'Behold the sea!' The geo-cultural place of landscape in Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*

Annika Lindskog

Published online: 29 Apr 2024.

Submit your article to this journal ⤴

Article views: 250

View related articles ⤴

View Crossmark data ⤴

'Behold the sea!' The geo-cultural place of landscape in Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*

Annika Lindskog

University College London; a.lindskog@ucl.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The article examines Ralph Vaughan Williams' first symphony, 'A Sea Symphony', from 1912, in the context of the British contemporary relationship to the sea as of defining national importance. It specifically looks for ways in which the symphony engages with narratives around the sea as a national landscape and a nationally defining geography. The article's aim is to situate the symphonic output and text in a nationally embedded, articulated and traceable discourse around the seascape, and interrogate the ways in which it relates to and contributes to such discourse. It finds that the music resonates against historical, cultural and political engagements with the seascape, and puts forward ways in which these engagements can be heard through textures, expression and sonorities, as well as being seen in inspirations and interpretations of the relational sea-scape and its geographical situatedness.

PART 1: THE SEA ITSELF

When Vaughan Williams' father died, when Vaughan Williams was only 3, his mother moved the family back to her ancestral Wedgewood home, Leith Hill Place. Deep in the Surrey hills, it is reached by long, winding roads through tall and ancient woods, and perching on top of one of the numerous rolling hills, affords far-reaching views of fields, a multitude of trees and hedgerows, and open skies. Today bequeathed to and run by The National Trust, Leith Hill Place remains intimately connected with Vaughan Williams, although he never lived there as an adult (and even in childhood spent a significant amount of time away at school). In its own capacity, it represents not only an instance of English history in a certain layer of society — as a former home of some of 'the country's most influential families'[1] — but also a particular landscape, which within its acreage contains an accumulated plenitude of features that combine to present a highly representative tableau of an archetypical English landscape. Throughout Vaughan Williams' compositions, landscapes of this kind occupy a central position: for example in numerous orchestral evocations bearing titles with geographical specificities, in folk song arrangements with musical narratives tied to specific locations, and as a recurrent sensitivity to our inter-connectedness with landscape as a matter of geography teeming with collective histories, multifaceted sensibilities and poetic inspirations.

It is in the context of this heightened sense of landscape as an inherited, present and continuously (re-)negotiated place that this article wants to consider Vaughan Williams' first symphony, 'A Sea Symphony'. Initially conceived as 'Songs of the sea' or 'Sea Songs', then as an 'Ocean Symphony'[2] before finally arriving at its ultimate form and title, it was premiered at the Leeds Musical Festival in October 1910,[3] on the composer's 38th birthday, and belongs to a group of works around that time which saw Vaughan Williams become firmly established as an important member of a new generation of British composers. Its choral 'core' is indicated in its early titles, and the composition as a whole hovers somewhere between a symphonic structure and a large cantata, with debates about the extent to which it adheres to established symphonic principles (or not) frequent in the commentary.[4] It is therefore on the one hand both innovative and individual,[5] while at the same time being firmly anchored in its own contemporary context through performative and thematic concerns.

PERFORMANCE

The Sea Symphony's close relationship with contemporary aesthetics and ideologies might be understood from two main perspectives: its musical form and expression, and its topical socio-political context. A Sea Symphony is scored for chorus, two soloists (soprano and baritone), and a large orchestra. It is a massive choral piece: performances typically lasting for just over an hour and, apart from a longer section for the soloists in the fourth movement and an orchestral interlude in the second, the chorus sings throughout. It also requires a relatively 'capacious' choral sound: although rich in nuance and varieties of mood and texture it is also abundant in passages where the choral intensity and sonority needs to be substantial. In this way it relates to the popular choral traditions of the day, cultivated since the massed choirs gathered for the Handelian oratorios in the late eighteenth century, and continued not least through various well-established festivals.[6] This is then a type of musical activity that was well known and well established, and the Sea Symphony's

premiere at one of the festivals which were one of the mainstays of British musical life at the time is part of its contextual relevancy.[7, 8]

The festivals were important performance opportunities for both established and new composers (as well as for regional musical life outside London). The socially and culturally embedded structures, the performance opportunity they provided, and the audience they reached, represent an essential ingredient in musical production of the early twentieth century in Britain. Vaughan Williams operated within this existing musical context by taking part in these performative realities and structures of musical consumption, and through contact with other contemporary composers. Although he is usually considered less directly influenced by any of his older colleagues or teachers, apart from his close friend Gustav Holst and a brief but important period of study with Maurice Ravel (in 1908), A Sea Symphony nevertheless bears traces of ideas or inspiration (and at points pure theft) from other composers, notably Elgar and Parry. Vaughan Williams studied for Parry at the Royal College of Music 1890–1892, then read history and music at Cambridge with composition lessons from Charles Wood, before returning to RCM 1895–96 and compositional studies for Charles Villiers Stanford.[9] It was also Stanford who recommended the Sea Symphony to the festival committee in Leeds, and whose scrutiny of earlier versions helped Vaughan Williams in the final revisions. In this way, the symphony must be understood to have emerged to a considerable degree in close dialogue with its contemporary musical framework and local context.

LANDSCAPE

The symphony also engaged with a topic of specific national interest and significance at the time. A Sea Symphony sets texts by Walt Whitman, taken mainly from Whitman's collections Leaves of Grass and Passage to India. This is in itself an act with high local reference, given Whitman's general popularity at the time and the very numerous settings of his poems that English composers were undertaking.[10] But the texts and passages extracted from Whitman's

texts also all engage exclusively with one subject in particular — the sea. For Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century, few topics might have been more generally relevant and integrally connected to sentiments of national status and collective identity, imbued with extensive historical contingency and poetic currency.

'England is mistress of the seas', *The Times* wrote in February 1902, the same year Vaughan Williams started work on *A Sea Symphony*, '[...] by virtue of her history, of her geographical situation, of her economic antecedents and conditions, of her Imperial position and expansion.' (quoted in Kennedy 1983, p. 149). The unrivalled command of the seas and seafaring which developed up to and into the nineteenth century had become what Gough terms 'the code of the nation' as well as the 'credo of policymakers' (2014, p. 2). In the era when Britain's Royal Navy secured "Pax Britannica" globally, underpinning freedom of navigation for her merchant fleet, 'British domination of the world's shipping lanes created an international traffic in people, goods, flora and fauna' (Taylor 2013, p. 1) and by the mid-nineteenth century London was handling the bulk of the world's shipping trade (*ibid.*, p. 8). The old maxim of 'ships, colonies, commerce' thus found new resonance in the nineteenth century (*ibid.*, p. 2) while the expression of the identity of the maritime nation became 'ineffably naturalised in the sea' (Quilley 1998, p. 149). As part of an 'entrenched' cultural naturalisation, which 'transform[ed] the national identity from an area of political contest to cultural fact' (*ibid.*, p. 146), the sea functions not just as 'a metaphor or vehicle for the commercial and global destiny of the nation', but beyond that as a 'verifiable fact of the national character' (*ibid.*, p. 149).

The sea thus played a multitude of significant roles for national and collective self-definition in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was carrying out the nation's trade, industry, warfare and empire, while also constituting a geographically denominated space which had inspired considerable technological advancement and development. At the same time the seascape was a depository of heritage and traditions, of gained territories and treasures, and of shared narratives around identities and geographies. But it also existed as a physical landscape: tangible and concrete, conditioning and powerful (often cruelly so), yet also containing poetic visions, inspiring artistic responses and spurring philosophical enquiry. Vaughan Williams' first symphony, this article argues, engages extensively with these multifarious aspects of the sea itself, and also with their collective resonance. It can be heard as expressing an understanding of the sea which most presciently relates to these local concerns in a local language: 'translating' Whitman's ideas and ideologies, and rephrasing them into a locally contingent and subjectively understood context.

The critical understanding of Vaughan Williams' relationship to the landscapes his music engages with is often 'mired in misconceived notions of Pastoralism, Nationalism and other blanket clichés', in Frogley's assessment (1993, p. 305). Throughout his output, Vaughan Williams finds connections with a range of localities and landscapes: in compositions ostensibly feeding on inspiration 'about' a place (*e.g.* 'On Wenlock Edge'; 'In the Fen Country: Norfolk Rhapsody'), or seemingly attempting to define notions of specific place-related narratives (symphonies no. *2 and no. 3, for example: The 'London' and the 'Pastoral', as well as the later Sinfonia Antarctica), as well as in songs which explore our relationship and our connectivity to places both in general and specifically, (*e.g.* 'Songs of Travel', 'Linden Lea', folk song arrangements, etc.). Rather than 'representing' any aesthetically predetermined notion of these places, however, Vaughan Williams' engagement centres on their geography and their characteristics as landscapes, but also use their embedded historical relevance to explore their roles as collective experiences with communal resonances. The following discussion will aim to draw out such interactions in the *Sea Symphony* and trace the understanding of the sea as landscape, geography and repository of collective culture, identity and historicity which the symphony engages with and interprets.

SEA (1ST MOVEMENT)

> Behold, the sea itself,
> And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships;
> See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind,
>   speckle the green and blue,
> See, the steamers coming and going, steaming in or
>   out of port,
> See, dusky and undulating, the long pennants of
>   smoke.
>
> (*A Sea Symphony*, movm.1, bb.1–57).

As *A Sea Symphony* opens with a fanfare, directly followed by a forceful choral exclamation of "Behold the sea!", it does two things immediately: it puts the sea centre stage and starts (rather forcefully) a direct dialogue with us about it. While the chorus holds on to the end of their opening statement, the full orchestra enters: upper woods, strings and harp rushing up and down in swirling gestures of fast demi-semi-quavers to the marking *brilliante*, while the lower strings and brass add depth and balance with extended, long beats or held chords underneath. These first four bars already present many of the essential expressions of the symphony: evocative gestures, a narrative trajectory through the vocal articulation of the text, and an orchestra in full spume which translates the physicality of the seascape into the score with onomatopoetic, illustrative and suggestive expressions. Throughout its four movements, the symphony will engage with a range of sea-related topics using such musical gestures and themes.

The first musical theme of importance — after the opening[11]— accompanies the second line of the opening text. It is a stepwise three-note upward phrase that turns downward on a triplet, adding a small tail to its end. It is attached to the line "And on its limitless heaving breast", here presented as a kind of two-part canon between the choral parts. The potential centrality of this theme might be indicated by being singled out by Vaughan Williams himself as one of only two 'significant tunes' to be found in the symphony, together with the harmonic leap at the very opening (Vaughan Williams in a letter to Herbert Thompson, quoted in Cobbe 2008, p. 74). In Vaughan Williams' own description he only refers

to these two thematic musical gestures as 'seem[ing] to suggest the sea to my mind', but adding 'for no particular reason' (*ibid.*). The vagueness of expressive intent renders the use of the theme a certain fluidity of its potential role, or roles. However, although Vaughan Williams makes no further mention of it in his own comments (the letter to Thompson is one of the few statements by him on the symphony that exist), an earlier use of a very similar theme might suggest contextual reasons for why it might have seemed to connect with a thematic around the sea.

In 1902–03, around the time when early work on the *Sea Symphony* dates from, Vaughan Williams appears to have planned a cycle of four impressions for orchestra to be called *In the New Forest*. It is difficult to say with certainty which pieces were intended for this collection, as they were never published, and contextual information is scarce. In preserved manuscripts in the British Library,[12] however, three of them are bound together (with an undated title page), bearing the titles *Burley Heath*, *The Solent*, and *Harnham Down*.[13] The second of these, *The Solent*, seems to have been composed in 1902–03 (Kennedy 1966, p. 405), and given only one private performance in 1903 (what happened to it after that is unclear).[14] Its main theme, presented on a solo clarinet here, is however closely enough related to the motif in the *Sea Symphony* to represent a significant relationship.[15]

The title for the composition where this theme first appears, 'The Solent', links it not only to a specific geography, but also to a particular narrative around that geography. The Solent is the narrow straight between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, and was of significant naval and maritime importance, Portsmouth being the first of the Royal Dockyards, dating from the late fifteenth century, and a major naval base, and as one of the main arenas used for so-called 'Fleet reviews'. Fleet reviews, held in various forms since the fourteenth century, were celebratory events aimed at publicly displaying naval and maritime strength, and Rüger argues that in the decades before the Great War, they were 'at the heart' of "the cult of the navy" which played out in the public

arena (2004, p. 160). 'Situated at the intersection between local, national and imperial contexts', he observes, 'these ceremonies provided an important stage for the politics of national identity in the UK and its Empire' (*ibid.*). On 16 August 1902 the first coronation review in modern times was held off Spithead to mark the coronation of Edward VII. It was apparently 'an imposing spectacle',[16] and must be regarded as a national event of some significance. That Vaughan Williams' *Solent* seems to have been conceived close to this occasion, or shortly afterwards, suggests potential links to both the event and its national reverberations. The shared thematic material between the tone poem and the symphony then opens up for a connection between the *Sea Symphony* with a seascape that is not only geographically specific, but also an arena for naval and maritime activity of national significance.

SEE, STEAMERS

The 'Solent theme' will come to play a recurring role in the symphony. The first section of text the symphony sets, where it first appears, is not part of the collections of poems in the more well-known *Leaves of Grass* or *Passage to India* from which the rest of the symphony draws its narrative, but consists of a short extract from a poem called 'Song of the Exposition'.[17] This had been commissioned of Whitman for the 40th Annual Industrial Exhibition, held by the American Institute in New York 1871. Industrial fairs, or expositions, had their forerunners in seventeenth-century English fairs, with the first of more explicitly 'industrial' character held in late eighteenth-century France. The era of modern fairs is generally understood to start with Crystal Palace in 1851, or 'The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations', to give it its formal name. Crystal Palace left an enormous legacy — with 6 million visitors and a substantial profit made, it would eventually inspire a 'Golden Age' of fairs worldwide (*c.* 1880–1914), including in the US. What fairs like these primarily celebrated was technological and industrial development and achievement, and in a more general sense man's capacity for innovation and exploration. Whitman's

'Song of the Exposition' is bound up with these same ideas, as Wolfe (1998) suggests:

> From the opening section's grand style to the third section's arrogant sales pitch, to the seventh section's passionate sincerity, Whitman takes full advantage of his subject, industrial civilization.

While Whitman's rhetoric is anchored in praises of achievements that have enabled the present advancements, the imperative is for modernity, through technical advancement and in poetic exaltedness of 'far superber' themes:[18]

> With latest connections, works, the inter-
>   transportation of the world,
> Steam-power, the great express lines, gas,
>   petroleum,
> These triumphs of our time, the Atlantic's delicate
>   cable,
> The Pacific railroad, the Suez canal, the Mont Cenis
>   and Gothard and Hoosac tunnels, the Brooklyn
>   bridge,
> This earth all spann'd with iron rails, with lines of
>   steamships threading every sea,
> Our own rondure, the current globe I bring.
>   [7th section: end]

The particular themes engaged with here, and the language with which they are drawn, will send noticeable reverberations into the *Sea Symphony*'s final movement, but in the opening part of the symphony none of these sentiments are directly explicit in the short section of the poem Vaughan Williams extracts. He chooses a passage from the section following the one above, which opens by gazing directly at America ('And thou America'), imploring us to 'behold' America's fields and farms, woods and mountains. It then turns to the sea with the lines which have been used for the *Sea Symphony*'s opening section.

The poem as a whole is then specifically and explicitly an American evocation, but out of context the text used in the symphonic setting appears universal, and can instead take on local meanings. The ships evocatively conjured up with "bellying" white sails and the steamers "steaming in or out of port", issuing long, undulating "pennants of

smoke", are in fact drawing particular attention to the intersection of the so called 'old' age of sail, and the 'new' age of steam, which, in the local context of the symphony, becomes a very acute referencing of historical lineage and contemporary conditions with particular reference for early twentieth-century Britain.

Although it was sailing ships that had both expanded and defended British territory so successfully until the mid-nineteenth centuries, the advent of steam was transformative. It is indeed impossible, as is often noted, to overestimate the importance of steam 'everywhere', and the impact of the development of the steam engine, particularly in ships. The revolution in traversing distances it for example enabled can be illustrated in temporal measurements: a journey to Canada, say, took three to four weeks in 1820 and six to seven days by the end of the century; the so called 'Cape run' took three months in the early nineteenth century, forty-four days in 1857, and from 1891 onwards two weeks; for Australia 100 days were needed with a clipper, seventy-five days with a steam engine in 1852, and thirty days by 1890s (MacKenzie 2013, p. 68). Such improvement in travel had wide-ranging consequences for connectivity, domination and influence, and in Britain, says Andrew Lambert, 'both nation and navy adopted steam power at sea with alacrity', benefiting from possessing 'the world's leading maritime steam-engineering industry' (Lambert in Gray 2018, p. v).[19] The steamers steaming 'in and out of port' represent then not only one of the major achievements Whitman lauded as a significant technological development and which had colossal impact on multiple levels of everyday lives, social organisation[20] and national conduct. They are also a technological advancement specifically related to the British context, where both the leading innovators and the main sources of fuel were to be found.

As these steamers enter the symphony, they are surrounded by activity and energy: the choral statements tumble in over each other in imitative excitement, a foghorn can be heard in the orchestra, and an overall accelerating pace intensifies the energy.

The text here establishes links to interpretations of the sea as a means for enabling and developing humanity and society as a whole, as the gently bellying white sails give way to an increase in speed and the steamers' more energetic movements. But in the emphatic choral "See", which starts each new phrase, there is also an aural overlapping with 'sea', and spectatorship, activity and landscape here intertwine. To underline these interrelationships, as the steamers sail on and the activity eventually subsides, the long pennants of smoke unfurl into a repeat of the opening fanfare, together with the first choral command to "behold", and the 'Solent' theme itself.

SAILORS AND CAPTAINS: A SONG FOR ALL SEAS, ALL SHIPS

So far, man's achievement on, and domination over, the seascape have been foregrounded, but in the second part of the first movement, the force and inescapability of the conditions the sea contains as a natural landscape and environment are brought in. The text for this section comes (almost intact) from a poem that eventually made it into the 'Sea-Drift' group in *Leaves of Grass* (where the poems for the second and third movement of the symphony also belong), there called 'Song for All Seas, All Ships'. It was, however, first printed as 'Sea Captains, Young or Old' in the *New York Daily Graphic* in April (4) 1873, and written in commemoration of two recent maritime disasters earlier that year: the British steamer *Northfleet* sinking in January with a loss of 300 lives, and the White Star steamer *Atlantic* wrecked in April, with a loss of 547.[21] The poem opens with the following lines:

> Today a rude brief recitative
> Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag
>   or ship-signal,
> Of unnamed heroes in the ships – of waves
>   spreading and spreading far as the eye can see
> Of dashing spray, and the wind piping and blowing

The symphonic realisation of this text starts jauntily, with a short, bouncy motif introducing the "rude brief recitative",[22] repeated and varied in both

orchestra and the vocal line, here sung by a baritone soloist. The symphony has much fun with the seascape descriptions that follow as Whitman's 'anthropomorphic imagery gives physicality to the musical gestures' (Mellers 1989, p. 20), and the orchestra engages in imitating both the piping wind and swelling waves. Mellers is right to point out the 'physicality' of this section: it is a good example of a sensory engagement with the seascape which is a recurring part of the symphony's response to its thematics.

The introductory "brief recitative" is followed by "a chant for the sailors of all nations", articulated by a homophonic (*i.e.* a representatively collective) choral response to the soloist, which concludes as a dedication to 'the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay'. The stoic indifference to their fate suggested by those "picked sparingly" by "thee, old ocean" is of course the most futile of hopes, but the choral expression is defiant: in unaccompanied four-part harmony it moves the mournful C-minor to assured C-major with stately, hymn-like solemnity.

This assurance is carried over into the poem's next section, where the imperative urge of the text to "Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of nations!", is again set as a kind of call-and-response, this time between a soprano soloist and the chorus. The choral replies all conclude in unison (with each repeated response shifting a major third up), which resonates against the passage's ultimately unifying codification: to reserve "for yourself and for the soul of man, one flag above all the rest / A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death / A pennant universal". Repetitions of the "pennant universal" as "emblem of man" allow the section to build climactically, but as it "elatedly" reaches its denouement, the soprano soloist soars out above it all to initiate a change of mood:

> Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors
> and mates,
> And all that went down doing their duty,
> Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid
> captains young or old

The soprano declamation of the first line is a call to attention, stilling the surrounding activity, but it is the chorus that takes over the articulation of the full stanza. The section unfurls as a continuous, hymn-like melody, looping in long legato lines, and with its first full presentation given to the warm register of the altos, accompanied for the first bars by very soft strings only, and shadowed by a solo clarinet. The single voice part and minimal accompaniment sets the theme out in relief, and although it is gradually reinforced by the other choral voice parts, both the sopranos and tenors are marked 'only half to sing' at their initial entries. The resulting 'hushed' additions have the effect of embedding the main line in the altos, while enhancing its presence through the repetitions each new voice part effects. Only once the alto presentation of the 'song' is complete, does the full choir expand on it, gradually increasing the textual intensity. At its collectively richest point, a strong bass line moves from sonorous depths into higher registers in repeats of the first line of the theme, underpinning the intent to imbue the passage with assurance and purpose through collective engagement.

After this collective articulation, however, the section softens to a more pensive, reflective mood with a luminously warm repeat of "Reminiscent of them" by unison alto and tenor, while the sopranos sing, first to "all that went down, doing their duty", then repeat the alto/ tenor phrase but with a flattened sixth note of the scale sorrowfully colouring their final "them". The very end of the section contains single, forlorn intonations of "young or old" [sea-captains] on a falling fourth passed downwards through the voice parts, until it finishes with the basses, reaching a point which momentarily stalls any onward movement. The brave captains have been hymned with a musically expressed dramatisation that relate closely to Elgarian oratorio style with its combination of evocative melodic shapes and layered choral textures.

That the section is of particular centrality to the narrative of the *Sea Symphony* is underscored by the sounding of the first two bars of its main

theme already back at the very beginning of the symphony. It can be heard resolutely (*molto marcato*) in the orchestra in bar 17, well ahead of the textual development reaching the point it relates to, as the symphony is only just setting out, and while the text is still busy with the movements of the steamers. Articulated there in low strings and brass, it has a very muscular quality, and does in fact contribute to the driving, confident and energetic mood that surrounds the activity of those steamers. This juxtaposition of thematic material, albeit one we only understand in retrospect, is part of a layered narrative which complexifies the symphony's responses to the issues it engages with.

The symphony uses Whitman's poetry to construct its own emphases, so moving on from the reflective dusk point reached, it returns to the text covered before the 'Token' passage through a sudden tenor declamation imploring the "emblem of man" to "elate above death". This textual repeat now has a triumphal tang: the chorus rejoices in wide leaps of upwards fourths (counteracting the recent downwards intervals) and enjoys broad, expansive triplets, while the orchestra returns to the 'Token' motif, but here with vigour and resolution (*marcato* and *fff*). The mood has turned celebratory and defiant, and the repeated choral stabs on the word "death" are delivered with defiant ferocity — not entirely unlike the attacks on 'Tot' [Death] the chorus challenges as sting-less in Brahms' *German Requiem*, and with their "above death"s here sounding like little fanfares, echoed in smatterings of punchy orchestra replies.

To conclude this passage, the final "above death" takes us yet again to an ebbing out of activity and into stillness. A rush of sea-glitter in the harp and upper strings sets up a conclusion for the last section of the poem. This gathers the text's emotions into "a pennant universal", subtly waving over "all time". In a kind of reflective recollection, the symphony negotiates a poetical summing-up with extracts of musical phrases adherent to earlier parts of the text. At the end, the final line of the poem — "all brave sailors, all seas, all ships" — is intoned variously in SAT, while the basses return to "one flag for all

nations", and the soprano soloist traces one final "behold the sea" above.

The symphonic interpretations of the text in the first movement thus explores in various ways humanity's entangled relationship with the sea as a natural landscape which it both depends on and seeks to dominate, while pointing to an emotional complexity brought out in particular articulations and juxtapositions. The early appearance of the 'Token' theme demonstrates how the symphony works with layered narratives: the textual lines referencing "steamers" and "brave captains" that it juxtaposes are even from separate poems, but connects the technological advance the steamers represent with the human efforts and sacrifices bound up with its captains and crews. The choice of a clarinet to accompany the full presentation of the 'Token' theme could also be noted as further layering: it is the same instrument used for the 'Solent' theme in the earlier composition, allowing another dialogue between the different narratives involved.[23]

The movement then brings a number of separate concerns of the text(s) together, foregrounding the immense presence of the sea itself, while engaging closely with man's interaction with it, embodied in the ships and their captains. It hymns the global connectivity between 'all nations' it enables, while considering themes of endeavour, endurance and sacrifice to include them as parts of the wider seafaring narratives. As the symphony rushes in and throws out the sea in front of us, then moves energetically through a number of activities and moods, the musical realisation of the selected passages of Whitman's texts serve to illustrate the complexity and multifacetedness of the relationship with the sea as a natural landscape and force which in itself conditions our negotiations of it as an active space. It is these negotiations the symphony is interested in: not through oblique presentations of evocative seascapes, but by employing its textual and musical material to probe the place and role of the sea in entanglement with its own contemporary context. This will clarify further in the second and third movement.

PART 2: GAZE, TERRITORY, TEMPORALITY

shore (2nd movement)

If the first movement of the *Sea Symphony* could be understood to focus on various activities the sea enables, the two contrasting middle movements of the symphony take a different approach. The text for the second movement, 'On the beach at night alone', takes a reflective approach with mood-indicative vocabulary from its very opening, and the symphony responds to its subject matter *solenne et tranquillo*, with a palette that is mostly hushed and without sharp contours. The text for the third movement, 'After the Sea-ship', in contrast depicts waves following a "sea-ship", and designated even in its title as a scherzo (a vigorous, light or playful section) and marked *allegro brilliante*, revels in speed, sails, froth, and bubbles.

The two movements also position themselves at different viewpoints: while the third movement takes place 'in the middle of the full Atlantic', the second gazes at the 'horizon measured from the shore' with a 'spectator's point of view' (Foss 1950, p. 92). The solitude and night stillness of this shorescape is evoked in the opening of the second movement by softly swelling string chords, shifting back and forth between C-minor to Eb-major chords. These shifts from minor to major sonorities are core building blocks for this movement, and colour the opening and closing sections with a softly melancholic hue. Out of these introductory swellings emerges the text, introduced by the baritone soloist accompanied by a semi-chorus of altos. The solo line here is presented on a single note (with only small additional excursions in the third line), giving it an air of stillness:

> On the beach at night alone
> As the old mother sways her to and fro, singing her husky song
> As I watch the bright stars shining
> I think a thought of the clef of the universe

The alto responses repeat each line, while harmonising it with notes from the surrounding chords and building atmospheric imagery: the 'rocking' motions in their second and third utterances imitate

the 'old mother's' swaying, and their particular voice part, low in their registers, connect easily with the 'husky song'. The effect is the creation of several dialogues: not just a call-and-response between the voices, but also between the solitary voice and the sea, and between the static perspective from the shore and the fluid, eternal movements of the water.

The text for the second movement is taken unaltered from Whitman's poem of the same name, as it appeared from 1867 onwards (first in *Leaves of Grass* and later (1871) first as one of the 'Sea-shore memories' of *Passage to India*, before 1881 transferred to the group entitled 'Sea-Drift'). In the original version, more than twice the length of the revised one, Whitman referred to it as a 'Clef Poem', with clef here meaning 'clue' or 'key' (Blodgett & Bradley 1965, p. 260). At the point in the text where reference is made to this "clef of the universe", the orchestra intones a short phrase which is an aural pre-echo of a longer passage that will later appear in the fourth movement (there accompanying a narrative section about Adam and Eve and the origin of man). The use of it here establishes a connection between the movements, and complexifies the temporal spans and the narrative layers the symphony creates.

In similar interlinkage, the theme from "today, a brief, rude recitative" in the first movement, combines with a passacaglia-like bass figure in the next section — its perpetual 'walking' movement suggesting 'eternity of time and space' (Mellers 1989, p. 21; also Town 2003, p. 86). This juxtaposes temporal specificity with infinity, while the poetic text connects a repeated "all": spheres, distances of place, distances of time, all souls, all nations, all identities: "all lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future".

The envisaged infinity evoked here is bright: a continued dialogue between the soloist and the (now full) choir conjures up a "vast similitude"[24] which "interlocks all", and which according to the poem's final lines "shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose them". An increasingly intensified expression builds to a powerful climax with unison full choir, and the combination of

effective orchestral pauses to underscore the choral statements, rich sonorities in strong vocal registers, and a harmonic progression through a sequence of major chords (Eb-C-A), makes it an assured statement of fortitude and faith. Immediately in the aftermath of the resounding climax, however, the lapping waves return, as does the solitary soloist on the empty beach. The baritone completes the movement's cyclical A-B-A structure (with a truncated second A) by returning to the opening line of the movement, alone on the shore amongst the ceaseless motion of the sea.

In the second movement, several layers of temporal structures are created. The repeated movement of the waves, the 'passacaglia' figure, and the movement's own architectural shape all enact narrative arches, while the aural characterisation of the sea's perpetual movements suggests recurrence and endlessness. But this temporal condition at the same time distances us from it: while the movements of the sea are continuous and eternal, we can only exist in the lived experience of single instances, caught in linear passages of time.

Despite an aurally evocative and immersive character then, the second movement in fact suggests a separation. Foss (1950) considers Vaughan Williams a 'landsman', obsessed with the presence of water lapping at his feet (p. 92), and the listener in the second movement as 'looking at views' (p. 97). The implied distance between viewer and view is relevant here: a beach is also a shoreline, and the shoreline represents a border — a disjunction between land and sea, but it is also an external border demarcating an island nation. The sea-gazing of the second movement therefore enacts an intrinsically national activity. Rüger writes of ideas of insularity as 'closely intertwined with constructions of national identity' in late nineteenth-century Britain (2013, p. 150), and a narrative of the nation as an island developed in artistic tropes. An island nation is geographically defined by being encircled by the sea, with the encirclement here further 'acted out' by the 'spectacles' of the naval displays and the 'naval theatre' the maritime nation engaged in, visibly drawing up the lines of demarcation between

inside and beyond, as 'a tool of delimitation' (*ibid.*, p.152). Throughout the nineteenth century the shoreline was thus understood as a border marker, and 'a potent emblem' of English 'separateness' (*ibid.*, p.150; quoting Readman 2001). Precisely what 'island nation' or 'insularity' meant was not uncontested, but the *idea* of insularity nevertheless gained unprecedented popularity [also] in literature, poetry and popular culture. That the concepts were imprecise and ambiguous in a way also served to give them broader appeal, as they in their vagueness could be applied more widely and could encompass a number of historical details. As a result, what Rüger cites Loxley as calling 'the powerful trope of the island' was 'forcefully entrenched' in nineteenth-century culture (*ibid.,* p. 164; Loxley 1990. p. 3). The shoreline functions thus as a significant aspect of a national definition, as well as an artistic subject of commonality, describing — repeatedly — 'the beginnings and the ends of the country' (Rüger 2013, p. 152; Beer 1990).

The shoreline, the solitary beach, is in this context then not a neutral or a whitewashed, anonymously poetic space, but instead a significant geographical specificity, pregnant with imagery that forms part of the national imagination. Vaughan Williams' portrayal of the experience of the shore-side could be seen alongside other artistic narratives, for example those of J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851). Turner is arguably the nineteenth century's most influential and most prolific maritime artist, and consequently his contribution to the national understanding of the sea as visual geography is substantial. 'Few other painters', writes Richard Johns, made 'such a concerted effort to study the elusive forms of the sea', and studying early sketches in particular reveals 'the artist's interest in the [..] repetitive rhythm of waves breaking on the shore [as] an infinitely variable motif' (2014, p. 218). The sketch *Blue Sea and Distant Ship* (probably from the early 1840s) below (Pl. I), one of the vast numbers of sea-shores in the Turner output, might illustrate the approach to the landscape as artistic object. Here 'the lightest of washes above and below denote the sky and a sandy beach', and the blue 'suggest[s] the

Plate I. *Blue Sea and Distant Ship* (© Tate Images).

rolling breakers of an agitated but unthreatening sea' (*ibid.*, p. 203). Painted with a limited palette and restricted in detail, the sketch engages with the unsettled relationship between shore and sea: their separation but also their connectedness, their interdependent existence, and the dual perspective between a nearby 'here', and a distant, opaque, out-of-reach 'there'. It also explores the inhabitation of these spatial dimensions: depicting a space which is seemingly empty, untouched, deserted — yet occupied by the suggestion of a ship on the horizon, the indistinct objects in the sand on the shore, and the gaze of the spectator. Turner's recurring attempts at catching the 'fleeting impressions' of 'the ever-changing relationships between the sea, sand and sun', as well as the 'chromatic effects of […] sunlight against the wet sand and receding tide' (Johns 2014, p. 225) find parallels in the second movement's chromatic explorations, its major-minor shifts, its swellings and motions, and both the visual and the aural responses might be seen to interpret

impressions of a constantly shifting interaction taking place between the shoreline and the sea.

It is perhaps indicative of the shore-side's inherent resonances that Turner allegedly painted the Dover coast more often than any other subject. The tensions alive in the shoreline as a visual image and a sensory experience on the one hand, and a geographical reality and national definition on the other, might be part of a particularly British sensitivity to the seascape: a 'disjunction between land and ocean' combining to produce a particularly English mix of 'beauty, variety and utility' (Keegan 1996, p. 144). This sensitivity is keenly present in the second movement, where the restrictiveness of the 'beached' viewpoint heightens the awareness of the infinite spatial otherness beyond. The shoreline thus ultimately becomes a liminal space: a place separating multiple existences, and a border zone which at the same time both offers and resists passage between them. The geographical reality of the beach and the demarcations of the shoreline

here blur with a state of mind, and the resulting spatial and temporal tension infuse the perspective of the second movement.

SHIP (3RD MOVEMENT)

The symphony's third movement might be considered an attempt at bridging this tension, as we find ourselves subjected to an abrupt switch of perspective: from a separated and distanced gazing from the shore-side to an exhilarating immersion in the seascape that comes close to a drenching. The change is announced by a short, very truncated brass fanfare figure. Then there is a short pause. This is effective musical dramaturgy, and as the movement takes off at a surging speed, darting triplet figures alternate with powerful swellings and high-pitched whistling winds.

The text is a poem published in 1876 as 'After the Sea-ship', and incorporated into the group of 'Sea-Drift' poems in *Leaves of Grass* 1881.[25] Vaughan Williams sets the whole poem unchanged, but has given the movement the title 'Scherzo – The Waves'. The changed title may indicate an altered focus, and the materiality of the waves and the textural grain of the sea as they are contained in the score are immediately present. The "taut sails", the "undulating waves", "burbling" and "gurgling", in "myriads hastening", the "ceaseless flow" and the "whirling current", all have a tangible, almost physical presence in this movement. The orchestral writing is 'brilliantly impressionistic', quickly shifting around like the glittering of the waves themselves, with cascading 'flecks of colour' (Day 1998, p. 187) and the tumult of the water and the sensation of the storm 'exhilaratingly communicated' (Kennedy 1964, p. 128). The sea's 'animal exuberance' (Mellers 1989, p. 22) is almost anthropomorphic (imbued with agency already in the poetic text, and enhanced in the scoring), and the use of chromaticism serves to render the waves alive and intense, but also partly fantastical: like sea creatures, not quite real, partly a mirage or an apparition, they are crawling, writhing and slithering their way through the movement.

The third movement is then not unlike an animated painting, with its activity and movement bounding about on the canvas: the brightly coloured images and the vivid, evocative descriptions in the poem becoming spluttering and sonorically tangible musical textures. But like many artistically reproduced seascapes, it is not primarily articulating an actual experience of the sea — at least not on a subjective level — as much as a particular notion of a collective interaction and relationship. The progress of the sea-ship on this animated seascape mirrors that of myriads of paintings of ships going about the oceans on the business of the nation by carrying out trade, exercising military control, and forwarding missions for the Empire. These activities in turn become embedded in the third movement's evocation of its sea-ship and, as in the second movement, relate it closely to already existing narratives around sea activities and engagements.

These narratives are further located in musical impulses that incorporate articulations from locally contextual traditions. The waves are made "laughing and buoyant" in a way, it has been noted, reminiscent of, or indeed directly imported from, a Handelian musical imagery for laughter (see Mellers 1989, p. 22). As discussed, a British penchant for massed choral gatherings emerged through the Handelian repertoire, and large-scale oratorio-style repertoire continued to be a mainstay of British musical life into the early twentieth century. By borrowing from, or imitating, its expressions, the choral articulation here makes connections with this communally identifiable and collectively performed activity.

While the choral forces busy themselves with Handelian manoeuvres, however, the orchestra is separately playing snatches of a folk song, or sea shanty,[26] 'The Golden Vanity'.[27] The story in 'The Golden Vanity' is of a cabin boy who shows great courage, and saves the ship from enemies, only to have the captain renege on his promise to him and leave him to die. As with many folk ballads, plenty of subtly different versions abound, but the cabin boy remains symbolic of a particular kind of 'indestructible folk hero', and is in some versions understood to be a young Sir Walter Raleigh, thus

also connecting it to other established seafaring narratives.[28] In the symphony a short phrase from the tune of 'The Golden Vanity' has been incorporated, rendered across four bars but 'halted' on the penultimate note of the phrase, where it stays circulating over the repeated 'laughing' entries in the chorus. This passage then plays out a combination of two separate, but fully recognisable, musical traditions of different heritage, and while doing so, also bridges tensions between two types of musical articulations: the European, mostly German, heritage of 'scholarly' music, and the music 'of the people' which the folk song enthusiasts were in the process of discovering, collecting, and promoting as of defining national character. To an almost contrapuntal effect, the 'laughter' and the borrowed phrases from 'The Golden Vanity' are united here by means of a common topic — the very collectively rooted endeavour of seafaring and sea domination — and combining to imbue the passage with an upbeat, positive energy.

This assured jollity leads into the central passage of the movement, and a new mood. The text has reached the sea-ship itself ("Where the great vessel sailing"), and its progress is rendered in a stately tune in gently undulating step-wise 'swelling' movements, in Dickinson's near-contemporary appreciation, both 'striking and reassuring' (1928, p. 21). The choral expression and harmonic progression of this passage seems inspired by, as many have noted, a 'Parryesque' grandeur,[29] as the steady eloquence of the opening theme, followed by contrasting intimate choral sections, mirror expressions from the choral cantatas of Parry, Elgar and other contemporary British composers. This central section then connects convincingly with another locally embedded choral tradition. And here too an extract from a sea song is perched above it.

The text which adheres to this song is of 'The Bold Princess Royal', and recounts (again) triumph in adversity. As a narrative it too exists in various versions but may relate to a historic incident in 1789, when a packet 'Princess Royal' was accosted and pursued by a French privateer, and against low

odds managed to hold off and escape. This is a folk song that Vaughan Williams collected himself and published with his own piano accompaniment in *Folk-Songs from the Eastern Counties* (1908), as part of a series edited by Cecil J. Sharp. Vaughan Williams' contributions to the series (in this volume) were collected in Kings Lynn, though he is careful to point out that it should not be supposed that they are the exclusive property of that area (Vaughan Williams 1908). The collection opens with the now perhaps best known 'Bushes & Briars', but contains many songs with nautical themes or featuring sailors (*e.g.* 'Ward the Pirate'[30] and 'The dark-eyed sailor'). Sharp, in his foreword to the series, refers to the collected songs as 'traditional' songs, and describes them as 'veritable folk-songs, i.e. songs which have been created or evolved by the common people […], the invention not of the individual, but of the *community*' (*ibid.*; my italics). Sharp foregrounds the perceived quality of such musical heritage as being of 'priceless worth', which every nation 'should cherish and preserve', but also underlines their communality, their value as a shared collective commodity. Vaughan Williams' use of this material here brings the collective tradition that these folk songs represented into the symphonic narrative.

Only a very short phrase from 'The Bold Princess Royal' is incorporated at this point, appearing in different instrumentations across the twenty bars of choral presentation of the sea-ship theme described above. The phrase is taken from the beginning of the song, which sets up the textual and narrative starting point of "we sailed": it is an upward-bouncing, jaunty musical phrase, which speaks not just of activity and energy, but also has a muscular, even masculine, character. This mood is relevant, as the narratives embedded in both sea songs discussed here significantly relate to the 'hero-worship' which represented a well-established tradition of pride in intrepid seafaring and heroic captains. The topical significance can be underscored by the poetry of Henry Newbolt, written a decade before the *Sea Symphony*. Newbolt was initially a relatively unknown poet and lawyer,

but his collection *Admirals All*, appearing on the anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1897, met with unprecedented and 'instantaneous' success and, according to Stanford scholar Jeremy Dibble, 'launched Newbolt's career overnight' (Dibble 2002, p. 358). There was a run on the available copies, and it had to be reprinted: four editions in two weeks, and seventeen in its first year.[31] The poems were reportedly 'learned by heart, chanted, and sung across England, the Empire, and beyond' (Furse Jackson 1994, p. 66) and, according to Newbolt himself, were 'quoted by ministers in the House of Commons and bishops in the pulpit' (*ibid.*), appealing [at the time] to a 'broad cross-section' of the public (Dibble 2002, p. 358). Dibble understands them as 'expounding a sense of "moral activism", an impassioned belief in a chivalric code of honour, a sense of history, glory in battle and adventure, heroism' (*ibid.*). The collective resonance of this subject matter should not be overlooked. Dibble argues for an impact based on the ability to depict seascapes and nautical imagery which count 'arguably as the finest of their kind in English poetry' (*ibid.*), but the willingness, or rather eagerness, of the contemporary public to engage with their topical content and moods of expression also demonstrate a deep resonance with contemporary concerns.

That Stanford, one of Vaughan Williams' teachers and mentors as well as a significant contemporary composer, subsequently set Newbolt's poems in two song collections, *Songs of the Sea* (1904) and *Songs of the Fleet* (1910), further indicate their contemporary appeal. These songs express the deeds of heroic and admired individuals — as in the title poem 'Admirals All', and the most well known, 'Drake's Drum' (recounting the legend of Sir Francis Drake who will return at the call of the drum to rescue England in her direst need) — as well as the collective geo-political power accrued by these acts. In Stanford's settings, the texts become aural representations of a collective relationship with seafaring through a muscly orchestra, a somewhat rowdy choral sound, and a solo baritone (of course) to narrate. In further interconnections between the artistic

expressions and maritime reality, Stanford's second song collection set five poems which Newbolt had been inspired to write after a visit to the Channel Fleet in 1908, and was in turn composed specifically for the Jubilee Congress of Naval Architects, due to take place in June 1910. As these festivities had to be postponed, however, due to the death of Edward VII, the songs ended up being premiered in the Leeds festival in October that year instead, the day after the *Sea Symphony*.[32] There is therefore not only a thematic interconnectivity between the songs and the symphony, but they also share a performative occasion: premiered in close temporal and spatial proximity to each other, and to a shared audience.

The title of the third movement of the *Sea Symphony* may be 'the waves', but it is ultimately a seascape dominated by the sea-ship itself, and the waves end up "in the wake, following". Naval and maritime endeavour, related heroism, and victorious outcomes must therefore be understood as part of a central thematic here. The climactic arrival on the sea-ship phrase, which ushers it in on its stately progress, seems to follow an inevitable trajectory built up, and when the theme returns at the end of the movement, it is surrounded by cymbal clashes and fanfaric gestures in a musical expression of celebration. This concluding passage is a victorious, festive finish: a polyphonic dialogue between orchestra and chorus with solid, homophonic choral statements, and in the orchestra brass fanfares, rich string sounds, and extra percussion joining in. Then it all culminates in one last "following" in which the orchestra briefly peels away under the final choral chord to create a heightened moment of suspense before the release of the very last, joint quavers: a method 'cribbed', as Vaughan Williams admitted it himself, directly from the end of the "Gloria" in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.[33]

Everything here then comes together in a great reassurance of endeavour and mastery of both sea and land. Before the collectively gathered finish outlined above, the whirling waves from the opening section return briefly, but this time somewhat wilder, a little more unruly. This perhaps justifies the increased intensity and solidity in the

final response: the power of the waves is reinforced by their return, but so also is consequently the dominance the sea-ship represents, and the musical control the movement ultimately holds over the unruly waves. Such control asserted, the symphony sails into the fourth and final movement.

singing its songs (4th movement)

The fourth movement sets selected (and edited) passages from Whitman's *Passage to India* (first published 1871, incorporated in *Leaves of Grass* 1881). It is the longest movement of the symphony, often understood to address more philosophical concerns than the more direct sea engagements in the previous movements, but as the discussion will show, these concerns here too become closely related to the rhetoric around the sea as a national concern and geo-political reality which the symphony explores and engages with.

The first section of *Passage of India* observes 'our modern wonders', ("the antique ponderous Seven outvied" [line 4]), seeing "God's purpose' in the earth 'spanned, connected by network" and the ocean's crossed, "the distant brought near" [lines 31–34], and throughout the third section it traverses America along routes enabled by the new technology: "I see over my own continent the Pacific railroad surmounting every barrier /… / I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring, and the shrill steam-whistle / I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest scenery in the world" [lines 47–48; 51–54]).

We might recognise the subject matter from the texts in the first movement, yet this is emphatically *not* 'another poem of materials' (Blodgett & Bradley 1965, p. 411). Instead *Passage of India* gathers the achievements of the modern world and places them in the context of human development and interaction. Already the second stanza makes clear that the past achievements must be regarded only as a point from which to move forward, as the poet's imperative is to 'eclairise' (clarify) the old 'myths' and 'the primitive fables', and embracing instead the endeavour and exploits of forward trajectories and global interconnectivity:

Passage to India!
Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the
    first?
The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,
The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in
    marriage,
The oceans to be cross'd, the distance brought near,
The lands to be welded together.
A worship new I sing,
You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours,
You engineers, you architects, machinists, yours
    /---/ [lines 30–38]

The text for the final movement of the *Sea Symphony* comes from the beginning of the fifth section of the poem, when it has mainly completed its reverence for the technological advancements, and is moving towards contemplating what Blodgett and Bradley call 'cosmic purposes' (p. 422). The fourth movement opens with the lines:

O vast rondure, swimming in space,
Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty /…/
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.
    [lines 81–82, 87].

Lovell's observation that what 'absorb[s] the reader' first in *Passage of India* is 'mood and setting' (1960, p. 134), might also be applied to the beginning of the fourth movement. After only two moving notes in the bass line by way of introduction, Vaughan Williams' opening choral phrase seems indeed to float, weightless and suspended, atmospherically abstract yet physically fully apprehensible. The opening phrase conjures up a shimmering sphere ('rondure' from French *roundeur*, derivative of 'rond'), aided by the first vocal interval of an open fifth that 'spans' the space between the tonic and the dominant — picked up by the strings and organ and layered upwards, filling in the sphere — and tone-painting the second word, 'vast' through elongation, before climbing back down step-wise through a triplet figure on 'swimming in space'. An aural circle has been drawn, and the choral phrase's finish on a dominant in the (perceived) Eb-major tonality harmonically leads further, reinforcing the sense of the phrase as one of perpetuity. The opening

textures of these shimmering colours gradually take on more tangible contours in the following phrase, until the arrival at "Now ... my thought begins to span thee" changes the mood from (Eb-)major to (G-)minor and a more sombre contemplation.

The contemplation that follows goes right back to existential beginnings and considers the creation of man through references to the Garden of Eden. The more 'primitive' sounding Dorian mood used here has been foreshadowed in the first movement, and Dickinson (1928) finds the passage expressing a kind of 'elemental' and 'rugged strength of antiquity' (p. 23). The phrase is sung only by the men, using a relatively limited range of tonal movement (the whole first phrase is on a single note) which creates a sense of restrictiveness, as if enclosed in a confined space, as well as lacking a sense of a discernible direction. To underline this lostness, the primitive musings are interrupted by a 'ghostly' semi-chorus of ladies' voices[34] asking (twice): "Wherefore unsatisfied soul? / Whither O mocking life?".

The symphony's response to this question is a shift back to a major tonality and full choir, intoning the next section of the poem, "Yet soul be sure", over expectantly hovering strings and excited harp glisses. This function as the lead into what might be considered the pivotal core point of the movement, and arguably the climax 'towards which the whole symphony has been tending' (Dickinson 1928, p. 24). The text for this seminal passage in the symphony, in Vaughan Williams' edited version (with some of Whitman's extended exemplifying cut but with other repetitions inserted by Vaughan Williams, indicated below in bold) reads:

> After the seas are all crossed
> After the great captains have accomplished their
>   work
> After the noble inventors
> Finally, **finally, finally**
> Shall come the poet worthy that name
> The true son of God shall come – singing,
> **Singing, singing** his songs

The centrality of this passage can be argued both through the compacted text and the musical expressivity. The first three repeated "after", are followed by a musically and aurally created sense of arrival on "finally": assurance has been building from the start of the section, the voices gradually sounding stronger and brighter, moving upwards, and gaining in certainty. The repetitions of "finally" that follow, on stately, impactful G-major chords which modulate through to an unrelated, brightly sounding E(-major), leading to a universal gathering on "poet" on unison E's, plus the added texture of an organ in full flow to support the section, powerfully suggest an arrival on a pivotal and climactic point for the symphony.

Equally, the specific emphasis on "singing" is articulated in the textual repetitions and aurally foregrounded: a polyphonic ('multi-voiced') choir bounces the repeated phrase between them with jubilant, bell-like peeling in the vocal lines, surrounded by upward, joyous runs in strings and woods and fanfare-like bursts in the brass (short semi-quaver figures), before the passage concludes by repeating "singing" in impactful, off-beat homophonic choral statements. The movement in this way, in a jubilant and self-assured expression, clearly marks the seminality of the poet, "singing his songs".

It is for the poet, claimed Whitman, to be both an 'observer of his nation' and 'a public speaker, teacher, or lecturer' for that nation (quoted in Reynolds 2015, pp. 87 and 94). Noticeably, throughout *Passage of India*, this poetical agency is couched in terms of "singing", declared in the very opening lines of the poem and reverberating throughout: "Singing my days, / Singing the great achievement of the present / Singing the strong light works of engineers" [lines 1–3]. This 'singing' role of the poet, or the composer, to interpret the contemporary existence and articulate the future, is arguable being foregrounded here. Vaughan Williams declares in this central passage that, far from being incidental, the layers of narratives the symphony present, and the aesthetic language in which it does so, are most acutely intended to form part of a current and contemporary dialogue, 'sung' through the symphony's own expression.

As the fourth movement develops, the Solent motif from the first movement is continually making its presence felt. It forms part of the structural core of the opening phrase (elongated and 'double-timed', highly relevant for the phrase's intended sense of timelessness). Shortly afterwards it appears as a kind of counter-theme in the high woods, then in a variant in a short alto phrase (later repeated agin in the wood-winds). On the climactic choral arrival on "poet", the version of it from the opening of the movement is clearly sounded in the orchestra, and in the following "singing" passage, it is aurally present in the brass, while the downward triplets in the choral phrases at the same pointare also directly related. As the movement continues, it appears at specific narrative (textual and musical) points of change of direction, in its original form but in double-fast tempo, as if to urge the symphony forwards. Before the final part of the symphony, it is played out in wood-winds and trombones above a rocking figure in the strings: bringing our focus back to the sea itself for the conclusion to come. This continued presence of the motif connects the final movement to the opening movement, and the elasticity with which it fulfils its many roles demonstrates its organic character. Its recurring usage deeply embeds the utterances of the symphony in a contemporary navigation through the understanding of the sea in collective narratives of ships, shores, sea power, and songs.

The final section of the fourth movement returns us to that business of seafaring and a tangible, concrete inter-agency with the sea, represented textually by anchors and sails, and (yet again) bursting with activity. The text sections used come from the corresponding last section of *Passage to India* (section 9, though again edited by RVW), and detail concrete and specific activities at sea. The chorus passes the short statements of activity gaily between them — hosting anchors, setting sails, etc. — surrounded by a lively orchestra:

> Away O soul! Hoist instantly the anchor!
> Cut the hawsers – haul out – shake out every sail!

At two points different shanty-like themes can be heard (b409ff & b430ff)— they seem not to be from existing tunes, but their expression is nevertheless distinctly recognisable.[35] Triplet motifs are now plentiful and a consistent part of the thematic, and the section gradually picks up speed and intensity. The relationship with previous gestures of the symphony is evident, in particular connecting to the first movement. Out of this activity emerges eventually the imperative: "Sail forth, steer for the deep waters only", rendered in flowing, surging lines, propelling the momentum forwards. The very last section combines musical phrases adhering to different texts from earlier (*e.g.*"O thou transcendent" in the woods, over "O we can wait no longer" in the strings (b.523)), and breaks the final part of the poem up, juxtaposing texts in a multitude of voices and participants:

> O my brave soul!
> O farther farther sail!
> Oh daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?
> O farther, farther, farther sail!

Slowly though, these utterances gradually still themselves, and the end of the movement becomes an 'ebbing' away: it gets quieter, elongated note values slow down the pulse of the movement, and an 'eternal' harmonic movement between the chord sequence IV-V-IV never unambiguously reaches the tonic, but enacts a kind of perpetual un-endingness of a lapping wave. The last choral phrases are swells, part of the sea itself and its movement, until they too fade, their final "farther sail" sounding as if disappearing over the horizon. At the very end, there are shimmering, glittering upper strings, while the lower strings sound out a slowly punctuated, barely-there suggestion of the fanfare which began the symphony's explorations.

This connecting gesture to the first movement, and the 'non-ending' qualities of the ending itself, underscore the narrative of cyclical temporalities and perpetual movement. As all stills around the final, fanfare-reminiscent pulsations, their slow echo of the opening returning the focus to 'the sea itself', the symphony brings us into this cyclicality,

repositioning us at a moment which connects us again with its beginning. The choral last 'sail' reaches back (or forward) to the narrative of the first movement, and the ending is very clearly not an actual ending, but instead conceptualised as a moment in a perpetual, on-going sequence. The concluding scope of the symphony thus becomes a vast circular, interlocked swelling — like the movement of the sea, infinite and eternal.

GEOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE

Throughout the symphony the sea is consistently present, while in the specific engagements, to borrow Foss's (already borrowed) phrasing, 'the wide generalities of Whitman are given "a local habitation and a name" '(Foss 1950, p. 91). The specific relationship with the sea the symphony is responding to, creates a narrative anchored in the geographically, topographical, and historically local, and relating it to an aural local cultural context through sonorities, choral traditions and folk songs.

At the time of the *Sea Symphony*, artistic responses to the seascape were invariably conditioned by the entangled issues of geography and identity in Britain. Sea power is a strategy, as Andrew Lambert points out, and a pursuit of maritime power a conscious choice, with sea power states creating oceanic empires as well as territorial ones (see Lambert 2018). The seascape in its various roles becomes then an essential aspect of national agency and national self-definition. The artistic responses which engage with these geographies by necessity become part of the dialogue around that identity, and their perspectives resonate beyond the artistic text itself.

'Music transcends national frontiers' stated Vaughan Williams in a broadcast in 1944, 'but does not obliterate them. […] Certainly the vocabulary of music is universal, but in terms of that vocabulary, every community must make music which confirms with its temperament and traditions.' (RVW in broadcast Dec 1944, quoted in Foss 1950, p. 50). Leyshon *et al.* refer to Dahlhaus to suggest that 'the apparent naturalism of music was important for English C19/20 composers' (1995, p. 429), not least through a 'faith in power of music to refer directly to everyday experience', where 'the imitations of natural sounds, the quotation of folk song & dances, and references to localities and regions could rhetorically tie music to the rhythmical structures of land, landscape and language.' (*ibid.*, quoting Dahlhaus 1985). Music that responds to the landscape in this way, is then not only drawing on the 'rich aesthetics' of geographies (*ibid.*, 1995),[36] but also creates a dialogue between the artistic utterance and that landscape to become, in Susan Smith's phrase, 'integral to the geographical imagination' (Smith 1994, p. 238, in Leyshon *et al.* 1995, p. 423).

Daniel Grimley, in his recent book on Frederick Delius (*The Sound of Place*, 2018) — a contemporary of Vaughan Williams and a composer also closely engaged with landscape and places — argues for Delius' music to be understood as a 'sophisticated configuration of materiality, locality, identity, temporality, and sites of experience' (p. 19). He points to the 'different sites or topographies that shape his work', and which are shaped in turn by the 'literary, artistic and socio-economic patterns and routines of dwelling and inhabitation through which they are marked' (*ibid.*). When Grimley argues for an understanding of the ability of such places as being both 'physical, concrete locations' and 'more imaginary sites' (*ibid.*), he identifies here the duality of subjective landscapes as both concrete matter and as abstract, narratively constructed, notions that the *Sea Symphony* also negotiates and articulates.

These artistic landscapes relate to both a physical topography and a sensory experience, around which an aesthetic and poetic response is developed. The responses are in themselves however conditioned by their own context of collective and communal rhetoric, drawn in part from the historical and geographical reality of the landscape itself. Grimley points to a 'multiple temporality' implicit in an 'idea of place as unfolding, looking both forwards and backwards simultaneously' (pp. 17–18), and working with Whitman's trajectories between past

and future,[37] as well as its own cyclical structures, the *Sea Symphony* constructs an exploration of both timeless perpetuity and specific instances, underscoring the ability of the landscape to contain such 'multiple temporalities'. It thus presents a landscape that in itself can never be a-historical: instead the symphony engages with its layers of temporal historicity, and of multiple presences and instances of being-in that landscape.

While Delius often negotiated and channelled a landscape that was in many ways a subjective experience, Vaughan Williams' landscape engagements are frequently infused with a collective resonance. The *Sea Symphony* negotiates and draws on a cultural perception of the multiple meanings of the seascape, as well as on collectively developed sensibilities. The sea takes its place in the symphony as a landscape — spluttering, forceful, sensorially evocative — and as geography: invoking sailing routes, sea lanes, shores and territories. But it is also a location for a cultural and historical narrative with a collective resonance, into which feed deeds, traditions, and beliefs.

The inclusion of both the *Sea Symphony* and *Songs of the Fleet* in the 1910 Leeds Festival prompted Foreman to remark that 'that this nautical feast should be created by two landlubbers is an inexplicable enigma of musical history.' (1998, p. 9). But such approaches assume that all musical texts must be, and are only ever, contingent on subjective experience and knowledge. What the communication in the *Sea Symphony* is relating to, rather, is a local context of deep-rooted collective inter-agency with the sea as landscape and geography, borne

out of historical engagements and geo-cultural conditions alike. The *Sea Symphony* is a response to a sea that is both real and imagined, both geographically specific and widely generic, both subjectively depicted and communally interpreted, and as such, it is a musical engagement that continues a conversation with this landscape in a blend of sensory experiences, geographical realities and communal narratives.

There is, in the Vaughan Williams collections in the British Library, a hand-written note 'probably by Mary Venables in 1911 after [a] first rehearsal of "The Sea Symphony"' (MS.Mus.1714). It bears the title 'A parody of Walt Whitman', and begins:

> A song for all singers, all players'
> Behold Chaos itself
> And above, tremulous violins on perilous ledger
>   lines,
> See where the rocking scales speckle the M.S.
> See the instruments starting, failing, coming in or
>   out of time
> ---
> Of amateurs, young or old, rapidly ageing, all the
>   intrepid,
> Of the few, very brave, taciturn, whom fate can
>   never surprise nor failures dismay

A Sea Symphony was written for its own community: for its choruses, orchestras and festivals, for its history and traditions, for its inherited narratives, its new expressions, and hopes for the future. It represents in this most determinably a local habitation, but one which at its core also contains and embraces a limitless, indomitable landscape.

NOTES

1. For more on Leith Hill Place, see The National Trust's own website. I am immensely grateful to the NT and the Leith Hill team, who allowed me to write portions of this article in their Darwin room (named after one of the Wedgewood's frequent visitors), in Nov/Dec 2019.

2. See for example Ottaway (1972, p. 12) or for a fuller account of sketches and notes in existence (BL holdings), Stephen Town (2003, particularly p. 83ff).

I have not been able to find many details about this interim name or reasons for any changes — VW mentions scoring 'the ocean' in a letter to Holst in 1906 (Cobbe 2008, p. 51), but few other mentions are extant.

3. Its compositional timespan starts however in 1902/03, and Ottoway argues that the 'crucial years' for its composition are 1906–08 (1972, p. 19).

4. See for example Foss (1950): 'as a song, it is huge.

As a symphony it shrinks in dimensions, belittled by its musical and technical immaturities' (p. 91). RVW himself remained ambiguous about its symphonic character, see for example his letter to Herbert Thompson (Cobbe 2008, p. 74).

5. Dickinson, for example, draws attention to it as 'the first completely choral symphony ever written' and notes how it expands on an 'elaborate scale' (Dickinson 1928, p. 14).

6. See for example Mellers (1989/1991): 'Music's central manifestation in [Edwardian Society] English life was what came to be called the English Choral Tradition, in which "masses" of people banded "democratically" together to hymn the might of Edwardian affluence and of the imperial dream which was the world-wide consequence of commercial aggrandizement at home.' (p. 3).

7. See for example Ch. McGuire, in Adams & Wells 2003, pp. 235–68: 'Vaughan Williams and the English musical festival: 1910'. Kennedy (1980) refers to the period around the Sea Symphony as 'the zenith of English choral singing' (p. 131).

8. It is also worth noting that the late nineteenth century saw a dramatic expansion in all aspects of musical life, with a process of musical nationalisation underway and music making 'everywhere'; performed in the home, in church, in school, at the seaside, in the parks. There were music festivals in many towns and cities, symphony orchestras in most large cities, travelling opera companies, choral societies, brass bands, songs in music halls, musical comedies in theatres, and promenade concerts (Richards 2001, p. 9). The number of pro musicians rose from 19,000 in 1871 to 47,000 in 1911; the piano was a luxury item in 1840 while by 1910 an estimate suggests one piano per twenty people, and by 1900 there were more instruments, journals and societies generally than ever before in the national history (*ibid.*). Much of this expanded music making was enabled by the railways and their capacity for transporting and connecting, and their import is hugely relevant for this development.

9. See for example J. Dibble, 'Parry, Stanford and Vaughan Williams: the creation of tradition', in Foreman (1998).

10. Vaughan Williams' own earlier *Toward the unknown region* was also uses Whitman's texts, and Frederick Delius set texts from the same collection of poems, *Sea-Drift*, that Vaughan Williams used in *A Sea Symphony* — to take but two examples. See also for example Butcher 1947 and Thomas 1998.

11. The initial phrases are seminal and contain musical gestures that will recur at other points in the symphony: the leap the chorus makes from Bb-minor to D-major (a major third up) on 'sea' is a very singular harmonic shift which can be seen as one of the motifs of the symphony, and the fanfare will recur in different shapes at various points.

12. Br Libr Add. MS 57278(E). 'The Solent' is here clearly labelled as no. II of 'Four impressions for orchestra. In the New Forest.' (and confirmation of withdrawal/intended destruction noted by UVW).

13. Kuykendall (2015) notes that the manuscripts of 'Burley Heath', 'The Solent', and 'Harnham Down' are bound together and that the 'undated title page preceding BH indicates that it was at some point considered the first movement of *In the New Forest: Four Impressions for Orchestra*', but that *The Solent* does not quite seem to fit either this group or other potential collections of works (p. 575). These, and other early orchestral works have since been published as edited study scores by the OUP; *The Solent* in 2013, edited by James Francis Brown (to which Kuykendall's review refers).

14. See Herbert (1998), p. 69. Kuykendall (2015) notes markings in MS in blue pencil from other conductors, though unestablished by whom.

15. 'Themes closely related to the melodic line [..] play a prominent role in *A Sea Symphony*, on which VW began work in 1903' (Vaillancourt 1996, p. 41). See also Kuykendall 2015, p. 575, and Herbert 1998, p. 69 to confer this 'transfer' of material. Similar musical gestures also generally occur in *Solent* as in *Sea*: rushing string arpeggios, imitative swelling motions, use of triplet figures (both shorter and longer), tremolo strings, a figure with a repeated single note which moves the rhythmical emphasis, the suggestion of a fanfare. As a main theme, its significance here is well embedded throughout. In the MS, *The Solent* appears completed, though this is not unanimously agreed upon (ref Br Libr Add. MS 57278(E).

16. Taken from a contemporary report on trove.nla.gov.au.

17. Although it was included in one of the editions of *Leaves of Grass* (1872) as an appendix, as well as appearing in other collections, under different titles, and in the 1881 edition of LG heavily altered. See Karen Wolfe 1998.

18. 'Away with old romance! Away with novels, plots and plays of foreign courts', 'raise a voice for far superber themes for poets and for art / To exalt the present and the real' [7th section].

19. Lambert's introduction particularly praises Gray's text as having made a major contribution to 'putting the sea back into British and Commonwealth history' (p. vi), possibly indicating that the relationship between nation and sea might not yet have received as much critical attention as it might warrant. By 1870, British power and prosperity depended on coal, while coal was also 're-shaping the empire' with new harbours and technology centres developing. British coal and the machinery it powered was a major export, and British coal was 'in constant motion' on the shipping lanes globally (*ibid.*).

20. See for example Alan J. S. Paterson 1969, *The Golden Age of the Clyde Steamers*, or Ian McCrorie, 1986. *Clyde Pleasure Steamers: an illustrated history*, for an example of the role steam engines and steamers played also as part of socio-cultural patterns and environments, enabled and enhanced by the technological developments.

21. See Blodgett & Bradley (1956), notes to "Sea-Drift" (pp. 246–7).

22. This motif is identified as an important 'melodic contour' by Dickinson (1928, p. 16), recurring also in the second and fourth movements. Such recurring usage serves, beside underpinning the compositional structure, to heighten the thematic and narrative interconnectedness between the movements.

23. It could also be noted that both the first movement and the 'Token' passage starts in 'glorious' D-major', a tonality according to Mellers often 'indicative of human heroism' (1989, 19). The opening phrase of the 'Token' passage is a more or less a stepwise ascending of that scale, underpinning the articulation of the (rather sorrowful) text with a strong major tonality. In early sketches, this first phrase turned downwards on its final syllable ('cap-<u>tains</u>') to land on a harmonically 'expected' dominant. In the final version, as we hear it now, 'captains' continues upwards, however, ending the phrase on a c-sharp, and harmonically 'unresolved'. This leads the phrase further onwards while also connecting the continuous upward motion of the phrase to notions of endeavour and strength, and is another example of how the symphony combines textual and musical expressions to create multi-layered interactions.

24. "similitude": the concept is Hegelian, that the great macrocosm contains all microcosms, perhaps is the sum of them (Blodgett & Bradley 1965, p. 261)

25. Whitman's earlier titles also include "In the wake following" (1874) and "Waves in the vessel's wake" (no year given) (Blodgett & Bradley 1965, p. 263).

26. The terminology of shanty, of any spelling, is ambiguous and contested. See for example W. B. Whall, an early, and prolific, collector and publisher of sea songs and sea shanties (*Ships, Sea Songs and Shanties*, 1910 and subsequent editions), who had strong views on these denominations. See also Roy Palmer in *The Oxford Book of Sea Songs*, 1986, p. xiii.

27. This inclusion is well established, identified by, among others, Dickinson (1928) and Kennedy (1964). The second folk song discussed below is less often acknowledged, but see for example Howes (1954). Online score of 'The Golden Vanity' here: www.8notes.com/scores/6765.asp. The ballad was included in the anthologies published by Francis James Child in the late 19C (*English and Scottish Ballads/ The English and Scottish popular ballads*), and is also sometimes referred to as 'The Sweet Trinity'.

28. From the liner notes for Paddy Bell's recording of 1965 (*Paddie Herself*): 'The cabin boy of *The Golden Vanity* ranks alongside *John Henry* as one of the indestructible folk heroes. This is a very early ballad, known originally as *Sir Walter Raleigh Sailing in the Lowlands*, and, as such it was collected by Samuel Pepys.' (https://mainlynorfolk.info/lloyd/songs/thegoldenvanity.html).

29. See for example Pike (2003) 'a big flowing tune of the public-school-hymn type. [A] kind of grandiose melody' (39); Howes (1954) 'a fine diatonic tune' (8); Foss (1950) 'A spacious tune provides the fine dignity of a seafaring history: everyone ought to join in, in unison […] standing up to raise voices to the sky.' (97); Town (2003) 'the refulgent nobility [of these passages] strongly influenced by Parry's music' [others have noted] (87); Dickinson (1928) 'It has the bracing character of Parry's best subjects.' (21); Ottaway (1972) 'The tune itself both invites and defies comparison with Parry or with Elgar [and] has the same broad unison quality.' (17)

30. Recently recorded (2022) with a reconstructed orchestration by Martyn Brabbins, as part of his series of recordings of all RVW symphonies with Hyperion.

31. In foreword to *The Island Race*, a follow-up volume

published in 1898, re-print 1995, editorial authorship unknown.

32. Allegedly they were 'triumphantly received' at Leeds (Jonathan Blumhofer, on artfuse.org, 9 June 2018: https://artsfuse.org/171162/rethinking-the-repertoire-24-charles-villiers-stanfords-songs-of-the-fleet). Stanford had previously written *The Revenge: A Ballad of the Fleet* (Op. 24) to a text by Tennyson, which premiered at Leeds in 1886 and remained popular all into the 1930s, underlining both the contemporary commonality and popularity of the topic, as well as recurring musical engagements. 'Drake's Drum', from Newbolt's first collection, *Admirals All*, would become his best-known ballad – and Stanford's most popular song, as it remains today (Dibble 2002, p. 359). Herbert Howells' comment on them in an address at the centenary of Stanford's birth, notes in particular the song sets' embeddedness in contemporary moods and attitudes: '[Stanford's] own famous song cycles belonged as much to Edwardian security and optimism as they did to Leeds Town Hall and his own, supreme technique in choral-orchestral works' (Howells 1952, p. 24).

33. Admitted by RVW himself, widely reported in the literature.

34. There is some uncertainty around how crucial the semi-chorus allocation is: there exists a letter to Herbert Bardgett ahead of a performance that may indicate a later reconsideration of the composer in favour of a 'full and <u>not</u> distant' passage. (See Br Libr Add MS 65143, Size sequence E (last bundle))

35. Corroborated in the literature, see for example Kennedy (2014): '"Away, O soul! [etc]" sets off an outburst of shanty-like rhythms'.

36. 'Space and place' to Leyshon *et al.* (1995), are 'not simply sites where or about which music happens to be made, or over which music has diffused' but are rather 'different spatialities […] formative of the sounding and resounding of music' (pp. 424–5). To consider the 'place' of music, is not, they suggest, to reduce it to a location, or 'ground it down into some geographical baseline' but to 'allow purchase' on the 'rich aesthetic, cultural, economic and political geographies of musical language' (p. 425). Instead of considering music as ostensibly 'place-less', we need to be sensitive to 'mutually generated relations', and the way in which music can partake in our formative understanding of place.

37. Whitman was in his 50s at the time of writing *Passage to India*, and it has sometimes been referred to as his 'midway philosophy', in a poem that topically seems 'suspended between past and future' (Lovell 1960, p. 132).

PRIMARY SOURCES

Br Libr Add MS: British Library Additional Manuscripts

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beer, G., 1990. 'The island and the aeroplane: the case of Virginia Woolf', in *Nation and Narration*, ed. H. K. Bhabha (London & New York), pp. 266–90.

Blodgett, H. W., & Bradley, S. (eds), 1965. *Leaves of Grass* (1891–92): comprehensive reader's editions, (9th and final edn) (New York, US).

Butcher, A V., 1947. 'Walt Whitman and the English composer', *Music & Letters*, vol. 28, No. 2, April 1947. pp. 154–67.

Cobbe, H., 2008. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1895–1958* (Oxford).

Dahlhaus, C., 1985. *Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge).

Day, J., 1998. *Vaughan Williams* (Oxford).

Dibble, J., 2002. *Charles Villier Stanford: man and musician* (Oxford).

Dickinson, A. E. F., 1928. *An Introduction to the Music of R. Vaughan Williams* (repr 1945) (London).

Foreman, L. (ed.), 1998. *Vaughan Williams in Perspective: studies of an English composer* (Somerset).

Foss, H., 1950. *Ralph Vaughan Williams: a study* (London).

Frogley, A., 1993. 'H.G. Wells and Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony*: politics and culture in fin-de-siècle England', *Sundry Sorts of Music Books: essays on the British Library collections*, ed. C. Banks, A. Searle & M. Turner in Keegan 1996 (Stroud, Glous), pp. 299–308.

Frogley, A., 1996. 'Constructing Englishness in music: national character and the reception of Ralph Vaughan

Williams', in *Vaughan Williams Studies*, ed. A. Frogley (Cambridge), pp. 1–22.

Froude, J. A., 1886. *Oceana, or England and her Colonies* (London).

Furse Jackson, V., 1994. *The Poetry of Henry Newbolt: patriotism is not enough* (Greensboro, NC, US).

Gough, B., 2014. *Pax Britannica: Ruling the waves and Keeping the peace before Armageddon* (Cambridge).

Gray, S., 2018. *Steam Power and Sea Power: coal, the Royal Navy and the British Empire c.1870–1914* (Cambridge).

Grimley, D. M., 2018. *Delius and the Sound of Place* (Cambridge).

Herbert, A., 1998. 'Unfinished business: the evolution of the "solent": theme', in *Vaughan Williams in Perspective*, ed. I. Foreman (Somerset), pp. 69–90.

Howells, H., 1952. Address at the Centenary of Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924), in 'Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 79th session', 1952–1953, p. 24.

Howes, F., 1954. *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London).

Johns, R., & Riding. C., 2014. *Turner and the Sea* (Nat Maritime Mus, London). (Published to accompany the exhibition 'Turner and the Sea', NMR, Greenwich, 21 Nov–1 Sept 2014).

Keegan, J., 1996. 'The Sea and the English', in *The Sea and History*, ed. E. E. Rice (Stroud, Glos), pp. 143–53.

Kennedy, P. M., 1976. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, 1983 (1976) (Cambridge).

Kennedy. P. M., 1983. *Strategy and Diplomacy 1987–1945* (London).

Kennedy, M., 1964. *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 1980 (London).

Kennedy, M., 1966. 'Early RVW: more facts', *The Musical Times*, 107, no.1479 (May 1966), pp. 404–6.

Kennedy, M., 2014. *A Sea Symphony, 'Symphony No 1'*, notes for Hyperion recordings; https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W20006_68245

Kuykendall, J. B., 2015.'Early orchestral works of Vaughan Williams recovered', Review of study scores, in *Notes*, vol. 71, no. 3 (March), pp. 573–7.

Lambert, A., 2018. *Seapower States: maritime culture, continental empires and the conflict that made the modern world* (Yale, CT, US).

Leyshon, A., Matless, D., & Revill, G.1995. 'The Place of Music (Introduction)', in *Trans Inst Br Geogr*, 20, no. 4, pp. 423–33.

Lovell, J. Jr., 1960.'Appreciating Whitman: "Passage to India" ', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 21, no. 2 (June), pp.131–41.

Loxley, D., 1990. *Problematic Shores: the literature of islands* (Basingstoke).

MacKenzie, J., 2013. 'Cultural, intellectual and religious networks: Britain's maritime exchanges in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', in *The Victorian Empire and Britain's maritime world, 1837–1901*, ed. M. Taylor (Cambridge), pp. 64–81

McCrorie, I., 1986. *Pleasure Steamers: an illustrated history* (Clydebank).

McGuire, C. E. 2003. 'Vaughan Williams and English Music Festival: 1910', in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, ed. B. Adams & R. Wells (Aldershot), pp. 235–68.

Mellers, W., 1989/1991. *Vaughan Williams and the vision of Albion* (1st edn 1989) (London).

Newbolt, H., 1898, repr.1995.*The Island Race* (Oxford). Including the poems in *Admirals All*, first publ 1897.

Ottaway, H., 1972. *Vaughan Williams' Symphonies* (BBC Music Guides (London).

Palmer, R. (ed.), 1986. In *The Oxford Book of Sea Songs* (Oxford).

Paterson, A. J. S., 1969. *The Golden Age of the Clyde Steamers, 1889–1914* (Newton Abbot).

Pike, L., 2003. *Vaughan Williams and The Symphony* (London).

Quilley, G., 1998. '"All Ocean is her own": the image of the sea and the identity of the maritime nation in eighteenth-century British art', in *Imagining Nations*, ed. G. Cubitt (Manchester), pp. 132–52.

Readman, P., 2001. 'Landscape Preservation, "Advertising Disfigurement" and English Identity, *c.*1890 –1914', *Rural Hist*, 12, pp. 61–83.

Reynolds, D., 2015. 'Walt Whitman', in *The Cambridge Companion to American Poets*, ed. M. Richardson (Cambridge), pp. 87–103).

Richards, J., 2001. *Imperialism and music: Britain 1876–1953* (Manchester).

Rüger, J., 2004. 'Nation, empire and navy: identity politics in the United Kingdom, 1887–1914', in *Past & Present*, 185, November 2004, pp. 159–88.

Rüger, J., 2013. 'Insularity and empire in the late nineteenth century', in *The Victorian Empire and Britain's maritime world, 1837–1901: the sea and global history*, ed. M. Taylor 2013 (Cambridge), pp. 149–87.

Smith, S. 1994. 'Soundscape', in *Area*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 232–40.

Taylor, M. (ed.), 2013. *The Victorian Empire and Britain's*

maritime world, 1837–1901: the sea and global history (Cambridge).

Thomas, M. W., 1998. 'Whitman in the British Isles', in *Walt Whitman: an encyclopedia*, ed. J. R. LeMaster & D. D. Kummings (New York, US).

Thomson, A., 2013. 'Becoming a national composer: critical reception to *c*.1925', in *The Cambridge Companion to Vaughan Williams*, ed. A. Frogley & A. J. Thomson, pp. 56–78.

Town, S., 2003. ' "Full of fresh thoughts": Vaughan Williams, Whitman and the Genesis of A Sea Symphony', in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, ed. B. Adams, B. & R. Wells (Aldershot), pp. 73–101.

Vaillancourt, M., 1996. 'Coming of age: the earliest orchestral music of Ralph Vaughan Williams', in Frogley, A. (ed.), *Vaughan Williams Studies* (Cambridge), pp. 23–46.

Vaughan Williams, R. *Folk-songs from the Eastern Counties*, in the series *Folk-songs of England*, ed. C. J. Sharp 1908 (London).

Vaughan Williams, R., 1918. *A Sea Symphony* (1910) (London).

Whall, W. B., 1910. S*hips, Sea Songs and Shanties* (Glasgow).

Whitman, W., 1973, *Leaves of Gras,* ed. Blodgett & Bradley, (9th and final edn) (NewYork, US).

Wolfe, K, 1998. 'Song of the Exposition'; Whitman Archive; https://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_53.html [accessed 28.11.2019]. Print source: *Walt Whitman: an encyclopedia*, ed. J. R. LeMaster & D. D. Kummings 1998 (New York, US).