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TEXT/MUSIC RELATIONS IN RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'
SONGS OF TRAVEL: AN INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

by

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A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

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ABSTRACT

Preparation of art song for performance requires intensive collaborative effort by both the singer and the pianist. This preparation should include a thorough study of the text as well as the music. The relationship between the composer's music and the poet's words is the key to discovering the interpretive intentions of the composer, as well as making informed musical decisions regarding the performance of the work.

Songs of Travel for baritone and piano, composed in 1904 by Ralph Vaughan Williams on poems of Robert Louis Stevenson, is an example of song cycle, a set of art songs that are connected musically, textually, or both. The songs were intended by the composer to be performed as a unit. The texts were chosen by the composer from a larger collection of poems of the same title, and were arranged in a particular order that suggests a chronology of events in the life of the protagonist. This particular song cycle employs recurring musical ideas while maintaining the independence of each piece. The story is told by a narrator, represented by the baritone, who has abandoned civilized society in favor of a life of wandering. His development as a person, and the effect the events of each song has upon his personal journey, are reflected through the use of returning musical themes, specific harmonic devices, and other compositional tools with which Vaughan Williams suggests dramatic direction.

This research paper focuses on an analysis of text/music relations in each of the nine *Songs of Travel*. Specific musical ideas have been highlighted, possible connections between these figures and the poetry have been explored, and a dramatic progression of the story has been extrapolated. The end of each chapter presents interpretive suggestions for performance based upon those findings.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family for their unending support and supreme patience; and to John Dooley, whose beautiful voice, prodigious musicianship and unwavering friendship inspired me to be the best collaborator I can be.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the supervisory committee for their invaluable help; Eckart Sellheim for setting an example of what a true artist should be; Kristina Welch, without whose computer skills this work would not exist; and Lynne Floyd for her support and her unfailing friendship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	Introduction.....	1
2	“The Vagabond”	19
3	“Let Beauty Awake”	31
4	“The Roadside Fire”	40
5	“Youth and Love”	53
6	“In Dreams”	64
7	“The Infinite Shining Heavens”	73
8	“Whither must I wander?”	83
9	“Bright is the ring of words”.....	96
10	“I have trod the upward and the downward slope”.....	105
11	Interpretive Summary.....	115
	Bibliography	117

Chapter 1

Introduction

Collaborative artists have a wide range of responsibilities that often go unnoticed by their fellow musicians. Their primary functions are to play with technical skill, and to communicate well-conceived musical ideas in partnership with other performers. When working with vocalists they must also have a complete understanding of the text for which the music was written, as well as a thorough knowledge of how that text is represented in the accompaniment and vocal line. It is this comprehension, combined with an interpretive agreement between singer and pianist, which makes for a truly rewarding performance experience. Frequently, disagreements between performers could be avoided by studying in-depth the coordination between text and music, rather than basing performance practice solely upon personal opinion or on one part alone. In the performance of solo piano music, the pianist alone is accountable for the musical integrity of the composition and his or her own artistic impulses. When the pianist accompanies a singer, however, the equation becomes much more complex: the collaborator must still answer to him- or herself and to the composer, but also must be sensitive to the poet's intentions. In addition, the accompanist must coordinate all of these intentions with the singer's

views, and both should be in accord with regard to the final product they hope to present. This complicated puzzle is readily solvable by means of detailed study of music and poetry by both singer and accompanist. The project embarked upon here is an example of such a study, using Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel* as its subject matter.

Relative to other musical concentrations, collaborative arts is an area lacking in specific supportive texts (e.g. interpretive guides), especially when one considers the great size of the repertoire. Nonetheless, there are several books that have been viewed as standard guides to interpretation in the field of art song performance. The authors include coaches and accompanists, singers of opera and lieder, and a non-performing scholar. Each has a unique approach to the instruction of interpretation, but all share the common goal of well-conceived and motivated performance.

The Schubert Song Cycles may be viewed as one of the great interpretive handbooks by one of the preeminent collaborative pianists, Gerald Moore.¹ The volume is divided into three parts, dealing chronologically with each of Schubert's three major cycles. Each cycle is discussed one song at a time, including commentary on difficulties of interpretation, ranging from the abundance of strophic songs requiring

¹ Gerald Moore, *The Schubert Song Cycles, with Thoughts on Performance* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975).

great variety, to treatment of markings (such as fermati and accents), which had unique definitions in Schubert's music. Along with these technical issues, Moore simultaneously tackles interpretive concerns in the poetry with ease. He is a skilled writer, and his ability to suggest well-conceived interpretations based upon musical markings is unparalleled in other volumes of this type.

An equally valuable book of the same genre is Pierre Bernac's *The Interpretation of French Song*.² Bernac states in the foreword of the book that this is a guide for English-speaking singers who are studying unfamiliar repertoire. He goes on to define French song and to briefly discuss its origins.

The early chapters address such topics as the performance of vocal music, basic French diction, and stylistic differences between French *mélodies* and German *lieder*. Bernac's goal is to make it clear that French song cannot be compared to any other country's song repertoire, as it has its own unique appeal and somewhat evasive interpretive needs.

The subsequent chapters contain poems and interpretive suggestions for selected songs by the most significant composers, arranged chronologically and loosely divided into sections. Bernac is very consistent in his format. He begins by briefly discussing the output of the

² Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978).

composer, then he displays specific poems with side-by-side English translation. He then discusses interpretation, touching on all aspects of performance, from vocal quality to pedaling and pianistic attack.

Lotte Lehmann's *Eighteen Song Cycles: Studies in Their Interpretation*³ is less successful than the books by Moore and Bernac, for several reasons. A line from an introductory chapter titled "The Song Cycle" speaks volumes: "An accompanist must be the servant of the singer. He must, so to speak, play second fiddle and leave the singer completely in charge." The main part of the book is devoid of any pianistic suggestions. Lehmann presents eighteen cycles, ranging from Schubert to Ravel, with vague dramatic recommendations. For example, her interpretive suggestions for the fourth song of Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* follow:

Sing...with your head thrown back, vividly and filled with enthusiasm. Your voice must have a quality that conveys courage, adventure, delight...Now the wind blows through your hair, your eyes sparkle, your blood pulses through your veins. [p. 48]

This is Lehmann's style of instruction throughout the book. Overall, this book would be of little help to anyone advanced enough to consider performance of a song cycle. It reads more like a memoir of how Lehmann herself performed these songs than as a well-researched, scholarly attempt at a guide to interpretation. Lehmann's earlier attempt at writing a guide to

³ Lotte Lehmann, *Eighteen Song Cycles: Studies in Their Interpretation* (London: Cassel and Company, 1971).

interpretation is titled *More than Singing*.⁴ Although this book includes some musical examples, they do not enhance the text.

Another general interpretive guide to songs of mixed languages and periods is Gerald Moore's *Singer and Accompanist*.⁵ From the very beginning, Moore points out that the book is comprised of his opinions, and if someone disagrees enough with his suggestions to find his or her own interpretation through research and study, then the book has served its purpose. The table of contents is presented alphabetically by composer. Moore's thoroughness with regard to research and his need to justify his opinions using musical examples, make this book very user-friendly. He treats vocal concerns and pianistic problems fairly equally. In fact, he spends slightly more time addressing the responsibilities of the pianist. Moore includes a substantial index of song titles, composers, poets, and performers.

The undisputed champion of lieder performance in the last half of the twentieth century is Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. He is regarded as the ultimate interpreter of Schubert's songs, and his book on the subject,

⁴ Lotte Lehmann, *More than Singing* (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1945).

⁵ Gerald Moore, *Singer and Accompanist* (New York: MacMillan, 1954).

Schubert's Songs: A Biographical Study,⁶ sheds light on how he achieved such a remarkable level of performance ability. A great portion of the book contains absorbing biographical, historical, and social commentary that gives the reader a thorough understanding of Schubert's compositional motivations. This is the aspect of *Schubert's Songs* that makes it unique and illustrates the fact that Fischer-Dieskau's prowess as a performer is directly related to his scholarly knowledge of the works he performs. He includes a bibliography at the end of the text, as well as two indexes. The first of these presents some six hundred song titles with their dates of composition and the poet's name. The general index includes an impressive list of people who came into contact with Schubert and their relationship to him.

Another valuable interpretive aid is Barbara Meister's *Art Song: The Marriage of Music and Poetry*.⁷ The author provides a clear, if somewhat analytical, study of art song that gives equal weight to the poetry and music. The chapters are divided by composer, with some (like Mozart and Strauss) being represented by a single song and others by several songs or a cycle. The final chapter is devoted to Aaron Copland's *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*. This chapter is noteworthy because art song research

⁶ Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, *Schubert's Songs: A Biographical Study* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1984).

⁷ Barbara Meister, *Art Song: The Marriage of Music and Poetry* (Wakefield, NH: Hollowbrook Publishing, 1992).

and performance was initiated and has been consistently maintained in Europe; therefore, a large number of significant American works have been passed over in favor of the “giants” of song composition. It is a refreshing change to find not only a well-balanced representation of songs of different styles, but to find a major American cycle included.

From a coaching standpoint, the most comprehensive reference is *The Art of Accompanying and Coaching* by Kurt Adler.⁸ A respected vocal coach and accompanist in his own right, he devotes separate chapters to the history of accompanying and the history of coaching, and in the succeeding chapters addresses everything from the mechanics of musical instruments and the human voice to French, German, Italian, and Spanish diction. Adler also includes chapters on programming and musical style. Although regarded as the foremost guide for the coach/accompanist, Kurt Adler’s *Art of Accompanying and Coaching* may serve the field better if it were presented in separate volumes on diction, programming, history, and coaching.

The few texts discussed here are a cross-section of the types of literature available to collaborative artists seeking help with interpretation. When a singer and pianist begin work on a song cycle, they often have to extrapolate the intentions of the composer, since most did not leave behind

⁸ Kurt Adler, *The Art of Accompanying and Coaching* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1978).

specific directions for interpreting their work. Thus, performers rely upon their own instincts and must validate their musical choices by citing the evidence they find in the score. Something as simple as a recurring interval or contour of phrase may serve as the basis of an interpretive choice, as long as the collaborators know what that motive means to them. It is that freedom of personal expression that makes all performances different, and all well-thought-out interpretations justified.

The following discussion of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel* will present each song in order, discussing aspects of the story as it develops as well as musical ideas that represent key elements of the plot (e.g., the road, physical motion) or act as emotional barometers. Each song will be considered individually, with an introductory section that discusses the poem and the overall form of the song. The piece will then be described from start to finish, and a concluding section will provide suggestions regarding tempi, interpretive choices, and any pianistic or vocal intricacies found in the piece.

Songs of Travel is a cycle of nine pieces for baritone and piano by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) on texts by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894). The first eight songs were composed between 1901 and 1904, and the ninth song was written sometime before the composer's death in 1958. The original was composed for baritone, but the score is

available from Boosey and Hawkes in a high version. The transposed key relationships are not exact, and the history of its inception is unknown. The publisher was contacted several times, with no response.

The first performance of the cycle, which at that time did not include "I have trod the upward and the downward slope," was in 1904 in London. Vaughan Williams sought publication after this performance, but he could only get the work printed in sections. The first publication, *Songs of Travel* Book I, was in 1905 and consisted of "The Vagabond," "Bright is the ring of words," and "The Roadside Fire." Book II was released in 1907, and contained "Let Beauty Awake," "Youth and Love," "In Dreams," and "The Infinite Shining Heavens," in that order. "Whither must I wander?" was published alone in 1912. "I have trod the upward and the downward slope" was found after Vaughan Williams' death by his widow, and carries a notation that the song is only to be performed with the rest of the cycle. The complete *Songs of Travel* was published in 1960 in the original key (baritone).

The poetry is written in the first person, and has been set to music in such a way as to suggest a progression of events. This narrative alludes to the life journey of a man who, for unknown reasons, chooses to abandon the society and life of his upbringing in favor of a nomadic existence. He leaves behind the security of home and family and takes to the open road

to live as a vagabond. His journey is interrupted when he meets, and falls in love with, a young woman. He must choose between her and the life of a wanderer, and his choice brings him great pain. He eventually finds that he must face the consequences of his choice to abandon his family, and, later, the woman he loves. These scenes and the emotional upheaval they later produce become the “plot” of the cycle by virtue of their organization by the composer, as well as through the use of such compositional devices as text painting, modality, and motivic recurrence.

When studying a song cycle, one must first attempt to understand the factors that inspired the poet and, later, the composer. *Songs of Travel* focuses on a man who abandoned all he knew and loved in favor of a rootless existence. Robert Louis Stevenson, the author of these texts, led a life of nearly constant travel and self-examination through the journeys he took.

Robert Louis Stevenson was born on November 30, 1850, in Edinburgh, Scotland. His parents, Thomas and Margaret Isabella Balfour Stevenson, each came from large families of thirteen children, and each suffered from the poor health common in inbred families during the Victorian era. Louis, as his family called him, was also sickly, and suffered frequently throughout his childhood from a variety of maladies ranging from colds and flu to pneumonia and whooping cough. For the first twelve

years of his life, Louis's mother was often bedridden with pulmonary difficulties, thus necessitating the employment of a nurse to supervise the Stevensons' only child.

The family hired Alison Cunningham ("Cummy") when Louis was eighteen months old. Although a devoted caregiver for Louis (she often sat up all night with him when he was ill), Cummy was also an extreme religious zealot who read the Bible constantly to her young charge.⁹ Louis's father caused as much anxiety in the boy as his nurse. He too would preach to his son about the never-ending punishments that would be meted out for the smallest of sins. All of this input into such a young mind augmented Louis's feelings of guilt and remorse at being so sickly. Victorian sensibilities allied sickness with evil, and since Louis was never well, he never felt worthy of heavenly redemption. The overriding presence of Calvinist religion in his formative years led to his belief in predestination, which is evident throughout his writings. The unending *Wanderlust* expressed in *Songs of Travel* may also be directly attributed to the lonely, trapped feelings that Louis's childhood produced.

Robert Louis Stevenson's collegiate career was as unfocused as his earlier schooling. He entered Edinburgh University in 1867 with the intention of becoming a lawyer. His father expected Louis to enter the

⁹Frank McLynn, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Hutchinson 1993), 14.

family trade of lighthouse design and building, and consequently provided little guidance for his son's own academic goals. Louis allowed his parents to believe that he intended to enter the legal profession to keep them from blocking his real pursuit—writing. He found university life boring and pointless. His semesters were spent eagerly awaiting vacation, when he would travel to remote areas of Scotland with his parents. The trips filled Louis with a great love of his native land (the kind of love that was the motivation for *Songs of Travel*, written later in his life while in the South Pacific).

During his twenties, Stevenson's continuing poor health required him to maintain a leisurely existence. It was during this time that he began an affair with an American woman named Fanny Osbourne. Fanny was ten years older than Louis, and had been married to a notoriously unfaithful man whom she divorced in favor of the Stevenson family's wealth and Louis's unwavering devotion to her. They were married in May of 1880 on a trip to America. Fanny was a shrewd, opportunistic woman whose first marriage had conditioned her to control every situation. Louis's natural passiveness made him the ideal mate for Fanny, who shared his obsession for exotic travel.

After his father's death in 1887, Louis inherited a substantial fortune. His poor health, combined with his anxiety over the growing

political turmoil between Ireland and the British Empire, gave Louis the incentive to collect his belongings and go off with his wife on a worldwide adventure. His travels took him across the Atlantic, through America, and across the Pacific. The Stevensons eventually settled in Samoa, where Louis wrote a great number of works, among them *Songs of Travel*. Although he was immensely popular for his sociability as well as his literary skills,¹⁰ he retained a feeling of loss at never returning to his homeland. On December 3, 1894, he died suddenly of a stroke presumably brought on by stress. He was buried the next day at the summit of Mount Vaea in Samoa.

Robert Louis Stevenson's overwhelming drive to travel took him away from the country he loved and forced him into a workaholic lifestyle, which probably created the stress that ultimately killed him. Like the protagonist of his *Songs of Travel*, Stevenson chose a doomed path rather than a life of convention.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born in Gloucestershire, England on October 12, 1872, into a prominent family of lawyers, judges, and industrialists. His father, the Reverend Arthur Vaughan Williams, died when

¹⁰Arthur Johnstone. *Recollections of Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1905), 248.

Ralph was three years old. Despite this loss, he grew up happily among his mother's large family in Surrey.¹¹

An aunt on his mother's side began teaching him piano and harmony. By the time he went to a preparatory school in Sussex, he had acquired some ability on the violin and the organ. He switched from violin to viola in his teens, and was a gifted player. His family, however, did not want him to pursue a performing career, and by the time he reached college his focus was on composition.

During his studies at the Royal College of Music, he met a fellow composer named Gustav Holst. The two men forged a strong friendship that lasted until Holst's death in 1934. Vaughan Williams and Holst trusted each other as musicians, and spent days criticizing each other's new compositions and working out musical problems faced by one or the other.

It was during these early years of his career that Vaughan Williams wrote *Songs of Travel* (1901-1904). He was particularly drawn to the poetry of Burkes, Tennyson, and Stevenson because he found their works "most apt for tunes."¹² This early period of Vaughan Williams' compositional output is significant because, after 1908, he began studying folksong and Elizabethan music. The vocal works from that point on were heavily

¹¹ Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R. V. W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford, 1964), 11.

¹² Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R. V. W.*, 65.

influenced by these studies. *Songs of Travel* has a uniquely Romantic flavor not found in his later compositions.

Vaughan Williams married Adeline Fisher on October 9, 1897. They remained happily married until Adeline's death in 1951 at the age of eighty. On February 7, 1953, he married his friend and traveling companion Ursula Wood, who was a devoted wife and caregiver to him in his later years. Unlike Robert Louis Stevenson (and the protagonist of his *Songs of Travel*), Vaughan Williams was happiest when at home in England. Although he loved to travel, his strong family and solid upbringing motivated him to stay close to home. He lived a full and happy life, and died peacefully in his sleep on August 26, 1958, at the age of eighty-five.

When one considers Robert Louis Stevenson's extraordinary life, it is surprising that someone who lived as tranquil a life as did Ralph Vaughan Williams would not only find a connection to Stevenson's poetry, but also be able to capture such compulsive needs to wander and live a rootless existence. This paradox is the essence of *Songs of Travel*, and makes the study of musical and textual connections all the more appealing.

The extent of these connections between music and text can be revealed through in-depth analysis of music and poetry and the various compositional techniques used within and among the nine songs of the cycle. Each piece will be examined individually, but with a view to the work

as a whole. As the cycle progresses, the development of musical form and figures will reflect the development of the protagonist in the narrative and illustrate his emotional state, thus aiding the performers in their interpretation of the cycle.

While Ralph Vaughan Williams' compositional output is substantial, texts analyzing his music are not. Most books present biographical information only, while some, such as Elliot Schwartz's *The Symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams*,¹³ focus on specific genres of music.

At this time, little if anything of significance has been written on Vaughan Williams' work in the medium of song cycle, and there are few references to *Songs of Travel* in the published texts beyond mention of its existence. Generally, Vaughan Williams' music has not tended to attract analysts, and his prominence in the music world has been eclipsed by some of his compatriots, such as Benjamin Britten. It is also noteworthy that Vaughan Williams was not motivated toward self-promotion. A great deal of his life was spent collecting and annotating English folk melodies, as well as harmonizing hymn tunes. Although these activities were important and their results are enduring, neither pursuit earned him recognition for his compositional skills.

¹³ Elliot S. Schwartz. *The Symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1964).

The lack of attention to *Songs of Travel* may also be attributed to the prominence of Vaughan Williams in other compositional arenas, such as choral composition. He is simply not known first as a composer of art song, and yet this song cycle is one of the most motivically unified works in the repertoire. This unity makes *Songs of Travel* ideal for the study of text/music relations, and the application of that study as a means of interpreting art song.

Songs of Travel is comprised of moments in time centering on a man who believes that the life of a wanderer is preferable to a life of convention. "The Vagabond" finds him at the beginning of his journey, anxious to be in the wild, free of the constraints of society. He discovers the awesome splendor of nature in "Let Beauty Awake." In "The Roadside Fire," the young man has met a woman, and is attempting to convince her to join him on his travels. He promises her that nature will provide excellent substitutes for the trappings of civilized life. "Youth and Love" recounts the parting of the young lovers as the narrator chooses the open road over the love of the woman. His pain at having left her manifests itself as nightmares in "In Dreams." The abstract text of "The Infinite Shining Heavens" contains the first negative references to nature in the cycle, as the protagonist muses on his relationship to the stars. The structure of "Whither must I wander?" gives the song a folk quality that complements

the text, which focuses on the narrator's return to the home he abandoned in "The Vagabond." The power and endurance of poetry and song is espoused in "Bright is the ring of words." The final song of the cycle, "I have trod the upward and the downward slope," depicts the wanderer at the end of his life's journey, and recalls material from several earlier songs. The cycle ends with a marching figure in the piano that softly fades into the distance. This motive is an echo of the opening music of *Songs of Travel* – a strong, relentless rhythm that represents the youthful excitement and unyielding resolve of a young man who is beginning a journey of self-discovery.

Chapter 2

“The Vagabond”

Key: c minor Form: aaba

The narrator of “The Vagabond” asserts his life’s philosophy in this song – “I will live a solitary life of endless wandering, or I will not live at all; nothing will alter my course.” In keeping with the high resolve of the poem, the general character of the song is that of a march. The text consists of four eight-line stanzas, the last of which is nearly an exact repeat of the first. This repeat is original to the poem, not a license taken by the composer, but of course it invites a musical return

In the first, second, and fourth stanzas, the protagonist discusses what he wants from life, with the imagery becoming more specific in the fifth and sixth lines of the text, then returning to broader philosophical statements in the last two lines. This increase in emotional intensity is reflected in the music. The third stanza, which is given a different musical setting, deals with the narrator’s willingness to suffer the hardships of a life lived completely out-of-doors, and his resolve to conquer even the elements. Autumn and winter may silence all of nature and harden the ground upon which he must sleep, but he will not abandon his path. The final stanza is identical to the second, with one exception. “All I seek, the

heaven above” is changed to “All I ask, the heaven above.” This change of verb implies an appeal, rather than the determination suggested by the verb “seek.” The four stanzas are thus given an aaba musical setting.

1.
 Give to me the life I love,
 Let the lave go by me.
 Give the jolly heaven above,
 And the byway nigh me.
 Bed in the bush with stars to see,
 Bread I dip in the river,
 There’s the life for a man like me,
 There’s the life forever.

2.
 Let the blow fall soon or late,
 Let what will be o’er me.
 Give the face of earth around,
 And the road before me.
 Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
 Nor a friend to know me;
 All I seek, the heaven above,
 And the road below me.

3.
 Or let autumn fall on me
 Where afield I linger,
 Silencing the bird on tree,
 Biting the blue finger.
 White as meal the frosty field –
 Warm the fireside haven –
 Not to autumn will I yield,
 Not to winter even!

4.
 Let the blow fall soon or late,
 Let what will be o’er me;
 Give the face of earth around,
 And the road before me.
 Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,
 Nor a friend to know me;
 All I ask, the heaven above,
 And the road below me.

Verse 1 opens with a quarter-note march rhythm in the left hand of the accompaniment. This figure is present (in some form) throughout the song, and will reappear later in the cycle (Ex. 1). A fanfare is introduced in the right hand and is expanded to become the first half of the opening phrase of the vocal line (Ex. 1, mm. 1 and 3). The second half of this melody is marked *staccato* and hovers around the fifth of the chord. This

portion of the vocal line is completely doubled in the piano, emphasizing the text (Ex. 1, mm. 8 and 11). These musical elements are present in each statement of the “a” section.

Example 1 (“The Vagabond,” mm. 1-9)

Allegro moderato.
(alla marcia.)

Voice.

Piano.

p ma sempre marcato.

sempre pesante il basso.

risoluto.

Give to me the life I love, Let the love go

by me. Give the jolly heaven above, And the byway night

The text begins with general references to the kind of existence for which the narrator hopes, speaking in broad terms about life and heaven. As the poetic imagery becomes more specific, the harmonic motion increases rapidly. The opening two lines of text remain in c minor. The third line, referring to heaven, transposes the opening melody to e \flat minor, and the fourth line ends up in G \flat major when it mentions the nearby road. As the number of images increases (e.g., bed, stars, bread, river), the harmonic changes increase proportionately, as does the dynamic level (Ex. 2). The dynamic peak of the verse is reached at the text "There's the life for a man like me." Further emphasizing this penultimate line of the verse, Vaughan Williams changes the articulation of the left hand for the first time in the song. The legato in both hands, combined with the *forte* dynamic, gives emphasis to the narrator's level of desire to be out on his own (Ex. 2, mm. 17-18).

Example 2 ("The Vagabond," mm. 13-19)

Bed in the bush with stars to see, Bread I dip in the

ri - - - ver - There's the life for a man like me,

As the protagonist returns to the general idea of his ideal life, the music calms both dynamically and harmonically until c minor is reintroduced at the last line of the verse. "There's the life forever" begins as a second inversion tonic chord in c minor, but ends with a root position tonic chord. This resolution is further enhanced by an abrupt drop in the dynamic level, from *forte* in the previous line to *piano* for the voice and *pianissimo* in the accompaniment (Ex. 3).

Example 3 ("The Vagabond," mm. 20-23)

Verse 2 begins as Verse 1 did, but with two measures less of introduction. The dynamic is *pianissimo*, in contrast to the *piano* of the first strophe. Verse 1 spoke of life, while this section opens with a comment on the ultimate demise of the narrator: "Let the blow fall soon or late." The climax of verse 2 is approached in the same manner as in verse 1, with a similar progression of ideas. Verse 1 began with a reference to life, and continued with mention of heaven and the road. It next discussed several more concrete details ("bed, stars, bread"), ending as it began with a reference to life. Verse 2 opens with a mention of death ("Let the blow fall..."), moves on to earth and the road, and becomes more specific in its description ("wealth, hope, love, friend"). The verse ends with generalities about heaven and the road. The high point of Verse 2 is punctuated by straight rhythm in contrast to the dotted rhythm at the corresponding moment in the previous verse, thus building tension. There is also the

addition of *tenuto* marks over these quarter notes, further stressing the line “all I seek” (Ex. 4). The narrator is seemingly trying to convince the listener, or perhaps himself, that all his needs will be met away from society.

Example 4 (“The Vagabond,” mm. 36-39)

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef and contains the lyrics: "know me; All I seek, the heaven a - bove,". A tenuto mark is placed over the quarter notes "All I seek". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with chords and eighth-note patterns. A tenuto mark is also present in the piano part, under the notes corresponding to "All I seek".

The third verse, marked *Animando, mezzo forte robustamente*, contains some of the most bitter and evocative text of the song. The abrupt movement from c minor to e minor highlights the importance of this section, with excitement being added by long-term eighth-note motion in the piano part. The marching rhythm of the left hand is still present, but is enhanced and quickened as though to reflect the anxiety the narrator feels as he thinks more carefully about the future (Ex. 5). He may realize that

autumn and winter will be unpleasant seasons of the year, as well as seasons of his life.

Example 5 ("The Vagabond," mm. 52-55)

fin - ger. White as meal the

fros - ty field - Warm the fire - side

meno f

meno f

As his resolve is rekindled toward the end of the verse, the harmonic motion returns to c minor for the climax ("Not to autumn will I yield, / Not to winter even!"). The first *fortissimo* is reached and *tempo primo* returns, as does the opening music. The decision is made that, no matter what the outcome, the protagonist's choice is final, and he cannot alter his course.

The text of the final stanza is nearly the same as that of Verse 2, but is presented musically in a more powerful way through the use of subtle changes in the markings. The verse opens *pianissimo*, and the vocal line is marked *parlante*. This speech-like delivery is further encouraged by the staccato markings of the melody. The accompaniment is given an added mark of *pianissimo ma marcato*. This seemingly contradictory marking is actually an ingenious way to maintain and increase the tension that must build to the final climax of the piece. Both performers are encouraged by the marking *sempre pp* to hold back dynamically at measure 71 (“Wealth I ask not...”), and a huge *crescendo* takes place over the six beats leading into “All I ask, the heaven above” (Ex. 6, mm. 74-75). This final outburst is embellished with a difficult addition to the vocal line – a *portamento* up to the high E \flat at “All I ask,” thus necessitating a long lead-in phrase and a greatly controlled *crescendo* (Ex. 6, mm. 73-76). This, the narrator’s final decree, announces his intentions to all of nature. The change of the penultimate line from “All I seek” to “All I ask” implies that the narrator’s attitude has shifted from one of action to one of anticipation (Ex. 6, mm. 75-76).

Example 6 ("The Vagabond," mm. 72-77)

hope nor love, Nor a friend to know

me; All I ask, the heaven above,

After the climactic line "All I ask, the heaven above," an equally dramatic *decrescendo* to *pianissimo* occurs over four beats, exaggerating the poetic contrast between "heaven above" in the penultimate line and "the road below" in the last line. The piece closes with the piano's opening march fading out dynamically, and rhythmically as quarter rests replace the chords of beats two and four of the last bars. This fading of the sound and the marching figure may represent the narrator's departure as he drifts farther and farther down the road. The right hand whole-note chords are punctuated by *tenuto* markings over the uppermost notes, and may be an allusion to the introduction of the next song, "Let Beauty Awake!" (Ex. 7).

Example 7 (“The Vagabond,” mm. 81-84)

Interpretive suggestions

A marking of *Allegro moderato* suggests controlled motion. The left hand, representing the physical motion of the narrator, must be evenly played throughout ($\text{♩} = 126$ recommended – no faster). The main difficulty for the pianist is the articulation. The composer wants the left hand *staccato* through the three statements of the “a” section, yet has indicated *legato* at certain points in the right hand. Some measures require the pianist to play *staccato* thirds simultaneously with sustained notes, all in the right hand. These challenges would be best surmounted using as little pedal as possible throughout the song. The even sound of the traveling motive in the left hand provides much of the drama of the piece, and should be played with as little variation as possible. The end of each statement of the “a” section has a marking of *colla voce*. It is important for the singer and pianist to agree on the amount of time taken at these places, since this is not a *ritard*, but only a slight stretching of the last two

beats of the measure. The marching quality of the song should not be sacrificed. The third stanza should be approached with a solid, even *crescendo* in the piano. The tempo (*Animando*) may be only slightly faster, depending upon the singer's ability to produce the line "Where afield I linger" clearly and with the proper articulation. It is also important to note in this section that the dynamic of *mezzo forte* should not become a true *forte* until "Not to autumn will I yield." The markings of *poco forte* and *meno forte* are in relation to the *mezzo forte* mark at the beginning of the verse. The pianist should also pay careful attention to balance in this section in light of the vocal line's drop in *tessitura*, as well as the increased activity of the accompaniment. The last verse should remain *pianissimo*, as marked in both the voice and piano, until the indicated *crescendo* before "All I ask, the heaven above." This dramatic device, combined with the *portamento* indicated in the vocal line, can be very moving if executed as indicated in the music, without anticipation of the *fortissimo* dynamic. The singer needs superior control in order to deliver "Nor a friend to know me, / All I ask..." in one breath, with a *crescendo* from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* in six beats. The composer is very specific about his musical desires here, and they need to be adhered to as closely as possible.

Chapter 3

“Let Beauty Awake”

Key: f# minor Form: a¹ a²

The poem has two stanzas, each with nearly identical rhythmic patterns. The text presents the narrator’s impression of nature as the embodiment of Beauty. He uses Beauty as a proper name, reflecting on the glory of the dawn in the first verse, and on nightfall in the second. These times of day, and the images with which he describes them, are depicted in the accompaniment, which changes as the text moves from morning to night. Musically, “Let Beauty Awake” may be viewed as a folk song in a¹ a² form, and it is characterized by a lyrical melody in the voice, with a simple arpeggiated accompaniment and a gentle 9/8 meter. This simple folk quality is enhanced by the modality of the vocal melody and the harmonic structure. The song is entirely in F# Dorian, with only one accidental included. The melody and harmony of both verses are the same, the only modification being in the accompaniment.

1.

Let Beauty awake in the morn from beautiful dreams,
 Beauty awake from rest!
 Let Beauty awake
 For Beauty's sake
 In the hour when the birds awake in the brake
 And the stars are bright in the west!

2.

Let Beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,
 Awake in the crimson eve!
 In the day's dusk end
 When the shades ascend,
 Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend
 To render again and receive!

Verse 1 discusses the virtues of morning as the embodiment of beauty. The song opens with fast *arpeggios* in the piano over bell-like long tones that echo the whole notes in the postlude of the previous song. The first half of this “dawn” verse has a rustling, flowing character that might symbolize birds in the thicket (“In the hour when the birds awake in the brake”), and perhaps a nearby brook. This pattern changes in the first half of the “dusk” verse, when the ascending/descending pattern of the arpeggiated accompaniment becomes ascending only.

The dynamic is *poco forte* for the first two lines of the text. The vocal line hovers within an interval of a third in the opening line, contrasting with the rustling expanse of *arpeggios* in the accompaniment. This compact melodic line seems to reflect the narrator's awe at the vitality and beauty of

nature. This quality, however, is actually contradicted by the dynamic level of *poco forte* (Ex. 1).

Example 1 ("Let Beauty Awake," mm. 1-3)

Moderate.

Voice.

Piano.

poco f

poco f

Let Beau - ty a - wake

in the morn from beau - ti - ful

The character of the accompaniment is altered after the delivery of the two opening lines of the verse. Beginning at measure 5, the arpeggiation becomes ascending for two beats, and suddenly slows from 32nd notes to 16th notes. The right hand doubles the vocal line and harmonizes a third or a sixth away, adding to the folk-like quality of the song (Ex. 2). These changes accommodate the alteration in the poetic meter beginning in the third line, where the length becomes considerably shorter, necessitating a different musical setting.

Example 2 (“Let Beauty Awake,” m. 5)

The image shows a musical score for measure 5. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The lyrics are "rest! Let Beau-ty a -". The middle and bottom staves are for the piano accompaniment, with the right hand in treble clef and the left hand in bass clef. The piano part features arpeggiated chords, with the right hand doubling the vocal line and harmonizing it a third or a sixth away. The dynamics are marked with a *forte* (f) and a *piano* (p).

The dynamic reaches *forte* at the third line, then tapers down to *piano* for the last line of the verse. This swelling and fading of dynamic serves to illustrate the difference between the content of the two verses. The first verse refers to morning, and the second verse speaks of evening. At the end

of the first verse, the narrator's realization that night is still visible in the western sky ("And the stars are bright in the west!") is marked *piano*, presaging the dynamic of the second verse (Ex. 3).

Example 3 ("Let Beauty Awake," mm. 9-10)

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The top system is the vocal line, and the bottom system is the piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "brake And the stars are bright in the". The piano part has a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a key signature of one sharp. The music is in a 3/4 time signature. The vocal line starts with a *piano* dynamic marking. The piano part features arpeggiated chords in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

The interlude between verses echoes "the stars are bright in the west," the last line of the first verse. The melodic line is repeated an octave lower as the dynamic fades to *pianissimo*, representing the passing of the day and the setting of the sun.

The second stanza requires a great deal of dynamic control within a marking of *tranquillo*. The quiet of evening is reflected in these markings, and the contrast of evening to dawn is clearly evinced. In addition, the rustling *arpeggios* representing sounds of nature at dawn are replaced by

murky, vibrant *tremolos* symbolizing evening, and evoking the constant sounds of the night (Ex. 4).

Example 4 (“Let Beauty Awake,” mm. 18-22)

The musical score for "Let Beauty Awake" (mm. 18-22) is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the first two measures. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "eve! In the day's dusk end — When the shades as -". The piano accompaniment features arpeggiated chords in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked "mp sonore" and the dynamics are "mp cantabile". The second system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the next two measures. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "- cend, — Let her wake to the kiss of a ten - der friend. To". The piano accompaniment continues with arpeggiated chords in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. The score ends with a fermata over the final note of the vocal line.

The verse closes in a manner similar to verse 1, trailing off with rising *arpeggios* ending *pianississimo* with a *morendo* marking that further mirrors the gradual fading of day into night and back into day. This song may be viewed as a vignette of the narrator’s early days on the road, when he was still in wide-eyed wonder as he observed the subtle workings of nature. “Let Beauty Awake” serves as a connective moment in time

between “The Vagabond” and the substantial third song, “The Roadside Fire.”

Interpretive Suggestions

In a 9/8 meter, the marking of *Moderato* may be misleading. The song should be felt in three rather than nine, since the composer indicated slurs encompassing entire measures or more. Therefore, a metronome marking of ($\text{♩} = 52-56$) is recommended. The accompaniment requires an even transition from 32nd notes to 16th notes in the arpeggiated sections. Attention must also be given to the bell-tones in the left hand, which should be clear enough to give a firm harmonic grounding, without being overly prominent. Overlapping pedal would be effective throughout the song, and would provide a seamless quality that enhances the image of the endless bustle of nature surrounding the narrator. In the vocal line, the *decrescendo* indicated in the penultimate line of the first verse may be unnecessary. The drop in *tessitura* and the beginning of left-hand tremolos under the word “brake” suggest that the dynamic will diminish naturally. The *poco rallentando* in the interlude between verses creates an echo effect and should not be taken too far. The pianist may also take particular care in the dynamic treatment in the last two measures of this interlude. Beginning at *pianissimo*, the composer indicates a *crescendo-decrescendo* over the bar

line, with the *decrescendo* ending at *piano*. These markings imply that the loudest point of the *crescendo-decrescendo* should peak at *mezzo-piano* so that the *piano* marking of the second verse grows out of the interlude, rather than acting as an abrupt dynamic change. This effect gives the impression of a new beginning musically.

The accompaniment of the second verse requires different pedaling than that of the first verse. Stanza 1 is phrased with slurs over each full measure, while in stanza 2 there are three equal slurs in each bar. The pedal should therefore be changed with the bell-tones at the bottom of the left hand. This manner of pedaling will satisfy the rhythmic and harmonic motion of the section and indicate the altered phrasing in a subtle way. The singer should produce an easy, floated quality throughout the second verse, and strictly observe the composer's dynamic markings. *Mezzo piano* is the maximum volume in this section, and if maintained will produce the quiet quality of the sound of evening. An interesting device in the second verse occurs with the last line of text. The *crescendo-decrescendo* from the end of the first stanza returns, but only in the piano. The singer should be careful to maintain an even dynamic level in this measure, allowing the pianist to produce the swelling effect alone.

The postlude recalls the interlude between the verses, but *tenuto* marks that were present in the right hand of the interlude are absent here.

The *morendo* marking four measures from the end indicates an even waning of tempo as well as volume. In order to achieve the *ppp* dynamic followed by a *decrescendo* into the last measure, the pianist should play the final ascending *arpeggios* with no accents and no weight in the keys.

Chapter 4

“The Roadside Fire”

Key: D \flat major Form: aab

“The Roadside Fire” consists of three stanzas of poetry, each with four lines of nearly equal length. The musical settings of the first two are harmonically and vocally identical, with only the character of the accompaniment changing. The first two stanzas contain visual images, with several references to colors (blue, green, white), whereas the third stanza turns to the sense of hearing (music, singing). This difference between the first two verses and the last is reflected in the aab form of the song. There is a key change at the opening of the third verse from D \flat major to E major, with the return to the home key delayed until the final word of the text. The character of the vocal line moves from the eighth-note-dominated *scherzando* of the first two stanzas to a more lyrical quarter-note motion, juxtaposed with a change in the accompaniment from staccato eighth notes in the first two verses to sixteenth and thirty-second notes in the final verse. The postlude recalls the accompaniment of the first and second verses, with a steadily ascending *tessitura* that is reminiscent of the postlude of “Let Beauty Awake.”

An undetermined amount of time has passed between “Let Beauty Awake” and “The Roadside Fire,” and the narrator has met and begun a relationship with a woman. This song finds the protagonist extolling the joys of having all of nature as one’s household, in an attempt to convince the woman to join him in his life of wandering.

1.

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight,
Of birdsong at morning and starshine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me,
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

2.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom;
And you shall wash your linen, and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

3.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches, and the roadside fire.

“The Roadside Fire” opens with the marching figure from “The Vagabond” in diminution and in major mode. The marking of *leggiero* and the tempo and *staccato* marks evoke a fast, light pace, perhaps indicating carriage wheels or the lighter footsteps of the young woman to whom the narrator is speaking (Ex. 1).

Example 1 ("The Roadside Fire," mm. 1-3)

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is for the voice, and the lower staff is for the piano. The key signature has two flats (Bb major). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the mood is 'poco scherzando'. The piano part is marked 'p leggiero'. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'I will make you'.

The vocal line is marked *poco scherzando*, and contains syncopations that give a playful mood to each of the first two verses. The first two lines of each verse are in D \flat major, and they modulate to G \flat major for the following two lines of text. Each of the G \flat major sections rises in dynamic relative to the first half of the verse, from *piano* to *mezzo forte*.

In the first two verses, the poetic imagery alternates between material possessions (brooches, palace, linen) and their substitutes in nature (birdsong, green days, rainfall). These colorful references to nature are accompanied by equally colorful harmonic structures. After the departure to G \flat major at measure 11, the return to D \flat major is accomplished by first moving to a C \flat major 6/4 in measure 15. This chord is actually acting as a B \natural 6/4 leading to an A \natural 6/4 at measure 17. The return of D \flat major is realized with the use of this chord, acting as \flat VI in D \flat major. This chord progression is a refreshing way of returning to the tonic.

The hints of A major and B major chords in this transition, as well as the E \flat that moves to D \flat in the bass both at measures 17-18 and measures 35-36, foreshadow the key plan of the “b” section (Ex 2).

Example 2 (“The Roadside Fire,” mm. 15-18)

The musical score for Example 2 shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and 3/4 time, with lyrics: "green days in forests, and blue days at sea." The piano accompaniment features arpeggiated figures in the left hand and chords in the right hand. Dynamics include piano (p) and pianissimo (pp).

The interlude after the first stanza begins with arpeggios in the left hand that recall the rustling accompaniment of “Let Beauty Awake,” but in major mode (Ex. 3, mm. 20-22).

Example 3 (“The Roadside Fire,” mm. 19-22)

The musical score for Example 3 shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and 3/4 time, with lyrics: "I will make my". The piano accompaniment features arpeggiated figures in the left hand and chords in the right hand. Dynamics include piano (p).

This arpeggiation continues through the first two lines of the second stanza, perhaps recalling the accompanying pattern of the second song, and aiding in the rhythmic progression from alternating eighth-notes in the first verse to arpeggiated eighths in the second verse, and finally arpeggiated 16th notes in the final section. The verse continues as before, but with different dynamics. “In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night” is marked *pianissimo*; this musical figure was marked *piano* in the first stanza.

The short interlude leading to the third verse contains fast ascending arpeggios that drop two octaves in as many measures. The rippling of this accompaniment provides a bridge of representation between the verses; the flowing arpeggios represent the rain and dewfall of the preceding stanza, as well as the “music” of the following verse (Ex. 4). The key changes from D \flat major to E major, up a minor third. “The Vagabond” centered around the flat key of c minor, and at that point in the story the narrator had not yet abandoned mankind. “Let Beauty Awake” found him alone among nature, and the song is written in a sharp key (f \sharp minor). Here, the key is D \flat major when the narrator speaks of man-made things such as “brooches and toys,” and “kitchen” and “linen.” These key relationships allude to a connection between sharp keys and nature, as well as flat keys to the recollection of civilized society (Ex. 4).

Example 4 ("The Roadside Fire," mm. 38-42)

The musical score for Example 4, "The Roadside Fire," mm. 38-42, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an *And* tempo marking. The piano accompaniment consists of arpeggiated chords. The lyrics are: "rall - en - - tm - - da." The second system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a *Meno mosso.* tempo marking and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "this shall be for mu - sic when".

The highest vocal and dynamic moment of the piece, "the fine song for singing," (Ex. 4) vividly recalls the high point of "The Vagabond" ("not to winter even!" Ex. 6). This similarity may be symbolic of the powerful hold that the lure of nature exerts over the narrator.

Example 5 ("The Roadside Fire," mm. 45-46)

fine song for sing - ing, the

Example 6 ("The Vagabond," mm. 58-63)

Tempo I

au - tumn will I yield, Not to win - - - ter

ff

e - ven!

dim.

From here, the music begins to modulate. The bass line has been moving stepwise downward, and at measure 47 it pauses on F#. At measure 48, there is a brief cadence in b minor with the word "...hear."

From this point, the roots of the chords ascend in fourths every two beats (e.g., m. 48, B-E; m.49, A-D) until G major is reached at measure 50. This G-major triad is sustained for three beats, becoming a dominant seventh chord on beat 4. Beneath the word “you” of the line, “That only I remember, that only you admire,” the harmony moves to a B major seventh chord, but the G of the previous measure remains as a powerful suspension. This G creates a prominent dissonance at the moment in the text where the narrator assumes that the woman will admire and remember the song he sings to her. The approach to this dissonance is further accentuated by markings of *largamente* in the voice and *colla voce* in the piano (Ex. 7). The B-major seventh chord resolves deceptively to C major on the word “admire,” delaying the return to tonic by another measure.

Example 7 ("The Roadside Fire," mm. 47-52)

rare song to hear! That on - ly I re -
 mem - ber, that on - ly you ad - mire, Of
a cantato.
largamente.
colla voce.
pp

The vision of the road appears before the narrator, and is depicted in the music by the most rapid arpeggios of the piece, with harmony of static pentatonic chords centering at B, further prolonging the B major tonal center and delaying the return to D \flat . The composer also employs text painting by elongating the first syllable of the word "stretches" with a seven-note melisma beginning and ending on F \sharp , but "stretching" a fifth down, to B (Ex. 8, mm. 54-55). The suspended nature of these arpeggios magnifies the upcoming reappearance of the colorful \flat VI-I progression from

the earlier verses (Ex 8, mm. 56-57). In the previous stanza arpeggios like these evoked the rain and dew, the cleansing water. Here, they represent the unending flowing of the road – the literal path on which the narrator travels, and, symbolically, the figurative course his life is going to take (Ex. 8).

Example 8 (“The Roadside Fire,” mm. 53-57)

The musical score for Example 8, "The Roadside Fire," mm. 53-57, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the first two phrases: "broad road that stretch" and "es and the road side". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and arpeggiated chords in the right hand. The tempo is marked "tranquillo" and the dynamics are "pp".

The piece ends in the same rhythmic framework with which it began. Here, the flickering motion of the right hand represents not carriage wheels, but rather the actual “roadside fire,” which may symbolize the narrator’s

burning need to travel. The steadily rising *tessitura* and outline of arpeggios in this postlude may be a recollection of the postlude of the previous song, “Let Beauty Awake” (Ex. 9).

Example 9 (“The Roadside Fire,” mm. 58-63)

Interpretive suggestions

The *poco scherzando* marking at the beginning of the voice part and the *leggiero* marking in the accompaniment warrant a lightness and mobility that would be hindered by too many stresses in a measure. Therefore, a metronome marking of ($\text{♩} = 144$) is appropriate, provided the performers maintain a feeling of two stresses in each measure rather than four. The pianist should use no pedal until the second half of the verse (“I will make a palace...”), and then only to aid in the production of the *legato*. The change from one chord to another should not be blurred. The *pianissimo* at measure 15 (“...green days in forests”) is *subito*, following a

crescendo from *mezzo forte* in the previous four measures (note that the vocal line is marked *piano* here).

The pedal marks in the second verse can be somewhat refined. The pianist may want to consider counteracting the inevitable buildup of sound by using a flutter technique, clearing out some of the sound with rapid movement of the pedal while keeping the dampers as close to the strings as possible. The flutter should be used for approximately the middle third of the pedaled section of music. In the interest of variety, the singer may use more *legato* in the second verse, especially leading into “Where white flows the river.” The pianist should note that the pedal indications stop at this point. The *subito pianissimo* marking at “In rainfall at morning...” applies to both performers in this verse, and may be accentuated by a slight hesitation at the barline. This delay will also facilitate dropping the dynamic smoothly. Sparing use of the pedal applies again at the second half of the verse.

The third verse, and the two measures leading into it, may be pedaled more freely. The tempo drops slightly here, allowing the vocalist to sing in a more lyrical way. The *largamente* marking over “...no one else...” serves to highlight the triplet. Too much slowing will diminish the rhythmic integrity of the measure. This same principle applies at the *largamente* over the line “...that only you...” The pedal marking under the three measures of

“...the broad road that stretches...” may be executed using the flutter technique. It could be difficult to maintain an even *pianissimo* dynamic with three measures of sound accumulating in the pedal. At the key change, the performers may consider returning to the opening tempo of the song, even though Vaughan Williams did not indicate it.

Chapter 5

“Youth and Love”

Key: G Major Form: ab

The poem “Youth and Love” consists of two stanzas of five lines each. The freedom of meter and long lines in this poem gave Vaughan Williams the opportunity to compose in a more rhythmically free way than in the previous songs. This style of text setting creates the illusion of a vocal line that is free of meter and measures. The “ab” form of the song is evident at the beginning of the second verse, where the tempo, dynamic, tonal center, and accompaniment all change. The general musical character of the opening section returns for the last eight measures of the song, almost as an echo of the piano introduction.

At this point in the story, the narrator is feeling the draw of the open road. Though the pleasures of being with the woman are intoxicating, his belief in the valor and merit of his choice to live a life free from the trappings of civilization is too strong to ignore. He believes his youth is passing him by, and indeed the woman and the world in which she lives are alluring, intrusive distractions from which he must break free. The pleasures of this world “assail” him, and he takes to the road, leaving the woman at the gate to her garden with barely a word of farewell.

1.
 To the heart of youth the world is a highwyside.
 Passing forever, he fares; and on either hand,
 Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,
 Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land
 Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

2.
 Thick as stars at night when the moon is down
 Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate
 Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,
 Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,
 Sings but a boyish stave, and his face is gone.

The first verse finds the poet musing on the intrigue of the open road, and the distraction earthly pleasures hold, especially for a young man, who is called by the "...golden pavilions.../ Nestled in orchard bloom," symbolic of the physical attraction felt for the woman. The key is G Major, a sharp key, signifying nature and magnifying the choice the youth will have to make between the woman and the open road. The dichotomy of the temptation the woman represents versus the freedom of a life of wandering is also suggested by the form of the song, with the "a" section focusing on the temptation itself, and the "b" section revealing the decision the narrator makes.

The introduction to "Youth and Love" recalls the marching rhythm of "The Vagabond" as well as the *staccato* eighth-note motion in the introduction of "The Roadside Fire." Here, the even rhythm that was so

pervasive in the two earlier songs has been distorted. There is still a stepwise rocking movement, but this alteration is made to seem uneven and hesitant with the use of triplets. This figure may represent the “wavering” of the narrator’s resolve as he struggles with the choice between love and freedom. Each time the harmony moves away from the tonic, the even eighth notes become triplets, and their articulation changes from *sostenuto* to *portato*. This use of triplet rhythm on non-tonic chords continues through the verse. As the perceived tonic changes, the even eighth-notes are applied to the tonal center, and the harmonic changes are produced with triplet motion (Ex. 1).

Example 1 (“Youth and Love,” mm. 1-6)

The musical score for Example 1, "Youth and Love," mm. 1-6, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Andante sostenuto." and the piano part is marked "p espressivo. tempo rubato." The piano accompaniment features eighth-note triplets in both hands. The second system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with the lyrics "To the" visible under the piano part.

This almost relentless accompaniment, based on an unstable second-inversion triad, alludes to the indecision that has developed in the narrator, and the difficulty he is having continuing his pursuit of a rootless existence. Under the word “forever” is the “fanfare” figure from the opening of “The Vagabond.” The appearance of this motive recalls the driving energy of the opening song, and with it Vaughan Williams reminds the listener of the narrator’s youthful resolve to live the solitary life he craved earlier in the cycle (Ex. 2, m. 12).

Example 2 (“Youth and Love,” mm. 11-12)

The musical score for Example 2, measures 11-12, is presented in three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "Pass - - ing for ev - - er,". The middle and bottom staves are the piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady eighth-note pattern in both hands, with a "poco f" dynamic marking. The music concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

The character of the section beginning with “...and on either hand” is quiet and almost motionless, centering around C major for the five measures corresponding to the text “Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide, Nestle in orchard bloom...” A sudden shift to *e \flat* minor for the line “...and far on the level land” is combined with a dynamic of *pianissimo* and the

cessation of the *portato* articulation in the piano. Both the vocal part and the accompaniment are marked *misterioso*, and the line is set apart from the material following it by a breath mark (\surd). This treatment of the line represents physical distance (“...and far on the level land”). A sudden dynamic change to *mezzo forte* with a *crescendo* provides text painting for the line “Call him with lighted lamp.” The verse fades away and ends on a second inversion G major chord, which is the same one prolonged in the opening of the song.

Suddenly the tempo increases. The key of E major from the previous song returns and the narrator takes in the natural beauty of the night sky, musing on the thickness of the stars on a moonless night. The accompaniment here recalls the arpeggiation of “Let Beauty Awake,” suggesting that the allure of nature will overtake the attraction of material pleasures (Ex. 3).

Example 3 (“Youth and Love,” mm. 33-35)

Poco animando.

Thick as stars at night when the

pp

This soft, caressing music is abruptly halted by the fanfare figure, again in the minor and this time marked *risoluto*, as if nature itself is attempting to rouse the narrator and draw him away (Ex. 4, m. 39).

Example 4 (“Youth and Love,” mm. 36-39)

The image shows a musical score for Example 4, spanning measures 36 to 39. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a single staff with lyrics: "moon is down Pleasures as - sail him. He to his". The piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is in a minor key. The tempo and dynamics are marked *f risoluto* in the upper right and lower right corners of the score. The piano accompaniment features a fanfare figure in the right hand, which is a rapid succession of three notes.

The narrator snaps out of his hesitation; the decision is made (“He to his nobler fate Fares”). The stubborn pride of the first song returns, and his disdain for the woman and her way of life appears in full force. The melody that appeared in “The Vagabond” with the line “Let the love go by me” practically assaults the listener in the right hand of the piano accompaniment, sounding three times in rapid succession (Ex. 5, mm. 40-41). The parallel between the first time the narrator abandoned the world of civilized man and this instance is unmistakable. The narrator’s urgency as he waves goodbye to the woman is further accentuated by the increased dynamic level and the *affrettando* marking. The accompaniment here is a

version of the opening of the song, but the tension is increased by an added the seventh on the bottom of the chord (Ex. 5, m. 42).

Example 5 ("Youth and Love," mm. 40-42)

The musical score for Example 5 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "no bier fate Fares; and but waves a". The middle staff is the right hand of the piano, and the bottom staff is the left hand. The score includes performance markings: "affrettando" above the vocal line, "sempre f cresc." above the piano right hand, and "affrettando." below the piano left hand. A triplet of eighth notes is marked in the vocal line.

As the narrator waves casually to the woman and walks away, her confusion is mirrored in the sudden suspension of the vocal line on G. Her questions are answered when he proudly shouts goodbye from the gate, accompanied in the piano by the melody from the opening of "The Roadside Fire" (Ex. 6, mm. 45-48).

Example 6 ("Youth and Love," mm. 43-50)

hand as he pass-es on, Cries but a
way - side word to her - at the gar - den gate,

Piu mosso.

The "turn of the road" idea from the end of "The Roadside Fire" ("...the broad road that stretches...") appears in the accompaniment under "sings but a boyish stave," indicating that the youth is looking to the path ahead, rather than back at the woman he is leaving behind (Ex. 7, mm. 52-53).

Example 7 ("Youth and Love," mm. 51-54)

Sings but a boy - ish

Piu mosso.
pp

As he fades from view, the music descends in *tessitura* and dynamics, concluding on an incomplete cadence with the fifth on the bottom and a single G in the chord. This lack of resolution implies that the narrator will continue to have lingering doubts about his decision, despite the confidence with which he resumed his travels in the last lines of the song (Ex. 8, m. 63).

Example 8 ("Youth and Love," mm. 59-63)

Interpretive suggestions

The marking of *Andante sostenuto* implies a comfortable tempo, yet the sustained character of the vocal line and the long phrases demanded of the singer require some forward motion. A metronome marking of ($\text{♩} = 72$) is reasonable, and will give the performers enough leeway to produce the *accelerandi* that are required later in the song. The accompaniment carries a marking of *espressivo, tempo rubato*. This second indication most likely

refers to the triplets, and would give the pianist the freedom to produce the *portato* articulation without feeling rushed. The vocalist should sing with as much legato as possible in the first verse, carefully observing the nuances of dynamic only where indicated. At times, this adherence to the dynamics will be in contrast to the markings in the accompaniment. This apparent contradiction enhances the interpretation, reflecting the discomfort the narrator feels at his decision to leave the woman. The breath mark after "...and far on the level land" should not be abrupt, but there must be a definite cessation of sound from both singer and pianist. The text of this song is somewhat difficult to understand on its first hearing, and the vocalist should try to enunciate as clearly as possible, especially the final consonants.

The second verse begins with a marking of *poco animando*, which should be very slight. Ten measures later, Vaughan Williams requires an *affrettando*, and three measures after that there is a marking of *più mosso*. Eight measures later, another *più mosso* is indicated. These increases necessitate great restraint from both performers in terms of tempo, and must be very slight in order to avoid an overly frantic delivery. The pianist should pay special attention to the balance at the *affrettando* ("...and but waves a hand...") in terms of balance. The vocal line drops in tessitura here, but the dynamic is supposed to continue growing. It may be advisable

to actually drop the dynamic slightly at the barline, and delay the crescendo until after the singer has finished the line "...as he passes on." The final *più mosso* at the line "Sings but a boyish stave..." is sometimes misinterpreted as *meno mosso*. The right hand of the accompaniment in these four measures is deceptive, and presents a challenge for even the most adept pianist. This line needs to be *legato*, *pianissimo*, and faster than any other portion of the song. It may be advisable to play at least some of the bottom half of the right hand with the left hand after the whole-note chord is sounded. The *più mosso* here is a difficult one to successfully execute. It is a moment in the music that may simply feel unnatural to the performers. The *rallentando* leading to the last line of the song needs to be substantial in order to regain the original tempo. It is noteworthy that Vaughan Williams chose to repeat the two last words of text ("...is gone"), and does so an octave lower as if to illustrate the distance the narrator has already traveled from the woman standing at the gate.

Chapter 6

“In Dreams”

Key: c minor Form: a¹ba²

“In Dreams” is in c minor, the key of the opening song of the cycle. The form consists of an opening section of twelve measures, a middle portion of twelve measures, and a return of sorts that combines elements of the two. The narrator is summarizing the disturbing nightmares that have plagued him since his abandonment of the woman in the previous song. The first verse describes his vision of her, still standing at the gate, holding some trinkets he apparently gave her. He believes that they mean nothing to her now (“The unremembered tokens in your hand avail no more”). As the harmonic motion becomes faster and more chromatic, the accompaniment and the vocal line take on a turbulent character. At this point the narrator describes the woman’s physical appearance since his departure. He characterizes her as aging and weeping (“Cold beats the light of time upon your face and shows your tears”). The final verse begins with the return of the opening music. The narrator hypothesizes that perhaps his time with her meant less to her than his dreams imply (“Perchance you wept awhile and then forgot”). The second half of this last verse brings back the storminess of the second section, and finds the

narrator admitting that he will still remember her even if she has forgotten him (“...he that left you with a smile forgets you not”). Thus, the poem moves from description of the dream (Verse 1) to characterization of the woman (Verse 2), ending with a depiction of the narrator (Verse 3).

1.

In dreams unhappy, I behold you stand as heretofore:
The unremembered tokens in your hand avail no more.

2.

No more the morning glow, no more the grace, enshrines, endears.
Cold beats the light of time upon your face and shows your tears.

3.

He came and went. Perchance you wept awhile and then forgot.
Ah, me! But he that left you with a smile forgets you not.

The repeated C of the introduction continues through the first two lines of the text in some form. This tone is always syncopated, and its repetition suggests persistence – the woman is still standing there at the gate, in his dreams. The harmony of this opening section moves chromatically below and above the fifth scale degree of c minor (G). This harmonic structure is sustained for six measures (Ex. 1, mm. 1-6). The second line of text moves down a step to enter on a second-inversion bb minor triad, with the same repeating syncopated idea on the fifth scale degree, now F. In this case, the frequency of return to this pitch has doubled (Ex. 1, mm. 8-10).

Example 1 ("In Dreams," mm. 1-10)

Andantino.

Voice. In dreams un - hap-py, I be-hold

Piano.

stand as here - to-fore: The un - remember'd to-kens in your

The sudden outburst at "avail no more" begins the second section of the song and may represent both the anger the narrator has with himself, and the pride that prevents him from accepting that the gifts he bestowed on her may be worthless to her now. The anger that he expresses in these lines manifests itself in the dynamic and tempo change, as well as in the rising, surging quality of the melody. It is also important to note the change from flat keys to sharp keys at this point in the song. The narrator has described the woman in terms of the man-made trappings that she holds in her hand. Now, as he begins to relate her appearance to aspects of the

natural world (“No more the morning glow”), the sharp keys come to the fore (Ex. 2).

Example 2 (“In Dreams,” mm. 11-18)

hand a - vail no more. No more the morn ing

glow, no more the grace, en - shrines, en - dears.

The narrator no longer sees her as beautiful; the passage of time has aged her (“Cold beats the light of time upon your face”) and made her cold and bitter (“The unremembered tokens in your hand avail no more”). When he realizes that she is weeping, the dream-like repeated note returns, signaling the start of the recapitulation section of the song (Ex. 3).

Example 3 ("In Dreams," mm. 22-25)

The musical score for Example 3, "In Dreams," mm. 22-25, is presented in a standard musical notation format. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked *smorzando* and includes the lyrics "shows your tears." The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a melodic line and a left hand with a harmonic accompaniment. The music is in a minor key and features a slow, expressive tempo.

The melody and harmony of the last section are identical to those of Verse 1, up to a point. The five measures of the opening line are echoed harmonically in the first five bars of the third verse, but then a sudden change occurs. The words "...perchance you wept awhile..." are lingered upon both rhythmically and harmonically, perhaps delaying the thought that she has forgotten him. This slowing of the harmonic motion coincides with the chords under the words "...as heretofore" from the first verse (Ex. 1 supra, mm. 6-7). The chord beneath the word "forgot" in the line, "Perchance you wept awhile and then forgot" (Ex. 4, m. 32) matches the one found at the downbeat of measure 12.

Example 4 ("In Dreams," mm. 26-32)

smorzando

He came and went. Per-chance you

poco rit.

wept a while and then for got.

colla voce.

This is the moment where the poem shifts from description of the dream to the actual event. The harmonic movement skips ahead, recalling the G-flat 7 of "avail no more" (Ex. 2, supra, m. 12) at the exclamation, "Ah, me!..." and bypassing the progression under the line "The unremember'd tokens in your hand..." (mm. 8-12). The harmonic motion under the line "...but he that left you with a smile..." is a telescoping of the open-fifth figures from the accompaniment of the second verse, arriving at a c minor 6/4 chord with a suspended D at measure 37 ("...forgets you

not.”) This musical “tapering” reflects the transition from past to present tense.

The lack of resolution of the narrator’s feelings for the woman and his inability to forget her is demonstrated in the ending of the melody on the fifth of the chord, denying the listener a sense of finality in this song.

Interpretive Suggestions

When determining the optimum tempo for “In Dreams,” the performers should begin by examining measures 19-21, “Cold beats the light of time upon your face” (Ex. 5).

Example 5 (“In Dreams,” mm.19-21)
poco animando.

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics: "Cold beats the light of time up - on your face and". The middle and bottom staves are the piano accompaniment. The music is in 4/4 time and features a tempo marking of *poco animando*. The piano part includes chords and moving lines in both hands, with some notes beamed together.

The line is marked *poco animando*, which is actually the second tempo change of the song, there being a marking of *poco animato* five measures earlier. Grammatically and musically, measures 19 to 21 need to be sung

in one breath. In light of the high F at the end of the phrase, and the fairly high *tessitura* at the beginning of the line, the ability to sing this phrase well without breathing will vary from one singer to the next. It is therefore sensible to find the most vocally comfortable tempo for this line and work backward from there. For example, if a metronome marking of (♩ = 100) is reasonable here, then the preceding section (“No more the morning glow...”) needs to be slightly slower, perhaps (♩ = 88)(Ex. 2 supra). The opening would therefore be even slower, possibly (♩ = 76). This is an acceptable tempo for a marking of *Andantino*, and the singer can be confident in the knowledge that he will absolutely be able to execute the long phrase with the high F in a comfortable manner.

“In Dreams” contains a recurring marking that may present the pianist with difficulty if misinterpreted. Beginning in measure 3, the composer has indicated *crescendo-decrescendo* marks (<>) throughout the song (Example 1 above shows the marking clearly), with each occurrence mirrored in the vocal line. The accompaniment consists of a harmonized version of the melody, plus the offbeat repeated note. The temptation is for the pianist to try to execute the *crescendo-decrescendo* in the harmonized melody, with the singer. This is not possible, due to the short duration of the marking. The dynamic swell occurs over only two beats, namely the G and B \flat of the melody and their chordal harmonizations. This leaves the

pianist with one note with which to indicate the crescendo portion of the *crescendo-decrescendo*. A *crescendo-decrescendo* on one note will actually sound as an accent rather than a swelling of the dynamic. It is therefore logical to divorce this marking from the melody of the accompaniment and apply it to the repeated offbeat note. This effect creates an interesting contrast to the vocal line, and it emphasizes the dissonance that this note supplies at various times throughout the song.

The second half of the song contains two markings of *smorzando* in the vocal line only. These emotional indications can be easily conveyed by emphasizing the text where they occur, rather than by making any changes in tempo. For example, the first instance of this marking is over the words “your tears” at the end of the second verse of the text. A lingering on the “t” of the word “tears” will give the required emphasis without disturbing the flow of the music. Above all, the repeated offbeat notes throughout this song should remain constant. It is up to the performers to execute all of the markings of the piece with as little effect on the steadiness of the repeated notes as possible.

Chapter 7

“The Infinite Shining Heavens”

Key: d minor Form: aba¹

Based upon Vaughan Williams’ placement of this poem following “In Dreams,” “The Infinite Shining Heavens” may represent the final interpretation of the events surrounding the narrator’s relationship to the young woman. The poem has three stanzas, each with equal meter, and it recounts the narrator’s lifelong fascination with the stars. The poem refers back to the opening of the cycle, employing the first use of the word “heaven” since “The Vagabond” (“All I ask, the heaven above”). In the second stanza, references to the stars as “dumb and shining and dead” represent the first negative imagery of nature found in the cycle. The last stanza of the poem evokes a parallel between the stars and the woman the narrator left behind, with references to the text of the earlier song “Youth and Love;” specifically, the line “Till lo! I looked in the dusk / And a star had come down to me” is reminiscent of the lines “Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide” and “Thick as stars at night when the moon is down” from “Youth and Love.”

The music contains allusions to material from earlier in the cycle, such as the marching figure and touches of modality found in “The

Vagabond.” The tonal center of the song seems to shift between major and minor modes, representing the uncertainty of the narrator’s feelings regarding the stars. The accompaniment is almost exclusively homophonic, with articulation that alternates between rolled chords and non-rolled chords. Changes between these two types of articulation coincide with the implied changes of attitude of the narrator toward the stars. Rolled chords occur at those moments when the protagonist’s comments are positive (“The infinite shining heavens / Rose...”), and the chords are no longer rolled when the text has a negative connotation (“...distant as heaven / Dumb and shining and dead”). The musical form of “The Infinite Shining Heavens” is aba¹, with the music of the first stanza returning for the third, but changing at the end to satisfy the harmonic motion and end in the tonic.

1.
 The infinite shining heavens
 Rose, and I saw in the night
 Uncountable angel stars
 Showering sorrow and light.

2.
 I saw them, distant as heaven
 Dumb and shining and dead,
 And the idle stars of the night
 Were dearer to me than bread.

3.
Night after night in my sorrow
The stars looked over the sea
Till lo! I looked in the dusk
And a star had come down to me.

The vocal line of “The Infinite Shining Heavens” contains several triplets, which bring the delivery of the text closer to the natural rhythm of speech (Ex. 1, mm. 3-4). Harmonically, there is major/minor ambiguity from the outset of the song. The accompaniment implies d minor for the first five chords (Ex. 1, mm. 1-2). As the bass line makes a stepwise descent from D, the harmony passes through an F-major dominant seventh chord in each measure, beginning in measure 3 (Ex. 1, m. 3, beat 2). The descent in the left hand of the piano continues, stopping at C for a full measure and moving up to F as a cadence in F major at measure 8. The second phrase begins this bass descent again, this time from B \flat , and stops at E at the end of the stanza. This E is part of a dominant seventh chord in d minor, thus shifting modes by using the relative of F major. The accompaniment has been mainly rolled chords throughout the verse, illustrating the “showering” of the starlight.

Example 1 (“The Infinite Shining Heavens,” measures 1-4)

The musical score for measures 1-4 of "The Infinite Shining Heavens" is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (D minor) and the time signature is 3/2. The tempo is marked "Andante sostenuto." The voice part begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment features a repetitive figure in the right hand and a descending line in the left hand. The lyrics are "The in-fi-nite shining heavens Rose, and I saw".

The statement by the narrator that the angel stars give sorrow as well as light is an important moment dramatically, in that it is the first moment in the cycle that the stars, representing nature, have a negative connotation.

At the beginning of the second verse, the chords are no longer rolled, and the “showering” descent of the bass line pauses on E as part of a dominant seventh chord in d minor, as it did at the end of the first verse. The accompaniment echoes the repetitive quality of the marching figure from earlier songs, but in longer note values (Ex. 2, mm.16-18). This feature is reminiscent of the narrator’s earlier enthusiasm regarding these “dumb, idle, dead” things that became his life-force, more important than food. (“The Vagabond,” Verse 1: “bed in the bush with stars to see;” “Let Beauty Awake,” Verse 1: “and the stars are bright in the west;” “Youth and Love,” Verse 2: “Thick as stars at night when the moon is down.”) The line “distant as heaven” is enhanced by the change of octave in the right hand

of the accompaniment (Ex. 2, mm. 16-18). The static marching reference in the piano moves upward for two measures as the text progresses toward the most negative pronouncement of the song, “Dumb and shining and dead.” The approach to the word “dead” is achieved using a stepwise motion similar to that of the opening of the song, but ascending to *eb* minor. This shift of tonality gives the word “dead” a removed feeling that is enhanced by the sudden drop in dynamic, as well as by the *tenuto* marking over it (Ex. 2, m.20). The static harmony returns immediately, when the narrator again refers to the stars in a negative way, calling them “idle” (Ex. 2, mm. 21-23).

Example 2 (“The Infinite Shining Heavens,” measures 14-23)

The musical score for Example 2 consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

System 1 (Measures 14-18):
 Vocal line: I saw them dis-tant as heaven
 Piano accompaniment: Features a static harmonic pattern with a stepwise upward motion in the right hand.

System 2 (Measures 19-23):
 Vocal line: shi-ning and dead, And the i dle stars of the
 Piano accompaniment: Features a sudden drop in dynamic and a shift in tonality to *eb* minor, marked with a *tenuto* over the word "dead".

As the second verse comes to a close, the narrator realizes that he placed a tremendous, almost irrational, value on stars, and by association nature. The duple meter is interrupted by a passionate *crescendo* to *forte*, with a marking of *largamente* and a triplet in the melody (Ex. 4, m. 26). This outburst has a positive quality that belies the emotions of the narrator. The irony of the realization that he has spent so much time and energy revering these remote, unfeeling stars is demonstrated by the contradiction of the uplifting nature of the music. The accompaniment further enhances this ambivalence by alternating between rolled and non-rolled chords in the last five measures of the verse (Ex. 3, beginning at m. 28).

Example 3 (“The Infinite Shining Heavens,” mm. 24-28) *N. B.* The score has a clef error at measure 24 – the treble clef from m. 20 in the left hand should continue to m. 28

The third stanza opens as the first did, with some important differences that help to set off the change of meaning in the last two lines

of the song. The accompaniment begins with the stepwise descent of Verse 1, but it has thinner voicing, with no rolled chords. The narrator recalls that in his darkest time, the stars just hovered there, offering no solace. But suddenly, one of them descended to him at dusk. This star may represent the woman, who came to him "...in the eventide" and called to him "...with lighted lamp," as stated in the first stanza of "Youth and Love." This realization on his part seems to surprise him, as evidenced by the sudden tempo change and harmonic activity that drives toward the end of the song (Ex. 5, mm. 38-47). The stepwise descent of the left hand returns for the last line of text, but is mirrored in the top voice of the right hand. Thus the accompaniment expands outward beginning at measure 42 (Ex. 4, m. 42-45). This expansion reaches its climax at the end of the vocal line, where the top voice of the accompaniment has reached F and the bottom voice is at G (Ex. 4, m. 45). The resolution of these pitches is outward to F#, functioning as the third of D major (Ex. 4, mm. 46-47). This change of mode at the very end of the song may recall the irony of the realization of the futile reverence the narrator had of the stars in the second verse. Here, the irony may be that the emotional connection he desired was present with the woman, whom he abandoned in favor of the uncaring heavens. This knowledge may motivate the protagonist's return in the next song to the home he abandoned in "The Vagabond."

Example 4 ("The Infinite Shining Heavens," mm. 36-47)

stars . looked o - ver the sea, Till lo!

... I looked in the dusk ... And a star had come down

to me...

pp animando

sempre animando

f dim. *pp*

Interpretive suggestions

"The Infinite Shining Heavens" is marked *Andante sostenuto*, and requires forward motion, but with a feeling of suspense representative of the stars in the heavens. A metronome marking of ($\text{♩} = 60$) is a reasonable tempo. The singer should be able to comfortably execute the somewhat long phrases (e.g., "showering sorrow and light," mm. 8-12). Another important factor in determining the tempo is the length of the rolled chords

that occur in the accompaniment. The first verse, for example, contains a preponderance of these rolled chords that cover as many as eight notes. In order to properly play so many keys clearly as a roll, the tempo must not be too fast.

How the rolled chords are played can also have an effect on the expression of the text. For example, to evoke the reflection of starlight on the water (“The stars looked over the sea”), the pianist can vary the speed and placement of the rolled chords. In the first verse, the pianist may roll the chords so that the bottom note of each chord sounds at the same time as the corresponding note in the voice part, giving the accompaniment a “delayed” feeling that depicts the reflection of the stars in the surf. When the rolled chords return at the end of the song, the narrator is relating the point in the story where a star comes down and joins him (“Till lo! I looked in the dusk / And a star had come down to me!”). Here, the pianist could roll the chords earlier, placing the top note of each chord with the voice line, in order to illustrate closer proximity.

Another aspect of the accompaniment that needs attention is the use of chord voicing. This technique requires the pianist to create melodies from a homophonic accompaniment by playing certain inner pitches louder than the more obvious outer voices. For instance, in Example 5 beginning at measure 36, a descending line can be produced from F in the right hand

down the scale to the B \flat in the second chord of measure 37. This would parallel the descent of the bass line in sixths, making this figure more prominent and foreshadowing the descent of the star that occurs in the last line of the text. The final appearance of the stepwise figure beginning at measure 42 should be voiced so that the resolution outward to F \sharp at the end of the song is clear.

Chapter 8

“Whither must I wander?”

Key: c minor Form: strophic

The poem consists of three sections of two four-line stanzas each, for a total of 24 lines. This is by far the most substantial poem in the cycle. Musically, the composer set the text as a strophic song, with each of the three folk-like verses in “aaba” form. The poem describes the narrator's return to the home he left in the first song of the cycle, “The Vagabond.”

Verse 1 begins with the protagonist's account of the hunger and undesirable living conditions with which he has dealt since beginning his journey, but in the second stanza moves to recollections of his earlier life as part of the civilized world. The second verse continues this reverie, but becomes more specific, citing the presence of friends and neighbors, and the pleasantness of daily activity. The second stanza brings the narrator back to the present, where the house that was such a haven for friends and family now stands lonely and apparently empty. In the final verse, the narrator describes the beauty of spring that will surround his former home, as it did throughout his time there.

1.

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?
 Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
 Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather:
 Thick drives the rain and my roof is in the dust.

Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree,
 The true word of welcome was spoken in the door:
 Dear days of old with the faces in the firelight;
 Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

2.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
 Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.
 Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;
 Song, tuneful song built a palace in the wild.

Now when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
 Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
 Lone let it stand now the friends are all departed,
 The kind hearts, the true hearts that loved the place of old.

3.

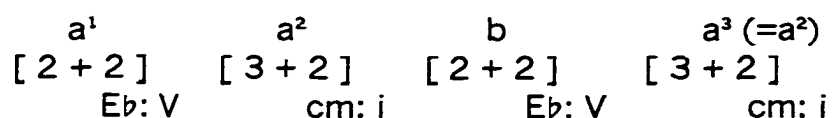
Spring shall come, come again, calling up the moor-fowl,
 Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees and flowers;
 Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,
 Soft flow the stream through the even flowing hours.

Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood;
 Fair the day shine on the house with open door.
 Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney
 But I go forever and come again no more.

Alternation in the poem between past and present tense is reflected musically by a tonal duality between c minor and its relative major, as well as in the sectional form of the music. Each stanza of the poem is divided

into two stanzas of four lines each. These stanzas have one verb tense – for example, the first part of Verse 1 is in the present tense (“Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust”), and the second is in the past tense (“The true word of welcome was spoken in the door”). These divisions are represented in the music by the shifting of tonality between c minor and E \flat major. The first half of each verse begins in E \flat major, but moves back and forth between major and minor mode, cadencing in c minor. The second half of the verse begins and ends in c minor, with a touch of E \flat major appearing along the way.

The tonal duality and the folk-like simplicity of the phrase structure are apparent in this schematic representation of the form of each verse:



In this diagram, line 1 represents the melodic material; line 2 is the breakdown of the vocal line by number of downbeats into phrases and subphrases; line 3 shows the cadences of each phrase.

Phrase a¹ begins at measure 3 in E \flat major, with an outline of the tonic triad in the voice (Ex. 1, mm. 3-4), then pauses with a half cadence in E \flat major with the voice on the second scale degree (“...I go where I must,” Ex. 1, m. 6). This cadence is approached from a c minor triad outlined at

the beginning of the measure, contributing to the tonal ambiguity of this song.

Example 1 (“Whither must I wander?” mm. 1-6)

The musical score for Example 1 consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 1-6. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb major/C minor). The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The tempo marking *mf tranquillo* is placed above the vocal line. The lyrics are: "Home no more home to me...". The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "whither must I wander? Hunger my driver, I go...where I must." The piano accompaniment includes the marking *legato*.

At measure 7, phrase a^2 of the vocal line begins as phrase a^1 did, but with a harmonization of c minor rather than Eb major (Ex. 2, m. 7). The peak of the melody occurs at measure 8 with the outline of an Eb major triad in the voice and a combination of Eb major and c minor in the harmony. The high note of the phrase (“...heather”) is extended, relative to the same melodic point in phrase a^1 (“...wander”). This “stretching” of one

word adds one downbeat to this portion of the melody, giving the rhythmic contour more variety (Ex. 2, mm. 8-9). The second half of phrase a^2 continues as did the second half of phrase a^1 , until the last few notes of the vocal line. The melody moves downward to C rather than turning upward and reaching F as it did in the previous phrase, then cadences at measure 11 on a c minor triad (Ex. 2, mm. 10-11).

Example 2 ("Whither must I wander?" mm. 7-12)

Cold blows the win-ter wind o-ver hill and hea-ther: Thick drives the

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rain and my roof is in the dust. *risoluto* Lov'd of... wise men was the

Phrase b has a different character from that of the previous two phrases. The *tessitura* is higher, with the vocal line ascending to the high E \flat at the midpoint of each part of this phrase (Ex. 3, mm.13 and 15). This melody repeats itself partially, but stops, as it started, on B \flat .

Harmonically, the motion in these measures is a reversal of the previous phrase, moving through c minor toward E \flat major, with a cadence on the dominant of that key (Ex. 3, m. 15).

Example 3 (“Whither must I wander?” mm. 10-15)

The musical score for Example 3, "Whither must I wander?" (mm. 10-15), is presented in two systems. Each system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system (mm. 10-15) features the lyrics: "rain and my roof is in the dust. Lov'd of...wise men was the". The second system (mm. 16-21) features the lyrics: "shade of my roof-tree, The true word of welcome was spoken in the door...". The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (e.g., *risoluto*, *ff*, *poco rit.*, *poco rall.*) and articulation marks.

The final phrase of the vocal line is a direct repeat of phrase a², and cadences at measure 20 in c minor (Ex. 4).

Example 4 ("Whither must I wander?" mm. 16-21)

The musical score for Example 4 consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 16-18. The vocal line is in C minor and 3/4 time, starting with a *p* dynamic and *a tempo* marking. The piano accompaniment is in the same key and time, starting with a *pp* dynamic and *a tempo* marking. The lyrics are: "Dear days of old...with the faces in the fire - light: Kind folks of". The second system shows measures 19-21. The vocal line continues with "old, you come a - gain no more." The piano accompaniment includes a *colla voce* marking. The score ends with a cadence in measure 20.

The vocal line is structured in the same fashion for each verse.

Before the first presentation of this aaba melody, the piano introduction in c minor presages the contour of the vocal line, but in a broader, less compact fashion (Ex. 1 supra, mm. 1 and 3). There is a *decrescendo* from *forte* to *piano* in the course of the first measure, giving the

introduction a blustery quality (Ex. 1 supra, m. 1). The tonal duality is evident when the voice enters in the relative key of E \flat major. This rising and falling line begins in a fairly confined manner, yet expands as the verse continues and eventually covers the span of a tenth in six measures of music (Ex. 1-2 supra, mm. 3-9). The peak of this tenth is reached in the second line of text ("Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather"). This phrase begins in c minor, and reaches E \flat major on the word "heather" (Ex. 2 supra, m.8-9). This alternation between c minor and E \flat major is not only one of the main musical characteristics of "Whither must I wander?" but it also gives the song a folk quality reminiscent of the modality of "Let Beauty Awake." The ascent to the high E \flat in the vocal line is augmented by the mirrored descent of the left hand of the piano part, expanding the sound outward and greatly enhancing the dynamic swell marked in both parts (Ex. 2 supra, mm. 8-9). The first half of the verse cadences in c minor.

The second stanza is approached with ascending parallel thirds leading to the dominant minor, evoking another touch of modality (Ex. 2 supra, mm. 11-12). This line of text is set apart from the rest of the verse by the rests inserted in the accompaniment, the punctuation of certain chords by a roll marking, and the dynamic goal of *fortissimo* at the end of the line (Ex. 3 supra, mm. 12-15). The two last lines of the verse ("Fire and

the windows bright...") are musically identical to the third and fourth lines ("Cold blows the winter wind..."), yet they each focus on the opposing ideas of homelessness and domesticity. The voice's last note overlaps a return of the piano introduction, which here acts as both postlude for verse 1 and prelude to verse 2 (Ex. 4 supra, mm. 20-21). These final two lines are set apart from the rest of the verse by the sudden drop in dynamic from *fortissimo* to *piano*, with a *diminuendo* to the first *pianissimo* of the vocal line at the last line of text, "Kind folks of old, you come again no more." This contrast suggests that narrator maintains a sort of reverence for the home and people that he abandoned.

The second verse is musically identical to the first verse, both vocally and pianistically, with the exception that Vaughan Williams changes the rhythm of the opening line to accommodate the word stress of the poetry (Ex. 5, mm. 22 and 24).

Example 5 ("Whither must I wander?" mm. 22-24)

The musical score for Example 5 consists of two systems. The first system is the vocal line, written in a single treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte). The lyrics are: "Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces, Home was home then, my dear." The second system is the piano accompaniment, written in two staves (treble and bass clefs). It begins with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The piano part features a steady accompaniment with some melodic lines in the right hand and a more active bass line.

While Verse 1 began by describing the narrator's living conditions since leaving his home, Verse 2 refers directly to his memories of his early life ("Home was home...happy for the child"), and how sad the state of this place really is ("Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold").

Verse 3 begins with an embellished accompaniment figure of thirds and sixths that move in counterpoint to the vocal line, giving the music a lighter, more flowing quality than in the previous verses. This change in the music directly reflects the text, which refers to the beauty of spring's return to the area surrounding the narrator's former home (Ex. 6).

Example 6 ("Whither must I wander?" mm. 41-46)

The musical score for Example 6 consists of two systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part features a prominent accompaniment figure of thirds and sixths. The first system of music includes the lyrics: "Spring shall come, come a-gain, call-ing up the moor-fowl, Spring shall bring the sun and rain,". The second system includes the lyrics: "bring the bees and flowers; Red shall the hea-ther bloom o-ver hill and val . . .". The piano part is marked *pp legato*.

The second half of this final verse is musically similar to the previous stanzas, but the accompaniment changes to enhance the drama. At the second half of the line, "Fair shine the day as it shone on my childhood," the right hand of the accompaniment ascends in opposition to the descent of the vocal line (Ex. 7, m. 51). This change seems to connect this line musically to the next line in a clearer way than in the previous verses, with the counterpoint of the right hand continuing across the bar line (Ex. 7, mm. 51-52). The sun's shining down on the empty house is reflected in the expanding tessitura of the piano part, covering a full octave more than in the previous verses (Ex. 7, mm. 52-53). The eighth-note motion continues in the accompaniment until the penultimate measure (Ex. 7, mm. 53-57), where an indication of *molto rallentando* in the vocal line and *colla voce* in the accompaniment punctuate the line, "But I go forever and come again no more." In the piano, the closing c-minor chord has the fifth in the top voice (Ex. 7, m. 58). The somewhat incomplete sound of this cadence may be heard as a connection between this song and the next, "Bright is the ring of words," which begins with a long C major chord in root position. The transition from a *pianissimo* c minor to a *forte* C major may be text painting by the composer on the word "Bright."

Example 7 ("Whither must I wander?" mm. 50-58)

Fair the day shine as it shone on my child-hood: Fair shine the day on the

house with open door. Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chim-

ney— But I go for ever and come a-gain no more

poco rit. *pp a tempo*

poco rit. pp a tempo

molto rall.

colla voce

Interpretive suggestions

"Whither must I wander" requires a comfortable tempo that can be flexible, yet remain within *Andante*, never feeling rushed. A metronome marking of ($\text{♩} = 72-76$) would be appropriate.

Strophic songs are generally more difficult to vary in expression because of the repetitive nature of the music. Furthermore, in this song the singer and the pianist have a challenge in that they are bound to the composer's musical markings, which rarely change between verses.

One way of indicating expressive differences may be to vary the tempo of each verse. For example, Vaughan Williams marks only the first verse *tranquillo*, leaving the mood of the latter two verses open to interpretation. The second verse begins with a rhythmic alteration of the melody that could be further enhanced by slight *rubato* within each phrase. The inner voices of the piano part may be brought out here to give the verse a different emphasis. The third verse could be performed at a faster tempo than the preceding two, which would emphasize the greater activity in the accompaniment and the more hopeful meaning of the text. This increase should continue to the *a tempo* marking at the last two lines of the poem ("Birds come and cry there..." measure 54). The last line of text is marked *molto rallentando*, and should slow evenly, without altering the rhythm within the line. The final chord needs to be voiced with an emphasis on the outermost notes in each hand, to reflect the unresolved nature of the cadence and make the opening chord of the next song more meaningful.

Chapter 9

“Bright is the ring of words”

Key: C major Form: ab¹/ab²

“Bright is the ring of words” divides into two sections with two four-line stanzas in each. The four stanzas are musically set in an ab¹/ab² design. The “a” portion of this representation indicates that the two sections begin alike and end differently, but with similar material.

The text is a philosophical reverie about the enduring nature of words, especially in the form of poems and songs. The narrator refers to the transformation of words into song, and points out that the song continues to be sung long after its composer and singer are dead (it seems that the narrator is substituting “singer” for himself in this poem). The tune brings people together even though its creator is long dead, and inspires those who have similar emotional or spiritual qualities to the “singer.” They in turn express the emotional content of the song as the original singer did. “The lover lingers and sings, / And the maid remembers” implies that the maid is the woman to whom his “song” was first sung in “The Roadside Fire.”

1.
 Bright is the ring of words
 When the right man rings them,
 Fair the fall of songs
 When the singer sings them.

Still they are carolled and said –
 On wings they are carried –
 After the singer is dead
 And the maker buried.

2.
 Low as the singer lies
 In the field of heather,
 Songs of his fashion bring
 The swains together.

And when the west is red
 With the sunset embers,
 The lover lingers and sings,
 And the maid remembers.

The accompaniment is homophonic in the first verse. The second verse the begins with rolled chords, then changes to eighth-note motion for the last half of the stanza. This change in the piano part may reflect the shift in the text from reference to the “singer” in the present tense (Verse 1) to discussing those who carried on his legacy of song after his death. The piece begins *forte*, with a marking of *moderato risoluto*. This broad, almost heroic, quality tapers down gradually, reaching *pianissimo* at the beginning of the second verse.

The key scheme of the song presents some colorful harmonic choices. The piece opens in C major, but the third and fourth lines of text center around a minor, the relative of C major. The second half of the verse has the Neapolitan of C (D \flat) as its tonal center, and moves back to C major by the end of the verse. In the second verse, the same key scheme applies,

up to the point where the harmonic structure centered on the dominant of a minor in Verse 1 (“Fair the fall of songs...”). In Verse 2, this dominant is prolonged and becomes the dominant of A major, maintaining this key as tonic for six measures before moving to the Neapolitan and returning to C major. “Bright is the ring of words” begins with a full C major chord marked with a *fermata*. This chord is heard in relation to the c-minor chord at the end of the previous song, “Whither must I wander?” and furnishes text-painting for the word “bright” (Ex. 1, m.1). The accents within the lines of poetry alternate in number (e.g., the opening line has three accents, the next line four, etc.). To accommodate this mixing of meter in the poetry, Vaughan Williams has composed the song in mixed meter, switching between 3/4 and common time (Ex. 1).

Example 1 (“Bright is the ring of words,” mm. 1-4)

Moderato risoluto

VOICE

Bright is the ring of words..... When the right man

PIANO

risoluto

The first stanza of the poem begins with praise for the virtues of poetry and song, especially when they are produced by talented men (“Bright is the ring of words / When the right man rings them...”). The second stanza describes the existence of these words and songs in perpetuity. The endurance of creative works into the distant future is represented in the music by a sudden shift to the “distant” key of D \flat major following a half cadence in C major (Ex. 2). The new tonal center parallels the change in the text from present to future (“Bright is the ring of words...” versus “Still they are carolled...after the singer is dead”). This change in focus is further highlighted by a drop in dynamic level from *forte* to *mezzo piano*, as well as by a change in articulation from non-legato to *legato* (Ex. 2, m. 10). Here, the dynamic level drops for the second time, from *mezzo piano* to *piano*. This dynamic change is especially difficult for the singer, who must leap up from the lowest vocal pitch of the cycle to the highest note of this song (Ex. 2, mm. 14-15). At the end of Verse 1, there is a 5/4 measure inserted, accommodating a pause on the word “dead” and setting up the modulation back to C major (Ex. 2, m. 17).

Example 2 ("Bright is the ring of words," mm.10-17)

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system (measures 10-17) features a vocal line starting with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Still they are ca-rolled and said- On wings they are car-ried-". The piano accompaniment is marked *mp legato*. The second system (measures 18-25) starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction *poco rit.* The lyrics are: "Af-ter the sing-er is dead And the mak-er". The piano accompaniment in the second system is also marked *p*.

The first half of Verse 2 resembles Verse 1 harmonically, but the dynamic is now *pianissimo*, and the accompaniment has changed. Rolled chords in the treble clef replace the low octaves and *risoluto* chords of the opening of the song. At the line, "Songs of his fashion bring / The swains together..." the composer uses rhythmic *hemiola* as a text painting device, giving a dance-like rhythm to the line. Rhythmically, these three measures can be interpreted as a series of five half-notes (Ex. 3).

Example 3 ("Bright is the ring of words," mm. 25-27)

The focus of the text turns from the spoken word to nature for two lines of the second verse, referring to the sunset. The harmony focused on the Neapolitan chord at this point in the previous verse, but here the tonal center is A major, a sharp key relating to nature. The return of D \flat major recalls the key and melody of the penultimate line of the first verse, "After the singer is dead..." Where the vocal line moved from F to E \flat once (m. 16), in this verse the melody "lingers," repeating the move from F to E \flat (Ex. 4, mm. 35-36).

"Bright is the ring of words" ends with a reference to a woman who recalls her lover after hearing the song. The last time the narrator had contact with the woman he loved, he sang "...but a boyish stave" and disappeared forever ("Youth and Love"). The reference here to the lover who "...lingers and sings" and the woman who remembers him may imply that the woman whom the narrator left behind in "Youth and Love" remembers

the narrator. That song ended on a tonic chord in second inversion, as does this one, provided the accompaniment is played without pedaling through the last two measures (Ex. 4, m.40). The unresolved nature of this chord may imply that the feelings these two people had for each other have never been resolved, and apparently never will be.

Example 4 ("Bright is the ring of words," mm. 34-40)

The musical score for Example 4 consists of two systems of vocal and piano parts. The first system covers measures 34-36, with the vocal line singing "The lov - - er lin - - gers and" and the piano accompaniment. The second system covers measures 37-40, with the vocal line singing "sings,..... And the maid re - mem - - bers." and the piano accompaniment. Performance markings include *la melodia ben marcato*, *pp molto più lento*, *colla voce*, and *rall.*

Interpretive suggestions

The tempo marking *Moderato risoluto* suggests motion with attention to the vitality of the dotted rhythms, recalling the *risoluto* marking in "The

Vagabond.” This quality would be difficult to achieve if the piece is performed too fast. A metronome marking of ($\text{♩} = 108$) seems sufficient.

The grace note leading into the opening chord should be played before the beat, with both hands of the chord sounding together. The *risoluto* marking could become stilted and shapeless with no pedal at all; therefore, some accent pedal on each chord, without overlapping, is recommended. In the second half of the first verse, the piano part is specifically marked *legato*. This particular section of the accompaniment can be problematic due to the pedal F that is to be held in the left hand (see Ex. 2). It is possible to play the moving thirds in the upper voices *legato* if the some of the top notes of the bass clef are played by the right hand.

The rolled chords that open the second verse may represent the fields of heather that cover the singer’s grave. The rolls can be played either with the top note sounding on the beat, or with the bottom note beginning the beat. The duration of the roll may also be varied, with the result that the end of one chord is overlapped by the beginning of the next. Experimentation is necessary for this feature, and the rolling of the chords must not be such that it distracts the singer. The eighth-note motion in the accompaniment beginning at measure 28 may be enhanced by voicing the

bottom note of each third, thus accentuating the harmonization of the melody.

The last line of the song is marked *molto più lento* for both singer and pianist, with a *rallentando* marked in the piano at the penultimate measure. These tempo changes need to be given great attention in order to prevent the singer from running out of breath before the end of the word “remembers.” The *fermata* indicated on the last note suggests that the tempo markings in the previous two measures should be relative to the singer’s ability to sustain the last measure for at least five beats.

Chapter 10

“I have trod the upward and the downward slope”

Key: d minor/D major Form: through-composed

“I have trod the upward and the downward slope” was found among Vaughan Williams’ papers after his death and published posthumously with the other eight songs in 1960. The song carries a note, either from the publisher or Vaughan Williams’ widow, that it is to be “sung in public only when the complete cycle is performed.” The motivation for this instruction is evident in the music and text.

The poem is very short, resembling an epitaph. The four lines of text may be viewed as a summary of the narrator’s life and philosophy. The music strongly reflects this idea, with quotes from “The Vagabond,” “Whither must I wander?” and “Bright is the ring of words.” There are also strong parallels between this song and “The Infinite Shining Heavens,” such as the shifts between d minor and F major, the descending line in the introductions of both pieces, and the seeming contradiction of affirmative music combined with negativity in the text. This reappearance of familiar material, combined with the succinct and direct nature of the text, support the idea of this song’s function as a postscript to the cycle.

The song is divided by change of key signature, the first half being in d minor and the second in D major. As the song progresses, the note values in the vocal line are elongated, slowing the delivery of the text.

I have trod the upward and the downward slope;
I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.

“I have trod the upward and the downward slope” begins with a measure of piano introduction that recalls the fanfare from the opening of “The Vagabond” in the right hand and the descending step-wise bass notes of “The Infinite Shining Heavens” in the left hand (Ex. 1, m. 1). The key of d minor is also reminiscent of “The Infinite Shining Heavens.” The combination of musical ideas from those two songs supports the connections of subject matter (the only two references to “heaven” are in these songs) and similarity of melodic contour. This synthesis of ideas from “The Vagabond” and “The Infinite Shining Heavens” regarding the narrator’s relationship to the stars and the realization of the futility of his admiration for them may be seen as the protagonist’s passionate feelings being tempered by his experiences. The fanfare from “The Vagabond” frames the line “I have trod the upward and the downward slope,” recalling

the resolve to travel from the opening of the cycle. Yet this setting of the figure is in a much slower tempo, with a dynamic marking of *piano* and anagogical marking of *maestoso*. In addition, there is a tie in the middle of the motive that gives it a halting quality (Ex. 1, mm. 1 and 3). The interruption of the forward motion, the softer dynamic and the weight of the octaves in the left hand all suggest a feeling of weariness and some regret.

The text corroborates this interpretation in its wording. The use of the word “trod” is significant in that it is the first time the narrator has described his own motion. He has referred to the road, and to coming and going. Here, he chooses to describe his physical movement with a strong verb that implies walking, but with force. However, the music is anything but forceful, with the halting triplets and the plodding descent of the bass line.

The vocal part also gives a clue as to the narrator’s feelings regarding the wandering life he chose. In the opening phrase (“I have trod the upward and the downward slope;”), the composer has written the vocal line with great emphasis on the word “downward.” All the words before this one are set to sixteenth notes, with a marking of *quasi ritardando* leading to the word “downward.” This single word encompasses two-thirds of the measure. It is further magnified with a *messa di voce* marking (Ex. 1, m. 2). The accentuation of “downward” suggests that the narrator has had more

negative thoughts regarding his life than positive ones. The second line of text adds to this negativity with the word "endured," which implies suffering and resistance against some force (Ex. 1, mm. 3-4).

Example 1 ("I have trod the upward..." mm. 1-4)

The musical score for Example 1 consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 1-2, and the second system covers measures 3-4. The voice part is written in a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo markings are *Andante sostenuto*, *quasi rit*, and *a tempo*. The dynamic markings are *p maestoso* and *risoluto*. The lyrics are: "I have trod the up-ward and the down - ward slope; I have en - dured and done in _ days be -".

The crescendo into "I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope" sets this line apart dynamically from the rest of the song. The text again portrays regret in that the narrator wanted so much from his life, and eventually gave up any hope of satisfying his desires. Musically, the voice

has the same melody as the line from "The Vagabond," "All I seek, the heaven above." This musical recollection further illustrates the narrator's lack of fulfillment, as well as regret for the course his life took (Ex. 3, mm. 5-6, compare with Ex. 4, mm. 37-39).

Example 3 ("I have trod the upward..." mm. 5-7)

fore: I have longed for all, and bid fare-well to hope;

The musical score for Example 3 consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line begins with a half note 'fore:' followed by a quarter note 'I', a quarter note 'have', a quarter note 'longed', a quarter note 'for', a quarter note 'all,', a quarter note 'and', a quarter note 'bid', a quarter note 'fare-well', a quarter note 'to', and a half note 'hope;'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

Example 4 ("The Vagabond," mm. 36-39)

know me; All I seek, the heaven a - bove,

The musical score for Example 4 consists of four systems. The first system shows the vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line begins with a half note 'know', a quarter note 'me;', a quarter note 'All', a quarter note 'I', a quarter note 'seek,', a quarter note 'the', a quarter note 'heaven', a quarter note 'a -', and a half note 'bove,'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

Harmonically, the first half of the song strongly resembles "The Infinite Shining Heavens" in that both songs began in d minor and shift to F

major. Both also have the same melodic outline, beginning at A and moving up a minor third to C, working down toward low C, upward to a peak at high D, and finally arriving on low E. The second half of the piece is also reminiscent of "The Infinite Shining Heavens" in that it moves to D major. This change takes place with a major-mode version of the accompaniment to "Whither must I wander?" in the piano over a dominant pedal (Ex. 5), a low A that continues for eight measures. The appearance of music from "Whither must I wander?" beneath the text "And I have lived and loved" may symbolize emotional closure. In the earlier song, the narrator returned to his former home, found it abandoned, and vowed never to return ("But I go forever, and come again no more"). Here, he has lived his life, given up love, and although he has regrets, he will not look back. His decisions cannot be changed ("And I have lived and loved, and closed the door").

Example 5 ("I have trod the upward..." mm. 8-11)

The musical score for Example 5 consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and features a melodic line with a dominant pedal point of A. The piano accompaniment is in G major and features a dominant pedal point of A. The text "And I have lived and loved," is written below the vocal line.

The postlude of "I have trod the upward and the downward slope" begins with a quotation of the first line of "Bright is the ring of words" (Ex. 6, mm. 17-20). In that poem, the narrator refers to the enduring nature of words, even beyond the life of the one who utters them ("Still they are carolled and said...after the singer is dead / And the maker buried"). The appearance of this music after the line "...and closed the door" may symbolize the narrator's role as the "singer" of the cycle, and suggest that his existence is ending, but his words live on.

Example 6 ("I have trod the upward..." mm. 16-20)

The final three measures of the cycle are a quotation of the marching figure with which *Songs of Travel* began. Here, rather than *risoluto* and *staccato*, the motive is somewhat spiritless and *legato*, with a pedal mark throughout the statement. The key of D major as opposed to the c minor that began the cycle gives this final moment of *Songs of Travel* a

transfigured quality that may be viewed as the narrator finally finding the "heaven" he sought for so long.

Example 7 ("I have trod the upward..." mm. 21-25)

Interpretive suggestions

Ralph Vaughan Williams' composition of "I have trod the upward and the downward slope" leaves no doubt that his intention was for *Songs of Travel* to be performed as a cycle. The quotations from earlier songs in the work need to be conveyed as echoes of those pieces, allowing the audience to conceive their own interpretations of the emotions connected with those figures. The pianist has the greater amount of this recalled material, and it is necessary to follow the dynamics carefully to avoid burlesquing the earlier songs. For example, the opening of the song contains the fanfare figure from "The Vagabond," yet here it is marked *piano maestoso*, without the staccato marks that characterized it in the earlier song.

The vocal line begins with a marking of *mezzo forte*, and grows dynamically through the first half of the song. The line "I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope" should be delivered with as much emotion as the singer can provide, since this is the admission of the narrator that his life was less than what he wanted it to be. The tempo of this first half should be determined by the singer's ability to sing "I have endured and done in days before" in one breath. A reasonable starting point may be ($\text{♩} = 76$).

The second half of the song begins with a chord in the piano that may require special pedaling. The low A in measure 8 (see Ex. 5) should be played alone and pedaled with the sostenuto pedal using the left foot. The rest of the chord and the three measures following should be pedaled with the damper pedal, changing on each chord with a slight overlap to increase the legato. After measure 10, the sostenuto pedal can be released and the soft pedal employed. Since the piano part is in the same tessitura as the singer, the lightest touch possible is recommended. The crescendo into measure 16 is for the piano only, and can be indicated by evenly raising the soft pedal with the crescendo to the downbeat of measure 16, then lowering the pedal evenly with the decrescendo. This will give the illusion of a dynamic change without having it be too broad a change for the context. The last note of the voice part should be as soft as possible, and may need to be sung in falsetto if the voice cannot achieve so soft a dynamic.

The beginning of the postlude may need the sostenuto pedal for the D octaves in measures 17 to 21, as suggested for measure 8 (see Ex. 6). This piano part should be as clear as possible until measure 23, where the damper pedal should be applied, as indicated, for two full measures.

Chapter 11

Interpretive Summary

Performing *Songs of Travel* in its entirety would require some thought as to the unity of the cycle. The transitions between the pieces can be easier for the performers if they mentally “group” the nine songs based upon the chosen interpretive direction. For example, based upon the dramatic intent suggested by this study, a collaborative team may conceive of “The Vagabond” and “Let Beauty Awake” as a unit, connected by the poetic focus on the narrator and his relationship to nature. “The Roadside Fire” and “Youth and Love” can be linked by the addition of the woman to the “plot.” “In Dreams” and “The Infinite Shining Heavens” both convey the narrator’s emotional unrest after leaving the woman, and are the two most abstract poems in the cycle. “Whither must I wander?” stands alone in this interpretation, because it is viewed as a return to the narrator’s birthplace, which was abandoned in the opening song. The final two songs, “Bright is the ring of words” and “I have trod the upward and the downward slope,” represent two types of summations. The first song expresses the narrator’s philosophical conclusions regarding the type of life he led, while the final piece illustrates his reflections on life as a whole, and the unchangeable nature of the decisions one makes. Grouping the songs in this manner

gives the performers a more structured mental concept for presenting the work on stage. They can use the divisions of subject matter as guideposts for emotional direction, preventing the nine songs from blurring one into the next.

It is necessary to note that the conclusions drawn from the study of text/music relations are subjective to an extent. While the analysis of harmonic structure and compositional devices and their connections to the poetry are constants, the interpretation of those findings is variable, based on the collaborative team's point of view. Recurring figures such as the marching motive from "The Vagabond" may be viewed by other artists as representing something entirely different. Both concepts may be equally valid, provided the music and the text have been studied and the performers' dramatic choices have the support of their findings. This individuality of interpretation is the essence of performance, and the sharing of that collaborative effort with an audience is the ultimate reward for the artists who create their performance using evidence from the score.

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