

VIOLIN AND VOICE AS PARTNERS IN THREE EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY
ENGLISH WORKS FOR VOICE AND VIOLIN

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Rutland, John Paul, Violin and voice as partners in three early twentieth-century English works for voice and violin. Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance), December 2005, 96 pp., 74 examples, references, 31 titles.

The purpose of this study is to examine three works for the unusual combination of violin and voice. Chamber music for violin and keyboard and violin and other instruments has been extant since the Baroque period. However, three English composers found a unique chamber grouping in the first decades of the twentieth century: Gustav Holst (1874-1934), Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979), and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) each wrote works for violin and voice. Holst's *Four Songs for Voice and Violin, Op. 35* (1917), Vaughan Williams' *Along the Field, Eight Housman Songs for Voice and Violin* (1927, revised 1954), and Clarke's *Three Old English Songs* (1924) each utilize the combination of violin and voice. The violin in each is not relegated to accompaniment but is instead a true partner. This study will investigate these works. A history of each composition will be chronicled. An analytical discussion of formal organization and significant style features will include consideration of the musical structure, harmonic language, and the use of text in select movements of each work. Finally, performance suggestions pertaining to technical and artistic issues offer specific recommendations as an aid in performance preparation.

In order to provide historical and musical context, a brief overview of Late Romantic and early Twentieth-Century chamber music with strings and voice will be given. This overview will help to illuminate the uniqueness of the pairing of violin and voice.

Discovery of the works discussed here makes possible an expanded repertoire of good music for both violinists and vocalists. It is also hoped that through the performance of these works a spark might be set with composers to create more pieces for this most intimate of duos.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: HOLST, VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, AND CLARKE LATE ROMANTIC AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHAMBER MUSIC WITH INSTRUMENTS AND VOICE

The purpose of this study is to examine three works for the unusual combination of violin and voice. Chamber music for violin and keyboard and violin and other instruments has been extant since the Baroque period. However, three English composers found a unique chamber grouping in the first decades of the twentieth century: Gustav Holst (1874-1934), Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), and Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979) each wrote works for violin and voice. Holst's *Four Songs for Voice and Violin, Op. 35* (1916-17), Vaughan Williams' *Along the Field, Eight Housman Songs for Voice and Violin* (1927, revised 1954), and Clarke's *Three Old English Songs* (1924) each utilize the intimate combination of violin and voice. While much has been written about the large works of Holst and Vaughan Williams, there has been no close study of their music for violin and voice. Likewise, there has been no study of the Clarke songs. The violin in each work is not relegated to mere accompaniment but is instead a true partner. Nevertheless, each of the three composers utilizes the duo in a different way. This study will investigate these works. A history of each composition will be chronicled. An analytical discussion of formal organization and significant stylistic features will include consideration of the musical structure, harmonic language, and the use of text in select movements of each work. Finally, performance suggestions pertaining to technical and artistic issues will offer the reader specific recommendations as an aid in performance preparation.

In order to provide historical and musical context, a brief overview of late Romantic and early twentieth-century chamber music with strings and voice will be given. This overview will help to illuminate the uniqueness of the pairing of violin and voice.

Late Romantic and Early Twentieth Century Chamber Music with Instruments and Voice

String chamber music of the late Romantic and early twentieth-century periods was dominated by the genres that were developed in the Classical period. Sonatas for violin and piano, string duos, string trios, string quartets, piano trios, and piano quartets were all flourishing during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, chamber music concerts were an established tradition in several European cities by the middle of the nineteenth century with string ensembles and songs with piano making the staple of the repertoire. As Christina Bashford explains:

Important series founded in this period were the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde's Musikalische Abendunterhaltungen in (1818-29, 1831-40), the series run by the Tilmant brothers (1833-49), Alard and Chevillard (1837-48) and the Dancla brothers (1838-1870) in Paris, and the Quartett Concerts (1836-59), Classical Chamber Concerts (1836-39) and the Musical Union (1845-81) in London. The core repertory of most concerts was instrumental trios, quartets and quintets by the Viennese trinity (Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven), although there was a good deal of local variation in the content and shape of programmes. Baillot's concerts in Paris presented instrumental repertory only (typically five ensemble works and one violin solo, played by Baillot with piano accompaniment), whereas the longer programmes of many London concerts, which included piano and duo sonatas as well as works for larger instrumental ensembles, were relieved by the interspersed songs and duets between the instrumental items; the programmes of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde concerts offered few large-scale instrumental chamber works, being chiefly made up of small-scale instrumental and vocal pieces (including a number of Schubert's lieder), usually with a string quartet to open proceedings and a work for vocal ensemble (often one of Schubert's vocal quartets) to end.¹

¹ Christina Bashford, "Chamber Music," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 5, 440-441 (London: Macmillan, 2001).

In addition to the public chamber music concert series that were appearing at this time, Europe saw the rise of the private soiree, or salon concert. Some were dedicated to more serious chamber music while others focused on lightweight works. Salon performances in Berlin attracted the intelligentsia who would gather to hear such musicians as Clara Schumann and Joseph Joachim. Leading composers such as Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann might also be heard performing at these events. It was not uncommon for them to use the private setting of the salon to test new works.²

The number of public chamber music series continued to rise during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Among the series founded at this time were the Czech Society for Chamber Music in Prague (1894-), the Société de Quartuors Armingaud et Jacquard in Paris (1856-68), the Mason and Thomas Chamber Music Soirees in New York (1855-68), and the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts in London (1887-). Even Italy, which was dominated by opera, was not immune to the influx of chamber music. Between 1861 and 1874 quartet societies were founded in Turin, Milan, Florence, and Rome. As in the mid-nineteenth century, the Viennese classics formed the bulk of the repertoire. One performance at the Quartett-Abend in 1856 included the Opus 77 number 1 quartet of Haydn, the Opus 44 number 2 quartet of Mendelssohn, and Beethoven's Opus 127 quartet. However, works by Franz Schubert, Antonin Dvorak, and Johannes Brahms would gradually work their way into the repertory so that by the first decade of the twentieth century they were staples of the literature.³

Concert series performances were largely given by groups of professional local musicians; however, by the end of the nineteenth century, leading pianists such as Clara Schumann were being hired by local promoters to bring more listeners into the chamber concert

² Bashford., 441.

³ Ibid., 441-442.

hall. Permanent string quartets were also beginning to form at this time, many including prominent string players of the day. Some quartets who formed during this time were the Joachim Quartet, formed by Joseph Joachim in 1869; the Czech Quartet, formed in 1892 and with Josef Suk on second violin; the Brodsky Quartet, formed in 1883; and the first permanent touring string quartet in the United States, the Kneisel Quartet, formed in 1885.⁴ As was the case with leading soloists, these quartets toured and performed in prominent musical cities. The rise of the professional quartet shows the importance composers placed upon the genre. The string quartet had become the symphony of the chamber music world.

Although the string quartet had become a popular genre with Romantic and early Twentieth-Century composers, they continued to write much music for the other traditional genres such as the instrumental sonata, piano trio, piano quartet, piano quintet, and voice with piano. Slowly, composers began to add voice with strings and other instruments. In France, Ernest Chausson (1855-1899) wrote *Chanson perpétuelle, Op. 37* (1898) for soprano and orchestra or piano quintet. The other chamber works and songs of Chausson include the traditional genres of string quartet, piano trio, piano quartet, and voice with piano.

The contribution to string chamber music that Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) made was great. He wrote numerous songs with piano and works for traditional string chamber genres. However, Brahms did not limit his chamber output strictly to the traditional genres. He wrote two works that combine the viola with an alto voice. As these works were not traditional in instrumentation, it took special circumstances for their composition. *Spruch* (c.1857-9) is a canon for alto and viola. It was written at a time when Brahms and his good friend, the renowned violinist Joseph Joachim, were sending counterpoint exercises to one another. Out of these

⁴ Ibid., 442.

exercises came Brahms' first works for vocal ensembles.⁵ The second work in which Brahms combines voice and viola is *Zwei Gesänge* Opus 91 for alto, viola, and piano (number 1, 1884, number 2, 1864, revised 1882). While these works were not written as studies to be shared with Joachim, he was the reason for their composition. One was written in celebration and one as a means to reunite husband and wife as well as old friends, for Brahms found himself supporting Joachim's wife, Amalie Joachim, in the Joachim's divorce case, much to Joseph Joachim's dismay⁶

With the twentieth century came more experimentation and more works for chamber ensembles and voice. Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) wrote for the traditional chamber genres: a string quartet (1903), a piano trio (1915), a duo sonata for violin and cello (1922) and a violin sonata (1927). However, he also tried new timbre combinations in his chamber music. In 1925-26 Ravel wrote the song cycle *Chansons madécasses* for mezzo-soprano, flute, cello and piano at the behest of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. She allowed Ravel to choose the text but she requested that this particular instrumentation be used. Ravel set the poetry of Évariste-Désiré de Parvy and used the ensemble colors to achieve what he called "dramatic" and "erotic" elements to the songs.⁷

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) also wrote traditional chamber works and works that combined voice with a mixed chamber ensemble. His first important chamber composition was the string sextet *Verklärte Nacht*, *Op. 4* (1899, published 1905). The first two of four string quartets were to follow in 1907 and 1910. In the second quartet Schoenberg used a four movement form but added a voice part for soprano in the third and fourth movements. After the

⁵ Malcolm MacDonald, *Brahms*, (New York: Schirmer, 1990), 90, 452.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 345.

⁷ Roy Howard, disc liner notes for Maurice Ravel's *Chansons madécasses, Sites auriculaires, Frontispice, and Sonata for Violin and Cello*, performed by Jan DeGaetani, Paul Dunkel, Donald Anderson, Gilbert Kalish, et al.

second string quartet Schoenberg continued to utilize voice in his chamber music. The Expressionist work *Pierrot Lunaire*, Op. 21 (1912) is a song cycle set of twenty-one poems scored for woman's voice and an unusual quintet; piano, flute, clarinet, violin and cello. However, Schoenberg increases the color palate of the ensemble by requiring some of the players to double on other instruments; violin to viola, clarinet to bass clarinet and flute to piccolo. Demands are also made of the singer in that Schoenberg uses the relatively new technique of *Sprechstimme*, in which the vocal part is a mix between speech and song.⁸ These new ideas in ensemble combinations and use of the voice help to create an eerie atmosphere in which the macabre fantasies of the clown, the main character, are realized. Another chamber work in which Schoenberg uses the voice is the *Serenade* Op. 24 (1923). This is a seven-movement work for mandolin, guitar, string trio, two clarinets and male voice. The voice only appears in one of the movements. The *Serenade*, along with the Op. 23 piano pieces, marks the beginning of Schoenberg's use of the twelve-tone compositional technique. Schoenberg returned to more traditional genres with his last chamber works: the third and fourth string quartets (1927, 1936), a one-movement string trio (1946), and a fantasy for violin and piano (1949).⁹

As did his mentor Schoenberg, Anton von Webern (1883-1945), wrote for various chamber combinations including voice. Among the works that do not involve voice are the *Slow Movement for String Quartet*, *Five Movements for String Quartet*, Op. 5 (1909), *Six Bagatelles for String Quartet*, Op. 9 (1913), and the *String Quartet*, Op. 28 (1937-38), which, like Ravel's *Chansons madécasses* was commissioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.¹⁰ The works for voice

(Elektra/Nonesuch 9 1355-2, 1978).

⁸ Homer Ulrich, *Chamber Music*, 2nd ed., (New York: Columbia University Press), 348-349.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 348-349, 352.

¹⁰ Susan Bradshaw, "The Works of Anton Webern" disc liner notes for *Webern: Complete Works Opp. 1-31*, performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, Juilliard String Quartet, Heather Harper, et al., (Sony Classical 01-045845-10, 1991), 31.

and various instrumental combinations include the early *Two Songs on Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke for Medium Voice and Eight Instruments*, Op. 8 (1910), *Six Songs for Voice and Four Instruments*, Op. 14 (1921), *Five Sacred Songs for Soprano and Five Instruments*, Op. 15 (1922), *Three Traditional Rhymes for Voice and Three Instruments*, Op. 17 (1924), and *Three Songs for Voice, E flat Clarinet and Guitar*, Op. 18 (1925).¹¹

The boldness of Webern's musical voice can be seen within his chamber music. While his contributions to the literature might be brief, they are full of inventiveness. As Homer Ulrich wrote: "with constantly changing instrumental colors, with constantly changing dynamics, and with a constantly changing set of themes, Webern's music gives an over-all effect of ceaseless flow, plasticity, and kaleidoscopic color."¹²

Russian composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) went through many compositional styles during his lifetime, from nationalist to neo-classicist and even serialist. Chamber music played a role in each. It was after Stravinsky wrote the Russian Nationalist ballets *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), and *The Rite of Spring* (1913) that he went to Berlin and met Schoenberg. While in Berlin Stravinsky attended a performance of Schoenberg's *Pierrot*. One month later Stravinsky wrote *Three Japanese Lyrics* (1913) for soprano, piano, two flutes, two clarinets, and string quartet. Another work for voice and instruments soon followed. *Pribaukti* (1914) is scored for male voice, piano, flute, oboe/English horn, clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, cello, and double bass. These two works might have been inspired by Schoenberg's combination of voice and instruments in *Pierrot*. Stravinsky turned again to similar combinations much later in his life with

¹¹ Ibid., 23, 25, 26.

¹² Ulrich, *Chamber Music*, 355.

the works *Three Songs from William Shakespeare* (1953) for mezzo soprano, flute, clarinet, and viola and *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas* (1954) for tenor, string quartet, and four trombones.¹³

Although there is no singing in what is one of Stravinsky's most well known works, *L'Histoire du Soldat* (1918), there is a part for voice. Written for clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, violin, double bass, and percussion (and conductor), *L'Histoire* was originally conceived as a traveling theater piece that would be cheap to perform and hence make money for those involved. In its initial form there were parts for a narrator and two or three dancers. This is arguably Stravinsky's most famous chamber work. "His score, which could avoid direct concern with the words (since they are never sung), brings together Russian dances of extreme subtlety with modern parodies: a Lutheran chorale, a march, a waltz, a tango and a ragtime (one of several such pieces he worked on at this time). The economy and instrumental brilliance of the writing are throughout astonishing."¹⁴

String chamber music was an important part of the musical culture of the late Romantic and early twentieth century. Composers continued in the tradition of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven by writing works for quartet, trio, and other accepted ensembles. With the twentieth century came more experimentation. Some composers sought new ways to structure music while others looked to the past. Folk and peasant music was studied and incorporated by composers, both by quoting songs directly and writing in a folk-like manner. New sounds were created as composers utilized the special effects of strings and combined strings with other instruments. Also with the new century came more chamber works that included voice. These works are usually for voice and multiple instruments such as Ravel's *Chansons madécasses*, Schoenberg's *Pierrot*, and Stravinsky's *Three Japanese Lyrics*. The importance of chamber music continued to

¹³ Stephen Walsh, "Stravinsky, Igor," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 24, 534, 536, 551 (London: Macmillan, 2001).

rise throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as more societies and concert series were begun that were devoted solely to chamber works.

While composers throughout the early twentieth century wrote works for more unusual instrumental and vocal combinations, getting those works into the standard repertory was more difficult. Traditional genres, especially the string quartet, violin and piano duo, and voice with piano were and still remain the most popular with audiences.

Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Clarke each sought a different duo combination than the norm and in so doing found a coupling unique in the chamber music literature of the time. Duos were either in the form of the instrumental duo sonata or duos for two instruments with or without piano. Chamber vocal works were usually for small vocal ensembles, voice with several instruments, or the voice and piano duo with the piano normally in an accompanimental role. The works in this study are indeed unique in their chamber grouping and in the partnership of their roles.

¹⁴ Ibid., 538.

CHAPTER 2

GUSTAV HOLST,

FOUR SONGS FOR VOICE AND VIOLIN, OP. 35

Historical Background

The early life of Gustav Holst was filled with music. His father was an organist and pianist who was actively involved in the local Cheltenham, England, music scene while his mother was a singer and pianist. His parents encouraged young Holst in his musical studies. His father taught him piano and he also studied violin and trombone, the latter as a cure for asthma.

Holst began composing during his teenage years, writing both instrumental and vocal works that were performed locally. In 1892 Holst's father sent him to study counterpoint with the organist at Merton College in Oxford, England. After only four months at Oxford Holst returned home to Cheltenham and became organist and choirmaster at an area church. Back at home he continued to compose and completed his first operetta, *Lansdown Castle*.¹

In 1893 Holst went to London to study composition at the Royal College of Music. It was here that he met Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1895. The two formed a close friendship that was to last a lifetime. The trombone became Holst's secondary course of study at the Royal College. As music students do today, he played in many freelance ensembles, and in 1897 played under Richard Strauss in the Queen's Hall Orchestra. The very next year Holst turned down a scholarship extension at the Royal College to join the Carl Rosa Opera Company as first trombonist and *repetiteur*. In 1900 Holst once again uprooted himself and joined the Scottish Orchestra, now the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, as second trombonist. He was evidently a good enough trombonist to impress conductor Hans Richter. After performing under him at

¹ Colin Matthews, "Holst, Gustav," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley

Covent Garden, Richter told Holst that he wished he could take him back to Germany. Although he enjoyed orchestral playing and found the experience of being on the inside of an orchestra valuable to his compositional training, Holst ultimately wanted to dedicate his life to composing.²

Holst made the decision to stop his orchestral career in 1903. After a few months spent in Germany and Paris on the money he inherited after his father's death, Holst and his wife Isobel returned to England in dire financial straits. He wrote several songs and tried in vain to get them published. Just when Holst was contemplating a return to the trombone, he was offered a teaching position at the James Allen Girl's School in Dulwich, where he took over for his close friend Ralph Vaughan Williams. Only one year later Holst took a position at the Passmore Edwards Settlement as conductor of the orchestra and choir. Here he programmed several Bach cantatas, including the first performance in English of the *Peasant Cantata*. His friendship with Vaughan Williams continued while Holst was at the Passmore Edwards Settlement. Vaughan Williams even played under Holst there, stepping in to help with the viola section. Then, in 1905, Holst was appointed music director at the St. Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith. Although he remained at the St. Paul's school until his death, he also took other teaching posts, including that of the director of music at the Morley College for Working Men and Women, 1907-1924. At Morley Holst gained an appreciation for amateur musicians, as most of the students attended classes in the evening after a long day at work. Even though his students were considered amateurs, they worked very hard for him. It was in 1910 that Holst received permission from the Purcell Society for his students to copy all of the parts to Purcell's *Fairy Queen*. The score had been recently published, but the vocal and orchestral parts had not. In the summer of 1911, after

Sadie, vol. 5, 648 (London: Macmillan, 2001).

² Ibid; Imogen Holst, *Gustav Holst: A Biography*, 2d ed., 16, 18-20, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

nearly a year of work on the parts, Holst and his students gave the first performance of the *Fairy Queen* since 1695.³

With his many teaching responsibilities at several schools, Holst found it difficult at times to compose in quiet and solitude. A dream was realized in 1913 when the St. Paul's School opened a new music wing. In it they gave him a large sound-proof room in which he could compose. He was able to find the solitude he needed there on weekends and throughout August when the students were away. The *St. Paul's Suite* (1913) was dedicated to the school orchestra as a gesture of deep appreciation and gratitude.⁴ Holst also found the environment he needed for writing at Thaxted in Essex. The large church in Thaxted gave him an idea. According to Imogen Holst, "Standing in those empty aisles, and seeing the shafts of sunlight slanting through the pillars, Holst dreamed of a festival of music that might happen there one day. He would bring down his pupils from, past and present, from Morley and St. Paul's, and they would do 'Sleepers Wake', and 'Soul, Array Thyself', and Palestrina and Vittoria and Purcell."⁵ He did not have to wait long for his dream to be realized. The first of what became an annual festival began on the Whitsun weekend of 1916. Holst wrote to his friend W. G. Wittaker and described that first festival:

It was a feast--an orgy. Four whole days of perpetual singing and playing, either properly arranged in the church or impromptu in various houses or still more impromptu in ploughed fields during thunderstorms, or in the train going home... .

We don't get *enough*. We practice stuff for a concert at which we do a thing once and get excited over it and then go off and do something else.

Whereas on this occasion things were different. Take Bach's *Missa Brevis* for instance. The Morleyites had practiced it since January. On the 3rd of June they did it *twice through* at their concert. On June 10th they rehearsed it and other things for three

³ Matthews, "Holst, Gustav," 648; Imogen Holst, *Biography*, 24, 27, 30-31, 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *Biography*, 42.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

hours in Thaxed church. On Whitsunday we did it during the service in the morning, and again in the evening, and again on Monday morning. And then some enthusiasts went through it again on Tuesday morning.

In the intervals between the services people drifted into the church and sang motets or played violin or cello. And others caught bad colds through going on long walks in the pouring rain singing madrigals and folk songs and rounds the whole time.

The effect on us was indescribable. We weren't merely excited:--we were quite normal, only rather more alive than usual....

I realize [sic] now why the bible insists on heaven being a place (I should call it a condition) where people sing and *go on singing*.

We kept it up at Thaxed about fourteen hours a day. The reason why we didn't do more is that we were not capable mentally or physically of realizing [sic] heaven any further... .

Music, being identical with heaven, isn't a thing of momentary thrills, or even hourly ones. It's a condition of eternity.⁶

The events at the festival truly touched Holst in a great way. One of the impromptu happenings would even lead directly to the composition of the *Four Songs*.

It was during his tenure with the Carl Rosa Company that Holst first became interested in Hinduism and Sanskrit literature. He wanted to set some Sanskrit hymns to music but was unsatisfied with the translations that were available. In 1899 Holst decided to study Sanskrit formally and enrolled in the School of Oriental Languages at the London Institution. Although he worked laboriously at his studies, he never gained the ability to translate Sanskrit quickly. Holst looked up each word in a dictionary, which was a time-consuming task. In spite of this he translated several Sanskrit poems and twenty hymns from the "Rig Veda." He also wrote the music and libretti to two operas based on Sanskrit, *Sita* (1900-06), and *Savitri* (1908). While *Sita* is a large-scale work, according to Colin Matthews, *Savitri* is possibly the first chamber opera,

⁶ Ibid., 47-48.

for it has only three characters and a twelve member orchestra.⁷ In *Savitri* Holst uses modes, bitonality, and rhythms derived from patterns of speech. The rhythmic patterns and modality used in this Sanskrit-based work come ironically from Holst's study of English folk music, which he began around 1904.⁸ Modes, bimodality, and naturally flowing vocal texts are all present in the *Four Songs* as well.

The fascination with folk and peasant songs spread throughout Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Holst and his close friend Vaughan Williams soon became enthralled with English folk songs. Imogen Holst relates:

Vaughan Williams had begun collecting folk-songs in Essex during 1904, and as soon as Holst heard these tunes he recognized that this was what he had been longing for. Here, for the first time, he found the simplicity and economy that he needed in his own music. These short tunes seemed to contain within themselves the whole of what he wanted to say. Miraculously, they managed to combine an emotional beauty with an impersonal restraint. They were the living embodiment of the musical idiom of the English language, for the words and the music had grown up together and depended on each other for their very existence. He discovered that a flowing five-four could be the most natural and inevitable rhythm for the setting of an English poem. He also began to discover that music need not belong to a fixed major or minor key... .

It was not easy to shake off the old way of thinking and feeling. By an effort of will he managed to persuade his nineteenth-century harmonies to shed layer after layer of protective chromaticism until they were left standing on the chill and unfamiliar brink of a Phrygian austerity.⁹

While Holst had found new musical life in folksongs, he had difficulties at first using them in his works. The orchestral work *Songs of the West* (1906), Holst's first extended use of folksong material, was considered a failure. He did not know how to deal with transitions between the folksongs and he was not sure of what form to use. He decided to let the songs

⁷ Matthews, "Holst, Gustav," 650.

⁸Ibid., 648-650.

decide the form. The result, with canon, augmentation, and sudden tempo changes, was not successful. In *Seven Scottish Airs* for strings and piano (1907), Holst does not try to connect the folksongs but instead flows one into another. Several years after the *Scottish Airs*, Holst wrote the *Second Suite in F* for military band (1911). He was now much more adept with handling folksongs. The *Suite* is based on folksongs from Hampshire. In the last movement Holst combines “The Dargason,” in 6/8 meter, with “Greensleeves,” in 3/4. The tunes are combined so seamlessly and naturally that it sounds as if they must have been sung that way originally. He used this movement again, almost identically, as the last movement of the *St. Paul’s Suite*.¹⁰

It was before the outbreak of World War I in 1914 that Holst began work on ‘Mars, the Bringer of War’ from *The Planets*. This is Holst’s largest work and has become his most popular. It is now in the standard repertory of every major symphony. *The Planets* is not based on Greek or Roman mythology but rather on astrology. Holst became interested in astrology sometime in 1912 or 1913. While he did not discuss this interest with many friends, he did delight in casting horoscopes.¹¹ While *The Planets* was not necessarily based on horoscopes, it did have a basis in astrology. Holst wrote to a friend, “As a rule I only study things that suggest music to me. That’s why I worried at Sanskrit. Then recently the character of each planet suggested lots to me, and I have been studying astrology fairly closely.”¹²

After completing *The Planets* in 1916, Holst turned to smaller vocal and chamber works. One of those is the *Four Songs*. According to Imogen Holst, he first conceived the idea for the unusual combination of solo voice and solo violin in 1917 after hearing a woman in the church at Thaxted improvising with both her violin and voice at the same time. Holst seized the

⁹ Imogen Holst, *The Music of Holst*, 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18, 34, 39.

¹¹ Imogen Holst, *A Biography*, 43, 44.

¹² *Ibid.*, 43.

opportunity and wrote one of his most intimate works. The *Four Songs* is a deceptively simple setting of texts which Holst found in *A Medieval Anthology, Being Lyrics and Other Short Poems, Chiefly Religious* compiled by Mary Gertrude Segar in 1915. None of the four songs contains a key signature or time signature. Holst uses modes and simple structures to give the music a folk quality, and a free-flowing rhythm to impart the feeling of improvisation and to imitate the flowing quality of speech. The rhythmic and melodic flow of the melodies also hints at plainsong, which Holst was familiar with through his study and performance of Early Music.¹³

Analytical Discussion

“Jesu Sweet”

The text of “Jesu Sweet,” the first of the four songs, deals with the poet’s love for Christ and the desire to be with Him in Heaven (see Example 1):

Example 1 - Text of “Jesu Sweet,” written by an anonymous poet.

Jesu Sweet, now I will sing
To Thee a song of love longing;
Do in my heart a quick well spring
Thee to love above all thing.

Jesu Sweet, my dim heart’s gleam
Brighter than the sunnebeam!
As thou wert born in Bethlehem
Make in me thy love dream.

Jesu Sweet, my dark heart’s light
Thou art day withouten night;
Give me strength and eke might
For to loven Thee aright.

Jesu Sweet, well may he be
That in Thy bliss Thyself shall see:
With love cords then draw Thou me
That I may come and dwell with Thee.

¹³<http://catalog.loc.gov/>, website of the Library of Congress; Imogen Holst, *Music of Holst*, 57; *Ibid.*, *A Biography*, 49, 50; *Ibid.*, “Gustav Holst” in *Twentieth-Century Masters English Masters*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 156 (New York: W. W. Norton., 1986).

This piece is in A Aeolian but ends on an A Major triad and has a form of A, A^I, A^{II}, A^{III}.

The violin begins with an introductory descending motive that anticipates the voice line in measure two: the first seven pitches of the voice are anticipated by the violin. The opening statement of the violin is in 7/4 while the voice begins in 3/4 and then immediately begins a free change of meter with each phrase being roughly five measures long (see Example 2).

Example 2 - *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “Jesu Sweet,” measures 1 through 5.

The musical score for "Jesu Sweet" consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows measures 1 and 2. The voice part begins in measure 2 with the lyrics "Je - - - su Sweet,". The violin part begins in measure 1 with a descending motive. The second system shows measures 3 and 4. The voice part continues with the lyrics "now will I sing To Thee a song of love long-ing; Do in my heart a quick well". The violin part continues with a descending motive. The third system shows measures 5 and 6. The voice part continues with the lyrics "spring Thee to love a - bove all thing." The violin part continues with a descending motive. The tempo is marked "Andante". Dynamics include "f" (forte) and "p" (piano).

Holst’s harmonic language begins simplistically as the first three phrases begin and end in A Aeolian. The ending of the third phrase elides with the beginning of the fourth and final phrase. The voice holds an F for two beats as the violin holds A and E fifths from the previous measure that hint at A Aeolian. Instead Holst goes to A Major with the voice entrance in measure sixteen. There is one unexpected moment which takes place in measure fourteen. Here Holst places a B flat Major chord that strikes as a bright light in the darkness. After only seven beats

Holst moves down a half step to an A Minor chord, which facilitates the beginning of the final phrase (see Example 3).

Example 3 - *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “Jesu Sweet,” measures 11 through 16.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a voice line and a violin line. The first system (measures 11-12) shows the voice entering with a piano dynamic, singing "Je - su Sweet, my dark heart's light Thou art day without-en". The violin provides a rhythmic accompaniment, also starting piano. The second system (measures 13-14) features the voice singing "night; Give me strength and ek - e might For to lov - en Thee a -" with a mezzo-forte dynamic. The violin plays a sustained chord, also mezzo-forte. The third system (measures 15-16) shows the voice singing "right. Je - su Sweet, well _____ may he be" in a pianissimo, dolce dynamic. The violin plays a sustained chord, also pianissimo, with a triplet in the final measure.

Holst did not use word painting in the same manner as Renaissance composers. It is used sparingly to help convey what is important in the text. The first instance is in measure five, beat two, on “Thee” in reference to Jesus. This is the climax of the very first phrase and Holst has the voice *crescendo* from a *piano* dynamic over only two beats to reach *forte*. The violin emphasizes the word with an accented A Minor chord, while vocal emphasis is achieved by the sustained highest note followed by an octave leap downward (see Example 4).

Example 4 - *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “Jesu Sweet,” measures 4 through 5.

4

Voice

Do in my heart a quick well spring Thee to love a - bove all thing.

Violin

f

Another example occurs at the aforementioned B flat chord in measure fourteen. Here, the anonymous author of the text cries out for strength to love Jesus as he should. The B flat chord also helps to convey the text that immediately precedes it in measures twelve and thirteen: “Jesu Sweet, my dark heart’s light/Thou art day withouten night;... .”

The final instance is more extended than the others. It is the movement from A Aeolian to A Major for the last phrase. In this final section the poet requests to live forever with Jesus: “With love cords then draw Thou me/that I may come and dwell with Thee.” Choosing to end the song in A Major instead of A Aeolian is like the picardy third tradition of the Baroque period. The major ending also reflects the blissful and peaceful approach to the thought of a heavenly afterlife (see Example 5).

Example 5 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “Jesu Sweet,” measures 17 through 21.

17

Voice

That in Thy bliss Thy - self shall see; With love cords then draw Thou

Vln.

19

Voice

me That I may come and dwell with

Vln.

sempre *pp*

20

Voice

Thee.

Vln.

20

morendo

Throughout the song the violin and voice appear alone, or with the violin sustaining thirds, sixths, or perfect fifths while the voice moves above in chant-like stepwise or small leap motion.

“My soul has nought but fire and ice”

Song two, “My soul has nought but fire and ice,” is based on another poem dealing with Christ (see Example 6) and is the shortest of the cycle, being only eight measures long and through-composed.

Example 6 – Text of “My soul has nought but fire and ice” written by an anonymous poet.

My soul has nought but fire and ice
And my body earth and wood:
Pray we all the most High King
Who is the Lord of our last doom,
That He should give us just one thing,
That we may do His will.

While it may be short, it is harmonically interesting. The song is tonally centered around D, but throughout Holst uses E flats and B naturals. This constitutes a mixture of the Phrygian and Dorian modes: the E flat coming from Phrygian, the B natural from Dorian, and the F natural common to both. After establishing the Dorian-Phrygian modality, Holst adds an F sharp at the end of measure five (on the word “doom”), which gives a D Major chord into measure six. Many composers would choose to word paint the word “doom” with a dark chord of some kind, minor or diminished. It is interesting that Holst chooses this word to place the first Major harmony of the song. The voice sustains an A from the end of measure six into seven, when the violin plays again its ostinato of octave Ds going to a major sixth on E flat - C, changing the mode to Phrygian (no Bs of any kind in this measure). In the final measure the voice and violin come to rest on a D Major triad, creating the picardy third as was present in “Jesu.” In this movement the violin is relegated to sustained double-stops that at times act as a drone, while the voice moves around it in a recitative-like manner (see Example 7).

Example 7

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a Voice part and a Violin (Vln.) part. The lyrics are: "My soul had nought but fire and ice And my body earth and wood; Pray we all the Most High King Who is the Lord of our last doom, That He should give us just one thing That we may do His will." The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, and *p*, and various musical notations like rests, slurs, and accents.

Imogen Holst wrote of this song:

There is passion in the depth of the violin's Eb, and a sense of space in the voices entry, as if the fifth had been waiting to sound within the held octave: the word 'fire' takes its warmth from the wide interval of the major sixth, and there is a radiance in the icy return to the fifth, the vowel blending with the strings' tone and the hissing sibilant adding to the steeliness. The Eb of 'earth' knows the desperation of all the ills that flesh is heir to, as it pulls against

the framework of the octave D before coming to rest on the unison.¹⁴

“I sing of a maiden”

“I sing of a maiden,” song three, is a very free-flowing tribute to the Virgin Mary (see Example 8).

Example 8 – Text of “I sing of a maiden,” written by an anonymous poet.

I sing of a maiden
That matchless is.
King of all Kings
Was her Son iwis.
He came all so still
Where His mother was
As dew in April
That falleth on grass:

He came all so still
To his mother’s bower
As dew in April
That falleth on flower:
He came all so still
Where His mother lay
As dew in April
That falleth on spray.

Mother and maiden
Was ne’er none but she:
Well may such a lady God’s mother be.

The measures variously move from 3/4 to 4/4 to 5/4 in a very fluid manner. The song begins with a short introductory Allegretto with voice alone in A Aeolian (see Example 9).

An Andante then takes way with the anacrusis to measure seven. This section continues with the solo voice on a melody different than but similar to the first six measures. The first appearance of the violin in measure thirteen marks a repeat of the previous six-measure phrase, but this time in E and with the violin in counterpoint (see Example 10).

¹⁴ Imogen Holst, *Music of Holst*, 58.

Example 9 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measures 1 through 6.

mf Allegretto

Voice

I sing of a mai - den That match-less is. King of all

Violin

5

Kings Was her Son i - wis He

Vln.

Example 10 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measures 7 through 14.

7 Andante

Voice

came all so still Where His mo-ther was As dew in A - pril that fall - eth on

Violin

12

grass; He came all so still to His

Vln.

The text here deals with Christ coming to his mother as April dew on a flower. The phrase ends on the downbeat of measure eighteen on a fermata-held C and D sharp expressed as an augmented ninth, which implies a D-sharp seven, or VII7 of E on “flower.” This would be a good word with which to use a major chord. However, Holst chose to use the dissonance of the

augmented ninth which resolves unexpectedly into a C Major third in measure nineteen, which then goes directly back to A Aeolian (see Example 11).

Example 11 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measures 17 through 19.

17

Voice

fall - eth on flower; He came all so

Violin

Structurally, the last thirteen measures are a conflation of the Allegretto and Andante. The voice part in measures nineteen through twenty-one, the beginning of the last section, is taken from measure one through three. But measures twenty-two, with the anacrusis, through twenty-four are taken from measures ten, with anacrusis, through twelve, which is the end of the first six-measure phrase of the Andante (see Example 12).

Example 12 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measures 19 through 24, vocal line

19

Voice

came all so still Where His mo - ther lay As

22

dew in A - pril That form - eth on spray.

This short three measure motive (measures twenty-two through twenty-four) acts as a unifying feature as it appears as a closing to many of the phrases. Beginning in measure twenty-five the voice sings the same notes as in measures five and six, but now with different meters and note lengths. With the last beat of measure 28 comes the familiar closing phrase seen first in measures ten through twelve (see Example 13).

Example 13 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measures 25 through 31, vocal line.

25 *f* dim. rall

Voice

Mo - ther and mai - den Was ne'er none but she; Well

29

may such a la - dy God's mo - ther be.

While the voice sings its combination of Allegretto and Andante fragments from measures nineteen to the end, the violin continues the countermelody it began in measure thirteen, moving now with many thirds and sixths with the voice. This is reminiscent of Renaissance *fauxbourdon*, which Holst would have had intimate knowledge of through his Early Music studies and conducting of vocal ensembles, both secular and sacred. In measure twenty-three the violin’s motion is slowed as it reinforces the closing vocal phrase and comes to rest on a major tenth of D and F sharp with the voice on an A. This D Major chord is a IV borrowed from A Major. It leads, after the voice repeats Ds in measure twenty-five, to a B flat chord in measure twenty-six. This flat II relationship is also seen in “Jesu,” measure fourteen, which is also in A Aeolian. In “Jesu” the B flat chord is approached from a G chord and resolves into open fifths of A and E in the violin before going to A Major. In “I sing of a maiden” the B flat chord is preceded by D Major and followed by a G chord before resting on a unison A (see Example 14).

Example 14 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measures 19 through 31.

19

Voice

came all so still Where His mo-ther lay As dew in A - pril That form-eth on

Violin

24 *f* dim. rall
 spray. Mo - ther and mai - den Was ne'er none but she; Well may such a la - dy

Vln. 24 *f* dim. rall

30 God's mo - - - ther be.

Vln. 30

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and two violin parts. The vocal line is in treble clef, starting at measure 24 with a forte (*f*) dynamic and ending with a decrescendo and rallentando (*dim. rall*). The lyrics are: "spray. Mo - ther and mai - den Was ne'er none but she; Well may such a la - dy". The first violin part is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#), starting at measure 24 with a forte (*f*) dynamic and ending with a decrescendo and rallentando (*dim. rall*). The second violin part is in treble clef, starting at measure 30 with a forte (*f*) dynamic and ending with a decrescendo and rallentando (*dim. rall*). The lyrics for the second part are: "God's mo - - - ther be.".

Although “I sing of a maiden” has a more complex form than either of the first two songs, it still maintains a feeling of simplicity. By using the same closing motive and mixing different phrase fragments together in a cohesive way, Holst gives the song a feeling of comfortable familiarity.

“My Leman is so true”

The text of the final song of the cycle “My Leman is so true,” again deals with the love of Christ (see Example 15).

Example 15 – Text of “My leaman is so true,” written by an anonymous poet.

My Leman is so true
 Of love and full steadfast
 Yet seemeth ever new.
 His love is on us cast.

I would that all Him knew
 And loved Him firm and fast,
 They never would it rue
 But happy be at last.

He lovingly abides
 Although I stay full long.

He will me never chide
Although I choose the wrong.

He says 'Behold My side
And why on Rood I hung;
For my love leave thy pride
And I thee underfong.'

I'll dwell with Thee believe,
Leman, under Thy tree.
May no pain e'er me grieve
Nor make me from Thee flee.

I will in at Thy sleeve
All in Thine heart to be;
Mine heart shall burst and cleave
Ere untrue Thou me see.

Imogen Holst relates, "Holst once referred to 'My Leman is so true' as a good instance of a tune at one with the words--he felt that it was the nearest approach he had yet achieved in his search for the musical idiom of the English language. The violin's flowing counterpoint is inseparable from the rise and fall of the singer's phrase... ." ¹⁵ In the first song the voice and violin alternate melodic interest with the violin also providing harmonic underpinning with sustained double-stops. In the second song the violin plays sustained double-stops mostly as a drone while the voice sings a recitative-like melody. In the third song the violin and voice are in counterpoint with one another, but only after the voice sings almost half the song alone. It is in the final song that Holst does indeed achieve making the "tune at one with the words," or the violin at one with the voice. There is no measure here where the singer is alone. The violin is continuously present and the parts complement each other perfectly.

The song is once again in A Aeolian, but is the only one in a modified strophic form. It begins with solo violin as do songs one and two. The voice enters in measure three with the melody that forms the basis for each verse. However, each time this melody returns it is slightly

altered by varying meters and note lengths. The violin weaves around the voice throughout but always staying below the notes of the voice until the end (see Example 16).

Example 16 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “My leaman is so true,” measures 1 through 10.

1
Voice
My Le-man is so true Of
p

5
love and full stead-fast Yet seem-eth e-ver new. His
Vln.
p

9
love is on us cast.
Vln.
p

There are no surprise harmonies in the first 30 measures, such as the motion to flat II that appears in songs one and three. Instead the voice and violin seem to explore the simple beauty of melody. In measures 31 and 32, Holst uses the harmony of IV, or D, to lead to a fermata on the downbeat of measure 33 that sustains E before going immediately back to A Aeolian. Holst moves back to E Major in measure 37 before beginning an extended E pedal in the violin that lasts for seven measures. As the violin sustains the pedal, the voice floats up and down, first in E, then E Dorian with implied Phrygian in measure 43 to 44 with the motion from F natural to E (see Example 17).

¹⁵ Imogen Holst, *Music of Holst*, 58.

Example 17 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “My leaman is so true,” measures 37 through 44.

37 *pp* poco animato
 Voice I'll dwell with Thee be - lieve,
 Violin *pp* poco animato

39
 Voice Le - man, un - der Thy tree. May no
 Vln.

41
 Voice pain e'er me grieve Nor
 Vln.

43 a tempo
 Voice make me from Thee flee. I will
 Vln. a tempo

The last two quarter notes of measure 44 are sung by the voice and begin a short, four measure phrase that is a slightly altered version of measures eleven through fourteen. These measures also form the basis for measures 30 through 33 and in each case act as a closing. The violin, after sustaining a long seven measure E pedal, returns in measure 45 to its interplay with the voice (see Example 18).

Example 18 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “My leaman is so true,” measures 44 through 48.

44 a tempo cresc. *mf*
 Voice flee. I will in at Thy sleeve All in Thine Heart to be; Mine
 Violin a tempo cresc. *mf*

After an A chord in measure 48, Holst begins the last phrase, based on the first ten measures, in reverse. The violin melody in measures one through three is a short introduction to the verse sung in measures four through ten. This introduction happens again in measures eighteen through twenty. Here at the end of the song and song cycle, however, the voice and violin have a short four measure cadential section of the verse taken from measures 26 through 29. Both use a lowered seven to one (D to E) instead of a Phrygian-motion cadence of lowered two to one (F to E) as seen in measures six, ten, seventeen to eighteen, twenty-four to twenty-five, and many others, thus creating a much softer cadence. With the final note of the voice sustained through measure 52, the violin plays again its introductory statement but with a C sharp instead of natural, hinting at the picardy third present in songs one and two. The penultimate measure, 54, briefly moves the listener away from the picardy third with the F and G naturals played against a held B. The violin concludes the phrase against the B with an A, held two beats, and a quarter note D. The sustained B acts as a secondary dominant and sets up, even with the modal D natural, the E Major final chord. This half cadence is reminiscent of Early Music but does not feel as if it needs to continue. It rests serenely and brings the cycle to a quiet close (see Example 19).

Example 19 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “My leaman is so true,” measures 48 through 55.

The musical score for Example 19 consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 48 to 52. The voice part begins at measure 48 with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5. The lyrics are: "be; Mine heart shall burst and cleave Ere un-true Thou me see." The violin part starts at measure 48 with a half note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, C4, and D4. The second system covers measures 53 to 55. The voice part is silent. The violin part begins at measure 53 with a half note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, C4, and D4. The score concludes with a half note B3 in measure 55, marked *pp*.

Performance Suggestions

The very first sound heard in “Jesu Sweet” is a *forte* A minor chord in the violin that begins a series of sixths and thirds that *diminuendo* to a *piano* perfect fifth. The *forte* should be robust to set a large contrast to the vocal *piano* entrance in measure two. Any pianist performing with a vocalist would continuously scan the voice part written above the piano part so that he or she could accurately follow. Violinists performing “Jesu Sweet” must do the same. Holst does not always write the rhythm in the violin part as it should actually be played. This is as a result of the odd number of beats or half-beats in several measures and the possibility of error in others. The first two instances of this occur when the violin is resting; measure three, which has seven and a half beats, and measure five, which has six and a half beats. The violin plays the first two beats of measure five with the voice, after which Holst indicates a whole rest in the violin part for the remainder of the measure. The voice, however, has four and a half beats to sing before the barline. In measure seven it is indicated for the violin to sustain its note for only four beats but the voice has four and a half beats (see Example 20).

Example 20 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “Jesu Sweet,” measures 3, 5 and 7.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the piece "Jesu Sweet". Each system consists of a voice line and a violin line. The first system, labeled "ms. 3", shows the voice part with the lyrics "now will I sing To Thee a song of love long - ing;" and the violin part with a whole rest. The second system, labeled "ms. 5", shows the voice part with the lyrics "spring Thee to love a - bove all thing." and the violin part with a whole rest. The third system, labeled "ms. 7", shows the voice part with the lyrics "Je - - - su Sweet, my dim heart's" and the violin part with a whole rest. The violin part in measure 7 begins with a *p* dynamic marking.

Measures seventeen and eighteen, just five measures from the end, comprise the last example of this in the song. Holst writes a whole note in each measure for the violin but the voice sings first a measure of 8/4 and then a measure of 6/4. Holst could have used a breve for the violin in these measures to indicate the notes be sustained for the entire measure, no matter how many beats. He did use breves in two of the other songs (see Example 21).

Example 21 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “Jesu Sweet,” measures 17 through 18.

The image shows a musical score for voice and violin. The voice part is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "That in thy bliss Thy-self shall see; With love cords then draw Thou". The voice part consists of two measures. The first measure contains four eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, and C5. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note G4, followed by a quarter rest, and then four eighth notes: A4, B4, C5, and D5. The violin part is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp. It consists of two measures, each containing a whole note double stop on G4 and C5. The notes are marked with a large '8' below them, indicating eighth notes.

Two possible misprints cause need for the violinist to be careful as well. In measure eight the voice has four eighth notes to the syllable “sun.” The violin here is given a dotted quarter. The next two syllables in the voice part, “ne” and “beam,” each have rhythm values equaled in the violin. Also, the voice and violin line up in rhythmic values up to each syllable before “sun.” Clearly something is incorrect at “sun.” The violin part most likely needs alteration because it sustains a double stop under a four-note vocal melisma. To remedy this the performing violinist simply needs to change the dotted quarter double stop to a half note. The other example is found in the very next measure, nine. In this case the violin is given a whole note double stop over which the voice has an eighth rest followed by syllabic eighth note motion of five eighth notes. This means the violin has a measure of 4/4 and the voice a measure of 3/4. Once again there is a simple resolution: the violinist should change the whole note in measure nine to a dotted half note (see Example22).

Example 22 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “Jesu Sweet,” measures 8 through 9.

The image shows a musical score for two staves: Voice and Violin. The Voice staff is in treble clef and contains the following lyrics: "gleam Brighter than the sun _____ ne - beam! As thou wert born in". The Violin staff is also in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a fermata over the final measure. The word "cresc." is written above the Voice staff in the second measure.

While these rhythmic problems may not be major, they can lead to difficulties in rehearsal and performance. The violinist who fails to pay close attention to the voice and follow the text will quickly be in trouble.

With the second song, “My soul,” tone color is the issue. The first words of the text are: “My soul has nought but fire and ice....” These words are not heard until the second measure, but none the less the violin must set the framework for them. The violin has only three sustained and *forte* double stops before the voice entrance. The violin can foreshadow the words “fire” and “ice” by using vibrato until the fermata and ceasing it during the *diminuendo*, on “ice.” Utilizing a milder vibrato throughout the *forte* of the next four measures creates a very good contrast to the *piano* of the last two. Here, in the last two measures, a nonvibrato sound helps to reflect the quiet reverence of the text “That we may do His will.”

There is one instance in “My soul” to which the violinist should once again give special attention to the voice part. In measure four Holst writes a whole note for the violin over which the voice has a chant-like passage of nine and a half beats (refer back to Example 7).

The first violin entrance in “I sing of a maiden” is a *pianissimo* A that could easily be played in first position on the E string. The voice has twelve measures alone before the violin comes in, at which point there is lyrical interplay as the text speaks of Mary and Jesus, Mother and Son. The violin should therefore come in without any accents but instead melt into the sound of the voice. Thus the violin should begin on the A string and not the E, so that the warmth of the

A string will complement the text. Beginning on the A string with little vibrato also makes it easier to achieve the desired dynamic and not overpower the voice (see Example 23).

Example 23 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measures 13 through 15.

13

Voice

came all so still To His mo - ther's bower As

Violin

pp

After the initial violin entrance the violinist should maintain a vibrato that will blend with the voice and not make one part stand out above the other. Vibrato can also aid in the intonation of the perfect fifth in measure 26 (see Example 24).

Example 24 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measure 26.

26

Voice

mai - - - den Was ne'er

Violin

f

Perfect fifths, even when played in first position, as is recommended for this occasion, can be difficult for intonation. Vibrato, in a most practical sense, distorts pitch by the rocking motion used. This distortion can cover up the fifth that is not perfectly in tune. The very last measure of the song is an instance in which vibrato may hinder and not help intonation. Here violin and voice come to rest on a unison A after a *diminuendo* (see Example 25).

Example 25 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “I sing of a maiden,” measures 28 through 31.

28

Voice

she; Well may such a la - dy God's mo - ther be.

Violin

she; Well may such a la - dy God's mo - ther be.

dim. rall.

If both performers use vibrato on a unison while at a *piano* dynamic, the note will likely not sound in tune. If the violin plays a straight tone it will be easier to match the voice pitch and then to melt into the sound of the voice.

Sound is the primary concern for the violinist in the last song of the cycle, “My Leman.” This is the song that Holst believed was his best effort at making the words one with the music. To match the nature of the text, which deals with God’s love, a warm vibrato should be used throughout. The violinist should also strive never to overpower the voice, but to equal it. Only from the end of measure 37 until the *a tempo* in measure 44 should vibrato not be used by the violin (see Example 26).

Example 26 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “My leaman is so true,” measures 38 through 44.

The musical score for Example 26 consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 38 to 41. The voice part begins at measure 38 with a *pp* dynamic and a *poco animato* tempo. The lyrics are: "I'll dwell with Thee believe, Le - man, un - der Thy tree. May no pain e'er me". The violin part also begins at measure 38 with a *poco animato* tempo and plays a sustained E note drone. The second system covers measures 42 to 44. The voice part continues with the lyrics: "grieve Nor make me from Thee flee." The tempo changes to *a tempo* at measure 42. The violin part continues with the same E note drone.

Here also the violin should be just under the voice. The lack of violin vibrato on the extended E drone helps to emphasize the idea of discomfort that comes from separation from God. At the *a tempo* the violin should be more present and begin vibrato again, which will aid in the *crescendo* in measure 45.

Violinists need be aware of a misprint in measure 48 (see Example 27). As written, the violin has five beats in the measure as the voice has only three. Violinists should change the double stop whole note to a half note to match the voice.

Example 27 – *Four Songs for Voice and Violin*, “My leaman is so true,” measure 48.

The image shows a musical score for measure 48, featuring a voice part and a violin part. The voice part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "be;" and "Mine". The violin part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "rall.". The measure is marked with a dynamic of *mf* and a tempo marking of *rall.* (rallentando). The music consists of a single note in each part, with a fermata over the note in the voice part.

48

mf rall.

Voice

be; Mine

Violin

rall.

CHAPTER 3

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS,

ALONG THE FIELD, EIGHT HOUSMAN SONGS FOR VOICE AND VIOLIN

Historical Background

Like his friend Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams was encouraged in music from a young age. Vaughan Williams was born in 1872 in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, to a family of prominent lawyers. A maternal aunt (and relative of Charles Darwin) gave him his first musical instruction in piano and also theory. Vaughan Williams soon took up the organ and violin, but switched from violin to viola while attending the Charterhouse School, a public school in Godalming in the county of Surrey. He then went on to study at the Royal College of Music, London, and Trinity College, Cambridge, after which he returned to the Royal College to study composition with Charles Wood, Charles Stanford, and Charles Hubert Parry.¹

Vaughan Williams was not sure of his compositional abilities and even Wood, one of his teachers at the Royal College, expressed doubts about his future as a composer. These personal doubts led Vaughan Williams to seek further studies. In 1897 he traveled to Berlin to study with Max Bruch. Vaughan Williams did not believe that his lessons with Bruch were beneficial, so in 1900 he asked Edward Elgar for lessons. Elgar did not respond himself; but instead his wife sent word to Vaughan Williams that his request was being (politely) refused. Still determined that he could learn from Elgar, Vaughan Williams began to study Elgar's scores, from *Enigma* to the symphonies. In 1908 he decided that Paris would be the best place for his compositional growth. Vaughan Williams contacted a respected friend, Edward Evans, and told him of his desire to

¹ Hugh Ottaway, "Ralph Vaughan Williams," in *The New Grove Twentieth-Century English Masters*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie, 97-98 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986).

study with Vincent d'Indy. Evans wisely suggested Maurice Ravel.² Study with Ravel proved to be very fruitful. During the time he was studying with Ravel, Vaughan Williams wrote to a friend, "Ravel... is exactly the man I was looking for. As far as I know my own faults, he hit on them exactly, and is telling me to do exactly what I felt in my mind I ought to do."³

Although Vaughan Williams gained much in his studies with Ravel, his days spent at the Royal College of Music were not without their merit. It was there that Gustav Holst and Vaughan Williams became life-long friends. They began a practice, much like Johannes Brahms and Joseph Joachim, of exchanging new works for each other's scrutiny. They called these meetings "field days" and continued them until the death of Holst. During these years of study Vaughan Williams also became fascinated with English folksong and early English music. Along with Holst, Vaughan Williams began collecting folksongs around England and eventually collected them in at least six other countries. They both believed that classical English music of the day relied too much on other traditions and that they could look to the music of the English people for their models. This quest led Vaughan Williams to join The Folk Song Society in 1904. Like Holst, Vaughan Williams was fascinated by the modes used in folk song. At a time when many professional English musicians did not know what Dorian or Phrygian were, he was discovering their beauty and folk tune flexibility. Vaughan Williams believed that modal writing allowed composers more possibilities with melody and that folk tunes themselves allowed for harmonizations that, as he said in a 1912 lecture, "defy the ravages of time"; folk tunes can be harmonized by composers of any musical period and sound correct, not as if there is a musical anachronism between melody and harmony. Even though Vaughan Williams recognized the importance of and advocated the study of folk music, he also challenged English composers to be

² Ibid., 98; A. E. F. Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams*, 46, 49, (London: Faber and Faber, 1963).

³ Ibid., *Vaughan Williams*, 50.

true to themselves first and write what they like. He believed that there would be no School of English Music until this was done.⁴

In 1902, before his association with The Folk Song Society, Vaughan Williams began a series of lectures on *The History of the Folk Song* at the Pokesdown Technical School in Bournemouth. The series was repeated in early 1903 in Gloucester. The first two lectures dealt with this history. The following lectures were titled “The Characteristics of National Song-On the Continent,” “The Characteristics of National Songs in the British Isles,” “Religious Folk Songs,” and “The Importance of Folk Song.” Each lecture included demonstrations by singers and instrumentalists. In one of these Vaughan Williams stated that there is no difference between music of the people and classical music. Each has music that is beautiful and sincere and that which is bad and insincere. If it is good then it does not matter who is making the music, if it is bad then it should be ignored as it is not worthy of attention.⁵

In the final lecture of the series, “The Importance of Folk Song,” this time given in Gloucester, Vaughan Williams outlined four reasons why folk songs were so important: “1. Folk songs contained the nucleus of all further development in music; 2. They invariably affected the style of great composers; 3. National music was a sure index to national temperament; 4. Folk songs were supremely beautiful.”⁶ He went on to say:

Great composers in all times in the history of music have not disdained to use folk tunes as a means to inspiration. We must not accuse them of stealing, for those great popular tunes are the common property of anybody who by nationality, friendship or analogous feeling finds himself in sympathy with them... .

I have kept my best reason for the importance of folk song to last-namely, their own intrinsic beauty. I would not care how many

⁴ Ibid., 51-52, 55; Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980) 28, 29, 30; Ottaway, 98-99; Simona Pakenham, *Ralph Vaughan Williams, a Discovery of His Music* (London: Macmillan, 1957) 24.

⁵ Kennedy, *Works of Vaughan Williams*, 30, 31, 34.

⁶ Ibid., 34.

sonatas could be traced to them, or how many great composers had used them if those country tunes were not in themselves superbly beautiful. It is that beauty which has preserved them, which makes them a joy forever... . But there is no doubt that they are hardly sung at all by the people nowadays. They are only to be heard from some oldest inhabitant in an out-of-the-way district. That precious legacy has slipped out of the hands of those whose it was by right and passed into the hands of enthusiastic connoisseurs who collect folk tunes like old china...now the only place where you can hear a folk song sung is at some soiree musicale among the elect of Kensington. The people who originally sang folk songs now sing music-hall songs instead. I do not like music-hall songs very much, but with all their blatant vulgarity they are infinitely superior to the inane rubbish which is sung in the modern drawing-room... . Will the people ever come by their own again? Will they ever return to their folk songs waiting for them--as beautiful and new now as they were 60 years ago? The collectors of folk songs differ from the collectors of old china in this--the connoisseurs in china keep the china locked up in their china cupboards when they are home and when they go away they send it in a tin box to the bank. But the collector of folk songs gives them back again to the world... . Will they not, perhaps, once more make their way back to the mouths of the people?⁷

Vaughan Williams believed that for composers to be truly great they could not ignore the music of their homeland. He thought that if composers tried to appeal first to the world at large, they would surely fail.⁸

In the 1912 article "Who Wants the English Composer," Vaughan Williams declared his own view of nationalism while at the same time seemingly disparaging his fellow English composers. He wrote:

Art, like charity, should begin at home. If it is to be any value it must grow out of the very life of himself, ... the community in which he lives, and the nation to which he belongs... . The English composer is not and for many generations will not be anything like so good as the Great Masters, nor can he do such wonderful things as Strauss and Debussy. But is he for this reason of no value to the community? Is it not possible that he has something to say to his own countrymen that no one of any other age and any other

⁷ Kennedy, *Works of Vaughan Williams*, 34-35.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

country can say? ... Have we not all about us forms of musical expression which we can purify and raise to the level of great art? For instance, the lilt of the chorus at a music-hall joining in a popular song, the children dancing to a barrel-organ, the rousing fervour [sic] of a Salvation Army hymn, St. Paul's and a great choir singing in one of its festivals, the Welshmen striking up one of their own hymns whenever they win a goal at the international football match, the cries of the street pedlars [sic], the factory girls singing their sentimental songs. Have all these nothing to say to us? Have we not in England occasions crying out for music? ... We must cultivate a sense of musical citizenship; why should not the musician be the servant of the State and build national monuments like the painter, the writer or the architect? ... The composer must not shut himself up and think about art, he must live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community.⁹

Vaughan Williams took his own words to heart. He believed that the study of any music of the English people was a worthy endeavor. It is no wonder then that in 1904 Vaughan Williams chose to accept the invitation of Reverend Percy Dearmer to be the editor of a new English hymn book. In taking on the challenge, he was trying to insure that the music heard and sung by members of congregations all over England was of good quality. Vaughan Williams discovered while being a church organist that for many English men and women the music of the church was the only music they heard on a regular basis. The task of editing *The English Hymnal*, which originally he thought would take only two months to complete, would occupy him off and on for the next two years. Vaughan Williams was responsible for the selection of each hymn and also for rewriting some so that they could be sung by worshipers with no musical training. In addition to this, he adapted 35 to 40 folk tunes and wrote four original ones, including his most well known, "Sine Nomine," for the hymn book. Vaughan Williams also asked other English composers to help with his task, including his dear friend Holst. In 1906 *The*

⁹ Ibid., 37.

English Hymnal was complete.¹⁰ The study of hymn tunes and the avid collection of folk songs gave Vaughan Williams a wealth of musical material on which he could draw throughout the rest of his life.

By the time Vaughan Williams began editing the *Hymnal* he had composed many works, ranging from a string quartet (1898) and quintet for clarinet, horn, violin, cello, and piano (1898) to *In the Fen Country* for orchestra (1904). It was, however, works for voice and piano that make up the majority of his early works. Several songs by Vaughan Williams and Holst were presented in recital in December of 1904. The recital is noteworthy because two of Vaughan Williams' song cycles received their first performance, *The House of Life* and *Songs of Travel*. Of even more interest, however, is the performance of two duets with an obbligato violin, "The Last Invocation" and "The Birds' Love Song." The duets, the first setting by Vaughan Williams of Walt Whitman, may have begun life without the violin obbligato. In the first performance of these duets, in October of 1904, they were accompanied by piano and string quartet. Years later Vaughan Williams told Katherine Eggar that he did not think the duets were well written.¹¹ Perhaps this is why he changed the accompaniment to solo violin for the performance less than two months later. This work, with voice (two voices) and solo violin, may have been remembered by Holst when he stumbled across that lone violinist singing along with herself in 1917.

It was in 1908, after returning from his studies with Ravel, that Vaughan Williams wrote a G Minor string quartet and the song cycle *On Wenlock Edge*. *Wenlock* is a cycle of six songs for tenor, piano, and string quartet, with text by A. E. Housman taken from *A Shropshire Lad*.

¹⁰ Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams*, 55, 56; Kennedy, *Music of Vaughan Williams*, 59, 85; Ottaway, *Vaughan Williams*, 100; Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughn Williams*, 70, 71, 72 (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

¹¹ Kennedy, *Works of Vaughan Williams*, 60, 61.

Adding to the overall effect of the instruments in each song is Vaughan Williams' use of mode. Though some find the influence of Ravel in these songs, the harmonic language is purely Vaughan Williams. Borrowing modes from folk songs, he uses Dorian, Aeolian, Mixolydian, and even the more uncommon Locrian. Bitonality or bimodality is also used. The melodic line of the voice is at times flowing, at others speech-like, and at others in the manner of plainchant. Pentatonic lines point also in the direction of folk song. *Wenlock* may be considered one of Vaughan Williams' important early works, one in which his own compositional voice comes to the fore.¹²

The *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* (1909) is arguably Vaughan Williams' best known work. This work for double string orchestra is a direct result of the research Vaughan Williams did for *The English Hymnal*. The theme is taken from a hymn written in 1567 by Thomas Tallis for Archbishop Parker's *Psalter*. The choice of using a hymn tune for such a grand work is not surprising because Elizabethan hymn tunes, like folk songs, have modal harmonies. Vaughan Williams was drawn to Neo-modality, as were other early twentieth-century composers, because through it he could expand his harmonic palette without going as far away from tonality as Schoenberg had done.¹³

From 1911 to 1914 Vaughan Williams wrote a variety of works, from the piano accompaniment to *15 Folk Songs of England* (1912, edited by Cecil Sharp) to the programmatic *A London Symphony* (1913). He also continued to write chamber music and to combine voice with chamber strings. The *Phantasy Quintet* for two violins, two violas, and cello (1912) is another example of the impact folk tunes had on Vaughan Williams. The single movement work

¹² James Day, *Vaughan Williams*, 177 (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1964); Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams*, 156, 158, 160; Ottaway, *Vaughn Williams*, 100.

¹³ Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams*, 175, 176; Frank Howes, *Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954) 87, 89, 90, 91; Kennedy, *Works of Vaughan Williams*, 124, 125, 126; Ottaway, *Vaughn*

has melodies based on the pentatonic scale, which is commonly found in folk music of England as well as other countries. As he did in *Wenlock* and the *Fantasia*, Vaughan Williams used modality for his harmonic language. Two works during this period incorporate strings and voice. The *Five Mystical Songs* for baritone, orchestra and optional chorus, is also extant in a version for baritone, piano, and string quintet. Likewise, the *Four Hymns* (1914) have several different settings. There are versions for tenor, piano, and string quartet, and tenor, string orchestra and obbligato viola. The primary setting, however, is for tenor, piano, and obbligato viola. Vaughan Williams used text different poets for each hymn; Bishop Jeremy Taylor, Isaac Watts, and Richard Crashaw, who were all seventeenth and eighteenth-century writers. The final hymn is a translation from the early Greek Church by Robert Bridges. Modality is again used by Vaughan Williams. The viola is prominent especially in the second and fourth hymn. The second hymn, “Who is this fair one?,” is based on a tune in the Phrygian mode that is begun by the solo viola.¹⁴ With the *Hymns* Vaughan Williams was integrating the voice and viola parts so that they are more like partners in a musical conversation. The piano, while also involved in the conversation, is more of an accompaniment than equal partner.

Shortly after Great Britain declared war on Germany in 1914, Vaughan Williams joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. Several of his fellow young composers and friends enlisted to fight, including George Butterworth, who would lose his life in the war. Vaughan Williams was assigned to be a wagon orderly in a unit that actually had no wagons. He spent almost two years in various parts of Great Britain training and drilling. While Vaughan Williams did not compose

Williams, 113.

¹⁴ Howes, *Music of Vaughan Williams*, 239, 240.

during the war, he did not stop making music, performing music with army friends whenever duties would allow.¹⁵

Shortly after the end of the war in 1918, when his services at the front were no longer required, Vaughan Williams was appointed the Director of Music for the First Army in France. Here he directed the H. Q. Choral Society. His other duties included visiting other units and divisions of the English army to look for soldiers, both officers and enlisted, who were musicians, and those that were interested in music classes. Out of this group was formed three music classes, nine choral societies, a band, and an orchestra. Vaughan Williams was finally able to devote more than just his spare time to music making. This was, of course, the happiest time he spent in the army.¹⁶

In February of 1919 Vaughan Williams was demobilized, but did not return to England until that summer. He was happy to get back to composition. For the next several years, he revised previously written works such as the *London Symphony* and wrote many new ones, once again based on folk song. These works included *Eight Traditional English Carols* (1919), arranged for voice and piano or unaccompanied mixed chorus, and *Twelve Traditional Carols From Herefordshire* (1920), arranged for voice and piano or unaccompanied mixed chorus. It is during this time his first works for military band appear. *English Folk Songs* (1923), a suite for the Royal Military School of Music Band was quickly followed by *Sea Songs* (1923), a march for military and brass bands. While the *Pastoral Symphony* (1921) for orchestra and soprano (or tenor) was not written for a military band, it did have the military as its genesis. While Vaughan Williams was in Ecoives he heard a bugler often practice. This became the basis for the trumpet cadenza in the second movement. While Vaughan Williams wrote large-scale works like the

¹⁵ Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Biography* 115-120.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 131, 132.

Pastoral Symphony, the Romantic ballad opera *Hugh the Drover* (1924), the *Mass in G Minor* for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists and double chorus (1922), military band pieces, and folk song arrangements, after the war he did not neglect chamber music or works for strings and voice. Purely instrumental chamber works of this time include *Three Preludes for Organ* (1920), which is based on Welsh hymn tunes, *the Suite de Ballet* (1920) for flute and piano, *Two Pieces for Violin and Piano* (1923), and *Six Studies in English Folk Song* (1926) for cello and piano. Works that combine voice and strings are *Merciless Beauty* (1921), three rondels for high voice and string trio and the truly unique *Flos Campi* (1925) for viola solo, wordless mixed chorus, and chamber orchestra.¹⁷

Flos Campi is a six-movement suite based loosely on love poems from the *Song of Solomon*. While each movement begins with a Latin quotation from the *Bible*, Vaughan Williams always claimed that the work itself is not religious. The sections used are not poems of a heavenly love between God and man but of an earthly love between man and woman. The text that appears at the head of each movement is intended to reflect the music that follows. The combination of wordless chorus, solo viola, and chamber orchestra with only solo winds creates a very intimate texture. The addition of percussion, including triangle, celeste, cymbals, and tabor give *Flos Campi* an element of the Orient from which the *Song of Solomon* came. Though there are several forces at work, no voice or group plays a dominant role over the others.

The harmonic and rhythmic properties of *Flos Campi* are interesting as well as is the orchestration. The bitonal opening was quoted as an example of modernism in volume seven of the *Oxford History of Music*.¹⁸ Throughout the work Vaughan Williams exploits the tensions created and relieved through polymodality and the dark timbres of the viola combined with

¹⁷ Ibid., 133; Kennedy, *Works of Vaughan Williams*, 411-415.

¹⁸ Howes, *Music of Vaughan Williams*, 141-150; Kennedy, *Works of Vaughan Williams*, 211-213.

wordless voices and small orchestra. *Flos Campi* is one of Vaughan Williams' most exotic and evocative works. It was shortly after *Flos Campi* that he turned once again to a solo string instrument with voice. This time there are not the larger forces of choir and orchestra, but the more intimate combination of solo voice and violin.

The exact year in which Vaughan Williams wrote *Along the Field* is uncertain. Michael Kennedy lists the year as 1927, but he most likely chose that year because the premiere was given, as Kennedy states in *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, on October 24, 1927 by soprano Joan Elwes and violinist Marie Wilson.¹⁹ A short time after the premiere, and possibly another performance or two, the parts were returned to Vaughan Williams. He seems to have forgotten about the song cycle until the parts turned up in 1954 while he was preparing to move to the United States to be a visiting professor at Cornell University. Vaughan Williams sent his find to his publisher at Oxford Press, which published the song cycle that year. The text is taken from two sets of poems by A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* (1896) and *Last Poems* (1922). Vaughan Williams could not have seen *Last Poems* until 1922 and so *Along the field* must have been written between 1922 and 1927. Vaughan Williams had used Housman texts once before in *Wenlock*, which was also taken from *A Shropshire Lad*. Originally *Along the Field* included nine movements. Vaughan Williams later removed "The Soldier," which had immediately followed the third movement. The final version of *Along the Field*, with the Housman sets they were taken from, is as follows:

1. "We'll to the Woods No More," *Last Poems* Prologue
2. "Along the Field," *A Shropshire Lad* number 26
3. "The Half-Moon," *Last Poems* number 26
4. "In the Morning," *Last Poems* number 23

¹⁹ Kennedy, *Works of Vaughan Williams*, 416.

5. "The Sigh That Heaves the Grasses," *Last Poems* number 27
6. "Good-Bye," *A Shropshire Lad* number 5
7. "Fancy's Knell," *Last Poems* number 41
8. "With Rue My Heart is Laden," *A Shropshire Lad* number 54.²⁰

The complete texts to the cycle may be found in the Appendix. Each poem in the cycle deals with love and/or death using metaphors of nature. "We'll to the Woods no More" is a lament over the loss of a lover depicted by the changes of season. The second song of the cycle, and also its namesake, "Along the Field," deals with love and death through the passage of time. Nature, personified in an aspen tree, speaks to the lovers of their future. "The Half-Moon Westers Low" deals once again with a lover's loss and uses imagery of wind, rain, and the half-moon. Death is not a part of "In the Morning," rather this poem is a short tale of two people who spend the night together in a field of hay. Upon waking and seeing one another, they feel shame for their encounter. In "The Sigh that Heaves the Grasses" Housman returns again to the death of a love. The speaker in the poem describes the grave of their love as "the grasses/whence thou wilt never rise" and a "low mound on the lea." The speaker goes on to say that the tears shed at the gravesite are "tears of morning,/that weeps, but not for thee." "Good-Bye" is a much lighter poem than the previous five. In it a gentleman suitor tries to woo a lady as they walk in "field and lane," but all to no avail. The woman in the poem leaves the suitor as soon as she realizes his true nature. "Fancy's Knell" speaks of country dances accompanied by flute and enjoying life before death comes. The final poem of the cycle, "With Rue my Heart is Laden," does not speak to joy or dancing. The speaker instead laments the death of friends who are laid "By brooks too broad for leaping," and "In fields where roses fade."

²⁰ Tom Burns Haber, *A. E. Housman* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967) 52, 54; Dickenson, *Vaughan Williams*, 480, 481; Howes, *Music of Vaughan Williams*, 240; Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography*, 343.

Housman had a mixed reputation in dealing with musicians. Richard Graves stated that Housman let musicians set his poems to music so he would be made immortal through the song. However, Grant Richards, Housman's publisher, related that he did not like to give permission to composers. In particular, Richards noted that Housman gave Vaughan Williams permission related to *Wenlock* only grudgingly. When Housman realized that Vaughan Williams had omitted lines from "Is My Team Ploughing," he was very upset and equated it to the poet cutting two measures out of Vaughan Williams' music. Michael Kennedy states that Housman did not like a great number of the musical settings of his poetry, and moreover, that *Wenlock* was the one he disliked the most.²¹ The choice to set the text of *Along the Field* for solo violin and voice, while unusual, was not unprecedented. Two songs for solo violin and two voices written by Vaughan Williams were performed on the recital held in December of 1904. He also would have known of the Holst *Four Songs* from 1917. Vaughan Williams and Holst frequently discussed works in progress and even corresponded during the years of World War I while Vaughan Williams was in the army, in England and abroad. Ursula Vaughan Williams stated that it is very likely he went to a performance of Holst's *Four Songs* in 1924 at the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford.²²

Select Analytical Discussion

This discussion will be limited to only three of the songs in the cycle *Along the Field*. The songs selected for this discussion are chosen from the viewpoint of the violinist, because they are the most musically rewarding in performance. They are "Along the Field," "In the Morning," and "Good-Bye."

²¹ Richard Graves, *A. E. Housman: The Scholar Poet*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979) 117; Howes, *Music of Vaughan Williams*, 213, 214; Kennedy, *Works of Vaughan Williams*, 92.

“Along the Field”

The namesake song of the cycle *Along the Field*, song two, is a very plaintive setting of the Housman poem. The poem itself is a poignant look at love, death, and the inevitable passage of time (see Example 28):

Example 28 – Text of “Along the Field” from *A Shropshire Lad* No. 26, by A. E. Housman

Along the field as we came by
A year ago, my love and I,
The aspen over stile and stone
Was talking to itself alone.
‘Oh who are these that kiss and pass?
A country lover and his lass;
Two lovers looking to be wed;
And time shall put them both to bed,
But she shall lie with earth above,
And he beside another love.’
And sure enough beneath the tree
There walks another love with me,
And overhead the aspen heaves
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;
And I spell nothing in their stir,
But now perhaps they speak to her,
And plain for her to understand
They talk about a time at hand
When I shall sleep with clover clad,
And she beside another lad.²³

The song is in the mode of G Dorian and the meter is given as mixed 4/4-5/4 at the start. The form is ABAB¹. As with Holst, Vaughan Williams is able to flow seamlessly from one meter to another. “Along the Field” begins with the violin playing a four-note incipit that the voice imitates on beat four of measure two. The voice then sings alone until beat three of measure ten when the violin joins with open fifths of G and D. The violin enters one beat before the word “alone.” The open fifths, while harkening the qualities of folk music, also convey a

²² Ursula Vaughn Williams, *A Biography*, 156.

²³ A. E. Houseman, No. 26 in *A Shropshire Lad*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1922) 37, 38.

feeling of sadness with the indication to be played *sul tasto*, or over the fingerboard, and the D of the violin softly clashing against the voice's E natural (see Example 29).

Example 29 – *Along the Field*, “Along the Field,” measures 1 through 12.

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the voice part starting with a rest, followed by the lyrics "A - long the field as —" with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The violin part starts with a rest, followed by a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p*. The second system shows the voice part continuing with lyrics "we came by A year a - go, my love and I, The as - pen o - ver stile and stone Was". The violin part has a rest. The third system shows the voice part with lyrics "talk - ing to it - self a - lone. —". The violin part has a rest and then plays a series of chords marked "sul tasto" and "pp".

With the speaking of the aspen comes a change of key and meter. The meter changes to 3/2 while the mode changes to the true mixture of E Dorian and Phrygian. This is like the mixture of modes in the Holst song “My soul has nought” from the *Four Songs*. Vaughan Williams exploits the tritone and half-step motion made inherent by this modal mixture to give this passage speaking of death and an unknown future lover a sense of unease and sadness. The last word of the section is “love.” Instead of making love a good and perfect thing, Vaughan Williams clouds it with insecurity by setting it as a *pianississimo* fermata chord of g-f-C sharp¹.

During this entire section the violin plays a somber motive over the open G drone, held over from the end of the 4/4-5/4 section (see Example 30).

Example 30 – *Along the Field*, “Along the Field,” measures 13 through 16.

The musical score for Example 30 consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 13 and 14. The voice part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "'Oh who are these that kiss and". The violin part is written in a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, playing a somber motive over an open G drone. The second system covers measures 15 and 16. The voice part continues with the lyrics: "pass? A coun - try lov - er and his lass;". The violin part continues with the same somber motive over the open G drone.

At measure 27 the mode and meter return as they were at the beginning. The voice continues alone with the same melody it had beginning in measure two. This time the phrase is shortened from eleven to nine measures, ending on the meter and key change in measure 35. The violin reenters here with the open fifths of G and D. During the first four measures of this section the voice and violin reprise their roles from the analogous section. Beginning with the end of measure 38, they switch: the violin now has the fluid line that returns so often to the C sharp, while the voice has the half note falling motive below it (see Example 31 A). The voice and violin briefly reverse roles again at the end of measure 49 when the voice begins upward motion ending with the D to C sharp motive that has been prevalent throughout both 3/2 sections. The violin then takes over from the voice by playing a quiet E Phrygian-Dorian scale that ends in a

quadruple *piano* echo of the last notes sung by the voice. The last note heard is C sharp, which creates dissonance and the sense of unease throughout. Now it stands alone (see Example 31 B).

Example 31 A – *Along the Field*, “Along the Field,” measures 38 through 41

38 a tempo
Voice they speak to her, And
Violin *pp*

40
Voice plain for her to un - - der
Violin *p*

Example 31 B – *Along the Field*, “Along the Field,” measures 50 through 55.

50
Voice she be - side an - o - ther lad.
Violin *f*

53 *ppp*
Voice
Violin *ppp*

“In the Morning”

The text of song four, “In the Morning,” is the twenty-third poem of *Last Poems* and consists of only two quatrains (see Example 32).

Example 32 – Text of “In the Morning” from *Last Poems* No. 27, by A. E. Housman.

In the morning, in the morning,
In the happy field of hay,

Oh they looked at one another
By the light of day.

In the blue and silver morning
On the haycock as they lay,
Oh they looked at one another
And they looked away.²⁴

The form of the song is strophic with a violin prelude and postlude. Vaughan Williams plays on the parallel major-minor relationship throughout “In the Morning.” The key signature of G Major is given but the violin quickly introduces the minor third on the third note, moving from B natural to B flat. Adding to the sense of unease caused by the major/minor ambiguity of the motion from B to B flat is the half-step motion from G to F sharp and F sharp to F natural. The violin weaves alone from major to minor for the first five measures with the indication of *appassionato* (see Example 33).

Example 33 - *Along the Field*, “In the Morning,” measures 1 through 5.

The musical score for Example 33 consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Voice, the middle for the Violin, and the bottom for the Violin (Vln.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/2. The tempo is marked "Allegro moderato". The first violin part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an *appass.* marking. The second violin part starts with a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic. The lyrics "In the" are written under the second violin part in measure 5. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

²⁴ A. E. Housman, *Collected Poems*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959) 124.

On beat four of measure five the voice begins a four bar phrase without the violin that is firmly in G major with the indication to be sung *semplice* (see Example 34).

Example 34 - *Along the Field*, “In the Morning,” measures 5 through 7.

Example 34 shows the musical score for measures 5 through 7. The voice part begins on measure 5 with the lyrics "In the hap-py field of hay, Oh they looked at one an-o-ther By the". The violin part is silent in these measures.

When the violin rejoins the voice it immediately obscures the mode again with the B natural to B flat motion. At the end of the next measure, nine, the voice repeats the same melody it had at the beginning. With that Vaughan Williams combined the solo violin and solo voice melodies from the first nine measures, *appassionato* and *semplice* (see Example 35).

Example 35 - *Along the Field*, “In the Morning,” measures 9 through 12.

Example 35 shows the musical score for measures 9 through 12. The voice part continues with the lyrics "In the blue and sil-ver morn-ing On the hay-cock as they lay, Oh they looked at one an-o-ther". The violin part features triplets and a "poco string." marking.

Modal ambiguity continues with the song’s closing. A sequence based on the opening violin motive begins in measure fifteen, rising to suggest E Minor before falling once again to the motive with which the song began (see Example 36).

Example 36 - *Along the Field*, “In the Morning,” measures 15 through 24.

Violin

15

cresc. e string.

19

rit. e dim.

f appass.

p *pp* *ppp*

The constant half tone shift creates a sense of unease or uncertainty. This reflects well the ambiguous nature of the text. Housman leaves the reader to determine what each person might be thinking. However, the poem seems to suggest that the couple spent the night together and upon the light of day were ashamed and left wondering what would come of their union. The tonal ambiguities of Vaughan Williams’ setting, combined with the violin quarter triplets against duple voice rhythms, are effective in expressing feelings of shame and of questions left unanswered.

“Good-bye”

The text to “Good-bye,” the sixth song of the cycle, is from *A Shropshire Lad*, number five, depicting an encounter between a rakish man and a woman. With every verse he tries to seduce her with charm but is ultimately rebuffed (see Example 37).

Example 37 – Text of “Good-Bye” from *A Shropshire Lad* No. V, by A. E. Housman.

Oh see how thick the gold cup flowers
 Are lying in field and lane,
 With dandelions to tell the hours
 That never are told again.
 Oh may I squire you round the meads
 And pick you posies gay?
 -’Twill do no harm to take my arm.
 ‘You may, young man, you may.’

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
 ‘Tis now the blood runs gold,
 And man and maid had best be glad

Before the world is old.
 What flowers to-day may flower to-morrow,
 But never as good as new.
 -Suppose I wound my arm right round-
 'Tis true, young man, 'tis true.'

Some lads there are, 'tis shame to say,
 That only court to thieve,
 And once they bear the bloom away
 'Tis little enough they leave.
 Then keep your heart for men like me
 And safe from trustless chaps.
 My love is true and all for you.
 'Perhaps, young man, perhaps.'

Oh, look in my eyes then, can you doubt?
 -Why, 'tis a mile from town.
 How green the grass is all about!
 We might as well sit down.
 -Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
 Why must true lovers sigh?
 Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty,-
 'Good-bye, young man, good-bye.'²⁵

This song is a light-hearted dance in 6/8 that begins in D Major. It is comprised of four major sections, A, A¹ B, and C. Each section is characterized by gigue rhythms and driving eighth notes. The violin begins with a five measure introduction that anticipates theme A. As the voice sings this D Major theme, the violin scampers about outlining fifths and octaves that suggest B Minor. In measure nine and ten the violin plays a figure that is repeated each time the female character of the poem replies to her suitor (see Example 38).

Example 38 - - *Along the Field*, "Good-Bye," measures 5 through 11.

5
 Voice
 Oh see how thick the gold-cup flowers are lying in field and
 Violin

²⁵ Housman, *Collected Poems*, 15-16.

After a brief transition with solo violin, once again incorporating the reply motive, A^I begins, which is only a slightly altered version of A. This time the entire violin introduction or prelude is not presented. Instead only the reply motive is heard. The B section, in E Dorian, starts in measure 45, again preceded by a transition in the violin based on the reply motive. Here the melody in the voice keeps its lilting quality while the violin plays double stops accenting the downbeat. The change of mode coupled with the accented double stops in the violin underscore the text. Here the suitor describes the unscrupulous nature of most men, intimating that he is not like them (see Example 39).

Example 39 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 45 through 48.

Vaughan Williams does not give a transition into the C section as he had done before A^I and B. Measure 56 marks a key change back to two sharps. The A theme makes a brief

appearance in the voice as the violin plays figures taken from measure thirteen. After the female character's retort to her gentleman friend, the violin plays an ascending gapped scale that leads directly to the C section in measure 62 with no restatement of the reply motive (see Example 40).

Example 40 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 56 through 62.

The musical score for Example 40 is presented in two systems. The first system, measures 56-60, is marked "poco rit." and includes a voice line with the lyrics "My love is true and all for you" and a violin line. The second system, measures 60-62, is marked "a tempo" and includes a voice line with the lyrics "haps, young man, per - haps." and "Oh, look in my" and a violin line. The key signature changes from two sharps to no sharps or flats at measure 60.

Vaughan Williams changes the key signature here so it contains no sharps or flats; however, the constant E flats, A naturals, and B flats suggest C Dorian. Here also the character of the song changes considerably. The violin constantly arpeggiates chords over three and four strings in a *barriolage* style. The alternation of chords in this way while emphasizing C Minor darkens the mood and provides strong forward motion. Added to this are strategically-placed eighth-note rests in the vocal part that give a feeling of breathlessness or urgency. For a brief moment the male in the poem is not sure if his advances will be completely accepted. The motion of the violin and the rests within the voice convey these feelings well (see Example 41).

Example 41 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 62 through 66.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 62-64) shows the voice and violin parts. The voice part is in treble clef with a forte (f) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Oh, look in my eyes, then, can you doubt? Why,". The violin part is also in treble clef with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system (measures 65-66) shows the voice and violin parts. The voice part continues with the lyrics: "'tis a mile from town." The violin part continues with a melodic line. The key signature changes from two sharps to one sharp (F major) at measure 65.

A key signature of two sharps returns in measure 75, in which the violin outlines B Minor. D Major is finally achieved in measure 76, in which Vaughan Williams slows the tempo from its original graceful *Allegretto grazioso e molto moderato* to *Piu lento*. Here the violin and voice have a horn call-like figure before resting on a bitonal chord of C Minor and F sharp Minor, respectively. This happens during the male character’s final entreaties to his companion, which are then truncated: “Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty...” It is on the word “own,” that the suitor seems to become possessive of the woman and she pulls away. Immediately after the male’s last words, Vaughan Williams changes the tempo to *Vivace*, brilliantly reflecting the woman removing herself from her suitor’s arm and her quick response of “Good-bye, young man, good-bye.” Here, after the last reply of the woman, one would expect a cadence in the tonic to close the song. Instead Vaughan Williams tricks the listener by giving the voice one last statement of the reply motive, after which the violin plays two *pizzicato piano* chords that cadence on B Major. Vaughan Williams took the final F sharp of the voice and made it the root of the minor dominant of B, showing the levity Vaughan Williams found in the poem and the whimsical nature of young love (see Example 42).

Example 42 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 75 through 83.

75 *rit.* *Piu lento* *a tempo* *Vivace*

Voice

Be kind, have pi - ty, my own, my pret-ty,

Violin

ff *colla voce* *f*

79 *p*

Vln.

'Good - bye, young man, good - bye.'

pp *pizz.* *p*

Once again Vaughan Williams brings out the character of the poem not by word painting per se but by depicting or characterizing the overall text.

Performance Suggestions For All Songs

Of the three works in this study, *Along the Field* is the most technically difficult. To minimize shifting in the first song, “We’ll into the Woods No More,” fourth position should be used extensively. This will not eliminate the need to shift entirely, but it will provide a base position for the bulk of the song, thus enabling good intonation (see Example 43).

Example 43 – *Along the Field*, “We’ll into the Woods No More,” measures 3 through 9.

3

Voice

Mu - ses wore; The year draws in the day

Violin

p

6
— and soon will eve - ning shut:

Vln. 6

8
The lau - rels all are cut,

Vln. 8

In song number two, “Along the Field,” the primary issue is to not let the drones in the violin overpower the vocal line. The drones begin in measure ten and continue throughout the majority of the song (see Example 44).

Example 44 – *Along the Field*, “We’ll into the Woods No More,” measures 10 through 17, violin line only.

10
sul tasto

Violin

pp

14

Vaughan Williams helps the violin by indicating the song to be played *sul tasto*. Even so, it is easy to let the open G overtake the passages. To avoid this the violinist should be careful to add more weight to the moving line on the D string. The second extended drone passage begins in measure 35 (see Example 45).

Example 45 – *Along the Field*, “We’ll into the Woods No More,” measures 35 through 42.

35 *parlando*
ppp ad lib.
Voice leaves; — And I spell no-thing in their stir, But now per -

38 a tempo
Vln. haps they speak to her, And plain for her —
pp cantabile

41
Vln. to un - - der - stand

Unlike the first passage, the upper line in the violin stays above the voice most of the time. If the violinist diligently adheres to the *sul tasto* directive of Vaughan Williams the voice part should be easily heard.

“The Half-Moon Westers Low” presents many intonation challenges. Seventeen of the song’s twenty-two measures for violin include double stops with many dissonances against the voice (see Example 46).

Example 46 – *Along the Field*, “The Half-Moon Westers Low,” measures 3 through 10.

3 *p*
Voice The half-moon wes-ters low, my love, — And the wind brings up the rain; —

Violin

7
 — And wide a - part lie we, my love, And seas be-tween the twain.
 7
 Vln.

A limited use of vibrato by the violinist will aid in intonation. If too wide of a vibrato is used, the pitch will not have a clear center, because vibrato can easily distort it. Fortunately, most of these double stops may be played in first position, which also helps with intonation.

The violin part in “In the Morning” is highly chromatic. The violinist must constantly move around positions as no one position works for any length of time. Throughout the first fifteen and a half measures, combining first and second positions works well (refer to Example 33). However, at the end of measure fifteen through the end of the song, the violin ascends sequentially and then descends ultimately to the figure first heard at the very beginning. The following fingerings will help in a more assured intonation (see Example 47):

Example 47 – *Along the Field*, “In the Morning,” measures 15 through 24.

Violin
 15
 cresc. e string. *f* appass.
 19
 rit. e dim. *p* *pp* *ppp*

“The Sigh That Heaves the Grasses” is yet another song in which the violin must play many double stops (including many tri-tones) at a *pianissimo* dynamic (see Example 48).

Example 48 – *Along the Field*, “Sigh that Heaves the Grasses,” measures 1 through 3.

Once again Vaughan Williams gives the indication of *sul tasto*. By raising the general dynamic level to *piano* while still playing over the fingerboard, the violinist will be able to use more bow to ensure a good sound, which leads to a more confident performance. This song should sound mysterious and not timid. Intonation is made easier here if the violinist stays primarily in first and third positions.

Song six, “Good-Bye,” is a light-hearted Jig and needs to be, as Vaughan Williams wrote in the tempo indication, *grazioso*. Some of the bowings given in the part are awkward and can cause this song to lose its gracefulness. The most prevalent bowing of this nature is groups of three notes played staccato on the same bow. This makes it difficult to maintain equal articulation of the notes as well as the graceful quality that Vaughan Williams wanted. Below are examples of some of the bowings indicated in the score followed by a suggested bowing that will aid the performer (see Examples 49-54).

Example 49 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 5 through 7, printed bowings.

Example 50 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 5 through 7, suggested bowings.

Violin

Musical notation for Example 50: Violin part, measures 5 through 7. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The music consists of three measures. The first measure starts with a measure rest '5' and contains a quarter note G4 with a '1' above it, a quarter note A4 with a 'V' above it, and a quarter note B4 with a '1' above it. The second measure contains a quarter note C5 with a '1' above it, a quarter note D5 with a '1' above it, and a quarter note E5 with a '0' above it. The third measure contains a quarter note F5 with a '2' above it, a quarter note G5 with a '1' above it, and a quarter note A5 with a '1' above it.

Example 51 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 9 through 12, printed bowings.

Violin

Musical notation for Example 51: Violin part, measures 9 through 12. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The music consists of four measures. The first measure starts with a measure rest '9' and contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure contains a quarter note F5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6. Slurs are placed under the notes in each measure, indicating printed bowings.

Example 52 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 9 through 12, suggested bowings.

Violin

Musical notation for Example 52: Violin part, measures 9 through 12. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The music consists of four measures. The first measure starts with a measure rest '9' and contains a quarter note G4 with a 'V' above it, a quarter note A4 with a 'V' above it, and a quarter note B4 with a '1' above it. The second measure contains a quarter note C5 with a '1' above it, a quarter note D5 with a '1' above it, and a quarter note E5 with a '1' above it. The third measure contains a quarter note F5 with a '1' above it, a quarter note G5 with a '1' above it, and a quarter note A5 with a '1' above it. The fourth measure contains a quarter note B5 with a '0' above it, a quarter note C6 with a '0' above it, and a quarter note D6 with a '0' above it.

Example 53 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 45 through 48, printed bowings.

Violin

Musical notation for Example 53: Violin part, measures 45 through 48. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The music consists of four measures. The first measure starts with a measure rest '45' and contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure contains a quarter note F5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6. Slurs are placed under the notes in each measure, indicating printed bowings.

Example 54 – *Along the Field*, “Good-Bye,” measures 45 through 48, suggested bowings.

Violin

Musical notation for Example 54: Violin part, measures 45 through 48. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The music consists of four measures. The first measure starts with a measure rest '45' and contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure contains a quarter note F5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6.

As in the previous song, the problematic issue in “Fancy’s Knell” is the bowing, specifically a ricochet stroke. In most of these instances the written dynamic is *pianissimo* or *pianississimo* with, in one passage, the additional instruction to play *sul tasto*. It is very easy to lose the quality of articulation when performing ricochet at these dynamics and especially if

playing *sul tasto*. If the violinist uses separate bows, the short articulation can be maintained without an unwanted dynamic increase, and the passages will be clear (see Examples 55 and 56).

Example 55 – *Along the Field*, “Fancy’s Knell,” measures 7 through 9, printed bowings.

Example 56 – *Along the Field*, “Fancy’s Knell,” measures 7 through 9, suggested bowings.

Simplicity of fingerings should be considered when performing the final song in the cycle, “With Rue My Heart Is Laden.” Many violinists like to explore the upper positions of the strings when playing something that is not technically demanding. In this case, however, all fingerings should be kept simple, staying in first and third position. The intensity of sound when playing in the upper positions of the G and D strings is not appropriate for this song and would undermine the music. Additionally, in this context the upper position sound would not blend well with the voice. The beauty of this song lies with its simple elegance, and the violinist should strive to maintain it. (see Example 57).

Example 57 – *Along the Field*, “With Rue My Heart is Laden,” measures 1 through 8.

4

la - den For gold - en friends I had, For

Vln.

Detailed description: This system contains two staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature. It begins with a measure rest, followed by notes for 'la - den', 'For', 'gold - en', 'friends', 'I', 'had,', and 'For'. The bottom staff is a violin line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a long slur covering the rest of the system, and another triplet of eighth notes in the final measure.

7

many a rose - lipt maid - en And

Vln.

Detailed description: This system contains two staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It begins with a measure rest, followed by notes for 'many', 'a', 'rose - lipt', 'maid - en', and 'And'. The bottom staff is a violin line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a long slur covering the first two measures, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in the third measure, and another long slur covering the final measure.

CHAPTER 4

REBECCA CLARKE, THREE OLD ENGLISH SONGS

Historical Background

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979), an often overlooked twentieth-century composer, was born and raised in Victorian England, at a time when proper women did not typically pursue composition. Their role in musical society was usually limited to family or social gatherings and public chamber performances. Clarke overcame the bias and became both a respected composer and performer. She was selected in 1912 to become one of the first female members of the Queen's Hall Orchestra and in 1923 became the only woman ever given a commission by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.¹

Scholars do not know a great deal about Clarke's life before she entered the Royal College of Music in 1903. What is known of her early life, however, comes from as of yet unpublished memoirs. In her memoirs Clarke recalls a tyrannical father who regularly whipped Clarke and her two brothers with a two foot steel ruler used by architects. Each Sunday morning Clarke's father would inspect her fingernails for signs of nail biting. If they were not deemed acceptable she would once again have a meeting with what Clarke called the "steel slapper." Although her father was cruel, he also encouraged her musical studies in violin. Clarke was twice a student at the Royal College. After entering in 1903 to study violin, she was removed two years later when she was proposed to by her harmony teacher. She returned in 1907, but this time was accepted in composition. Although women had been admitted to the College since its

¹ Liane Curtis, "A Case of Identity," in *The Musical Times*, 5, vol. 137 (May, 1996); Ibid., "Clarke, Rebecca," in *The New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 5, 919, (London: Macmillan, 2001).

beginning, it was rare for them to be taken in composition. Her composition teacher there was none other than the teacher of Holst and Vaughan Williams, Charles Stanford. Clarke was the first woman ever to be taken on by Stanford as a student. Once again she withdrew from the College before her formal studies were complete, this time as the result of an argument with her father in 1910, the subject of which is unknown. After this quarrel Clarke's father made her leave the family home. Forced out with no means of support, Clarke began a career as a professional violist, eventually joining the aforementioned Queen's Hall Orchestra in 1912 and an all-woman string quartet some time before Britain declared war on Germany in 1914. In 1916 Clarke left England and went to the United States to visit her brothers, to concertize, and to compose.²

The meeting that would lead to the composition of Clarke's best known work, the viola sonata (1919), was purely coincidental. In 1917, while vacationing with friends in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, she met the patroness of the Coolidge festival, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who happened to be vacationing there as well. The next year Clarke attended the first Coolidge festival, where Coolidge suggested she enter the 1919 festival and composition competition, which would be for a new viola work. Clarke tied for first place and as a result Coolidge had to choose the winner. She choose the *Suite for Viola* by Ernest Bloch. The entries were submitted anonymously and there was much speculation before the composers names were released. Some of the judges, due to the Impressionist qualities of Clarke's sonata, thought it was written by Ravel. After the names were released the London newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* suggested that Clarke did not write her sonata at all and that "Rebecca Clarke" was a pseudonym being used by Bloch. Some of the musical elite of the time did not believe a woman was capable of writing with such power and quality.³

² Ibid., "A Case for Identity," 15, 16; Ibid., "Clarke, Rebecca," 919.

³ Curtis, "A Case of Identity," 15, 17; Ibid., "Clarke, Rebecca" 920.

Most of Clarke's compositional output before the sonata are short songs or instrumental works of one movement written for her friends and herself to perform. The *Viola Sonata* is much larger in scope. It is a three-movement work and each movement is cyclically linked. As the Coolidge competition judges found, Clarke combines the Post-Romantic sonata form treatment with an Impressionistic vocabulary, creating what today is considered a masterpiece for viola. She entered the Coolidge festival competition again in 1921, and again, was runner-up. The *Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano* was the result of this effort. Once more Clarke went beyond the compositional scope of her previous works and wrote a trio more aligned with the *Viola Sonata*. Coolidge was so taken with Clarke's music that she awarded Clarke a commission in 1923 for the *Rhapsody for Cello and Piano*.⁴

Following her compositional success in the United States and extensive performing tours, including a Hawaiian tour in 1918-1919 and an around-the-world tour in 1923, Clarke returned to her native England. While she continued to perform with various chamber ensembles upon her return, she composed less frequently. The pieces she did write were more characteristic of her pre-Coolidge festival compositions -- short, single movement instrumental pieces and songs. Among those few works are the *Old English Songs*, "Down by the Salley Garden" (1919, arranged for voice and violin c. 1950), *Three Irish Country Songs* (1926) for voice and violin, and several songs written for the married baritone John Goss, with whom she later had an affair. *The Tiger* (1933), written for Goss, is perhaps Clarke's darkest work, its use of chromaticism reminds one of the Expressionist composers. Her output as a composer dropped severely after 1933. Six years later, when England entered World War I, Clarke was again in the United States

⁴ Ibid., "Clarke, Rebecca," 920.

visiting her brothers. She decided not to return to London but to stay in America, living at different times with each brother and their families.⁵

The years 1939-1942 saw an increase in Clarke's compositional output. Out of the ten or so pieces written during this period, of special interest are the *Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale* (1941) for clarinet and viola and *Dumka* (1941) for violin, viola, and piano. The *Prelude* is a departure from her earlier works. The Post Romantic gestures and sweeping lines are replaced with neo-classical style reminiscent of Stravinsky, marked by asymmetrical rhythms and running counterpoint. Clarke did not explore the outer edges of tonality but she did incorporate some difficult rhythmic phrases. She believed that the future development of music lay not in harmonic language but in rhythm. In 1942 the *Pastoral* was one of thirty-five works chosen to be presented at a meeting in Berkeley, California, at the International Society for Contemporary Music. Clarke was one of only three British composers selected, the only woman. *Dumka* was most likely written, as many of Clarke's works, for her family or friends to perform. It is scored for violin, viola, and piano, a deviation from the traditional piano trio made up of violin, cello, and piano. In this work Clarke uses the same rhythmic structure as is in sections of Dvorak's *Dumka* trio, three plus three plus two. The Eastern European folk tradition that can be heard may also have been inspired by Clarke's work on a book about Martinu, which she was writing at the time she composed *Dumka*.⁶

Clarke's compositional productivity ended in 1942 when she took a position as a nanny. While she may have done this to lessen the burden on her brothers, with whom she was alternately living, she was none-the-less surprised at having for the first time in her life a job unrelated to music. In 1944 Clarke had a chance encounter on a street in Manhattan with an old

⁵ Curtis, "A Case of Identity," 17; Ibid., "Clarke, Rebecca," 919-921.

⁶ Curtis, "Clarke, Rebecca," 920; Ibid., "A Case of Identity," 20; W. H. H. Squire, "Rebecca Clarke Sees Rhythm as

acquaintance from her days at the Royal College, James Friskin, who was a piano professor at The Juilliard School. After a brief and romantic courtship Clarke and Friskin married on September 23rd, the twenty-fourth anniversary of her father's death. Friskin thought highly of Clarke's compositions and encouraged her to write more. "I'll bid my heart be still" for viola and piano (1944) was written for Friskin before they were married. He described in a letter to Clarke how he was truly touched by the work and implored her compose another viola sonata. However, with the exception of the song "God made a tree" (1954) and a few revisions of earlier works, Clarke did not compose for the rest of her thirty-five years.⁷

Analytical Discussion

Three Old English Songs was published in 1925, only a year after Clarke returned to London. It is not clear in exactly what year she wrote them. These songs are not written in a serious manner, such as the *Viola Sonata*, *Prelude*, *Trio*, or *The Tiger*, but are instead in the manner of works written for family and friends.

"It was a Lover and His Lass"

The first song, "It was a Lover and His Lass" is an arrangement of a Thomas Morley song with a text by William Shakespeare, taken from Act V, Scene III of *As You Like It*. While in the forest two pages happen upon Touchstone, a clown, and Audrey, a country wench, who will be married the next day. Touchstone asks the pages to sing he and his lady a song, to which the pages agree but suggest they will not sing well. The pages then sing their song (see Example 58):

Example 58 – Text of "It was a Lover and His Lass" from Act V, Scene III of *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green corn-field did pass

Next Field Development," *Christian Science Monitor*, 18, (12 December, 1922).

⁷ Curtis, "A Case of Identity," 20, 21; *Ibid.*, "Clarke, Rebecca," 920.

In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino
How that a life was but a flower
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:
Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crowned with the prime
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:
Sweet lovers love the spring.⁸

Clarke chose to use only three of Shakespeare's four verses, omitting his second verse.

"It was a Lover" is a very light and sprightly song in E flat Major. Clarke indicates the violin to play *leggiero* and gives the song the tempo marking of "Freshly, but not too fast." The violin begins with a short two measure introduction which hints at C Minor. By measure three, where the voice joins the violin, E flat is firmly established with motion from B flat on the last eighth-note of measure two to E flat on the downbeat of measure three in the violin. The harmonic language used by Clarke is as simple as the text, and stays firmly rooted in E flat.

This song is set in three verse strophic form. The violin provides contrast and interest with different textures and humorous arpeggiated figures. The first of these begins in measure

⁸ William Shakespeare, "As You Like It," Act V, Scene III in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, 252, 253, (New York: Gramercy Books, 1975).

ten. Here the violin plays *pizzicato* three note double-stops at the dynamic of *pianissimo* as it reinforces the vocal line (see Example 59).

Example 59 – *Three Old English Songs*, “It was a Lover,” measures 10 through 11.

Musical score for Example 59, measures 10 through 11. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The voice part has lyrics: "o'er the green corn - fields did pass In". The violin part is marked *pp* and *pizz.* and plays three-note double-stops.

The *pizzicato* texture continues through measure seventeen. In measure eighteen the series of arpeggiated figures begins. With these figures begins an architecture of increasing speed of counterpoint as they progress from sixteenths, to thirty-seconds, ending with sixteenth-note triplets. These figures should seemingly propel the music to the verse return or song ending, but, instead, Clarke places a *ritardando* at the end of measure twenty that continues through measure twenty-one until the downbeat of measure twenty-two, which marks the verse return for the second verse and also, the third and final ending. Adding to the humor of the song, Clarke gives trills to the violin that imitate the warbling of a bird. This begins also in measure eighteen just after the voice sings “When birds do sing” in the previous measure. Clarke’s use of bird imitation is reminiscent of Renaissance madrigal style. The *ritardando* and “bird trills,” along with the arpeggios and *pizzicato* section, help very well to convey the levity of the text and the moment in *As You Like It* (see Example 60).

Example 60 – *Three Old English Songs*, “It was a Lover,” measures 18 through 23.

Musical score for Example 60, measures 18 through 23. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The voice part has lyrics: "ding a ding a ding, Hey ding a ding a ding, Hey". The violin part is marked *p* and *arco* and includes trills and arpeggiated figures.

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 20-23) features a vocal line and a violin line. The vocal line has lyrics: "ding a ding a ding, Sweet lov - ers love the spring!". The tempo markings are "ritardando" (decelerating), "f" (forte), and "a tempo" (returning to the original tempo). The violin line includes triplets and a "pizz." (pizzicato) marking. The second system (measures 24-25) continues the vocal line with the word "spring!" and the violin line with a "pizz." marking. The dynamic markings are "p" (piano) and "pp" (pianissimo).

“Phyllis on the New Made Hay”

The second song, “Phyllis on the New Made Hay,” is an arrangement of an anonymous old English folksong. This is another song of love in which a man who has loved Phyllis a long time sings to her to win her hand in marriage (see Example 61).

Example 61 – Text of “Phyllis on the New Made Hay” from a traditional folk song (anonymous).

Phyllis on the new made hay,
 Fair, but lovely still she lay,
 Waisting all the summer day
 In melancholy sighing;
 Till Amintor came that way
 And bid her cease repining.

Told her he had loved her long,
 Loved her well and loved too long;
 Phyllis feared he'd do her wrong
 And feared to say she loved him;
 Till he swore in word and song
 She never need reprove him.

He had bought the wedding ring,
 Many a bow and silken string,
 Fit for queen or fit for king,

To show he truly loved her;
 Thus did e declare and sing
 Until at last he moved her.

Clarke marked the tempo indication “Flowingly” and has the violin play with a mute, hardly getting above a *piano* dynamic. The flowing feeling is achieved by the violin playing a constant stream of eighth-notes interspersed with triplets over the drone of an open D or A string. The drone suggests the country or folk sound from which this came (see Example 62).

Example 62 – *Three Old English Songs*, “Phyllis on the New Made Hay,” measures 1 through 4.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system is for Voice and Violin. The Voice part is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a rest, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign. The lyrics are: "Phil - lis on the new made hay,". The Violin part is in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. It starts with a *p* dynamic and the instruction "con sordino". The melody consists of eighth notes and triplets. The second system is for Violin (Vln.). It continues the melody from the first system. The lyrics are: "Fair but, lone - ly still she lay,". The Violin part continues with eighth notes and triplets, ending with a fermata over a final note.

As with “It Was a Lover” Clarke keeps the harmony simple. “Phyllis” is in D Major with a brief deflection to the relative minor, B, in measure seven after a deceptive cadence, which leads to a V of D in measure eight. Measure nine returns to D Major, where the key remains until the end (see Example 63). The structure of the song is a three-verse strophic form, just as “It Was a Lover.”

Example 63 – *Three Old English Songs*, “Phyllis on the New Made Hay,” measures 4 through 9.

The musical score for Example 63 consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 4 through 6, and the second system covers measures 7 through 9. The top staff is for the Voice, and the bottom two staves are for the Violin (Vln.). The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "still she lay, wast - ing all the sum - mer day In me - lan - chol - y sigh - ing: Till A - min - tor". The violin parts feature intricate rhythmic patterns, including triplets and a crescendo marking in measure 9.

The beauty in “Phyllis” lies in its simplicity of harmony and form and the weaving of the violin around the voice in lyrical counterpoint.

“The Tailor and His Mouse”

The final song of the set, “The Tailor and His Mouse,” returns to the lighthearted character of “It Was a Lover.” As with “Phyllis,” it is an arrangement of an old English folksong. The story is of a tailor who had a mouse that he thought was sick (see Example 64).

Example 64 – Text of “The Tailor and His Mouse,” from a traditional folk song (anonymous).

A tailor had a little mouse,
 Hi diddly um cum feedle;
 They lived together in an house,
 Hi diddly um cum feedle;
 Hi diddly um cum tarum tantum,
 Through the town of Ramsey,
 Hi diddly um cum over the lea,
 Hi diddly um cum feedle.

The tailor thought his mouse was ill,
 Hi diddly um cum feedle;

So he gave it half of one blue pill,
Hi diddly um cum feedle;
Hi diddly um cum tarum tantum,
Through the town of Ramsey,
Hi diddly um cum over the lea,
Hi diddly um cum feedle.

The tailor thought his mouse would die,
Hi diddly um cum feedle;
Do he baked it in an apple pie,
Hi diddly um cum feedle;
Hi diddly um cum tarum tantum,
Through the town of Ramsey,
Hi diddly um cum over the lea,
Hi diddly um cum feedle.

The tailor thought his mouse was dead,
Hi diddly um cum feedle;
So he another in its stead,
Hi diddly um cum feedle;
Hi diddly um cum tarum tantum,
Through the town of Ramsey,
Hi diddly um cum over the lea,
Hi diddly um cum feedle.

This morbidly absurd tale is set in a very comical way by Clarke. She makes use of folk mannerisms and even adds a bit of popular classical music.

“The Tailor” is in a modified strophic form and has four verses, not three as the first two songs. Also unlike the first two songs “The Tailor” is set in a mode, G Dorian. The phrases are always four measures in length. The mouse story is relayed in the first two measures of each phrase of the verses. The final two measures of each contain the directive to “cum feedle,” which paired with the country fiddle figures in the violin, suggests it indeed does mean to “come fiddle.” Harmonically, Clarke sets the measures which tell of the mouse in G Dorian. With the fiddle request comes swift motion to B flat for three beats and an implied D minor chord of one beat which returns to G Dorian (see Example 65).

Example 65 – *Three Old English Songs*, “The Tailor and His Mouse,” measures 1 through 4.

Example 65 musical score showing Voice and Violin parts for measures 1 through 4. The lyrics are: "tai - lor had a lit - tle mouse, Hi did - dl - y um cum fee - dle; They". The violin part is marked *p* and *spiccato* in the first two measures, and *mf* in the last two measures.

The text in the refrain, or measures nine through sixteen and 26 through 33, seems to add a drum with the words “Hi diddly un cum tarum tantum, through the town of Ramsey.” As the voice outlines a minor mode G for two measures and minor mode A for two measures, the violin flies about with spiccato arpeggiated figures, open fifths, and thirds that can be played with an open string that at times create harmonic clashes (see Example 66).

Example 66 – *Three Old English Songs*, “The Tailor and His Mouse,” measures 9 through 13.

Example 66 musical score showing Voice and Violin parts for measures 9 through 13. The lyrics are: "Hi did - dl - y um cum ta - rum tan - tum, through the town of Ram - - - sey, Hi did - dl - y um cum". The violin part is marked *f* in the first two measures and *mf* in the last two measures.

The final verse is Clarke at her comic best. She changes the tempo marking from “In lively time,” which it is for the first three verses, to “Slowly and Sadly.” The voice melody remains exactly as it was for the previous verses but the violin part now changes. After a measure long transition by the violin, it plays four measures of Chopin’s famous funeral march

as an open G is droned below. In measure twenty-one, the end of the four measure phrase, both the violin and voice are instructed to glissando down their pitch. Over the next two measures the violin plays a G Dorian scale leading once again to the B flat-D modal- G Dorian motion where the tempo changes to “In lively time again.” The refrain, measures 26 through the end, remains the same save one change: the violin plays a *fortissimo* G minor quadruple-stop to close the song (see Example 67).

Example 67 – *Three Old English Songs*, “The Tailor and His Mouse,” measures 17 through 21 and 22 through 25.

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows measures 17-21. The voice part has lyrics: "The tai - lor thought his mouse was dead, Hi did - dl - y um cum". The violin part has a *p* dynamic and an *espress.* marking. The second system shows measures 22-25. The voice part has lyrics: "fee dle; So he got an - oth - er in its stead,". The violin part has a *pp* dynamic and a *Glissando* marking. The third system shows measures 26-29. The voice part has lyrics: "Hi did - dl - y um cum fee - - - dle;". The violin part has a *ten.* marking.

“The Tailor” is a jovial song whereby Clarke achieves her humor with the inclusion of the Chopin quote, stark note clashes, and also by utilizing common folk traits such as the open fifths and bouncing, fiddle-like arpeggios. Clarke truly captures the levity and spirit of the text.

Performance Suggestions

“It Was a Lover” is the most technically difficult of the three Clarke songs. The tempo poses the first problem. Clarke’s only tempo indication is “Freshly, but not too fast.” Violinists should look at measures eighteen through twenty-one to determine just what “..not too fast” is for them (see Example 68).

Example 68 – *Three Old English Songs*, “It was a Lover,” measures 18 through 21, violin line only.

The musical score for the violin line in measures 18 through 21 of "It was a Lover" is shown. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. Measure 18 begins with a *p* dynamic, a trill (*tr*) on the first note, and a *tr* marking above the final note. The instruction "arco" is written below the staff, and "a tempo" is written below the first measure. Measures 19 and 20 contain triplets of eighth notes. Measure 21 features a *f* dynamic and triplets of eighth notes. The score is written on two staves, with measure numbers 18, 20, and 21 indicated.

If the song is too fast it might become a problem for the vocalist to enunciate properly, and in measures eighteen through twenty-one, the violin can easily sound harried and unclear. A tempo of the quarter note at circa seventy to eighty beats per minute aids with both of these issues. If, however, the tempo is any slower, the sprightly character of the song is lost.

The dynamics can also pose a problem. Most of the song is at the *piano* dynamic level. There are only two *fortes* indicated. In measure ten begins an extended double stop *pizzicato* section that is marked *pianissimo* (see Example 69).

Example 69 – *Three Old English Songs*, “It was a Lover,” measures 10 through 17, violin line only.

The musical score for the violin line in measures 10 through 17 of "It was a Lover" is shown. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. Measure 10 begins with a *pp* dynamic and a *pizz.* marking. The score is written on two staves, with measure numbers 14 and 17 indicated. The instruction "colla voce" is written below the staff at the end of measure 17.

Measures eighteen through twenty, the most challenging measures for the violin, are marked *piano* and the final verse is to be performed *pianississimo*. If the general dynamic level of this song is raised by one level it then becomes easier to play the *pizzicati* and meet the technical difficulty of measures eighteen through twenty-one. There is a danger in being too quiet as it becomes much more difficult to tune the double stops if they cannot be easily heard. A raised dynamic also allows for the violinist to be more aggressive in the three-note double stops.

In “Phyllis” the main concern is with evenness of sound and balance. The violinist must not let the open D or open A drones overpower the moving eighth notes above it or the vocal line (see Example 70).

Example 70 – *Three Old English Songs*, “Phyllis on the New Made Hay,” measures 1 through 4.

In addition to the drones, measure eight poses a potential color and balance problem (see Example 71).

Example 71 – *Three Old English Songs*, “The Tailor and His Mouse,” measures 7 through 8.

If the violin plays the first three beats of measure eight on the E string the color will be too bright and it will be difficult not to cover the vocalist. To avoid this the violinist should shift to fourth position on the A string on the last eighth note of measure seven. This will keep a warmer sound and aid in good balance through the *diminuendo*.

The violin in “The Tailor” should take on the role of the country fiddle mentioned in measure eight. Clarke gives the violin many open fifths and fiddle-like passages to meet that end. The only bowings that are given directly are in measures one, five, and eight (measure five is a repeat of measure one). There is an upbow indicated on beat four of measure eight, which works well for achieving the *crescendo* to measure nine. The printed bowings for measures one and five do not work as well (see Example 72).

Example 72 – *Three Old English Songs*, “The Tailor and His Mouse,” measure 1.

To achieve the *spiccato* Clarke has written it is easier to break up the bowing in beats two, three, and four, and to keep the consecutive downbows from beats one to two. This allows for greater control of the stroke and it maintains the character of the song. In the fiddle passages the violinist should use as many open strings as possible. This will ensure the fiddle quality of the work (see Example 73).

Example 73 – *Three Old English Songs*, “The Tailor and His Mouse,” measures 10 through 12, violin line only.

The final measure of the song brings the last suggestion. As written, the final *fortissimo* chord in the violin would occur on an upbow (see Example 74).

Example 74 – *Three Old English Songs*, “The Tailor and His Mouse,” measure 33.

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Voice and Violin. Both parts are in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The Voice part consists of a single note on the staff with a fermata above it. The Violin part consists of a chord on the staff with a fermata above it and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic marking below it.

An upbow would be antithetical to starting the chord *fortissimo* and maintaining the sound evenly during the fermata. If the final chord is played using a downbow, the dynamic can be achieved with less effort and kept more even throughout the fermata.

CONCLUSION

The three works examined in this study were written at a time when chamber genres and recital halls were dominated by string quartets, quintets, trios, and voice combined with piano. Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Clarke ventured into a new sonic texture that only a handful of other composers have since utilized. Hector Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), Boris Blacher (1903-1975), and Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000) each wrote a work for violin and voice. The Villa-Lobos work was written in 1923, which was also when he took his first trip to Europe. When the Holst songs first appeared, Villa-Lobos had already been collecting folksongs from his native Brazilian rain forests. His work for violin and voice reflects peasant work songs.¹ There is no evidence that Villa-Lobos heard the Holst songs while in England or that Holst, Vaughan Williams, or Clarke knew of the Villa-Lobos song. Both the Blacher and Hovhaness works were written in the 1950s.

As this small group of composers indicates, the combination of violin and voice has not gained the popularity of the ubiquitous quartet. Clarke would utilize this pairing in only two other works (“Down by the Salley Garden” 1919, arranged for violin and voice circa 1950), and Vaughan Williams would write only one more piece for this combination (*Two English Songs* 1954). Holst would never use the coupling of violin and voice again. The reason for this lies not with any lack of quality or beauty in works for violin and voice but more simply the difficulties in getting both forces together and the predominance of established chamber ensembles. There have been professional string quartets in existence since the mid-nineteenth century and composers have taken advantage of their availability ever since. Also, it is an easy thing to take away one violin to form a trio or add a piano or viola or cello to form a quintet.

¹ Shirley Fleming, disc liner notes for *Songs My Father Taught Me*, performed by Catherine and Joseph Malfitano,

Composers are more likely to write works for genres that will be the easiest to have performed. There are of course notable exceptions that include the works in this study. If a composer does write a work for a more unconventional chamber grouping, he or she would most likely have to rely on friends and colleagues for a performance, and once given, the piece is admired but put away. Vaughan Williams, for example, forgot about *Along the Field* for almost thirty years. Given the abundant number of professional quartets and their concert series around the world and the demands of opera and/or solo recitals for singers, it is easy to see why these works are left off of concert programs.

It is in academia where nontraditional chamber works are most likely to be heard. This is due to the relative availability of performance faculty and their willingness to branch out from the norm in programming. Also, in the academic setting profit is not the main concern of concert sponsors and the audience is comprised of a different makeup than those at public venues. Academia is concerned with the musical education of students and providing new musical experiences to the greater community. Subsequently, performers have greater freedom in choosing repertoire and composers a wider range of musical choices.

Four Songs, Along the Field, and Three Old English Songs are unique among chamber music of the Late Romantic and early twentieth century. Although many composers experimented with various combinations of instruments and instruments with voice, only Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Clarke, in England, chose to combine voice and violin. The only other example of violin and voice in this combination before the 1950s is the aforementioned work of the Brazilian composer Villa-Lobos. In the three English works studied here, the composers strove to underline the intimate nature of the duo by making them more equals than in the usual voice and piano setting. This is achieved in many cases with each “voice” weaving musical

threads around each other in melodies and countermelodies. Special capabilities of the violin were also utilized such as double-stops, drones, *pizzicato*, and the ability to closely imitate the human voice. Each composer also utilized native folk idioms such as modes and phrases that common people might recognize such as the chant-like sections of the Holst, which came from the Church, or Clarke's inclusion of the Chopin funeral march.

These works also employ new ideas beyond the combination of voice and violin. In the Holst one finds no fixed meters or key signatures but instead a free flow of words and music as well as a true mixture of modes. Vaughan Williams used modes, keys, and, in one song, atonality. These works deserve to be heard and enjoyed by a wider audience. It is very easy for performers (even in academia) to recycle works for performance. Instead of relying on pieces that are widely played and heard, performers should look for unique and lesser known works to present. Music is only music when it is played and heard and many great works are too often ignored. The result is an ever shrinking repertoire and the same works heard again and again in halls around the world. Discovery of the works discussed here makes possible an expanded repertoire of good music for both violinists and vocalists. It is also hoped that through the performance of these works a spark might be set with composers to create more pieces for this intimate duo.

APPENDIX

COMPLETE TEXT TO THE SONG CYCLE *ALONG THE FIELD*

All poems are taken from *A Shropshire Lad* and *Collected Poems*. These works are cited in the Works Referenced section that follows.

“We’ll to the Woods”

We’ll to the woods no more,
The laurels are all cut,
The bowers are bare of bay
That once the Muses wore;
The year draws in the day
And soon will evening shut:
The laurels are all cut,
We’ll to the woods no more.
Oh we’ll no more, no more
To the leafy woods away,
To the high wild woods of laurel
And the bowers of bay no more.

“Along the Field”

Along the field as we came by
A year ago, my and I,
The aspen over stile and stone
Was talking to itself alone.
‘Oh who are these that kiss and pass?
A country lover and his lass;
Two lovers looking to be wed;
And time shall put them both to bed,
But she shall lie with earth above,
And he beside another love.’

And sure enough beneath the tree
There walks another love with me,
And overhead the aspen heaves
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;
And I spell nothing in their stir,
But now perhaps they speak to her,

And plain for her to understand
They talk about a time at hand
When I shall sleep with clover clad,
And she beside another lad.

“The Half-Moon Westers Low”

The half moon westers low, my love,
And the wind brings up the rain;
And wide apart lie we, my love,
And seas between the twain.

I know not if it rains, my love,
In the land where you do lie;
And oh, so sound you sleep, my love,
You know no more than I.

“In the Morning”

In the morning, in the morning,
In the happy field of hay,
Oh they looked at one another
By the light of day.

In the blue and silver morning
On the haycock as they lay,
Oh they looked at one another
And they looked away.

“The Sigh That Heaves the Grasses”

The sigh that heaves the grasses
Whence thou wilt never rise
Is of the air that passes
And knows not if it sighs

The diamond tears adorning
Thy low mound on the lea,
Those are the tears of morning,
That weeps, but not for thee.

“Good-Bye”

Oh see how thick the goldcup flowers
Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours
That never are told again.
Oh may I squire you round the meads
And pick you posies gay?
-’Twill do no harm to take my arm.
‘You may, young man, you may.’

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
’Tis now the blood runs gold,
And man and maid had best be glad
Before the world is old.
What flowers to-day may flower to-morrow,
But never as good as new.
-Suppose I wound my arm right round-
‘’Tis true, young man, ’tis true.’

Some lads there are, ’tis shame to say,
That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
’Tis little enough they leave.
Then keep your heart for men like me
And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true and all for you.
‘Perhaps, young man, perhaps.’

Oh, look in my eyes then, can you doubt?
-Why, ’tis a mile from town.
How green the grass is all about!
We might as well sit down.
-Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
Why must true lovers sigh?
Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty,-
‘Good-bye, young man, good-bye.’

“Fancy’s Knell”

When lads were home from labour
At Abon under Clee,
A man would call his neighbor
And both would send for me.
And where the light in lances
Across the mead was laid,
There to the dances
I fetched my flute and played.

Ours were idle pleasures,
Yet oh, content we were,
The young to wind the measures,
The old to heed the air;
And I to lift with playing
From tree and tower and steep
The light delaying,
And flute the sun to sleep.

The youth toward his fancy
Would turn his brow of tan,
And Tom would pair with Nancy
And Dick step off with Fan;
The girl would lift her glances
To his, and both be mute:
Well went the dances
At evening to the flute.

Wenlock Edge was umbered,
And bright was Abdon Burf,
And warm between them slumbered
The smooth green miles of turf;
Until from grass and clover
The upshot beam would fade,
And England over
Advanced the lofty shade.

The lofty shade advances,
I fetch my flute and play:
Come, lads, and learn the dances
And praise the tune to-day.
To-morrow, more’s the pity,
Away we both must hie,
To air the ditty,
And to earth I.

“With Rue My Heart is Laden”

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

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