence de l’heure*.<sup>15</sup>

Debussy’s preference for silence was not solely a reaction against the louder volume of so much of the late-Romantic repertoire. His famous discovery of the gamelan music at the 1889 Paris

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<sup>9</sup> Metzger, 336.

<sup>10</sup> François Lesure, “Claude Debussy,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 97; Jane Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France 1914-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 54. Wagner eventually wished “to escape the gigantism that his own work came to represent” (Ross, *The Rest Is Noise*, 14) and refers, in “Music of the Future,” to the musician’s role as giving voice to “sounding silence.” Richard Wagner, “The Music of the Future,” tr. Edward Dannreuther (London, 1873), 47-48, quoted in Richard Langham Smith, “Debussy and the Pre-Raphaelites,” *19th-Century Music* 5, no. 2 (1981): 102.

<sup>11</sup> Salzman, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 20; Wennerstrom, *Anthology*, v.

<sup>12</sup> Jankélévitch, 132-33.

<sup>13</sup> Lesure, 111.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Claude Debussy, *Chansons: Recueil de mélodies dédiées à Marie-Blanche Vasnier* (Paris: Centre de Documentation Claude Debussy).

Universal Exposition opened a new world not only of quieter dynamics but also of new timbres that resonated more effectively in quieter dynamics. Here was a “delicate layering of timbres” and an “air of suspended animation.”<sup>16</sup>

This sense of serenity in terms of timbres and musical dynamics was closely allied in Debussy’s aesthetic to his discovery of scales and the antique modes that rendered the tonic and dominant “nothing more than empty phantoms,”<sup>17</sup> thus stilling tonal logic and fostering “stationary blocks of largely static harmony.”<sup>18</sup> Though analysis of Debussy’s mature works reveals a great deal of rational structure in his craftsmanship, one listens to it by stilling the discursive logic of traditional Western music that charts tonal goals, asks where any given musical moment “is coming from and, especially, where it is headed.”<sup>19</sup> Josef Pieper is an unlikely ally with Impressionist painters and *Symboliste* poets, but much in French aesthetics during this period is articulated by Pieper’s description of stilling *ratio* in favor of *intellectus*.<sup>20</sup>

Debussy’s musical language also includes stilling the argument and exposition of thematic development. It prefers melodic stasis. The listener is not asked to engage in an internal dialogue on the markers and qualities of a phrase, how it is answered or varied, whether its structure is classically proportioned or expansively lyrical. In the hands of Debussy, harmonic and melodic stasis becomes the aesthetic ideal.

That Debussy laid the foundation of twentieth-century sound as silence does not mean there was a widespread embrace of musical silence among twentieth-century composers. The Futurists,<sup>21</sup> Ezra Pound’s Vorticist theories about music,<sup>22</sup> and Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* and the *Rite of Spring* are all examples of Modernist expressions that are alternatives to, if not reactions against, what was perceived as the “static imagism”<sup>23</sup> of composers such as Debussy. But the current of musical silence that Debussy launched has demonstrated its own staying power, perhaps even more influential than the sound and fury of other Modernist voices.

### **Debussy, Literature, and Silence.**

Debussy’s musical language was inspired by literature and painting. Richard Langham Smith has identified the influence of the pre-Raphaelites and, notably, the element of silence in their paintings and poetry in Debussy’s *oeuvre*.<sup>24</sup> The pre-Raphaelite movement caught Debussy’s

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<sup>16</sup> Ross, *The Rest Is Noise*, 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York; London: Norton, 1991), 46.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

<sup>20</sup> Pieper, *Leisure*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> “Luigi Russolo, The Art of Noises,” (1913), quoted in Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 115-16.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen J. Adams, “Musical Neofism: Pound’s Theory of Harmony in Context,” *Mosaic* 13:2 (1980): 49-69.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Langham Smith, 95-109.



attention *avant l'heure* since the movement had made little impact on France at the time Debussy set Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "The Blessed Damozel" as a cantata, *La Damoiselle élue*.<sup>25</sup> The pre-Raphaelites were soon to influence French literature<sup>26</sup> and thus the *Symboliste* writers. This influence included the theme of silence. The *Symboliste* poet, Maurice Maeterlinck, whose *Pelléas et Mélisande* provided the basis for the libretto of Debussy's opera of the same title, was one of the most eloquent poets of twentieth-century silence. "Speech is of time, Silence is of eternity."<sup>27</sup>

Two works, *La Damoiselle élue* (1887) and *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1893-1902),<sup>28</sup> serve as examples of the role of silence in Debussy's *oeuvre*. *La Damoiselle élue* is a work early in Debussy's *oeuvre*. The translation into the French of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem, *The Blessed Damozel* translates as *elle se tut* (she fell silent) the original's "she ceased" in the following passage: "She gazed and listened and then said ... / 'All this is when he comes.' She ceased. / The light thrilled towards her, fill'd / With angels in strong level flight." Debussy dutifully text-painted *elle se tut* by framing this passage in literal silences of rests that stand out because of the tempo indication, *lent*, and the quiet dynamic markings (Example 3.1). Since this is a madrigalistic use of silence, it is mentioned only because such uses of silence can suggest the presence of other types of musical silence, which proves to be the case here.

The *damoiselle*'s cessation of speech becomes eloquent "beauty in sadness" as the poem turns to the "pictorial description of her silent state—her eyes and smile—and the culmination of this intense silence, tears."<sup>29</sup> Rossetti's text relates this silent beauty in sadness to the angels becoming "vague in distant spheres" (*dans les sphères distantes* in the French translation). At this point (bars 3-4 after rehearsal 32, Example 3.2) Debussy "injects a rootless Tristanesque chromaticism into the music ... [a] minor triad with added major sixth, itself an inversion of the Tristan chord ... The effect is of the 'radiant moment' so often captured by Rossetti."<sup>30</sup> Debussy also instructs the low strings to bow over the fingerboard (*sur la touche*) and the brass to play *pianissimo* with mutes. Finally, after the word *distantes*, the low strings play a quiet echo. Then there is a bar of almost-complete silence, broken only by a *pppp* pizzicato in the low strings (Example 3.2). Both literal silence and the careful use of sound present silence associated with distance and with beauty that is inexpressible, ineffable.

Though *La Damoiselle élue* is early in Debussy's *oeuvre*, it already reaches beyond Romanticism's confidence in its ability to express yearning and even the ineffable to Modernism's

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>27</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, "Silence," *The Treasure of the Humble*, trans. Alfred Sutro (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1916), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Lesure, 113.

<sup>29</sup> Langham Smith, 102.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 102-104.

pointing beyond words and music. “Words, after speech, reach / Into the silence,”<sup>31</sup> claims T. S. Eliot. The French-nationalist composer Debussy<sup>32</sup> joined the Anglo-centric Eliot, also influenced by the *Symbolistes*,<sup>33</sup> in the same Modernist desire to reach “The stillness, as a Chinese jar still / Moves perpetually in its stillness.”<sup>34</sup>

*Pelléas et Mélisande* presents another instance of this perspective’s expression. Again, Debussy used a rootless chord to evoke beauty in sadness.<sup>35</sup> Like *La Damoiselle élue*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* culminates in silence. The final tryst in the opera conveys Maeterlinck’s “silences of love” and has Mélisande largely silent. She speaks (rather than sings, thus silencing music) her *je t’aime aussi* “out of her silence.”<sup>36</sup>

Debussy communicated beauty in sadness as unrepresentable by challenging conventions of artistic form and harmony. The result is the development of sound as silence, not entirely a new morphology of musical silence, but one that Debussy helped bring to the fore. Debussy’s sound as silence breathes an air of restraint. Softer timbres, harmonic rootlessness, and an overall economy of writing account for this quality. The use of fluctuating meters, not being controlled by the beat, also enhances this sense of cool restraint.

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<sup>31</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 121

<sup>32</sup> Jane Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France 1914-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 52.

<sup>33</sup> Anne Bentinck, *Romantic Imagery in the Works of Walter De La Mare* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 57.

<sup>34</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950*, 121.

<sup>35</sup> Langham Smith, 102.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

Example. 3.1<sup>37</sup>

30 Un peu animé

La Damoiselle  
il vien-dra

Sopranos  
El-le se tut:

Harp I

Vln. I

Vln. II  
div. ppp arco  
pizz. ppp

Vla.  
unis. ppp  
pizz. ppp  
arco ppp

Vc. & Cb  
p ppp

ppp

<sup>37</sup> Engraved from Claude Debussy, *La Damoiselle élue*, 67

Example. 3.2<sup>38</sup>

The musical score consists of the following parts and markings:

- Fl. 1 & 2:** Flutes, marked *pp*. Fl. 1 has first and second endings indicated by  $1^{\circ}$  and  $2^{\circ}$ .
- Ob.:** Oboe, marked *p* and *pp*, with first and second endings indicated by  $1^{\circ}$  and  $2^{\circ}$ .
- B♭ Cl. 1 & 2:** Clarinets in B-flat, marked *pp*.
- Bsn.:** Bassoon, marked *pp* and *ppp*, with first and second endings indicated by  $1^{\circ}$  et  $2^{\circ}$ .
- Hn. 1 & 2:** Horns, marked *pp*. Hn. 1 includes the instruction "(sourdines)". Hn. 2 includes "(sourdines)" and a third ending marked  $3^{\circ}$ .
- Tbn. 1 & 2:** Trombones. Tbn. 1 is marked *pp* and *ppp*. Tbn. 2 is marked *pp* and *ppp*. Tbn. 2 includes the instruction "2° (sourdines)".
- Sop.:** Soprano voice, marked *pp* with the instruction "les 1rs seulement". The lyrics are "Dans les sphères dis-tan-tes."
- Vln. I & II:** Violins, marked *pp*. Vln. II includes the instruction "(sur la touche)". Both include "pizz." markings.
- Vla.:** Viola, marked *pp*. Includes "(sur la touche)" and "div. (sur la touche)".
- Vc.:** Violoncello, marked *pp* and *pppp*. Includes "pizz." markings.
- Cb.:** Contrabass, marked *pp* and *pppp*. Includes "pizz." markings.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 71.

### Debussy, *Aporia*, and *Telaesthesia*

In addition to developing a musical language of sound as silence, Debussy developed techniques of musical *aporia*. *Aporias* are “gaps in our language use that no rational argument can resolve.”<sup>39</sup> What makes listening to music of the common-practice period exciting while, “at some level, predictable,”<sup>40</sup> is the ability to participate in an evolving linearity that amounts to a language, so to speak, based on functional harmony. Debussy altered the normative so that “the raw materials of tonal space (paradigmatic events) and what governs the ways that these elements are distributed (syntagmatic relations) differ radically from ... common-practice music.”<sup>41</sup> Gregory Marion’s analysis of *Brouillards* offers an example of Debussy’s use of *aporia*.

The events of bars 1 through 6 “tend to support the assumption that C is the central sonority”<sup>42</sup> of section A1 (bars 1 through 17) of this six-section work. A “subtle fracture,” which accords with this study’s definition of a musical *aporia*, occurs at the end of bar 6 and the beginning of bar 7, however, marking the arrival of the second of the two subsections of A1, “for the direct repetition of the B-diminished triad (L.H.) and its shadowing quintuplet wrest attention from the central role assumed thus far by the C sonority. This is the first stage of a radical shift affecting the listener’s orientation.”<sup>43</sup> The G triad is no longer strongly perceived as a dominant of C. Instead, its association shifts to the B-diminished triad. “Events that had belonged to the second, or distant, stratum at the opening of the piece come to the fore—penetrate the mist if you will—while the primary line recedes”<sup>44</sup> (Example 3.3).

Marion further develops the association of this compositional technique with distance by mentioning studies in visual perception. He refers to the three famous paradoxical visual images, the Necker Cube, the Rubin Vase Faces, and the Duck-Rabbit Image (Figure 3.1).<sup>45</sup> Though these are not landscapes that present a foreground and images in the distance, they nonetheless present the viewer with the experience of shifting perceptions without any apparent logical process—*intellectus* rather than *ratio*.

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<sup>39</sup> Sim, 90.

<sup>40</sup> Gregory J. Marion, “A Foreground Mist? Debussy’s *Brouillards*.” *Current Musicology* 66 (Spring 1999): 21.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

Example 3.3<sup>46</sup>

Figure 3.1

(a) The Necker Cube



original source: unknown

(b) Rubin Vase Faces

original source: E. Rubin  
(1915)

(c) Duck-Rabbit Image

original source: J. Jastrow  
(1900)**Ravel as Well.**

Ravel also shared an interest in silence's expressive potential. In language more poetic than precise, musicologist Vladimir Jankélévitch describes Ravel's music as buoying up "the heavy weight of logos, [loosening] the devastating hegemony of the word, and [preventing] the human genus from becoming overidentified with the spoken alone. In Ravel, the 'musician of silence' described by Mallarmé assumed earthly form."<sup>47</sup> Mallarmé's poem, *Sainte*, set to music by Ravel, presents St. Cecilia,<sup>48</sup> patron saint of music, as the *musicienne du silence*. The poem was published in 1907,<sup>49</sup> only a year before Vaughan Williams, who was an important friend and mentor to Howells, studied with Ravel.

Mallarmé stated his goal as remaining in a poet's version of apophatic nothingness. He wanted to make available the content of his *cassette spirituelle* (spiritual treasure chest) *en l'absence*

<sup>46</sup> Engraved from Claude Debussy, *Brouillards, Complete Preludes, Books 1 and 2*, ed. Konstantin Stepanovich Sorokin (New York: Dover, 1989), 53.

<sup>47</sup> Jankélévitch, 140.

<sup>48</sup> The original title was *Sainte Cécile jouant sur l'aile d'un chérubin*<sup>48</sup> (Saint Cecilia playing on an angel's wing). Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance complete 1862-1871, Lettres sur la poésie*, ed. Bertrand Marchal (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), 260, n. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Roger Nichols, *Ravel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 400.

*de toute impression empruntée* (without benefit of any borrowed impressions).<sup>50</sup> As one Mallarmé scholar expresses it, “what is any page of this work but the beautiful, monotonous, imperfect sign of that sacred ‘something else’ in *Music and Literature*” [which is] an imperfect expression of the infinite *Rien*—which the poet, philosopher, or mystic calls God, Idea, Ideal, Nothingness, Emptiness, Abyss, Horror, and so on through the history of the greatest minds at bay?”<sup>51</sup>

Mallarmé’s aesthetic ideals influenced both Ravel and Debussy. With an economy of musical means, Ravel succeeds, in his setting of Mallarmé’s *Sainte*, in expressing silence as the ineffable, perfectly in line with Mallarmé’s aesthetic. Ravel sets the line, *musicienne du silence*, as stasis—one repeated pitch on a *pianissimo* dynamic marking—in the voice’s part (Example 3.4).

Example 3.4<sup>52</sup>

The image shows a musical score for a voice and piano. The voice part is on a single staff with a treble clef, starting with a rest, then a quarter note 'si' (B) in the second measure, which is held through the end of the phrase. The piano accompaniment is on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays bass notes. The dynamic marking 'pp' is above the voice line. The lyrics 'Mu - si - ci - en - ne - du si - lence.' are written below the voice line.

The quiet chords oscillate in the background without reference to tonal chord progressions, thus setting up a bell-like effect. Ravel gives this already-slow ringing of the bells a rhythmic augmentation at the end, allowing intervening stretches of literal silence (repetitive silence, according to the taxonomy) while the voice slows down as well. The entire piece evades being pinned down tonally by evoking both the combinations of G minor/D minor and C minor/G minor as well as by avoiding (silencing) E flat in G minor and A flat in C minor, thus sounding gapped scales.<sup>53</sup> The gaps enhance the sense that something else—the ideal, the ineffable—is implied but is best expressed by silence. Finally, Ravel ends with the dissonance of a major ninth. The final chord makes the already-nebulous sense of tonality even more uncertain, thus quieting *ratio* so that the sandalwood, the book, the plumage, and all the elements of Mallarmé’s poem can be perceived in silence by the *intellectus*. This understanding of the final chord is all the more likely since in spite of the similarities between Debussy and Ravel, Ravel’s *oeuvre* is not as readily characterized by

<sup>50</sup> Mallarmé, *Correspondance complete*, 312.

<sup>51</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *Selected Prose Poems, Essays, & Letters*, trans. Bradford Cook (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), xv.

<sup>52</sup> Engraved from Maurice Ravel, *Songs 1896-1914* (New York: Dover Publications, 1990), 3. The piece begins with the following score indications: *Liturgiquement* and *sans aucune nuance jusqu’à la fin*.

<sup>53</sup> Nichols, *Ravel*, 24.

ambiguity and mystery.<sup>54</sup> The ambiguity and mystery of Ravel's final chord in *Sainte* thus sounds even more unusual and therefore deliberate.

### **Webern and Twentieth-Century Musical Silence: Literal Silence.**

Webern experienced a revelation about musical silence on hearing Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* in its first Viennese performance in 1908. "Very fine, often very strange, in places wonderfully beautiful," Webern wrote, and added, "The ending is one of the loveliest that exists ... Oh, how grateful I am that I may ... sacrifice my life to [these things]."<sup>55</sup> Webern "was amazed at Debussy's ability to make so much from so few notes, and sought the same economy in his own music."<sup>56</sup> This enthusiasm for Debussy's work was "proof of Webern's own preference for ... shunning the emphatic intensity of Strauss, Mahler, or even of Schoenberg himself between 1899 and 1906."<sup>57</sup> The result was a silencing of the lush, the grandiose, the aurally intense in favor of an "art of compression at its most extreme."<sup>58</sup>

Though Webern's musical silence includes the development of sound as silence, he especially developed "the borderland between music and silence, showing it to be so vast that directions are needed for moving"<sup>59</sup> within this landscape. Webern explored dynamic ranges below *ppp*, a realm he indicated as *kaum hörbar* (barely audible).<sup>60</sup> This is an aural region that has always existed in music, but only in passing. Webern asserted that seemingly infinitesimal gradations between dynamics can be dramatic.<sup>61</sup> His use of musical silence is not exactly literal silence since the listener is constantly attuned not to rests but to the infinitesimal distinctions between sound and silence. But moments of literal silences are so pervasive in Webern's work that he can be regarded as having developed the literal-silence stream of twentieth-century musical silence.

Webern was also fascinated with musical brevity. Jankélévitch uses the term brachyology (brevity, concision of diction). He identifies it as a form of musical silence because it "harbors the wish to disturb silence as little as possible."<sup>62</sup> Brachyology is discussed in chapter one as a description of Anglicanism's silence of restraint. It and Jankélévitch return in the final chapter to tie Anglicanism's restraint and twentieth-century sound as silence into a discussion of restraint in ECM.

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<sup>54</sup> Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 126.

<sup>55</sup> Hans and Rosaleen Moldenhauer, *Anton von Webern: a Chronicle of His Life and Work* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 104.

<sup>56</sup> Ross, *The Rest Is Noise*, 68.

<sup>57</sup> Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 46.

<sup>58</sup> Ross, *The Rest Is Noise*, 68.

<sup>59</sup> Metzger, 339.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Jankélévitch, 141.



### Webern, Silence as the Ineffable, and the Pastoral.

Musical silence for Webern was more than a purely aesthetic appreciation of aural economy. He saw the twelve-tone system as employing the *pleroma*, the divine fullness, in which every possibility exists in perfect orderliness.<sup>63</sup> Silence in Webern's music obviously plays the functional role of safeguarding, even amplifying, that fullness by maintaining the crystalline orderliness "prior to descent along the scales of the planets" and "prior to the domain of physical manifestation, in which the notes inevitably form a hierarchy in the order of the harmonic series."<sup>64</sup> Schoenberg, Webern's teacher, suggests Webern's silence is first- and second-level-positive when, in his introduction to Webern's *Six Bagatelles*, he writes "May this silence sound for them,"<sup>65</sup> as if the silence has its own agency.

Webern's identity as a Roman Catholic adds to the context by which to understand the importance of silence in his life and work. His belief "stood above dogma," and his religious practice was more focused on private devotions such as entering a church or wayside chapel to pray in solitude than to take part in the liturgy. Indeed, the family attended church for special occasions, such as baptisms or weddings, but never went to church together on holy days such as Christmas or Easter.<sup>66</sup> To whatever degree Webern was aware of classics of spirituality and mysticism, he clearly would have been inclined to the post-medieval Catholic classics that favor individual spiritual experiences, including pronounced experiences of silence, rather than the liturgically-centered mystical theology of the patristic/monastic era that informs Anglicanism's more reticent view of silence.

Though identifying Webern as a devout Catholic would be a stretch, what he did believe he seems to have believed sincerely, as the prayers at the wayside chapels suggest as well as comments he made concerning what inspired his music. Webern's words concerning his *Six Bagatelles* supply a theological dimension to hearing life and death melting into each other: "First a word: angel. From it comes the 'mood' of this piece. The angels in heaven. The incomprehensible state after death. I come more and more to the absolute belief in these things: heaven and hell. But not in the transferred sense: hell on this earth, a condition in this life. No, really only after death."<sup>67</sup> Again and again, Webern's song texts are concerned with the depiction of angelic presence.<sup>68</sup> If Webern associated silence with death, his language suggests it would not be the Psalmist's second-level-

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<sup>63</sup> Joscelyn Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth: The Spiritual Dimension of Music from Antiquity to the Avant-Garde* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1987), 106.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Arnold Schönberg, "Introduction," *Six Bagatelles*, Op. 9 (Vienna: Universal, 1924).

<sup>66</sup> Webern's religious belief did not accord with Roman Catholic doctrine in every particular, but it was a sincere, active part of his life. Moldenhauer, 355.

<sup>67</sup> Webern, letter to Schoenberg, 24 November 1913, quoted in Moldenhauer, 192. Musicologist Alex Ross hears Webern's works as hanging "in a limbo between the noise of life and the stillness of death. The ease with which the one melts into the other is one major philosophical insight that arises from them." Ross, *The Rest Is Noise*, 63.

<sup>68</sup> Julian Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*, 88.

negative silence of the grave. Rather, this silence is second-level-positive because it seems to represent the ineffability of life after death rather than death as the end of existence. Webern also associated this silence with the memory of his mother, Amalie Geer Webern, who died in 1906.<sup>69</sup>

A further interconnection was the landscape in and around the family estate, Preglhof, including Schwabegg, where his mother was buried. Webern's pastoral sense is that of "distance, timelessness, radiance, and ineffability, inspired by a vision of the mother's physical presence, which is in turn bound up with the otherworldly light, sounds, and smells of the high mountain landscape."<sup>70</sup> This is Webern's description of his family estate, Preglhof:

Here it is glorious; I spend the whole day out of doors ... An ideal "cloister." And if one stands still, one hears nothing but a rustle once in a while in the forest—and this quiet is something really glorious, really remarkable, because in the city one hears bustle and noise continuously. It is sublime.<sup>71</sup>

### **Messiaen and Twentieth-Century Musical Silence: Sound as Silence.**

Messiaen, also influenced by Debussy,<sup>72</sup> lived in a cultural/religious context that, similar to Webern's, fostered pronounced expressions of musical silence. Though Modernism could not be described as mainstream in Vienna and Paris, it nevertheless flourished in both cities. Too, both Webern and Messiaen were Roman Catholic (though Messiaen identified more explicitly with Catholicism). As already established, the role of silence developed more explicitly in the Catholic tradition than in the Protestant, which helps account for more pronounced expressions of silence when Webern and Messiaen associate it with spiritual ineffability.

Messiaen further developed the concept that sound can serve as a metaphor for silence. The role of musical silence in Messiaen's *oeuvre* was manifest as early as his first published organ work, *Le banquet céleste* (1928).<sup>73</sup> One of the compositional strategies of this work involves the borderland between music and silence. Unlike Webern, however, Messiaen does not dwell in this aural landscape but uses it only to begin and end the piece. Once the silence that precedes the piece has subtly been transformed into sound, the flow of sound is uninterrupted until the end. *Le banquet céleste* is all about silence though never silent. Uninterrupted sound achieves stillness by its "very slow tempo, very soft dynamic, harmonic stasis and a silent, contemplative atmosphere."<sup>74</sup> Another strategy in Messiaen's sound as silence technique and employed in *Le banquet céleste* is musical *aporia*. Messiaen deliberately played upon the tonal expectations he knew his listeners would have

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>70</sup> Anne Shreffler, "Review of Julian Johnson's *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 24:2 (Fall 2002): 296.

<sup>71</sup> Moldenhauer, 105.

<sup>72</sup> Paul Griffiths, "Olivier Messiaen," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 491.

<sup>73</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *Le banquet céleste: pour orgue* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1934).

<sup>74</sup> Christiaens, "Sounding Silence," 54.

by causing the “obvious grammatical frame” to fail, thus causing what Christiaens refers to as intentional listening to silence.<sup>75</sup>

Silence for Messiaen was very much first- and second-level positive. This is apparent from the biographical data and from Messiaen’s own prose. But it is clear as well from textual indications in the scores. To list a couple of examples, *Antienne de la conversation intérieure*, of *Trois petites liturgies de la Présence Divine* (1943-1944) opens with the words, *Mon Jésus, mon silence, Restez en moi. Mon Jésus, mon royaume de silence, Parlez en moi.*<sup>76</sup> Another example is the very title, *Regard du silence*, from *Vingt regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*<sup>77</sup> (1944).

Messiaen did not compose musical silence expressed in quiet-to-inaudible dynamic levels as consistently as Webern did. He also used musical *aporia* in connection with acoustical indicators that do not connote stillness and quiet. His exalted, “dazzling” (*éblouissant*) music also confounds tonal expectations. It does so by being “rhythmically complex, usually in a rather fast tempo, with loud dynamics and a bright, extensive instrumentation.”<sup>78</sup> Both styles convey the same concept of contemplating the ineffable. Messiaen’s “dazzling” style can be regarded as an example of sound as silence analogously to the way in which Pickstock’s liturgical stammer and Harold Pinter’s flow of words are considered to be silence. But Messiaen’s use of musical *aporia* in connection with parameters that suggest stillness and quiet is perhaps more intuitively perceived as a metaphor for silence.

A final comment about *Le banquet céleste* has to do with distance. The piece opens with the score indication, *lointain, mystérieux* (as though distant, conveying mystery).<sup>79</sup> It is tempting to regard this reference to distance teleaesthetically. But Messiaen seems not to have been inspired by distant vistas. Time played a greater role in Messiaen’s attempt to suggest the ineffable than space. Messiaen relied on Henri Bergson’s ideas concerning the perception of time in shaping music’s parametric modalities to create a sense of timelessness.<sup>80</sup>

### **Other Twentieth-Century Composers and Silence.**

Before Debussy, no composer’s entire *oeuvre* was so consistently suggestive of silence. Before Webern, no composer remained so consistently in the borderland between music and silence. Before Messiaen, no composer so explicitly related sound as silence to the ineffable. As the techniques of musical silence developed and expanded, so did the list of composers interested in silence’s expressive potential.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>76</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *Trois Petite Liturgies De La Présence Divine* (Paris: Durand, 1952), 1-3.

<sup>77</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *Vingt regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus* (Paris: Durand, 1944).

<sup>78</sup> Christiaens, “Sounding Silence,” 54.

<sup>79</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *Le banquet céleste: pour orgue* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1934).

<sup>80</sup> Christiaens, “Sounding Silence,” 64-68. Messiaen’s ornithological interest, however, supplies a connection with the love of nature expressed by both Webern and Howells and recalls the role of birdsong in Howells’s “King David.”

To name only a few twentieth-century composers in whose *oeuvres* silence is a significant factor, Catalan composer Federico Mompou's masterpiece, *Musica callada* (1959-1967) for solo piano, was inspired by St. John of the Cross's "silent music." Japanese composer Tōru Takemitsu claimed Debussy and Messiaen as influences but also drew from Japanese culture's concept of *ma*<sup>81</sup> in both his compositions<sup>82</sup> and his prose.<sup>83</sup> David Metzger's essay on twentieth-century musical silence explores the musical silence of Webern, Luigi Nono, and Salvatore Sciarrino,<sup>84</sup> and refers to Morton Feldman, a composer who wrote "abstract fields of quiet."<sup>85</sup>

Several composers explicitly expressed the same connection Messiaen and Charles Ives had developed earlier in the twentieth century, namely the connection of silence with the spiritual and the ineffable. More on this connection in Messiaen's and Ives's *oeuvres* is discussed in the next section, and this connection in the music of late-twentieth-century British composers, Jonathan Harvey, John Tavener and James MacMillan, is discussed in the final chapter. Arvo Pärt contributed to this development as well by formulating a technique he calls tintinnabulation: "quiet dynamics, rhythmic stasis, and open-interval and triadic harmonies to create a thoughtful mood of mystical introspection reflecting the composer's personal piety."<sup>86</sup>

### Techniques for Using Sound as Silence.

Literal silence relies on the cessation of sound-making vibrations. Rhythm is thus the primary parameter involved in organizing literal silence in music. Most literal silences are notated by rests with specific rhythmic values. *Fermatae* over rests, *caesurae*, and notations of pauses without durational values are less precise rhythmically, but usually occur within some kind of rhythmic context. The array of techniques for presenting sound as silence is much wider because sound as silence involves nearly all musical parameters (pitch, dynamics, meter, tempo, rhythmic gestures, melodic material, scales and modes, harmony, texture, and timbre) and almost always in a combination of more than one of the parameters. So many possibilities means an exhaustive catalogue of sound-as-silence techniques is perhaps impossible.

Generally, sound-as-silence techniques employ quieter dynamics, avoid strong beats,<sup>87</sup> and use slower tempi. Sound-as-silence techniques tend not to focus on melodic material that would call attention to itself by its lyrical shape. A change from one musical texture to another can suggest

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<sup>81</sup> Space or gaps that give shape to the whole. Alan Fletcher, *The Art of Looking Sideways* (London; New York: Phaidon, 2001), 370.

<sup>82</sup> Examples are *Quiet Design*, *Chinmoku* (Silence), and *Seijaku no umi* (The Sea is Still). Yoko Narazaki, "Tōru Takemitsu," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 24.

<sup>83</sup> Tōru Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence* (Berkeley, California: Fallen Leaf Press, 1995).

<sup>84</sup> Metzger, 331-374.

<sup>85</sup> Steven Johnson, "Morton Feldman," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 650.

<sup>86</sup> Richard E. Rodda, Notes to *Arvo Pärt Fratres*, CD (Telarc CD-80387, 1994), 2.

<sup>87</sup> "Webern imagined a music of ethereal sounds ... The avoidance of strong beats ... often imparts the feeling of hovering suspension." Erwin Stein, *Orpheus in New Guises* (London: Rockliff, 1953), 99-100.

silence, especially from polyphony to homophony or monophony. Instruments whose overtone series constitute relatively quieter timbres can suggest silence as well. But these are only general observations that composers can follow or ignore, depending on their creativity and what the cultural context reliably expects an audience to perceive.

Since musical topics and metaphors can be nonsyntactic or have only a fragile relation to form,<sup>88</sup> and since sound as silence is a metaphor for silence, silence cannot be associated with any particular musical form. But through-composed works lend themselves more readily to conveying musical silence because they rely less on the logic of developing statements by repetition and variation. The sonata-allegro form and the eighteenth-century fugue are among those forms least likely to express silence because they rely much more heavily on *ratio* than *intellectus*.

A combination of musical parameters that very effectively suggests silence is sonic exuviation, an effect “in which a noisy climax suddenly cuts off to reveal another plane of sound, softer and more distant, representing something that has been going on all the time unheard.”<sup>89</sup> The noisy climax’s sudden cessation is effected in part by silencing some of the ensemble’s timbres—silencing all instruments but the strings, for example—and indicating a quiet dynamic marking for the other “plane of sound.”

Sonic exuviation would have been considered too *avant garde* in early-twentieth-century ECM. But by the end of the twentieth century, James MacMillan used sonic exuviation in the repeated “Amen” that ends his 2000 setting of the *Magnificat* (Example 3.5). As is generally the case with sonic exuviation, the suddenly revealed plane of quiet sound tends to be static. The chords sung by the choir move homophonically and slowly. This enhances the sense of the eternal and thus the ineffable.

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<sup>88</sup> Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 9.

<sup>89</sup> J. Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 344; Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music Since 1900*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 1491.



Example 3.6<sup>91</sup>

Allegretto con moto ♩ = 92

Fl. I  
 Ob.  
 Cl. in A  
 Vln. I  
 Vln. I

1.  
 ppp  
 pp  
 1.  
 p cantabile  
 Solo  
 8<sup>va</sup>  
 pp  
 div. Solo  
 pp  
 zu 2  
 zu 2

<sup>91</sup> Engraved from Alexander Borodin, *On the Steppes of Central Asia* (London; Zürich; New York: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd.), 1.





By the end of the twentieth century, John Tavener established the drone, or *ison*, as an integral characteristic of his music. Though much of his *oeuvre* is tonal, he does not generally use the drone as an exceptional moment. Rather, the other aspects of a number of Tavener's works are exceptions, as it were, to the silence of the *ison*.<sup>93</sup>

Another combination of musical parameters is to use quiet dynamic indications, a very slow tempo, and a texture that is not characterized by complex polyphony. Two important examples of this technique are Ives's *The Unanswered Question* and Messiaen's *Le banquet céleste*. Both works seem to emerge from, and flow back into, silence. Though they do not maintain a quiet dynamic throughout, the elements of both works combine to convey a sense that this beginning and ending silence is always there. The slow tempi used in both works contribute to a sense that the "obvious grammatical frame for intentional listening fails."<sup>94</sup> The hymn-like chords played by the strings in *The Unanswered Question* unfold so slowly that the listener eventually ceases listening to the melodic shape the chords make and hears them rather as a constantly sounding substratum. Similarly with the dotted whole notes in most of *Le banquet céleste*. This combination of parameters is common to a number of twentieth-century works that effect a "radical shift in perspective [from sound as] the central paradigm and the starting point of composers' creative activity ... towards silence or at least a desire to approximate it musically."<sup>95</sup>

The Borodin and Debussy examples show that early-twentieth-century stasis tended to be a pictorial technique rather than carrying any metaphysical or spiritual import. An exception, however, is in the original title of Ives's *The Unanswered Question*, "contemplation of a serious matter,"<sup>96</sup> and Ives's association of the static chords with the "silence of the Druids."<sup>97</sup> Messiaen's inscription of the Johannine "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him" on the score of *Le banquet céleste* leaves no question that this stasis is about a theological/spiritual experience rather than a physical landscape. At the end of the twentieth century, John Tavener took stasis even further when he referred to the *ison* as the silence of God, of eternity. He identified it as the nearest one can get to the very root of music in the world of articulated sound.<sup>98</sup> Late-twentieth-century composers could still use stasis to represent the concrete, of course. But Ives, Messiaen, Tavener, and others so effectively associated stasis with the spiritual that listeners have become culturally inclined to imbue stasis with spiritual significance as well. After Ives and Messiaen, it is

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<sup>93</sup> John Tavener, *The Music of Silence: A Composer's Testament*, ed. Brian Keeble (London: Faber, 1999), 154-55.

<sup>94</sup> Christiaens, "Sounding Silence," 58.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. See also Wilhelm Seidel, "Stille," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1998), 8: 1760.

<sup>96</sup> Jan Swafford, J., *Charles Ives: A Life with Music* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 181.

<sup>97</sup> Charles Ives, Foreword, *The Unanswered Question* (New York: Southern Music Publishing, 1953).

<sup>98</sup> Tavener, *The Music of Silence*, 154-55.

difficult to hear Borodin's monotonous desert and Debussy's serene sea as nothing but steppes and ocean.

### **Conclusion.**

In its overview of twentieth-century musical silence, this chapter establishes that any twentieth-century composer who remained current with musical developments knew of musical silence's importance. It cannot have been otherwise when silence played so important a role in the *oeuvres* of composers as prominent as Charles Ives, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Anton Webern, and Olivier Messiaen. The importance of silence in all areas of twentieth-century arts and letters was such that Debussy's initial emphasis of silence in music grew into a development that has spanned the entire century and continues into the twenty-first. The second part of this thesis addresses how two composers who wrote for a specific repertoire primarily in the middle of the twentieth century chose to respond to this development.

This chapter also ends this thesis's first part, which establishes the broader context of perceptions of silence in areas of twentieth-century thought and creativity directly related to ECM: theology and music. Ample scholarship on the role of silence in twentieth-century literature obviates the need for an extensive discussion in the first part of this study. That topic is summarized in chapters five and six, which discuss, respectively, Britten's and Howells's response to literary silence. By contrast, the very limited scholarship on silence in twentieth-century Anglicanism and music affords the opportunity for a fuller exploration of those areas. This research shows a tension between pronounced expressions of silence, including silence as the ineffable, in twentieth-century music, and a sense of restraint concerning silence's expression in Anglican liturgy and spirituality. The second part of this thesis shows that Britten did not regard this tension as an area for creative expression; Howells did.

The next chapter discusses Britten's and Howells's perspectives on silence as shaped by their religious backgrounds. Britten's response is examined first since the evidence shows that Britten was not interested in silence as the ineffable. He was, however, interested in other types of silence. That interest exceeds the scope of this thesis, but it is worth a brief reference since the second part of this study makes the contrast between Britten and Howells on the question of silence as the ineffable clearer. As the distinction between Britten and Howells is confirmed in the next two chapters, the final chapters focus solely on Howells's response to twentieth-century developments in expressing silence as the ineffable, the last chapter exploring Howells's contribution to silence in ECM.

## Chapter Four

### Silence, Anglicanism, Britten, and Howells

#### Introduction.

As discussed below, Anglicanism was generally regarded as being part of one's cultural identity as an Englishman throughout the first half of the twentieth century, this identity being all the more easy to accept since Anglicanism was known for not wanting to "open windows into men's souls."<sup>1</sup> Britten and Howells went well beyond a passive conformity to cultural Anglicanism, however. Though neither seems to have believed in the tenets of Christianity that call for religious faith,<sup>2</sup> they both had a profound appreciation for the Anglican tradition. This appreciation was partly due to a love of Anglicanism's aesthetics, including its texts. Britten "absorbed in his formative years the language and cadences of [the Authorized Version]. Scriptural stories and the liturgy of the Church of England were inescapably a part of his mental and intellectual make-up."<sup>3</sup> Howells was also profoundly influenced by the Authorized Version and the BCP. This language sparked in him a "quest of that 'besieging Eternity' or whatever it is that lies behind and beyond the flux of ephemera the envelop man's temporal life."<sup>4</sup> Both Britten and Howells were theologically literate. Howells's choice of texts for anthems was orthodox.<sup>5</sup> Britten's statement about being influenced by controversial theologians, John A. T. Robinson and Dietrich Bonhoeffer,<sup>6</sup> indicates he too was theologically informed. Britten even identified himself as Christian.<sup>7</sup> Though he acknowledged a less than ideal attendance at worship and less than orthodox adherence to the creed in the BCP, his identification with Christianity was primarily with Anglican Christianity. Howells's prolific contribution to ECM attests, in its own right, to his identification with Anglicanism, though the following discussion shows other aspects of his Anglican identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Attributed to Elizabeth I. Whether Elizabeth I actually made this statement, it was associated with her in the early twentieth century since J. B. Black includes it in *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558–1603* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), 19, first published in 1937.

<sup>2</sup> In a 1963 BBC interview, Britten said that he "must confess" to being "influenced by the Bishop of Woolwich [John A. T. Robinson, author of the radical *Honest to God*, published that same year] and [Dietrich] Bonhoeffer." Humphrey Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten: A Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 419. He also stated, "I do not believe in the Divinity of Christ, but I think his teaching is sound and his example should be followed." Benjamin Britten, *Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters and Diaries of Benjamin Britten*, vol. 2 1939-1945, ed. Donald Mitchell and Philip Reed (London: Faber, 1991), 1046, 1058. Howells's daughter recalls her father commenting, "I don't believe there's anything." Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend, Wales: Seren, 2006), 98.

<sup>3</sup> John A. Florance, "Benjamin Britten's Religion," Britten-Pears Foundation, Aldeburgh, 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Howells denied being influenced by theology when he wrote music for the church. Palmer, *Centenary*, 170. The theological soundness of his text selections across his entire career, however, suggests he used theological judgment when writing ECM.

<sup>6</sup> Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten*, 419.

<sup>7</sup> Though acknowledging the influence of Bishop John A. T. Robinson and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Britten described himself as "a dedicated Christian" Carpenter, 419.

Even without considering the question of Churchmanship as an influence on one's perception of silence, the Anglican texts by which, and the ethos in which, Britten and Howells had been raised instilled in both composers the same reserve about silence that characterized the Anglican perspective on silence. This chapter also identifies the Low Church spirituality of Britten and the somewhat High Church spirituality of Howells, which helps explain their respective views of silence since, as discussed in chapter one, perspectives on silence tend to differ according to Churchmanship. It is in this chapter that the collection of evidence in support of the claim that Britten avoided silence as the ineffable and that Howells was interested in expressing this kind of silence begins in earnest.

Information on the kind of spiritual literature Britten and Howells read is examined as a means of confirming what other biographical data indicate. Britten's interest in literature, spiritual or otherwise, tended towards *logos*-centric word-play rather than reflection. It is the opposite for Howells. There is also a discussion of the role of silence in Christmas hymnody, which is important in understanding Britten's view of silence since his interest in Christmas hymnody does not acknowledge the role of silence in important Christmas hymns.

### **Britten Serving the Community by Serving Its Religion.**

What Britten believed theologically at any point in his life is ultimately unknown.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the question of whether it is somehow essentialist to hear Britten's religious beliefs in his music, especially in his ECM, is moot. What Britten made clear, however, is that he saw his role as a composer as involving service to the community. It is "the composer's duty as a member of society," he declared, "to speak to or for his fellow human beings."<sup>9</sup> After Britten returned to England from America in 1942, the fellow human beings for whom he wrote for the remainder of his career tended to be his fellow Englishmen, whose dominant religious identity was Christian, especially Anglican.

For most of Britten's life, his class and upbringing meant equating national identity with Anglican identity was generally assumed. In *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*, T. S. Eliot lists a few examples of characteristic activities and interests of the English people, including Derby Day, Henley Regatta, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches, and the music of Elgar. After noting that the reader can make his own list, Eliot implies that religion—by which he means the Christian religion, particularly its expression through the established Church of England—was an essential aspect of English culture in that period by noting

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<sup>8</sup> Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 3-6.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Britten, "On Receiving the First Aspen Award," in *Britten on Music*, 257.

that “we have to face the strange idea that what is part of our culture is also a part of our lived religion.”<sup>10</sup> Church “was bound to be one of the most palpable realities” of an English middle-class upbringing in the early twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> This was the case for Britten. This influence did not necessarily cease as children of the middle and upper classes moved through university and into adulthood. In the 1950s, a very high percentage of students at Cambridge, for instance, were already confirmed, and “almost half of all undergraduates practiced religion” in a “warm atmosphere of male camaraderie, Anglicanism and sherry.”<sup>12</sup> By the early 1950s, traditional forms of Christianity maintained a considerable appeal “for some of the best educated of modern people. The Christian intellectual revival, which had been proceeding steadily from the 1920s, had now reached its peak.”<sup>13</sup> Too, the rather broad spectrum of religious opinions and forms of churchmanship embraced by the Church of England meant that claiming to be Anglican could be a matter more of English identity than a declaration of religious belief. This made it all the more likely that those brought up Anglican but who ceased to believe in some or all of Christianity’s religious claims continued to identify themselves as Anglican.

An important aspect of a composer’s service to the community was service to the repertoire of the Church of England. This meant fulfilling this service with intelligence, sensitivity, and respect for the ECM heritage into which the composer’s works were expected to take their place. Britten referred to this kind of honoring of the context of a work of music for worship in comments on J. S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. The ideal performance of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* is thus one “on Good Friday in a church, to a congregation of Christians.”<sup>14</sup> If Britten did not compose as a believing Christian, he knew how to compose for believing Christians, particularly in the Anglican tradition.

As Britten’s contribution to ECM began to diminish mid-century, he nonetheless continued to write music based on Christian themes and intended for performance in churches—the church parables, for example. Britten also made sure the Aldeburgh parish church was involved in the annual Aldeburgh Festival.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Britten’s withdrawal from composing for liturgy might have been due in part to an unfortunate resistance in some quarters to Britten’s “jolly”<sup>16</sup> idiom as

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<sup>10</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949), 30.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Palmer, “The Ceremony of Innocence,” in *The Britten Companion*, ed. C Palmer (London: Faber, 1984), 78.

<sup>12</sup> Don Cupitt, “A Multi-Faith Country?” *Sea of Faith Magazine* (1994): 8; quoted in John A. Florance, “Benjamin Britten’s Religion,” Britten-Pears Foundation, Aldeburgh, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-2000* (London: SCM Press, 2001), 491.

<sup>14</sup> Britten, “On Receiving the First Aspen Award,” in *Britten on Music*, 261.

<sup>15</sup> Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 24.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Canon Bentley to Graham Elliott, quoted in Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 86.

somehow unsuitable for Anglican liturgy rather than from a genuine desire on his part to cease writing for ECM.<sup>17</sup>

### **Britten and Low Church Anglicanism.**

Britten's upbringing was Low Church.<sup>18</sup> During his childhood, Britten's mother, Edith, "took him to St. John's Church in Lowestoft, which had a Low Church evangelical background."<sup>19</sup> Canon John Simpson, the rector of St. Margaret's in Lowestoft as of 2009, confirms that St. John's (pulled down in the 1970s) was "definitely Evangelical ... The worship there [would] have been largely non sacramental."<sup>20</sup> He also notes that the Britten residence placed the family "in the catchment area of two churches," St. John's and St. Peter's. The latter was "very definitely Anglo Catholic ... daily Mass, High Mass on Sundays and all the ceremonial."<sup>21</sup> Having a choice between High Church and Low Church services, Edith Britten<sup>22</sup> chose to worship at St. John's.<sup>23</sup>

Britten's description of the minimal ceremonial in the Chapel services of his school, Gresham's, as though it is High Church liturgy gives a sense of how Low Church his perception of liturgy was. The fifteen-year-old Britten recounts going to Chapel, which was "a sort of glorified Morning Prayer. It is a high service, anyhow they sing plainsong, and in the Creed turn to the East and bow and nod etc."<sup>24</sup>

Britten seems never to have warmed to liturgy, especially High Church liturgy. After moving to London to study at the Royal College of Music, his diary entry for May 31, 1931 notes, "Go to Church with Summers to St. Marks, N. Audley Street, at 11. V. nice service altho' it is too high for my liking."<sup>25</sup> By this point, Britten's "musical tastes had matured."<sup>26</sup> A dislike of even modest ceremonial suggests that Britten did not spend a great deal of time listening to cathedral music in

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<sup>17</sup> The epistolary evidence shows that Britten was keen to write liturgical music for St. George's Chapel, Windsor when Prince Philip and Britten corresponded about the possibility in the early 1960s. For reasons not altogether clear, Britten's *Jubilate Deo* of 1961 was the only part of the project realized. The then organist and composer of St. George's, Sir William Harris, found the *Jubilate* to be too "jolly" for the liturgy. Letter from Canon Bentley to Graham Elliott, quoted in Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 86. If Britten was aware of Harris's opinion, the disapproval of so eminent a church musician might have been one factor in Britten's withdrawal from writing music specifically for liturgy.

<sup>18</sup> Alan Blyth, *Remembering Britten* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), 22; Britten, *Letters from a Life*, vol. 1 1923-1939, 94, n. 6; Beth Britten, *My Brother Benjamin* (Abbotsbrook, 1986) 46.

<sup>19</sup> Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 41.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Rev. John Simpson to John-Bede Pauley, November 5, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Britten's father did not regularly attend church services. Beth Britten, *My Brother Benjamin*, 46.

<sup>23</sup> Edith Britten's Churchmanship apparently edged towards dualism because she was involved with Mary Baker Eddy's Church of Christ, Scientist as well as worshiping at St. John's. In the 1930s, however, the Christian Science church had a rather fundamentalist appeal in England which "would not have seemed in any way inconsistent with Edith Britten's continuing allegiance to Low Church Anglicanism." Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 15.

<sup>24</sup> Britten, *Letters from a Life*, vol. 1 1923-1939, 93. Emphasis Britten's.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>26</sup> Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 13.

developing his musical tastes, since liturgies in most cathedrals were characterized by some degree of ceremonial. Bishop Leslie Brown, Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, in which diocese Aldeburgh was situated, was invited by Britten to preach at the Festival Service for the Aldeburgh Festival of 1967. The bishop “remembers that Britten took no formal part in the service but preferred to sit at the rear of the church.”<sup>27</sup>

In addition to a non-liturgical outlook, Britten’s Low Church background inculcated in him an almost puritanical sense of morality.<sup>28</sup> According to Britten’s companion, Peter Pears, “there can be no doubt that this rather ‘colourless’ form of religion was a potent force in his life.”<sup>29</sup> Britten’s puritanical streak made it all the more difficult for him to come to terms with the homosexual relationship he had with Pears as well as his physical attraction to boys.<sup>30</sup> Throughout his life, Britten regarded his homosexuality as the love that dare not speak its name. One of Britten’s collaborators, the BBC Producer Richard Butt, recalled that despite the increasingly liberal public attitude to homosexuality (engaging in homosexual activity was no longer illegal in Britain by 1970), Britten never alluded to it.<sup>31</sup> He apparently kept it so quiet that his housekeeper, whose sense of decorum was such that she was concerned at first about actors and actresses as house-guests, gave no sign of awareness of Britten’s homosexuality.<sup>32</sup> Britten’s and Pears’s relationship seems to have been an “open secret”<sup>33</sup> among those who were perceptive, but Britten definitely emphasized the secrecy rather than the openness. This no doubt colored his sense of silence in general since he regarded it as a necessary strategy for social and professional survival.

Britten’s Evangelical background did not make him un-sympathetic or hostile to the Catholic tradition and its music. His sister, Beth, claimed her brother considered converting to Roman Catholicism (though he left no record of this): “I think he felt that their religion seemed more alive than did our Church of England; and he considered their music better.”<sup>34</sup> And Britten’s friendship with George Malcolm, choir director of Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral, resulted in Britten’s *Missa Brevis*.<sup>35</sup> Overall, however, Britten identified with the religious outlook of his upbringing, which resulted in an “aversion to the high church liturgical manner [which] suggests a certain

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>28</sup> Alan Blyth, *Remembering Britten* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), 22.

<sup>29</sup> Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 41.

<sup>30</sup> Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten*, 178-79.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 503

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>33</sup> Stephen McClatchie, “Benjamin Britten, *Owen Wingrave* and the Politics of the Closet; or, ‘He Shall Be Straightened out at Paramore’,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8:1 (March 1996): 59-75.

<sup>34</sup> Beth Britten, *My Brother Benjamin*, 200. A few examples of Britten’s interest in Catholic music: Mass in E, written when he was thirteen, never published; Mass for Four Voices, 1930, never published; “A Hymn to the Virgin” (1930); *Missa brevis* for the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral.

<sup>35</sup> Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten*, 350, 388.

ambiguity in his use of high liturgical forms and texts in his later works.”<sup>36</sup> For example, there is an “overt conflict between the Latin Catholic Requiem sequence and the Wilfred Owen poems in *War Requiem* and, more subtly, the use of ritual and liturgically derived materials in the Church Parables.”<sup>37</sup> Britten never wrote a setting of the two evening canticles. He wrote only a few settings of Matins canticles. His one published setting of the Catholic Mass, his *Missa brevis*,<sup>38</sup> was more “a vivacious piece designed to show off the [Westminster Cathedral] choristers’ paces” than a reflection of the meaning of the liturgical texts.<sup>39</sup>

Evangelicals have also been less inclined to write settings of Marian texts such as the thirteenth-century hymn, *Stabat Mater*, and the *Requiem* Mass. Britten’s *War Requiem* is patently not intended for liturgy. Britten wrote no setting of the *Stabat Mater* or of any of the Marian antiphons, whether in Latin or English. While still very young, he wrote “A Hymn to the Virgin.” But that is his only Marian work possibly intended for liturgy. The Virgin Mary does appear in a Britten’s works connected with Christmas, such as *A Ceremony of Carols*, *A Boy is Born*, and *St. Nicolas*. But Britten was more interested in the Nativity narrative as a whole—especially because of its assertion of pure innocence as a confrontation to all that challenges that innocence—than in reflecting musically on the place of the Virgin Mary in that narrative. Britten’s *Hymn to St. Cecilia*, *Hymn of St. Columba*, and *St. Nicolas* are saint-related works that attest to the fact that Britten was, after all, a member of the Church of England, which has retained a degree of appreciation for the Catholic cult of saints.

Britten’s perspective on silence cannot be determined solely by examining his Low Church identity. The poets and texts he chose—and those he avoided—all of which are explored in the next chapter, shed further light on Britten’s view of silence. Moreover, that Britten revealed no particular interest in developing musical expressions of silence as the ineffable as a significant aspect of his *oeuvre* does not mean he was unable express contemplative stillness if the text called for it. He was too excellent a composer to leave this aspect of human experience out of his music altogether. For example there are moments of serene stasis in the *Festival Te Deum*, the “Hymn to Saint Peter,” the “Antiphon,” and the *Missa brevis*.<sup>40</sup> And his *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac* is a non-liturgical work that expresses contemplative stillness in the passages of colloquy between Abraham and God. But

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<sup>36</sup> Stephen Allen, “Benjamin Britten and Christianity” (Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University, Somerville College, 2002) 10-11. It is safe to assume Britten would have had little or no inclination to appreciate the ritual value of the liturgical stammer of Pickstock discussed in chapter one.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> When Britten entered the RCM in 1926, he was working on a Mass in E minor, never published. Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 23, f.n. 23.

<sup>39</sup> Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten*, 388.

<sup>40</sup> I gratefully acknowledge Timothy Day’s mention/reminder of the contemplative moments in some of these works.



the balance of the evidence, considered in this chapter and the next, determines that Britten was not artistically or perhaps even temperamentally comfortable with silence as the ineffable.

### **The English Hymnal and Christmas.**

Noting Britten's use of Christmas themes and hymnody in his *oeuvre* provides further evidence of his lack of interest in silence as the ineffable. Over time, Christmas hymnody developed a significant role for silence as the ineffable. One who read as carefully as Britten did would have perceived the theme of silence in Christmas texts. The themes of Christmas hymnody were all the more apparent since these texts, far from being the preserve of specialists, were very well known by the general population. Leaving the theme of silence out of his Christmas-related works had to have been a conscious decision on Britten's part.

One of the earliest hymns associated with the Nativity is from the fifth century: Coelius Sedulius's "From East to West, From Shore to Shore," number 18 in *The English Hymnal*. It mentions silence. "And while the angels in the sky / Sang praise above the silent field ..." Though the field is silent, the angels above it are anything but. There is no hint that the silent field should somehow signify or express silence as the ineffable or any other kind of subjective experience of silence. Sedulius's text nonetheless makes a place for a general understanding of silence early in Christmas hymnody.

Rather than a silence of awe, Christmas hymnody as well as motets and anthems from most of Christian history are much more likely to emphasize sound. Germanus's (634-734) "A Great and Mighty Wonder" (number 19 in *The English Hymnal*), for instance, includes the constant refrain: "Repeat the hymn again!" That the Low Church perspective, later in time, is more likely to cultivate the sound of proclamation rather than the silence of contemplation is evident in the well-known Christmas hymn Charles Wesley wrote, "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing." Neither the hymn tune (adapted from a chorus by Felix Mendelssohn) nor the hymn text favors silence, so insistent is the emphasis on the triumphant sound of the angelic choir.

It is not until the nineteenth century that an intentional association between the Christmas narrative and a subjective experience of silence as reflective takes hold in hymnody. In addition to the "heavenly peace" of "Silent Night," (a nineteenth-century Austrian hymn<sup>41</sup> that did not make its way into *The English Hymnal*), Phillips Brooks's "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (1867) (number 15 in *The English Hymnal*) suggests a distinctly interior, subjective silence at Christmas. The author of the text was an American Episcopalian clergyman who has been described as holding Broad Church

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<sup>41</sup> "Franz Gruber," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 457.

beliefs but leaning towards the High Church perspective liturgically.<sup>42</sup> Brooks's text provides a distilled history of silence and Christmas in hymnody. Its first use of the word "silence" evokes earlier objective perspectives by stating that the silent stars go by. Silent stars are as objective as the silent field in Coelius Sedulius's "From East to West, From Shore to Shore." Brooks's reference to silent stars alludes to the harmony of the spheres, the silent cosmic harmony integral to the pre-modern musical world-view of Pythagoras and Plato and transmitted into medieval Europe especially through Boethius.<sup>43</sup> This world-view regarded the silent harmony of the spheres in terms of mathematic ratios, not subjective, personal perceptions. In the middle verse of the hymn, however, Brooks shifts from objective cosmic silence to a very subjective silence. The relevant passage: "How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven." Brooks repeats "silently" for emphasis. He also uses the concept of silence adverbially, which suggests that silence is not a distant object but part of a dynamic process. As such, silence has to be seen as first-level-positive, existing in its own right with its own characteristics. Since Brooks actively sought to forge understanding across denominational and Churchmanship differences,<sup>44</sup> his outlook was broad enough in scope to permit a reading of his text as a synthesis of both Low Church personal experience (with its tendency to disregard contemplative silence) and the High Church and Catholic development of silence (first- and second-level-positive, while being disinclined to emphasize personal experience in liturgy and hymnody).

The impact of Christmas hymnody and music on English culture in general in the first half of the twentieth century was immense. This was the liturgical feast at which a significant percentage of the population attended services, regardless of how irregular or even non-existent their attendance might have been at other times of the year. Also, the BBC began broadcasting the Lessons and Carols Service from King's College, Cambridge beginning in 1928,<sup>45</sup> the broadcasts becoming international soon thereafter. Even if Britten had not written church music at all, he would have been influenced to some degree by the *lex cantandi* of the nation's participation in Christmas music. It is

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<sup>42</sup> Brooks is identified as Broad Church because of his ecumenism in a period when ecumenism was not actively fostered. Douglass Shand-Tucci, *Ralph Adams Cram: An Architect's Four Quests: Medieval, Modernist, American, Ecumenical* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 343. Brooks's sacramental views were High Church, even to the extent that his sermons often ended with Eucharistic invitations that suggested adoration, bowing, at the altar. *Ibid.*, 395.

<sup>43</sup> Joscelyn Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth: The Spiritual Dimension of Music from Antiquity to the Avant-Garde* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1987), 21. See also "Timaeus" from *The Dialogues of Plato*, tr. Benjamin Jowett, 4th ed. (London: Sphere, 1970) 238 et seq.; and Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, trans. Calvin Bower; ed. Claude Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), xiii-xiv, 9-10.

<sup>44</sup> Shand-Tucci, *Ralph Adams Cram*, 343.

<sup>45</sup> "A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols" (Cambridge, United Kingdom: King's College Cambridge, 2011), 4, <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/files/services/festival-nine-lessons-2011.pdf> – accessed January 5, 2012; Hastings, *History of English Christianity*, 196.

therefore striking that in the significant number of Christmas-narrative compositions Britten wrote,<sup>46</sup> there is no reference to silence in any of the texts (see Appendix 5.2).

### **Britten and Low Church Spiritual Literature.**

In the West, the most ancient and abundant sources of writings on silence as the ineffable are those penned by mystics. Since a number of these texts are both spiritual and literary classics, the educated are acquainted with many of them. This was the assumption a poet such as T. S. Eliot was able to make in the early twentieth century when his poetry alludes to mystical literature. The early twentieth century was also a period of scholarly interest in mystical writings, which resulted in the appearance of critical texts of many such works. By 1930, in the preface of the twelfth edition of her book, *Mysticism*, Evelyn Underhill celebrated new critical editions not only of the works of St. Teresa d'Àvila, St. John of the Cross, the Abbé Bremond, Johannes Tauler, and Jan van Ruysbroeck, but also—importantly for those interested in England's literary and spiritual heritage, as was the case with both Britten and Howells—the works of Walter Hilton and *The Cloud of Unknowing*.<sup>47</sup>

Concerning mystical/spiritual literature in general, though he did not leave a record of having read Evelyn Underhill's important study, *Mysticism*, Britten expressed an interest in doing so.<sup>48</sup> The fact that he “states his interest in Underhill's philosophy is in itself quite significant. He was a very attentive reader and may have been one of the few to have managed to complete [Underhill's] *Mysticism*.”<sup>49</sup>

Britten's Low-Church upbringing shows itself in the selection of Christian texts he set to music. These are texts that rely on *logos (ratio)* more than *intellectus*, the same inclination that favors the sermon over ritual. These texts are often striking in their word-play, which means appreciating Britten's settings means attending to the texts themselves as much as to the music. Christopher Smart's “Rejoice in the Lamb,” for instance, or W. H. Auden's “Hymn to St. Cecilia” are two examples of texts that capture the attention in their own right, whether set to music or not. Such texts arguably defy *ratio* because of their obscurity. But the cleverness of the texts keeps the attention focused on the texts, and Britten plays on this very quality by his masterful settings.

Britten set works of several Metaphysical poets: John Donne, George Herbert, and Henry Vaughan. But these were poets who favored *ratio* over *intellectus*. T. S. Eliot puts it succinctly by

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<sup>46</sup> *Christ's Nativity* (1931); *A Boy was Born* (1933); *A Ceremony of Carols* (1942); *Saint Nicolas*, Op. 42 (1948) inasmuch as the Christian saint has been regarded as connected with Father Christmas; “The Oxen” (1967); *Canticle IV: Journey of the Magi* (1971); *Christmas Sequence* (1976 – unfinished).

<sup>47</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: The Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*. (Oxford: Oneworld, 1993), xi.

<sup>48</sup> “I am going to read the letters of E. Underhill – she was obviously a great woman.” Benjamin Britten to Revd. Walter Hussey, 8 December 1940, Britten, *Letters from a Life*, vol. 2: 1939-1945, 1240.

<sup>49</sup> Dr. Nicholas Clark, Librarian, Britten-Pears Foundation, Aldeburgh, to John-Bede Pauley, 13 October 2009.

quoting Samuel Johnson (who coined the term “Metaphysical poets”) who described the Metaphysical poets as “analytic.”<sup>50</sup> Eliot identifies a difference in English poetry in general “between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet.”<sup>51</sup> Britten’s literary—and apparently spiritual—penchant was decidedly towards the analytic rather than the reflective.

### **Howells, Serving the Community by Serving Its Religion.**

As with Britten, the question of what exactly Howells believed at any point in his life is ultimately unanswerable.<sup>52</sup> But Howells expressed the same desire Britten had to serve their community by writing works inspired by its dominant religious perspective. Howells did not leave as explicit a statement concerning service to society as Britten’s speech on receiving the Aspen Award. But Howells’s engagement in the worship and liturgical music of the Church of England is apparent in deeds rather than words, most notably the fact that he devoted the latter part of his career to writing ECM. Whereas Britten knew how to write for Christian audiences, Howells was arguably more adept at writing for Anglican congregations in particular. How well Howells’s ECM has been received by choirs and congregations is a topic chapter eight discusses. But at least some of Howells’s works for ECM have been very well received. In those instances, at least, it is clear Howells wanted to understand the ECM heritage, did so, and successfully wrote for it.

### **Howells and High Church Anglicanism.**

As an articulated pupil to Herbert Brewer at Gloucester Cathedral, Howells’s boyhood and youth were closely associated with that cathedral’s liturgy,<sup>53</sup> which meant being formed as a musician in a liturgical tradition that tended to be High Church.<sup>54</sup> Theologically, Howells might have been more at home with Broad Church Anglicans. But he did not share the Latitudinarians’ relative lack of interest in liturgy and liturgical music. Indeed, Howells demonstrated a masterful grasp and appreciation of liturgy by the successful place his liturgical music found in the repertoire.

As was apparently the case with a number of educated people in the early twentieth century, Howells was apparently able to maintain an agnostic stance while identifying strongly with idealized

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<sup>50</sup> T. S. Eliot, “The Metaphysical Poets,” *Selected Prose*, ed. John Hayward (London: Penguin Books, 1953), 115.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>52</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 197.

<sup>53</sup><sup>53</sup> Howells’s earliest experience of churchgoing was non-conformist. But cathedral liturgy seems to have made such an impact on him that it effectively replaced whatever there might have been in his identification with non-conformist spirituality and worship.

<sup>54</sup> Gatens, 8.

aspects of Catholic liturgy and culture.<sup>55</sup> This was thanks in large part to the work of Helen Waddell, poet, translator, and scholar of Catholic medieval Europe, who also maintained what might be called a dual religious identity. While she “would have died had she not been able to return and drink deep of Catholic springs of devotion,” she “never deviated a hair’s breadth from the faith of her Presbyterian forefathers.”<sup>56</sup> Howells scholar Christopher Palmer describes the importance of Waddell’s work in Howells’s life, which went well beyond the fact that Howells set two of her translations, “A Sequence for St. Michael” and “Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing.” Howells’s copy of Waddell’s *The Wandering Scholar*, a poetic study of medieval Catholic literature, was “annotated from first to last.”<sup>57</sup> In the medieval, Latin hymns Waddell translated, Howells

discovered the God of Beauty and the ‘wingy mysteries of Divinity’; and it was these words, the King James’ Bible and the Book of Common Prayer which first sent Howells, like Vaughan Williams, in quest of that ‘besieging Eternity’ or whatever it is that lies behind and beyond the flux of ephemera the envelop man’s temporal life.<sup>58</sup>

Having discovered the beauty of medieval literature, Howells said that “it opened the doors to the spiritual life in literature, and thence in oneself.”<sup>59</sup>

It might be tempting to see Howells’s discovery of medieval Catholic culture as fitting him into the Tractarian mold, which had involved a nineteenth-century re-discovery of Anglicanism’s Catholic roots. Palmer’s account of the spiritual aspect of Howells’s life, however, refers to a “combination of ardent historical feeling and literary sensibility with a remarkable freshness of romantic perception,”<sup>60</sup> none of which indicates theological faith or practice. Nonetheless, Waddell’s influence on Howells necessarily gave greater depth to Howells’s identification with liturgy, especially High Church liturgy.

Whereas Britten was not particularly interested in writing for liturgy, Howells not only wrote many settings of liturgical texts, he was content to set the same texts again and again, especially the more-than-twenty settings of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* for choral Evensong. Pickstock’s observation about the liturgical stammer would have made sense to Howells within the liturgy and from liturgy to liturgy.<sup>61</sup> In contrast to Britten’s Low Church leanings where liturgical and saint-

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<sup>55</sup> One Howells scholar, Christopher Palmer, regards Howells as more Catholic than Anglican. Palmer, *Centenary*, 211.

<sup>56</sup> Felicitas Corrigan, *Helen Waddell: A Biography* (London: Gollancz, 1986), 327.

<sup>57</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 138.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>61</sup> Howells’s close association with Richard Runciman Terry, choir director at the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral (Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 56-57), which resulted in Howells’s *Four Anthems to the Blessed Virgin Mary* as well as his assistance in Terry’s project of editing manuscripts of the Tudor masters, confirm some degree of familiarity with Roman Catholic liturgy.

related texts are concerned, Howells reflected the High Church perspective in that he wrote a Requiem (which, though not according to the usual liturgical form, is sung as ECM repertoire<sup>62</sup>), a setting of the *Stabat Mater*, and the *Four Anthems of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. He also revised his Requiem as a concert piece, *Hymnus Paradisi*.

### **Howells and Music in Worship.**

Since Howells became a prolific contributor to ECM, his awareness of the 1922 Report, *Music in Worship*, is worth a mention. Research has found no record that Howells was aware of the report or read it. But he was thirty when the report, with its remarkably perceptive statement on silence in liturgical music, was published, and he had already indicated an interest in writing for ECM beyond his article-pupil days. He had written church music highly regarded by the Royal College of Music faculty, by Sir Richard Runciman Terry at Westminster Cathedral, and by Eric Milner-White, Dean of King's College Cambridge, who was instrumental in eventually persuading Howells to “accomplish almost single-handedly” the “renewal of musical fitness and strength within the Anglican church ... after World War II.”<sup>63</sup> Also, Howells had already indicated in his music a deep connection with the great composers of the Tudor era, whose church music was often the crowning achievements of their *oeuvres*. Though research has not uncovered who authored the 1922 report,<sup>64</sup> it is not inconceivable that Howells might have been considered as a member of the Commission, was invited to participate, and actually did so. Unlikely though Howells's participation in the Commission was, it is very likely that he read the report at some point since the next official report on Anglican church music (in 1948) noted the “steady sale” of the 1922 report, which indicates its “considerable influence.”<sup>65</sup> Regardless of who read the 1922 statement, however, it serves as an indication that no matter how ambivalent the Church of England's basic texts seem to be about silence, those who took ECM seriously—which Howells did—were not unaware of silence's evolving role in twentieth-century music.

### **Howells and High Church Spiritual Literature.**

There is no evidence Howells read classics of mystical literature. But Helen Waddell's translations of medieval religious literature opened to Howells “the doors to the spiritual life,”<sup>66</sup> which confirms an interest on his part in spiritual/mystical literature of the West. It also confirms

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<sup>62</sup> Patton, 63, 179.

<sup>63</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 166.

<sup>64</sup> Among the sources that discuss the report is Long, *Music of the English Church*, 392. Long sheds no light on the identity of the Committee members.

<sup>65</sup> Church of England, Archbishops' Committee on the Place of Music in Church, *Music in Church. A Report of the Archbishops' Committee on the Place of Music in Church* (Church Information Board: Westminster, 1951), v.

<sup>66</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 139.

that he was at home—through literature, at any rate—with Europe’s Catholic past. The “liturgical worship of Catholic and Episcopal [Anglican] churches ... permits the analytical mind—the focused, objectifying dimensions of man’s intellect—to rest, thus freeing other dimensions of the person, what we might refer to as man’s spirit, for a deeper openness to divine reality.”<sup>67</sup> It follows from this that the more High Church sensibility (that favors liturgical worship) would be inclined towards poetry of a more reflective, “mystical” bent. It is not surprising, then, that Howells had a life-long appreciation of the poetry of Walter de la Mare and Fiona Macleod. Chapter six discusses Howells’s settings of works of these two poets. Britten, on the other hand, set a few poems of de la Mare, but only in his youth.

### **Non-theist Spirituality/Mysticism and *Telaesthesis*.**

Howells’s inclination towards poetry of a more reflective than intellectual character and his interest in the tradition of Catholic spirituality, which “emphasizes mysticism,”<sup>68</sup> would seem to situate him towards the mystical end of the continuum discussed in chapter one. But chapter one focuses on liturgy and spirituality/mysticism in the context of Christian belief. Howells’s apparent lack of religious belief calls for a definition of non-theist spirituality and mysticism. Non-theist spirituality can be defined as “some kind of vision of the human spirit and of what will assist it to achieve full potential.”<sup>69</sup> Defining non-theist mysticism is difficult because it has not generally been a subject of critical scholarship. Underhill did not feel the subject warranted more than a list of descriptors that would show how vague the term’s meaning is in popular usage.<sup>70</sup> But since theist spirituality and mysticism run along a continuum that has to do with awareness of the colloquy between the individual and God,<sup>71</sup> and since Knowles defines the mysticism end of the spectrum as receiving incommunicable, ineffable knowledge and love without precedent effort or reasoning,<sup>72</sup> non-theist mysticism can be defined, for the purpose of this discussion, as receiving an ineffable vision of the human spirit and its potential without precedent effort or reasoning. This vision of the human spirit includes the human capacity to experience awe in the face of natural beauty. It also includes the ability to conceive of a reality “that lies behind and beyond the flux of ephemera that

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<sup>67</sup> Richard Arthur Baer, “Quaker Silence, Catholic Liturgy, and Pentecostal Glossalalia – Some Functional Similarities,” in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Co., 1976), 152.

<sup>68</sup> Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 209.

<sup>69</sup> Sheldrake, *A Brief History of Spirituality*, 2. McIntosh’s definition of non-theist spirituality: “the human search for transcendence, fulfillment, and authenticity.” McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*, p. 9.

<sup>70</sup> Underhill, *Mysticism*, xiv.

<sup>71</sup> McGinn “Communicating the Incommunicable”; Underhill, *Mysticism*, xiv.

<sup>72</sup> Knowles, *What is Mysticism*, 13.

envelop man’s temporal life.”<sup>73</sup> Such experiences can transcend the tedious and the self-centered, assuage grief, inspire creativity, and so on. Howells’s perspective seems to have been that of the non-theist mystic.

As this chapter shows, Howells so completely identified with so many aspects of Anglican Christianity that he naturally expressed his non-theist mystical penchant in the language of Christian spirituality, both Anglican and the medieval Catholic expression in Waddell’s translations. Indeed, Howells’s identification with the language of the “King James’ Bible and the Book of Common Prayer,”<sup>74</sup> the architecture and acoustics of cathedrals,<sup>75</sup> and ECM means he probably spent most of his life without any need to distinguish between theist and non-theist spirituality/mysticism. His daughter was not surprised by the fact that her father stated his lack of belief in the afterlife. What surprised her was that he stated it so explicitly.<sup>76</sup> Apparently, making theological distinctions and addressing religious faith or the lack thereof were not topics Howells was known to address, even in his family.

In a sense, Howells’s non-theist mysticism strengthens rather than diminishes the identification of his ECM with all that is discussed in chapter one concerning silence in Anglicanism. Howells’s love of ECM, cathedral architecture, and Anglican liturgy was ardent all his life<sup>77</sup> as was his telaesthetic sensibility concerning his native Gloucestershire. That he expresses this rather than theological tenets in which he did not believe certainly explains the creative vitality of his ECM. It just happened that expressing his non-theist mystical perception meant reaching for the theological language closest at hand and that best communicated to others in his culture. He cannot have been entirely impervious to the influence of Anglican spirituality, including its perception of silence. His appreciation of the liturgy included an appreciation of the way liturgy was generally done, which included the reading of texts with a sense of *intellectus* (and thus a form of monastic *lectio divina*) rather than *ratio*. Later chapters discuss the way his music reveals this perspective.

Where Howells’s profession of a non-theist mysticism is most authentic is in his references to the telaesthetic, whether in the countryside of his native Gloucestershire or in cathedrals. But notes he wrote on cathedrals, presumably for a lecture, are illuminating: “Only the nave at first (Secular) then a Screen (a barrier, and gateway to—mystery?) ... Space + space + space! Stand under the Tower. Look up!—another spatial experience. The central tower seems to rise up like another

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<sup>73</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 138.

<sup>74</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 211.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-147.

<sup>76</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 98.

<sup>77</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 98; “Howells saw his spirituality ... in terms of three As—Architecture, Acoustic, Association.” Palmer, *Centenary*, 146.



cathedral-within-a-cathedral.”<sup>78</sup> Howells’s daughter, Ursula, recounts Howells’s great love for cathedrals. He “adored the music and the buildings—he adored cathedrals. Emotionally, he had a sort of spiritual sense.”<sup>79</sup> Howells’s experience was to silence the discursive and to perceive the distances as mystery. Both Howells and Josef Pieper were kindred spirits with the Heideggerean notion of being open to the revelation of *Dasein* (Being), perceiving by *intellectus* more than by *ratio*.

All of this comes together in Howells’s description of the ideal music in cathedral liturgies. *Ratio* is silenced in order to perceive the *simplex intuitus* of the entire experience of being in a cathedral, including the mystery associated with the distant vistas beyond the chancel screen and in the upper reaches of the vaulted ceilings and the tower. Howells wrote that cathedral music should provide the faithful with an “ultra-mondian experience.” This music should transcend “normal common-or-garden musical experience in two crucial aspects: its unmetrical nature (no easy breakdown into three-in-a-bar or four-in-a-bar), and [in its] harmonic challenge.”<sup>80</sup> Because Howells had been raised as an organist and composer in the Anglican tradition, he knew how to convey musically what seems to have been his non-theist spirituality/mysticism in terms entirely consonant with Anglicanism’s theist spirituality-mysticism and its ECM

### **Conclusion.**

There is no indication that Britten’s spirituality, whether theist or not, included silence as the ineffable. Britten reflected, in general terms, the Low Church view of silence. He either took no notice of it or avoided it. This chapter makes these observations as well as providing indications of the kind of mystical and poetic literature to which Britten was drawn. The next chapter develops this theme. It establishes that even when silence has a major role in a poet’s *oeuvre*, Britten ignored it.

Howells’s expressions of the ineffable suggest a non-theist spirituality or perhaps a non-theist mysticism. Howells’s spirituality was connected with his *telaesthetic* sensibility, particularly in relation to cathedrals and the Gloucestershire countryside. What he perceived in silences as being associated with distance and the ineffable, apparently in non-theist terms, was nonetheless consonant with many aspects of the Anglican ethos and spirituality in which he had been raised and trained as a musician and composer. Chapter six looks at mostly secular texts Howells chose and through which he expressed his non-theist appreciation of silence as the ineffable, including silence’s involvement in *telaesthesis*.

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<sup>78</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 144.

<sup>79</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 98; Palmer, *Centenary*, 146.

<sup>80</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 145.

## Chapter Five Silence, Twentieth-Century British Literature, and Britten

### Introduction

This chapter opens with observations on how literature was involved in the twentieth-century's pronounced interest in silence. It then explores Britten's response to this phenomenon, particularly in the non-ECM texts he selected, and finds that Britten was interested in silence, but silence as first-level-positive and second-level-negative, which excludes silence as the ineffable. The research and analysis shows that Britten largely ignored or avoided silence's significant role in the *oeuvres* of T. S. Eliot and Walter de la Mare. This chapter also examines the important theme of night in Britten's selection of texts and the night's relation to silence, which further affirms Britten's largely negative view of silence. The final section of this chapter provides yet more evidence of Britten's negative perspective on silence by discussing the use of silence in his operas.

Britten's response to literature is an important indicator of his views because he chose and set texts with great care and also collaborated closely with writers who wrote or compiled texts for his compositions.<sup>1</sup> "Not since the days when musician and poet were the same person," wrote poet Peter Porter, "has there been a great composer whose art is as profoundly bound up with words as Benjamin Britten's."<sup>2</sup> More fundamentally, Britten identified literature as the basis of his identity as a twentieth-century composer. The twentieth century, with its many musical "ism"s, provided no ready-made musical idiom in which the young composer could find his own musical language. Britten saw his way forward as a composer to be England's "wonderful lyric tradition of poetry."<sup>3</sup>

Drawing on the observations in preceding chapters on the Low Church emphasis on text and on *ratio*, it is not surprising that there is not a dominant presence of Romantic and more reflective poetry in Britten's settings. For example, Tennyson seems to have been called into service not because he was a Romantic poet but because he wrote two poems—"Blow, Bugle, Blow," incorporated into *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, op. 31, and "The Kraken," part of the cycle, *Nocturne*, op. 60—that addressed one of Britten's favorite topics: night. Britten's penchant towards poetry that favors *ratio* rather than *intellectus* is also evident in the influence of Henry Purcell on Britten as a composer of vocal music. Both Purcell and Britten relished the challenge of setting words rather than feelings to music. "I never realized words could be set with such ingenuity and colour," Britten said of Purcell.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At twenty four, Britten's 1938 collaboration with R. Ellis Roberts on *The World of the Spirit* established themes that were to occupy Britten for the rest of his life. Donald Mitchell, Prefatory Note to *The World of the Spirit*, by Benjamin Britten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Porter, "Composer and Poet," in *The Britten Companion*, ed. Christopher Palmer (London: Faber, 1984), 271. See also Barbara Docherty, "Sentence into Cadence: The Word-Setting of Tippett and Britten," *Tempo* 166 (1988): 2-11.

<sup>3</sup> *Britten on Music*, 211.

<sup>4</sup> Ford, *Britten's Poets*, xvi.

### Modernism, Silence, and Continental Literature.

Since silence in twentieth-century literature is most apparent among Modernist continental writers, a few observations on Modernism in general are helpful. Modernism was not so much about thought as it was a mood of energetically responding to the sense that the work of art had become “entrapped, diminished when it is given articulate [or patently representational] form.”<sup>5</sup> But emancipation from literary and artistic forms was tied to a sense of emancipation and joyful release from cultural norms and conventions in general.<sup>6</sup> One literary theorist, Lawrence Gamache, identifies literary Modernism’s constitutive elements as follows:

(1) a preoccupation with the present, usually urban and technical rather than rural and agricultural in its sense of place and time, is related to the loss of a meaningful context derived from the past, from its forms, styles, and traditions; (2) this sense of loss gives rise to a search for a new context—cosmopolitan, not provincial, in scope—and for new techniques to evolve an acceptable perception of reality, often, paradoxically, in the form of an attempt to rediscover roots in the depths of the past; (3) but this search tends to an increasingly relativistic, inward, often disillusioned vision and a compulsive need to develop techniques to embody it.<sup>7</sup>

Gamache gives a few examples of Modernist responses that came from literary Britain: “the rejection of the present in favor of the values of the past (Eliot), a singular vision of the future (Lawrence), a substitute reality (Yeats), or the diminishing conviction that there is any stable external reality to which that inward search relates (Joyce).”<sup>8</sup> Though Modernism seems to have begun with a sense of “joyful release,”<sup>9</sup> its expression was not without significantly negative elements such as destabilization, disillusionment, and compulsion. These negative elements help account for a strong current of second-level-negative silence in Modernism.

Literary Modernism did not merely include the concept of silence, it brought it to the fore. The “election of silence by the most articulate is ... historically recent,”<sup>10</sup> notes George Steiner, who gives as two examples Friedrich Hölderlin and Arthur Rimbaud.<sup>11</sup> For both of these poets, it was a matter of valuing silence within their art but, more importantly, silencing their art itself after early periods of creativity. Rimbaud, silenced his creative voice at the age of eighteen. For Hölderlin, it was a matter of accomplishing what he felt he needed to and then entering into a quiet madness that

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<sup>5</sup> Steiner, *Language and Silence*, 68. A similar view is expressed in Cleo McNelly Kearns, “Modernism.” In *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, ed., Andrew Hass, David Jasper and Elisabeth Jay, 164-79. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 171.

<sup>6</sup> Monroe K. Spears, *Dionysus and the City* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence B. Gamache, “Toward a Definition of ‘Modernism’,” in *The Modernists: Studies in a Literary Phenomenon: Essay[S] in Honor of Harry T. Moore*, ed. Lawrence B. Gamache and Ian S. MacNiven (Rutherford, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1987), 33.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Spears, *Dionysus and the City*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Steiner, *Language and Silence*, 66.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

lasted thirty-six years.<sup>12</sup> Neither case is regarded as abandonment or negation. In Hölderlin’s case, the later silence was seen as the unfolding and sovereign logic of the “gathering strength of stillness within and between the lines of the poems,” which are seen as the “primary element of their genius.”<sup>13</sup> Steiner claims that Rimbaud’s silence was a means of turning his words into the nobler language of action.<sup>14</sup>

This twentieth-century appreciation and increased awareness of silence in the arts was expressed in the epistemology of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the aesthetics of Anton Webern and John Cage, and the poetics of Samuel Beckett,<sup>15</sup> to name only a few. In literature, there were also Stéphane Mallarmé, Eugène Ionesco, Franz Kafka, and Luigi Pirandello,<sup>16</sup> among others. Among American writers, silence is an important theme in the fiction of Willa Cather<sup>17</sup> and in the poetry of E. E. Cummings. Silence in the *oeuvres* of British writers important to Britten and Howells are explored below, but Aldous Huxley, whose texts were not set by Britten or Howells, was one British writer who took a notable interest in silence and its relation to music.<sup>18</sup> Silence was also important in the theater. Writing in 1984, literary critic Leslie Kane observed that “[w]ithin the last eighty years several dramatists, merging form and content, have increasingly employed silence in the dramatic spectacle.”<sup>19</sup>

### **Modernist and Post-Modernist Literary Silence as Second-Level-Negative**

An aspect of Modernism of the later twentieth century, particularly in drama, Leslie Kane argues, is the “terrible face of our bestiality,” which Harold Pinter’s uncertain, uneasy, and even noisy, silences were meant to reveal.<sup>20</sup> First-level-positive, second-level-negative silence (silence perceived as existing in its own right and experienced as unpleasant) is also important in the works

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. The evidence suggests Rimbaud’s actions were anything but noble since they seem to have included involvement in the slave trade. Enid Starkie, *Arthur Rimbaud* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1947), 363. Charles Nicholl, *Somebody Else: Arthur Rimbaud in Africa 1880-91* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), 272-282.

<sup>15</sup> Steiner, *Language and Silence*, 67

<sup>16</sup> Catalina Florescu, "Reading of Samuel Beckett's 'Krapp's Last Tape,' Luigi Pirandello's 'Henry IV,' and Eugène Ionesco's 'Rhinoceros,'" *Vitalpoetics: A Journal of Critical Literary Theory* 1:2 (June 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Richards Giannone, “Music, Silence, and the Spirituality of Willa Cather,” *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature* 57:2 (Winter 2005): 123-150.

<sup>18</sup> Huxley declared that Wagner’s music is less significant than Beethoven’s or Mozart’s because Wagner’s is “very poor in silence” and that if music fails to express the inexpressible, “there was always silence to fall back on. For always, always and everywhere, the rest is silence.” “The Rest is Silence,” in *Aldous Huxley Complete Essays*, vol. III: 1930-1935, ed. R. S. Baker and J. Sexton (Chicago: I. R. Dee, 2001), 56. See also *Antic Hay* (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), 201.

<sup>19</sup> Leslie Kane, *The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama* (Rutherford, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 13. For a discussion on silence in Harold Pinter’s plays, see Mel Gussow and Ben Brantley, “Harold Pinter, Playwright of the Pause, Dies at 78,” *New York Times*, 26 December 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Kane, *The Language of Silence*, 13.

of Luigi Pirandello.<sup>21</sup> Throughout all human existence, one association of silence is with a “Great Chthonic Terror”<sup>22</sup> that could be wired into our evolutionary synapses since it results from the uncertainty of how to answer the question, “How do we stay alive?” In earliest human societies, most of the activities for survival (hunting, foraging, harvesting) were by the light of day and attended by sound. The Great Chthonic Terror was that the dark will swallow the light, the sun will not rise, the fires will go out, and the sound of activity will give way to silence and death. As discussed in chapter one, the silence of death is one of the most explicit references to silence in the Old Testament. Given this relationship between silence and darkness, Sara Maitland makes the interesting observation that the Norse mythological system, developed from a people in the far north where the light of day is dramatically scarce during much of the year, presents the noisiest of heavens. Valhalla is “no everlasting rest and sweet music [but] drunken rioting and a great deal of crashing and banging.”<sup>23</sup>

The Great Chthonic Terror, or even a less focused discomfort with silence, can be kept at bay by language. Language, especially scientific language, “keeps the sun (the light, life, food, future, ... [the noise of activity]) alive.”<sup>24</sup> Science provides “non-theological, non-magical rules, to explain why the sun has not been swallowed up and ... why it is not going to be swallowed up tomorrow.”<sup>25</sup> And yet, the unsayable, with all its associations, positive, negative, and the *terribilis* of biblical dread awe, somehow remains in the human consciousness or sub-consciousness and therefore in culture. As Budick and Iser point out, to acknowledge the realm of the unsayable but pass over it in silence (Wittgenstein) or set it aside (Husserl) paradoxically points to it, even if articulating the unsayable is “by means of a language somehow formed on being silent.”<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, as the idea of an impending ecological disaster has come to the fore across the twentieth century, it has been attended by a deep uneasiness that “one day the science [would] not work, the language [would] break down and the light [would] go out.”<sup>27</sup> Because this breakdown of language and science is terrifying, moderns keep silence at bay; so much so that Stuart Sim devotes significant attention in his *Manifesto for Silence* to cataloguing the myriad ways in which modern society allows itself to be besieged by noise.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Maria Antonietta Grignani, “The Making and Unmaking of Language: The Rhetoric of Speech and Silence,” in *Luigi Pirandello: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Gian-Paolo Biasin and Manuela Gieri, 77-106 (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 103.

<sup>22</sup> Maitland, *A Book of Silence*, 129.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), xii.

<sup>27</sup> Maitland, *A Book of Silence*, 130.

<sup>28</sup> Sim, *Manifesto for Silence*, passim.

Though twentieth-century thought had its current that avoided or downplayed the chthonic terror, it also had its current that faced it head-on. This is what E. B. O. Borgerhoff refers to as the neuro-pathological<sup>29</sup> perspective, which, in spite of the rather pejorative label, has inspired creative activity in twentieth-century arts and letters. Indeed, because this perspective generated important artistic, literary, and philosophical works, it is difficult to identify it as a disease (the meaning of “pathological”). So it will be referred to here as the neuro-existential. Claimed as one of the earliest articulations of this perspective—though *bien avant la lettre*—is Blaise Pascal’s famous statement, “The eternal silence of those infinite spaces fills me with dread.”<sup>30</sup> Pascal’s statement was intended not as an expression of Pascal’s conviction but that of an imaginary interlocutor who would have been a rationalist or skeptic of Pascal’s era.<sup>31</sup> To translate *m’effraie* as “fills me with dread” evokes the vetero-testamentary language that associates dread, holy fear with interactions with the divine. For Pascal the believer, this silence of dread awe would be second-level-positive. For the rationalist/skeptic, it would be the silence of dread, of *horreur*—second-level-negative. It was in the latter sense that this famous statement influenced subsequent intellectual history, effectively giving voice to a powerful artistic and philosophical current in modern perceptions of silence. Pascal’s influence was explicitly invoked by several writers and thinkers of the early twentieth century. Henri Bergson “thought the *Pensées* the work of a poet and a hero; [Miguel de] Unamuno saw himself in them, agonized, and spoke of an ‘intimate tragedy.’”<sup>32</sup> Samuel Beckett’s menacing silences undoubtedly found a receptive audience because of Pascal, Bergson, and others. Adorno declared the irreversible slide of new music into silence.<sup>33</sup> Implied in this statement is that the silence is to be avoided, that there is nothing pleasant or beneficial about it. The silence of the eternal spaces became, in the twentieth century, “the larger artistic and social oblivion awaiting modernist arts.”<sup>34</sup>

This cultural current continued through the twentieth century with a sense that silence is not so much terrifying as it is a kind of non-theist *via negativa* that frees the artist “from servile bondage to the world.”<sup>35</sup> Adorno suggests a similar motivation where Webern is concerned, claiming Webern and others subsumed silence “into the cultural *morendo* of modernism.”<sup>36</sup> Umberto Eco charts this movement into a kind of non-theist apophysis in the West by observing that the *avant-*

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<sup>29</sup> E. B. O. Borgerhoff, “The Reality of Pascal: The ‘Pensées’ as Rhetoric,” *The Sewanee Review* 65, no. 1 (1957): 15-33: 23.

<sup>30</sup> Pascal, *Pensées*, tr. Krailshimer, 95. *Le silence éternel des ces espaces infinis m’effraie*.

<sup>31</sup> Borgerhoff, 17.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> Metzer, 332.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Susan Sontag, “The Aesthetics of Silence,” in *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, London: Secker & Warburg, 1969), 6. Sontag’s description of the *via negativa* as a theology of God’s absence is not accurate. The mystical literature on the *via negativa* expresses the paradox of sensing God as absent because more fully drawn into God’s presence

<sup>36</sup> Metzer, 333.

*garde* of early twentieth-century Modernism wanted to “settle scores with the past” because “[t]he past conditions us, harries us, blackmails us.” The *avant-garde* therefore destroyed the figure, destroyed the past. It arrived at the white canvas, the blank page, and, in music, “the passage from atonality to noise to absolute silence.”<sup>37</sup>

None of the writers mentioned so far were British, with the exception of Becket who identified more with France. Silence’s neuro-existential current did not play a major role in the mainstream of British arts and letters in the early or mid-twentieth century. An exception might be T. S. Eliot. But many of his references to silence are associated with Christian and Eastern mysticism as much as with the neuro-existential. The reticence of British writers to espouse Modernism’s neuro-existential current of silence is related to the tendency of early-twentieth-century British writers and artists to shape a more moderate form of Modernism in general. Indeed, some artists and writers, such as James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and Mina Loy gave up on England as a place for radical innovation.<sup>38</sup>

### **Britten and Literary Modernism.**

Consonant with the Low Church perspective on silence, Britten could have been attracted to silence in literature in one of two ways. Either he might have taken no particular notice of the role of silence in literature. Or, regarding silence as suspect, Britten’s perspective on silence might have been open to silence as primarily first-level-positive and second-level-negative, which accords with the neuro-existential view of silence. Where literature is concerned, Britten inclined towards the former reaction. Britten’s perspective on silence in his music, however, reflects the latter perspective.

As noted above, British literature was an important influence in Britten’s musical idiom away from the “Wagner cloud.”<sup>39</sup> Britten was too appreciative of poetry to limit his scope solely to British writers. But most of the texts he set following his return to England in 1942 are by British writers (see Appendix 5.1) or were foreign texts re-written for English settings (for example, Guy de Maupassant’s *Le rosier de Madame Husson* situated in a very English village in *Albert Herring*, and the Japanese Noh play, *Sumidagawa*, re-written for a setting in medieval East Anglia in *Curlew River*).

Britten’s Anglocentric turn reflects the phenomenon literary theorist Jed Esty identifies as having taken place among late Modernist writers in Britain.<sup>40</sup> This was due to a spirit of reverse

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<sup>37</sup> Umberto Eco, “Postmodernism, Irony, the Enjoyable,” in Postscript to *The Name of the Rose*, tr. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 530.

<sup>38</sup> Jed Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Britten on Music*, 211.

<sup>40</sup> Esty, *passim*.

colonization, of which English intellectuals already saw the signs by the late 1930s. They realized war and imperial contraction were structurally interrelated, not merely coincident in time.<sup>41</sup> Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*, has to do with a voyage away from England (to South America). Her last novel, *Between the Acts* takes as its subject an English country ritual, the pageant play. T. S. Eliot moved from the multi-cultural metropolis of *The Waste Land* to the sacred national site in "Little Gidding" of *The Four Quartets*. E. M. Forster's *Room with a View* and *Passage to India* focused on the English in Italian and Indian culture. His later works are characterized as displaying the "delibidinalized insularity of his mid-century pageants and country rambles."<sup>42</sup>

Of these writers, Woolf seems to have made very little impression on Britten. But Britten set Eliot's "Journey of the Magi" (as *Canticle IV*) and "The Death of St. Narcissus" (as *Canticle V*) and collaborated with Forster as the librettist for *Billy Budd*. Other Modernist British writers that had a role in Britten's *oeuvre* were Edith Sitwell, whose "Still Falls the Rain" was set as *Canticle III* and Lytton Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex*, the inspiration of *Gloriana*. Britten also read British Late Modernists' literary criticism. He made references to E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*<sup>43</sup> and commented on Eliot's observations concerning Milton.<sup>44</sup>

The rest of this chapter establishes that though Britten was influenced by British Late Modernist literature, he was not influenced by the role of silence where it appears among these writers. Britten's selection of texts indicates he was interested in silence's neuro-existential association. But that interest, as noted above, does not play a significant role in British literature of the period. The neuro-existential also exceeds the scope of this study, though it merits some attention in these pages because of its importance in the twentieth century's interest in silence.

### **Gerard Manley Hopkins.**

Though a nineteenth-century poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins was one of several Victorian writers who articulated a consciousness of the disappearance of God, which was "perhaps the fundamental shift in the transition to modernity in English literature and culture."<sup>45</sup> Hopkins's poetry also points the way towards Modernist literature in terms of form and style both by escaping the inherited standards of Victorian poetry and by its apparent disregard for accessibility. Hopkins employed the concept of silence in his art and took on a self-imposed silencing of his art at one point in his career.<sup>46</sup> Though silence is not a major theme in Hopkins's *oeuvre*, the reference to "elected

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Britten on Music*, 213; Carpenter, 202.

<sup>44</sup> *Britten on Music*, 215.

<sup>45</sup> David Jasper, "The Study of Literature and Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, ed. Andrew Hass, David Jasper and Elisabeth Jay, 15-32 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 25.

<sup>46</sup> Hopkins assembled his poems and burned them when he became a Jesuit novice, though the "regulations of the [Jesuit] novitiate did not require such a holocaust." Eleanor Ruggles, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Life* (London: John



silence”<sup>47</sup> in the opening line of “The Habit of Perfection” (1866), has a staying power in the mind of the attentive reader, particularly with the resonances of other famous references to silence among Victorian poets such as Keats’s “still unravished bride of quietness / Thou foster child of silence and slow time” in “Ode on a Grecian Urn,”<sup>48</sup> the silences in Wordsworth’s *genius loci* poems,<sup>49</sup> and so on. Hopkins’s “The Habit of Perfection” became his best known poem from his conversion period and was one of the eight poems his friend, Robert Bridges, later poet laureate, included in the first publication of Hopkins’s poetry in 1893. The staying power of its opening line received further confirmation and new life when *Elected Silence* was chosen in 1949 as the title of the British edition of Thomas Merton’s autobiography, *Seven Storey Mountain*. “The Habit of Perfection” was not an obscure poem by an obscure poet in the Anglophone world.

Among Hopkins’s poems Britten set, “The Habit of Perfection” was not one of them. Britten was “only fitfully at ease with the levitating religious fervor of [Hopkins’s] texts.”<sup>50</sup> He effectively removed *A.M.D.G.*, his setting of five of Hopkins’s poems,<sup>51</sup> from his *oeuvre* by assigning its opus number (17) to *Paul Bunyan*.<sup>52</sup> Also, Hopkins was a poet to which Britten did not return after the Hopkins settings rather early in Britten’s career (see Appendix 5.1). The one reference to silence in one poem by a poet only “fitfully” present early in Britten’s career might not warrant any mention at all were it not for its consistency with Britten’s response to the role of silence in the works of other poets.

### T. S. Eliot.

T. S. Eliot, at the heart of British literary Modernism and in whose *oeuvre* silence is very important, had a substantial influence on Britten. On January 5, 1936, the high summer of Britten’s Auden years, Britten wrote of how much he admired listening to a broadcast of Eliot’s *Murder in the*

Lane the Bodley Head, 1947), 77. By contrast with Hölderlin and Rimbaud, Hopkins’s self-imposed silence was temporary and confirmed his vocation as a priest while contributing to his evolution as a poet. Paddy Kitchen, *Gerard Manley Hopkins a Life* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1989), 114; Ruggles, 95.

<sup>47</sup> For various interpretations of this passage, see Norman White, *Hopkins: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 130; Ruggles, 58; and Kitchen, 83.

<sup>48</sup> John Keats, *John Keats: Complete Poems*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 282.

<sup>49</sup> Roy Schwartzman, “The Mother of Sound: A Phenomenology of Silence in Wordsworth’s Poetry” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western Speech Communication Association, Salt Lake City, Utah, February 1987).

<sup>50</sup> Peter Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 56.

<sup>51</sup> The five poems are “Prayer I,” “Rosa Mystica,” “God’s Grandeur,” “Prayer II,” “O Deus ego amo te,” “The Soldier,” and “Heaven-Haven.” These settings were for unaccompanied vocal quartet and were written in 1939. The title of the collection, *A.M.D.G.*, is from the motto of Hopkins’s Jesuit order, *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*. The year before, Britten wrote another setting of “God’s Grandeur,” scored for choir, soprano soloist, and orchestra as part of the epilogue of his religious cantata, *The World of the Spirit*. In that case, the text had been chosen by the librettist, R. Ellis Roberts, though in consultation with Britten. Donald Mitchell and Philip Reed, Prefatory Note, Benjamin Britten, *The World of the Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>52</sup> Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten*, 56.

*Cathedral*.<sup>53</sup> In 1944, Britten suggested Eliot as a possible collaborator for a Christmas production for the Sadler’s Wells Company, though the production did not take place.<sup>54</sup> In 1946, Eliot invited Britten to contribute “a short general article on the problems of the small opera” as a preface to Faber and Faber’s proposed publication of Duncan’s libretto for *The Rape of Lucretia*.<sup>55</sup> In 1949, Britten invited Eliot to take part in the Aldeburgh Festival, which Eliot had to turn down because of other engagements.<sup>56</sup> After Eliot’s death, Valerie Eliot, his widow, wrote that Eliot had been delighted by the founding of Faber Music in 1964 to publish Britten’s music.<sup>57</sup> A year later, in March 1965, only two months after Eliot died, Britten was awarded the Order of Merit, an honor reserved to only twenty-four holders. The member of the Order Britten replaced was T. S. Eliot. Britten’s comment on being admitted into the Order was “[H]ow I wish that Eliot was still with us to keep me company in it.”<sup>58</sup> In 1973, Valerie Eliot reminisced, “I wish my husband could have known of your setting [of “Journey of the Magi”] for he admired your work. Once when we were listening to *Les Illuminations* and *Serenade* he said, ‘I dislike my poems put to music, but I should be pleased if Britten cared to do it’.”<sup>59</sup>

Britten set two texts of Eliot: *Canticle IV: The Journey of the Magi* (1971) and *Canticle V: The Death of St. Narcissus* (1974). That Britten set only two works of Eliot and late in his career is not an indication that Britten did not have a longstanding and deep appreciation of Eliot’s poetry but that it is very challenging to set to music. One indication that Eliot was a favorite poet of Britten is that after heart surgery in 1973, Britten found that Eliot was one of the poets he was able to read.<sup>60</sup>

What Britten drew from Eliot’s work was the strength and clarity of the poetic outlook. Eliot, along with Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis, galvanized his poetic voice according to the poetic ideals of T. E. Hulme:

There are ... two things to distinguish, first the particular faculty of mind to see things as they really are, and apart from the conventional ways in which you have been trained to see them ... Second, the concentrated state of mind, the grip over oneself which is necessary in the actual expression of what one sees. To prevent one falling into the conventional curves of ingrained technique, to hold on through infinite detail and trouble to the exact curve you want.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Donald Mitchell, *Britten and Auden in the Thirties* (Woodbridge, England; Rochester, New York: Boydell Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>54</sup> Britten, *Letters From a Life*, vol. 3, 1946-1951, 332.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*; Carpenter, 446.

<sup>58</sup> Carpenter, 446.

<sup>59</sup> Britten, *Letters from a Life*, vol. 3, 1946-1951, 332.

<sup>60</sup> Carpenter, *Britten*, 562.

<sup>61</sup> T. E. Hulme, “Romanticism and Classicism,” in *The English Modernist Reader, 1910-1930*, ed. Peter Faulkner (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1986), 51.

Britten did not work with, or set the texts of, Modernist writers until 1951 when he collaborated with E. M. Forster as the librettist for *Billy Budd*. Still, Britten's musical language has the spare clarity of expression spoken of by Hulme. Britten constantly re-shaped his technique, striving for faithful clarity to each word of each text. He strove constantly against falling into conventional curves, even to the extent of not repeating his own conventional curves. "Some people [want another *Grimes*.] But they are mistaken if they expect me to give it to them. I have different challenges before me and I respond to them."<sup>62</sup>

In a backhanded compliment that likens Britten's Modernist musical idiom to Eliot's Modernist poetry, a critic in the *Evening News* complained that Britten's realization of Gay's and Pepusch's *The Beggar's Opera* was too Modernist for the general public. "It would be an ingenious literary experiment no doubt to rewrite 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' in the style of T. S. Eliot, but one suspects that some of the simple charm of the original would be lost."<sup>63</sup> Though this is only one critic's opinion, it nonetheless says something about the perception of Britten's art in relation to Eliot's in 1948 England.

As attentive a reader as Britten was, he cannot have missed the prominent role of silence<sup>64</sup> in Eliot's *oeuvre*. Attributed to Eliot is the description of his poetry as "writing with a lot of silence on the page."<sup>65</sup> Denis Donoghue notes that Eliot "was a man of words who loved silence. Indeed, in his greatest poems the words are one part sound and three parts silence, the silence in which he pondered, felt, and remembered."<sup>66</sup> Eliot's perspective on silence evolved, effectively embracing both the non-theist silence of Modernism, including elements of the neuro-existential current, in his early poetry (in "The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock," for example) and silence as open to the ineffable in *The Four Quartets*. Eliot did not simply employ references to silence, as though silence were one concept or image among many. He "used poetry to explore several problems of silence and action."<sup>67</sup> Silence in Eliot's early poetry is of one extreme. "It is impossible to say just what I mean"<sup>68</sup> in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is about the "loss of articulate speech and an

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<sup>62</sup> *Britten on Music*, 230.

<sup>63</sup> *Evening News*, 19 September 1948. quoted in Paul Kildea, *Selling Britten: Music and the Market Place* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 97.

<sup>64</sup> Forms of the word "silent" are used fifty-one times in Eliot's poems and plays. J. L. Dawson, P. D. Holland, D. J. McKitterick, ed. *A Concordance to the Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (Ithaca, New York; London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 903. "Stillness" is used eight times. *Ibid.*, 952 "Still" is used one-hundred-and-forty times, *ibid.*, 950-952, though this list does not distinguish between various meanings of the word. Forms of the word "Quiet" are used forty-five times. *Ibid.*, 797-98. Frequency of silence-related language is not a sure indication of the role of silence in Eliot's work. But a mere glance at many of the passages that use silence-related language shows that many of them are central to Eliot's philosophical and theological outlook.

<sup>65</sup> Maitland, *A Book of Silence*, 186.

<sup>66</sup> Denis Donoghue, "T. S. Eliot's Quartets: A New Reading," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 54, no. 213 (Spring 1965): 41. Eliot's family motto happened to be, "Be silent and act." William Harmon, "T. S. Eliot's Raids on the Inarticulate," *PMLA* 91, no. 3 (May 1976): 450.

<sup>67</sup> William Harmon, "T. S. Eliot's Raids on the Inarticulate," *PMLA* 91, no. 3 (May 1976): 450

<sup>68</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems: 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 16.

inability to do anything.”<sup>69</sup> But Eliot’s poetry eventually arrived at “the other extreme, at which silence suggests such tranquility that language and poetry do not matter”<sup>70</sup>—the silence of apophatic mysticism.

Among the interpretations to which silence in Eliot’s early poetry is open is that of silence as a psychological and spiritual emptiness—silence in the neuro-existential vein. In “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” there is this line: “I should have been a pair of ragged claws, / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.”<sup>71</sup> This silence is *fuga mundi* in a sense antithetical to Christian monastic *fuga mundi* because it abandons one’s concern for humanity and one’s own role in responding to the needs of others.<sup>72</sup> It is first-level-positive, second-level-negative silence because silence is sought as existing unto itself with its own ability to anaesthetize against the anxiety of “decisions and revisions” and of wondering whether one can dare “[d]isturb the universe.”<sup>73</sup> “The Hollow Men,” a poem heavily in the neuro-existential vein, does not refer to silence by word, but is all about the death and futility of speech in a meaningless existence. “Our dried voices, when / We whisper together / Are quiet and meaningless / As wind in dry grass / Or rats’ feet over broken glass / In our dry cellar.”<sup>74</sup> “In this last of meeting places / We grope together / And avoid speech / Gathered on this beach of the tumid river.”<sup>75</sup> Rather than being filled with dread at the silent, empty spaces, the nihilist end of all things seems to be one of grim resignation as the poem ends in verses very like a nursery rhyme: “This is the way the world ends / This is the way the world ends ... Not with a bang but a whimper.”<sup>76</sup>

Even in Eliot’s early poetry, however, there are the seeds of a later recognition of silence as first- and second-level-positive. In “The Waste Land,” there are hints that silence could be life-giving. “There is not even silence in the mountains / But dry sterile thunder without rain / There is not even solitude in the mountains / But red sullen faces sneer and snarl / From doors of mudcracked houses / If there were water.”<sup>77</sup> Suggested here is that silence and solitude, like water and rain, bring life.

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<sup>69</sup> Harmon, 450.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. See also Curt Asher, “Silence, Sound and Eliot’s Mystical Imagination: A Reading of Burnt Norton,” *Yeats Eliot Review: A Journal of Criticism and Scholarship* 19, no. 3 (October 2002): 27-31.

<sup>71</sup> Eliot, *Collected Poems*, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Peifer, *Monastic Spirituality*, 194-95.

<sup>73</sup> Eliot, *Collected Poems*, 5.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 47. A brief mention of Eliot’s early poem, “Silence” (1910), is called for. It did not influence cultural views of silence in Britain in the first half of the century since it was not published until recently. Perhaps “Silence” expressed a religious phenomenon of which Eliot himself was not fully aware at the time. Jayme Stayer, “Searching for the Early Eliot: *Inventions for the March Hare*,” in *A Companion to T. S. Eliot*, ed. David Chinitz, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 112. For a different interpretation, see Eloise Knapp Hay, *T.S. Eliot’s Negative Way* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 72.

Eliot also employed references to silence as an expression of the Modernist perception of the tarnished, worn-out state of language and inherited forms,<sup>78</sup> a theme he maintained into his late poems. In “Burnt Norton” from *Four Quartets*: “Words strain, / Crack and sometimes break, under the burden, / Under the tension, slip, slide, perish, / Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place, / Will not stay still.”<sup>79</sup> By carrying the Modernist understanding of silence into his post-religious-conversion poetry, Eliot was a twentieth-century writer who effectively combined both that century’s non-theist understanding of silence and its continuing development of silence in the Christian context.<sup>80</sup> In *Ash Wednesday*, Eliot’s first long poem after his conversion, he identified divine silence with the very Word of God and did so paradoxically with allusions to Modernism’s perception of language as worn, spent, broken:

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent  
 If the unheard, unspoken  
 Word is unspoken, unheard;  
 Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,  
 The Word without a word, the Word within  
 The world and for the world;  
 And the light shone in the darkness and  
 Against the Word in the unstill world still whirled  
 About the centre of the silent Word.<sup>81</sup>

Stillness is another term Eliot used for silence. In “Burnt Norton,” Eliot, echoing Keats’s Grecian urn, refers to “The stillness, as a Chinese jar still / Moves perpetually in its stillness.” This perpetual movement in stillness is referred to as words that “decay with imprecision” and “after speech, reach / Into the silence.” Because of Eliot’s Modernist credentials, this stillness/silence is a Modernist rejection of conventional forms, expressions, and ingrained technique.<sup>82</sup> Because of Eliot’s Christianity and his knowledge of mystical literature (Christian and Eastern), this stillness can be understood to be silence as the ineffable. A few lines later, the silence of *ascesis* comes into play when Eliot refers to the “Word in the desert” being “most attacked by voices of temptation,” a reference to Christ’s forty days of fasting and solitude in the wilderness.

Reflecting on aporias, “gaps in our language use that no rational argument can resolve,”<sup>83</sup> provides an important insight into Eliot’s understanding of silence. Theology “has never, ever, not dealt in the aporetic, the desert experience, the *via negativa*. *Aporia* infects the very ecstasy of the

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<sup>78</sup> Steiner, *Language and Silence*, 68.

<sup>79</sup> Eliot, *Collected Poems*, 194.

<sup>80</sup> Silence from the Buddhist perspective is also a factor in Eliot’s life and poetry. Daniel Murphy, *Christianity and Modern European Literature* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997), 208-209. But concepts from Eastern religions in general were often a means of illuminating Christian concepts, especially where the Christian *via negativa* was in play. Stephen Medcalf, “Eliot, David Jones, and Auden,” in *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, 534, 536, 539-40.

<sup>81</sup> Eliot, *Collected Poems*, 102.

<sup>82</sup> Hulme, “Romanticism and Classicism,” 51.

<sup>83</sup> Sim, 90.

believer.”<sup>84</sup> *Aporia* is perceived not by *ratio* but by *intellectus*, which links them to Pieper’s comments on leisure and silencing *ratio*. Reference to the desert experience and the *via negativa* is to allude to apophatic mysticism. The interrelation of *aporia*, *apophasis*, and *intellectus* is not only present in Eliot’s poetry but also accounts for some of its success by tapping into the general twentieth-century interest in first- and second-level-positive silence. Britten, however, ignored this important aspect of Eliot’s poetry. This is consistent with his response to other cultural influences where silence is concerned.

### Walter de la Mare.

Silence is a major aspect of Walter de la Mare’s poetry. It is a theme not only in passages of poems but of entire poems as well, such as “Music Unheard” and “Silence.” Silence in de la Mare’s poetry is a presence with a life of its own.<sup>85</sup> W. H. Auden, whose influence on Britten’s literary tastes was immense,<sup>86</sup> connected first- and second-level-positive silence and its related love of solitude in de la Mare’s poetry. Auden wrote that the sense of wonder, awe and reverence at the heart of de la Mare’s poetry has to do with de la Mare’s respect for the solitude of others, which he teaches as “a style of behaviour and speech which [for want of a better word we call] good-breeding.”<sup>87</sup> If silence can be daunting in its more austere, pronounced aspects, certainly Auden’s understanding of its place in de la Mare’s poetry as a facet of good-breeding could have made it appealing to Britten. But in spite of Auden’s perceptiveness about poetry, his understanding of silence in de la Mare’s poetry as related to good-breeding is too tame—at least it must have been to Britten, also a careful reader of poetry.

Silence as the means of remembering and transfiguring sound is a recurrent theme in de la Mare’s poetry. For example, “Those echoing bells rang on in dream, / And stillness made even lovelier seem” in “The Bells.”<sup>88</sup> And in “The Listeners,” the lines, “And how the silence surged

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<sup>84</sup> Valentine Cunningham, *In the Reading Gaol: Postmodernity, Texts and History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 402. Derrida’s amplification of digressions to reveal the *aporia*, the impasses in understanding that put one at a loss (Cunningham, *In the Reading Gaol*, 205), is a technique not entirely different from the *apophatic* language of the spiritual writers that reveals the *aporia*, the impasses, in language about the divine. (Cunningham quotes a 1657 use of the term *aporia* noted in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “Aporia is a figure whereby the Speaker sheweth that he doubteth, either where to begin for the multitude of matters, or what to do or say in some strange or ambiguous thing” [Cunningham, *In the Reading Gaol*, 208]). *Apophatic* theology does not generally need to multiply digressions or to use Harold Pinter’s “torrent of language” that points to a language locked beneath it. John Russell Brown, *Theatre Language*, 18. But these wordy silences have their own counterparts in both the liturgical stammer mentioned in the discussion on silence and liturgy and in the multiplication of poetic images in many classic texts of spirituality and mysticism. To be exposed to the concept of silence as understood by Christianity, particularly in the Catholic, Orthodox, and High Church Anglican traditions, has been to have an intuitive grasp of some of the claims of Postmodernism, especially where the idea of *aporia* is concerned.

<sup>85</sup> W. Roberts, “Walter De La Mare, the Listener,” *Music & Letters* 16 (April 1935): 130.

<sup>86</sup> Britten credited Auden with teaching a deeper and more sophisticated appreciation of poetry. Alan Holinghurst, Foreword to Mitchell, *Britten and Auden in the Thirties*.

<sup>87</sup> W. H. Auden, “Walter de la Mare,” in *Forewords and Afterwords* (New York: Random House, 1973), 394.

<sup>88</sup> De la Mare, *The Collected Poems of Walter de la Mare*, 66.

softly backward / When the plunging hoofs were gone,”<sup>89</sup> portray silence “as something with a life and movement of its own.”<sup>90</sup> De la Mare first listens, even though barely within the pale of audibility, “in a state of mind eager and adventurous, intent yet not strained.” Then, there is “the putting down in words of the most delicate pianissimo shade; then the mind’s flight, clean and swift, to the place in imagination’s world just right for it.”<sup>91</sup>

Britten set only a few poems of de la Mare and did so only in his youth. Britten seems to have had some appreciation of first- and second-level-positive silence in his youth since this kind of silence appears in the de la Mare poems Britten set. But in his maturity, Britten paid no attention to, or avoided, first- and second-level-positive silence.

In 1969, Britten “titivated” the de la Mare poems he had set in his youth and had them published under the title, *Tit for Tat: Five Settings from Boyhood of Poems by Walter de la Mare*.<sup>92</sup> The sub-title of the collection indicates the mature composer made these works available as juvenilia, more for the sake of curiosity than as a serious artistic statement. The prefatory note confirms this impression. Britten states that these songs were written when he was a schoolboy and that they were written “straight off without much forethought” and some of them “so hurriedly that there was no time to write the words in.” The mature Britten selected the songs for *Tit for Tat* carefully. But even these are, for the most part, “very naïve,” and the best of them are only the best that can be expected “from a composer in his early teens.”<sup>93</sup> That Britten published these songs at all is apparently more a gesture of appreciation to de la Mare’s son, Richard, than an homage to de la Mare’s poetry or an expression of confidence in Britten’s settings of the poems. Richard de la Mare was chairman of Faber & Faber when the decision was made to start publishing Britten’s music.<sup>94</sup> The dedication reads “For [Richard] de la Mare,” and the prefatory note states that these “old scraps” were published “in honour of the poet’s son on his birthday.”<sup>95</sup>

Of these settings, three include uses of the word “silence”: “A Song of Enchantment,” “Autumn,” and “Silver.” Where Britten pays musical attention to forms of the word “silence,” he

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>90</sup> Roberts, “Walter De La Mare, the Listener,” 130.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>92</sup> The five songs, “A Song of Enchantment,” “Autumn,” “Silver,” “Vigil,” and “Tit for Tat,” had been set when Britten was about fifteen years of age. Ford, *Britten’s Poets*, 6. Britten set three other poems of de la Mare, “The Ride-by-Nights,” “The Rainbow,” and “The Ship of Rio,” as part-songs for boys’ or women’s voices. They were written in 1932, when Britten was still a student at the Royal College of Music and were the first of his compositions to be published. Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten*, 41.

<sup>93</sup> Benjamin Britten, Prefatory Note, *Tit for Tat: Five Settings from Boyhood of Poems by Walter de la Mare* (London: Faber Music, 1969). Since de la Mare’s son, Richard, was chairman of Faber & Faber when the decision was made to start publishing Britten’s music (Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten*, 425-26), publication of *Tit for Tat* was apparently more an homage to Richard’s business decision than to the poetry of de la Mare. The dedication reads “For [Richard] de la Mare,” and the prefatory note states that these “old scraps” were published “in honour of the poet’s son on his birthday.” Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten*, 425-26.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

does so by using text-painting. Overall, however, his musical treatment of silence in these songs is the same as his treatment of other themes and images in the poems and thus no more or less evident than the text-painting of twilight, for example, or thickets or dew. To take one example, in “A Song of Enchantment” Britten meticulously applies several layers of text painting to convey silence. The score indications instruct the singer not only to sing *pianissimo* but also *sotto voce*. The accompanist is directed to play *ppp* and use the *una corda* pedal (Example 5.1).

Example 5.1<sup>96</sup>

The musical score for Example 5.1 consists of two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting at measure 25. It begins with a fermata over a whole note rest, followed by a 'rall.' marking. The lyrics are 'Twi - light came; si - lence came; The'. The vocal line is marked 'Slower' and 'pp sotto voce'. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a 'dim.' marking and a descending line of notes. It is marked 'pp' and 'ppp', and includes a 'una corda' marking at the bottom. The piano part features a descending line of notes, with a fermata over the final measure.

The entire third stanza of the poem, which contains the reference to silence,<sup>97</sup> departs from the rocking 6/8 rhythm of most of the rest of the song by a gradual slowing of the rhythm into longer rhythmic note values and the use of *fermate*. The *fermate* are used, moreover, on “came” of “silence came,” thus implying that the singer should hold “came” in a silence of stasis and then add a literal silence by taking a breath for the next phrase. (No breath mark or rest is actually written into the score.) When twilight and silence are mentioned (bars 27-29), the accompaniment has a descending gesture that evokes the sun’s setting/night-fall. The word “silence” is accompanied by a minor eleventh chord that amounts to a tone cluster that sets up a harmonic *aporia* since the piece up to this point has been identifiably in the tonality of A-flat major. The lowest note of this tone cluster is A flat, as if to point to the fact that A flat as the pitch around which the song centers does not really hold its own as the pitch center at this point. This song, edited by the older Britten, expresses an aspect of Britten’s mature musical idiom in that it does not follow common-practice tonal logic. The musical parameters of most of the song nonetheless convey a sense of forward motion leading to cadences on A-flat chords for three of the four stanzas and the dominant, E-flat major, at the end of the third stanza. The tone cluster on “silence” blurs that sense of forward motion as does the removal of the driving rhythmic motion, the slower tempo marking, and the *fermata* ending the phrase “silence came.” This stilling of movement expresses the stillness of twilight.

<sup>96</sup> Engraved from Britten, *Tit for Tat*, 2.

<sup>97</sup> See Appendix 5.2 for texts.



Although Britten employs an impressive range of compositional devices to convey silence, he backs away from using one device that would have been a significant bit of text-painting. He does not develop the silence of stasis on the very word “silence,” especially since stasis—holding the same pitch—on that word would fit the text well. The E flat is otherwise constant in the singer’s line in bars 28 and 29, even ending in a held-out E flat because of the *fermata* on the “came” of “silence came” (as well as being sustained an even longer time in the accompaniment). Declining to write this passage as settling into silence suggests that even in this very early stage of his career, Britten did not feel entirely comfortable with silence.

That Britten was apparently not interested in the theme of silence or actively avoided it is confirmed by the very next phrase: “But the music is lost and the words are gone / Of the song I sang as I sat alone” (bars 38-42). De la Mare sometimes presents silence as being as powerful as music or even more so. This is the case in “A Song of Enchantment,” where silence is presented as first- and second-level-positive. The final stanza’s reference to the music being lost is, in de la Mare’s world, an invitation to deeper silence. But Britten’s setting of “music is lost” returns to the rhythmic, melodic sing-song that is almost a patter after the quiet, still, near-stasis of the preceding bars.

An alternate interpretation of Britten’s setting is that the rhythmic, melodic 6/8 theme returns (aside from the musical reason of bringing the song back to the character of its opening section) because the song of enchantment is indeed gone, so the best one can do now is to fall back, as it were, on the tried-and-true conventions of regular rhythm and lyrical melody. But to read the poem without the music, the final stanza seems to invite the reader to listen attentively for that lost music—inaccessible though it may ultimately be. And Britten does not stop to listen.

De la Mare’s poem, “Autumn,” makes silence prominent by its presence at the end of the poem and by the fact that it is in opposition to hope. This first-level-positive, second-level-negative silence shows that de la Mare explored silence’s various qualities, not solely the positive. It is telling that Britten chose a de la Mare poem that speaks forcefully of first-level-positive, second-level-negative silence and composed a setting that brings out this perspective on silence. Here Britten uses literal silence. It does not coincide with the word “silence,” but it follows the final phrase that speaks of silence where hope was, thus re-emphasizing and prolonging this silence of despair. This silence is accomplished by lengthening the silences that separate sound. Bar 38 has one beat of silence, bar 39 has 3, and bar 40, the final measure, has 3 beats of silence, the final two accompanied by *fermate* (Example 5.2). This all takes place in an ever decreasing dynamic as well (*pp* to *ppp*). Moreover, the accompaniment ends with swiftly repeated figures that include an open fifth (F and C) in the right hand and that return without rhythmic regularity (on the third beat in bar 39, on the first beat in bar 40), all of which gives a sense that something is left unresolved. Even the silence that overtakes

it is uncertain. Is it the silence of the erratic sound going on and on? Or are the last two beats of silence with *fermate* truly the end?

Example 5.2<sup>98</sup>

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 34-36) shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "with me, Si - lence where hope". The piano part has a dynamic marking of *p* and *dim.*. The second system (measures 37-39) shows the vocal line with the lyric "was." and the piano accompaniment with dynamics *pp dim.* and *ppp*. There are also markings for *And.* and *ppp* in the piano part.

As for Britten’s musical portrayal of the actual word “silence” in this song, it is a stronger musical statement of silence, in its way, than the silence in “A Song of Enchantment.” There, the musical depiction intertwined the idea of silence with the idea of twilight, which is true to the text. Here, however, silence stands not only by itself but in opposition to something: hope. Britten sets the final phrase, “silence where hope was,” by taking the same melodic idea that has accompanied all of the statements of loss (“a wind where the rose was,” “cold rain where sweet grass was,” and so on). But the first syllable of “silence” gets a longer rhythmic value than the comparable notes had in the other statements of loss. “Hope” also has a longer note value (a dotted whole note in a 3/2 bar) than anywhere else in the piece—even longer than the first syllable of “silence.” But that only heightens the sense of loss since this hope is definitely in the past. It is the narrator’s last, lingering farewell to hope before the even longer process of entering into hopeless silence takes over.

The last of the *Tit for Tat* songs to mention silence is “Silver.” Whereas silence ends “Autumn” (which happens to be the song directly preceding “Silver”), silence is the second word of this piece: “Slowly, silently, now the moon” (Example 5.3). Britten passes over this opportunity to make a statement on silence at the beginning of the piece with a minimum of musical expression. As expected, the score indications are effective text painting: “Slow and quiet,” “sustained,” and a *piano* dynamic marking. “Slowly” is sung to a triplet as is “silently,” which makes “silently” un-

<sup>98</sup> Engraved from Britten, *Tit for Tat*, 6.

exceptional rhythmically. And “silently,” which begins on an F, falls melodically without interest between the opening G of “Slowly” and the opening E-flat of “now the moon.” The remainder of the poem is a succession of visual images, which leads to an interpretation of this silence as neutral, in the same way Roberts observes that silence in De la Mare’s “The Sunken Garden” serves the neutral function of giving one’s “other senses full play.”<sup>99</sup> Britten’s unexceptional setting of this neutral silence is therefore apt.

Example 5.3<sup>100</sup>

Slow and quiet

Slow - ly, si - lent-ly, now the moon

*p* sustained

### Illumination on Britten’s Nocturnal Silence.

Britten is said to have cherished both night and silence.<sup>101</sup> But Britten’s nocturnal silence is not about serenity or the ineffable. It allows sound to be exaggerated.

[N]ight exalts sound in the same way that it draws out perfume: the composer who wrote *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air du soir* dedicated the second movement of *Iberia* to the “perfumes of the night.” ... In the dark, our auditory perception is enhanced: and, vice versa, it is often in the full daylight that silence is most thunderous.<sup>102</sup>

Britten’s selection of texts conveys a nocturnal world not serene but busy, sometimes sinister, and teeming with dreams. “I have spent in sleep a far more active and adventurous existence than has been my outward lot in the waking day,” he wrote.<sup>103</sup> Britten commented in a broadcast interview that the night “can release many things which one thinks had better not be released.”<sup>104</sup> Night and silence are associated with danger in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves,” which Britten incorporated into his Nocturne, op. 60. “But who ... beguil’d / That beauteous boy to linger here? / Alone, by night, a little child, / In place so silent and so wild?”

The place of dreams in Britten’s *oeuvre* makes all the more striking the fact that he did not return to de la Mare’s poetry after 1932, since dreaming is an important topic in de la Mare’s poetry.

<sup>99</sup> Roberts, “Walter De La Mare, the Listener,” 129.

<sup>100</sup> Engraved from Britten, *Tit for Tat*, 7.

<sup>101</sup> Headington, *Britten*, 139.

<sup>102</sup> Jankélévitch, 137-38.

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Richard Church, *Eight for Immortality* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 22.

<sup>104</sup> Headington, *Britten*, 120.

But de la Mare's imagery of night and dreams generally has spiritual connotations, often gentle associations, and a sense of quiet resignation when sadness is involved. Britten's nocturnal world is more intent on exploring psychological restlessness.

Given the range of biblical texts Britten set to music, how remarkable it is that he did not set any that take place at night and involve dreams of encounters with divine ineffability. Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:11–19, for example, with its angelic theme, would have found a convenient place in *The Company of Heaven*. A setting of Joseph's dream in Matthew 1:20-21 would have found an apt place in one of the several Christmas-themed works Britten composed. And since *Canticle II* dealt with Abraham and Isaac, one wonders if the Genesis 15:5 dialogue between YHWH and Abraham on a starry evening ever occurred to Britten as a subject.

Britten had two cradle songs to choose from by the same poet, William Blake, and chose to set "A Cradle Song" from the *Songs of Experience* twice<sup>105</sup> whereas its counterpart of the same title in *Songs of Innocence* does not appear in Britten's *oeuvre* at all. The latter poem, if not entirely free from care since the sleeping infant is likened to the weeping of the infant Christ, nonetheless breathes a quieter, more serene air than the cradle song in the *Songs of Experience*. Even a poem as serene as Keats's "Sleep and Poetry" becomes restless in Britten's setting of it as part of his Nocturne, op. 60. Britten answers the opening line of the poem, "What is more gentle than a wind in summer?" with an obligato line for flute and clarinet that, even if gentle, is fitfully busy.

### **Britten's Few Second-Level-Positive Silence Texts.**

The list of silence-related texts Britten set (Appendix 5.2) shows few second-level-positive-silences.<sup>106</sup> "A Song of Enchantment" from Britten's youth arguably contains the only unqualifiedly positive "silence" text. About a decade later, Britten's *Company of Heaven* included a passage from *Revelations* and Emily Brontë's "A thousand, thousand gleaming fires."<sup>107</sup> Britten candidly admitted he could not see the significance of the program Roberts had devised, a collection of texts having to do with angels, which was to be aired over the radio for Michaelmas. Britten was attracted by the "nice words to set," but he apparently took enough interest in Roberts's collection of texts to suggest or approve the deletion of a number of lines from Brontë's poem. Among them were, in the last stanza, "The music ceased—the noonday Dream / Like dream of night withdrew / but fancy still will sometimes deem / Her fond creation true."<sup>108</sup> The cessation of music and even words is where

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<sup>105</sup> "A Cradle Song, for Soprano, Contralto and Piano," written 1938, published 1994; "A Cradle Song," *A Charm of Lullabies*, Op. 41 (1947).

<sup>106</sup> The caveats stated in assessing silence-related texts in Scripture apply here as well—even more so since poetry, more prevalent in the texts chosen by Britten than in Scripture, is intentionally ambiguous. Also noted is the fact that some texts Britten set are established by the liturgy, so there is no certainty that these texts would have been chosen otherwise.

<sup>107</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Britten* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 257-58.

<sup>108</sup> Ford, *Britten's Poets*, 59.

revelation sometimes takes place in Howells's *oeuvre*, as is discussed in the next chapter. Britten had no interest in setting music to this concept.

In Britten's setting of passages from Christopher Smart's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, there is a passage that refers to the "devils themselves" being at peace, "For this time is perceptible to man / By a remarkable stillness and serenity of soul." Serenity of soul can be associated with experiencing, or being open to experiencing, the ineffable. But because Smart wrote his rambling poem mostly while incarcerated in a lunatic asylum, he "captures ... an innocence known perhaps only to children and the benignly insane."<sup>109</sup> Britten's selection of this text—and he chose passages from Smart's poem, not the entire work—is interesting in that the only text of his choosing in his *oeuvre* that suggests silence as the ineffable is one written in insanity. This implies Britten saw this kind of psychological and spiritual silence as eluding the experience of the sane.

"A Charm" in *A Charm of Lullabies*, which Britten composed in 1947, has the following: "Quiet! / Sleep! or I will make / Erinny's whip thee with a snake." Silence is second-level-positive because it is longed for. But it is sought in terms negative even to the point of violence.

Among the few non-English texts Britten set after his return to England in 1942 are the Hölderlin fragments he set as *Sechs Hölderlin Fragmente*. "Die Jugend" from that cycle includes a passage on understanding *die Stille des Aethers*. To understand the original, he relied on the translation by Peter Pears and Elizabeth Mayer: "I knew you better / than I ever knew men; / I understood the stillness of the ether, / but human words I never understood."<sup>110</sup> Though this silence is experienced as second-level-positive, it separates from human society. Since Britten saw his role as a composer as serving society, separation from society cannot be regarded as positive. Too, the tragic element of *Peter Grimes* is the title character's separation from society. Hölderlin's reference to the ethereal and separation from society calls to mind Grimes's "Now the Great Bear and Pleiades," an aria both beautiful and disturbing as Grimes detaches himself from society at a moment when he very much needs society. Instead, he loses himself in the stars, the ether, as it were (*die Stille des Aethers*), which presages his tragic end.

### **More Observations on Britten and Second-Level-Negative Silence.**

An overview of the texts Britten selected and those he avoided supports the observation that silence about his homosexuality must have contributed to his perception of silence as second-level-negative. He tended to "omit passages that describe or hint at intimate relations between men."<sup>111</sup> But Britten's omission of texts that hint at intimate relations between men generated abundant

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<sup>109</sup> Carpenter, 188.

<sup>110</sup> Ford, *Britten's Poets*, 193.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi.

expression of this very topic by other, less direct means.<sup>112</sup> Fruitful though this silence was, Britten's experience of the silence of the closet<sup>113</sup> as well as his Low Church perspective on silence contributed to a second-level-negative view of silence.

Opera *libretti* are helpful in revealing Britten's perspective on silence. The few examples mentioned here span Britten's operatic corpus from *Peter Grimes*, his first successful opera, to *Death in Venice*, his last, thus pointing to a recurrent association Britten made between silence, death, and the loss of innocence. Since Britten collaborated closely with his librettists, this recurrent perception of silence unquestionably appears at his behest. The apprentice in *Peter Grimes* never speaks or sings. His death silences even the hope of an already-silent voice being heard. The title character of *Billy Budd* stammers into silence in moments of great emotional turmoil and distress. This affliction overtakes him when he most needs to speak in order to defend himself against Claggart's false accusation. Captain Vere remains silent when his words could defend Billy. The dialogue between Vere and Billy that informs Billy of the death sentence is not heard by the audience. Instead, the orchestra plays chords while the discussion takes place offstage. *Billy Budd* "is most clear about the existence of what cannot be said, sung or allowed on the stage."<sup>114</sup> Apollo sings in *Death in Venice*, but another Greek god, the god of non-violent death, Thanatos, can be regarded as the silent presence in the opera. After his inability to speak, Aschenbach's decision not to speak, which leads to his death, "is in many ways the crux of the opera."<sup>115</sup> Britten's *Curlew River* was based on *Sumidagawa*, from *Noh* theater, which builds on the Japanese concept of *ma*, first-level-positive silence.<sup>116</sup> If Britten appreciated the place of silence in *Sumidagawa*, it has to have been as second-level-negative silence since the play is entirely a tragedy.

*Cantata Misericordium* relates the parable of the Good Samaritan. Solitude is mentioned twice and both times unfavorably. *Terret me solitudo, terret omnis rupes* ("Ah how desolate the country! I am afraid of the solitude ... I fear an ambush.") And after the traveler has been robbed and beaten, the chorus sings, *Solitudo ubique, solitudo et silentium*. ("Solitude everywhere, solitude and silence. Who will help this man in such a wilderness?") The traveler's vulnerable solitude is implied in the scriptural account of the parable, but Britten and Patrick Wilkinson, the librettist, chose to emphasize it. Silence and solitude do not lead to death in this narrative, but without the intervention of the Good Samaritan, they would have done.

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<sup>112</sup> To cite only a few analyses of the role of homosexuality in Britten's *oeuvre*: Philip Brett, "Britten's Bad Boys: Male Relations in *The Turn of the Screw*," *Repercussions* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 5-25; Dominique Fernandez, "Un Opera sans Femmes," *L'Avant-Scene Opera* 158 (March-April 1994): 110-3; Clifford Hindley, "Homosexual Self-affirmation and Self-oppression in Two Britten Operas," *Musical Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (Summer 1992).

<sup>113</sup> Stephen McClatchie, "Benjamin Britten, 'Owen Wingrave' and the Politics of the Closet; Or, 'He Shall Be Straightened out at Paramore'," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8, no. 1 [March 1996]: 59-75.

<sup>114</sup> Barry Emslie, "Billy Budd and the Fear of Words," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4, no.1 (March 1992): 54.

<sup>115</sup> Shersten Johnson, "Hearing the Unvoiceable: Writer's Block in Benjamin Britten's *Death in Venice*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004), 161.

<sup>116</sup> Alan Fletcher, *The Art of Looking Sideways* (London; New York: Phaidon, 2001), 370.

**Conclusion.**

Other than a few observations on silence in Britten’s ECM in the remaining chapters, this chapter completes the presentation of evidence that shows Britten, one of the two major mid-twentieth-century ECM composers, did not contribute to the role of silence as the ineffable in ECM. This in no way lessens the value of his contribution to ECM. As one of the preeminent setters of text in twentieth-century music, he helped affirm the importance of careful text settings in liturgical music. And though only a few of Britten’s ECM works are established in the repertoire, the fact that they are regarded as established attests to the high regard in which church musicians hold them.

The qualities of Britten’s silence-related texts are contrasted with Howells’s in Table 5.1. (See table 6.1 for Howells’s silence-related texts.)

Table 5.1 Comparison of Negative, Neutral, and Positive “Silence” Texts Used by Britten and Howells.

|         | First-Level Positive,<br>Second-Level<br>Negative | First-Level Neutral or<br>Ambiguous | First- and Second-<br>Level Positive |
|---------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Britten | 12  | 8                                   | 4                                    |
| Howells | 11  | 6                                   | 10                                   |

This table confirms that Howells appreciated silence’s expressive potential and thus exploited its polyvalence. The next chapter examines indications from Howells’s text selections of his interest in silence’s polyvalence and especially in its association with the ineffable. Some of these settings show that Howells had more than a mere interest in silence as the ineffable. It inspired one of his most important works, “King David,” and caused him to withdraw settings of silence-related texts by Fiona Macleod.

## Chapter Six Howells's Twentieth-Century Poets and Silence

### Introduction.

The cultural/religious milieu of Howells's rather High Church perspective encouraged an appreciation of silence as the ineffable but not the more pronounced statements of silence expressed according to some Roman Catholic currents of spirituality or the Modernist aesthetic, especially on the continent. Indeed, there is scant evidence that Howells was interested in literary Modernism at all, whether related to silence or not. He set only two poems by Modernist writers.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter examines texts Howells selected that are non-liturgical texts and are silence-related. It finds Howells was interested in silence as the ineffable and that it is expressed, albeit subtly, in several important secular works in his *oeuvre*. One of the most important musical statements Howells makes on silence is in a work he considered his most important: his setting of de la Mare's "King David." This chapter discusses that work as well as the importance to Howells of de la Mare and his poetry in general. Though Britten's settings of a few de la Mare poems warrants some discussion of that poet's perception of silence in the previous chapter, this chapter develops the theme to show how similar de la Mare's view of silence was to Howells's.

Another important poet of silence in Howells's *oeuvre* is Fiona Macleod (the pseudonym of William Sharp). This chapter discusses the fact that Howells's refusal to have these settings published is related to silence. Not only do some of the texts refer to silence, Howells silenced his own musical voice explicitly in deference to the beauty of the texts.

Before analyzing Howells's expressions of silence, especially in settings of texts by de la Mare, this chapter further develops the topic of *telaesthesia* and its importance in Howells's *oeuvre*. This discussion includes statements by reviewers, contemporary with Howells and since, who have identified characteristics of Howells's aesthetic by referring to the "mystical"<sup>2</sup> quality of his music and relating this quality to distance and remoteness.<sup>3</sup> The discussion continues with an exploration of Howells's aesthetic in relation to his understanding of the pastoral and his development of musical *aporia* (with its connection to *apophasis* and *intellectus*, terms discussed in earlier chapters) as an expression of the *telaesthetic*.

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<sup>1</sup> Howells set Joyce's "Flood" for inclusion in *The Joyce Book* because he was requested to do so (Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early 20th Century* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 322), not from any apparent interest Howells had in Joyce's *oeuvre*. Howells also set "Lethe" by the imagist poet, Hilda Doolittle, which Howells did not publish. Howells's interest in the poem might have been not its Modernist technique but its theme of forgetting, for Howells set the poem shortly after the death of his son, Michael. Palmer, *Centenary*, 95.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Andrews, Notes to *Howells: The Winchester Service*, CD (Hyperion Records CDA67853, 2011), 3; Edwin Evans, "Modern British Composers. VIII: Herbert Howells," *The Musical Times* 61: 924 (February 1, 1920): 88; Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 41, quoting Evans's comments as deeply perceptive.

<sup>3</sup> Katherine Eggar, "An English Composer: Herbert Howells," *The Music Teacher* (December 1923), quoted in Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 41; Evans, "Modern British Composers: Howells," 88.



**Howells, *Telaesthesia*, and Gloucestershire**

*Telaesthesia* can value not only the distant vista but also the place from which one regards it. In Howells's case, this place was "Chosen" Hill at Churchdown, between Gloucester and Cheltenham. It is there that the young Howells and Ivor Gurney, both articulated pupils to the Gloucester Cathedral organist, Herbert Brewer,<sup>4</sup> used to sit and look at the distant Malvern Hills, thirty miles north of Chosen Hill. This was an immensely influential spot not only for Gurney and Howells but also for other composers of the period, notably Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams.<sup>5</sup> Howells made a number of references to it both musically and in prose.

I used to sit with Ivor Gurney on a hill half way between Gloucester and Cheltenham ["Chosen" Hill at Churchdown] and from there, on a clear April day (shall we say), when the visibility was second to none, you could see the whole outline of the Malvern hills ... Gurney said to me one day "look at that outline", he meant the outline of the Malverns, he said, "unless that influences you for the whole of your life in tune-making, it is failing in one of its chief essentials"... [O]utlines of hills, and things, are tremendously important especially if you are born in Gloucestershire, God bless it.<sup>6</sup>

The vistas viewed from Chosen Hill were part of the inspiration of Howells's most substantial instrumental work,<sup>7</sup> *In Gloucestershire*, String Quartet No. 3, op. 34, as well as a number of other works and passages, including the *Phantasy String Quartet*, op. 25, the "Chosen" tune from Three Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 28, no. 29; the *Rhapsodic Quintet* for Clarinet and Strings, op. 31, *Missa Sabrinensis*, and the fourth movement—"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills"—of both the Requiem and *Hymnus Paradisi*.<sup>8</sup> That the inspiration of these distant vistas had a natural connection in Howells's mind with creativity in writing ECM is evident in his reference to writing an anthem in a letter written to his brother in 1917, when Howells was twenty-five, over two decades before composing ECM became his primary focus as a composer.

Last Sunday morning I walked to the top of [Chosen Hill], stood against that fine old Church, and looked out across the country round the Malverns, and at the Malverns themselves. Five minutes of that view was enough to set the musical part of my brain going ... and by 2.30 in the afternoon I had begun and finished an Anthem [for Dr. Hugh Allen of New College, Oxford]. So it is that Chosen affects me.<sup>9</sup>

In 1920, the period in which British audiences and critics were taking note of Howells and identifying him as one of England's promising young composers, and during which *In Gloucestershire* was enjoying its first performances, the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s music critic, Edwin Evans, made similar connections between Howells's music, the Gloucestershire countryside, distant vistas, and the spiritual.

<sup>4</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 19; Evans, "Modern British Composers: Howells," 88.

<sup>5</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Paul Andrews, "Herbert Howells," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 46-47.

<sup>8</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 49.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

The main characteristics [of Howells's music] are ... a lyrical realisation of the beauties that unfold themselves to the eye of a tone-poet amid rural surroundings, a sense of openairiness combined with a feeling for distance that engenders a strain of mysticism, alternating with a healthy cheeriness ... The most important of [these qualities], though not that which is most frequently indulged, is the mysticism for which perhaps remoteness were a better word. Sometimes it enters quite suddenly, with a feeling which recalls the sensation of glancing from a picturesque cottage in the foreground to the horizon far behind it. At other times it creeps in imperceptibly, and one realises that the atmosphere of the music is radically different from what it was a few pages back, without having noticed the transition. Perhaps it is then more attractive, for the poetical feeling takes one, so to speak, unawares, and tricks one into accepting its beauty as a matter of course, and as an inevitable consequence of a train of thought which at its inception was concerned with picturesque externals, or at best with a less detached mood. It is in these moments that Herbert Howells shows the best that is in him. It is here that he becomes, in the fullest meaning of the word, a tone-poet, for the greatest poetry of all despises mere anecdote except as a gateway to those remote things which are its true material. There are moments when the poetical feeling becomes so meditative that it seems to pass beyond the influence of purely musical considerations.<sup>10</sup>

Only a few years later, in 1923, composer Katherine Eggar also referred to remoteness as a quality of Howells's music and identified it as the "most English of all" Howells's qualities.

Remoteness, she wrote,

is that in us as a nation which must account for our amazing literary history—that hold upon the deep things of the mind which persists in our tradition, in spite of all our levity, our gullibleness, our commercialism, our stupidity, our superficial contempt for learning. Some might say that the "remoteness" in Howells's music is due to his looking back to the past in music; others, nearer to the point, might say that the quality of the music to which he looks back is also "remoteness."<sup>11</sup>

Neither the precise meaning of "remoteness" nor how exactly it relates to being English is clear in this quote. But Eggar does draw a helpful distinction between temporal remoteness (Howells "looking back to the past") and a remoteness which is a "hold upon the deep things of the mind," which no doubt alludes to the meditative mysticism in Evans's comments a few years earlier.

### **Howells, *Telaesthesia*, and the Pastoral.**

As noted in chapter four, Howells associated not only rural horizons but also distances in cathedrals with spirituality/mysticism. But since his expression of the *telaesthetic* is more apparent in his secular music, especially where the pastoral is concerned, a fuller exploration of *telaesthesia* and the pastoral in Howells's *oeuvre* is helpful. The pastoral regards the rural as providing an environment that fosters creativity in a way cities do not and/or making the rural a significant topic in creative expression. This intentionally broad definition conflates the three kinds of pastoral identified by Terry Gifford.<sup>12</sup> It avoids defining the pastoral narrowly as an artificial genre,

<sup>10</sup> Edwin Evans, "Modern British Composers. VIII: Herbert Howells," 88.

<sup>11</sup> Eggar, quoted in Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 41.

<sup>12</sup> Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 1-12. Gifford's survey of British pastoral theory in literature presents the beginnings of the pastoral in the early Renaissance, drawing from Georgic poetry of the Greek

especially in literature, that “under the vaile of homely persons and in rude speeches [insinuates and glances] at greater matters.”<sup>13</sup> In relation to Howells, using “pastoral” in a general sense identifies both the close connection Howells had to his “beloved Gloucestershire”<sup>14</sup> throughout his life and the fact that he has been associated with other “west-country [composers, such as] Parry, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Ivor Gurney ... who responded to the power of landscape and to place.”<sup>15</sup>

Gloucestershire mattered to Howells not only because he grew up there and because of the beauty of such places as Chosen Hill. It came to matter “even more than it ever did” because the grave of Howells’s son, Michael, who died while still a child in 1935, was in Twigworth, Gloucestershire.<sup>16</sup> Yet another association is likely implied by Howells’s listing “seeking quiet” as one of his favorite recreations.<sup>17</sup> This statement, along with the frequent trips to Gloucestershire, was no doubt an expression of the widespread phenomenon in Britain at the time to seek quiet in the countryside, “to retreat to a static rural idyll away from the disordered stresses of modernity.”<sup>18</sup>

Howells’s own perception of the pastoral is also clarified by identifying what the pastoral did not mean to him. Unlike Vaughan Williams, Cecil Sharp, and Gustav Holst, Howells was not particularly interested in the folksong element of England’s country life. To the extent that he drew from folksong, it was more for its modality than because of its human associations.<sup>19</sup> Another approach to the pastoral, which is its antithesis, the anti-pastoral,<sup>20</sup> plays no role in Howells’s pastoral view. The lack of the anti-pastoral among Howells’s poets and his settings is matched by the absence of the sentimentally pastoral—“chocolate-box prettiness, the portrayal of nymphs and shepherds in an idyllic landscape dancing to the ubiquitous 6/8 metre”<sup>21</sup>—indulged in by other poets and composers at the time.<sup>22</sup>

Surprising, since it concerns a composer noted for sensuality in his private life and music,<sup>23</sup> is Howells’s lack of interest in texts that associate the pastoral with romance and the erotic. “Silent

poet Hesiod and others, and charts its history through anti-pastoral poetry to the post-pastoral. Terry Gifford, “Towards a Post-Pastoral View of British Poetry,” in *The Environmental Tradition in English Literature*, J. Parham, ed. (Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2002): 53-58.

<sup>13</sup> George Puttenham’s 1598 pastoral theory concerning Virgil’s *Eclogues*, quoted in Gifford, “Towards a Post-Pastoral View,” 54.

<sup>14</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 99.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis Foreman, Notes to *Herbert Howells Orchestral Works*, CD (Chandos CHAN 241-20, 2005), 5. One of the influences on Howells was “the topography of his native Gloucestershire.” Paul Andrews, “Herbert Howells,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 771. Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 99.

<sup>16</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 99.

<sup>17</sup> *Who Was Who*, vol. VIII 1981-1990 (London: A & C Black).

<sup>18</sup> Terry Gifford, “Towards a Post-Pastoral View,” 52. See also Terry Gifford, *Green Voices: Understanding Contemporary Nature Poetry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 26-54.

<sup>19</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 48.

<sup>20</sup> Anti-pastoral works include George Crabbe’s *The Village* (the inspiration for Britten’s *Peter Grimes*) and Stephen Duck’s *The Thresher’s Labour*. Terry Gifford, “Towards a Post-Pastoral View of British Poetry,” 55.

<sup>21</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 42.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Concerning sensuality in Howells’s private life, see Palmer, *Centenary*, 198. For comments on the sensuality of Howells’s music, see Andrews, “Herbert Howells”; Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 47; Patrick Russill, Notes to *Howells Mass*

Noon” of Vaughan Williams, Howells’s friend and mentor, had been popular since its composition in 1903.<sup>24</sup> Given the influence of French composers on both Vaughan Williams and Howells, several pastoral-erotic French *mélodies*—Duparc’s *Phidylée*<sup>25</sup> (1882), Debussy’s *Romance: Silence ineffable* (1883), and Debussy’s *En sourdine* (revised in 1891)<sup>26</sup>—would have been known to Howells as well.

The mature Howells’s sense of the pastoral had much in common with Vaughan Williams’s pastoral view as expressed in the *Pastoral Symphony*. That Howells connected *telaesthesia* with silence is evident in his discussion of the passage of the second movement of Vaughan Williams’s *Pastoral Symphony* where “the music takes us to great heights, emphasizing stillness, remoteness.”<sup>27</sup> He also connects *telaesthesia*, contemplation, and silence in his discussion of the fourth movement of the symphony. “The fourth ... movement gets back to the predominant mood of contemplation ... [I]t is in effect a coda to the rest of the work. ‘Visible silence’ was in one’s thoughts in the second movement [which Howells relates to distances and remoteness]; here it is as if great distances were overlooked.”<sup>28</sup>

But the post-World-War-I Howells was like his friend, Vaughan Williams, in perceiving the pastoral as a “complex, multi-layered musical vision, one ultimately predicated on a sense of loss and abstraction rather than the idealized historical continuity imagined by Baldwin,”<sup>29</sup> who had written nostalgically of the “corncrake on a dewy morning, ... and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill.”<sup>30</sup> “A way of life, an attitude of mind, disappeared [because of the Great War], and with it the cream of the rising generation.”<sup>31</sup> Well before Howells suffered the grief of losing his son, Michael, to polio, he had already experienced grief over friend who fell in battle. This grief and the horror of modern warfare imbued Howells’s perspective on the pastoral with a sense not of fleeing to a happy, nostalgic past, but of finding the visionary in landscape in order there to face and, one hoped, assuage the sense of loss.<sup>32</sup>

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in the *Dorian Mode & Latin and English Choral Works*, CD (Chandos Records CHAB 9021, 1992), 6. For comments that connect sensuality and the sacred in Howells’s music, see Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 134; Palmer, *Centenary*, 209-210.

<sup>24</sup> Alain Frogley, “Ralph Vaughan Williams,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 348.

<sup>25</sup> *Phidylée* seems to have been an inspiration for Vaughan Williams’s “Silent Noon.” Graham Johnson and Richard Stokes, *A French Song Companion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 138.

<sup>26</sup> François Lesure, “Claude Debussy,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 115.

<sup>27</sup> Herbert Howells, “Vaughan Williams’s ‘Pastoral’ Symphony,” *Music & Letters* 3:2 (April 1922): 126.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Grimley, “Landscape and Distance: Vaughan Williams, Modernism and the Symphonic Pastoral,” in *British Music and Modernism, 1895-1960*, ed. M. Riley (Farnham, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2010), 148-49.

<sup>30</sup> Stanley Baldwin, “England is the Country, and the Country is England,” Speech of May 1924, in Judy Giles and Tim Middleton, ed., *Writing Englishness: An Introductory Sourcebook on National Identity* (London: Routledge, 1995), 101.

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study*, (London: Novello, 1978), 22. Howells’s *Elegy for solo viola, string quartet and string orchestra* (1917) “is inscribed to the memory of Purcell Warren, a fellow-student of the composer at the royal College of Music [who was] killed in the 1914-1918 War.” Christopher Palmer, Notes to *Herbert Howells Music for Strings*, CD (Chandos Records CHAN 9161, 1993), 6.

<sup>32</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 198.

The work of official wartime artist Paul Nash sheds light on the pastoral view of Vaughan Williams and Howells. Nash's shafts of light cutting through the clouds and striking the ground below "no longer symbolize divine presence as they might in earlier pastoral representations. Rather, they illuminate the desolation beneath, where conventional faith in established religion has been fatally shaken but the need for spiritual belief remains desperate."<sup>33</sup> Biographical evidence suggests Howells's stance towards religious belief was not as "fatally shaken" as Vaughan Williams's. Howells's poor health prevented him serving in battle, which meant he was spared the firsthand experience of the Great War's horrors, horrors that deeply shook the faith and/or world-views of nearly everyone involved. But Howells and Vaughan Williams were alike in seeking some kind of spiritual belief, some kind of "otherness," beyond the everyday associations of the rural. The *telaesthetic*, which perceives distant vistas as pointing even beyond the distances into "otherness," was the poetic imagination that informed Howells's sense of the pastoral.

This aesthetic, rather than one based primarily on Christian spirituality-mysticism, explains the effectiveness of Howells's ECM in expressing "or [stimulating] a depth and richness of spiritual experience that go far beyond the capacity of mere words or rational thought."<sup>34</sup> Again, this does not deny the importance of what has already been observed concerning Howells being at home with the concepts and language of Christian spirituality, including the importance to him of Helen Waddell's translations of Christian texts. But the essence of Howells's art where texts related to the pastoral are concerned is connected with the *telaesthetic*.

### **Howells and Musical *Aporia* as Sounding Silence.**

One of the techniques Howells used to express the *telaesthetic* was musical *aporia*, "gaps in [musical] language that no rational argument can resolve."<sup>35</sup> Because *aporias* silence the rational process, there is little one can do but pass over *aporias* in silence<sup>36</sup> or perceive *aporia* as an opportunity to join silence, perceiving that silence as existing unto itself, first-level-positive. Musical *aporia* represents the possibility of taking in the moment by *intellectus* instead of *ratio*. Musical *aporia* thus constitutes a metaphor for the reflective stance of *intellectus* that flourishes in silence and solitude. Where the context is religious, musical *aporia* has associations with *apophysis*, which also acknowledges that silence is more eloquent than attempts at rational discourse.

Howells used several sound-as-silence techniques to express musical *aporia*. One of them, to be identified as the ineffability chord, Howells generally related to spirituality and the ineffable. Evans includes a reminder, however, that important though the quality of mysticism (as he terms it)

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<sup>33</sup> Grimley, 161.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Andrews, Notes to *Howells: The Winchester Service*, CD (Hyperion Records CDA67853, 2011), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Sim, 90.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

is in Howells's *oeuvre*, it is not "frequently indulged."<sup>37</sup> Moreover, as is the case with accomplished composers, this technique is more often used to imply rather than explicitly to state. Howells used this technique, however, in one of the most important works of his *oeuvre*: his setting of de la Mare's "King David."

### **De la Mare, Howells, and Silence.**

Howells not only admired and set de la Mare's poetry all his life, including careful settings and revisions of a number of settings across a fifty-year period,<sup>38</sup> he and de la Mare were lifelong friends.<sup>39</sup> It was a friendship based on a deeply shared world-view. Both "responded to things numinous in a quite uncanny way."<sup>40</sup> De la Mare, not associated with twentieth-century Modernism, has been dismissed by some as not currently relevant. This sometimes happens in connection with writers "who create a concise universe within and also around themselves, so that their work functions, and finally survives, on its own terms, with no other determinants of politics, aesthetic fashion, moral and philosophical relevance."<sup>41</sup> Because one of the unique aesthetic developments of the twentieth century was its perception and expression of silence, de la Mare's development of silence preeminently among poets in the early twentieth century makes him more "relevant" than has generally been recognized. Howells embraced this aspect of de la Mare's poetry.

If de la Mare's style and technique were not Modernist, he nonetheless joined many twentieth-century writers who expressed a sense of alienation<sup>42</sup> and "contemporary lostness";<sup>43</sup> who took up the burden of finding meaning where meaning was perceived as no longer existing. The twentieth-century artist's calling "is one of alienation and return—if he can make it."<sup>44</sup> T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden were two artists who were able to return since they resolved the contemporary artist's dilemma by journeying inward "to the ultimate mysteries, where ethical and religious understandings take hold."<sup>45</sup> De la Mare was unable to return from the edge of the abyss.<sup>46</sup> The conclusion de la Mare reached in his novels and suggested in his poems and short stories was that the alienation is both theological and social. "[M]an in life is isolated ... 'the inmost self of each one of us is a livelong recluse.'"<sup>47</sup> Such a perspective might find expression in the "eternal note of sadness" of Matthew Arnold's "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the "Sea of Faith," the neuro-

<sup>37</sup> Edwin Evans, "Modern British Composers. VIII: Herbert Howells," 88.

<sup>38</sup> Christopher Palmer, prefatory note to Herbert Howells, *A Garland for de la Mare* (London: Thames Publishing, 1995), 6.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 67.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Palmer, prefatory note to *A Garland for de la Mare*, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Doris Ross McCrosson, *Walter de la Mare* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1966), 145-46.

<sup>43</sup> Hopper, Stanley Romaine. "The Problem of Moral Isolation in Contemporary Literature," in *Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature*, ed. Stanley Romaine Hopper (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1957), 154.

<sup>44</sup> Hopper, "Moral Isolation in Contemporary Literature," 153.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>46</sup> McCrosson, 146.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 143, quoting Walter de la Mare, *Desert Islands and Robinson Crusoe* (London: Faber, 1930), 27.

existential reading of Pascal's *le silence éternel des ces espaces infinis m'effraie*, an embrace of Nietzschean nihilism, a focus on the materialist meta-narrative that engaged the Frankfurt School, or any number of perspectives on what modern alienation is and the response it calls for. De la Mare's response, however, was a strong belief "that man can live in the imagination."<sup>48</sup> For de la Mare, imagination gives us a sense of "a kind of visionary world saturating this"<sup>49</sup> world that we perceive only by our senses. For de la Mare, our sensuous experiences are not enough. "They must be imaginatively 'Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart', 'which watches and receives', so that we can 'see into the life of things'."<sup>50</sup>

In addition to the role of imagination as a response to spiritual alienation, de la Mare was influenced by the *Symbolistes*. In 1908, Arthur Symons ensured a *Symboliste* impact in the Anglophone world by translating *Symboliste* poets and by his important book, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*.<sup>51</sup> De la Mare indicates the influence of Symons by quoting him in his book, *Behold, This Dreamer!*,<sup>52</sup> and included four poems by Verlaine and three by Baudelaire (translated by Alan Conder) in his anthology, *Love*.<sup>53</sup> What the *Symbolistes* sought in their use of symbols—and Symons explicitly stated this in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*—was that they wanted "the reader to see beyond the object in the foreground of the poem, and find important truths hidden behind the veil of reality."<sup>54</sup> Seeing beyond the foreground is, figuratively, *telaesthesia*. For *Symbolistes*, the important truths were not those of any particular religious or philosophical systems, but some kind of "supernatural experience." The *Symbolistes* "attempted to convey the supernatural experience in the language of visible things, and therefore almost every word is a symbol and is used not for its common purpose but for the association which it evokes of a reality beyond the senses."<sup>55</sup>

That the *Symbolistes* regarded even words as symbols meant silencing the discursive, linear language of logic. De la Mare quoted Mallarmé's observation that using words to identify an object, naming it, "is to suppress three-quarters of the enjoyment in a poem which is made up of the happiness of gradually divining."<sup>56</sup> Artists for whom silence is significant might refer to it explicitly at times—by word in de la Mare's case or, in Howells's case, by using literal musical silences to text-paint references to silence. But they take special delight in implying silence, even more so when silence, in turn, represents something(s) else.

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<sup>48</sup> McCrosson, 143.

<sup>49</sup> Walter de la Mare, *Private View* (London: Faber, 1953), 26.

<sup>50</sup> Bentinck, 44, quoting Walter de la Mare who in turn quotes Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and "The Tables Turned" in *Behold, this Dreamer: Of Reverie, Night, Sleep, Dream, Lovedreams, Nightmare, Death, the Unconscious, the Imagination, Divination, the Artist, and Kindred Subjects* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 548, 594.

<sup>51</sup> Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: Constable, 1908).

<sup>52</sup> De la Mare, *Behold, this Dreamer*, 605, 523, 625, 680.

<sup>53</sup> Bentinck, 57.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>56</sup> De la Mare, *Behold, this Dreamer*, 614.

For de la Mare, the supernatural was often the enchantment his imagination supplied. It was an enchantment that has much resonance with the world-conscious view, which, in the ancient notion of the harmony of the spheres, tended to regard music as connected with the cosmos. De la Mare did not “habitually treat of music as an art. For him it [was] first of all a phenomenon; rarer, perhaps, in quality than bird-song or the sounds of winds and waves, but of one nature with them.”<sup>57</sup> To hear and attend to this music, to hear the bird-song or waves, means “listening to sound just within the pale of audibility, in a state of mind eager and adventurous, intent yet not strained; then the putting down in words of the most delicate pianissimo shade; then the mind’s flight, clean and swift, to the place in imagination’s world just right for it.”<sup>58</sup>

Whether one is quiet and attentive to the sound of the angelus bell and the theology behind and beyond it<sup>59</sup> or to the sound of bird-song and the cosmic enchantment behind and beyond it, the role of both poetry and music are the same in de la Mare’s view: economy of words so that the symbol can speak its own language in eloquent silence. If neither de la Mare nor Howells claimed religious belief, their appreciation of the value of symbol nonetheless made it easy to identify with Christianity’s expression through the High Church wing of the Church of England, which, as the discussion on silence in Anglicanism shows, further affirms silence’s expressive value.

De la Mare appreciated silence’s polyvalence. His silence is not always first- and second-level positive. The same applies to Howells’s selections of texts that refer to silence. Howells set de la Mare’s “The Old House,” for example, which has these lines: “A very, very old house I know – / And ever so many people go, / Past the small lodge, forlorn and still.” The house represents death, and the stillness, the stillness of death.

Much of what has been summarized here on the kinship between Howells and de la Mare concerning silence is expressed in Howells’s setting of de la Mare’s “King David,” written in 1919. It is one of the most successful expressions of Howells’s aesthetic and of his musical language.

My favourite poet is Walter de la Mare, whom I first knew when I was seventeen or eighteen. I’m prouder to have written *King David* than almost anything else of mine—de la Mare once said he didn’t want anyone else to set it. I always enjoyed talking music to de la Mare; he was one of the few poets I’ve known who really *understood* music.<sup>60</sup>

De la Mare’s poem, “King David,” privileges silence and “listening to sound just within the pale of audibility.”<sup>61</sup> Silence is explicitly mentioned only once in the poem and in a neutral sense because it simply reports that the one hundred harpists called in to cheer the melancholy king

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<sup>57</sup> Roberts, “Walter De La Mare, the Listener,” 128.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>59</sup> T. S. Eliot, also influenced by the *Symbolistes* (Bentinck, 57), connected wordless symbols with those of the Anglo-Catholic tradition. The wordless “clamour of the bell” conveys the theology of “the last annunciation” to the one who engages in “silent listening.” T. S. Eliot, “Dry Salvages,” *Collected Poems: 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1971), 132.

<sup>60</sup> Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study*, 16.

<sup>61</sup> Roberts, “Walter De La Mare, the Listener,” 133.



“played till they all fell silent.” What is implied throughout the poem, however, is a deeper silence that somehow accomplishes more than even music can accomplish.

Reference to harpists in connection with King David calls to mind I Samuel 16:23. “[W]hen the evil spirit from God was upon Saul ... David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.” Regardless of whether de la Mare intended the King David of his poem to be the biblical King David who succeeded King Saul, the association is inevitable. This makes the contrast striking. Music therapy was effective for King Saul; it failed for de la Mare’s King David. It is only after the harps “all fell silent” that the king was free to rise and seek solace elsewhere. He finds solace in the quiet of the nightingale’s song. Music recovers its importance, but it is the music of nature. Human music seems almost to clutter the aural environment.<sup>62</sup>

There is also silence between the nightingale and King David. King David attempts to leave the melancholy silence of his loneliness by engaging the bird in a dialogue. “Who taught my grief to thee?” asks King David of the bird. “But the bird in no-wise heeded” and maintains silence between itself and King David. This forces the king to listen, which converts melancholy silence of loneliness (even in a crowd of one hundred harpists) into the silence of solitude. Silence is ever-present throughout the poem but is mostly referenced obliquely. Therefore, de la Mare gives no descriptors that would allow pinpointing this silence as first- and second-level-positive. But its role in directing the king’s attention away from the rational structure of music and of dialogue (assuming, by poetic license, the ability to carry on a dialogue with a bird) to the *intellectus* of taking in the simplicity of the nightingale’s song is to make of silence in this poem an active agent. It is the bird’s song as well as silence—both taken together—that effect the remarkable transformation. Howells’s setting emphasizes this silence. The piece opens with a very spare accompaniment as it establishes King David’s sorrow. The accompaniment gives the echo of a sustained chord, a tonally indeterminate A-flat minor combined with a ninth and an isolated C-flat on the drawn-out melisma on the word “sorrowful” (Example 6.1). This musical stillness presages the quiet “cure”<sup>63</sup> for King David’s sorrow. At bar 10, the harpists are called. The rhythmic activity gradually increases until by the “They played” of bar 19 there are chords both on and off the beats. Even when the harps are said to fall silent, the accompaniment continues (bars 21-22 in Example 6.2) as if to emphasize the mistaken notion that given enough of the “right” sound, the cure can be found. Both the melody and

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<sup>62</sup> Other examples of texts Howells chose that limit music’s claims include his un-published setting of Psalm 137 (“By the Waters of Babylon”) and Thomas Campion’s “To Music Bent.” Psalm 137 suggests that though music will not assuage the sorrow of exile, silencing music in order to focus on prayer is where hope lies. Campion’s text mentions singing “some song of pleasure” but then sets it aside as vain joy and finds true delight” in “heav’nly thoughts.” Herbert Howells, “To Music Bent” (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1933).

<sup>63</sup> Howells used the word “cure” in all manuscripts, but this was changed to “cause” in the printed copy to read, “No cause for his sorrow had he.” Michael Pilkington, “Editorial Commentary,” in *Herbert Howells's a Garland for De La Mare*, ed., Michael Pilkington (London: Thames Publishing, 1995), 6-7.

the accompaniment are examples of Howells at his most lyrical. “Played” and “sweet” of “Played and play sweet did they” (Example 6.2) are given flowing melismas many admirers of Howells’s music would claim banish sorrow. These bars are also tonicized in the relative key of G-flat major, a more optimistic-sounding mode, before returning to E-flat minor. But Howells’s (and the harpists’) lyricism does not work its usual effect on the king. Since Howells considered this song one of his most effective works, he wrote the enchantingly lyrical passage knowing it would give way to silence, thus admitting that his own lyricism is not as eloquent as silence. The accompaniment finally abates at bars 32-33, where the text says the harpists “could not charm away” the king’s sorrow, and then falls completely silent for the first time at bar 36 (Example 6.3). Moreover, the accompaniment in bars 33-35, beginning with the same pitches and generally the same intervals with which the singer began in bars 3-4 (Example 6.1), an E flat rising to a G flat then by step up to an A flat, declines to follow the same lyrical motion and ends on a slowly repeated chord—a static rather than lyrical movement. It is here, where the silence of the accompaniment and then the silence of stasis reign, that, freed from the harpists’ music, the king finally arises to make his way into his garden. The very next measure (bar 37) establishes a key change from E-flat minor to E major, which further conveys the idea that the deadening music of the court harpists has been left behind.

Example 6.1<sup>64</sup>

The musical score for Example 6.1 is set in E-flat minor, 2/2 time, and marked "Quasi lento". It consists of two systems of music. The first system includes a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The voice line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "King Da - vid was a sor - row - ful". The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines in both hands, with dynamics ranging from piano (*p*) to pianissimo (*pp*). The second system starts at measure 6 and includes the lyrics "man: No cause for his sor - row had he: And he". The piano accompaniment continues with similar textures, including a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking and a *mp* (mezzo-piano) marking. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 6.

<sup>64</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, “King David,” in *A Garland for de la Mare*, 69-74 (London: Thames Publishing, 1995), 69.

Example 6.2<sup>65</sup>

(Pocchettino più mosso)

*f ma dolce*

18 They played till they all fell si - lent:

played till

*f* LH

22 *mf*

Played and play sweet did they;

*mp*

Example 6.3<sup>66</sup>

31 *dim.* *p*

Da - vid They could not charm a - way. He

*dim.* *pp* *ppp*

36 *Placido* *pp*

rose; and in his

*Placido* *p*

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 70.

In the new key, the stasis of slowly repeated chords (E major) sets the tone. In this silence of stasis, the king is able to hear the nightingale’s song, represented by the right hand of the accompaniment in the upper register in bars 38-39 (Example 6.3). Howells also emphasizes solitude. The accompaniment drops out again for part of the phrase “by the moon alone” (bar 43 in Example 6.4). It returns on the second syllable of “alone” but at quiet dynamic markings, recovering only tentatively the role of music and only as a quiet backdrop to the song of the nightingale that is heard again in bars 44-45.

Example 6.4<sup>67</sup>

The musical score for Example 6.4 consists of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 41 to 44, and the second system covers bars 45 to 48. The vocal line is written in a single staff with lyrics underneath. The piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature changes from G-flat major (one flat) to E-flat major (three flats) between bars 43 and 44. The time signature is 3/4. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Howells’s setting of the one use of the word “silent” is interesting. It occurs rather early, at bar 21 (Example 6.2), accompanying “silent” in a neutral sense. Howells indicates the chord on beat three of bar 21 is to be played as an arpeggiation at the moment the text relates that the harpists fell silent. This harp-like playing of the chord after the harpists fall silent suggests silence is more effective than the music of the harps. The structure of the chord is unusual. The chord can be analyzed as an eleventh chord built on a B flat, lacking the ninth of a chord, a C. But its function is more like a dominant chord in the key of G-flat major since it both has the pitches of a V chord, the D-flat root of a V chord sounding as the lowest note, and seems to resolve to a G-flat major chord. But this does not account for the E flat and the B flat. It is tempting to regard this as a “wrong-note”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 71-72.

gesture meant simply to add a bit of piquant color to a passage that might otherwise be too straightforwardly tonal, particularly since the surrounding arpeggiated chords are straightforwardly tertian. But Howells's composition teacher at the Royal College of Music, Charles Villiers Stanford, had no time for mere color that did not serve the higher values of proportion and form.<sup>68</sup> Important principles of composition espoused by the teacher were fully absorbed by the student, especially this student whom Stanford called his "Son in Music."<sup>69</sup> So, this chord should be heard as more than a wrong-note affectation. Howells recalled that Stanford taught him to use his "discovered" chords "consistently or not at all."<sup>70</sup> At this early point in Howells's career, he was developing a signature gesture to express silence as first- and second-level-positive, particularly in relation to the mystical and the eternal. This chord, the ineffability chord, is discussed more fully in the final chapter. For now, it suffices to point out that the ineffability chord has a G sharp or its enharmonic A flat and is harmonically aporetic because its structure, within a context that generally implies a somewhat tonal cadence, removes all sense of tonal or pitch-centric bearings—or at least, this was the perception Howells expected of his audiences since he considered such chords to be harmonically challenging.<sup>71</sup> The chord on beat three in bar 21 has elements of the ineffability chord in that it has an A flat and is harmonically aporetic.<sup>72</sup>

Howells's setting connects *aporia* with *telaesthesis*, though the text of the poem does not mention distance. Indeed, the garden and the nightingale in the cypress tree are apparently so close at hand in King David's perception as to rule out an interpretation of the telaesthetic. Where de la Mare and Howells differ is that the former focuses on the near at hand, the latter on distances. De la Mare's text nonetheless conveys the idea that it is the quiet and solitude of the pastoral that accomplishes transformation. For Howells, transformation in the quiet of the countryside was necessarily associated with the vistas viewed from Chosen Hill and thus the telaesthetic.

Silence plays an important role in de la Mare's "The Scribe" (which Howells set in 1957, forty years after "King David" and dedicated to Ralph Vaughan Williams for his eighty-fifth birthday<sup>73</sup>) without using the word "silence" at all. It does use the word "soundless": "Though I should sit / By some tarn / Using its ink / As the spirit wills / To write of Earth's wonders, ... Flit would the ages / On soundless wings / Ere unto Z / My pen drew nigh." More important, however, is the silence as the ineffable in the closing lines: "And still would remain ... - All words forgotten - /

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<sup>68</sup> Charles Villiers Stanford, *Musical Composition: A Short Treatise for Students* (London: Macmillan, 1949), 96.

<sup>69</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 51; Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study*, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study*, 13.

<sup>71</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 145.

<sup>72</sup> Britten used essentially the same musical gesture in his treatment of the word "silence" in his setting of de la Mare's "Song of Enchantment." It is the same gesture even to the extent that Britten used an A flat (Example 5.1) in the chord. Since Britten's mature works did not explore silence as first- and second-level-positive, Britten's use of the chord does not establish itself as a fingerprint of his musical language.

<sup>73</sup> Herbert Howells, *The Scribe* (Oxford; London: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Thou, Lord, and I.” Whereas “King David” addresses the futility of dialogue and of music as organized sound, both of which give way to silence and the quiet of solitude, “The Scribe” is of a piece with all apophatic mystical literature that asserts the futility of words in the face of the ineffable. The one reference to the Lord at the end of the poem makes it theistic, but only just, since much of the poem is not about communion with the divine but with the “lovely things Thy hand hath made.” This is thus the ideal poem for the apparently agnostic Howells who smoothly translated his telaesthetic sensibility into the theist spirituality of ECM.

Indeed, Howells’s setting of the word “Spirit” is one of the first moments in the song that stands out for its harmonic *aporia* involving G sharp as well as a brief moment of stasis (bar 16 in Example 6.6). Until bar 14, the musical setting is a lyrical pastoral idyll that flows comfortably in an E-major tonality. At bar 14, on “Using its ink / As the Spirit wills,” the parallel minor comes from nowhere, which creates a sense that there is another level to this E-major landscape; that there is something other than or beyond the “smooth-plumed bird in its emerald shade, the seed of the grass, the speck of stone,” and so on. Then, on “spirit wills,” this other level sounds (Example 6.6). It is not the first moment at which the normally lilting rhythm is held by all the voices in stasis. This has also happened in bar 2, on the first statement of “hand” in the phrase, “What lovely things Thy hand hath made” (Example 6.5) and at the end of the same phrase when it is repeated at bars 9 and 10 (Example 6.6). But this is the first moment at which stasis accompanies a chord that makes no harmonic sense and involves a G sharp. It has the pitches—C sharp, E, and G sharp—that constitute a sub-mediante chord (assuming the tonality is still E minor or has even switched back to E major), with the B serving as a seventh of the chord. But the addition of only one note, the F sharp, means the chord does not make tonal sense (Example 6.6).

As with de la Mare’s “King David,” the focus of “The Scribe” is not on distances but on what is close at hand. Though in the hills, the poet focuses on minute details in his immediate surroundings. But the entire poem is about the ineffable beauty of the pastoral. “Though I should ... write of Earth’s wonders, ... And still would remain ... My worn reeds broken.” As such, the reference to hills necessarily had an association in Howells’s mind with what was for him the archetypal place of pastoral beauty: Chosen Hill in Gloucestershire. It is not a stretch to assume, then, that brief though the reference to hills is in de la Mare’s “The Scribe,” and unexceptional though Howells’s musical setting of the word “hill” is, he was nonetheless drawn to this text as the basis for writing a musical tribute to Vaughan Williams because the reference to being in the hills recalled the walks Howells and Vaughan Williams had taken together to Chosen Hill, there to admire the distant vistas.

Example 6.5<sup>74</sup>

Moving slowly, but freely  
*mp*

Sop. What love - ly things Thy — hand hath made,

Alto What love - ly things Thy — hand hath made,

Tenor What love - ly things Thy — hand hath made,

Bass What love - ly things Thy — hand hath made,

Piano (rehearsal only)  
Moving slowly, but freely  
*mp*

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are for the vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each vocal line begins with a treble clef (except for the Bass which has a bass clef), a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo/mood is 'Moving slowly, but freely' and the dynamic is 'mp'. The lyrics are 'What love - ly things Thy — hand hath made,'. The piano part is on the bottom staff, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and is marked '(rehearsal only)'. It also has the same tempo/mood and dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fermatas.

<sup>74</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, “The Scribe,” in *English Pastoral Partsongs*, ed., Paul Spicer (Oxford; London: Oxford University Press, 1994), 55.

Example 6.6<sup>75</sup>

**A tempo (un poco più animato)**

**Measures 9-14:**

**Measures 9-13:** *rit.* *mf* *poco cresc.*  
 Sop. Though I should sit By some tarn,  
 Alto hath made. Though I should sit By some tarn,  
 Tenor hath made. Though I should sit By some tarn,  
 Bass hath made. Though I should sit By some tarn in thy hills,

**Measures 14-18:** *poco f* *mp*  
 Sop. U-sing its ink As the spi-rit wills To write, To write  
 Alto U-sing its ink As the spi-rit wills To write  
 Tenor U-sing its ink As the spi-rit wills To write of  
 Bass U-sing its ink As the spi-rit wills To write

**Piano (rehearsal only):** *pp* *mf* *poco cresc.* *poco f* *mp*

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 57-58.



Though the text does not express the *telaesthetic*, Howells's setting of it does. In bar 14, there is a sixteenth-note literal silence in all the parts that registers to the ear of the listener because the tempo, though now marked as *un poco più animato*, is still slow. Bar 13 sounds a C-minor seventh chord. On the other side of the rest in bar 14, the music is suddenly in the region of an E-minor triad (Example 6.6). This juxtaposition of triads and chords with roots a third apart but without using sevenths of chords functionally to suggest resolution is a fingerprint of Vaughan Williams's musical language,<sup>76</sup> a type of musical *aporia* because it presents a gap in the expected musical logic. Howells thus uses this kind of *aporia* as a musical homage to Vaughan Williams. Bar 16 carries the *aporetic* even further by using, if not the ineffability chord, elements of it, which is to say a G sharp in a chord that is harmonically *aporetic* (Example 6.6).

Later in the anthem, Howells sets the passage, "Flit would the ages / On soundless wings / Ere unto Z / my pen drew nigh." The quick passage of ages suggests a sense of being outside of time, having a sense of eternity. Eternity is connected with silence by use of the word "soundless." Quiet dynamics, the same slow tempo, literal silences, stasis, and a G-sharp, harmonically *aporetic* chord all come into play. Before this phrase, there is an eighth-note rest and another one before "Ere unto Z." On "Flit would the," the *pp ma distinto* indication is a means of emphasizing silence, and the connection of this silence with eternity is made clear by the repeated-note stasis, that repeated note being none other than G sharp (Example 6.7). It is on the word "soundless" that the phrase seems to hang suspended. Howells does not resort to a *pro forma* G-sharp ineffability chord, however. G sharp continues as the pitch center of bars 27 and 28, but rather than a chord, Howells opens the setting of "soundless" with a G-sharp/A-natural dissonance that returns on beat 3 of bar 27 (Example 6.7). The presence of G sharp and B natural in bar 27 suggest G-sharp minor. And the A natural might hint at G-sharp Phrygian. But the precise tonal identity of this passage makes no sense and is not supposed to. Perhaps setting the word "soundless" leans towards obvious text painting. But by use of the G-sharp dissonances and stasis, Howells conveys more than simply silence. It is silence as the ineffable.

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<sup>76</sup> Julian Rushton, "A Thing of Wonder': Triadic Magic in Early Vaughan Williams," in *Let Beauty Awake: Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Literature*, 119-35 (London: Elgar Editions, 2010), 120-21.

Example 6.7<sup>77</sup>

23

Sop. *p* *pp* *pp ma distinto*  
 willed things, Flit would the a - ges On

Alto *p (distinto)*  
 willed things, Flit would the a - ges On

Tenor *p (distinto)*  
 willed things, Flit would the a - ges On

Bass *p (distinto)*  
 willed things, Flit would the a - ges On

Piano (rehearsal only) *p* *pp* *pp ma distinto* *p*

27

Sop. *p* *poch.*  
 sound - less wings Ere un-to Z\* My

Alto *p* *poch.*  
 sound - less wings Ere un-to Z\* My

Tenor *p* *poch.*  
 sound - less wings Ere un-to Z\* My

Bass *p* *poch.*  
 sound - less wings Ere un-to Z\* My

Piano (rehearsal only) *p* *poch.*

\* 'Z' should be pronounced 'Zed'.

<sup>77</sup> Engraved from Howells, "The Scribe," 59.

A de la Mare poem Howells did not set is “Music.” Using this text would have reclaimed music’s revelatory role in Howells’s *oeuvre*. It begins, “When music sounds, gone is the earth I know, / And all her lovely things even lovelier grow.”<sup>78</sup> In the light of Howells’s selection of de la Mare texts that prefer silence to music, it is possible he understood W. A. Byrne’s text in “The Restful Branches”<sup>79</sup> (“It sings of holy quietude, . . . For him the song, the solitude.” See Appendix 6.1) as referring to the singing not as distinct from “quietude” and “solitude” but as part of them, akin to the paradoxical *musica callada*, the singing silence, of St. John of the Cross.<sup>80</sup>

As for de la Mare’s appreciation of not naming concepts but evoking them, one indication that Howells shared this view is in the fact that he did not compose a setting of de la Mare’s poem entitled “Silence.” It would possibly have been too obvious a text for Howells. Setting it would have removed the “happiness of gradually divining”<sup>81</sup> the meaning of silence rather than stating it forthrightly.<sup>82</sup>

### **Fiona Macleod.**

Howells wrote settings of five poems of Fiona Macleod (the pseudonym of the Scottish nineteenth-century writer William Sharp). These settings were composed very early in Howells’s career, in 1913, when he was twenty one. Howells had very few works to his credit at this point that were settings of texts or that had any kind of programmatic reference, whether connected to silence or any other topic. Howells withheld the songs from publication shortly after they were written and re-ascribed their opus number, op 7, to *Three Dances* for violin and orchestra (1915).<sup>83</sup> In 1948 Howells added further emphasis to the withdrawal of one of the Macleod settings by appending a note to his setting of “The Valley of Silence” (along with a setting of Robert Bridges’s “The Evening Darkens Over”): “these two songs are *not* to be published.”<sup>84</sup> By setting these works aside, Howells did not edit them and guide them to publication as representative of his *oeuvre*. They were posthumously edited and published, which means there is no certainty that they represent Howells’s own musical judgment in every respect.

But these settings are very important where Howells’s perspective on silence is concerned. Howells withheld them because he considered silence to be superior to music in some cases. This was the view he came to hold regarding the poetry of what has been referred to as the Celtic

<sup>78</sup> Walter de la Mare, *The Collected Poems of Walter De La Mare* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 105.

<sup>79</sup> Herbert Howells, “The Restful Branches” (London: Stainer & Bell, 1920).

<sup>80</sup> St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, 84-86.

<sup>81</sup> De la Mare, *Behold, this Dreamer*, 614.

<sup>82</sup> Howells’s friend, Eugene Goossens, wrote a setting of de la Mare’s “Silence” in 1922. Howells, remarkably unconcerned about promoting his own music and genuinely interested in other people’s music (Richard Drakeford, “Herbert Howells: Some Personal Reminiscences,” *The Musical Times* 133, no. 1796 (1992): 502), might have been willing to let his friend have the final word on setting de la Mare’s “Silence.”

<sup>83</sup> Peter Horton, Introduction to Howells, *Five Songs for Low Voice and Piano*, ed. Peter Horton (London: Thames Publishing, 1999).

<sup>84</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 497. Emphasis in the original.

Revival,<sup>85</sup> which included Fiona Macleod, Seumas O’Sullivan, and William Butler Yeats. In the December 1916 issue of *The Athenaeum*, Howells wrote that the work of these poets

is on a high level. But the music of words is in it so evidently, so sonorously, so delicately, that the addition of music proper is in most cases wrong because it is superfluous. And such an imposition of one essentially musical expression on another which is itself already unmistakably musical leads to that sort of essence of beauty which, commendable enough as an oasis of beauty in a desert of ugliness, is out of place and unnecessary in modern British settings ... It were less unhealthy to set blatant jingoism such as “Land of Hope and Glory” ... than to steep our musical selves in the vague, slender, highly imaginative, and mystical poems of the Fiona Macleod type.<sup>86</sup>

These settings reveal that silence was a topic of interest at this early point in Howells’s career. Words and phrases such as “silence,” “quiet,” “voice that whispered,” and “hear no faintest stir” appear throughout the texts Howells chose. Not only did Howells silence his music because of Macleod’s sonorous style, he was apparently uneasy about setting the concept of silence at this early stage in his career.

Even if Howells had already developed his ineffability chord by 1913, it is reassuring that he did not attach it formulaically to every reference to silence or stillness. Of the five Macleod poems, the passage in which even a suggestion of the ineffability chord would be expected is “God dreamed in the silence of His might” in the song, “When There is Peace.” But Howells’s setting of this passage helps establish that he was not interested in straightforward text painting of the word “silence.” The music that accompanies this particular phrase has not even a passing reference to a G sharp or an A flat, much less to a harmonically aporetic chord built on either of those enharmonic pitches (Example 6.8). (It is possible this text would have been set differently had Howells edited the song for publication.)

In “The Valley of Silence,” the chords underlying the phrase “So silence hangs in the Valley” do feature a G sharp (Example 6.9) and function aporetically. Until this point in the song, there is a great deal of chromatic motion, descending and ascending, in both voice and accompaniment, which precludes the sense of a tonal center. But the last chord in bar 15 is a major-minor-seventh chord on A, which suggests a resolution to a D-major or -minor chord. Regardless of what the root of the G-sharp chord is in bar 16, the chord or the cluster does not have a D that would give some sense of a quasi-tonal resolution. Neither the movement to the last chord in bar 15 nor the quality of the chord makes tonal sense, even in the context of the predominantly chromatic movement that has heretofore

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<sup>85</sup> Gregory Castle, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). These poets are also referred to as part of the Celtic Twilight (Herbert Howells, “Vaughan Williams's 'Pastoral' Symphony,” *Music & Letters* 3:2 [April 1922]: 126) and the Irish Renaissance (Richard Fallis, *The Irish Renaissance* [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1977]; Phillip L. Marcus, *Yeats and the Beginning of the Irish Renaissance*, 2d ed. [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970]). See also, Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, 248.

<sup>86</sup> Howells, “Words for Musical Settings,” *The Athenaeum* no. 4612 (December 1916), 614-15, quoted in Horton, Introduction, *Five Songs*.

characterized the song. As early as 1913, then, Howells was already developing his own sound-as-silence techniques.

Example 6.8<sup>87</sup>

29 *cresc.*  
God dreamed in the si - lence of His

*poco a poco cresc.*

Example 6.9<sup>88</sup>

14 *p*  
wall a breath - less liz - ard is still, So si - lence hangs on the Val - ley

*ppp* *dim. e rit.*

Howells expressed his view of the pastoral, the *telaesthetic*, and their relation to the poetry of Macleod in his 1922 review of Vaughan Williams's *Pastoral Symphony*. Referring to the opening of the second movement of Vaughan Williams's symphony, Howells wrote that this passage "suggests great distances; it seems to be an easy expression of those vaguer emotions which Fiona Macleod struggled to express in words."<sup>89</sup> Ever self-effacing about his own compositions, Howells recognized Vaughan Williams as having accomplished what Howells wanted to and felt he could not. Expressing the *telaesthetic*, particularly tied to contemplation (which Howells hears as the pervasive frame of mind in Vaughan Williams's symphony<sup>90</sup>) was a significant artistic goal of Howells, but one he felt he could not achieve in relation to Macleod's poetry.

<sup>87</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, "When There is Peace," *Five Songs for Low Voice and Piano, Poems by Fiona Macleod*, ed., Peter Horton (London: Thames Publishing, 1999), 24.

<sup>88</sup> Engraved from Howells, "The Valley of Silence," *Five Songs for Low Voice and Piano, Poems by Fiona Macleod*, 2.

<sup>89</sup> Herbert Howells, "Vaughan Williams's 'Pastoral' Symphony," *Music & Letters* 3:2 (April 1922): 126.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 126, 130.

**Conclusion.**

Howells's connection of silence and *telaesthesia* is evident in his discussion of Vaughan Williams's *Pastoral Symphony*, his settings of de la Mare texts, including "King David," which he considered his best work, and in his removal of the Macleod settings from his *oeuvre*. His selection of silence-related texts shows an appreciation of silence's polyvalence. But conveying silence as the ineffable, in connection with a telaesthetic sensibility, and by means of musical *aporia* was an important contribution Howells made to twentieth-century musical silence. This places him in the company of the Modernist composers discussed in chapter three. The next chapter develops chapter three's observations on twentieth-century musical silence as they relate to Howells.

## Chapter Seven Howells and Twentieth-Century Musical Silence

### Introduction.

This chapter looks at two examples of musical silence in ECM at either end of the twentieth century that show a development from literal silence to sound as silence and identifies Howells as the mid-twentieth-century composer who helped broaden ECM's language of musical silence to include sound as silence by the end of the twentieth century. It provides Howells's own statements that indicate his appreciation of musical silence. It also shows similarities between Howells and some of his continental contemporaries in both perceiving silence and developing sound-as-silence techniques for expressing silence. This aspect of Howells's compositional style is contrasted with the styles of his teachers, Charles Villiers Stanford and Hubert Parry, who tended to use literal silence when they expressed silence at all. By exploring the similar perspective on silence shared by Anton Webern and Howells, this chapter adds further insights into Howells's interrelation of silence and the telaesthetic, thus deepening an appreciation of Howells's contribution to twentieth-century musical silence. This same appreciation is also deepened by considering Howells's sound-as-silence techniques in relation to those of the French Impressionists and of Messiaen, discussed in chapter three.

Another theme this chapter addresses is Howells's awareness of contemporary musical developments in general, whether silence-related or not. This arises as an issue because Howells has not been regarded as conforming to musical developments on the continent. But Howells's outlook was not insular in the sense of taking no interest in musical developments beyond Britain. Howells had a keen interest in musical developments elsewhere, which strengthens the claim that Howells's use of musical silence was more cosmopolitan than many might imagine.

### Howells's Perceptions of Musical Silence in General.

That silence plays a role in Howells's ECM does not mean Howells devoted a great deal of thought to the matter. But there are a few statements Howells made that attest to his awareness of silence's role in music. One of his biographers records Howells's observation that

one of the hardest things to learn as a composer was how, where, to place moments of silence. He recalled Gurney being excited almost to the point of ecstasy by a certain rest—a silence—he'd discovered in 'Homeward Bound', a movement in Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet*. There is such a moment in *Hymnus*, in the fourth movement, the one Sir Thomas Armstrong described as drawing-together the 'Sanctus' of the Mass and the 121<sup>st</sup> Psalm 'into one great vision, as in a Blake drawing'. Just before the climax Howells makes a semiquaver's break, followed by a comma and a half-beat's rest for everyone [Example 7.1]: and the effect is one the most dramatic in music."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 156.





Howells also explained that silence “could be a ‘dramatic intrusion’, particularly in a work of ‘extreme complexity’.”<sup>3</sup> Howells noted the musical silence in a performance of William Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast* at Royal Albert Hall. He identified Walton’s use of “calculated silence” as a scene-changing device<sup>4</sup> and again as a recapitulation at the “percussive climax” and yet again “bounding the whole telescoped drama.”<sup>5</sup> Finally, “even at journey’s end there are four more of those startling silences.”<sup>6</sup>

In addition to his recognition of the value of literal silence, Howells’s comment on the second movement of Vaughan Williams’s *Pastoral Symphony* recognized the expressiveness of sound as silence, describing the movement as a whole as “visible silence.”<sup>7</sup> Howells’s perception of silence as visible in a pastoral symphony, and the pastoral symphony by Vaughan Williams, connects silence with Howells’s *telaesthesia* and the distant landscapes Howells and Vaughan Williams viewed together from Chosen Hill. Howells made this observation in 1922, early in his career, which attests to the role of silence as a constant in his life and work from beginning to end. Though silence is not a major characteristic of Howells’s *oeuvre*, he took enough of a creative interest in it that he developed his use of silence beyond what he inherited from his teachers and beyond what was standard in ECM.

### **Howells in the Twentieth-Century Trajectory of ECM Silence.**

Musical silence is present in the works of early twentieth-century ECM composers, but it tends to be literal silence and has not merited explicit mention or discussion. By the end of the twentieth century, several ECM composers explicitly referred to musical silence.<sup>8</sup> Howells was part of this development. Jonathan Harvey, for example, has been identified as a successor to Howells because of Harvey’s use of harmonic stasis (“harmonic ‘being’ rather than ‘becoming’ and with it a timeless, visionary aesthetic”).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 160.

<sup>4</sup> Program Notes for a concert at the Royal Albert Hall, 8 March 1950, reproduced in Palmer, *Centenary*, 310-324, 321.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Herbert Howells, “Vaughan Williams’ Pastoral Symphony,” *Music and Letters* April 1922, reproduced in Christopher Palmer, *Centenary*, 339.

<sup>8</sup> A few examples: Jonathan Harvey’s *Passion and Resurrection* (1981)—described as a liturgical drama—presents the resurrection by means of “tremendous blasts” from the brass and “ever longer silences between” the blasts. Jonathan Harvey, “An Approach to Church Music,” *The Musical Times* 131 (January 1990): 53. John Tavener’s 1993 setting of the Lord’s Prayer instructs the choir to observe the pauses, “standing in silence before the Cosmos.” John Tavener, “The Lord’s Prayer” (London: Chester Music, 1993). James MacMillan has referred to the connection of silence, both musical silence and silence as a predisposition to listening to music, as a *kenosis* (self-emptying) in order to hear beyond oneself. James MacMillan, “The Divine Spark of Music,” BBC Broadcast October 2008, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/jplayer/console/b00dzny0>—accessed October 23, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Banfield, “Vocal Music,” *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain: The Twentieth Century*, ed. S. Banfield (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995): 461.

An example from the beginning of the twentieth century and one from the end help illustrate this development. At the end of Hubert Parry's "There is an Old Belief" (completed around 1915),<sup>10</sup> Parry uses rests that frame "eternal" in the sentence, "That creed I fain would keep / That hope I'll ne'er forgo, / Eternal be the sleep, / If not to waken so" (Example 7.2). Parry wrote these silences to be taken, along with the word "eternal," as expressions of the ineffable. The succession of rests beginning in bar 45 before "eternal" and the way they and the singing of "eternal" are written draw attention to the rests as much as to the sound the score calls for. The rhythm of the next phrase on "eternal be the sleep" is a series of straightforward half notes, suggesting stasis, which betokens eternity. Then, bar 49 has another quarter-note rest followed by a repetition of "eternal" at a much quieter dynamic level and also employing mostly half notes. Then is another quarter-note rest in bar 50 followed by a half-note rest in bar 50, then "eternal" on half notes and a whole note, this time, indicating a further slowing of the rhythmic motion. Finally, the span of silence is increased to four beats of literal silence in bars 53-54.

At the other end of the twentieth century, John Tavener's 1999 setting of the Lord's Prayer has not a single musical rest, and yet the score indication for the entire work is "'Silent music – very still and serene.'" Tavener indicates on the title page that "*The Lord's Prayer* should be sung very quietly, with an inner serenity that is almost 'silent'. This is the Prayer of all Prayers, and nothing can violate its silent theophany."<sup>11</sup>

The use of musical silence by Stanford and Parry, which tended to be literal silence rather than sound as silence, was merely a starting point for their pupil, Howells. To understand the context in which Howells developed a rich and varied language of musical silence, it is necessary to look not to British composers but to those on the continent—the very composers who are important in the rise and development of musical Modernism: Debussy, Ravel, Webern, and Messiaen.

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<sup>10</sup> Jeremy Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 478.

<sup>11</sup> John Tavener, *The Lord's Prayer: For Unaccompanied Choir, SATB (1999)* (London: Chester Music, 2005).

Example 7.2<sup>12</sup>

41

Sop. *p* *rit.* *mf* *pp*  
If not to wa-ken so, E-ter-nal be the sleep, E-ter-nal,

Alto *p* *rit.* *mf* *pp*  
If not wa-ken so, E-ter-nal be the sleep, E-ter-nal,

Tenor *p* *rit.* *mf* *pp*  
If not wa-ken so, E-ter-nal be the sleep, E-ter-nal,

Bass *p* *rit.* *mf* *pp*  
If not to wa-ken so, E-ter-nal be the sleep, E-ter-nal,

Piano (rehearsal only) *p* *rit.* *mf* *pp*

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Sop. *p cresc.* *pp*  
E-ter-nal, If not to wa-ken so.

Alto *p cresc.* *pp*  
E-ter-nal, If not to wa-ken so.

Tenor *p cresc.* *pp*  
E-ter-nal, If not to wa-ken so.

Bass *p cresc.* *pp*  
E-ter-nal, If not to wa-ken so.

Piano (rehearsal only) *p cresc.* *pp*

<sup>12</sup> C. Hubert Parry, "There Is an Old Belief," *Songs of Farewell* (London: Cramer Music, 1989), 23.

### Howells and the New Music of His Era.

The British musical establishment of the first half of the twentieth century was dominated by a few institutions “such as the [Royal College of Music] (Hubert Parry, Charles Villiers Stanford, Vaughan Williams), the *Times* newspaper (Fuller Maitland, H.C. Colles, Frank Howes), and Worcester College, Oxford (W.H. Hadow, Colles, Percy Buck).”<sup>13</sup> The intellectuals who shaped British musical culture shared post-Victorian liberal ideals, which embraced “progress” in art and society but expected progress to have limits, these limits “stemming from [these intellectuals’] commitment to ‘beauty’, their insistence on incremental change in music history, and their idealist aesthetics.”<sup>14</sup> Included among these idealist aesthetics were metaphysical modes of thought about the eternal values of all great art. Among these values were love of liberty, respect for law and tradition, and commitment to political reform by constitutional means.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, this was not the optimal cultural context for the *avant-garde*.

It was in this cultural context, which included the Anglican perspective also reticent about the *avant-garde* artistic expressions, that Howells developed his understanding of the composer’s role in society, a role that privileged service to the community. For many British composers of the period, including Howells, this service counseled against too much stretching of the ideological and aesthetic boundaries. Howells was in sympathy with Alban Berg (as was Britten) because he saw Berg as having launched an auspicious rebellion against Berg’s master, Schoenberg. Howells’s view of the influence of Schoenberg on composers was that it fostered insensitivity to the actual sound quality of what they wrote.<sup>16</sup> He also assessed Schoenberg’s music as “the most startling burning of boats.” Schoenberg’s music thus distanced itself from even the “borders of common musical experience,”<sup>17</sup> which Howells could not regard as service to a national audience.

Though not educated at a prestigious public school or ancient university, the “standard acculturating mechanisms [of Liberal England]”<sup>18</sup> that provided the ethos of the British musical establishment,<sup>19</sup> Howells was educated at the Royal College of Music (RCM), which was one of the

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew Riley, “Liberal Critics and Modern Music in the Post-Victorian Age,” in *British Music and Modernism, 1895-1960*, ed. M. Riley (Farnham, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate: 2010), 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Drakeford, 502.

<sup>17</sup> John Amis, Felix Aprahamian, Arnold Bax, Herbert Howells, et alii, “Arnold Schönberg 1874-1951,” *Musical Times* 32:4 (1951): 312.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Mandler and Susan Pedersen, “Introduction: The British Intelligentsia after the Victorians,” in *After the Victorians: Private Conscience and Public Duty in Modern Britain: Essays in Memory of John Clive* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 19.

<sup>19</sup> The differing educational outlooks of Britain and Germany and Austria help explain the different musical outlooks. The classical *Gymnasium* education, with its philhellenism, was regarded as irrelevant in the face of advanced technology operated by engineers and scientists from the *Realschulen*. Riley, “Liberal Critics,” 29; Deborah R. Coen, *Vienna in the Age of Uncertainty: Science, Liberalism, and Private Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 336-338. This resulted in a liberal-humanist crisis that allowed the young generation of *Bildungsbürger* to develop

“standard acculturating mechanisms.” Howells integrated so fully into the RCM that Charles Villiers Stanford called him “my Son in Music,”<sup>20</sup> and the primary focus of his long career as a musician was as a teacher of composition at the RCM. The foundations of his musical upbringing and education were thus built on aesthetic ideals consonant with the post-Victorian perspective of the musical establishment in early twentieth-century Britain.

Howells’s interest in contemporary European developments was not “vital.”<sup>21</sup> But it was an active and critical interest. Some of the hesitation in regarding Howells as actively aware of what was going on internationally is certainly due to his diffidence about claiming a place for his music internationally or even in Britain. If a composer’s music does not capture the world stage, it is easy to assume this is because the composer is out of touch with the world stage. But it is important to remember that after the 1920s, Howells turned most of his time and energy to the task of teaching composition at the Royal College of Music rather than putting his own music forward. Moreover, he seems to have been very successful as a composition teacher, which would require a lively awareness of developments at home and abroad. This is borne out by the reminiscences of one of Howells’s composition students, Richard Drakeford, who observed that Howells always had “a sympathetic interest in his fellow composers that came ... from knowing that he was of their number, yet quite unharrassed by worries about his ‘status’ in any imagined hierarchy.”<sup>22</sup> Drakeford draws upon the opinion of the British music critic and Honorary Secretary of the Organ Music Society, Felix Aprahamian, in support of the claim that Howells was very engaged with musical developments beyond Britain. Aprahamian’s assessment of Howells’s reception of the latest music from abroad is valuable since Aprahamian devoted much of his energy to furthering the place of French music in Britain and was one of Messiaen’s earliest British advocates.<sup>23</sup> Of all the British composers Aprahamian had known, Howells “was the least concerned to promote his own work. He seemed, in fact, genuinely more interested in other people’s music, and it is perhaps worth countering the notion that he represented some purely parochial force in English music of the time.”<sup>24</sup> Aprahamian also

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Expressionism. In England, “the standard acculturating mechanisms [of Liberal England]—public schools and ancient universities—were still functioning” (Mandler, 19) and “still fostered a shared set of values for many in the professions and in politics.” Riley, “Liberal Critics,” 28.

<sup>20</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 51.

<sup>21</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 212. Perhaps the French influence came to some extent through Ralph Vaughan Williams, an important influence on Howells’s music (Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 22; Nicholas Webber, ‘Herbert Howells at 85’, *Music and Musicians*, 26/ 2 [1977], 26) and a British composer who had, unlike Howells, crossed the channel to study with one of the masters of early-twentieth-century French music, Maurice Ravel. Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 11. But it is difficult to believe that Howells so thoroughly absorbed and adapted French influences primarily because of Vaughan Williams’s influence.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Drakeford, “Herbert Howells: Some Personal Reminiscences,” *The Musical Times* 133, no. 1796 (1992): 502.

<sup>23</sup> Nigel Simeone, “Felix Aprahamian,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 790-91.

<sup>24</sup> Drakeford, 502.

suggests that Howells did not merely note the works of international composers but listened to and studied them critically when he recalls that Howells expressed great admiration for Berg and respect for “Hindemith, though he was worried by the latter’s influence which he thought [akin to that] of Schoenberg.”<sup>25</sup>

There is very little evidence documenting Howells’s presence at the performance of new works or his reactions to them. Of that evidence, very little of it comes from Howells himself. Howells is one among many composers who are interested in the works of other composers, perhaps even absorbing their influences, but do not feel the need to keep a record of concerts attended and scores studied. It is thanks to the account of Arthur Bliss, one of Howells’s friends and fellow students at the Royal College of Music around the 1913-1914 academic year, that there is a record of Howells, Bliss, Eugene Goossens, and Arthur Benjamin enjoying the “zest of evenings at the Diaghilev ballets [with unexpected excitements on seeing Bakst designs and hearing] the opening notes of a Stravinsky score.”<sup>26</sup> These are Bliss’s recollections, not Howells’s, so there is no certainty that Howells attended these performances with the same “zest.” But the comments of Drakeford and Aprahamian affirm that Howells relished and learned from these experiences.

It is even more speculative to place Howells at the first London performances of Messiaen’s works. Such speculation is not far-fetched, however, since these performances were due to the organizational efforts of Felix Aprahamian, who, as noted above, was favorably impressed with Howells’s interest in new music. It was in the autumn of 1936 that French organist Noëlie Pierront gave the first London performance of Messiaen’s *Le Banquet céleste* and André Marchal performed the London premiere of *Apparition de l’Église éternelle*.<sup>27</sup> This was only a year after Howells and his family suffered the loss of his young son, Michael, to a virulent form of polio, which tragedy motivated the family to return to Michael’s grave in Gloucestershire “every weekend”<sup>28</sup> to Twigworth where Michael was buried. But Howells was in London during the week, and the London premieres of Messiaen’s works were during the week. Too, Howells’s daughter, Ursula, recalls that her father’s response to grief was to immerse himself in work and meet friends and colleagues. It was also at this point that Ursula, as young as she was, suggested that her father write about Michael in music, which led to the first drafts of *Hymnus Paradisi*.<sup>29</sup> A grieving composer and teacher of composition, interested in new works, very well acquainted with the organizer of the 1936 London premieres of Messiaen’s works, and beginning to write a work that takes the Christian

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Howells’s awareness of Stravinsky’s music is evidenced by conversations the two composers had. Drakeford, 503; Hilary Macnamara, “Herbert Howells Remembered,” *The RCM Magazine*, 89 (1992), 8-10, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 26. Howells knew Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* intimately and was “fascinated and influenced by it.” Ibid., 181.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Hill and Nigel Simeone, *Messiaen* (New Haven, Connecticut; London: Yale University Press, 2005), 69, 79.

<sup>28</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 98

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 100.

teaching on the afterlife as its subject might very well have been interested in listening to the London premiere of Messiaen's work about the heavenly banquet.

### **Howells and Impressionism.**

The degree to which Debussy established a musical movement or school of composition, the degree to which it can be called Impressionist, and the degree to which Maurice Ravel belongs to that movement are all debatable points.<sup>30</sup> Debussy would have agreed that his aesthetic was more influenced by the *Symboliste* writers than the Impressionist painters because of his music's tendency to reflect analogously the technique of the *Symbolistes*: dissolving "syntax so as to allow individual words to be appreciated more fully for their purely sonic values, and [evoking] instantaneous impressions through isolated and motionless images."<sup>31</sup> As for distinguishing Ravel from Debussy, it is an elusive project since the former's early style derived from Debussy and was sometimes parallel or even in advance of Debussy.<sup>32</sup> It is unlikely British composers of the period belabored any of these distinctions. What both Debussy and Ravel presented was a response to the dominance of German, Austrian musical influence by musical means that some British composers found adaptable for British audiences.

Elements of Debussy's musical language, such as a penchant for quieter timbres, the revival of ancient modes that stilled tonal logic, and fluctuating meters find their English counterpart in Howells's musical language a little later in time, though Howells modified these elements, as British Modernists in all the art forms tended to modify Modernism's characteristics. Whatever Howells drew from French Impressionism, whether directly or indirectly, the defining discoveries for him were not the gamelan or Russian oriental modes as was the case for Debussy<sup>33</sup> but the "immemorial note of the Tudors and Elizabethans."<sup>34</sup> Yet, the musical idiom of the Tudor Masters happens to share characteristics with Debussy's musical language: generally serene dynamics (at least as usually performed in the twentieth century), modal rather than tonal musical language, and metric fluidity.

Howells's fascination with the Tudor Masters was not, however, a safe refuge in a musical idiom familiar to British audiences at the time. New works most likely to appeal to audiences were those written in what Brooks Kuykendall refers to as the ceremonial style.<sup>35</sup> Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* marches and Parry's "I was Glad" are quintessential examples. The characteristics of this style, derived in part from triumphal music of Baroque composers, especially Handel, include

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<sup>30</sup> Eric Salzman, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 25.

<sup>31</sup> Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 46-7.

<sup>32</sup> Salzman, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 25; Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 126-7.

<sup>33</sup> Lesure, 109.

<sup>34</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 396.

<sup>35</sup> James Brooks Kuykendall, "The English Ceremonial Style Circa 1887-1937 and its Aftermath," Ph.D. diss. (Cornell University, 2005).

the following: the melodic material favors stately, unison melodies of a fairly restricted compass, with simple and singable intervals and rhythms, accompanied by a walking bass line and regular meters; these *nobilimente* melodies, or “big tunes,” as they have been called,<sup>36</sup> are often aggressively diatonic, even to the point of avoiding scale degrees 4 and 7; the ceremonial style’s melodic material also tends to use melodic sequences.<sup>37</sup> The popularity of the ceremonial style has lasted from the late nineteenth century to today. Sir Hubert Parry’s “I Was Glad” (composed in 1902), Edward Bairstow’s “Blessed City, Heavenly Salem” (composed in 1914) and Charles Wood’s “O Thou Central Orb” (composed in 1915), all in the ceremonial style, have been very frequently performed by British choral foundations.<sup>38</sup> From the perspective of the early twentieth century, then, the musical world of the Tudor Masters was in some ways as exotic to English ears as the gamelan had been to Debussy.

One of the most important moments in Howells’s life as a musician/composer was one that helped crystallize his identification with the Tudor Masters. That moment was hearing the first performance of Ralph Vaughan Williams’s *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* in the Three Choirs Festival of 1910, held that year at Gloucester Cathedral. There appears to be no evidence that the eighteen-year-old Howells, still involved in the music of a provincial English cathedral, even knew of Debussy’s and Ravel’s music at that point. And in 1910, Howells knew Vaughan Williams only as—in the words of the Gloucester Cathedral organist, Herbert Brewer—“this strange man from Chelsea.”<sup>39</sup> But hearing Vaughan Williams’s *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* for the first time helped define Howells’s identity as a composer beyond most other influences. That experience was so intense that both Howells and his fellow student Ivor Gurney paced the streets of Gloucester all night, unable to sleep.<sup>40</sup> “I heard this wonderful work, I was thrilled, I didn’t understand it, but I was moved deeply. I think if I had to isolate from the rest any one impression of a purely musical sort that mattered most to me in the whole of my life as a musician, it would be the hearing of that work.”<sup>41</sup>

Part of what Howells found so captivating about *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* was the use of pure triads in an age of “chromatic saturation, emergent atonality, and Debussyan added-

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<sup>36</sup> Fritz Spiegl, *Music Through the Looking Glass: A Very Personal Kind of Dictionary of Musicians' Jargon* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1984), 33.

<sup>37</sup> Kuykendall, 124-170.

<sup>38</sup> Parry’s “I was glad,” written for the 1902 coronation of Edward VII, has been performed at an average of 65% of the choral foundations surveyed in John Patton’s *A Century of Cathedral Music*. Edward Bairstow’s “Blessed City, Heavenly Salem” has been performed at an average of 50% of the choral foundations surveyed and Charles Wood’s “O Thou Central Orb” at an average of 75% of the choral foundations surveyed.

<sup>39</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, p. 22

<sup>40</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 13.

<sup>41</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 22.



notes chords.”<sup>42</sup> Pure triads would have sounded refreshing in that era, but not particularly remarkable. It was the way in which Vaughan Williams used triads that made such an impression. Vaughan Williams’s use of triads did not advance a sense of harmonic drive through functionally related harmonies. Rather, Vaughan Williams silenced the linear sense of a harmonic drive by using triads non-functionally, contributing to a sense of stasis.<sup>43</sup>

Two years later, Howells, beginning his studies at the Royal College of Music, was advised by Stanford to go to the recently built Westminster Cathedral to hear Richard Runciman Terry’s choir.<sup>44</sup> Stanford wanted his young student to be aware of Terry’s revival of England’s Renaissance polyphony. Howells subsequently obtained funding to aid Terry in editing Tudor and Elizabethan music,<sup>45</sup> bringing this repertoire more fully into the country’s musical identity in the early decades of the twentieth century. That the idiom of the Tudor Masters shared characteristics with the French Impressionists, who claimed to break the German hold on twentieth-century music, was already appealing. That this idiom was English made it all the more attractive.

Vaughan Williams, whose influence on Howells as a composer and as a friend was immense, studied with Ravel. Whether Howells appreciated the Impressionist aesthetic because of Vaughan Williams’s influence, because of Howells’s own awareness of contemporary musical developments, or both, the fact remains that scholars of Howells’s music—especially Howells’s music in its maturity, which includes the majority of his works for ECM—hear it as influenced by French Impressionism. Christopher Palmer regards Howells’s “finely-tempered euphony” as “arguably more French than English” and the precision, balance, impeccable craftsmanship as well as the “coolly self-critical editorial finish” as presenting an “affinity with Ravel.”<sup>46</sup> Palmer also agrees with Frank Howes’s identification of Howells’s polyphony as “impressionistic” for the sensitively blurred part-writing, the indeterminate and soft-drawn lines, and the sum total of a texture “seen mistily through a haze of water or light.”<sup>47</sup> Paul Andrews sums up the assessment of the Impressionist qualities in Howells’s music by observing that Howells took ECM in a new direction, not so much departing from the symphonic elements bequeathed to the ECM heritage in the music of Stanford and Parry but carrying that ethos into the twentieth century by introducing Impressionism, “the debt in his music to French models [having] frequently been noted.”<sup>48</sup> The influence of the French Impressionists in Howells’s music is particularly apt where his ECM is concerned, since

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<sup>42</sup> Frogley, “Ralph Vaughan Williams,” *New Grove Dictionary*, 354.

<sup>43</sup> Rushton, “Triadic Magic in Early Vaughan Williams,” 120.

<sup>44</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 23-24.

<sup>45</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 56.

<sup>46</sup> Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study*, 21.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Andrews, Notes to *The Complete Morning and Evening Canticles of Herbert Howells*, vol. 1, CD (Priority Records PRCD 745, 2000). Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 47-8.

devotees of Howells's music tend to be drawn as well to "the music of France's arch-impressionist in church and organ music," Maurice Duruflé.<sup>49</sup>

There is a tendency in many surveys of twentieth-century British music to identify Vaughan Williams and Britten as the two major forces before the 1960s. This often results in corralling lesser-known names into the Vaughan Williams camp especially. To observe, therefore, that Vaughan Williams "was never an 'impressionist' in any meaningful sense, but impulses from early English folk and art music in combination with 'impressionist' harmonic and coloristic techniques formed a personal and indisputably English style"<sup>50</sup> can easily be assumed to describe Howells as well. This is a reasonable assumption because of the affinity Vaughan Williams and Howells had for each other's music. But Vaughan Williams's later work moved in the direction of expanding and consolidating technique and style "in an attempt to create a large-scale English symphonic manner."<sup>51</sup> In spite of Howells's large-scale *Missa Sabrinensis* (1954), *Stabat Mater* (1963) (both arguably less successful than his earlier large-scale work, *Hymnus Paradisi*) Howells's later work generally declined to pursue the same large-scale-symphonic direction Vaughan Williams did. As scholarship of Howells's work develops, effectively distinguishing his music from Vaughan Williams's, the element of Impressionism might come to be regarded as a more significant factor in his *oeuvre* than has generally been the case.

Paul Andrews links Howells's introduction of Impressionism into ECM with a theological perspective more in tune with the twentieth century. The distinction Andrews draws is between the Victorian and Edwardian musical language of greater confidence in biblical certainties,<sup>52</sup> on the one hand, and, on the other hand, twentieth-century doubt as well as an Anglo-Catholic emphasis on spirituality rather than rationality.<sup>53</sup> Calling ceremonial music of the Elgar, Stanford, and Parry generations God-is-an-Englishman music<sup>54</sup> is not entirely tongue-in-cheek. Though tinged with chromatic instabilities at moments, the tonal and metric certainties of the ceremonial style are never far away and generally triumph in the end, as solid as the Empire and Church of England during the Victorian period. Introducing elements of Impressionism was to put in place a sound world of uncertainty and one suffused with silence,<sup>55</sup> which, as shown in chapter one, still made British audiences—especially those in cathedrals, churches, and chapels—rather uneasy.

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<sup>49</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 47-8.

<sup>50</sup> Salzman, *Twentieth-century Music*, 81.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> For an analysis of Parry's "I Was Glad" as a reflection of patriotism, see Kuykendall, 192-97.

<sup>53</sup> Andrews, *Notes to The Complete Morning and Evening Canticles of Herbert Howells*, vol. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Spiegl, 135.

<sup>55</sup> Jankélévitch, 132-33.

### **Howells, *Telaesthesia*, and the French Impressionists.**

Chapter three presents Debussy's use of musical *aporia* and its association with distance. Debussy's shifting musical strata in *Brouillards*, for example, evoke shifting visual perceptions without any apparent logical process. One therefore takes in these shifting strata by *intellectus* rather than *ratio*. This is not dissimilar from the sense that Howells's music evokes "glancing from a picturesque cottage in the foreground to the horizon far behind it."<sup>56</sup> Debussy's distances are generally closer at hand. They do not seem too concerned with looking at far horizons. Nonetheless, Howells drew from Debussy, whether directly or indirectly, in developing his own language of musical *telaesthesia*, *aporia*, and silence.

As noted above, defining precisely where Debussy ends and Ravel begins is not always possible. Complicating matters where Howells is concerned is the influence of Ravel/Debussy because of Vaughan Williams's brief but important period of study with Ravel. It is sufficient simply to note that the music of Ravel, "the 'musician of silence' [who] assumed earthly form,"<sup>57</sup> was part of the dialogue Howells's music had with twentieth-century musical silence.

### **Howells, Webern, and the Pastoral.**

According to the available evidence, the influence of Webern on Howells was minimal, if at all. But Webern's attitude to musical silence is worth comparing to Howells's for several reasons. Both composers contributed to twentieth-century music's interest in expressing silence. Both composers were influenced by Debussy's use of musical silence. Both composers connected silence with the spiritual. In this last respect, Howells and Webern were kindred spirits in their particular response to the twentieth-century interest in silence.

Already noted in chapter three is the fact that Anton Webern was inspired by a pastoral sense of "distance, timelessness, radiance, and ineffability,"<sup>58</sup> particularly when he experienced his family estate, Preglhof, as a quiet, sublime "cloister."<sup>59</sup> Webern was slightly more explicit than Howells in linking landscape, the mystical, and silence, just as his musical silence is considerably more pronounced than Howells's. But the same basic perspective caused Webern to associate the stillness of Preglhof's winter forest with a "sublime cloister" and Howells to associate the visual silence of the distant Malverns with a liturgical anthem.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, silence in the works of Howells's favorite poet, de la Mare, which was a matter of "listening to sound just within the pale of audibility,"<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Edwin Evans, "Modern British Composers. VIII: Herbert Howells," 88.

<sup>57</sup> Jankélévitch, 140.

<sup>58</sup> Anne Shreffler, "Review of Julian Johnson's *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 24:2 (Fall 2002): 296.

<sup>59</sup> Moldenhauer, 105.

<sup>60</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 50.

<sup>61</sup> Roberts, "Walter De La Mare, the Listener," 133.

describes Webern's *kaum hörbar* (barely audible).<sup>62</sup> Vienna and Preglhof are as far apart geographically from the Royal College of Music and Chosen Hill as they were in the musical styles they inspired and fostered. But the basic aesthetic of silence Webern and Howells shared annihilated that distance.

There is little discernible influence of the Second Viennese School on most British composers of the first half of the twentieth century. Parry's reaction to Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces* gives an idea of the kind of reception these composers received among perhaps most British composers of the period. "I can stand this fellow when he is loud, it is when he is soft he is so obscene."<sup>63</sup> It is not surprising that the Second-Viennese-School composer who most fully developed a musical language of silence, Anton Webern, had the least influence on British composers of the early twentieth century. Since Howells had almost nothing to say about Webern, a comment he made about Arthur Benjamin at the time of Benjamin's death in 1960 could, with some modification, almost apply to himself. "As a composer he lived and worked not in open defiance of the changed world of ... Webern ... but without active acknowledgment of [his] commanding influence."<sup>64</sup> That Howells acknowledges Webern's "commanding influence" is another indication that he was aware of the work and importance of his non-British contemporaries. But it is curious that Howells refers to a commanding influence yet seems to have left no record of that influence on his own work.

It is possible that Howells and Webern were so different in their expressions of the interconnection of silence with landscape, loss, remembering, and the ineffable not only because the British musical establishment resisted the *avant-garde* but because of the different religious perspectives on silence discussed in chapter one. Howells's appreciation of the BCP and the way its language was honored in reflective readings in the liturgy was part of what influenced him in how to reflect on (to read, so to speak) distant vistas and express those reflections. The overall ethos of twentieth-century Catholicism on the continent, including the role of silence, was markedly different from that of Anglicanism. Howells and Webern perceived silence and *telaesthesia* almost identically. But Howells's expression was influenced by the gentle apophysis, the *intellectus*, of Anglican spirituality. Webern's expression of silence was influenced, it seems, by perceiving silence as austere *kenosis* and as part of a systematic approach, *ratio*. Each in his own way developed twentieth-century musical silence's expression.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst, *Heirs and Rebels: Letters Written to Each Other and Occasional Writings on Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 95.

<sup>64</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 254. The full quote mentions Schoenberg, Berg, and Stravinsky as well, all composers whose influence Howells did recognize.

### Howells, Messiaen, and Sound as Silence.

Whereas evidence of a Webern influence on Howells is minimal, there is no evidence of any influence by Olivier Messiaen. But the same reasons for comparing Howells's and Webern's contributions to twentieth-century musical silence apply to a comparison of Howells and Messiaen: Messiaen's development of musical silence flowed—as was the case with Howells and Webern—from Debussy;<sup>65</sup> and Howells, Messiaen, and Webern connected silence with the spiritual. To compare Howells with Webern and Messiaen is not to claim that Howells was their equal in terms of musical innovation. But this comparison does place Howells in Webern's and Messiaen's company as one of the twentieth-century composers who developed musical silence techniques.

The place of musical silence in Messiaen's *oeuvre* is less pervasive than in Debussy's. But where Messiaen expresses musical silence as quiet stasis, it is generally more pronounced than Debussy's. Whether this is a further development of Debussy's use of musical silence or an over-emphasis that hinders an organic development is open to debate. Arguably, it is because Howells, only a bit older than Messiaen, expressed musical silence more subtly than any of the Modernists that he paved the way for the development of musical silence into the twenty-first century, particularly in ECM.

As noted in chapter three, Messiaen's *éblouissant* music is an expansion of the possibilities for conveying silence through sound since it also confounded tonal expectations of audiences of the day, thus silencing *ratio*. Messiaen's technique for expressing *éblouissance* was rhythmic complexity, usually in a rather fast tempo, with loud dynamics, and with a bright, extensive instrumentation.<sup>66</sup> This technique is used rarely by Howells. But the next chapter's analysis of the St. Paul's Service presents one of the rare examples of Howells's own expression of the same idea and with similar technical aspects.

The difference between religious perspectives is just as pronounced, if not more so, when comparing Howells and Messiaen as when comparing Howells and Webern. Messiaen was influenced by Neo-Thomism, with its revival of the systematic theology of the Thomists (very much a matter of theology by *ratio* rather than *intellectus*). That Messiaen's spirituality was less concerned with integrating liturgy and personal devotion is surely evidenced by the fact that other than his motet, "O Sacrum Convivium," he wrote no music explicitly for the liturgy.

In spite of the differences between Howells and Messiaen, Howells's perspective on silence and his musical-silence techniques had much in common with Messiaen's. Silence is very much first- and second-level-positive for Messiaen. Indeed, it is perhaps impossible to find any suggestion

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<sup>65</sup> Paul Griffiths, "Olivier Messiaen," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 491.

<sup>66</sup> Christiaens, "Sounding Silence," 54.

in his *oeuvre* of that current in Modernism that regards silence as neuro-existential. Howells appreciated silence's polyvalence, but where he perceived and expressed it as first- and second-level-positive, he was a kindred spirit with both Webern and Messiaen. Also similar to Messiaen is Howells's use of sound as silence—especially musical *aporia*. Howells shared Messiaen's interest in playing upon tonal expectations they both knew their listeners would have, doing so by causing the “obvious grammatical frame” to fail, thus encouraging intentional listening to silence.<sup>67</sup>

Webern, Messiaen, and Howells were alike in sharing an appreciation of nature as a kind of sacrament of the ineffable. It is a curious paradox, however, that whereas Howells and Webern were closer to each other in perceiving the ineffable in distances, and whereas Messiaen seems to have had no telaesthetic sensibility, Howells's techniques for conveying musical silence are closer to Messiaen's sound-as-silence techniques than to Webern's barely-audible-to-inaudible silences. One of the most important aspects of nature in Messiaen's life and work is that of bird song, which is best appreciated close at hand, not from great distances. This calls to mind the important bird song of the nightingale in de la Mare's “King David.” But no matter how influential de la Mare's poetry was in Howells's *oeuvre*, Howells perceived and expressed silence on his own terms, neither those of de la Mare, Webern, nor—assuming Howells was aware of Messiaen's music—Messiaen.

### **Conclusion.**

Scholarly interest in the role of silence in the *oeuvres* of Debussy, Ravel, Webern, and Messiaen has expanded our understanding of twentieth-century music, revealing an important if under-appreciated aspect of that century's musical expression. This chapter shows Howells was also interested in musical silence and that his perspectives on musical silence and his development of musical-silence techniques have a place in the study of twentieth-century musical silence. This chapter also situates Howells's creative engagement with twentieth-century musical silence as a mid-point in ECM's development towards a more sophisticated and varied approach to musical silence by the end of the twentieth century. The next chapter analyzes particular examples of Howells's expression of silence as the ineffable in his ECM.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 58.

## Chapter Eight

### Silence in Howells’s English Cathedral Music

#### Introduction.

Howells’s use of silence in his ECM is more nuanced than in his non-liturgical music and significantly more nuanced than in works of his contemporary colleagues, especially on the continent. This is due, in part, to Anglican liturgy and spirituality, which Howells understood instinctively because of his religious upbringing and lifelong interest in the aesthetic expressions of that spirituality. The subtlety of Howells’s use of silence had a staying power in ECM that might have done more to foster late-twentieth-century expressions of musical silence as the ineffable—particularly among composers, such as Jonathan Harvey, John Tavener, and James MacMillan, who associate their music with spiritual themes and have contributed to ECM—than did more overt expressions of musical silence. ECM does not favor experimentation and the *avant-garde*. No one understood this better than Howells. But in his quiet way, he knew how to insert elements of the *avant-garde*, including its expressions of silence, into ECM.

In analyzing Howells’s use of silence in his ECM, this chapter applies to Howells and his ECM relevant parts of the broad taxonomy of musical silence established in chapter two. After comments on Howells’s ECM in general, this chapter’s analysis of silence in Howells’s ECM begins by discussing uses of literal silence, which had been the usual approach to expressing silence in most stylistic periods. It ends with Howells’s development of sound-as-silence techniques. This part of the chapter is arranged from techniques that were widely used in ECM and that were associated with silence, quiet, and restraint, to those that were unique to Howells, particularly the ineffability chord.

#### Howells’s ECM in General.

It is reasonable to assume Howells intended that all of his ECM compositions should become established in the repertoire. That only a few of his works are regularly performed (see Appendix 8.1) suggests there is some basis for criticizing much of his ECM repertoire. In Howells’s defense is the fact that from the 1920s on, he maintained a busy schedule of teaching, lecturing, adjudicating, examining, and practical music-making.<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising, then, that Gerald Finzi noted a contrast between what he saw as the brilliant promise of the young Howells and the note-spinning and lack of inner vitality of the more mature composer. Finzi acknowledged, however, Howells’s craftsmanship. He also admired the fact that though Howells “may not have hit the target every time” he admirably found new inspiration in each setting of the same liturgical texts time after time, which “was

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study*, 27.

certainly beyond Stanford's capacity."<sup>2</sup> Where Howells did succeed in his ECM, most critics would agree he succeeded splendidly and thereby helped renew "musical fitness and strength within the Anglican church . . . almost single-handedly" following World War II.<sup>3</sup>

Though Howells found inspiration in each setting of the same liturgical texts, he was like any composer in that he developed his own idiom so that certain characteristics can be found on almost any page of his choral writing for ECM. The cathedral organist Richard Lloyd summarized these characteristics as follows:

the use of a main theme employed as a motive to give cohesion to the piece; the quasi-plainsong modal phrases; the fondness for the interval of a minor third; the variation in the vocal scoring (bars for trebles alone, or trebles and altos, contrasting with tenor/bass phrases); the careful regard for correct verbal stress; strong unison phrases breaking into harmony on key words; the easy moves from one key to another; the to-ing and fro-ing between major and minor tonality; and even a not infrequent hark-back to the use of the false relation so beloved of 16<sup>th</sup> century composers and 20<sup>th</sup> century choristers.<sup>4</sup>

Kenneth Long makes similar observations by focusing solely on the "family likeness" in Howells's Services settings from the *Collegium Regale* of 1945 on.

They are nearly all in the minor key with strong modal tendencies and however 'advanced' the harmony may be it is always rich and sensuous, revealing Howells as a pure Romantic at heart (as were all the Impressionists): yet his style is so strongly individual that almost any two bars are sufficient to identify him. Most of the Canticle settings are built round a principal theme used as a motive which binds them together (Stanford's idea). These themes tend to grow out of the interval of a minor 3<sup>rd</sup>. *Magnificats* often begin with treble voices only. *Glorias* are triumphant and frequently include a passage in unison. Climactic phrases are usually melismatic. There is a preponderance of 3/2 writing.<sup>5</sup>

Long claims that the family likeness in all of these settings is Howells's basic limitation; that Howells had only one style, one template, for his service settings which did not develop or change very much over the years.<sup>6</sup> Whether one hears this characteristic as a limitation, it is helpful for the purpose of this discussion since it means identifying characteristics in some of these settings is to identify traits that, while not omnipresent, should be consistent in the settings taken as a whole. Where Howells's use of silence is concerned, this proves not to be the case, which shows Howells's inventiveness and appreciation of silence's polyvalence, both in perceiving the many aspects of silence and in expressing them.

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<sup>2</sup> Gerald Finzi, "Herbert Howells," *The Musical Times* 95:1334 (April 1954): 183. Stanford had written perhaps the most influential Evening Service settings of the early twentieth century (Evening Service in G [1904]; Evening Service in C [1909]). Jeremy Dibble, "Sir Charles Villiers Stanford," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 280.

<sup>3</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 166.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Lloyd, "The Church Music of Herbert Howells" (speech given at the annual meeting of The Church Music Society, 16 June 1982) <http://www.church-music.org.uk/articles/herbert-howells.asp>, accessed January 1, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Long, *Music of the English Church*, 430.

<sup>6</sup> Long also notes, however, that one "cannot imagine Benjamin Britten writings a dozen Services all much alike." Ibid.



**Literal Silence in Howells’s ECM.**

Of the taxonomic categories of literal silences intended to communicate extra-musical meaning (see Table 8.1), Howells took no interest in repetitive silence. Punctuative silence with dramatic intent does play a role in his *oeuvre*. This kind of silence has a long history in ECM, including two examples already discussed: the famous silence at the end of Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus,”<sup>7</sup> and the silence used by one of Howells’s teachers, Sir Hubert Parry, in “There is an Old Belief.”

Table 8.1

| Spectrum 1: <b>First-Level-Neutral</b> to <b>First-Level-Positive</b>                           |  |                    |   |                         |
|---|--|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Spectrum 2: <b>Functional</b> to <b>Purely Musical Meaning</b> to <b>Extra-Musical Meaning.</b> |  |                    |   |                         |
| <b>Literal Silence</b>  |  |                    |   | <b>Sound as Silence</b> |
| Spectrum 3: Silences that <b>Escape Notice</b> to <b>Readily Apparent Silences</b>              |  |                    |   |                         |
| <b>Integrated</b>   | <b>Integrated w/ dramatic or rhetorical intent</b> | <b>Punctuative</b> | <b>Punctuative w/ dramatic or rhetorical intent</b> | <b>Repetitive</b>       |

Another of Howells’s teachers, Stanford, also used literal silences. An important use of literal silence in Stanford’s *oeuvre* is in the canticle settings in which the *Gloria* “commonly delineates a new section”<sup>8</sup> (referred to as the *Gloria* delineation) by a literal silence that follows a perfect-authentic cadence at the final phrase before the *Gloria*. Two early Stanford settings of the *Magnificat, The Queens’ Service*<sup>9</sup> (1872) and the *Service in E flat* (1873), do not present a clear sense of a *Gloria* delineation, as is demonstrated by the *fermata* before the *Gloria* in *The Queen’s Service*. The *fermata* does not convey a sense of a genuine pause because of the driving quarter notes leading up to it, the indefiniteness of the imperfect-authentic cadence directly before it, and the *attacca* directly afterwards (Example 8.1).

<sup>7</sup> As part of an oratorio, Handel’s famous chorus is not technically liturgical but is performed as part of the ECM repertoire. Patton, *A Century of Cathedral Music*, 58.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 58.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Stanford, *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F: The Queens’ Service* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1995).

Example 8.1<sup>10</sup>

222 attacca

Sop. fear \_\_\_\_\_ Him. \_\_\_\_\_

Alto fear \_\_\_\_\_ Him. \_\_\_\_\_

Piano

By contrast, the ending of the phrase before the *Gloria* in Stanford’s *Magnificat* in A, written eight years later, exemplifies the *Gloria* delineation. This passage ends in a plagal cadence, on a quiet dynamic marking, and with a series of dotted half notes in both the accompaniment and the choir (Example 8.2). There is no need for a rest or *caesura* to indicate a silence at this point because an understanding of musical phrasing means a silence has to happen.

Example 8.2<sup>11</sup>

Sop. *p* for - ev - er. \_\_\_\_\_

Alto *p* for - ev - er. \_\_\_\_\_

Tenor *p* for - ev - er. \_\_\_\_\_

Bass *p* for - ev - er. \_\_\_\_\_

Piano

8 ft. 16 & 32 ft.

Howells continued Stanford’s practice of the *Gloria* delineation, whether by using punctuative silence or not. Regardless of what associations Stanford intended to apply to his *Gloria*

<sup>10</sup> Engraved from Stanford, *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F: The Queens' Service*.

<sup>11</sup> Engraved from Stanford, *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in A* (London: Novello).

delineations, Howells’s comments on *telaesthesia* and cathedral spaces supply a hermeneutic for understanding his *Gloria* delineations as a contemplative, telaesthetic shift of focus.<sup>12</sup> The silence before the *Gloria* is part of a shift of one’s perception from the immediate vicinity to what lies beyond the chancel screen or is far above in the tower.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of the criticism that Howells’s canticle settings are “all much alike,”<sup>14</sup> Appendix 8.2 shows that each *Gloria* delineation in Howells’s *Magnificat* settings is unique. Not all of the *Gloria* delineations include a punctuative silence since Howells called upon a variety of musical parameters to create the delineation. Where there is a punctuative silence, however, it is first- and second-level-positive rather than functional/neutral because of what it foretells theologically, which is discussed below.

An important *Gloria* delineation is the one in Howells’s *Collegium Regale Magnificat*. His *Collegium Regale* setting of the Evensong canticles was, in his own words, “the original source of the series of canticle settings made for certain Cathedrals and Collegiate Chapels.”<sup>15</sup> It established a sort of template<sup>16</sup> for all of the subsequent settings from 1945 on. Analyzing this setting is aided by Howells’s own explanation of the program he had in mind, provided in a sleeve note of a recording of his church music.<sup>17</sup> He sought to write a *Magnificat* setting that would put down the mighty “without a brute force” and a *Nunc dimittis* setting that would characterize Simeon as gentle. The *Gloria* was to be distinct, however. “Only the ‘*Gloria*’ should raise its voice.”<sup>18</sup>

A fuller, more explicitly theological understanding of what Howells intended to convey derives from the fact that Howells knew the theological/liturgical context for which he wrote his settings of the canticles. In this context, there is a sense in which the *Gloria* delineation conveys a shift into the *eschaton*. The text of the *Magnificat* proper is primarily about fullness of grace given to the *Ecclesia Militans* (represented in the person of the Blessed Virgin), making its way through a world heavy-laden by the actions of the “proud,” the “mighty,” and the “rich,” and accomplishing something towards realizing a just society here and now. The text of the *Gloria*, addressed directly to God, points to the full arrival of the Church into the life of the Trinity, the *Ecclesia Triumphans*. So too with the *Nunc dimittis*, though there the aged Simeon expresses his beholding of the full beatific vision as being much more imminent.

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<sup>12</sup> Evans, “Modern British Composers: Howells,” 88.

<sup>13</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 144.

<sup>14</sup> Long, *Music of the English Church*, 430.

<sup>15</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 400.

<sup>16</sup> Long, *Music of the English Church*, 430.

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Howells, *Herbert Howells Church Music*, LP, Argo RG 507, quoted in Palmer, *Centenary*, 400.

<sup>18</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 400.

Example. 8.3<sup>19</sup>

62 *rall.* *dim.* *molto rall.* *molto dim.* *ppp*  
 Sop. and his seed, for - ev - er.  
 Alto and his seed, for - ev - er.  
 Org. *rall.* *dim.* *molto rall.* *ppp*

67 *Allargando* *poco più mosso* (♩ = 80) *f*  
 Sop. Glo - ry be to the  
 Alto Glo - ry be to the  
 Tenor Glo - ry be to the  
 Bass Glo - ry be to the  
 Org. *Allargando* *poco più mosso* (♩ = 80) *mf* *f*

Howells expressed the *Gloria* delineation in the *Collegium Regale* setting of the *Magnificat* by writing a stasis (long note values) on the last word, “forever,” of the *Magnificat* proper at a quiet dynamic level (*ppp*) and with a straightforward D-major chord (Example 8.3). Since the measures leading up to this moment suggest G minor, the final D-major chord sounds dominant. But it lacks a dominant chord’s usual drive towards the tonic because of the extended E-flat minor-seventh chord with an A pedal that leads to the D-major chord. This E-flat minor-seventh chord with an A pedal

<sup>19</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, *The ‘Oxford & Cambridge’ Services*, ed., David Hill (London: Novello, 2001).

presents an aporetic moment because it does not make sense tonally,<sup>20</sup> given this section’s G-minor bearings. The E-flat minor-seventh chord with an A pedal is not exactly the ineffability chord, however. For one thing, it lacks a G sharp or an A flat. Moreover, the primary sense of “forever” in the text has to do with Abraham’s literal lineal descendants, a continuation of the *Ecclesia Militans*. Though this line of descendants is said to last forever, evoking Kant’s notion that the infinite is of noumenal greatness in and of itself,<sup>21</sup> it is not, in the Christian understanding, the fullness of the *eschaton*. This “forever” nonetheless presages the *saeculum saeculi*, the “world without end” of the *Ecclesia Triumphans* in the *Gloria*. Also, Abraham represents the beginning of a spiritual race, which transcends literal lineage and is directed towards the *eschaton*. This justifies a chord that is almost, but not fully, ineffable.

### **Sound as Silence: Restraint in ECM and Howells’s ECM.**

The following discussion of techniques Howells used for conveying sound as silence is arranged from those techniques that were widely used in ECM to those that were Howells’s unique contribution to ECM. The first is not so much a technique as an overall characteristic: restraint, also described as reserve, reticence, nobility,<sup>22</sup> understatement, and *gravitas*. The “typically English and Anglican character of cathedral music” is “conscious restraint and sobriety.”<sup>23</sup> Especially in the late-twentieth-century West, restraint/reserve is often associated with emotional inhibition or repression. Jankélévitch, however articulates a view of restraint not as stifling emotion but as a privileged form of silence that fosters openness to the ineffable.

[R]eticence must be considered a privileged form of silence: for the silence that is no longer “tacit” or simply “taciturn,” but “reticent,” is a special form of silence, the one that arises quite suddenly, at the brink of mystery, at the threshold of the ineffable, where the vanity and impotence of words have become all too obvious.<sup>24</sup>

The theme of chapter one returns: Anglicanism’s reticence about expressing silence, its restraint, is the very means by which it fosters the expression of silence. Using the term “understatement,” musicologist Timothy Day describes this quality as an aspect of what was perceived to be the ideal

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<sup>20</sup> As noted above, this is a passage Howells expected audiences of his day to find harmonically challenging. Palmer, *Centenary*, 145. Were he writing today, he would have to find other compositional techniques for providing what he referred to as a transcendent, “ultra-mondian” experience. *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, tr. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 97.

<sup>22</sup> Faulkner, *Wiser than Despair*, 68.

<sup>23</sup> Temperley, “Anglican and Episcopalian Church Music,” 663.

<sup>24</sup> Jankélévitch, 141.

ECM sound in the early twentieth century. It was particularly noticeable when contrasted with the “shrill” and “gutsy” sound expected from continental choirs.<sup>25</sup> ECM, writes Day,

was certainly shaped by a characteristically English predilection for understatement and for self-control, “the true English style” that Jane Austen detected in the greetings between two friends whose real devotion was buried “under a calmness that seemed all but indifference.”<sup>26</sup> It is a manner of singing that has its counterpart in the way of reading lessons and prayers long familiar in cathedral services, in speaking of “seeing through a glass, darkly” or of “the word made flesh”—in treating “depths and immensities” [the ineffable] as one of the cathedral organists put it—with a measured calm, without any theatrical extravagance.<sup>27</sup>

Though Anglicanism's texts and spirituality account for the most ancient sources of this quality of restraint, nineteenth- and twentieth-century politics and perceptions of class distinctions also contributed to it. The quality of restraint was characteristic of “a class represented by influential Victorian and Edwardian composers such as Sir Frederick Ouseley, son of the ambassador to the courts of Persia and Russia and Sir Hubert Parry, son of a gentleman landowner.”<sup>28</sup> ECM's quality of restraint was influenced by the mid-twentieth-century politics of post-colonialism. Even before the Second World War, intellectuals distanced themselves from imperialist triumphalism in arts and letters.<sup>29</sup> Howells's claim that ECM never quite succumbed to the stylistic excesses of each successive period<sup>30</sup> was maintained in his ECM of his period by stilling the jingoist “opulence, virility, impulse and militancy”<sup>31</sup> of William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and the unhealthy jingoism of “Land of Hope and Glory,”<sup>32</sup> the text of which refers to England as the center of a strong empire whose bounds should be set “wider still and wider.”<sup>33</sup> The “opulent” passages of *Belshazzar's Feast* were Walton's endorsement of the ceremonial style, a style still popular but “very much out of fashion in the ‘serious music’ circles of the time.”<sup>34</sup> It is true that the opulence of ceremonial-style anthems such as Hubert Parry's “I Was Glad” (1902), Edward Bairstow's “Blessed City, Heavenly Salem” (1914), and Charles Wood's “O Thou the Central Orb” (1915)<sup>35</sup> is relatively restrained when compared to a number of secular works in the ceremonial style. It is also true that

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<sup>25</sup> Harvey Grace, *The Musical Times*, 63 (1922), p. 419. Quoted in Timothy Day, “English Cathedral Choirs in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*, ed. John Potter (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 126.

<sup>26</sup> Jane Austen, *Emma* (Oxford, 1933) 99-100. Quoted in Day, “English Cathedral Choirs in the Twentieth Century,” 126.

<sup>27</sup> Day, “English Cathedral Choirs in the Twentieth Century,” 126. The cathedral organist quoted is W. S. Vale, *The Training of Boys' Voices* (London, 1932), 72.

<sup>28</sup> Day, “English Cathedral Choirs in the Twentieth Century,” 126.

<sup>29</sup> Esty, *A Shrinking Island*, 10.

<sup>30</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 397.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 396.

<sup>32</sup> Howells, “Words for Musical Settings,” *The Athenaeum* no. 4612 (December 1916), 614-15, quoted in Horton, Introduction, *Five Songs*.

<sup>33</sup> Edward Elgar, “Land of Hope and Glory,” text by Arthur Benson (London; New York: Boosey & Co., 1914).

<sup>34</sup> Kuykendall, 168-69.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

not every ECM anthem composed during the ceremonial style’s heyday fully reflects the ceremonial style. But anthems written in the ceremonial style continued to be frequently performed in Anglican liturgies.<sup>36</sup> Howells was not the only ECM composer to explore a different idiom for ECM. William Harris’s 1925 anthem, “Faire is the Heaven,” is an example. But Howells’s prolific contribution to ECM established a place for melodic stasis, quieter dynamics that allow for nuanced layers of timbres, and harmonic haziness, all of which suggested that musical, theological, and/or political certainties were no longer taken as given.

To draw both politics and theology together in the mid-twentieth-century context, the perceptions of Anglican restraint discussed in chapter one continued. But mid-twentieth-century restraint expressed something new. It stilled the clamor of imperialist triumphalism. It posed a challenge to theological, biblical certainties<sup>37</sup> in an era when a number of those who identified themselves as Christian, such as Britten and Howells, accepted yet doubted the claims of their religious identity.

Howells explicitly championed the place of restraint as a privileged form of silence in ECM. In 1943, when Howells’s focus was shifting from secular music to ECM, he addressed ECM’s quality of restraint in a BBC broadcast from Christ Church, Oxford on the occasion of the performance of his anthems, “O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem” and “Let God Arise.”<sup>38</sup> He multiplies terms for silence and quiet. ECM is referred to as a repertoire of “quiet and disciplined ways.”<sup>39</sup> It is truest to itself when its “still small voice”<sup>40</sup> is not lost among the stylistic changes over the centuries, whether dealing with instrumentation Charles II added or persevering quietly through the “noisy world” of the 1940s.<sup>41</sup> Howells is also careful to point out that the middle section in “Let God Arise,” which sets a text that would normally call for triumphal fanfares, is reflective and quiet; and that “O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem” is “of course mainly quiet and contemplative.”<sup>42</sup> Howells’s comments set out his program as an ECM composer, which was to create a “sound-world that has proved a durable mirror of both the restraint and the exultation of the Anglican experience.”<sup>43</sup>

Nearly twenty years later, Howells again spoke about the same characteristic of ECM. In a 1961 BBC-recorded conversation between Howells, Alec Robertson (music critic), and Erik Routley

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<sup>36</sup> Patton, *A Century of Cathedral Music*, 32, 84, 113.

<sup>37</sup> For an analysis of Parry’s “I Was Glad” as a reflection of patriotism, see James Brooks Kuykendall, “The English Ceremonial Style Circa 1887-1937 and its Aftermath,” Ph.D. diss. (Cornell University, 2005), 192-97.

<sup>38</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 395-98.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 397.

<sup>40</sup> Use of the language “still small voice” indicates Howells’s appreciation of I Kings 19:12 as an expression of silence as the ineffable.

<sup>41</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 397.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 398.

<sup>43</sup> Banfield, “Vocal Music,” 459.

(author of several books on church music<sup>44</sup>), Howells gave this reply to Robertson’s query as to whether Howells was conscious of writing in “a certain tradition of reserve.” “As for reticence, I have almost rejoiced in that one can’t dismiss it from the act of writing music for the church.”<sup>45</sup>

Howells’s appreciation of sixteenth-century ECM was partly its quality of “grave beauty”<sup>46</sup> (which, in turn, drew from the noble *gravitas* of early and medieval Christianity’s musical ethos<sup>47</sup>). Britten’s idiom can also be thought of as restrained in that it veers towards Neo-Classical economy rather than expressive Romanticism. As noted above, Britten also understood ECM well enough to write reflective moments into his works for the liturgy. The final measures of his *Te Deum* in C is an example, with its quiet pedal points on “Let me never be confounded.” But the overall sense of Britten’s settings is more expository than reflective. Whereas Howells drew primarily from the “grave beauty” of the Tudor Masters in his effort to develop a musical idiom for ECM in the twentieth century, Britten’s inspiration was the text-centric Henry Purcell. Howells defended Purcell’s and John Blow’s place among ECM composers but acknowledged that they had to find a “dignified compromise by which to defend” ECM in the era of the English Baroque.<sup>48</sup>

Many are the techniques and interpretive nuances by which composers and performers express restraint. A couple of these techniques in the cultural context of twentieth-century ECM are named by a reviewer of a 1979 recording by Magdalen College, Oxford, under the direction of Bernard Rose. The reviewer praises the choir’s “gentle serenity” and “fine balance.” This restraint is accomplished by freedom from any tendency to “cheapen the music by exaggerated phrasing or tempi.”<sup>49</sup>

Among the compositional techniques that contribute to a sense of restraint in ECM is the relative rarity of compositional virtuosity, such as extended passages of contrapuntal complexity. Virtuoso vocal techniques such as high tessituras or rapid coloratura are also uncommon, though most of the repertoire calls for well-trained singers. Successful ECM (ECM that maintains a place in the repertoire) has its moments of assertive rhythms, but rarely of extended duration and hardly ever at the expense of the texts the music is meant to serve. Because thoughtful setting of texts is important in ECM, musical parameters are generally used to foster meditation and reflection on texts rather than providing jolly gambols through wordy texts or treating them in an expository manner.

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<sup>44</sup> Erik Routley, *The Church and Music: An Enquiry into the History, the Nature, and the Scope of Christian Judgment on Music* (Gerald Duckworth & Co.: London, 1950); Erik Routley, *Church Music and Theology* (SCM Press: London, 1959); Erik Routley, *A Short History of English Church Music*; Routley, *Twentieth Century Church Music* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1966).

<sup>45</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 170.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 396.

<sup>47</sup> Faulkner, *Wiser than Despair*, 68.

<sup>48</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 397.

<sup>49</sup> David Fallows, *Gramophone*, 56/672 (May 1979), p. 1926. Quoted in Day, “English Cathedral Choirs in the Twentieth Century,” 127.



Musical techniques that can suggest a more reflective treatment of texts include pauses, melismatic settings of key words, a judicious use of unexpected harmonies, quieter dynamics, and slower tempi.

Measures 13 through 19 of Howells’s Gloucester *Magnificat* provide an example of musical restraint in ECM (Example 8.4). This passage is contrapuntal but not of a complexity that calls attention to Howells’s compositional skill. Also, the counterpoint does not entirely prevent the listener from hearing the words of the text. There is some loss in the clarity of “For he that is mighty hath magnified me,” which might have been avoided had Howells maintained the *mf* dynamic marking for the Soprano I line and the *pp* marking for the Soprano II line. But the text is so familiar to the expected audience that maintaining crystalline clarity of each phrase is not always paramount. Example 8.4<sup>50</sup>

13 **Soprano I** *mf*  
For be - hold from hence - forth, all ge - ne - ra - tions shall call me

**Soprano II** *pp*  
For — be - hold — from hence - forth, all ge - ne - ra - tions shall

Org.

16 *p*  
bless - ed. For he — that is migh - ty hath mag - ni - fied

*mf*  
call — me bless - - - ed.

Org.

<sup>50</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, *The ‘Three Choirs’ Services*, ed., David Hill (London: Novello, 2001).

The jolly,<sup>51</sup> clever contrapuntal writing in the *vivace* section that begins at rehearsal 8 in Britten’s *Hymn to St. Cecilia* (Example 8.5) is a passage that stretches the limits of what can be considered ECM restraint. Perhaps because the text is about a saint, and the patron saint of music at that, it is performed as a liturgical anthem.<sup>52</sup> But there is no reason to believe Britten intended this choral work to serve liturgically.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, Britten’s sparkling setting brings out the text’s message that lost innocence is to be celebrated,<sup>54</sup> hardly what one expects in a liturgical anthem. The music’s lack of concern for restraint thus serves the meaning of the text well.

Example 8.5<sup>55</sup>

The musical score for Example 8.5 consists of four staves. The top two staves are for Soprano (Sop.) voices, and the third staff is for Tenor (Tcnor). The bottom two staves are for Piano (Piano), with the label '(rehearsal only)' on the left. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: 'I on - ly play, I on - ly play, I can - not grow; I have no sha - dow to run a - way from, I on - ly play,'. The piano part is marked 'pp lightly'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

The unique rhythmic characteristics of Howells’s music also contribute to a sense of restraint, particularly in contrast to the march-like impetus of the regular tempi that characterize the ceremonial style.<sup>56</sup> Howells regarded restraining these simple, plodding beats—departing from an “easy breakdown into three-in-a-bar or four-in-a-bar”<sup>57</sup> rhythms—as an expression of the transcendent. This facet of his musical language was influenced both by Tudor church music and by the French Impressionists.

### Sound as Silence: Boys’ Voices in Howells’s ECM.

Another musical characteristic of ECM that accorded with the twentieth century’s development of sound as silence is the timbre of boy choristers as cultivated by influential

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Canon Bentley to Graham Elliott, *Britten: The Spiritual Dimension*, 86

<sup>52</sup> Patton, 38.

<sup>53</sup> It is, however, listed as an anthem performed by cathedral choirs in Patton’s *A Century of Cathedral Music*, 38.

<sup>54</sup> Carpenter, 168.

<sup>55</sup> Engraved from Benjamin Britten, *Hymn to St. Cecilia* (London: Boosey & Co., 1942).

<sup>56</sup> Kuykendall, 129.

<sup>57</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 145.

choirmasters and affirmed by journalists and critics.<sup>58</sup> It has been characterized as “pure,” “ethereal,” “a clean white tone,”<sup>59</sup> a reserved and cool tone,<sup>60</sup> and so on. The word “ethereal” evokes Pythagoras’s notion of the music of the spheres, generated by the vibration of the celestial spheres, but inaudible, silent, to human ears.<sup>61</sup> In addition to the boy’s voice somehow echoing cosmological silence, boys’ voices also connote silence because of associations with innocence and purity. Innocence can be thought of in aural terms as not having been exposed to the din of experience and “the words of [the ungodly, which are] unrighteous, and full of deceit.”<sup>62</sup> The perception of boys’ voices as pure has generally been connected with the perception of restraint and being unemotional,<sup>63</sup> which has to do with emotional stillness, silencing the clamor of passion. In monastic theology, this would be connected with *apatheia*, detachment from passion, which is cultivated in, and sustained by, silence. Associating boy choristers with emotional detachment grounded in a religious impulse flows from ECM’s nineteenth-century choral renaissance, which included “an overt recognition that choristers were ministers of the church and members of the collegiate body and should perceive themselves as living out a vocation.”<sup>64</sup>

That this ethereal sound was considered to be the norm in Britain’s musical culture is clear by the vigor with which some musicians challenged it. George Malcolm, during his tenure as master of the music at Westminster Cathedral from 1947 to 1959, was perhaps the most successful cathedral choirmaster to challenge this “pure” tone by insisting on a “bright, continental-style choral tone.”<sup>65</sup> “Certainly the tone is ‘pure’, if purity connotes only the negative, emasculated quality of an Angel on a Christmas card; but if [“pure”] means the positive, vigorous, upstanding integrity of early youth, then this pretty fluting-sound is an insult to boyhood.”<sup>66</sup> Under Malcolm’s direction, the Westminster Cathedral Choir attained a high standard and added contemporary works to its repertoire,<sup>67</sup> including Britten’s *Missa Brevis*, inspired by what Britten regarded as the staggering “brilliance and authority” of Malcolm’s “incredible boys.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Day, “English Cathedral Choirs,” 123

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Alan Luff, “The Authentic Sound?” *The Musical Times* 110:1513 (March 1969): 308.

<sup>61</sup> Joscelyn Godwin, *The Harmony of the Spheres: A Sourcebook of the Pythagorean Tradition in Music* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1993), 8.

<sup>62</sup> *Book of Common Prayer: 1662 Version*, (Everyman’s Library, 1999), 370.

<sup>63</sup> “[P]ractically all church music was composed with the distinctive tone colour and unemotional purity of boys’ voices in mind.” Long, *Music of the English Church*, 389.

<sup>64</sup> Alan Mould, *The English Chorister: A History* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 196.

<sup>65</sup> Howard Schott, “George Malcolm,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 682.

<sup>66</sup> George Malcolm, “Boys’ Voices,” *Tribute to Benjamin Britten on His Fiftieth Birthday*, ed. Anthony Gishford (London: Faber & Faber, 1963): 102.

<sup>67</sup> Howard Schott, “George Malcolm,” 682.

<sup>68</sup> Carpenter, *Britten*, 388.

Britten’s love of ambiguity and his creative intelligence in grappling with the human experience of innocence destroyed<sup>69</sup> meant he capitalized on the perception that boys’ voices can be perceived as angelic and ethereal as well as vigorous,<sup>70</sup> cheeky, sinister, or perhaps a bit of all of the above. One reviewer mentioned the striking effect of Britten’s “uneclesiastical” use of boys’ voices in both the *Spring Symphony* (1959) and *Ceremony of Carols* (1942): “Most listeners, and most composers too think of boys’ voices in terms of a soft, ethereal, pious, floating quality of sound ... Britten showed an uneclesiastical preference for the raw, cheeky din of trebles singing with unpursed lips low down in the scale.”<sup>71</sup> In moments of innocent purity conveyed by boys’ voices in Britten’s *oeuvre*, ambiguity about that innocence is almost always close at hand.

Britten returns to this part of the discussion because of the paradox of his enthusiastic use of boys’ voices in light of that timbre’s associations with innocence while being un-interested in silence as the ineffable. Howells did not share that enthusiasm. His concert choral works do not employ boys’ voices; only his ECM does. Nonetheless, boy choristers and their associations with innocence were an established aspect of ECM and seem to be at play in Howells’s use of melismas, discussed next.

### **Sound as Silence: Melismas in Howells’s ECM.**

Melismas can be used to silence the discursive, even if they occur at climactic musical moments. Melismas employed in this manner did not receive particular attention in the twentieth century. They harken back to the *jubilus*, a “joyful work sung without text,”<sup>72</sup> of early Christian chant. Howells’s use of melismas seems to have been inspired by the sixteenth century rather than the twentieth. It is “doubtful if sacred music of such sustained, melismatic fervour [as Howells’s] had been written for English choir stalls since the Tudor period.”<sup>73</sup> Howells often used melismas at climactic moments<sup>74</sup> that accompanied words connected with the ineffable: “praise,” “infinite,” “glory,” and “everlasting.”<sup>75</sup> Howells’s *Sine Nomine* (1922) is fifteen minutes of melismas since the singers sing wordlessly throughout. Howells associated this very melismatic work with the ineffable quality of wordless prayer, regarding it as “a religious piece, a kind of spiritual meditation.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Florance, 13.

<sup>70</sup> Malcolm, “Boys’ Voices,” 102.

<sup>71</sup> Desmond Shawe-Taylor, review of Britten’s *Spring Symphony*, the *New Statesman and Nation* (23 July 1949), quoted in Britten, *Letters from a Life*, vol. 3, 527.

<sup>72</sup> Alex Lingas, “Jubilus,” *The Oxford Companion to Music*, rev. online edition, Alison Latham, ed. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.001.0001/acref-9780199579037-e-3599> – accessed May 15, 2013.

<sup>73</sup> Patrick Russill, Notes to *Herbert Howells: Choral Works*, CD (Chandos CHAN241-34, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Long, *Music of the English Church*, 430.

<sup>75</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 132.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Spicer, Editor’s Note to Herbert Howells’s *Sine Nomine* (London: Novello, 1992).

Howells’s grand melismatic moments often gave prominence to the sound of boy choristers. Though Howells did not seem particularly interested in the timbre of boy choristers, he made the most of what he had to work with. Howells had been in and around the world of boy choristers all his life and certainly understood the cultural associations of innocence with the boy chorister’s voice. Giving prominence to the treble line by writing soaring melismas and on the words listed above was to evoke these associations.

### **Sound as Silence: Pedal Points and Drones as Stasis and Howells’s ECM**

Howells’s own mentors influenced his use of musical stasis. Stanford’s “For Lo, I Raise Up,” composed 1914,<sup>77</sup> is mostly turbulent, perhaps a reflection of the Great War and problems in Stanford’s native Ireland. But the coda produces a sudden stillness (*adagio, pianissimo*) that lasts for twelve bars. Stanford increases the sense of stasis in the final two phrases. The choir sings “But the Lord is in his holy temple” on homophonic chords. That homophonic stillness then shifts to the greater stillness of monophonic unison on “let all the earth keep silence before him,” including an eighth-note rest after “silence” (Example 8.6). The eight bars across which these two phrases unfold are not long enough to constitute a drone or to compete with the sense of infinite stasis in Messiaen’s *Le banquet céleste*, written a decade later. But the *adagio* tempo of these eight bars creates a striking effect when compared with the energetic, ceremonial style that characterized popular ECM anthems during that period.

Stanford’s setting of the words “holy” and “silence” in this passage is fascinating in light of this study’s exploration of silence as the ineffable in ECM. It might even have been a valedictory suggestion, rather late in Stanford’s career, that the future of ECM would include more pronounced statements of silence. “Holy” is the one word in these two phrases that gets a melismatic setting. The melisma is slight (only two notes on the first syllable of “holy”), but it stands out in contrast to the syllabic setting of the other words in this passage. Stanford sets the word “silence” by having the unison line move from the slow, static F on “let all the earth keep” to an A flat. The leap of a minor third also has the choir emphasize the transition, heard two beats before in the accompaniment, from B-flat minor to a glowing A-flat major.

Wilfrid Mellers identified Howells’s other great influence, Vaughan Williams, as an inspiration for a specific pedal point in Howells’s *oeuvre*: the sixty-measure B-flat pedal point that opens the final movement of Howells’s *Hymnus Paradisi*. “The victory of *lux perpetua* is prefaced by trumpet fanfares over an ‘eternal pedal’, as in the music to which Vaughan Williams’ Pilgrim

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<sup>77</sup> Dibble, *Stanford: Man and Musician*, 410.

‘passed over to the other side.’”<sup>78</sup> Sixty measures of a “32-foot organ pedal rumbling and rolling and reverberating all around the building”<sup>79</sup> provide a brilliant example of the paradox of sound subtly and yet emphatically representing stillness and silence.

Mellers observes of *Hymnus Paradisi* that it contains “more of Howells’s essential self than does his liturgical music.”<sup>80</sup> It might be more accurate to say that Howells’s ECM was also his essential self but intentionally in dialogue with ECM’s restraint, which Howells consciously embraced. Understood in this way, the pronounced stasis as silence in the non-liturgical *Hymnus Paradisi* could only find a nuanced echo in Howells’s ECM.

One of Howells’s early anthems, “When First Thine Eies Unveil” (1925), ends, unusually for Howells, with an extended pedal and with the tonality deliberately uncertain<sup>81</sup> (Example 8.7). This final pedal point begins at a moment when all voices shift from polyphony to a homophonic C chord on “sleep” of “So shalt thou keep His Company all the day, and in Him sleep.” The sleep of this text can be regarded as the peaceful slumber at the end of a day that begins with an awareness of divine presence. But it can also be a metaphor for the final sleep of death, which ushers the faithful soul into the ineffable presence of God, hence the aptness of silence as the ineffable, represented by stasis.

Another pedal point in Howells’s ECM is referred to by Christopher Palmer as an “enclave of stillness” in the *Collegium Regale Te Deum*.<sup>82</sup> This stillness is established by a B-flat pedal point that accompanies “We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge” (Example 8.8). Howells’s association of this passage of the text with the ineffable shows theological sophistication. The obvious choice for many would be a musical representation of the final judgment as a harsh judicial process. Instead, Howells’s enclave of stillness points to the fact that this reference to judgment is the first moment in the *Te Deum* text that refers to the *eschaton* and thus to the numbering of the saints “in glory everlasting,”<sup>83</sup> there to experience divine ineffability.

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<sup>78</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 251

<sup>79</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 162.

<sup>80</sup> Mellers, *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion*, 251.

<sup>81</sup> Long, *Music of the English Church*, 429.

<sup>82</sup> Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study*, 81.

<sup>83</sup> *Book of Common Prayer: 1662 Version* (Everyman’s Library, 1999), 74.

Example 8.6<sup>84</sup>

The musical score is for the hymn "For Lo, I Raise Up" by Charles V. Stanford. It is in G minor and 4/4 time, marked "Adagio" and "pp". The score includes vocal parts for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, and an Organ part. The lyrics are: "But the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before". The organ part includes a 32-foot stop and a 16-foot stop.

<sup>84</sup> Engraved from Charles V. Stanford, "For Lo, I Raise Up" (London: Stainer & Bell, 1939).

Example 8.7<sup>85</sup>

86 **TENOR SOLO**

*mf* *rall.* *p* **Assai tranquillo**

and in Him sleep.

Sop. *pp dim.*  
Him sleep, in Him sleep.

Alto *pp dim.*  
Him sleep, and in Him sleep.

Tenor *pp dim.*  
sleep and in Him sleep.

Bass *pp dim.*  
in Him, in Him sleep.

Org. *rall.* *ppp* **Assai tranquillo**

92 *rall.*

Sop.

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Org. *rall.*

<sup>85</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, “When First Thine Eies Unveil” (London: Oxford University Press, 1927).



Example 8.8<sup>86</sup>

124 *poco meno mosso* ( $\text{♩} = 58$ )  
*mf molto espressivo* *dim.* *rit.*

Sop. We be - lieve \_\_\_\_\_ that thou \_\_\_\_\_

Alto \_\_\_\_\_ *mf molto espressivo* *dim.* *rit.*  
 We be - lieve \_\_\_\_\_ that thou \_\_\_\_\_ shalt

Tenor \_\_\_\_\_ *mf molto espressivo* *dim.* *rit.*  
 We \_\_\_\_\_ be - lieve \_\_\_\_\_ that thou \_\_\_\_\_ shalt

Bass \_\_\_\_\_ *mf molto espressivo rit.*  
 We be - lieve \_\_\_\_\_ that thou \_\_\_\_\_

Org. *poco meno mosso* ( $\text{♩} = 58$ )  
*mp dim. e rit. molto p* *rit.*

131 *mf* *pp*

Sop. \_\_\_\_\_ shalt \_\_\_\_\_ come \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ Judge. \_\_\_\_\_

Alto \_\_\_\_\_ *pp*  
 come \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ Judge. \_\_\_\_\_

Tenor \_\_\_\_\_ *pp*  
 come \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ Judge. \_\_\_\_\_

Bass \_\_\_\_\_ *pp*  
 \_\_\_\_\_ shalt \_\_\_\_\_ come \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ Judge. \_\_\_\_\_

Org. \_\_\_\_\_ *ppp*

<sup>86</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, *The 'Oxford & Cambridge' Services*, ed., David Hill (London: Novello, 2001).

**Sound as Silence: Modes and Non-Functional Triads in Howells’s ECM.**

Howells’s use of modal pitch collections, alternative scales, and non-functional triads shifts the listening mind from *ratio* to *intellectus*. Howells’s technique was similar to Messiaen’s deliberate play upon tonal expectations, though on a more restrained scale. Both composers sought to create “a kind of ‘intentional silence’ [when] the obvious grammatical frame for intentional listening fails in part.”<sup>87</sup>

Howells’s recurring use of modes and alternative scales in the ecstatically soaring treble lines of the canticles doxologies is particularly noteworthy.<sup>88</sup> The doxology of the Gloucester evening canticles is an example of Howells’s effective use of a mode and of his use of triads non-functionally. The passage in the doxology that ends with “Holy Ghost” and sets the text “As it was” begins with a B-major triad in bar 95 that leads non-functionally to a G-major triad in bar 96 (Example 8.9). The G-major triad does seem to behave functionally since it sounds like the subdominant of the subsequent D-major chord in bar 97. By raising the fourth, however, Howells throws the harmonic logic off course again by making the expected major scale a Lydian scale. That this and similar ecstatic moments are more likely to occur in the doxologies than in the texts proper of the two evening canticles is apt since the texts proper, as already noted, relate the perspectives of those making their way through the quotidian round, albeit with glimpses of the ineffable. The doxology, however, presages *Ecclesia triumphans*’s arrival into the ineffable life of the Trinity.

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<sup>87</sup> Christiaens, 58.

<sup>88</sup> “The doxologies are often ecstatically pentatonic and grand.” Wilfrid Mellers, *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion*, 250.

Example 8.9<sup>89</sup>

94

Sop. *p* ly Ghost. *f* As

Alto *p* ly Ghost. *f* As

Tenor *p* ly Ghost. *mf* As it was,

Bass *p* ly Ghost. *mf* As it was

Org. *pp* *mp più sonore* *f*

98

Sop. *mf dim. poco a poco* it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and

Alto *mf dim. poco a poco* it was in the be - gin - ning, is now,

Tenor *mf dim. poco a poco* As it was in the be - gin - ning, is

Bass *mf dim. poco a poco* in the be - gin - ning, is

Org. *dim. poco a poco*

<sup>89</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, *The 'Three Choirs' Services* (London: Novello, 2000).

### Sound as Silence: Howells’s Ineffability Chord.

A sound-as-silence technique unique to Howells is the ineffability chord, which takes the idea of non-functional triads even further by creating a chord that sounds like a cluster. This chord appears just frequently enough to establish itself as a “fingerprint” of Howells’s musical language. But it is used rarely enough and with slight variations to avoid being a predictable musical gesture. Where it does occur, it never serves as mere text painting of any word related to silence *tout court*. A significant number of its appearances, however, are in contexts that suggest the silencing of rational discourse in favor of reflecting on the eternal and thus the ineffable. It is therefore identified as the ineffability chord.<sup>90</sup> The chord often sounds in lower registers<sup>91</sup> and at a quiet dynamic, which adds to the air of contemplative introspection.

Howells used another chord, an augmented eleventh chord,<sup>92</sup> similarly. But this analysis focuses on the ineffability chord because its identity is more certain due to its use of a particular pitch, A flat or its enharmonic equivalent, G sharp. The G-sharp/A-flat pitch serves as the ineffability chord’s root to the degree one can identify this chord as having a root at all. A flat is selected as the root because of the chord’s function at the end of *Hymnus Paradisi*, where the A flat, moving to an E flat, suggests the beginning of a very decorated plagal cadence (Examples 8.10 and 8.11). One way of identifying this chord in *Hymnus Paradisi* is as an A-flat-major triad with a G-major augmented triad.<sup>93</sup> However, “it is not the name [or precise spelling] of the chord which is important, but the sound it creates.”<sup>94</sup>

Arguably, the ineffability chord should be the final chord, not the penultimate chord, if the final chord on the word *sempiternam* is supposed to indicate eternity. According to Christian theology, divine ineffability is not somehow translated into a comprehensible concept in the *eschaton*. Eternity is not an easy-to-understand triad, so to speak. But this is where Anglican restraint is an influence. The stylistic conventions of mid-twentieth-century British music would

<sup>90</sup> Musicologist Martin Ward hears the chord as conveying “a very mystical ambiance.” Martin Ward, “Analysis of Five Works by Herbert Howells, With Reference to Features of the Composer’s Style” (M. Phil. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2005), 94.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>92</sup> This is a major chord with a minor seventh and augmented eleventh. It is based on Howells’s unique scale, which has an augmented fourth and a flattened seventh and is hexatonic since Howells did not establish a pitch on the sixth note above the tonic. Ward, “Analysis of Five Works by Howells,” 13.



<sup>94</sup> Martin Ward, “Analysis of Five Works by Herbert Howells,” 94. Howells also uses literal silences in this passage. Measure 166 has what amounts to a dotted quarter note of silence that, at this passage’s slow tempo, registers as an intentional silence. A silence of the same duration occurs directly before *sempiternam* in bar 171.

discourage an incomprehensible chord as a work’s final statement. But Anglican reticence about expressing the silence of *apophysis* would discourage it as well.

To the extent *Hymnus Paradisi* contains “more of Howells’s essential self than does his liturgical music,”<sup>95</sup> the use of the ineffability chord in *Hymnus Paradisi* offers the archetype of what the chord meant to Howells. The chord’s use in *Hymnus Paradisi* is also important since Howells’s large-scale masterpiece was written in its first, un-revised form in 1938.<sup>96</sup> The 1930s is the period in which Howells’s use of these chords flavored by augmented intervals came to prominence,<sup>97</sup> which indicates a greater degree of thoughtfulness in how and why the ineffability chord is used than would likely have been the case earlier in Howells’s career. It is thus noteworthy that the use of this chord in *Hymnus Paradisi* (Examples 8.10 and 8.11) lengthens the word *sempiternam*. Howells avoided using this chord for obvious text painting and did not associate it with any particular word when it appears in texted music.<sup>98</sup> But that it accompanies the word *sempiternam* in *Hymnus Paradisi*, is the longest-held chord on that word, and returns in other works associated with the eternal and the ineffable is as close as Howells gets to using the chord as text painting.

Even so, the interpretation of this chord as silencing *ratio* in order to convey the sense of ineffable eternity is not obvious and is defensible only in relation to all that this thesis observes concerning Howells’s understanding, and musical expression of, *telaesthesia*. Just as the view seen from the top of Chosen Hill or the distances partly perceived beyond cathedral rood screens were, for Howells, a “gateway to—mystery,”<sup>99</sup> so too was the ineffability chord on the *sempiternam* that leads to the final cadence of *Hymnus Paradisi*.

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<sup>95</sup> Mellers, *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion*, 251.

<sup>96</sup> Palmer, *Howells Centenary*, 102.

<sup>97</sup> Ward, “Analysis of Five Works by Herbert Howells,” 19.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>99</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 144.

Example 8.10<sup>100</sup>

167 **SOPRANO SOLO** *pp* 76 *mp* *pp*

Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

**TENOR SOLO** *pp* *mp* *pp*

Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

167 *pp* *mp* *pp*

Sop. Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

*pp* *mp* *pp*

Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

*pp* *mp* *pp*

Alto Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

*pp* *mp* *pp*

Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

*pp* *mp* *pp*

Tenor Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

*pp* *mp* *pp*

Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

*pp* *mp* *pp*

Bass Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

*pp* *mp* *pp*

Re - qui-em do - na e - is sem-pi -

76

*più pp* *poco* *p* *pp* *p*

Piano

<sup>100</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, *Hymnus Paradisi* (London: Novello & Co., 1950).

Example 8.11<sup>101</sup>

**SOPRANO SOLO**  
Assai tranquillo

172 *p* *pp*

ter - - - - - nam.

**TENOR SOLO**

*p* *pp*

ter - - - - - nam.

Sop. *p* *pp* *ppp*

ter - - - - - nam.

*p* *pp* *ppp*

ter - - - - - nam.

Alto *p* *pp* *ppp*

ter - - - - - nam.

*p* *pp* *ppp*

ter - - - - - nam.

Tenor *p* *pp* *ppp*

ter - - - - - nam.

*p* *pp* *ppp*

ter - - - - - nam.

Bass *p* *pp* *ppp*

ter - - - - - nam.

*p* *pp* *ppp*

ter - - - - - nam.

**Piano**

Assai tranquillo

*pp* *ppp* *mp*

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

One of the earliest manifestations of the ineffability chord occurs in Howells’s *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra*, written in 1917 in memory of Howells’s friend and fellow RCM student, Francis Purcell Warren (“Bunny” of Howells’s *The B’s*), killed that year at the battle of Mons.<sup>102</sup> Howells’s apparently non-theist spirituality was inspired by the elegiac and comfortably expressed itself in connection with the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. The resurrection is not referenced in the title or in the score. But later associations Howells made between grief and loss and the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, most notably in the references he made to the death of his son, Michael, as playing a role in the creation of *Hymnus Paradisi*, establish elegy as being connected with the hope of the resurrection. Howells’s *Elegy* is an early expression of his connection of grief, solace, and music’s role as a means of “seeing” beyond the immediate, into the distance, and thus expressing and even instantiating something of an experience of the ineffable.

The ineffability chord in *Elegy* is telaesthetic *aporia*. Howells intended this chord to stand out. It occurs at the end of the work, as happens when the ineffability chord is used according to its *Hymnus Paradisi* archetype. It is heard before the solo viola’s final statement of the work’s primary motive and unfolds as a slow oscillation between the augmented ninth aspect of the chord in the first beat, then the A-flat major aspect of the chord in the half note on the second beat, the A-flat major chord echoing into the final beat with the return of the augmented ninth (Example 8.12). The measure-length statement of the chord then flows into a resolution not in the expected C-minor but to a C-major chord. The ineffability chord in bar 99 is thus the narrow gate through which one passes to reach that sunniest and most tonal of resolutions, a C-major chord. Howells sets off the ineffability chord both by its placement directly before the last statement of the primary motive of the piece and because it is preceded by a literal silence, a *fermata* on the bar line between bars 98 and 99. Howells asks his performers and listeners to take note of, and dwell in, this tonal *aporia*; to meditate on its lack of meaning as its actual meaning. Understand that neither grief nor hope makes logical sense and that there is an ineffable mystery in all of this, Howells’s setting says, and the hope of solace follows.

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<sup>102</sup> Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, 63.



Example 8.12<sup>103</sup>

his son Michael,<sup>107</sup> did believe in life after death and that the older Howells, by the time of Kennedy’s assassination, no longer believed, in which case the ineffability chord no longer attained G sharp/A flat? If this is the case, it does not alter the aporetic effect of the ineffability chord (or its half-step close relation) in “Take Him, Earth, For Cherishing.” But it would reveal a remarkable level of craftsmanship linked to an auto-biographical statement in Howells’s use of this sound-as-silence technique.

Among the appearances of the ineffability chord listed in Appendix 8.3 are several that do not occur at the culmination of a work, as does the chord’s archetype in the final cadence of *Hymnus Paradisi*. In two of these cases, the chords are arpeggiated. Howells’s “The Three Cherry Trees” (1919) makes a very early use of the chord, assuming Howells did not substantially revise the manuscript in the decades between the song’s composition and its posthumous publication. The chord is the first statement of this work, rather than one of the last, and is arpeggiated at a pianissimo dynamic marking, which tends to diffuse the chord’s dissonance (Example 8.14). That the chord is used in this altered manner might be due to its presence in a secular work. But it seems that in 1919 Howells already associated this sound with mystical perception, given the text. De la Mare’s poem evokes the ghost of a beautiful lady. It also appealed to Howells’s telaesthetic sensibility since the poet’s focus shifts from pastoral details to the mysterious, ghostly beauty of the lady.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

Example 8.13<sup>108</sup>

Sop.

Take him, earth, for cher - ish - ing. \_\_\_\_\_

Alto

Take him, earth, for cher - ish - ing. \_\_\_\_\_

Tenor

Take him, earth, for cher - ish - ing. \_\_\_\_\_

Bass

Take him, earth, for cher - ish - ing. \_\_\_\_\_

Piano (rehearsal only)

Take him, earth, for cher - ish - ing. \_\_\_\_\_

8<sup>bb</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, “Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing” (London: H. W. Gray co, 1964).

Example 8.14<sup>109</sup>

Come una Siciliana; teneramente, ma con moto (♩. = c.48-50)

*Missa Sabrinensis* (1954) includes variations of the chord. At bar 165 of the *Gloria*, the part of the chord that spells a G-sharp-minor triad is arpeggiated (Example 8.16) while the right hand of the arpeggiation in the score reduction sounds a lowered fifth, another instance of diffusing the chord’s dissonant effect. The use of the chord in this passage also differs from the way the chord functions at the end of *Hymnus Paradisi* because it does not lead to the clarity of a straightforward triad. It is not a brief aporetic moment but is part of a longer passage that supplies no tonal bearings at all. These limitations on the chord’s effectiveness can be interpreted theologically. The chord occurs on the first statement of *qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis*. More precisely, it occurs on the repetition of *miserere*, the only word of the first statement of the phrase that is repeated. Howells’s repetition of the word and emphasis of it by use of the ineffability chord focuses on the core of Christian doctrine, which is that ineffable communion with God is possible because of divine mercy. But because the ineffability chord does not resolve to the clarity of an uncomplicated triad, there is a sense that awareness of one’s sinfulness is to pass through the dark night of the soul, as it were, which, though difficult, is its own kind of ineffability.

Howells made use of a variation of the ineffability chord a few bars before bar 165 of *Missa Sabrinensis*’s *Gloria*. In bars 151 through 154 (Example 8.15), he wrote the chord with a D sharp rather than a G sharp in the bass (a second inversion according to the chord’s *Hymnus Paradisi* spelling). Again, as intentional as Howells was about using this unique sound, it is unlikely one should interpret its use at this point as mere dissonant color. Rather, the fact that this chord does not take G sharp or A flat as its root and that here too it does not resolve to a straightforward triad suggest that there is a hope of perceiving the ineffable but that it is not imminent. This is verified by the subsequent text that seeks mercy rather than glorying in a perception of the ineffable.

<sup>109</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, *A Garland for De La Mare* (London: Thames Publishing, 1995).

Example 8.15<sup>110</sup>

Example 8.16<sup>111</sup>

The ineffability chord sounds in the final bars of the doxology that ends the two canticle settings of the St. Paul’s Service (1951). Written thirteen years after *Hymnus Paradisi* and published three years later, the St. Paul’s Service’s use of the chord follows the *Hymnus Paradisi* archetypal pattern, though the implied tonal logic works a bit differently in this case. There is no clear sense of tonality as the doxology makes its way to the conclusion. But there are straightforward F-minor triads on either side of the ineffability chord (in bar 143 of the *Magnificat*. Example 8.17). The shift from F minor to a dissonant chord with an A-flat root that spells an A-flat-major triad suggests oscillating between a minor key and its relative major. But because the chord with the A-flat-major triad is the ineffability chord, the minor-to-relative-major movement does not really make sense and is not meant to. This represents the Pauline “unspeakable words” (II Corinthians 12:2-4) that cannot be spoken any more than the chord can be made sense of. The penultimate chord, an F-minor triad, shifts to the final chord, a simple, pure G-major triad. The surprising sunniness of the G-major triad after the F-minor chord is all the more dramatic because of the ineffability chord’s delightfully aporetic confusion in the antepenultimate chord. Again, mid-twentieth-century Anglican

<sup>110</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, *Missa Sabrinensis* (London: Novello & Co., 1954).

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

congregations were not prepared for anything like the ineffability chord as a final musical statement. So if it could not have the final say in *Hymnus Paradisi*, it certainly could not have it here.

What is unusual about this use of the ineffability chord is that it occurs in a rafters-raising crescendo. This makes it a Howellsian version of Messiaen’s *éblouissant* sound as silence. By 1951, Howells would certainly have known of Messiaen’s music, if he had not already been introduced to it at the first performances of Messiaen’s music in London in 1936. But there is no reason to believe Howells did not arrive at the idea of expressing ineffability as dazzling rather than quiet on his own.

Example 8.17<sup>112</sup>

The image shows a musical score for Example 8.17, starting at measure 141. It consists of five staves: Soprano (Sop.), Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Organ. The vocal parts are in G minor and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "men, A - men, A - men, A - men." The organ part provides harmonic support. The score is marked with a *cresc.* (crescendo) and *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic markings. The ineffability chord is a complex chord with multiple octaves of notes, creating a shimmering, ethereal effect.

Play the ineffability chord in isolation or as the basis of an extended musical passage, and it is an *avant-garde* gesture in early twentieth-century music. Howells’s sensitivity to this fact and the role of restraint in his music and in ECM so limited his use of the ineffability chord that it occurs rarely in the major evening services. Similarly, the ineffability chord does not appear in the most frequently performed<sup>113</sup> of Howells’s anthems: “Like as the Hart” (1941), “My Eyes for Beauty Pine” (1925); and “O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem” (1941). But Howells found other ways of expressing silence as the ineffable.

<sup>112</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, *The ‘London’ Services*, ed., David Hill (London: Novello, 2000).

<sup>113</sup> Patton, *A Century of Cathedral Music*, 63-4.

### Other Examples of Musical Silence in Howells’s ECM.

Though this study does not attempt an exhaustive analysis of Howells’s musical silence, it considers two more works to show Howells’s creative use of compositional techniques to express silence as the ineffable. “Like as the Hart” (1941) is perhaps Howells’s best known anthem. Written directly after the 1930s, when Howells’s technique had arrived at its maturity and produced his masterpiece, *Hymnus Paradisi*, “Like as the Hart” was one of the liturgical works that signaled Howells’s new focus on writing primarily for ECM. What he communicates about silence as the ineffable in this anthem is thus worth noting.

The indication for the entire score is “with quiet intensity.”<sup>114</sup> Bar 91 has a literal silence of more than a beat between repetitions of “the presence” in the phrase, “When shall I come before the presence of God” (Example 8.18). Repetition of the word “presence” is an understated liturgical stammer.<sup>115</sup> Bar 96, part of an E-major chord that accompanies the text’s statement about being in the presence of God, is held for a long duration and has an echo of the ineffability chord to the extent that the C natural creates an augmented fifth in relation to the chord’s root, giving this chord an aporetic role.

After the choir’s *pianissimo* decrescendo on “the presence of God” has faded into nothingness, bar 98 has another literal silence in the form of a *caesura* mark. This is followed by three chords—F-sharp minor with an added G sharp, G-sharp minor, and E major—that continue the decrescendo into a *ppp*. The literal silence that precedes this cadence is both neutral silence that affords the opportunity for contemplative listening and first- and second-level-positive silence that represents being in the ineffable presence of God.

The three chords that follow are another iteration of a liturgical stammer, this time with the text silenced. “Presence” was stated and re-stated at bars 90 and 92. The last three chords result in a re-statement of the E-major chord, but only after a quiet and curious progression that has nothing to do harmonically with what has gone before. Moreover, the ineffability chord’s G sharp is common to all three of these final chords. Though Howells chose not to use the full ineffability chord here, he nonetheless conveyed the sense that one arrives at the final statement of the E-major triad by going through the narrow gate of a G-sharp dissonance. It is not a *kenosis*, a sense that silence is a dark night of the soul, as is found in poet-medieval Catholic mysticism. Indeed, it almost happens without one being aware of the dissonance and incongruity. In short, it is consonant with Anglican spirituality.

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<sup>114</sup> Herbert Howells, “Like as the Hart Desireth the Waterbrooks” (London; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943).

<sup>115</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 176.

Example 8.18<sup>116</sup>

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 90 to 94, and the second system covers measures 95 to 99. The vocal parts (Soprano Solo, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and Organ are arranged in a standard choral setting. The lyrics are: "pre - sence, the pre - sence of God? fore the pre - sence of God?". Performance markings include *pp* (pianissimo), *rit.* (ritardando), and *Lento assai* (very slow). The organ part features a *ppp* (pianississimo) marking in measure 94. The score is in G major and 3/4 time.

<sup>116</sup> Engraved from Howells, "Like as the Hart."



Less often performed is “A Sequence for St. Michael” (1961). It merits analysis here if for no other reason than that its text includes a passage from Revelation 8:1, one of the few explicit neo-testamentary references to what might be first-level-positive silence. The chord in bar 133 that sets the context for the phrase, “Then was there a great silence in heaven,” is not the ineffability chord. But its augmented fourth woven into the A-minor triad that forms the basis of the chord creates a sound similar to the ineffability chord (Example 8.19). The entire passage (bars 133-39) is built on the same idea of an A-minor triad with an augmented fourth. The word “silence” is thus not singled out for text-painting. But it is clear from the quality of the chord that defines the passage, both its structure and the fact that it sounds quietly and mostly at long, static durational values, that Howells interpreted this passage from Revelation as first- and second-level-positive.

The text Howells used in “A Sequence for St. Michael” (1961), Helen Waddell’s translation of a poem by St. Alcuin of York, presents an ambiguity. Waddell’s translation (“Then there was a great silence in heaven, and a thousand thousand saying ‘Glory, to the Lord King’”) could convey either the sense that first there was silence, then there were a “thousand thousand saying ‘Glory to the Lord King’” or the paradoxical notion that silence and the praise uttered by a thousand thousand were happening simultaneously or were even the same thing. Howells seems to have arrived at the latter interpretation. If any text calls for a triumphal flourish of *fortissimo* fanfares, particularly in the ceremonial style, “Glory, Glory to the Lord King” would be such a text. But Howells has the choir and organ perform this passage on a *placido pianissimo* (Example 8.19). An augmented fourth above C makes this passage C Lydian, which further silences the logic of expected tonal relations. Finally, the passage ends (bars 149-52) in a choral stasis of over nine beats (Example 8.20). This stasis’s chord is indeterminate. It could be a chord built on F sharp, lacking the third of the chord, and thus a major-minor-seventh chord or a minor-seventh chord. But as with the ineffability chord, this chord’s identity does not really matter since it does not behave according to tonal logic at the end of a phrase. The fact that this phrase ends with an indeterminate chord on a text that alludes to divine ineffability is remarkably explicit. It does not leave the listener hanging on the sound of the ineffability chord. And the chord that ends the entire anthem and that accompanies another passage that alludes to divine ineffability (“And give us to share in the joys of the blessed”) is an F-sharp-major triad. But the chord in bars 149-52 is striking in its eloquence about silence.

Example 8.19<sup>117</sup>

132 *Meno mosso*  
*pp sotto voce*

Sop. Then was there a great si-lence in heav'n And a

Alto Then was there a great si-lence in heav'n And a

Tenor Then was there a great si-lence in heav'n And a

Bass Then was there a great si-lence in heav'n And a

Org. *pp* *mf*

137 *A tempo, placido*  
*rall.* *pp*

Sop. thou - sand thou - sand say-ing "Glo - - -

Alto thou - sand thou - sand say-ing

Tenor thou - sand thou - sand say-ing "Glo - - - ry, to the Lord

Bass thou - sand thou - sand "Glo - - - ry, Glo -

Org. *dim.* *pp* *A tempo, placido*

<sup>117</sup> Engraved from Herbert Howells, "A Sequence for St. Michael" (London: Novello & Co, 1961).

Example 8.20<sup>118</sup>

143

Sop. ry, Glo - ry to the Lord

Alto Glo - ry to the Lord

Tenor King, Glo - ry to the Lord King,

Bass - ry to the Lord King, to the Lord King,

Org.

148

Sop. King.

Alto King.

Tenor King.

Bass - the Lord King.

Org.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

By 1961, Thomas Merton’s *Elected Silence* had been a best-seller,<sup>119</sup> which encouraged the publication of other works that refer to silence and spirituality,<sup>120</sup> most of them by Roman Catholic authors. There is no evidence Howells read these texts. But that publishers considered silence’s role in spirituality a topic worth publishing means there were reviews and discussions of the topic among the literate population. Since Howells took his role as an ECM composer seriously, he would have had a general sense of this development in spiritual literature. Perhaps, then, the indeterminate, suspended silence in bars 149-52 of “A Sequence for St. Michael” indicates a direction towards which Howells’s expression of silence would eventually have moved: one that would have been more at ease with a pronounced, explicit expression of the *musica callada*, the singing silence, of St. John of the Cross and other writers in the post-medieval Catholic tradition. It is the direction in which ECM moved during the second half of the century.

### **Conclusion.**

This chapter presents a range of compositional techniques Howells used to express silence as the ineffable in his ECM. This silence reflects Howells’s identify as an Anglican and his awareness of the choirs and congregations for whom he wrote. Expressing an Anglican, rather High Church, perspective on silence meant the performers of, and listeners to, Howells’s music were rarely if ever aware that silence was part of the musical expression. Indeed, since Howells considered silence to be characteristic of ECM, an aspect of his communication of silence as the ineffable was paradoxically not to communicate silence but simply to write according to ECM’s ethos of restraint. But he wrote other expressions of musical silence that show creativity and careful thought and that gave mid-twentieth-century Anglican choirs and congregations hints and suggestions of how new works for ECM might continue to develop and to contribute as liturgical music and as twentieth-century repertoire.

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<sup>119</sup> Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, 247.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas Merton, *Silence in Heaven* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1956), and *The Waters of Silence* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1950); Patrick Leigh Fermor, *A Time to Keep Silence* (New York: The Akadine Press, 1957); William Johnston, *Silent Music: The Science of Meditation* (London: Collins, 1974); Morton Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976); and John Main, *Word into Silence* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980).

## Conclusion

### Major Themes of this Study.

Silence eludes definition. Moreover, its polyvalence makes the meaning(s), or absence of meaning, of any given instance of silence difficult to identify. Yet silence is so powerful a means of communication,<sup>1</sup> that in spite of its elusiveness, polyvalence, and even non-existence, since it is a matter of perception rather than objective reality, several disciplines have finally begun to develop a critical, analytical literature on the topic. The first part of this thesis discusses the efforts musicologists have made towards understanding silence. The approach that has gathered a consensus is to identify categories of musical silence and to analyze them within narrow stylistic scopes. By focusing on a particular stylistic period or a single composer, the analysis is then free to develop as extensive an understanding as possible of the musical idioms and the cultural expectations implicitly and explicitly understood between composer and audience. Part one of this thesis therefore establishes perceptions of silence in the theological and musical contexts of Britain and the Church of England in the first half of the twentieth century. No two composers would have responded to this context in quite the same way. But setting in place as much of the relevant context as possible makes it clear that musical silence played so important a role in music of this period that composers had to take notice of it—even if taking notice of it meant a decision to take no further notice of it.

This thesis's first part also provides a taxonomy of musical silence broad enough to be useful as a first step in understanding uses of silence from any stylistic period. As one moves further along this taxonomy's spectrum towards silence intended to convey extra-musical meaning, researching as much of the cultural context as possible is important. The research on the early-twentieth-century British context, especially in Anglicanism, reveals a creative tension between resisting pronounced expressions of silence while being drawn to silence (especially in its less austere aspect of quiet) as an ideal characteristic of daily life. The intense expressions of musical silence by continental composers tended to present it as something outside the scope of everyday life. The subtlety of mid-twentieth-century musical silence's development in the British context meant it could pass almost unnoticed while quietly influencing British music in this period.

The second part of this study establishes who—as between Britten and Howells, the two major contributors to mid-twentieth-century ECM—took notice of silence as the ineffable by making it part of his musical expression and how he did so. Britten chose not to incorporate this perspective on silence into his *oeuvre*. The importance of silence in a number of areas of twentieth-century

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<sup>1</sup> Jaworski, *The Power of Silence*.

culture, including the *oeuvres* of writers important to Britten, establishes that the relative absence of silence as the ineffable in Britten's music was a conscious decision. Howells did express musical silence across the span of his career. This expression was restrained, however. It is even more restrained in his ECM but is expressed in a variety of ways, which is its own forceful statement on musical silence's creative potential.

### **Areas of Future Research.**

Silence is still a relatively new area of inquiry in musicology. This is partly due to the fact that silence's expressive role in music has become prominent only slightly less recently. If musical silence is mentioned now, most of the musically-informed public would immediately think of John Cage and Anton Webern. And only a few moments' reflection would call to mind other prominent composers mentioned in the preceding pages: Claude Debussy, Charles Ives, and Olivier Messiaen. But given the importance of silence in the *oeuvres* of these composers, scholarship on their uses of silence is relatively sparse and calls for further research and reflection. And if exploring the more subtle use of silence in a less well-known composer such as Howells reveals a rich creativity in techniques for expressing silence, how much more remains to be discovered in analyzing musical silence in the works of many other composers?

Though it is somewhat surprising that the expression and study of silence in concert music is so recent, one might expect a long history of silence—especially silence as the ineffable—in liturgical music. The research shows otherwise. Indeed, one of the discoveries from this research is that silence as an expression of the ineffable is not prominent until rather recently in Christianity in general. Even then, Christianity's ambivalence about silence does much to limit its expression as well as to encourage it. From the vantage of the early twenty-first century, techniques such as the *ison* of John Tavener and the tintinabular stillness of Arvo Pärt can seem like fresh discoveries that, at the same time, bring to prominence what seems to have always been present in liturgical music. This impression calls for further research. How consciously did Renaissance composers reflect on and express silence in their motets and anthems? Did J. S. Bach think in terms similar to Messiaen's expression of silence as sometimes *éblouissant* and sometimes a dynamic stasis? There is certainly a rich area of inquiry in the literal silences of Anton Bruckner's liturgical music. How aware were Gabriel Fauré and Maurice Duruflé of the role of silence in Debussy and Ravel, and how aware were they of silence as the ineffable in perceptions of spirituality in France of that period? Silence's importance in some of Ives's works as well as the role of spirituality in his music and prose suggest an area of further research similar to the one undertaken here.

This study's focus on silence as the ineffable in mid-twentieth-century ECM means acknowledging Britten's importance in ECM, though not in this one perception of silence. As briefly suggested, however, silence does play an important role in Britten's *oeuvre*, particularly in his operas. Further research could possibly establish Britten as a composer of operatic silence and as a composer who did as much to develop first-level-positive and second-level-negative silence as Howells developed first- and second-level-positive silence.

The famous English quality of restraint plays its quiet role in this study. It is generally taken for granted and as a generalization, however. This study explores some of the theological and cultural contributions to this aspect of the English ethos. It also raises the question of whether Britain's changing identity, particularly where religion is concerned, points to the possibility of a different ethos developing in the future, if it is not already present. If this development occurs, what would it mean for many aspects of English identity and culture, including the future of ECM?

Identifying the English quality of restraint as it relates to ECM raises the question of this quality's encouragement or inhibition of creativity. Restraint has often been regarded an inhibiting creativity. But the restrained use of silence in Howells's ECM has played as much a role in fuller developments of silence's expression in late-twentieth-century ECM as have the more obvious examples of John Cage, Anton Webern, and others. Modern liturgical music does not attract as much scholarly attention as modern concert repertoire. But this study shows that writing music within acknowledged restraints—as both Howells<sup>2</sup> and Kenneth Leighton<sup>3</sup> explicitly observed—can cause music to thrive. Perhaps this richer appreciation of the role of restraint could encourage a reappraisal of ECM's place in twentieth-century musical developments.

Another contribution this study can make is to suggest an avenue of further research that could establish Howells as less of a Vaughan Williams acolyte and more of a creative, innovative musical voice in his own right. The limits on his career as a composer (choosing to focus on teaching more than composing, diffidence about promoting his own works, and so on) mean he cannot be regarded as one of the most prominent composers of the twentieth century, even in the context of British music. But more research and analysis of his unique musical voice might gain a more prominent place for some of his works, both in the concert hall and in musicological literature.

Finally, there is the question of musical silence and performance practice. The restraints against emphasizing silence—especially in the liturgy—in mid-twentieth-century England included restraints on appreciating and performing silences, whether in Howells's music or in anyone else's. This study's analysis of these silences (and its suggestion of similar silences elsewhere in Howells's

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<sup>2</sup> Palmer, *Centenary*, 170.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Leighton, "Composing Today," in *Twenty British Composers*, ed. Peter Dickinson (London: Chester Music, 1975), 8.

*oeuvre*) and our early-twenty-first-century appreciation of silence, especially silence as the ineffable, should not encourage exaggerating Howells's musical silences. Still, informed performers might include experimenting with subtle emphases of Howells's techniques such as the literal silences (the *Gloria* delineations, for example) and the ineffability chord.

The title of Alex Ross's book on twentieth-century music, *The Rest is Noise*, is a play on the final words of Shakespeare's tragedy, *Hamlet*, and also reflects the perception "that classical composition devolved into noise as the twentieth century went on."<sup>4</sup> Ross's book helps make sense of the "noise" and also discusses the role of silence in twentieth-century music. So the title could as well have been the less elegant, perhaps pedantic *The Rest is Noise and Silence*. This thesis's analysis of one composer's contribution to twentieth-century silence is an assertion that, unlike the end of *Hamlet*, silence need not be the end of a story—especially a tragedy—but can be the opening of new areas of discovery. How much more there is to hear in the singing silence.

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<sup>4</sup> Alex Ross, <http://www.therestisnoise.com/noise/> -- accessed July 15, 2013.



**Appendix 1.1**  
**“Quiet,” “Silence,” and “Stillness” in the Authorized Version of the Old Testament & Coverdale Psalter**  
**(Arranged According to Perceptions of Silence as Negative, Neutral, or Positive).**

**“Silence” in the Old Testament**

| <b>First- and Second-Level Negative (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as undesirable)</b>   | <b>Neutral Silence</b>   | <b>First- and Second-Level Positive (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as desirable or beneficial)</b>  |
|--|--|---|
|  | Judges 3:19 – Ehud, with knife concealed, offers a present to King Eglon of Moab, oppressor of the children of Israel. Ehud says he has a secret “errand” for the King. The king tells him to “keep silence” until he can send everyone out. The neutrality of this silence is compromised by the surrounding narrative. Ehud has a concealed knife, which he will presently thrust into the king’s body. So, the silence he is ordered to maintain has a sinister (literally, since Ehud is left-handed) irony about it. But no one takes notice of the silence itself. |   |
|  |  | I Samuel 1:13 – “Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.”<br>No use of a form of the word, “silent.” But this is an extraordinary instance of silent prayer in the Old Testament. |
| I Samuel 2:9 – “He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in the darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.”  |  |   |
| Job 4:16 – Eliphaz recounts his experience of visions of the night accompanied by hair-raising fear as a spirit passed, there was silence (or a soft voice), then a voice saying “Shall mortal man be more just than God?” |  |   |
|  | Job 29:21 – Job relates his high standing before his misfortunes. Men “kept silence at my counsel.”  |   |
| Job 31:34 – Job states that not even fear of contempt for taking righteous stances would compel him to keep silence. I see this as negative because the silence is accompanied by a fear of rejection and alienation.      |  |   |

Appendix 1.1  
Old Testament Silence

|   |  |  |
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| Psalm 31:19 – “Let the ungodly be put to silence in the grave.”   |  |  |
| Psalm 31:20 – “Let lying lips be put to silence.” To silence lying is positive. But this passage implies that the experience of silence is perceived as a punishment, and one not regarded as educative or reformative. |  |  |
| Psalm 32:3 – “I held my tongue, and spake nothing: I kept silence, yea, even from good words; but it was pain and grief to me.”   |  |  |
| Psalm 50:3 – “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.” Silence is negative here because it represents God’s aloofness from his people.  |  |  |
| Psalm 83:1 – “Hold not they tongue, O God, keep not still silence: refrain not thyself, O God.”   |  |  |
| Psalm 94:17 – “If the Lord had not helped me: it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence.” Silence as death.   |  |  |
| Psalm 115: 17 – “The dead praise not thee, O Lord: neither all they that go down into silence.”   |  |  |
|   | Ecclesiastes 3:7 – a time to keep silence and a time to speak.   |  |
| Isaiah 15:1 – “in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; . . . in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste and brought to silence”  |  |  |
|   | Isaiah 41:1 – “Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.”<br>This comes after 40:31 which says that waiting upon the Lord will renew the people’s strength. So silence is arguably tied to the experience of God as giving comfort and strength. But 41:1 ends by stating that judgment is close at hand. This is good news only for those who have nothing to fear in being judged. |  |

Appendix 1.1  
Old Testament Silence

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| <p>Isaiah 62:6 – “I have set watchmen upon they walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, [7] And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” Silence is negative here because it is tantamount to the absence of prayer, which means the relationship between God and his people languishes and the blessings of the nation do not come to pass.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Isaiah 65:6 – “Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, [7] your iniquities ...”</p>   |  |  |
| <p>Jeremiah 8:14 – “Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defended cities, and let us be silent there: for the Lord our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord.” Silence as punishment.</p>   |  |  |
| <p>Lamentations 2:10 – “The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.”</p>   |  |  |
| <p>Lamentations 3:28 – “He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne [the yoke of suffering].”</p>   |  |  |
| <p>Amos 5:13 – “Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.” Prudent silence carries a negative connotation because it indicates that speaking is the norm but must cease because of negative consequences.</p>  |  |  |
| <p>Amos 8:3 – “And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place: they shall cast them forth with silence [other MSS: “burn them”].” Silence here is the lack of honours of mourning.</p>   |  |  |

Appendix 1.1  
Old Testament Silence

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|--|--|---|
|  |  | Habakkuk 2:20 – [19: Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.] But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” |
|  |  | Zechariah 2:13 – “Be silent, o all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.” Unlike Isaiah 41:1, this silence seems to be an attentiveness that will bring joy not only to the daughter of Zion but to many nations that join with her (2:10-11).            |

“Stillness” in the Old Testament

| First- and Second-Level Negative (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as undesirable)  | Neutral Silence   | First- and Second-Level Positive (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as desirable or beneficial) |
|--|---|---|
| Exodus 15:16 – “fear and dread shall fall upon [the enemies of the children of Israel]; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord.”   |   |   |
|  | Numbers 13:30 – “Caleb stilled the people before Moses.”  |   |
| Judges 18:9 – “And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.” Though this stillness is about refraining from political/belligerent activity rather than from making sound or noise, the Hebrew word used, <i>chashah</i> , is the same word that is translated as “silent” in Psalm 28:1 of the Authorized Version (“if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.”) |   |   |
|  |   | I Kings 19:12 – “and after the [strong wind, the earthquake, and the] fire a still small voice.”            |
|  | Nehemiah 8:11 – “the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy.” |   |

Appendix 1.1  
Old Testament Silence

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   |  | Psalm 4:4 – “Commune with your own heart and be still.”  |
|   |  | Psalm 23:2 – “He leadeth me beside the still waters.” The waters are still, not the psalmist. But that stillness is a metaphor for the interior state of the psalmist. |
|   | Psalm 46:9-10 – “He maketh wars to cease . . . Be still then, and know that I am God.” I have to place this in the neutral category because it is not clear whether the stillness has to do with external, political peace or interior, contemplative silence. |  |
|   | Psalm 89:10 – “Thou rulest the raging of the sea : thou stillest the waves thereof when they arise.”   |  |
|   | Psalm 107:29 – “For he maketh the storm to cease : so that the waves thereof may be still.”  |  |
| Isaiah 23:2 – “Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle’ . . . [9] “The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.” |  |  |
| Isaiah 42:14 – “I have been still and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing women; I will destroy and devour at once.”   |  |  |
| Jeremiah 47:6 – “O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still.” The stillness of inaction where action is called for.    |  |  |

**“Quiet” in the Old Testament**

The list of passages containing forms of the word “silence” attempts to include all such passages. Passages containing forms of the word “quiet” are limited to descriptions of interior states. Neither instances of literal quiet in narrative passages nor passages that convey civil/political quiet (e.g. “the land was quiet ten years” 2 Chronicles 14:1) nor quiet in nature are included.

| <b>First- and Second-Level Negative (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as undesirable)</b> | <b>Neutral Silence</b> | <b>First- and Second-Level Positive (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as desirable or beneficial)</b>   |
|--|------------------------|--|
|  |                        | Psalm 42:6 “Why . . . O my soul . . . art thou so disquieted within me?” Quiet in this passage is considered positive, though the psalmist writes of its negation. |

Appendix 1.1  
Old Testament Silence

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | Ecclesiastes 9:17 – “The words of wise men are heard in quiet.” |  |
|  |   | Job 21:23 – “One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet . . . [25] And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul.”   |
|  |   | Job 3:26 – “[25] For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me . . . I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet.” Quiet here is positive though lacking to Job. |
|  |   | Proverbs 1:33 – “Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”   |
|  |   | Proverbs 17:1 – “Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.”  |
|  |   | Ecclesiastes 4:6 – “Better is a handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.”   |
|  |   | Isaiah 30:15 – “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.”   |
|  |   | Isaiah 32:17 – “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance.”  |
|  |   | Ezekiel 16:42 – “So will I make my fury towards thee to rest . . . and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.”  |

**Appendix 1.2**  
**“Quiet,” “Silence,” and “Stillness” in the Authorized Version of the New Testament**  
**(Arranged According to Perceptions of Silence as Negative, Neutral, or Positive).**

**“Silence” in the New Testament**

| <b>First- and Second-Level Negative (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as undesirable)</b>   | <b>Neutral Silence</b>   | <b>First- and Second-Level Positive (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as desirable or beneficial)</b> |
|--|--|--|
| Matthew 22:34 – “But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.” One group of adversaries is silenced only to provoke another group of adversaries to action. |  |  |
|  | Acts 15:12 – “Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.”  |  |
|  | Acts 21:40 – “And when [the captain] had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue”  |  |
|  | Acts 22:2 – “(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith)”   |  |
|  | I Corinthians 14:28 – If anyone speaks “by an unknown tongue” and there is no interpreter, “let him keep silence in the church”  |  |
|  | I Corinthians 14:34 – “Let your women keep silence in the churches.” Though negative from a feminist perspective, these passages concerning the silence of women were not intended by their author to present silence itself as negative. They continue in the line of statements that equate silence with the role of the listening disciple. |  |
|  | I Timothy 2:11 – “Let the women learn in silence with all subjection.”   |  |
|  | I Timothy 2:12 – “But I suffer not a woman to teach . . . but to be in silence.”   |  |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1 Peter 2:15 – “that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men”<br/>See the discussion in Appendix 3.1 for Psalm 31:20.</p> |  |  |
|   | <p>Revelation 8:1 – “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” Perhaps the most enigmatic silence in all Scripture. It seems to be the quiet before the storm that is unleashed by the opening of the seventh seal.</p> |  |

**“Stillness” in the New Testament**

| <p><b>First- and Second-Level Negative (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as undesirable)</b></p> | <p><b>Neutral Silence</b></p>  | <p><b>First- and Second-Level Positive (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as desirable or beneficial)</b></p> |
|---|--|---|
|   | <p>Mark 4:39 – Jesus “arose, and rebuked the [stormy] wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still.”</p> |   |

**“Quiet” in the New Testament**

The list of passages containing forms of the word “silence” attempts to include all such passages. Passages containing forms of the word “quiet” are limited to descriptions of interior states. Neither instances of literal quiet in narrative passages nor passages that convey civil/political quiet (e.g. “the land was quiet ten years” 2 Chronicles 14:1) nor quiet in nature are included.

| <p><b>First- and Second-Level Negative (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as undesirable)</b></p> | <p><b>Neutral Silence</b></p> | <p><b>First- and Second-Level Positive (Silence as existing unto itself and perceived as desirable or beneficial)</b></p> |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
|   |                               | <p>1 Peter 3:4 – Wives should have “a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”</p>            |



### Appendix 1.3

#### “Quiet,” “Silence,” and “Stillness” in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer

This list does not include uses of the words, “quiet,” “silence,” and “stillness” in the Psalter, which is discussed in the section that analyzes silence in scriptural texts. Also, because the Psalter is incorporated in its entirety into the BCP, there is no question of the BCP’s compilers selecting or rejecting certain passages. “Silence,” “Quiet,” and “Stillness” in other Scripture passages that are selected for the lectionary (“The Collects, Epistles, and Gospels to be Used Throughout the Year”) or in certain rites of the BCP are included because they were selected by the Prayer Book compilers.

#### Silence

| Quote  | Section of BCP   | Page <sup>1</sup> |
|--|--|-------------------|
| “For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (I Peter 2:15)  | “The Collects, Epistles and Gospels to be Used at the Ministration of Holy Communion, Throughout the Year” – The Third Sunday after Easter   | 175               |
| “When the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.” (Matthew 22: 34)   | “The Collects, Epistles and Gospels to be Used at the Ministration of Holy Communion, Throughout the Year” – The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity   | 208               |
| “I kept silence, yea, even from good words; but it was pain and grief to me.” Psalm 39:3   | “The Order for the Burial of the Dead.” “After they are come into the Church, shall be read one or both of these Psalms following”   | 320               |
| “After this, the Congregation shall be desired, secretly in their prayers, to make their humble supplications to God for all these things; for the which prayers there shall be silence kept for a space.” | “The Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests” Directly following the public examination by the bishop of the ordinand and the prayer that the ordinand be granted the strength and power to perform the same. | 522               |
| “For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (I Peter 2:15)  | “Forms of Prayer [on the day of or] every Year, upon the Anniversary of the day of the Accession of the Reigning Sovereign”  | 540               |

#### Quiet

| Quote  | Section of BCP  | Page |
|--|---|------|
| “And he [Saint Augustine] counseled that such yoke and burden [of an excessive multitude of Ceremonies] should be taken away, as time would serve quietly to do it.”   | The Preface, “Of Ceremonies”  | 12   |
| “But now as concerning those persons, which peradventure will be offended, for that some of the old Ceremonies are retained still: If they consider that without some Ceremonies it is not possible to keep any order, or quiet discipline in the Church, they shall easily perceive just cause to reform their judgements.” | The Preface, “Of Ceremonies”  | 13   |
| “Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness”  | Evening Prayer, “The Second Collect at Evening Prayer”  | 89   |
| “beseeching thee to grant to all of us grace, that we may henceforth obediently walk in thy holy commandments; and leading a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty . . .”   | Thanksgivings, “For Restoring Publick Peace at Home”  | 106  |
| “Grant, O Lord, . . . that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness”  | “The Collects, Epistles and Gospels to be Used at the Ministration of Holy Communion, Throughout the Year” – The Fifth Sunday after Trinity | 192  |

<sup>1</sup> Page numbers refer to the Everyman edition: Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer: 1662 Version (Includes Appendices from the 1549 Version and Other Commemorations)* (London: Everyman’s Library, 1999).

|  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
| “Grant . . . to thy faithful people pardon and peace; that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind . . .”   | “The Collects, Epistles and Gospels to be Used at the Ministration of Holy Communion, Throughout the Year” – The Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.   | 211 |
| “We beseech thee also to defend . . . they Servant Elizabeth our Queen; that under her we may be godly and quietly governed”   | “The Order of the Ministration of the Holy Communion,” Prayer for “the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here in earth” following the homily and creed and before the general Confession. | 252 |
| “And because it is requisite that no man should come to the holy Communion, but with a full trust in God’s mercy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore if there be any of you, who by this means [examination of conscience and reconciliation] cannot quiet his own conscience herein . . . let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God’s Word, and open his grief; that . . . he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience . . .” | “The Order of the Ministration of the Holy Communion,” “warning for the Celebration of the holy Communion” on the next Sunday or Holy-day.  | 254 |
| “O God . . . Look mercifully upon these thy servants, that . . . this woman may be loving and amiable, . . . and in all quietness, sobriety, and peace, be a follower of holy and godly matrons.”  | “The Solemnization of Matrimony”  | 305 |
| “Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold . . . but let it be . . . even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”   | “The Solemnization of Matrimony”  | 307 |
| “if he have not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonished to make his Will . . . for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his Executors.”   | “The Visitation of the Sick”  | 311 |
| “Forasmuch as all mortal men be subject to many sudden perils . . . the Curates shall exhort their Parishioners to the often receiving of the holy Communion . . . that so doing, they may, in case of sudden visitation [of peril], have the less cause to be disquieted for lack of the same.”   | “The Communion of the Sick”   | 317 |
| “For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain”  | “The Order for the Burial of the Dead.” “After they are come into the Church, shall be read one or both of these Psalms following” Psalm 39:7   | 321 |
| “that the inhabitants of our Island may in peace and quietness serve thee our God”   | “Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea” A prayer “to be also used in her Majesty’s Navy every day”  | 490 |
| “we Confess, when we have been safe, and seen all things quiet about us, we have forgot thee our God, and refused to hearken to the still voice of thy word”   | “Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea” Prayers to be used in Storms at Sea”  | 491 |
| “Will you maintain and set forward, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people . . .”   | “The Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests” – One of the questions of public examination.  | 521 |

|  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
| “Will you maintain and set forward (as much as shall lie in you) quietness, peace, and love, among all men; and such as be unquiet, disobedient and criminous within your Diocese, correct and punish, according to such authority as ye have by God’s Word, and as to you shall be committed by the Ordinance of this Realm?” | “The Form of Ordering of Consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop” – One of the questions of public examination.   | 533 |
| “Vouchsafe so to bless thy Servant our Queen, that under her this nation may be wisely governed, and thy Church may serve thee in all godly quietness”   | “Forms of Prayer [on the day of or] every Year, upon the Anniversary of the day of the Accession of the Reigning Sovereign” – Collect at Morning or Evening Prayer              | 538 |
| “Vouchsafe so to bless thy Servant our Queen, that under her this nation may be wisely governed, and thy Church may serve thee in all godly quietness”   | “Forms of Prayer [on the day of or] every Year, upon the Anniversary of the day of the Accession of the Reigning Sovereign” – Collect for Communion                             | 539 |
| “Vouchsafe so to bless thy Servant our Queen, that under her this nation may be wisely governed, and thy Church may serve thee in all godly quietness”   | “Forms of Prayer [on the day of or] every Year, upon the Anniversary of the day of the Accession of the Reigning Sovereign” – Collect for an additional Service on the same day | 543 |

**Still/Stillness**

| <b>Quote</b>   | <b>Section of BCP</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
|--|---|-------------|
| “we Confess, when we have been safe, and seen all things quiet about us, we have forgot thee our God, and refused to hearken to the still voice of thy word” | “Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea,” “Prayers to be used in Storms at Sea”      | 491         |
| “Thou, O Lord, that stillest the raging of the sea . . .”  | “Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea,” “Short Prayers in respect of a Storm”      | 492         |
| “For he maketh the storm to cease: so that the waves thereof are still.”   | “Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea,” “Thanksgiving after a Storm,” Psalm 107:29 | 496         |

**Appendix 5.1**  
**Authors Selected by Britten<sup>1</sup>**

| Year      | Work   | Poet(s)  |
|-----------|--|--|
| 1928      | Quatre Chansons Françaises                     | Victor Hugo, Paul Verlaine   |
| 1929      | The Song of the Women                          | F. M. Ford   |
| 1929      | The Birds                                      | Belloc   |
| 1930      | A Hymn to the Virgin                           | Anonymous  |
| 1930      | The Sycamore Tree                              | Traditional  |
| 1928-1931 | Tit for Tat                                    | Walter de la Mare  |
| 1931      | Sweet was the Song the Virgin Sang             | Anonymous, from William Ballet's lute book, "William Ballet, his booke", published 16th century  |
| 1931      | Thy King's Birthday                            | Henry Vaughan; Anon; Robert Southwell; C. W. Stubbs  |
| 1933      | A Boy Was Born                                 | Anon; C. Rossetti, Thomas Tusser; Francis Quarles  |
| 1934      | May  | Anon.  |
| 1935      | Friday Afternoon                               | Anon; Thackeray, J. Tayler, Udall, I. Walton, E. Farjeon   |
| 1935      | The Red Cockatoo and other songs               | Blake; Auden, Burra, Po Chü-I transl Waley; Beddoes; MacNeice; Duncan; Goethe  |
| 1936      | Our Hunting Fathers                            | Auden devised  |
| 1937      | Cabaret Songs                                  | Auden  |
| 1937      | The Company of Heaven                          | Bible (Authorized Version); E. Brontë; Athelstan Riley   |
| 1937      | On This Island                                 | Auden  |
| 1937      | Fish in the Unruffled Lakes                    | Auden  |
| 1938      | A Cradle Song                                  | Blake  |
| 1938      | Advance Democracy                              | Swingler   |
| 1938      | The World of the Spirit                        | Bible (Authorized Version); Duclaux; Gilchrist; Wordsworth; E. Brontë; Michelangelo; Empedocles; Turgenev; H. Vaughan; Hopkins; R. Bridges |
| 1939      | Ballad of Heroes                               | Swingler, Auden  |
| 1939      | A.M.D.G.                                       | G. M. Hopkins  |
| 1939      | Les Illuminations                              | Rimbaud  |
| 1940      | Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo                  | Michelangelo   |
| 1941      | Paul Bunyan                                    | Auden  |
| 1942      | Hymn to St. Cecilia                            | Auden  |
| 1942      | A Ceremony of Carols                           | Anon; Wedderburn, R. Southwell, Cornish  |
| 1943      | Rejoice in the Lamb                            | Christopher Smart  |
| 1943      | Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and String Orchestra | Cotton; Tennyson; Blake; Anon.; Ben Jonson; John Keats   |
| 1943      | Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal                   | Tennyson, edited by Colin Matthews   |
| 1943      | The Ballad of Little Musgrave                  | Anon.  |
| 1944      | The Shepherd's Carol                           | Auden  |
| 1944      | Evening, Morning, Night                        | From <i>This Way to the Tomb</i> , Duncan.   |
| 1944      | Festival Te Deum                               | Book of Common Prayer  |
| 1944      | Chorale after an old French carol              | Auden  |
| 1945      | Peter Grimes                                   | Slater; after Crabbe   |
| 1945      | The Holy Sonnets of John Donne                 | John Donne   |
| 1946      | The Rape of Lucretia                           | Duncan, after Obey   |
| 1947      | Albert Herring                                 | Crozier, after Maupassant  |
| 1947      | Canticle I: My Beloved is Mine                 | Quarles  |
| 1947      | A Charm of Lullabies                           | Blake; Burns; R. Greenie; Randolph; J. Philip  |
| 1948      | Saint Nicholas                                 | Crozier  |
| 1948      | The Beggar's Opera                             |  |
| 1949      | Spring Symphony                                | Anon.; Spenser; Nashe; Peele; Clare; Milton; Herrick; Charles Vaughan; W. H. Auden; Barnefield; Blake; Beaumont; Fletcher                  |

<sup>1</sup> Boris Ford, ed., *Benjamin Britten's Poets: The Poetry He Set to Music*, ed., Boris Ford (Manchester, England: Carcanet, 1994).

|      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 1949 | Let's Make an Opera; The Little Sweep                         | Crozier, after Blake  |
| 1949 | A Wedding Anthem  | Duncan  |
| 1950 | Five Flower Songs   | Herrick: Crabbe; Clare; Anon.   |
| 1951 | Billy Budd  | Forster and Crozier, after Melville   |
| 1952 | Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac                                | Chester Miracle Play  |
| 1953 | Gloriana  | William Plomer, after Lytton Strachey   |
| 1953 | Winter Words  | Thomas Hardy  |
| 1954 | The Turn of the Screw   | M. Piper, after H. James  |
| 1954 | Canticle III: Still Falls the Rain                            | E. Sitwell  |
| 1955 | Hymn to St. Peter   | Gradual of the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul                                   |
| 1956 | Antiphon for choir and organ                                  | Herbert   |
| 1957 | Songs from the Chinese  | Chinese, transl. Waley  |
| 1957 | Noyes Fludde  | Chester Miracle Play  |
| 1958 | Nocturne for tenor, seven obligato instruments, and strg orch | Shelley; Tennyson; Coleridge; Middleton; Wordsworth; Owen; Keats; Shakespeare |
| 1958 | Sechs Hölderlin-Fragments                                     | Hölderlin   |
| 1959 | Cantata Academica, Carmen Basiliense                          | Latin texts, compiled Wyss  |
| 1959 | Missa Brevis in D   | Latin texts (commissioned for Latin liturgy)                                  |
| 1960 | A Midsummer Night's Dream                                     | Britten and Pears, from Shakespeare   |
| 1961 | Fancie  | Shakespeare   |
| 1961 | War Requiem   | Missa pro Defunctis and Wilfred Owen  |
| 1962 | Psalm 150   |   |
| 1962 | A Hymn of St. Columba   | Regis regum rectissimi  |
| 1963 | Cantata Misericordium   | Latin – P. Wilkinson  |
| 1964 | Curlew River  | Plomer  |
| 1965 | Songs and Proverbs of William Blake                           | Blake   |
| 1965 | Voices for Today  | Various texts, Virgil   |
| 1965 | The Poet's Echo   | Pushkin (set in Russian)  |
| 1966 | The Burning Fiery Furnace                                     | Plomer  |
| 1966 | The Golden Vanity   | C. Graham, after an old English ballad  |
| 1967 | The Building of the House                                     | Metrical Psalm 127  |
| 1967 | The Oxen  | Hardy   |
| 1968 | The Prodigal Son  | Plomer  |
| 1968 | Children's Crusade  | Brecht; also Eng. Transl., Keller   |
| 1969 | Who are These Children?                                       | William Soutar  |
| 1970 | Owen Wingrave   | M. Piper, after James   |
| 1971 | Canticle IV: Journey of the Magi                              | T. S. Eliot   |
| 1973 | Death in Venice   | M. Piper, after Mann  |
| 1974 | Canticle V: The Death of St. Narcissus                        | T. S. Eliot   |
| 1975 | Sacred and Profane  | 8 medieval lyrics, ed. R. T. Davies   |
| 1975 | A Birthday Hansel   | Burns   |
| 1975 | Phaedra   | Racine, transl R. Lowell  |
| 1976 | Welcome Ode   | Dekker and Ford; Anon.; Fielding  |

**Appendix 5.2**  
**“Quiet,” “Silence,” and “Stillness” in Texts Set to Music by Benjamin Britten**  
**(Arranged According to Perceptions of Silence as Negative, Neutral, or Positive).**

| Year <sup>1</sup> | Poet / Title <sup>2</sup>  | 1st-Level Positive, 2 <sup>nd</sup> -Level Negative   | 1st-Level Neutral or Ambiguous  | 1st- and 2 <sup>nd</sup> -Level Positive  | Comments  |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1928              | De la Mare / “A Song of Enchantment”   |   |   | Twilight came; silence came; . . .<br>But the music is lost and the words<br>are gone / Of the song I sang as I sat<br>alone, | Silence brings the hope of<br>remembering positive<br>memories.                             |
| 1928              | De la Mare /<br>“Autumn”   | Sad winds where your voice was;<br>/ Tears, tears where my heart was;<br>. . . Silence where hope was.  |   |   | Silence as the loss of hope.  |
| 1928              | De la Mare / “Silver”  |   | Slowly, silently, now the moon<br>Walks the night in her silver shoon;  |   | The moon, not silence, is the<br>primary actor in this poem,<br>painting everything silver. |
| 1935              | Beddoes / “Wild with<br>Passion”   |   | And quiet as its death / Upon a lady's<br>breast.   |   | Not clear what is dying<br>quietly. The death of<br>passion?                                |
| 1937              | Auden / “Funeral<br>Blues”   | Stop all the clocks, cut off the<br>telephone, / . . . / Silence the<br>pianos and with muffled drum  |   |   | Silence of mourning.  |
| 1937              | Auden / “Seascape,”<br><i>On This Island</i>                                       |   | Look, stranger, at this island now /<br>The leaping light for your delight /<br>discovers, / Stand stable here / And<br>silent be, / That through the channels<br>of the ear / May wander like a river /<br>The swaying sound of the sea. |   | Silence that allows one to hear<br>the sea.   |
| 1938              | Duclaux / “O Life, O<br>Love Now<br>Undivided,” <i>The<br/>World of the Spirit</i> | Yet, though thy worlds maintain<br>unbroken / The silence of their<br>aweful round. / A voice within<br>our souls hath spoken, / And we<br>who seek have more than found. |   |   | Life and Love are found in<br>spite of the silence.   |
| 1939              | Auden / <i>Ballad of</i>   |   | The fishes are silent deep in the sea, /  |   |   |

<sup>1</sup> Year of composition if known. Source of composition dates: Peter Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 571-81.

<sup>2</sup> Title of Britten's work, not necessarily the title of the original text.

Appendix 5.2  
Britten's Silence-Related Texts

|      |   |   |  |   |   |
|------|---|---|--|---|---|
|      | <i>Heroes</i>                                     |   | The skies are lit up like a Christmas tree, / The star in the west shoots its warning cry / 'Mankind is alive but mankind must die.'   |   |   |
| 1942 | Auden / "Hymn to St. Cecilia"                     | III. O dear white children casual as birds, / Playing among the ruined languages, / So small beside their large confusing words, / So gay against the greater silences / Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head, Impetuous child with the tremendous brain, / O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain, / Lost innocence who wished your lover dead, / Weep for the lives your wishes never led. |  |   | Silences of dreadful things   |
| 1942 | Smart / <i>Rejoice in the Lamb</i>                |   |  | And the devils themselves are at peace. / For this time is perceptible to man / By a remarkable <b>stillness</b> and serenity of soul. / Hallelujah, hallelujah | Britten chooses a poem that secures peace for one in a lunatic asylum. Stillness on a psychological level in an extreme situation, not the spiritual level. |
| 1943 | Tennyson / "Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal"         |   | Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves / A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me. / Now folds the lily all her sweetness up, / And slips into the bosom of the lake: / So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip / Into my bosom and be lost in me. |   | Discarded from Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings  |
| 1947 | Randolph / "A Charm," <i>A Charm of Lullabies</i> |   |  | Quiet! / Sleep! or I will make / Erinny's whip thee with a snake  | The quiet that is sought is positive, but it is sought negatively   |
| 1948 | Crozier / <i>St Nicolas</i>                       | Persecution sprang upon our Church / And stilled its voice.   |  |   | Silence as oppression   |
| 1949 | Clare, John / <i>Spring</i>                       | But all is past the merry song / Of   |  |   | This part of the original poem  |

Appendix 5.2  
Britten's Silence-Related Texts

|      |   |  |  |  |  |
|------|---|--|--|--|--|
|      | <i>Symphony</i>   | maidens hurrying along / To crown at eve the earliest cow / Is gone and dead and silent now / The laugh raised at the mocking thorn / Tied to the cows tail last that morn /                         |  |  | was not set by Britten in Spring Symphony  |
| 1949 | Auden / <i>Spring Symphony</i>  |  | Now north and south and east and west / Those I love lie down to rest; / The moon looks on them all, / The healers and the brilliant talkers, / The eccentrics and the silent walkers, / The dumpy and the tall. |  |  |
| 1958 | Coleridge / <i>Nocturne</i>   | But who . . . beguil'd / That beautiful boy to linger here? / Alone, by night, a little child, / In place so silent and so wild - / Has he no friend, no loving mother near?                         |  |  | Silence as possible danger and abandonment.  |
| 1958 | Keats / <i>Nocturne</i>   |  | Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses! Most happy listener! when the morning blesses / Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes / That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.                                 |  | Britten's setting has the flute and clarinet obligato impose a nervous busyness on this otherwise tranquil poem. |
| 1958 | Owen / <i>Nocturne</i>  | Out of the stillness of her palace wall, / Her wall of boys on boys and dooms on dooms. / . . . / The shades keep down which well might roam her hall. / Quiet their blood lies in her crimson rooms |  |  | Quiet of death.  |
| 1958 | Hölderlin / "Die Jugend," <i>Sechs Hölderlin Fragmente</i>                            |  |  | Ich verstand die Stille des Aethers<br>But I knew you better than I ever knew any man; I understood the silence of the Ether, but the words of mankind I never understood. | Pleasant, but this is a silence of separation from society (Peter Grimes, etc.)                                  |
| 1963 | Wilkinson / "Solitude everywhere, solitude and silence," <i>Cantata Misericordium</i> | CHORUS: "Where have those robbers gone? How quickly they have vanished. Solitude everywhere, solitude and silence. Who will help this man in such a wilderness?"                                     |  |  | Parable of the Good Samaritan: Solitude and silence of being alone after being robbed.                           |
| 1965 | Hölderlin / <i>Voices for</i>   |  | Silence the raging battle with   |  | Battle and peace are the focus,  |



Appendix 5.2  
Britten's Silence-Related Texts

|      |  |  |  |  |   |
|------|--|--|--|--|---|
|      | <i>Today</i>   |  | Heaven's melodies of peace.<br>(Hölderlin) |  | not the silence that brings<br>the former to the latter.  |
| 1969 | Soutar / "Slaughter,"<br><i>Who are These<br/>Children?</i>    | Young bones are hollowed by the<br>worm: / The babe dies in the<br>womb. Above the lover's mouth<br>is pressed. / The silence of a<br>stone:/ Fate rides upon an iron<br>beast / And tramples cities down.                                       |  |  |   |
| 1969 | Soutar / "The<br>Children," <i>Who are<br/>These Children?</i> | Silence is in the air: / The stars<br>move to their places: / Silent and<br>serene the stars move to their<br>places: / But from earth the<br>children stare / With blind and<br>fearful faces: / And our charity is<br>in the children's faces. |  |  | The serenity of the stars is not<br>the silence of the spheres,<br>which was regarded as<br>connected to the world of<br>humanity but cold and<br>impassive in relation to "the<br>blood of children" |
| 1976 | Anonymous / "David<br>of the White Rock"                       | Near me, in silence, my harp lies<br>unstrung, / Weak are my fingers,<br>and falt'ring my tongue! / Tuneful<br>companion, we parted must be; /<br>Thou canst no longer bring<br>comfort to me.   |  |  | Silence of mourning.  |

**Appendix 6.1**  
**“Quiet,” “Silence,” and “Stillness” in Texts Set to Music by Herbert Howells**  
**(Arranged According to Perceptions of Silence as Negative, Neutral, or Positive).**

| Year <sup>1</sup> | Poet / Title <sup>2</sup>  | 1st-Level Positive, 2 <sup>nd</sup> -Level Negative  | 1st-Level Neutral or Ambiguous  | 1st- and 2 <sup>nd</sup> -Level Positive | Comments   |
|-------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| 1911              | O'Sullivan /<br>“The Twilight<br>People,” A<br>Cycle of Five<br>Songs for Low<br>Voice | It is a long, low, whispering voice that<br>fills / With a sad music the bending and<br>swaying rushes ; / It is a heart-beat<br>deep in the quiet hills . . . For under the<br>quiet grass the wise are lying, / And all<br>the strong ones are gone over the seas.     |   |  | Silence of mourning<br>and death. Even<br>before the First World<br>War. |
| 1911              | Macleod /<br>“Longing”   | O would I were the cool wind that's<br>blowing from the sea,<br>Each loneliest valley I would search till<br>I should come to thee.<br>O would I were the cool wind that's<br>blowing far from me --<br>The grey silence, the grey waves, the<br>grey wastes of the sea. |   |  | Silence associated<br>with the idea of<br>separation.                    |
| 1913              | Macleod / “By<br>the Grey Stone”   |  | It is quiet here : the wet hill-wind's sigh<br>Sobs faintly / . . . I hear no faintest stir.<br>Yet Love spake once, with lips of flame<br>and eyes of fire, / With burning<br>frankincense and myrrh —<br>Spake, and the vow was even as Desire<br>Terrible, winged, magnific, crested<br>with flame, / So that I bowed before it,<br>mounting gyre upon gyre. . . . |  | Does the silence recall<br>a mystical experience?<br>Re-live it?         |

<sup>1</sup> Year of Composition if known. Source of composition dates: Paul Andrews's, “Herbert Howells,” *The New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

<sup>2</sup> Title of Howells's works, not necessarily the title of the original text.

Appendix 6.1  
Howells Silence-Related Texts

|      |                                     |   |  |   |  |
|------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 1913 | Macleod / "The Valley of Silence"   |   |  | In the secret Valley of Silence . . .<br>Breathlessly still . . .<br>No rapt priest bends in awe<br>Before [the altar's] silent light:<br>But sometimes a flight<br>Of breathless words of prayer<br>White-wing'd enclose the altar,<br>Eddies of prayer. |  |
| 1913 | Macleod / "When there is Peace"     |   |  | There is peace among the stars to-night<br>Thought the sleeper in the grave :<br>. . .<br>For God dreamed in the silence of<br>His might / Amid the earthquakes of<br>death.  |  |
| 1913 | Macleod / "When the Dew is Falling" | When the dew is falling / I have heard a calling / Of aerial sweet voices . . . thro' the hollows green and still. / And O the sorrow upon me, . . . For a voice that whispered once, and now for aye is still:         |  |   | Stillness as a reminder of pleasant sounds that are lost.  |
| 1913 | Raleigh / "Even Such is Time"       | Even such is time, that takes in trust / Our youth, . . . Who, in the dark and silent grave, / . . . Shuts up the story of our days: / But from this earth, this grave, this dust, / My God shall raise me up, I trust. |  |   | Silence of death overcome by the resurrection  |
| 1915 | Symons / "A Roundel of Rest"        |   | The peace of a wandering sky, /<br>Silence, only the cry / Of the crickets |   | The end of the poem seems to resist the tranquility of the beginning. So the silent peace could be a negative torpor rather than positive tranquility. |

Appendix 6.1  
Howells Silence-Related Texts

|             |   |   |   |  |   |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| 1917        | Psalm 137   | By the waters of Babylon we sat down<br>and wept when we remembered thee, O<br>Sion. / As for our harps, we hanged<br>them up upon the trees that are therein.<br>. . . How shall we sing the Lord's song<br>in a strange land? |   |  | Silence imposed by<br>political oppression.   |
| 1918        | Byrne / "The<br>Restful<br>Branches"  |   |   | It sings of holy quietude, . . . him<br>whom sorrow's strength / Would<br>use to gather to her thorny breast: /<br>For him the song, the solitude; / Its<br>peace shall be his dearest food. | Nothing like this in<br>Britten's <i>oeuvre</i> .<br>Solitude as beneficial.  |
| 1919        | De la Mare /<br>"The Dunce,"<br><i>Peacock Pie</i>                                      | Why does he . . . mock at my disgrace?<br>/ . . . / Why does the sun so silent<br>shine? --<br>/ And what do I care if it does?   |   |  | What is meant by<br>associating light with<br>sound? The silence<br>seems to be felt as<br>uncomfortable.                                 |
| 1919        | De la Mare /<br>"Full Moon,"<br><i>Peacock Pie</i>                                      |   | Into his drowsy eyes / A great still light<br>begins to creep / From out the silent<br>skies. / It was lovely moon's . . . / Her<br>surge of silver filled the pane / And<br>streamed across his bed. |  | Possibly, given the<br>role of silence in de la<br>Mare's poetry, this is<br>more positive than<br>neutral.                               |
| 1919        | De la Mare /<br>"King David,"<br><i>A Garland for<br/>de la Mare</i>                    |   | They played till they all fell silent: . . .<br>But the sorrow that haunted the heart of<br>King David / They could not charm<br>away.  |  | Silence is preferable to<br>music.  |
| 1919        | De la Mare /<br>"Some One<br>Came<br>Knocking," <i>A<br/>Garland for de<br/>la Mare</i> |   | Some one came knocking<br>. . . I listened, I opened . . . But naught<br>there was a-stirring / In the still dark<br>night;   |  | Not clear whether the<br>knocking disturbs a<br>pleasant silence or<br>whether the silence<br>intensifies the mystery<br>of the knocking. |
| 1920        | De la Mare /<br>"The Old<br>House," <i>A<br/>Garland for de<br/>la Mare</i>             | A very, very old house I know –<br>And ever so many people go,<br>Past the small lodge, forlorn and still,  |   |  | The stillness of death.   |
| 1921<br>(m) | Gibson /<br>"Fallowfield<br>Fell"   | Soldier, what do you see, / Lying so<br>cold and still? / Fallowfield Fell at<br>night, / And the stars above the hill.   |   |  | Stillness of death.   |

Appendix 6.1  
Howells Silence-Related Texts

|              |                                  |  |  |   |   |
|--------------|----------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| 1923<br>(ns) | Sullivan / "The Shadows"         | O herdsman, driving your slow twilight flock . . . The trees stand shuddering as you pass by, / The suddenly falling silence is your path. . . O happy meadow and trees and raths and hedges, / The twilight and all its flock will pass you by. |  |   | Silence of death? But death in Howells seems more elegiac than sinister or threatening.                             |
| 1928         | Goethe / "Wanderer's Night Song" |  |  | The birds are silent in the branches. / Wait a-while, / Soon thou shalt rest too.   | Equates the birds' silence with longed-for rest.  |
| 1929         | Stephen / "The Goat Paths"       |  |  | The crooked paths . . . wind about / Through the heather in and out / Of the quiet sunniness . . . / In the place where nothing stirs. // Quietly in quietness. / In the quiet of the furze . . . / Crouching down where nothing stirs / In the silence of the furze, / Couching down again to brood / In the sunny solitude. // . . . / I would stare and turn and bound / To the deeper quietude. / To the place where nothing stirs / In the silence of the furze. // In that airy quietness / I would think as long as they; / Through the quiet sunniness . . . / In a sunny solitude. |   |
| 1931         | Greene / "Sweet Content"         |  |  | The quiet mind is richer than a crown;<br>The homely house that harbours quiet rest; . . . / A mind content both crown and kingdom is.  |   |
| 1951         | Buxton / "Long, Long Ago"        |  |  | In the quiet night / She listened to his breathing / And oh! her heart was light.   | Could be interpreted as neutral. But this is the nativity, which had accumulated references to silence as positive. |

Appendix 6.1  
Howells Silence-Related Texts

|      |  |   |  |   |  |
|------|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1953 | De la Mare /<br>"Inheritance"  |   | O lovely England, . . . Heed, through<br>the troubles that benumb / Voices now<br>stilled, yet clear, / Chaunting their<br>deathless songs- too oft / To ears that<br>would not hear |   | Does this suggest that<br>voices stilled by death<br>nonetheless resonate?<br>If so, the silence is<br>eloquent. |
| 1957 | De la Mare /<br>"The Scribe"   |   |  | Though I should sit / By some tarn /<br>Using its ink . . . To write of Earth's<br>wonders, . . . Flit would the ages /<br>On soundless wings / Ere unto Z /<br>My pen drew nigh; . . . And still<br>would remain . . . - All words<br>forgotten - / Thou, Lord, and I. | Silence as the<br>ineffable  |
| 1961 | Alcuin of York<br>/ "A Sequence<br>for St. Michael"                                |   |  | Then was there a great silence in<br>heaven, / And a thousand thousand<br>saying 'Glory to the Lord King'.  | Allusion to the<br>passage in Revelation.<br>The meaning of that<br>silence is not clear.                        |
| 1961 | De la Mare / "A<br>Queer Story," <i>A<br/>Garland for de<br/>la Mare</i>           | Then glum and silent / They sat instead,<br>/ Vacantly brooding / On home and bed   |  |   | This silence is merely<br>a descriptive touch in<br>a long ballad.   |
| 1969 | De la Mare / "A<br>Song of<br>Enchantment,"<br><i>A Garland for<br/>de la Mare</i> |   |  | Twilight came; silence came; / . . . /<br>But the music is lost and the words<br>are gone / Of the song I sang as I sat<br>alone,   | Silence seems to have<br>replaced the pleasant<br>song of enchantment.<br>Also set by Britten                    |
| 1974 | Exultate   | The dead praise not thee, O Lord /<br>Neither all they that go down in silence.<br>/ But we will praise our God from this<br>time forth for evermore. |  |   | Extracts from various<br>psalms, including<br>psalm 115:17   |

(m) – Missing

(ns) – Score not available to verify text

**Appendix 8.1**  
**Frequency of Performances of**  
**Benjamin Britten's and Herbert Howells's ECM Works**

The data is taken from John Patton's and Steve Taylor's *A Century of Cathedral Music, 1898-1998: A Comparison with Previous Music Surveys* (Winchester: J. Patton, 2000). Patton's survey records the percentage of choral establishments at which each choral work is performed during each year in which surveys were conducted. This information does not include the number of times a given work was sung at a particular choral establishment.

Patton's survey is not without its acknowledged limitations. The number of choral establishments varies each survey year. The geographical scope also varies. There are inconsistencies in titles of works. Also, the accuracy of the data depends on the care and interest with which individuals at the various choral establishments chose to respond. Patton's survey is nonetheless helpful in presenting general patterns.

**Britten**

- Top Ten Anthems – No anthems by Britten in the 1998 Survey or in Previous Surveys.
- Top Ten Canticles – No Canticles by Britten in the 1998 Survey or in Previous Surveys.
- Top Ten Eucharists/Masses – None

ECM Works by Britten performed in at least 5% of choral foundations in the years covered by the survey.

| Title, Opus numbers <sup>1</sup>                                   | Approx. Year Composed | Year of Publication | 1998 Survey | 1986 Survey | 1958 Survey | Total |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Festival Te Deum in E, Op. 32 (sung as an anthem or as a canticle) | 1944                  | 1945                | 24          |             |             | 24    |
| Service in E-flat (Matins unspecified)                             | 1934                  | 1984                | 0           | 7           |             | 7     |
| Jubilate Deo in E-flat (sung as canticle)                          | 1934                  | 1984                | 8           |             |             | 8     |
| Hymn to St. Cecilia, Op. 27  | 1942                  | 1942                | 5           | 5           |             | 10    |
| There is No Rose, from <i>A Ceremony of Carols</i> , Op. 28        | 1942                  | 1942                | 8           | 5           |             | 13    |
| Antiphon, Op. 56b  | 1956                  | 1956                | 7           | 9           |             | 16    |
| Agnus Dei, from <i>War Requiem</i> , Op. 66                        | 1961                  | 1961                | 8           | 9           |             | 17    |
| Hymn to St. Columba  | 1962                  | 1962                | 8           | 9           |             | 17    |
| Rejoice in the Lamb, Op. 30  | 1943                  | 1943                | 17          | 11          |             | 28    |
| Hymn to St. Peter, Op. 56a   | 1955                  | 1955                | 13          | 15          |             | 28    |
| Te Deum in C (sung as an anthem or canticle)                       | 1934                  | 1934                | 32          | 4           |             | 36    |

<sup>1</sup> Opus numbers and dates of composition/publication are taken from Peter Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 571-81.

| Title, Opus numbers                                     | Approx. Year Composed | Year of Publication | 1998 Survey | 1986 Survey | 1958 Survey | Total |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| A New Year Carol, from <i>Friday Afternoons</i> , Op. 7 | 1935                  | 1935                | 27          | 9           |             | 36    |
| Service in C (Jubilate Deo in E-flat)                   | 1934                  | 1984                | 39          |             |             | 39    |
| Service in E (Matins unspecified) <sup>2</sup>          | 1944                  | 1945                | 8           | 31          |             | 39    |
| Jubilate Deo in C (sung as canticle)                    | 1961                  | 1961                | 39          |             |             | 39    |
| Hymn to the Virgin                                      | 1930                  | 1934                | 30          | 35          |             | 65    |
| Missa Brevis, Op. 63                                    | 1959                  | 1959                | 38          | 28          |             | 66    |
| Service in C <sup>3</sup>                               | 1934                  | 1934                | 21          | 51          |             | 72    |

## Howells

- Top Ten Anthems
  - “Like as the Hart”
    - 1998 – 65% places sung
    - 1986 – 79% places sung
    - 1958 – 30% places sung
- Top Ten Canticles
  - “Collegium Regale”
    - 1998 – 67% places sung
    - 1986 – 84% places sung
    - 1958 – 59% places sung
- Top Ten Eucharists/Masses
  - “Collegium Regale”
    - 1998 – 42% places sung
    - 1986 – 43% places sung
    - 1958 – no data reported.

ECM Works by Howells performed in at least 5% of choral foundations in the years covered by the survey.

| Title, Opus numbers <sup>4</sup> | Approx. Year Composed | Year of Publication | 1998 Survey | 1986 Survey | 1958 Survey | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Coventry Antiphon                | 1961                  | 1962                | 1           | 5           |             | 6     |
| Thee Will I Love                 | 1970                  | 1970                | 5           | 1           |             | 6     |

<sup>2</sup> Britten did not write a “Jubilate Deo” in E, so the work referenced might be one of the two settings of “Jubilate Deo” or Britten’s “Venite” (written 1961; published 1983)

<sup>3</sup> Unspecified whether both morning canticles – “Jubilate Deo” in E-flat and “Te Deum” in C – were sung. It is also possible that the “Jubilate Deo” in C (composed in 1961) was combined with the “Te Deum” in C (composed in 1934).

<sup>4</sup> Opus numbers and dates of composition/publication are taken from Paul Andrews’s, “Herbert Howells,” *The New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.



Appendix 8.1  
Frequency of Performances of  
Britten and Howells ECM

| <b>Title, Opus numbers</b>   | <b>Approx. Year Composed</b> | <b>Year of Publication</b> | <b>1998 Survey</b> | <b>1986 Survey</b> | <b>1958 Survey</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Service in E-flat (for unison voices ?)  | 1924                         | 1925                       | 5                  | 1                  |                    | 6            |
| Salve Regina   | 1915                         | 1988                       | 7                  |                    |                    | 7            |
| Service in D   | 1941                         | 1995                       | 8                  |                    |                    | 8            |
| <i>Worcester Service</i>   | 1951                         | 1953                       | 2                  | 7                  |                    | 9            |
| Behold O God our Redeemer [sic]  | 1952                         | 1953                       | 12                 | 4                  |                    | 16           |
| <i>New College Oxford Service</i>  | 1949                         | 1953                       | 8                  | 9                  |                    | 17           |
| <i>Westminster Service</i>   | 1957                         | 1957                       | 14                 | 5                  |                    | 19           |
| Hymn to [sic] St. Cecilia  | 1960                         | 1961                       | 18                 | 7                  |                    | 25           |
| Take Him Earth for Cherishing  | 1964                         | 1964                       | 11                 | 15                 |                    | 26           |
| Service in b minor   | 1955                         | 1956                       | 19                 | 9                  |                    | 28           |
| <i>St. John's Service</i>  | 1957                         | 1958                       | 20                 | 13                 |                    | 33           |
| O be Joyful in the Lord (Jubilate Deo from <i>Collegium Regale</i> used as anthem or canticle) | 1944                         | 1951                       | 31                 | 3                  |                    | 34           |
| My Eyes for Beauty Pine  | 1925                         | 1928                       | 30                 | 16                 |                    | 46           |
| Service in E (men's voices)  | 1935                         | 1939                       | 23                 | 23                 |                    | 46           |
| Here is the Little Door  | 1918                         |                            | 21                 | 27                 | 31                 | 79           |
| A Spotless Rose  | 1919                         | 1919                       | 29                 | 27                 | 26                 | 82           |
| <i>Collegium Regale Communion Service</i>  | 1956                         | 1957                       | 44                 | 43                 |                    | 87           |
| <i>Gloucester Service</i>  | 1946                         | 1947                       | 58                 | 41                 |                    | 99           |
| <i>St. Paul's Service</i>  | 1951                         | 1954                       | 49                 | 52                 |                    | 101          |
| Te Deum from <i>Collegium Regale</i> (or Matins unspecified)                                   | 1944                         | 1951                       | 45                 | 44                 | 22                 | 111          |
| Service in G   | 1919                         | 1920                       | 46                 | 53                 | 33                 | 132          |
| O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem  | 1941                         | 1943                       | 45                 | 56                 | 33                 | 134          |
| Like as the Hart   | 1941                         | 1943                       | 69                 | 79                 | 30                 | 178          |
| <i>Collegium Regale Service</i>  | 1945                         | 1947                       | 71                 | 84                 | 59                 | 214          |

**Appendix 8.2**  
**Delineations Before *Glorias* in**  
**Howells *Magnificat* Settings**

| Yr Wrtn <sup>1</sup>     | Yr Pub'd | Genre            | Title  | Clear Delineation between Magnificat Proper and Gloria? | Comments  |
|--------------------------|----------|------------------|--|---|---|
| 1919                     | 1920     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat in G  | No  | Clear Dynamic Contrast: No ( <i>mf</i> to <i>f</i> )  |
| 1924                     | 1925     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat in E-flat – unison                            | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: No ( <i>f</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Literal Silence: Yes (half-note rest)  |
| 1935<br>(date uncertain) | 1939     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat for male voices (TTBB)<br>(AATB version also) | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: No ( <i>mf</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Shift from homophony to a mostly monophonic line  |
| 1941                     | 1995     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat in D for mens' voices & organ                 | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>p</i> to <i>f</i> )  |
| 1945                     | 1947     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Collegium Regale                             | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>ppp</i> to <i>f</i> )  |
| 1946                     | 1947     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Gloucester                                   | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>pp</i> to <i>mf</i> )<br>Shift from homophony to polyphony   |
| 1949                     | 1953     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, New College, Oxford                          | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>pp</i> to <i>mf</i> )<br>Different key is quickly established.<br>An actual rest.  |
| 1951                     | 1954     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, St. Paul's                                   | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: No<br>( <i>f</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>No change in key V of g to g<br>Homophonic stasis (long note values w/ fermata) leading to monophony. |

<sup>1</sup> For a number of reasons, one being the considerable length of time that elapsed between the composition and publication of some works, ascertaining the dates in which a number of works were composed is difficult or impossible. Source for dates in this list: Andrews, "Herbert Howells," *The New Grove*.

| Yr Wrtn | Yr Pub'd | Genre            | Title   | Clear Delineation between Magnificat Proper and Gloria? | Comments  |
|---------|----------|------------------|---|---|---|
| 1951    | 1953     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Worcester   | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: No ( <i>pp</i> to <i>mp</i> )<br>Literal silence: eighth note and quarter note<br>Homophonic stasis to a homophonic lyrical line  |
| 1955    | 1956     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat in B Minor (Church Music Socy. Service at Westminster) | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>pp</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Shift from homophony to monophony  |
| 1957    | 1958     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, St. John's Cambridge                                  | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>pp</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Literal silence quaver and half-note rest  |
| 1957    | 1957     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, St. Peter in Westminster                              | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes – ( <i>mp</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Literal silence: two half-note rests   |
| 1966    | 1968     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Salisbury   | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>mp</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Literal silence quarter-note and eighth-note rest  |
| 1967    | 1968     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Chichester  | No  | Clear Dynamic Contrast: No ( <i>pp</i> to <i>p</i> )  |
| 1967    | 1980     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, St. Augustine's, Edgbaston                            | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: ( <i>f</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Change in key<br>The A-flat minor 7 <sup>th</sup> chord doesn't function harmonically*                |
| 1967    | 1968     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Winchester  | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>pp</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Literal silence two quarter-note rests separated by a comma<br>Shift from polyphony to monophony |
| 1969    | 1972     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Hereford  | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>p</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Stasis leading to unison<br>Different key   |
| 1970    | 1972     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Magdalen College, Oxford                              | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: Yes ( <i>pp</i> to <i>mf</i> )<br>Stasis leading to unison  |
| 1973    | 1980     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, York  | No  | Clear Dynamic Contrast: No ( <i>ff</i> to <i>f</i> )<br>Literal silence (brief, given tempo): what amounts to a quarter-note rest                         |
| 1975    | 1975     | Evening Canticle | Magnificat, Dallas  | Yes   | Clear Dynamic Contrast: No ( <i>f</i> to <i>ff</i> )<br>Accented chord in the accomp. directly before Gloria*   |

\*—Elements of the ineffability chord.

**Appendix 8.3**  
**Uses & Constructions of Howells's Ineffability Chord**

| Year <sup>1</sup> | Genre          | Title  | Bars              | Text                     | Construction of the Chord   | At the Culmination of a Work?   |
|-------------------|----------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1917              | Orchestral     | <i>Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra,</i> | 99                | None                     | Built on A flat.  | Yes – Final bars.   |
| 1925 (ca.)        | Secular – song | <i>Garland for de la Mare, “The Three Cherry Trees”</i>      | 1-2               | No text                  | Built on A flat. Arpeggiated, which weakens the effect of the chord's dissonance.                 | No.   |
| 1933              | Secular choral | <i>Kent Yeoman's Wooing Song</i>                             | (ns)              | (ns)                     | Based on a different tone to make a decorated minor iv chord for a cadence ending on F.           | Yes   |
| 1938              | Chorus & Orch. | <i>Hymnus Paradisi, V. “I Heard a Voice from Heaven”</i>     | 159-71            | Final <i>sempiternam</i> | Archetypal spelling, though slightly altered at 170-71  | Yes – Final statement of <i>Requiem dona eis sempiternam</i> in the final movement. It is the penultimate chord of the entire work. |
| 1938              | Instrument.    | Psalm Prelude Set Two, No. 3 <sup>2</sup>                    |                   |                          |   |   |
| 1951              | Canticles      | St. Paul's Evening Service                                   | 143 (in the Mag.) | Amen                     | Hints at being relative major chord of f minor? Suggestion of tonal logic is tenuous. Fortissimo. | Yes. Penultimate <i>Amen</i> .  |

<sup>1</sup> Year of composition, if known.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Ward, “Analysis of Five Works by Herbert Howells, With Reference to Features of the Composer's Style” (M. Phil. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2005), 17-18.

Appendix 8.3  
 Uses & Constructions of  
 Howells's Ineffability Chord

| Year | Genre          | Title  | Bars             | Text  | Construction of the Chord   | At the Culmination of a Work?   |
|------|----------------|--|------------------|---|---|---|
| 1954 | Chorus & Orch. | <i>Missa Sabrinensis, II: Gloria</i>               | 151-54           | Before first statement of <i>Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis</i> | Variation of the chord: F sharp rather than G natural   | No (But it's a variation of the ineffability chord)   |
| 1954 | Chorus & Orch. | <i>Missa Sabrinensis, II: Gloria</i>               | 165              | On <i>miserere</i> of <i>miserere nobis</i>                               | Built on a G sharp, but most pitches of the chord are arpeggiated, which limits the chord's effect. | No (but arpeggiated rather than sounded as a sustained chord)                                   |
| 1954 | Chorus & Orch. | <i>Missa Sabrinensis, III: Credo</i>               | 217-22           | Before <i>Et in Spiritum Sanctum</i>                                      | Major 7 <sup>th</sup> sounds only fleetingly in the upper voices, not part of the sustained chord.  | No (But not a full statement of the chord)  |
| 1954 | Chorus & Orch. | <i>Missa Sabrinensis, VI: Agnus Dei</i>            | 23 (at reh. 124) | Before first statement of <i>Agnus Dei</i>                                | Built on a G sharp. Arpeggiated.  | Yes – In that it's in the final movement.   |
| 1963 | Chorus & Orch. | <i>Stabat Mater, 7: Christe cum sit hinc exire</i> | 126              | <i>Paradisi gloria</i> of <i>fac ut animae donetur paradise gloria</i>    | Built on G sharp. But no E flat as the fifth of a G-sharp minor chord.                              | Yes – Final movement. One of the statements of the last phrase of the <i>Stabat mater</i> text. |
| 1964 | Anthem         | "Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing"                  |                  | Penultimate chord. On "earth" of "Take him, earth, for cherishing"        | Built on a G rather than a G sharp.   | Yes – Penultimate chord   |

(ns) – Score not available to verify text

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