Revisiting the Past: Harmony, Structure and Narrative in Ralph Vaughan Williams's
Piano Quintet in C Minor

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ABSTRACT

Vaughan Williams's Piano Quintet in C minor is a rarity in the world of classical music: a complete multi-movement work by a major composer that was kept hidden from the light of day for eight decades after its premiere before being published and publicly presented once again. Because of the many years in which the work was unknown to performers and scholars, little has been written about the history, the structure, and the guiding influences on this piece, making it fertile ground for new research. This document aims to provide a better understanding of the piece from a historical and theoretical framework. Chapter 1 is an historical exploration of Vaughan Williams's life around the time of the Quintet's composition, in search of biographical clues that may explain why he removed the piece from the catalogue. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 explore the three movements of the Quintet from different perspectives. Chapter 2 investigates Vaughan Williams's relinquishment of traditional structural tonal devices in favor of modal ones, as well as his use of formal structure—based on Hepokoski and Darcy's Sonata Theory. Chapter 3 explores the concept of "Englishness" in the second movement, based on the framework of English pastoralism, and explores the dual meaning of Arcadia as it relates to expressive meaning in the second movement. Chapter 4 surveys the use of variations in the last movement and the movement's relationship to Vaughan Williams's Violin Sonata in A minor (1953), for which the composer used the same theme in the third movement. The concluding chapter, Chapter 5, investigates more closely the question of musical meaning in the Quintet, tracking the possible meaning of a single musical module throughout the three movements using the concepts of

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The Piano Quintet in C minor by Ralph Vaughan Williams is a rarity in the world of classical music: a complete multi-movement work by a major composer that was kept hidden from the light of day for eight decades after its premiere before being published and publically presented once again. Because of the many years in which the work was unknown to performers and scholars, little has been written about the history, the structure, and the guiding influences on this piece, making it fertile ground for new research.

This document will reveal the Quintet to be an important formative work that was situated at a decisive moment in Vaughan Williams's development. As such, the Quintet straddles several divergent paths that the young composer was exploring at this time: the legacy of Brahms and the German tradition, a growing absorption in English folksong and musical nationalism, and an interest in creating motivic unity throughout a multi-movement piece. This long-lost piece provides an essential evolutionary link to Vaughan Williams's mature style and serves as a window into his creative processes at a developmentally critical moment when he was grappling with the search for his own compositional voice.

I first encountered Vaughan William's Piano Quintet in the Fall of 2010, when I learned about a performance featuring Schubert's "Trout" Quintet and a "newly" discovered —11 years had passed already—work by the English composer. The pairing made sense, since both share the same unusual instrumentation: violin, viola, violoncello,

double bass and piano.[1] After hearing the piece for the first time, I fell in love with it and decided to program it on a recital and learn as much as I could. I have since performed the Quintet several times with different musical colleagues, and these performances have presented me several distinctive approaches to the piece. I also programed the piece on a degree lecture recital (2015), which sparked the following document.

The primary question that piqued my interest is this: why did Vaughan Williams decide to withdraw this piece from his catalogue, given that the work seems to be aligned with the aesthetics of other compositions from the same time? Did he consider it to be a student work, not worthy of inclusion in his catalogue? (Although Vaughan Williams was 31 years old by the time the Quintet was completed, his compositional processes matured slowly and he hit his stride later in life than many other composers.) Perhaps he did not consider the writing and style sophisticated or representative enough to be at par with his most famous later works, such as *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910) or *The Lark Ascending* (1914). Although we will likely never know for certain, I hope that this document will shed some light on the Quintet as it considers possible answers to these questions.

Chapter 1 is a historical exploration of Vaughan Williams's life around the time of the Quintet's composition, in search of biographical clues that may explain why he removed the piece from the catalogue. I will explore his years as a student and his work

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[1] The "Trout" Quintet is perhaps the most famous work for this combination but not the earliest. Hummel's *Piano Quintet in E flat major, Op. 87* from 1802 (a re–instrumentation of his septet, Op. 74, published in 1822) inspired the 'Trout.' According to Albert Stadler, "Schubert's Quintet for pianoforte, violin, viola, cello and double bass with the variations on his 'Forelle' you probably know. He wrote it at the particular request of my friend Sylvester Paumgartner, who was quite taken with the delicate little song. The Quintet, according to his wish, was to adopt the structure and instrumentation of Hummel's Quintet, *recte* Septet, which was then still new Schubert was soon finished with it; he himself kept the score." Piero Weiss, "Dating the 'Trout' Quintet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 32, no. 3 (1979): pp. 539–548, 539.

with mentors such as Sir Hubert Parry in England, as well as his studies with Max Bruch in Germany and Maurice Ravel in France. I will also look into Vaughan Williams's own writings, which will provide a first-hand look at the composer's ideas around the time of the Quintet.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 explore the three movements of the Quintet from different perspectives. Chapter 2 investigates Vaughan Williams's relinquishment of traditional structural tonal devices in favor of modal ones, as well as his use of form. Chapter 3 explores the concept of "Englishness" in the second movement, based on the framework of English pastoralism, and explores the dual meaning of Arcadia as it relates to expressive meaning in the second movement. Chapter 4 surveys the use of variations in the last movement and the movement's and its relationship to Vaughan Williams's Violin Sonata in A minor (1953), for which the composer used the same theme in the third movement. The concluding chapter, Chapter 5, investigates more closely the question of musical meaning in the piece, tracking the possible meaning of a single musical module throughout the three movements, using the concepts of markedness and gesture, and ties together all the threads discussed in the previous chapters.

The audience for this document is intended to be performers and listeners alike. Quite apart from its intriguing history and its important place in Vaughan Williams's musical development, the Quintet is an engaging and eminently appealing piece of music for listeners of all backgrounds. It is my belief that parsing the origins and the structure of the Quintet, and unraveling the deeper meanings of those elements, will result in a deeper understanding and greater appreciation of this important piece.

When I started this project in 2015, there was very little literature written about the Quintet, other than some program notes and CD liner notes. Since then, Sacha Peiser has included the Quintet as part of her 2017 dissertation *Telling Tales: Narrative and Anti–Narrative Approaches in British Chamber Music, 1900–1930.*[2] Peiser considers the Quintet as part of a larger analytical project, including Vaughan Williams's *Phantasy Quintet* (1912), Rebecca Clarke's Piano Trio (1921), and Frank Bridge's String Quartet No. 3 (1927).

My discussion of formal structures draws on the Sonata Theory of James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy—see my Chapter 2—as published in their book *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata,*[3] and on William Caplin's—see my Chapter 3—discussion of classical forms in his book *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.*[4] Both of these books are current references on musical structure and will provide the necessary framework for my analysis of form and formal functions in the Quintet.

David Manning's dissertation *Harmony, Tonality and Structure in Vaughan Williams's Music* provides a theoretical background for Vaughan Williams's compositional materials and processes.[5] Manning's concept of "modalised tonality" is of

[2] Sacha Peiser, "Telling Tales: Narrative and Anti–Narrative Approaches in British Chamber Music, 1900–1930" (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 2017).

[3] James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[4] William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[5] David Manning, "Harmony, Tonality and Structure in Vaughan Williams's Music" (PhD diss., University of Wales, 2003).

special importance to my study when referring to the harmonic techniques and processes that occur in the first movement of the Quintet.

The book *English Pastoral Music: From Arcadia to Utopia, 1900–1955* by Eric Saylor offers a detailed depiction of the aesthetic implications of the pastoral in the period of the Quintet's composition, offering a lens through which to view some elements in the second movement of the Quintet. [6]

The concepts of musical gesture and markedness are essential to this project. For these I will rely on Robert Hatten's seminal books *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation,*[7] and *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert.*[8]

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[6] Eric Saylor, *English Pastoral Music: from Arcadia to Utopia, 1900–1955* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

[7] Robert S. Hatten, *Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

[8] Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

CHAPTER ONE: TOWARDS AN ENGLISH IDENTITY: VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S FORMATIVE YEARS

Vaughan Williams's compositional development and arrival at a mature style can be characterized as methodically slow, at least when compared to that of other composers. He was fortunate in the variety of musical influences that he was exposed to: Vaughan Williams's musically formative years included studies with Hubert Parry in England (1892), Bruch in Berlin (1897) and Ravel in Paris (1908), opening the ears of the young composer to diverse compositional schools and trends.[9] The young composer's musical aesthetic was particularly strongly influenced by Romantic continental composers, especially those of the German tradition, a trend that was typical for British composition students at that time. This chapter examines the historical evidence that confirms Vaughan Williams's familiarity with, and reception of, Brahms's work, particularly as pertains to the Quintet in C minor. The long shadow that Brahms cast is evident in the multiple essays and articles that Vaughan Williams wrote about him (both favorable and critical), as well as in specific musical and structural similarities which will be explored in chapter 2 of this document. The evidence establishes a direct link between the aesthetics of German Romantic music of Brahms's time and the compositional style of the young Vaughan Williams, a link that was later dissolved by Vaughan Williams's abandonment of the German aesthetic and his discovery and adoption of the personal nationalistic English style that became his trademark.

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[9] Alain Frogley and Hugh Ottaway. "Vaughan Williams, Ralph," *in* In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online,* n.d. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.steenproxy.sfasu.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/42507 (accessed April 30, 2013).

Vaughan Williams composed the Piano Quintet in the fall of 1903, which was shortly before his work became associated with English folk music and traditional English carols—a turn in his compositional aesthetic that radically changed the course of his compositional style.[10] The Quintet was first performed on December 14th, 1905, at the Aeolian Hall in London, with the following musicians: Louis Zimmerman, violin; Alfred Hobday, viola; Paul Ludwig, cello; Claude Hobday, double bass; and Richard Epstein, piano.[11] Following the advice of colleague Gustav Holst, Vaughan Williams extensively revised the Quintet in 1904 and 1905; however, even after undertaking these revisions, he remained dissatisfied with the piece. After a final performance in 1918, Vaughan Williams decided to remove the work from his catalogue, but he did not disown it completely; many years later he used the main theme of the Quintet's third movement for the finale of his 1954 Violin Sonata in A minor.

The three-movement Quintet in C minor is scored for piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass, which is the same unusual instrumentation used in Schubert's "Trout" Quintet in A major, D. 667, a work that the young Vaughan Williams would have been familiar with from his years as a student at the Royal College of Music.[12] The first movement of the Quintet, *Allegro con fuoco*, evokes the compositional style of Brahms's chamber music on many levels: dense textures, rich harmonies, hemiolas, and (most importantly) similar deformations in its use of sonata form, as will be explored in detail in the following chapter. Although Brahms's influence on the first movement is evident to the knowledgeable listener, the *Allegro con fuoco* still forecasts his later style that we

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[10] Frogley and Ottaway. "Vaughan Williams, Ralph."
[11] Michael Kennedy, ed. *Ralph Vaughan Williams*: *Piano Quintet in C minor* (London: Faber Music, 2002).
[12] Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1980), 18.

are more familiar with, especially in its use of modality, which played such a central role in Vaughan Williams's later works. As Kennedy writes: "One might say that Brahms 'haunts' the work, as Beethoven haunted Brahms. Furthermore, the *Allegro con fuoco* moves as one large piece. The composer has absorbed the larger lesson of Brahms without mimicking him."[13]

In the second movement, *Andante*, the essence of Vaughan Williams's personal style begins to become more apparent. The main theme of the *Andante* resembles the song "Silent Noon," which he composed in the same year, and the pastoral trope that he used in both is a perspicuous step in the direction of Englishness in his work.[14] The finale, *Fantasia (quasi variazioni),* comprises a theme followed by six variations. The theme that Vaughan Williams uses as the basis of this movement is derived from an English folk song—again foreshadowing his extensive use of English folk repertoire in the years to come.

According to Vaughan Williams's wishes, the Quintet was never to be performed publically again. However, forty years after his death, his widow, Ursula Vaughan Williams, in consultation with her advisers, decided to allow the publication and performance of some of Vaughan Williams's previously withdrawn early works, including the Quintet. The reasons she permitted access to these earlier works are not entirely clear. Although the preface to the 2002 edition of the Quintet states that Mrs. Vaughan Williams's motivation was "the interest being expressed in the music that Vaughan Williams wrote before 1908," one may suspect that some other reasons—such

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[13] Steve Schwartz, "Classical Net Review – Vaughan Williams – Early Chamber Music," Classical Net, 2007, http://allclassics.org/music/recs/reviews/h/hyp67381b.php.
[14] Schwartz, "Classical Net Review."

as financial, since several works were edited and published simultaneously—might have factored into her decision as well. The first modern performance of the Quintet was given at the Royal College of Music in London, in 1999, followed by its publication in 2002.[15]

Vaughan Williams's relationship with the German tradition started early on, and can be observed both from his own years of training and from his later writings. He recalled the beginnings of his formal music lessons with this childhood memory:

> I remember as if it were yesterday, when I was about, I think, seven years old walking with my mother through the streets of Eastbourne and seeing in a music shop an advertisement for violin lessons. My mother said to me, "would you like to learn the violin?" and I, without thinking, said "Yes." Accordingly, next day, a wizened old German called Cramer appeared on the scene and gave me my first violin lesson.[16]

The Italians and Germans dominated the British musical landscape of much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: "Handel and Mendelssohn were celebrated visitors from Germany, Sir George Smart and other prominent British musicians were fervent admirers of Beethoven, and Johann Sebastian Bach was adopted as a British composer known as 'John Sebastian.'"[17] In 1890, Vaughan Williams experienced a strong Teutonic influence, as he enrolled in the Royal College of Music, where, as he put it, "Bach, Beethoven (ex officio), Brahms and Wagner were the only composers worth considering."[18] At this time, The Royal College of Music had a strong German influence, due to the preferences of its founding director, Sir George Grove. One of Vaughan Williams's first composition teachers, Hubert Parry, told him to devote himself to the

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[15] Kennedy, ed. *Ralph Vaughan Williams*: *Piano Quintet in C minor.*
[16] Byron Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," in *The Cambridge Companion to Vaughan Williams*, ed. Alain Frogley and Aidan J. Thomson (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 29–55, 33.
[17] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 33.
[18] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 33.

study of Beethoven's posthumous quartets "as a religious exercise;"[19] Vaughan Williams

did not share the same fondness for Beethoven, however, as he expressed in an essay on

the Ninth symphony, in which he expressed a dislike for "the 'trivial arabesques' of the

third movement."[20] Even later in his career, he admitted that "to this day the Beethoven

idiom repels me, but I hope I have at last learnt to see the greatness that lies behind the

idiom I dislike."[21] Parry's take on Brahms was different than his view of Beethoven: for

Parry, the latter was an idol of the past which must be revered, whereas Brahms was a

contemporary and the very model of the modern composer. Parry's admiration for

Brahms is evident in his *Elegy in Memory of Brahms* (1897).[22]

In 1892, Vaughan Williams took a break from his studies at the Royal College of

Music to enroll in the Bachelor of Arts degree at Trinity College in Cambridge. He

returned to the Royal College of Music in 1895 and became the pupil of Sir Charles

Villiers Stanford, as Parry had been appointed director of the institution. Vaughan

Williams's relationship with his new mentor, Stanford, was completely different from the

relationship he had with his previous mentor, Parry, whose criticism was always

constructive and his love of music infectious.[23] Stanford was a harsh critic of Vaughan

Williams's work, resulting in constant fights between pupil and mentor, as Vaughan

Williams himself described:

> The details of my work annoyed Stanford so much that we seldom arrived
> at the broader issues and the lesson usually started with a conversation on
> these lines: "Damnably ugly, my boy, why do you write such things?"
> "Because I like them." "But you can't like them, they're not music." "I

[19] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 33.
[20] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 33.
[21] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 34.
[22] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 34.
[23] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 35.

shouldn't write them if I didn't like them." So the argument went on and there was not time for constructive criticism.[24]

Stanford strongly advised Vaughan Williams to go to Italy and study opera, as he considered Vaughan Williams's writing "too Teutonic already."[25] However, Vaughan Williams rebelled by moving to Berlin in October 1897 to spend six months studying under the tutelage of Max Bruch. Vaughan Williams was interested in Bruch's work with folksong in pieces such as *Kol Nidrei*, Op. 47 (1881) and the *Scottish Fantasy*, Op.46 (1880). The relation between pupil and mentor was complicated, as Bruch disliked Vaughan Williams's "predilection for parallel fifths and the flattened seventh degree of the scale;"[26] nevertheless, Bruch professed great appreciation for his British student, considering him a "sehr guter Musiker und ein talentvoller Componist" ("a very good musician and a talented composer").[27] In a February 1898 letter to his cousin,[28] Vaughan Williams follows a summary of his experiences in Germany with an insightful discussion of his burgeoning interest in folk music:

> —I very much believe in the folk tune theory—by which I don't mean that modern composing is done by sandwiching an occasional tune—not your own invention—between lumps of "2d the pound" stuff—which seems to be Dvorak's latest method. But that to get the spirit of his national tunes into his work must be good for a composer if it comes natural to him, in which case it doesn't matter if what he writes occasionally corresponds with some real "folk tune"—All this because in the last thing I wrote for Bruch I used a Welsh tune as my "Haupt Thema"—unacknowledged of course,—but then I made it my own.[29]

The lessons learned from the German repertoire during these student years can be seen mostly clearly in Vaughan Williams's earlier works, including the Piano Quintet in

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[24] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 36.
[25] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 36.
[26] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 36.
[27] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 37.
[28] Alain Frogley, *Vaughan Williams Studies* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 87–88.
[29] Frogley, *Vaughan Williams Studies,* 87–88.

C minor. Byron Adams points out that these early compositions reveal "a composer who had mastered fully the vocabulary, formal structures, voice–leading and polyphony that were characteristics of Brahms, Bruch, Thuille and other conservative German composers of the late nineteenth century."[30] As has been thoroughly documented elsewhere, Vaughan Williams underwent an evolution of thought regarding German music in the years ahead, moving from an initial reverence for the central place occupied by German music to a growing conviction that, although the German tradition was rightfully respected, English music occupied a unique space that had developed (and must continue to develop) independently of the German tradition.[31] The fact that the Quintet and other early compositions were shelved by the composer shortly after their completion was perhaps an intentional decision to favor the new path of British nationalism that ultimately became his trademark by eliminating the earlier and more conservative German-influenced works that would have been inconvenient as part of his legacy.

In addition to the biographical evidence, one can find proof for Vaughan Williams's relationship with and appreciation for German composers in his own writings, especially the articles and letters written around the turn of the century at the time the Quintet was composed. He wrote extensively on Romantic style, on Brahms and related composers, on the division he perceived between absolute and programmatic trends in the nineteenth century, and on the intersection of Classical structure and style.

Vaughan Williams had a deep interest in European Romantic music and especially in the music of Brahms, as is well documented in several articles that he wrote

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[30] Adams, "Vaughan Williams's Musical Apprenticeship," 33.
[31] Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams: 1895–1958*, ed. Hugh Cobbe (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 58.

in the early 1900s. These articles include "The Romantic Movement and Its Results" (1897), "Good Taste" (1902), "Brahms and Tchaikovsky" (1902), and "The Romantic in Music: Some Thoughts on Brahms" (1910). These writings shed some light on Vaughan Williams's viewpoint on Brahms's style and aesthetics.

A particularly interesting point of view that Vaughan Williams held, and one that was not shared by all of his contemporaries, was that of Brahms as a classicist. Such a view was based not on Brahms's chronological placement in history but on Vaughan Williams's own interpretation of the music of Brahms as a direct continuation of Classical ideals. In his article "The Romantic Movement and Its Results," Vaughan Williams described the musical aesthetic of the nineteenth century as being clearly divided into two trends: the Classical, or "absolute," in which works were created on a purely musical basis, and the Romantic, or "programmatic," wherein the composers included external, non–musical factors as the expressive basis of their work.[32]

Vaughan William's classification of these two ideals, the Classical and the Romantic, was based on his understanding of how composers approached the compositional craft and whence they derived their inspiration. According to Vaughan Williams, Beethoven's style and technique was rooted in nineteenth-century classicism, and his music was therefore "as his admirers said, pure music, rather than music eked out by other arts, or as his detractors have it, the mere development of 'musical themes,' without any of the emotional influences which gave the dry bones life."[33] In Vaughan Williams's understanding, Beethoven's musical imagination began with a simple,

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[32] David Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 13.
[33] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 13.

seminal musical idea rather than a scene or a picture, and his use of abstract form could fully embody emotional expression without requiring programmatic inspiration.

Vaughan Williams was convinced that Beethoven's approach lay in polarity to the creative starting points of many Romantic composers. The Romantics—representing the second major division of nineteenth-century musical life, as defined by Vaughan Williams—pursued an aesthetic that insisted on connecting music with other forms of art and expression, both in inspiration and execution. For Vaughan Williams, this was the trend that dominated the musical scene of the nineteenth century; composers increased their interaction with other art forms, particularly drama, forming an interdisciplinary movement that became inextricably intertwined and reached its inevitable peak with Wagner. Vaughan William betrayed his personal judgment when he wrote that "After Schumann it was forever impossible to call the new art 'music'; the dramatic element had to be recognized as being of equal importance with the musical. To make the new art complete but one step was necessary: to transfer it to its proper home, the theatre, and this was done by Richard Wagner."[34]

Vaughan Williams viewed Brahms as a classicist who stood as a bold outsider to the Romantic movement, someone that, in his own way, created an alternative aesthetic path:

> No progressive musician can go on writing Romantic music; that is over and done for, and the way has been cleared for pure music to resume its sway. The next musical pioneer after Wagner must be a man who will start again on the lines from which the romanticists broke away, and who will write pure music out of a purely musical heart—and who has done this if not Brahms. The first whole-hearted composer since Beethoven? True, there has been an interregnum, but that does not make Brahms a reactionary, it only means that he waited his time.[35]

[34] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 15–16.
[35] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 16.

Although Vaughan Williams may not have fully subscribed to either one of these two views, his allegiance certainly seems to rest on the side of Brahms, in opposition to the Romantics; he expressed no apparent regrets when he wrote, "The Romantic school has lived its life and done its work, and has died an honourable death; to honour it truly is to let it rest in peace."[36]

From our privileged vantage point, looking back in history, it seems clear that Vaughan Williams's youthful dismissal of late Romantic ideals and his connection and sympathy for Brahms's style were a necessary step in the British composer's compositional development. While the Romantic era reached its pinnacle in terms of interdisciplinary integration in the arts via Wagner and his band of followers, and the use of emotional subjectivity exemplified by Strauss's tone poems continued to dominate musical expression in the early twentieth century, Vaughan Williams led a personal revolt. He seems to have consciously realized that he needed to detach himself from the crushing weight of the Romantic legacy and develop his musical style from within, and to (as he expressed it in "The Romantic Movement and Its Results") explore the path of "music for the sake of music." By separating himself from the German Romantic tradition he had been schooled in, Vaughan Williams created the space to incorporate personal experiences and British traditions into his work without remaining tied down expressively by the heavy subjectivism of Romantic topics.

Vaughan Williams's stylistic concerns were not only personal but national as well. In an article that dates from 1902, "Good Taste," Vaughan Williams's main objective was to define—and subsequently debunk—his contemporaries' concept of

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[36] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 16.

"good taste" in the compositional process, as he believed that current concepts of taste

would inhibit the development of a true national identity in English music. Vaughan

Williams bitingly states that:

> Good taste is, without doubt, the stumbling block in the path of "young
> English school of composers." These "rising young musicians" lack neither
> good teachers nor good models, nor good concerts, nor good opportunities
> of bringing their works to a hearing; nevertheless, all their promise seems
> to be nipped in the bud by the blighting influence of "good taste."[37]

That is, Vaughan Williams believed that his fellow English composers were too

worried about creating art that would accommodate the current trends in music in

continental Europe, an exercise in concession that would stifle the potential development

and distinctive voice of English music. In Vaughan Williams's own words, "good taste'"

is defined by him as "an artificial restriction that the composer imposes on himself when

he imagines—rightly or wrongly—that his inspiration is not good enough to guide

him."[38]

Vaughan Williams's article "Good Taste" can be seen as a clarion call for

originality in the development of an English national identity, not only for Vaughan

Williams's compatriots but perhaps, just as importantly, to himself. When he once again

raised the issue of Brahms's "Classical" approach to composition, he did so in a way that

seemed to be a personal challenge: "If he [the composer] favours the 'classical' school,

he thinks it only becoming to make a show of exercising Brahms's self–restraint, without

considering what a storehouse of invention Brahms possessed out of which to deny

himself."[39] Vaughan Williams was calling not for a continuation or imitation of

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[37] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 23.
[38] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 23.
[39] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 24.

Brahmsian style, but for invention and originality within an absolute Classical aesthetic, based on the premise that "pure" motivic invention and the working out thereof was preferable to programmatic or extramusical inspiration. It was a call that he himself struggled to fulfill as he sought his unique compositional path by experimenting with different sources and materials in the early 1900s before reaching his mature stride in the following decade.

As Vaughan Williams strove to find his own voice, he looked to composers other than Brahms for inspiration as well—although always with Brahms as his primary point of reference. In his 1902 article "Brahms and Tchaikovsky," Vaughan Williams discussed the main stylistic differences between these two composers, and divulges that his allegiance rests—although by a narrow margin— on the side of Brahms, stating:

> If I had, like the "Benzonian," to say 'under which king' or die, then I should declare in favour of Brahms. But this I should do under protest; they both have their times and seasons, we cannot afford to do without either of them; all I say is that if I had to do without one or the other Tchaikovsky would go by the board.[40]

According to Vaughan Williams, the main differences between these two composers are "depth of emotion and facility of expression." Tchaikovsky is characterized by Vaughan Williams as having a facility of expression that Brahms lacks; "every emotion which [Tchaikovsky] feels he translates into music with the readiness of a true Russian linguist." However, Vaughan Williams interpreted this virtue as also being a potential weakness: "the very fact that expression comes so easily to him is apt to make him careless as to whether his idea is worth expressing. He seems unable to distinguish false sentiment from true."[41] In other words, Vaughan Williams could not help feeling

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[40] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 154.
[41] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 154.

distrustful of the excessive emotional ease and expressive readiness that he felt characterized Tchaikovsky's works.

Vaughan Williams cast a somewhat critical eye on Brahms, whom he believed did not achieve the same level of expression as Tchaikovsky, or rather, in Vaughan Williams's view, "often [failed] to reach it." However, for Vaughan Williams, this apparent shortcoming is insignificant when Brahms reaches moments of true profound emotion, as is the case in his Piano Quintet or the Tragic Overture. Vaughan Williams summarizes his view:

> The nature of Tchaikovsky's genius leads him to the best results when he is more characteristic. Brahms is at his greatest when he is more universal. The one [Tchaikovsky] becomes banal directly he ceases to be characteristic, and the other's individuality outlives the peculiarities of phraseology.[42]

How, then, does Vaughan Williams understand these moments of true emotion to be expressed in the music of Brahms? He explores this issue in Brahms's Fourth Symphony, in which he views compositional technique and depth of expression as coexisting. He praises the German composer's use of counterpoint, referring as follows to the chaconne of the fourth movement: "He [Brahms] has disproved the old fallacy that this movement is a mere contrapuntal exercise; he showed, most clearly, that we have here a strong emotional utterance full of the most wonderful melody and deepest feeling."[43] In fact, when Vaughan Williams did offer a critique of Brahms, he attributed Brahms's "failures" to the German's excessively intellectual approach to composition: "The intellect is of great service to the composer, but it must not be allowed to get out of hand. This is the only one of the blemishes which mar the perfection of Brahms's work,

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[42] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 154.
[43] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 156.

but all these imperfections are the result of an almost impossible ideal…The nearer Icarus flies to the sun, the greater will be his fall when his wings fail him."[44]

The issue of Brahms's use of sonata form comes up in a later article by Vaughan Williams, "The Romantic in Music: Some Thoughts on Brahms" (1910).[45] The primary purpose of this article was to discuss Brahms's approach to formal structure and the mechanisms that he used to develop thematic material, although Vaughan Williams offered some opinions on Brahms's relationship with Romanticism as well. Despite Vaughan Williams's conviction that Brahms was an adherent to the classical compositional approach, he did acknowledge that Brahms had some suppressed Romantic tendencies, not only in his earlier pieces but in later ones as well: "From henceforth those romantic possibilities which were so apparent in his earlier work are often sternly repressed—and though they crop up impertinently at every moment in Brahms's work—to delight the hearer—they often seem not to fit in with his apparently deliberately self-imposed 'classical' style."[46] Vaughan Williams goes on to offer an explanation for this "ill-assorted mixture" of the Classical and Romantic in Brahms's later works: "The true explanation, as it appears to me, is that Brahms, who had—potentially—the noblest and greatest ideas that ever entered into a composer's mind, had not the proper technique to bring them to their full fruition."[47]

The "technique" that Vaughan Williams is referring to here probably does not include the conventional meaning of the word, i.e., a vast knowledge of academic

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[44] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 157.
[45] It is worth noting that at the time this article was written, Vaughan Williams was finishing the composition of *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, which was premiered in September 1910 and which marked a major turning point in his personal compositional style. Frogley and Ottaway, "Vaughan Williams, Ralph."
[46] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 157.
[47] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 166.

subjects such as harmony, counterpoint and orchestration; "of this kind of technique and much more Brahms, of course, possessed in the highest degree."[48] The deficiency that Vaughan Williams observed lay in the structural application of this knowledge to convey, in the clearest and most effective possible way, what Brahms wanted to say. This perceived lack of technique was "more apparent in the form into which he [Brahms] threw his inspirations."[49]

Structural form was, in the eyes of Vaughan Williams, the main vehicle through which composers found a way to deliver the message of their works; he even referred to it as "the chief factor of intelligibility."[50] This intelligibility was clearly established in the Classical period, with the generalization of predetermined formal schemes such as ternary, theme and variations, rondo, and sonata. Of these, ternary form—ABA—seemed to "give a feeling of stability and unity to all forms of human activity (we find it exemplified equally in the sandwich and in the sonata); so whether it is in its origin a convention or not, it is now deeply rooted in human nature."[51]

Even though Vaughan Williams held the sonata form (as well as the humble sandwich) to be a subspecies of the balanced and symmetrical ternary form, he highlights that the sonata form is a pure convention that is necessary only as long as "the composer himself feels that this convention does not hinder his natural flow of ideas."[52] The British composer felt that the sonata form was perhaps not the ideal form for Brahms, as he found that in Brahms's music the form felt inhibiting and stifled the natural development

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[48] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 166.
[49] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 166.
[50] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 167.
[51] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 167.
[52] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 167.

of Brahms's ideas. In this sense, Vaughan Williams draws a definite distinction between the Classical conventions of musical inspiration and the Classical conventions of structure and form:

> Was not [Brahms's] "return to the classics" a piece of deliberate reasoning rather than inspired intuition? And why did Brahms apparently mistrust his intuition? Was it not because he lacked the technical power to build the massive blocks of inspiration into an architectural scheme fitted for them and was obligated to model his works by rule and line on some ready–plan?[53]

Furthermore, according to Vaughan Williams, "Brahms's ideas are essentially architectural. They require architectural treatment. He apparently did not have the technique however to build up a unifying scheme out of the ideas themselves; hence he was forced to fall back on the classical form."[54]

What Vaughan Williams seems to have overlooked in his censure of Brahms is the flexibility of the sonata form. In practice, theorists and musicologists agree that the use of the strictest definition of sonata form—the traditional sonata of the *Formenlehre* tradition—is an idea that exists only in the realms of Utopia; it is specifically within the deviations—or deformations[55]—of that rigid frame where the composer will find his or her true voice. Decades later, Charles Rosen sounded a warning about this issue:

> The most dangerous aspect of the traditional theory of "sonata form" is the normative one. Basically the account is most comfortable with the works that Beethoven wrote when he was closely following Mozart's lead. The assumption that divergences from the pattern are irregularities is made as often as the inference that earlier eighteenth-century versions of the form represent an inferior stage from which a higher type evolved.[56]

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[53] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 167.
[54] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music,* 167.
[55] Hepokoski and Darcy define deformations as the stretch "of a normative procedure to its maximally expected limits or even beyond them— or the overriding of that norm altogether in order to produce a calculated expressive effect...The expressive or narrative point lies in the tension between the limits of a competent listener's field of generic expectations and what is made to occur— or not occur— in actual sound at that moment." Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory,* 614.
[56] Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: Viking Press , 1971), 32.

One cannot help but wonder: could the essay "The Romantic in Music: Some Thoughts on Brahms" be an apologia by Vaughan Williams to rationalize his previous use of similar Brahmsian organizational devices in the sonata form of his earlier works—especially the Quintet—a process that Vaughan Williams abandoned after initial experimentation in order to open the door for the nationalistic style that later was associated with his name? To venture an answer to this question with absolute certainty would be futile. However, one can say with confidence that the first movement of the Vaughan Williams's Quintet shares some of the typical deformations of the sonata form found in Brahms, a parallel that will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

Much evidence exists to demonstrate the extensive influence that Brahms had on Vaughan Williams: the German dominance of the English musical scene during the composer's formative years, studies in Germany with Bruch, the multiple articles and written references to Brahms, the similarities in their chamber music, the strong opinions that Vaughan Williams held on the use of Classicism and Romanticism in nineteenth-century music and on the merits and weaknesses of Brahms as a composer, and finally in the similarities in their use of sonata form. At the same time, the English nationalistic style that came to dominate Vaughan Williams's musical language in subsequent decades was already manifesting itself in the Quintet, resulting in a composition that is both firmly planted in the composer's Teutonic musical training but also looks ahead to the path of Englishness that he ultimately committed to. Whatever his reason for withdrawing this piece from the public—whether he felt that there was a conflict between the two styles, or a lack of commitment to a singular musical vision, or that neither the Englishness or the Brahmsian influence on the piece was satisfactorily developed—the

Quintet is a composition that represents a pivotal developmental moment in Vaughan

Williams's life and forms an important connecting link between his youthful works and

the flowering of his mature style.

CHAPTER TWO: HARMONIC RESOURCES AND STRUCTURE IN THE FIRST MOVEMENT OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S PIANO QUINTET IN C MINOR.

It is undeniable that the first movement of the Quintet, *Allegro con fuoco*, has a distinctive Romantic sound, which resembles the chamber music of Brahms. Some of this comparison is warranted, as several key features in the movement—which will be explored in detail later in this chapter—seem to align with Brahms's style: the lush piano writing, the uses of texture in which the strings are often engaged in a back and forth dialogue with the piano, and the treatment of sonata form, such as the use of telescopic recapitulations and multiple modules in the S-space. However, a deeper study of the movement shows that there is a strong connection to the distinctive style of Vaughan Williams, a style that is derived from the composer's work with English folk music and hymns. These traits can be observed in the first movement of the Quintet with, specifically, the use of plagal cadences and modality as the source of melodic material. In this chapter, I will discuss how Vaughan Williams, in the first movement of the Quintet, presents a musical argument that shows primordial steps towards the development of his distinctive musical language. This argument may provide a starting point for discussion of Vaughan William's reasons for dropping this Quintet—as well as other early works— from his catalog, a decision that he perhaps made to emphasize the works that came shortly after the Quintet, such as *Silent Noon* (1904), the *Norfolk Rhapsody* No. 1 (1906), *The Wasps* (1909), *On Wenlock Edge* (1909), and *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910), all of which are commonly associated with his compositional language.

Example 2.1: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, I, mm. 1–3.

The movement opens with four powerful, tutti, fortissimo chords: Cm: i–iv–iv⁶–i, unequivocally setting up C minor as the key center, as shown in example 2.1. The importance of these four chords goes beyond engaging the listener with a powerful beginning statement; these chords also address two crucial non-normative melodic and cadential features: the extensive use of plagal cadences ("PC" in the example) and the use

of the modal, lowered 7th scale degree (subtonic). By starting the movement with these

two elements, Vaughan Williams asserts them as normative in the musical language in

this context, in contrast to the expected tonal language which was characteristic of music

of the late Romantic period. These two elements are not independent from each other: the

absence of a leading tone in the minor mode diminishes the power of the dominant chord

in cadences—because of the forward motion of $\hat{7}$–$\hat{1}$ in the upper voices and $\hat{5}$–$\hat{1}$ in the

bass—leaving a void that needs to be filled; in this case, with the use of plagal cadences.

Composers throughout the Classical and Romantic periods relied on the same

cadential formulas to establish formal boundaries in their musical themes: authentic

(strong) and half (weak) cadences. As William Caplin explains:

> Cadences are classified into two main types based on the final harmony of
> the underlying cadential progression. If the goal of the progression is
> tonic, an authentic cadence is created; if the harmonic goal is dominant, a
> half cadence (HC) is created. Authentic cadences are further subdivided
> according to the extent of melodic closure achieved at the cadential
> arrival. In a perfect authentic cadence (PAC), the melody reaches the tonic
> scale–degree in conjunction with the onset of the final tonic harmony. In
> an imperfect authentic cadence (IAC), the melody is left open on the third
> scale–degree (or, very rarely, the fifth degree). The half cadence is not
> subject to further subdivision based on any such melodic criterion.[57]

Caplin writes elsewhere that PACs, IACs and HCs are the only possible cadences

in music of the Classical period.[58] If an authentic cadence fails to reach the tonic and

arrives at a different function—or even at a tonic triad in first inversion—a deceptive

cadence (DC) emerges. The DC often acts as a detour, in which the composer frequently

repeats the material leading up to the unrealized cadence and closes it with the authentic

cadence originally promised. The plagal cadence is another type of progression—not

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[57] Caplin, *Classical Form*, 43.
[58] Caplin, *Classical Form*, 43.

"cadential" in the strictest sense—found at the end of sections, where the plagal cadence involves harmonic motion that does not exhibit the conclusive properties of PACs, IACs and HCs. As Caplin explains:

> "…the progression IV–I cannot confirm a tonality (it lacks any leading–tone resolution), [and] it cannot articulate formal closure in the sense developed in this book. Rather, this progression is normally part of a tonic prolongation serving a variety of formal functions—not, however, a cadential one. Most examples of plagal cadences given in textbooks actually represent a post–cadential codetta function: that is, the IV–I progression follows an authentic cadence but does not in itself create genuine cadential closure."[59]

Thus Caplin implies that in the Classical period, to call the subdominant (SD) to tonic (T) progression a "cadence" would be a misnomer, since this type of progression does not have the necessary energy (it lacks a leading tone) to confirm the key and achieve closure. I propose that, in the case of the first movement of Vaughan Williams's Piano Quintet, the concept of plagal cadence—as a SD to T motion—is viable, given its structural placements throughout the first movement.

This brings us to the question presented in this movement: if there is no leading tone—and therefore authentic cadences are no longer available—what type of harmonic devices would fill the void left by the absence of traditional ones? Vaughan Williams answers that question within the first three measures of the first movement, by placing a plagal cadence before the entrance of the main material of the primary theme (P), as shown in example 2.1.

The use of plagal cadences in the Romantic period is in dialogue with its aesthetics, as Leonard Meyer notes: "Ideologically, [plagal cadences] were consonant with the Romantic valuing of openness, because they create less decisive closure than

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[59] Caplin, *Classical Form*, 43.

authentic cadences."[60] Heather Platt has discussed Brahms's use of plagal cadences in some of his *Lieder*:

> Some of his [Brahms's] songs employ plagal cadences in a more innovative manner, using them as substitutes for an expected final authentic cadence. In these pieces, a strong sense of closure is evaded not only by the choice of cadence, but also by an ascending melody, which does not end on the tonic. These weaker concluding cadences displace the expected structural close of the entire piece, and, consequently, their influence is evident at even the deepest structural levels.[61]

Vaughan Williams's use of plagal cadences goes beyond these procedures of curtailing the decisiveness of closures; on the contrary, his use of plagal cadences is the element that provides the necessary strength to establish formal boundaries within the movement. Since the use of the plagal cadence in this way is not normative, Vaughan Williams uses other musical devices—such as strong dynamics, marked articulations, and *tutti* textures—to change the perception of it. That is, hearing plagal cadences as structural is a challenging proposal, given the cultural conditioning of expecting a dominant chord to follow the subdominant harmony in cadential contexts. Because of this, the plagal cadence has to be reinforced by other musical devices. Higo Henriques remarks that "such techniques include the employment of repetitive devices, textural treatment highest/loudest, long-held notes, and rhythmic placement, among others that will consequently strengthen a plagal axis."[62]

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[60] Leonard B. Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 285.

[61] Heather Platt, "Unrequited Love And Unrealized Dominants," *Intégral* 7 (1993): 119–148, 120.

[62] Higo Henrique Rodrigues, "Edward Elgar's Extended Tonal Procedures—An Inquiry into Elgar's Chromaticism Realm" (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2014), 67.

Studying the non-normative use of plagal cadences—i.e., uses other than as prolonging the tonic after a PAC—requires a different approach and a redefined set of analytical tools. Deborah Stein explores and defines some of these ideas, based on her analysis of Wolf's *Lieder*: for Stein, the plagal domain refers to "an expansion of the tonal system through an extended use of the subdominant,"[63] including chords with subdominant function beyond only the IV (such as ii and vi). According to Stein, the plagal domain uses two processes, "plagal ambiguity" and "dominant replacement," that are often—but not necessarily—used simultaneously.

Plagal ambiguity uses two devices, harmonic substitutions and transformation of the tonic function. Harmonic substitutions are the use of different subdominant harmonies, such as ii, VI, ♭II and ♭VI, where no traditional dominant is viable.[64] As Stein notes, "the ultimate consequence of this subdominant enlargement is the emergence of the subdominant as tonal force that can compete with and eventually can replace the dominant as a primary polarity to the tonic."[65] In the other device, the transformation of the tonic function, "a I–to–IV progression can be transformed—with the addition of but one pitch—into a V^7–to–I progression."[66]

Dominant replacement is the successful substitution of the dominant for the subdominant, as Stein states: "The success of dominant replacement, therefore, depends upon the ability of the plagal domain to provide a plagal analog for the function of the

[63] Deborah Stein, *Hugo Wolf's Lieder and Extensions of Tonality* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1985), 35.
[64] Stein, *Hugo Wolf's Lieder*, 42.
[65] Stein, *Hugo Wolf's Lieder,* 43.
[66] Stein, *Hugo Wolf's Lieder,* 44.

dominant, i.e., to replace the tonic-dominant axis with what could be called a plagal

axis."[67]

The plagal system is more often used in the minor mode and, by extension, in the

Phrygian and Aeolian modes.[68] Margaret Notley notes that plagal harmony is possible in

passages that "draw on a non-diatonic scale with, in descending order, two whole tones

followed by a semitone in the upper tetrachord, or on Phrygian or Aeolian scales. Like

the minor-major scale, these two diatonic scales (and no others) include a whole tone

between $\hat{8}$ and $\hat{7}$ and a semitone between $\hat{6}$ and $\hat{5}$, thus allowing the minor subdominant

but excluding the major dominant."[69]

The plagal system has also been the subject of hermeneutic studies. Margaret

Notley cites Robert Hatten's discussion of the "markedness of the minor mode with

respect to the major" and proposes that:

> The expressive power of plagal idioms comes about through their lesser
> position within the framework that defines them as other, that is, through
> their difference from "more basic" or "default" idioms. Stated in more
> concrete terms, the relative infrequence with which plagal harmony plays
> a non–subordinate role accounts for its (largely unacknowledged)
> markedness within the dualistic systems described by Riemann and
> others.[70]

The use of modality in the music of Vaughan Williams has been extensively

explored by David Manning in his dissertation "Harmony, Tonality and Structure in

Vaughan Williams's Music." Manning's term "modalised tonality" creates tools to

explore modal elements in the music of Vaughan Williams. Manning asserts that, given

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[67] Stein, *Hugo Wolf's Lieder,* 49.
[68] Margaret Notley has discussed the use of the plagal devices in the second movement of Brahms's Fourth Symphony. Margaret Notley, "Plagal Harmony as Other: Asymmetrical Dualism and Instrumental Music by Brahms," *The Journal of Musicology* 22, no. 1 (2005): pp. 90–130, 91.
[69] Notley, "Plagal Harmony as Other," 105.
[70] Notley, "Plagal Harmony as Other," 93.

that it is impossible to hear modal pitch resources in a tonal context in the twentieth century,[71] *modal alteration* is a better way to think of modal elements in music from a tonal perspective. In this context, "modality" is not being offered as an alternative to "tonality." Instead, the relation of modal elements and tonal centricity is being explored in order to suggest some characteristics of modalized tonality. One of the main principles of modalized tonality is that the hierarchy of modal notes becomes elevated: "In music where, for example, the flattened seventh is consistently employed, this practice becomes a norm in itself. Calling that note a modal 'alteration' becomes redundant. It is modal, but nothing is being 'altered.'"[72]

Vaughan Williams uses modalized tonality via two parameters, to establish harmonic relationships: key center and pitch collection. A specific key center or tonic can have seven different modes; i.e., if G is the tonic, different pitch collections can be employed while still maintaining G as the perceived key center. G Ionian will use the one-sharp collection, for example, while G Lydian will use the two-sharp collection. On the other hand, a single pitch collection can have different key centers: the four-sharp collection can be centered on C♯ (Aeolian), F♯ (Dorian), or any one of seven other possibilities. As Manning notes, "A stable pitch collection does not necessarily imply stability of the tonal centre. A stable tonal centre does not necessarily imply stability of scale degrees."[73] This is relevant for understanding Vaughan Williams use of tonality and modality.

Manning also explores the use of plagal cadences as structural devices:

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[71] Manning, *Harmony, Tonality and Structure*, 49–50.
[72] Manning, *Harmony, Tonality and Structure*, 49–50.
[73] Manning, *Harmony, Tonality and Structure*, 49–50.

Modal scales frequently occur in Vaughan Williams's music. They open a wider range of potential tonal strategies compared with the relative certainties of common practice tonality. Most modal scales have a flattened seventh degree, and the second subject from the first movement of the [Vaughan Williams's] Fifth Symphony illustrates the difference this makes to harmonic relations, both for the dominant triad and melodic shapes using the 'leading note'. By comparison, the subdominant offers a stronger cadential motion. All the examples discussed in this chapter contain plagal cadences. Given the frequent occurrence of this harmonic progression the question could be posed as to whether the subdominant functions [are] in an equivalent way to the dominant in common practice tonality. However, there is not the same strength of polarity between IV and I as there is between V and I.[74]

Vaughan Williams's approach to structure in the first movement of the Quintet is in dialogue with the *Formenlehre* Sonata: the rotational qualities and boundaries are present and well established throughout the movement; however, the movement exhibits significant deformations in the structure of the rotations and organization of the themes, as well as alternative harmonic devices that define those sections. I will continue to approach my reading of this movement using the Sonata Theory of Hepokoski and Darcy.

According to Hepokoski and Darcy, the ideal, or "generically normative," Type 3 sonata movement has the following rotational structure:

Table 2.1: Hepokoski and Darcy's Type 3, sonata model.

Rotation 1 (R1)	Rotation 2 (R2)	Rotation 3 (R3)	Rotation 4 (R4)
P TR' S / C	Develops P, S or C ideas	P TR' S / C	P–based
(Exposition)	(Development)	(Recapitulation)	(Coda)

"Rotations" are "those structures that extend through musical space by recycling one or more times—with appropriate alterations and adjustments—a referential thematic

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[74] Manning, *Harmony, Tonality and Structure*, 67.

pattern established as an ordered succession at the piece's outset."[75] New rotations are triggered by the entrance of P, the primary theme area. P comprises the initial musical ideas of the sonata, ideas that normatively define the key center, often solidifying it with a cadence at the end of the theme. TR, the transition, follows P, normatively building energy, and often modulating, in order to prepare the arrival of the medial caesura. The medial caesura, or MC, represented by the apostrophe in table 2.1, is normatively either a half cadence or authentic cadence in the tonic or secondary key, although other options are available as well. The MC has a dual role: "it marks the end of the first part of the exposition (hence our adjective 'medial'), and it is simultaneously the highlighted gesture that makes available the second part. The MC is the device that forcibly opens up S-space and defines the exposition type."[76] The MC is often triggered by repeated, declamatory chords, also known as "hammer blows." The secondary theme area, or S, follows immediately from the MC. S comprises a new theme, normatively in the exposition's new key, for which, in Sonata Theory, the "first-level default" choice is V in major–mode sonatas and III (or, secondarily, minor V) for minor-mode sonatas. An array of other tonal options are possible as well. In the most normative Classical sonata, the S theme is calmer and more lyrical than the P and certainly than the preceding TR. S has one main function: to confirm the modulation to the new key—which is also the ultimate goal of the exposition of the sonata structure itself. This confirmation occurs in the form of a perfect authentic cadence—the second main moment of structural punctuation in the rotation—known as the "Essential Expositional Closure," or EEC, occurring at the end of the S-space and represented by the slash in table 2.1. The parallel moment in the

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[75] Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory,* 611.
[76] Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory,* 25.

recapitulation—normatively occurring there in the key of the home tonic instead of the secondary key of the exposition—is known as the Essential Structural Closure," or ESC. Both the EEC and ESC are identified in Sonata Theory as "The first satisfactory perfect authentic cadence[s] that [proceed] onward to differing material."[77] The "Closing" space, or C, follows the EEC and ESC and normatively involves additional cadences that reinforce the key achieved by the foregoing cadence. C often adopts new thematic material.

In Sonata-Theory terms, the structure I have just described is in reality only a cognitive abstraction; it is a foundational plan that composers use as the starting point of their generic discourse and against which their forms are in an expressive dialogue; that dialogue is defined in large part by the deviations or other expressive modifications of this generic model—the deformations—that create expressive inflections and meaning in the musical narrative.

The use of plagal cadences in the first movement of the Vaughan Williams Quintet can be found in key structural places, where they function in the same manner in which authentic cadences function in tonal music—punctuating the structure, as in Stein's concept of dominant replacement. Table 2.2 shows where plagal cadences occur in this movement.

As Table 2.2 shows, plagal cadences are prevalent in R1, R3 and R4, reinforcing its foundational character. The lack of plagal cadences in R2, the development, can be attributed to the natural tonal instability of the developmental rotation. In this area,

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[77] Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory,* 120.

authentic cadences become essential to change the key centers. Further strong evidence

of Vaughan Williams's use of plagal cadences as substitutes for authentic cadences in

Table 2.2: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i, plagal cadences

mm.	Key/Function	Section
2–3	Cm: iv–iv^6–i	R1: P
11–12	Cm: iv–i	R1: P
38–40	Cm: iv– iv^6–i	R1: P
48–49	Cm: iv–i	R1: P
143–144	F$\sharp$m: IV–i	R1: S^1
197–198	Em: ii–i	R1: C
282–284	Cm: iv– iv^6–i	R3: P
302–303	Fm: IV–i	R3: S^1
324–325	C: IV^{add9}–I^6	R3: S^2
360–361	C: iv–I^6	R4
363–364	C: iv–I^6	R4
377–379	C: iv–I^6	R4

this movement can be found in his choice for MC in R1, a subdominant chord in the key

of C$\sharp$ minor. Traditionally, a HC in the key of the secondary area would be one of the

default choices; however, in this movement, Vaughan Williams uses the chord to resolve

the V-lock, as I will show presently.

Vaughan Williams's use of the plagal domain goes beyond the use of plagal

cadences. Due to the use of the subdominant in C$\sharp$ minor as the MC, the S-space is thus

primed for F$\sharp$ to be perceived as key center, even though the four–sharp key signature

would otherwise (in a normative tonal environment) indicate C$\sharp$ minor. Here, Vaughan

Williams chose to use a permutation of the four-sharp collection, yielding F♯ Dorian, following Manning's concept of modalized tonality.

The initial motivic module in the movement—which I will refer to as P^0—appears in the first three measures and is shown in example 2.1. The module is a summary presentation of the two most important harmonic and melodic gestures that shape the language of the movement itself: first, the use of the subtonic scale degree in the melodic line; and, second, the use of plagal cadences as structural devices. In this example we can see the use of the subtonic in the initial melodic line, $\hat{1}$–$\hat{7}$–$\hat{6}$–$\hat{5}$ in the first violin, in mm. 1–3. This line is supported by a plagal cadence in mm. 2–3, supported by the bass motion $\hat{4}$–$\hat{6}$–$\hat{1}$. In a tonal context, these two features are not strong and decisive enough to kinds of firm, closed tonal structures that are associated with the use of authentic cadences and the leading tone. In this scenario, since PACs and IACs are no longer a primary option that Vaughan Williams is employing to cement the tonal structure, several additional techniques are present that energize the plagal cadences and the lowered seventh scale degree, effectively adapting, as mentioned, the listeners' acceptance of these devices as structural. He first utilizes strategic placement in the form: these are the first two harmonic or melodic gestures that the listeners experience, at the very beginning of the piece. Second, this melodic and harmonic material is sounded by the full, *tutti* ensemble at a *fortissimo* dynamic, and is thus underscored by Vaughan Williams's use of texture, rhythm, and dynamics. Third, P^0 is a stand–alone melodic–harmonic module that serves to prepare the entrance of the P theme, and, as a result, does not warrant musical elaboration. To be clear, the original module is still part of P. Table 2.3 provides a complete formal diagram of the movement.

Table 2.3: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i, formal organization

R1: Exposition. mm. 1–198

P: mm. 1–56

Thematic material	P⁰	P¹·¹	P¹·² (≈ P¹·¹)	P¹·³ episode	P⁰	P¹·⁴ (≈ P¹·¹)
Key Areas	Cm	Cm	B♭ Mixolydian	Cm	Cm	Cm
Cadences	PC: mm. 3: iv⁶–i				PC: mm. 40: iv⁶–i	PC: mm. 49: iv–i
mm.	1–3	3–17	18–27	27–39	38–40	40–56
Notes	Tutti, *ff*, $\hat{1}$–$\hat{7}$–$\hat{6}$–$\hat{5}$ melody				Tutti, *ff*, $\hat{1}$–$\hat{7}$–$\hat{6}$–$\hat{5}$ melody	

TR: mm. 57–138

Thematic material	P (fragments)	MC
Key Areas	E♭: m. 61; D: m. 76 F: m .85 C♯: V LOCK (m.103)	C♯m
Cadences		
mm.	57–134	135–138
Notes		MC is c♯:iv

S: mm. 139–190

Thematic material	$S^{1.1}$	$S^{1.2}$ ($\approx S^{1.1}$)	S^2	$S^{1.3}$ ($\approx S^{1.1}$)	motto	EEC
Key Areas	F$\sharp$ Dorian	C$\sharp$ Aeolian:	E: m. 160 G: m. 168 F–Fm: m. 171	E	E	D Lydian	E
Cadences	Plagal cadence: m. 144 Motion v (minor)– i: m.150	To E: V^6–i^6					
mm.	139–149	150–159	160–181	181–185	186–190	191	
Notes	Period: Antecedent: mm.139–144 Consequent: mm. 144–150	Period: Antecedent: mm.150–155 Consequent: mm. 155–159					

C: mm. 191–198

Thematic material	C
Key Areas	E
Cadences	
mm.	191–198
Notes	

R2: DEVELOPMENT. mm. 199–281

Thematic material	P	motto	P	motto/C	S²/P	C	S² /P
Key Areas	Em	Bm	Bm	E♭m	C	Fm	A
Cadences							
mm.	199–206	207–213	214–219	220–225	226–229	230–233	234–237
Notes							

Thematic material	C	S²	S²	S²	C	Motto–Full reprisal
Key Areas	F♯	F			Fm	Fm
Cadences					mm. 275–277: Fm:V⁹–VI⁶	mm. 281–282: Cm ii°⁷–iv 6/4
mm.	238–241	242–247	248–253	254–269	270–276	277–281
Notes					*Stretto*	Climax of R2

R3: RECAPITULATION. mm. 282– 324

P mm. 282–295

Thematic material	P⁰	P¹·¹
Key Areas	Cm	
Cadences		
mm.	282–284	285–295
Notes	Unstable, starts on iv$^{6/4}$	

TR' 295–297

Thematic material	
Key Areas	
Cadences	
mm.	296–297
Notes	TR and MC are condensed into an A half-diminished-seventh chord.

S: mm. 298–324

Thematic material	S¹·¹	S²	EEC
Key Areas	F Dorian	D$^\flat$: m. 310–317 E: m. 318–320 D: m. 321–324	
Cadences	Motion v (minor)–i		C: IV$^{add\#6}$ – I^6
mm.	298–309	310–324	324–325
Notes			

R4: Coda. mm. 325–388

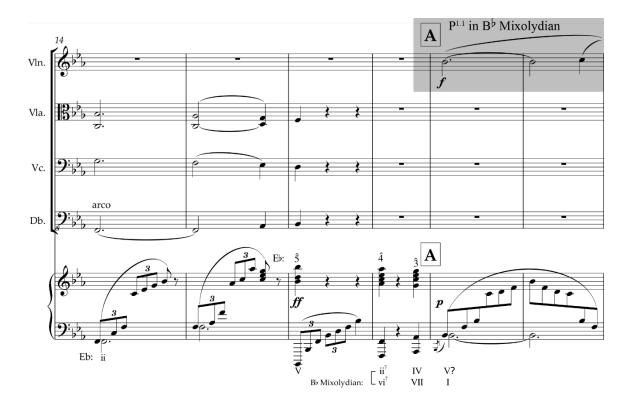| Thematic material	$P^{1.1}$	$P^{1.1}$	P^0	$P^{1.1}$
Key Areas	C——unstable	Unstable——C		
Cadences		PC	PC	
mm.	325–347	348–362	362–365	364–388
Notes				

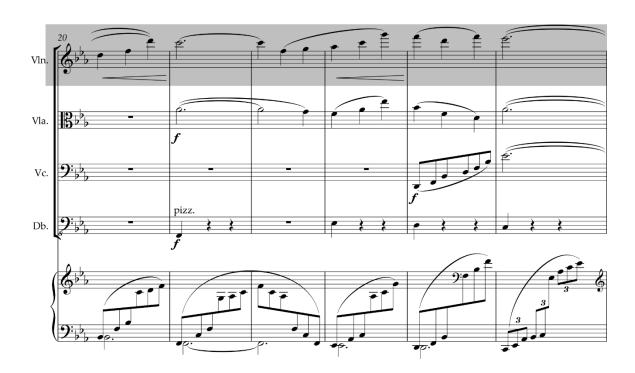**Example 2.2:** Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. $P^{1.1}$.

P$^{1.1}$ begins in m.3, after P^0 concludes with a plagal cadence. The viola introduces a lush modal, as shown in example 2.2. This module ends in m. 16, followed by a gesture that mirrors P^0 but does not lead back to C minor; instead, in mm. 16–17, we see what seems to be a transition to E♭ major, the relative major of C minor, following the normative path of sonata form, as seen in example 2.3. The melodic line is $\hat{5}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$ in E♭ major, supported by an apparent chord progression in E♭: ii–V–IV^7–V. This harmonic progression is deceiving, since the key of E♭ major will not be confirmed immediately; instead, Vaughan Williams interrupts this announced trajectory by inserting a version of P$^{1.1}$—which I will call P$^{1.2}$—in B♭ Mixolydian (the A♭ is still present in the melody), re-energizing P.

The second statement of P—P$^{1.2}$—is introduced in mm. 18, this time using a permutation of the three-flat collection, B♭ Mixolydian. There is something deceiving about the musical rhetoric in this section: at first, the listener may perceive this as the transition (TR) to the Secondary theme (S) because of the apparent change in tonal center, suggesting a move towards E♭ major; however, in mm. 26 –27 there is motion from vii^{o7} to I$^+$ in E♭, shifting the tonal center back to C minor due to the inclusion of one

Example 2.3: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 14–25.

Example 2.4: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 38–43.

of only a few B naturals—the leading tone in C minor—found in the entire movement.

With the arrival of this E♭ augmented triad and the B natural, Vaughan Williams signals a

sudden return to the key of C minor using the promise of a leading tone that should

support a strong dominant; this of course, does not happen here, as instead the B natural serves a "soft" nudge back to C minor, without a clear dominant and without the strength of a PAC.

Measures 27–38 function to move from the temporary world of B♭ Mixolydian back to C minor; this tonal motion is especially effective since P^0, from mm. 1–3, appears again in mm. 38–40, as shown in example 2.4. P^0 again uses a plagal cadence to turn back to C minor, launching the return of the main theme in an exuberant tutti and fortissimo in m. 40, as shown in example 2.4.

TR begins in m. 57 with an arrival on a volatile augmented triad on C♭. This launches a highly unstable area comprising a series of modulations using P-based material, first to E♭ minor in m. 62, then to D major in m. 76 and F major in m. 85, arriving finally on V-lock in C♯ minor in m. 102. The arrival at C♯ minor feels abrupt and harsh, due to the quick modulation that uses the supertonic triad in G minor as a pivot, reinterpreting it as the leading–tone triad in C♯ minor, all as shown in example 2.5.

The choice to shift to C♯ minor in this part of the transition may seem unusual, since C♯ minor is extremely distant from C minor; however, C♯ minor has several important implications for the trajectory of R1. This dramatic change, highlighted by the V-lock, *fortissimo*, and *tutta forza* indication, super-charges this section, making it a strong, expressively heightened launching pad for the medial caesura (MC) in m. 135, as shown in Example 2.6.

Understanding the arrival of the MC in m. 135 requires approaching it from perspective different from the traditional harmonic one, since it does not conform to the first-level normative choices described by Hepokoski and Darcy: that is, either

Example 2.5: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 100–105.

III:HC or v:HC.[78] Vaughan Williams's choice of harmony for the MC—the subdominant in C♯ minor—is in dialogue with the plagal domain processes that are so common in this movement. The effectiveness of the subdominant to support the MC is achieved through several factors. First, plagal cadences have already been established as successful substitutes within PACs, thus establishing the subdominant an alternative to the dominant. This sets a precedent that allows for the use of the subdominant triad to suggest a half-cadential effect. Second, the use of the subdominant in this situation does not constitute a tonal arrival in the traditional sense but, rather, a rhetorical one. As

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[78] Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory,* 26.

Example 2.6: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 123-138.

Hepokoski and Darcy explain: "Tonal form is to be distinguished from rhetorical form, which includes personalized factors of design and ad hoc expression: modular and

textural layout, selection and arrangement of musical topics, varieties of structural punctuation, and so on."[79] The use of the subdominant here is a good example of Vaughan Williams's personal use of a rhetorical formal device. Third, the MC arrives after a lengthy V-lock and a dynamic and textural build-up in the TR module; the MC, furthermore, is announced by the traditional hammer blows in mm. 131–134, as seen in example 2.6. Finally, the MC, in C♯ minor, effectively opens the S space, as we will see with the arrival of the first module in the S-space, $S^{1.1}$.

In this sense, in the S module, the energy build-up is quite effective. S opens by introducing the pastoral $S^{1.1}$, repeating this module, moves to the unstable S^2, repeating an expressively charged (*tutti, fortissimo*) version of $S^{1.1}$, and finally culminates culminating with the introduction of the expressively supercharged "motto"—a module that I will discuss in length later in this chapter. This accumulated energy is released in the subsequent C module.

S opens in m. 139, with the $S^{1.1}$ theme sounded in the violin, viola, and cello, using a delicate texture that provides a strong contrast to the foregoing music of the MC, as shown in example 2.7. This theme comprises a repeated period, the first one sounded in the strings (with a brief interjection of the piano in m. 144) and the second one in the solo piano. My use of the term "period" does not adhere to the traditional use of the term in a tonal context, where there is a weak–strong cadential relationship between the phrases: either HC–PAC, IAC–PAC, or HC–IAC. Rather, since the context here is modal and not tonal, I interpret the plagal cadences in mm. 143–144 and mm. 154–155 as forming the weak cadences in the periodic relationship, and the motion from minor v to i

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[79] Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory,* 26.

in mm. 149–150 and the motion of V^6–I^6 in mm. 159–160, as forming the strong cadences.

The antecedent of the first period (mm. 139–144) reinforces the key center of F♯ minor that was achieved by the MC in m.135, this time using the F♯ Dorian—four-sharp—collection. This antecedent ends with a plagal cadence in mm. 143–144, as seen in example 2.7. The consequent begins a tonal realignment, still using the four-sharp collection but moving now from F♯ Dorian to C♯ Aeolian. This "correction" is achieved by a motion from minor v (a G♯ minor triad) to i (C♯ minor) in mm. 149–150.

The repetition of this period—$S^{1.2}$—begins in the piano in m. 150, with a rich, arpeggiated accompaniment, before moving to E major in mm. 159–160 with a brief, and weakened (more presently on why), V^6-I^6 motion.[80] The structure of the second period is similar to the that of the first: the antecedent occupies mm. 150–155 and the consequent mm. 155–160. The difference is in the identity of the cadences, as the key center has now shifted to C♯.
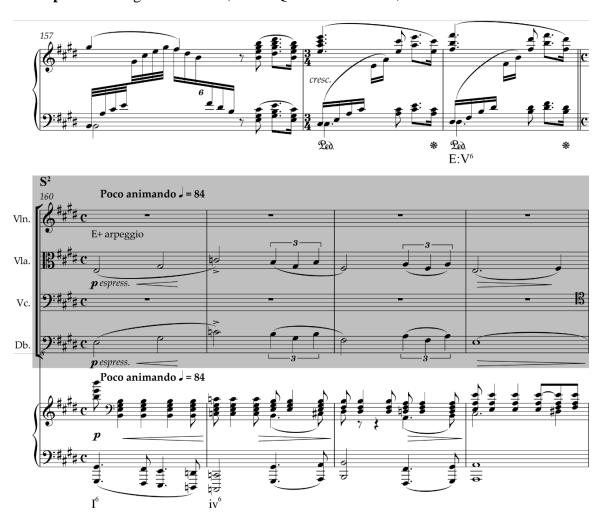
The second module in the S-space, S^2, begins in m. 160, in what, as mentioned, seems to be a "weak" arrival on E major, as shown in example 2.8. The motion is "weak" because the case for E major is feeble. First, the arrival of this module is marked by a weak cadence in E major, V^6–I^6, in mm. 159–160, thus undercutting the stability of the expected E–major tonic. Second, the arrival E-major triad in m. 160 appears in in first inversion, further diminishing its stability. Third, the harmony in the next measure, m. 161, is a C-major triad in first inversion, a modally borrowed chord—a non-diatonic triad

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[80] Even though this is a dominant-tonic motion in the traditional sense, its placement, choice of harmonies and inversions (V^6–I^6) and context, weaken its structural and teleological potential.

Example 2.7: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 139–151.

Example 2.8: Vaughan Williams, *Piano Quintet in C minor,* i. mm. 157–163.

in E major—emphasizing the instability of this section, in the sense that, while it is not

necessarily unusual in this context, it further undermines the stability of the E major tonal

center. Fourth, the melodic line in the viola and double bass outlines an augmented triad

on E, a triad that is here easily perceived by the listener and thus further blurs the E major

tonal center. Fifth, this section constantly changes keys and is thus highly unstable in

terms of tonality: it begins in E major in m. 160, moves to G major in m. 168, and finally

arrives at F major in m.171. (It is important to note that the iterations of these different

keys all adhere to the same strategy as in the initial iteration of E major in m. 160, with

the arpeggio on an augmented triad in the melody.) The last entrance of this module, in F

major in m. 171, energizes the theme using fragmentations of the augmented arpeggio, an

increase in the dynamic level, and a pulling back of the tempo produced by the

rallentando in m. 181. What follows is unexpected: the taciturn $S^{1.1}$ returns triumphantly

m. 181 (I label it as $S^{1.3}$). $S^{1.3}$ is *tutti*, *fortissimo,* at slower tempo (*Andante sostenuto-*

Largamente), and over a dense accompaniment in the piano, as seen in example 2.9. At

this point, the listener may perceive the reach of the climax of the section, implying that

the Essential Expositional Closure (EEC) will follow; then, yet again, Vaughan Williams

thwarts those expectations with the introduction of a completely new theme—which I

will refer from now on as the motto—in m. 186, as shown in example 2.9.

Example 2.9: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 181–193.

Shortly afterward, the movement finally arrives, after many failed attempts

throughout the S-area, at the EEC in m. 192—or at least a gesture that functions

rhetorically as an EEC: an accented, *fff* E, sounded in octaves in the *tutti* ensemble. This

Table 2.4: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i, thematic sources in R2

Measures	Theme	Key
199–206	P	Em
207–213	motto and C	Bm
214–219	P	Bm
220–225	motto and C	E♭m
226–229	P and S^2	C
230–233	C	Fm
234–237	P and S^2	A
238–241	C	F♯
242–247	S^2	F
248–253	S^2	
254–269	S^2	
270–276	C, *stretto*	Moves towards Fm
277–281	motto (full reprisal)	Fm

single note is a far cry from the normative authentic-cadence EEC found in the

Formenlehre sonata; however, the $\hat{2}$–$\hat{1}$ bass motion and its placement within the S-area—

at the climax that has been announced with the entrance of every new module—finally

releases the energy that had been accumulated a few bars earlier by the motto. The EEC

launches the brief and brisk closing theme (C) in the piano, which stabilizes the key

center of E, as shown in example 2.9.

The second rotation (R2), the development section of the sonata movement,

begins in m. 199 with the entrance of a P-based melody in E minor. R2 follows, for the

most part, a normative approach to the developmental section, with interjections of

several themes from R1, including from P and S, all as shown in Table 2.4. The themes

are presented in rotational order through the development—P before S—except for the interjections of material from the motto and from C.

R2 does not feature any occurrences of $S^{1.1}$, one of the themes that Vaughan Williams emphasized in the S-space of R1. The climax of R2 comes in m. 277, with a full reprisal of the motto, this time in F minor, preparing the return of C minor and the launch of rotation 3 (R3) in m. 282, as shown in example 2.10. This will be the last appearance of the motto in this movement, as it will not be used in R3.

This last entrance of the motto, at the climax of R2, sets up the expectation for a majestic return of P at the opening of Rotation 3 (R3); instead, the return of P is an introspective, abridged and unstable, compared to its initial presentation in R1, as shown in example 2.10. P^0, the initial module from mm. 1–3, reappears here as a reverse version of the original one: the piano and the double bass are left out of the texture, there is a quick *diminuendo,* and the first chord is an F-minor triad in second inversion. $P^{1.1}$ is not immune to this same transformation: the texture is now thinned out (see mm. 284–294) and the dynamic lowered to *piano*, creating a sense of bareness and transparency. P has also been drastically shortened, from 56 measures in R1, with several repetitions of the theme, to just 13 measures in R3, with just a single entrance of P. The key center of C minor is also not confirmed in the P-space, and the theme lacks the plagal cadences that were present in R1. There is an F-minor triad in mm. 294–295 that does not move back to the tonic—as we might have expected, given the movement's predilection for plagal cadences—but instead propels the rotation forward into the TR module.

Example 2.10: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 277–289.

TR in R3 is hyper-condensed and relegated to just one chord composed out across two measures, a half diminished seventh chord on root A, in mm. 296–297, as shown in example 2.11. This chord also serves as the MC of this rotation.
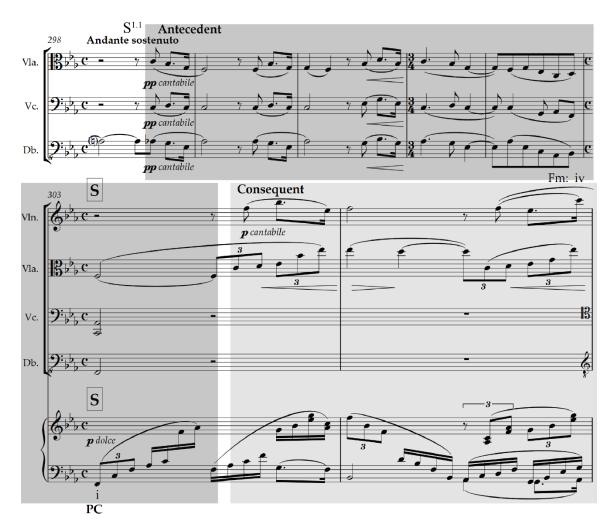
Example 2.11: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 290–297.

The S module returns with $S^{1.1}$, this time with the antecedent played by the viola, cello and bass. The use of the lower strings is a device that effectively enhances the somber nature of $S^{1.1}$. The consequent is sounded in the violin, viola and piano, as seen in example 2.12. $S^{1.1}$ in R3 is significantly shorter than in R1: instead of the two repeated periods heard in R1—one in the strings and another in the piano—R3 features a compressed version of the theme that uses only one period, with the antecedent sounded in the lower strings and the consequent in the strings and piano. $S^{1.1}$ follows the same harmonic design in R3 as in R1, beginning in an F Dorian and eventually moving to a C
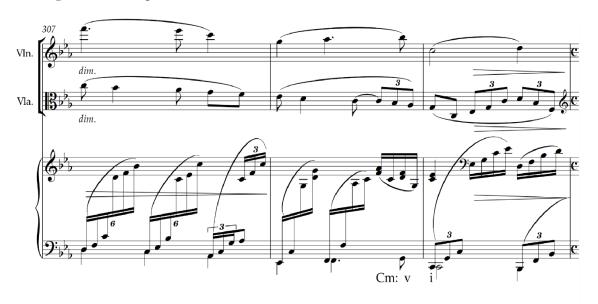
Aeolian, achieving the modulation, as before, with a weak minor v–i motion in mm. 308–309.

Example 2.12: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 298–304.

S^2 begins in m. 310 and follows the same gestures as in R1—with the melodic arpeggio on an augmented triad and the first supporting chord in first inversion, as shown in example 2.13. There is, however, a significant difference in the preparation of the entrance of S^2 in R3 when compared to its entrance in R1: in R1, S^2 was preceded by a

Example 2.13: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 307–313.

weak dominant to tonic motion (V^6 to I^6 in E major), but in R3, S^2 is preceded with a

descending bass line C–Bb–F, as shown in example 2.12 This is a significant change, as

this time, in R3, S^2 is not preceded by any type of cadential motion. The arrival of thus S^2

feels jarring—like a sudden panning to a new character in a film, perhaps, without a

proper introduction. Subsequent entrances of S^2 follow the same tonal relationship pattern

as before: D♭ in m. 310, E major in m. 318, and D major in m. 321 (as compared to entrances in E, G, and F in R1).

Following the three entrances of S^2, R3 contains no return to the energized version of S^1 that appeared in R1 and, furthermore, no reprisal of the motto. These are dramatic omissions the reasons for which are not entirely clear at this point in the piece; one could speculate that Vaughan Williams suspended the use of the motto in R3 because of its disruptive nature and its character as an "outsider" in the trajectory of R1, or perhaps he did not want to further elaborate the motto, given that it will become a crucial element in movements two and three.

The Essential Structural Closure (ESC) appears in mm. 324–325. It comprises a modified version of a plagal cadence in C major (C: $IV^{add\#6}$-I^6), as shown in example 2.14. R3 contains no C module, with the ESC followed by the immediate entrance of rotation 4 (R4), the Coda.

R3 thus comprises a compressed, "telescopic" version of the S-area heard in R1, one that still manages to fulfill—albeit not entirely satisfactorily, by virtue of the lack of a true authentic cadence— the intrinsic "promise" of R1—to close in the tonic key—in the sonata form.

In P in R3, the key of C minor is never convincingly achieved, and $P^{1.1}$ is not repeated as it was in R1. TR and MC are combined, immediately launching the $S^{1.1}$ module in m. 298. The S-area is a condensed version of S from R1, omitting the triumphal return of $S^{1.1}$, the motto, and C. All of these factors change the narrative trajectory of R3, which as a result progresses from the dramatic, highly charged nature of R1 to a more subdued, introspective nature.

Example 2.14: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, i. mm. 321–329.

R4, the Coda, begins in m. 325 with the return of P (characteristic of codas in normative sonata practice) in the cello, as shown in example 2.14. Other entrances of P

occur in m. 333 in the viola, m. 339 in the violin, and finally m. 348 in the double bass

and the left hand of the piano. This last entrance of P develops into a *fortspinnung* that

reaches a climax in mm. 360–363, with the arrival of the plagal cadence (C: iv–I^6). Note

that even though the key has changed to C major, Vaughan Williams continues to utilize

the minor subdominant chord, strengthening the connection between the harmonic

practices exhibited in R1 and R3. The same gesture is repeated in m. 362, m. 368, m. 371,

and for the last time in m. 377, where the double bass sounds the final entrance of P. This

last entrance features the last plagal cadence of the movement, in mm. 377–379.

Several patterns emerge in this reading of first movement of the Quintet, *Allegro*

con fuoco. First, there is a stylistic struggle between the Romantic elements (conventional

formal organization and textural treatment) and the "English" elements (marked by

unconventional harmonic and structural devices), but these ultimately amalgamate into a

coherent sonata narrative. Vaughan Williams's abandonment of conventional tonal

pillars, such as PACs and HCs, and his adoption of replacement strategies in the form of

plagal cadences, represent a nudge towards the consolidation of his English mature style.

The emergence of the motto as an agent of disruption is significant as well, and will have

expressive ramifications in the overall narrative trajectory of the piece, as will be seen in

the next three chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: ENGLISH PASTORALISM IN THE SECOND MOVEMENT

OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S PIANO QUINTET

To R. W. Vaughan Williams
Maker of the square shaped music, hewer of sound
That has the walking quickened of me on the hills
The taker of the very sea surge that fills
Granite of Cornish inlets, when the ground
Shakes with the onset. Singer of grove and mound
Also, of Shrosphire pastoral quiet, miles
Of roadway have I gone with your marching flies
Of ranked lines – Music with Nature's own worthy found.

But in a later day help he would have brought,
Had that but saved me! And now I call to him
To save me from a Fate bitterer than thought
Had guessed; who find Life more than Death's self to be grim.
May he yet save me with high Salvation wrought
Of pity. For here always Hope is obscure and dim.

–Ivor Gurney[81]

The first six chords, in the piano, of the second movement, *Andante*, announce the

departure from the grandiose and intense first movement and a settling into a more

intimate, unostentatious, and warmer tableau. The strings respond antiphonally to the

piano statement, preparing the entrance of the main theme of the A section at m. 5.

The *Andante* follows the formal plan of a large ternary form.[82] The B section of

this movement is in dialogue with the normative practices of what Caplin defines as an

"interior theme":

> The harmonic, tonal, and formal plans of an interior theme can vary
> considerably, but a number of standard procedures are frequently found.
> As a general rule, an interior theme resides in the home key, but in its
> opposite modality...The prominence of minor modality in an interior
> theme can be likened to the same modal emphasis in the development
> section of sonata form. Indeed, an interior theme often brings a *Sturm und
> Drang* affect within highly active and rhythmically continuous

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[81] John Greening, *Accompanied Voices: Poets on Composers, from Thomas Tallis to Arvo Pärt* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2015), 117.
[82] William Caplin defines a large ternary form as a "tripartite structure…that it is formally analogous to the small ternary; however, small and large ternaries are fundamentally different forms, whose corresponding parts are comparable to one another in only the most superficial ways." Caplin, *Classical Form,* 211.

accompanimental patterns. Although these secondary characteristics recall a developmental core, the primary characteristics of harmony, tonality, and phrase structure make the interior theme an entirely different formal entity.[83]

In the *Andante*, Vaughan Williams makes a striking rhetorical shift from the bold, dramatic opening of the first movement to the gentle, bucolic opening theme of this movement. Vaughan Williams's writing here is clearly in dialogue with the aesthetics of English pastoralism in the first part of the twentieth century. Pastoralism is a wide-ranging aesthetic concept, used ubiquitously in visual art, literature and music. It is characterized by a rejection of urbanity and technology, along with the corresponding complications and stress, and an embrace of inner renewal brought about by unspoiled nature or rustic country life. In its most trite form, pastoralism appears in the imitation *hameaux* built by 18th century aristocracy (such as Marie Antionette's *Hameau de la Reine* at Versailles), a caricature of quaintness and simplicity populated by people who were truly interested in neither. However, in its more thoughtful incarnations, pastoralism celebrates the regenerative qualities of the natural world and the powerful experience of harmony with nature, and how a retreat from the material world might lead to an increased quality of inner life. The term "pastoral" can be used both to define a genre (particularly in literature, where it can refer to specific formal characteristics) and also to the equally common method of framing it as a mode (i.e., "the place in which our notion of the world comes to be manifested in the text").[84] Some authors have taken into account the issues between genre and mode and have coined definitions that integrate both.

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[83] Caplin, *Classical Form,* 211.

[84] Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 9.

Table 3.1: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, ii, formal organization.

A: mm. 1–54

Thematic material	Module A	Module A	Theme 1, 3 phrases: • 1st: mm. 5–10 • 2nd: mm. 11–15 • 3rd: mm. 16–21	Module A	Module B	Module B	Episode
Key Areas	Cm?	E$\flat$	m.5: E$\flat$, m.11: Cm, m.16: G–Gm.	Eb	E$\flat$	G$\flat$	E$\flat$
Cadences		m.5: Eb: IAC	m.10: E$\flat$: IAC m.15: G: PAC (shift to c minor, then tonicize G) Third phrase is interrupted, no cadence.	m. 22: E$\flat$: IAC	Cm: HC		
mm.	1–2	3–5	5–21	21–23	23–25	26–27	28–29
Notes	Solo piano. Tonally vague.	Strings. The DB provides the $\hat{5}$ in Eb.	Piano solo Module B in m. 5.				Prepares the return of Theme 1.

Thematic material	Theme 1, 3 phrases: • 1st: mm. 30–35 • 2nd: mm. 36–40 • 3rd: mm. 41–46	Theme 1, 3 phrases: • 1st: mm. 30–35 • 2nd: mm. 36–40 • 3rd: mm. 41–46	Module A	Theme 1	Module A	Module C
Key Areas	m.30: Eb, m.36: Cm, m. 41: G–Gm.	m.30: Eb, m.36: Cm, m. 41: G–Gm.	E$\flat$	E$\flat$		E$\flat$
Cadences	m.35: Eb: IAC m.40: G: PAC Third phrase is interrupted, no cadence.	m.35: Eb: IAC m.40: G: PAC Third phrase is interrupted, no cadence.	m. 48: E$\flat$: IAC	Fm: HC	E: V6/4–I–E$\flat$	
mm.	30–46	30–46	46–48	48–50	51–53	53–54
Notes	Piano + Strings.	Piano + Strings.				E$\flat$ prolongation.

B: mm. 55–133

Thematic material	Theme T	Theme S	Theme T
Key Areas	E♭ minor.	C♭	G minor F♯ minor
Cadences			
mm.	55–56	58–63	63–65
Notes	Lower strings. *P ma marcato.* 2 modules: • motto: mm. 55–56. E♭m. • T²: mm. 56-57. E♭m.	Only one module here, S1. Interrupted, no cadence	3 modules: • T¹: m.63 • motto: m. 64. Gm. • T²: m. 65. F♯m.

Thematic material	Theme S (expanded)	Theme T (expanded)	Theme S
Key Areas	F♯ minor C♯ minor: m. 79 G♯ minor: m. 86	F minor G minor F♯ minor	Unstable F minor,
Cadences			
mm.	66–89	89–109	110–126
Notes	3 modules: • S¹: m. 66–75. F♯m. • S²: m. 75–81. F♯m. • S³: m. 82–85. C♯m. • S²: m. 86–88. G♯m.	• T¹: mm.89–94. Fm. • "Motto": mm. 95–98. Gm. • motto: mm. 99–103. F♯m. • T¹: mm.104–107. Gm.	• S³: mm. 110–116. Fm. • S²: mm. 116–125. C♯m.

Thematic material	Theme T
Key Areas	
Cadences	
mm.	126–133
Notes	• Pre-motto: mm. 126–127 • Motto: mm. 128–131 • Climax, interrupted: mm 132–133.

A': mm. 134–164

Thematic material	Module A	Module A	Theme 1, 3 phrases: • 1st: mm. 138–145. Expanded • 2nd: mm. 146–150 • 3rd: mm. 151–156	Module A	Module B	Module B	Module C
Key Areas	Cm?	E♭	m.138: E♭, m.146: Cm, m.151: G–Gm.	E♭	E♭–G♭	D	E♭
Cadences		m.138: Eb: IAC	m.144: E♭: IAC m.150: G: PAC (shift to c minor, then tonicize G) Third phrase is interrupted, no cadence.	m. 158: E♭: IAC			
mm.	134–135	136–137	138–156	156–158	158–160	161–162	163–164
Notes	Solo piano. *ff*. Tonally vague	Strings. The piano and DB provide the 5̂ in E♭	Piano solo Module B in m. 5				

CODA: mm. 165–178

Thematic material	Theme S	Module B	motto	Module C
Key Areas	F♯m	G	D	E♭
Cadences				
mm.	165–169	170–171	171–172	173–178
Notes			First time that the moto is presented in the context of the major mode.	

William Empson, for example, describes the term as a "process of putting the complex into the simple," shifting the focus of the term from "a concrete set of literary traits" into "an abstract creative concept."[85] Kate Kennedy describes the pastoral as "a genre shaped by nostalgia: the distance between the present and memory, and the physical distance between the location of the writer and the absent landscape described."[86]

Perhaps one of the most important early representations of pastoralism is Arcadia, the idyllic Greek province that represents a bucolic retreat from the grueling routine of daily urban life. However, not everything in Arcadia can be idealized, and thus the concept exhibits a dual value system in which the pleasures of the countryside cannot be taken for granted but rather come at the expense of everyday hardships and tough labor. This apparent contradiction between the indolence of Utopia and the undercurrents of effort that it masks will prove to be a significant thematic factor that Vaughan Williams explores in the *Andante* movement of the Quintet. Saylor expounds on the dichotomy:

> Arcadia is therefore both "a place of bucolic leisure and a place of primitive panic" in which the rules of urban civilization no longer apply—a lightly cultivated buffer between civitas and wilderness in which qualities of both intersect. Such oppositional tensions not only define the existence of the Arcadian pastoral but are bound together and held in balance. Before shepherds can sing, they must tend to their flocks; before drinking wine, they must harvest and press the grapes; before eating honey, they must risk the stings of bees. The power of the Arcadian pastoral, then, comes not only from experiencing the pleasures of the country itself but from knowing the pain that their absence would engender, as well as the challenges that must be overcome to achieve them. As Raymond Williams has noted, "Wolves, foxes, locusts and beetles are as much part of the [pastoral] experience as balm and rockrose and apples and honey.[87]

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[85] William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, quoted in Loughrey, *The Pastoral Mode*, 89. Quoted in Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 9.
[86] Kate Kennedy, "Ambivalent Englishness," quoted in Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 9.
[87] Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 10–11.

Defining pastoralism in music presents some of the same challenges as it does in literature. Saylor explains that—in the context of musical pastoralism of the twentieth century—"'pastoral' is frequently employed as a stylistic descriptor, as well as (or instead of) an indicator of an underlying topic, a dichotomy also present in the scholarly treatment of modernism or nature (in either physical or philosophical terms)."[88] Saylor finds that— given the subtleties of pastoral music—defining it in "stylistic or expressive terms"[89] carries "the risk of oversimplifying its significance or misrepresenting its application."[90]

Saylor describes specific musical features that define the English pastoral style. Not all of these characteristics will be present at all times, but, in general, music in the pastoral style will showcase several of them, including: triadic harmonies that retain pitch centricity without necessarily adhering to conventional means of securing or reinforcing tonality (chordal parallelism, parallel fifths, and unusual dissonance resolutions are frequent); modal scales, pentatonicism, or pandiatonicism, sometimes used in ways that obscure the identity of the scale (e.g., use of a pitch collection of G–A–B♭–C–D–F to imply either G minor or G Dorian); avoidance of systematic motivic development in favor of motivic or thematic fragmentation, repetition, and recombination (for example, rhapsodic melodies, often featuring irregular, unpredictable, or rhythmically free phrase structures); and predominantly quiet dynamic levels and light, transparent textures.[91]

The external sections—A and A'—of the Quintet's second movement exhibit some of these characteristics, specifically in their avoidance of chromaticism, quiet

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[88] Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 10
[89] Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 10
[90] Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 11
[91] For a more detailed list see Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 19–21.

dynamic levels, string-dominated timbres, and avoidance of motivic development. The main theme of the A section, furthermore, has overt similarities to Vaughan Williams's song *Silent Noon*, one of six songs from his cycle "The House of Life," which dates from the same year (1903) as the quintet. The song's text is a sonnet by the English poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti that reads as follows:

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass, –
The finger–points look through like rosy blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup fields with silver edge
Where the cow–parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge.
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour glass.
Deep in the sunsearched growths the dragon–fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky: –
So this winged hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close–companioned inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

The pastoral themes in the poetry of *Silent Noon*—a scene of post-intimacy bliss in a sunny meadow—are supported in Vaughan Williams's musical setting by the languid melody, harmonic stasis, lilting chordal accompaniment, gentle arpeggiations, and a resulting feeling of musical spaciousness that one can interpret as signifying the wide–open sky. *Silent Noon* is in the same key—E♭—as the second movement of the Piano Quintet, and the quietly pulsating E♭ chords in the same voicing—with $\hat{3}$ in the top voice—is related to the Quintet's module B (the pulsating chords in m. 5), speaking to

Example 3.1: Vaughan Williams, Silent Noon, mm. 1–3.

Example 3.2: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, ii, mm. 1–5.

the predominant pastoral themes that occupied Vaughan Williams's creative process at this point. For a comparison of the song's opening and the opening of the Quintet's second movement, see examples 3.1 and 3.2.

The Quintet's second movement (example 3.2) begins in the piano with a two-measure chorale module that immediately passes to the strings, leading to an IAC in m. 5 that introduces the first theme. This module, which I will refer to as module A, is tonally ambiguous: the first two measures give the impression of C minor, moving back and forth between the tonic in second inversion, and the subdominant in first and second inversions. This tonal ambiguity is dispelled with the reprise of module A in the strings, especially after the entrance of the double bass in m. 4 with a B♭ that moves to an E♭, shifting the tonal focus from C minor to E♭ major and leading to an IAC in m. 5.

The use of module A to begin the movement is an important device in establishing the narrative trajectory of the section. Module A is unstable due to its initial tonal ambiguity and the use of a C minor triad in second inversion. Because of this instability, this module sounds more as though it belongs towards the end of the phrase than the beginning, perhaps serving as a conclusion rather than an introduction; indeed, this module appears again at the end of theme 1, and this usage shifts its meaning. It suggests that Module A may be interpreted as signifying a memory of time past—perhaps, consistent with the themes of the pastoral narrative, a vague remembrance of the difficult and uncomfortable times in the city as one starts a holiday retreat into the countryside. The memory of Module A dissipates with the entrance of the double bass on B♭, returning the mind to the pastoral joys of the holiday and shifting the discourse to favor the bucolic theme 1.

Example 3.3: Vaughan Williams, *Piano Quintet in C minor,* ii. mm. 5–15.

Theme 1 begins in m. 5, with a lush melody in E♭ major, as shown in example 3.3.

The rich, chorale-like texture of this theme supports the declamatory nature of the head of

the theme module B, the four-note rhythmic module on E♭ major with G in the upper

voice—as seen in example 3.3. This module is of crucial importance in the A and A'

sections of the movement, as it either launches the main key center—E♭— or signals an

unexpected motion to a remote key: G♭ in m. 26, E in m. 51, D in m. 161 and m. 170.

Module B distinctly resembles the beginning of "Silent Noon," as shown in example 3.1.

Theme 1 is comprised of four different phrases, each one launched by module B, as shown in table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, ii, section A: theme 1–phrases

mm.	Key	Cadence	Comments
5–7	E♭	IAC	Three measures, two in ¾ one in ²⁄₄
8–10	E♭	IAC	Three measures, two in ¾ one in ²⁄₄
11–15	Cm	G: PAC	
16–21	G, moves towards E♭		Starts in G major, immediately repeating the same measure in G minor and shifting to E♭ without reaching a cadence.

The last phrase of theme 1, mm. 16–21, does not reach a cadence; rather, it ends on a supertonic triad in E♭. This inconclusive ending prepares the reappearance of module A, which provides the cadence to this phrase. It is here that module A is reframed as a concluding device, in contrast to its appearance as a wondering, ambiguous element at the beginning of the movement.

The next phrase, mm. 23–25, follows the same length and rhythmic structure as the first phrase; however, this phrase end on a G-major triad, functioning as a deformational HC on the submediant chord in E♭ major (or perhaps as a normative HC in the implied new key of C minor). What follows is rather unexpected, harmonically: a surprise shift to Gb major for two measures, moving ultimately back to E♭. Theme 1 then returns in m. 30, *tutti,* with the violin, viola, and cello sounding the melody in a chorale setting and the piano and bass punctuating the accompaniment's texture with *pizzicato* gestures. The structure of this entrance of theme 1 follows the same phrase organization

of the initial presentation of theme 1. The section ends with the addition of module C, in mm. 53–54, prolonging the tonic chord, E♭, for two measures.

The middle section of this movement provides an expressively powerful contrast to the outer sections. Section B is tonally unstable, more chromatic, and constantly evolving, as the two main themes are developed and placed in constant struggle with one another. In narrative terms, in the same way that the idealized Arcadia cannot exist without the hardships and trials necessary to maintain the peace and calm of the idea, the A sections of the *Andante* movement require heightened, more strenuous contrasting material in the B section. If the A sections signifies the Arcadian ideal of an idyllic escape from the stress and anxiety of daily urban life, the middle section may then signify the regrets of the past and the anxiety of a future return to the everyday routine. An even deeper interpretation might suggest that A and A' signify an external, real-time stimulus—Arcadia—while B may signify the simultaneous internal chatter that exists while trying to reconcile the dichotomy of the beauty of the moment with the realities of quotidian life. These two states of being occur at the same time but at different levels of awareness, so that the progression of sections in the movement can be heard as a panning from external to internal, or as a mapping of internal dialogue onto external sensory experiences. This is very much akin to reading or listening to a character's thoughts and feelings while they interact with another character or situation in literature or cinema. It also distinguishes Quintet's *Andante* movement from many other historical examples of pastoralism; although the pastoral in art has often been criticized as a trivial genre because of its penchant for emphasizing sweetness and lightness while avoiding the darker shadows that are also part of the human experience, Vaughan Williams's

treatment of this movement embraces a more complex understanding of the pastoral aesthetic.[92]

The B section of the Andante merits still further consideration. Christopher Bruhn has explored William James's ideas regarding the stream of consciousness, using Charles Ives' "Concord" sonata as his object of study. For James, consciousness is in constant flowing motion, like a stream. Bruhn explains:

> In James's view, our consciousness settles on any one image just long enough to move on to the next under the influence of new stimuli. Using another metaphor from nature to describe this motion, James wrote: "Like a bird's life, [our consciousness] seems to be made of an alternation of flights and perchings." The transitive flights "lead us from one substantive conclusion [or perching] to another." This model treats consciousness as a process through which networks of association are constructed. The elements contained in each individual consciousness are different, and the process of association connecting those elements is different for each individual.[93]

Bruhn proposes four different levels of approaching a "Jamesian view of consciousness" in Ives's "Concord sonata": "First, in the behavior of the music within each movement; second, in the structure of the four–movement sonata as a whole, third, in the difficulty Ives experienced in holding to any single version of the sonata, which he revised obsessively, as definitive. Finally, one may view the sonata as one work within an even larger multiverse of interrelated works that encompasses the Fourth and Universe Symphonies, as well as a number of shorter compositions.[94] Whereas Bruhn organizes his

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[92]Saylor writes that "the term pastoral has rarely been one of endearment within critiques of twentieth-century English music. While characterizations of pastoralism as antiquated, insular, and reactionary are problematic, their critical acceptance and promotion have proven remarkably persistent. English composer Elisabeth Lutyens coined the phrase "the cow-pat school" to describe the music of the English pastoralists, which she dismissed as little more than "folky-wolky modal melodies on the cor anglais." Saylor, *English Pastoral Music,* 2.

[93] Christopher Bruhn, "The Transitive Multiverse of Charles Ives's 'Concord' Sonata," *The Journal of Musicology* 28, no. 2 (2011): pp. 166–194, https://doi.org/10.1525/jm.2011.28.2.166, 168–9.
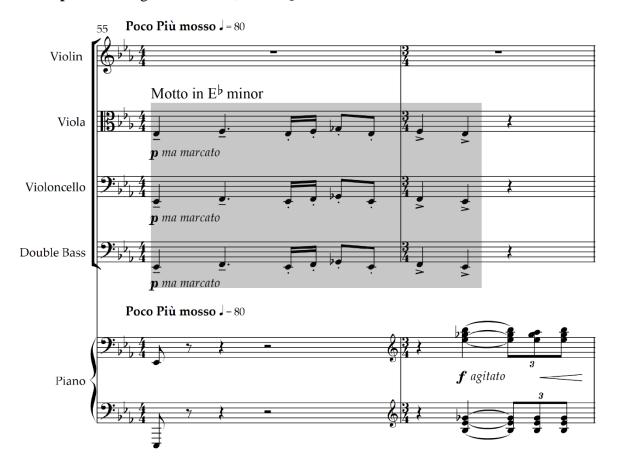
[94] Bruhn, "The Transitive Multiverse," 169–70.

interpretation by moving from a microscopic to a macroscopic level, I propose that we may add another, even more minute, microscopic level, one in which James's ideas about consciousness can be applied to a section of a movement—in this case the internal section of the second movement of the quintet.

I will use James's concepts of the substantive (perching) and the transitive (flying) to characterize the two distinctive themes of this section: theme S, the substantive, and theme T, the transitive. Based on Bruhn's reading of James, theme S is tasked with "perching" the mind to the physical world, in which one should be enjoying the peace of Arcadia; in contrast, theme T is the wondering, ruminating mind that is preoccupied with the stress of the past and the anxiety of the future. These two themes are opposed in agency: theme S features a sweet, melancholic melody while theme T—which includes the motto from the first movement—is hesitant and unstable. Both themes are initially presented in a brief, condensed version that becomes expanded and developed in future appearances. As these two themes are expanded, more modules are added and manipulated. These modules—for both themes—get reordered within subsequent entrances of the themes. The developmental and additive nature of this material is an effective metaphor for something that we have all experienced: a worried mind at work; a simple idea returns in circular motion, magnified and cascading into new worries each time it appears.

At the core of theme T is the highly charged, disruptive motto from the first movement, which launches section B in m. 55, in unison with the violin, viola and cello, as shown in example 3.4. This entrance of the motto is in E♭ minor, the parallel minor of the initial E♭ major of section A an approach which is in dialogue with Caplin's definition

Example 3.4: Vaughan Williams, *Piano Quintet in C minor,* ii. mm. 55–56.

of ternary form referred to earlier, in which the interior section adopts the movement's home key but opposite modality. Vaughan Williams's decision to bring back this disruptive agent of the first movement to open the middle section of the second movement is a bold one: at this point in the piece, the listener is fairly familiar with the motto and its dramatic connotations from the first movement. Given this conditioning, the ominous nature of the motto and its narrative implications now become clearer: here the motto is a menacing agent, pulling our attention away from Arcadia and spiraling the narrative out of control.

Theme S appears in m. 58 in C♭ major, right after the disruptive entrance of the motto. Theme S features a lyrical, *cantabile* melody in the first violin, a device that relieves the anxiety that the motto brought back in m. 55; theme S perhaps also signifies a reminiscent look back at Arcadian ideals, as a way of grounding (or, for James, "perching") the mind back on the conscious level. Unfortunately, the relief is cut short by a new iteration of theme T, expanded now to three modules: a new module —T^1—in m. 63, the motto in m. 64, and module T^2 in m. 65, as shown in table 3.1.

An expanded version of theme S returns in m. 66 in F♯ minor. The expansion of this theme adds two new modules—for a total of three—as shown in table 3.1. The first—S^1—in mm. 66–75, is a repetition of the module from mm. 58–73. The second module—S^2—begins in m. 75 in the piano, moving to the cello in m. 77. S2 is a calm melody highlighted by a *cantabile* in marking m. 75 and a *terneramente* (tenderly) marking in m. 77. This module quickly increases its intensity, launching the third module—S^3—in m. 82—*f appassionato*—forming the climax of the theme. S^3 quickly dissolves with a *diminuendo* in m. 85 that again launches the calmer second module in m. 86, this time in G♯ minor.

A reorganized and developed theme T returns in m. 89, effectively re-introducing the elements of instability and anxiety that had just been swept away by theme S. Theme T begins with an expanded and developed T^1, followed by an abrasive entrance of the motto in m. 95, this time in the key of G minor. This entrance of the motto starts unfolding, underlined by a *crescendo* from *pp* to *f* and the expressive marking *minacciando* (threatening), quickly moving to F♯ minor and launching a *fortspinnung* in

m. 99 that reaches a climax in m.104. A decisive version of T^1 returns in m. 107 (*piu f appassionato*), cementing the turmoil of the moment.

A new version of theme S emerges in this chaotic environment, seamlessly connecting to the preceding rendering of theme T. This is a fragmented version of theme S, where S^1 and S^2 are omitted and only S^3 and the second entrance of S^2 are present. The choice of using only these two modules in this order is clear: S^3 reaches the climax of the moment (*ff* and *con molto passione*) and the return of S^2 diffuses the tension, creating a more lyrical episode in the narrative and centering the mind back into the idylls of Arcadia.

The final entrance of theme T with the motto in m. 128 brings back the anxiety that has been haunting this section of the movement. The motto appears in G minor and begins to fragment until it dissolves completely and reaches the climax of the section, with the violin, viola, and cello sounding a declamatory chromatic motive in unison in mm. 131–133, suddenly ending the B section and returning to section A' in m. 134. The abruptness of this ending signals the present moment taking over and controlling the narrative, bringing us back to the enjoyment of Arcadia.

A' arrives in m. 134, after the sudden ending of the B section. A' is an abridged, *tutti* version of A that uses theme 1 once, rather than the two times that appeared in section A. Theme 1 moves to the same key centers, E♭ major–C minor–G major–E♭ Major. The only difference in theme 1 of section A' is that it suddenly moves to G♭ major in m. 160, then D major in m. 161 and finally back to E♭ major in m.164, as shown in table 3.1.

The coda begins in m. 165, with theme S from section B returning in F♯ minor and then vanishing in m. 169, to be followed by module B from theme 1. After creating the expectation of a conclusive return of theme 1, Vaughan Williams brings back the motto in m. 171. Here, the character of the motto undergoes another transformation: even though the dynamic and expressive indications are *f marcato,* the articulation is *tenuto* and both the cello and viola are muted, expressively easing the character of the music. Furthermore, for the first time in this movement, the motto is heard in a major-mode context, as the piano sounds a G-major triad. This motion to the major mode signals the final transformation of the gesture, revealing its final form as well as the form it will take as the theme of the third movement. The movement culminates with the return of E♭, in the same way that sections A and A' ended. The coda reconciles the main elements of this movement by bringing glimpses of themes 1, S, and T together to find a common bond. Thus the motto is finally transformed and vindicated, just in time to become the cornerstone of the next movement.

The *Andante* movement displays Vaughan Williams's early relationship with his own national identity, through a pastoral lens. The ternary form itself is well suited to the exploration of Arcadian ideals, traversing from the bucolic countryside to a personal, inner conflict in which the mind ruminates about the past and the future, avoiding the present time. At a larger level, we might interpret this struggle as expressively signifying Vaughan Williams's own stylistic issues in the Quintet, in which his nascent English aesthetic is in constant turmoil as it attempts to gain a footing in the overall narrative.

CHAPTER FOUR: TREATMENT OF VARIATIONS IN THE THIRD

MOVEMENT OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S PIANO QUINTET

The beginning of the third movement, *Fantasia (quasi variazioni)*, feels at once familiar and new: it strikes a sense of recognition with the return of the motto that served as a disrupter in the previous movements, and yet the baldly monophonic texture (in which the strings sound in unison without piano) provides a startling sense of freshness after the dramatic opening of the first movement and the tonal uncertainty at the opening of the second. Here in this movement, the returning motto is finally set free and allowed to develop unrestrainedly under the lens of a variation form.

A set of variations gives the composer a toolbox to explore the technical and expressive potential of a musical idea. In his dissertation "Mozart and the Environment of Variation," Roman Ivanovitch observes that "Variation, like fugue or sonata, is more than a form or a collection of techniques: it is a way of shaping and responding to an environment."[95] Each variation can be thought of as a spectator viewing the theme from a distinctive angle, illuminating and developing specific attributes of the theme in a way that is unique to that viewpoint. In the same way that the experiences of a storyteller color the retelling of a story, the paradigm of each variation gives a different account of the theme. When the variations are considered collectively, a multi-faceted and three-dimensional portrait of the theme emerges. This has particular narrative significance in the *Fantasia*, because the returning motto, which in previous movements served as a

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[95] Roman Ivanovitch, "Mozart and the Environment of Variation" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2004), 2.

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disruptive agent and an "outlier," is now weighted with consequence because of its role as theme and genesis of the following variations.

Vaughan Williams's inclusion of *Fantasia* in the title of this movement may be compositionally strategic. Ivanovitch points out that "an abstract definition of the Classical variation asserts that variations maintain the proportions of the theme, follow the theme's general harmonic course, and are self-contained."[96] Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia* is in essence a theme and variations structure, but with the wider artistic license that the word *Fantasia* allows. The use of the term *Fantasia* thus signals an explicit opening of the door for freer experimentation, without the composer being restricted by the expectations of the "theme and variations" label. Vaughan Williams frequently adopted the fantasia genre and wrote many fantasias post-dating the Quintet, including his most famous work, *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910).[97] It is notable that almost every other fantasia he wrote is based on English folk tunes, suggesting that he felt an enduring kinship between folk music and the fantasia genre, and that the folk-like qualities of the theme of the Quintet's *Fantasia* are a harbinger of the folk-fantasia relationship that would be cemented in his later works.

Although not unheard of, it is unusual for the final movement of a multi-movement work to take the form of a theme and variations. This form is more common in inner movements. One can speculate that Vaughan Williams may have at some point
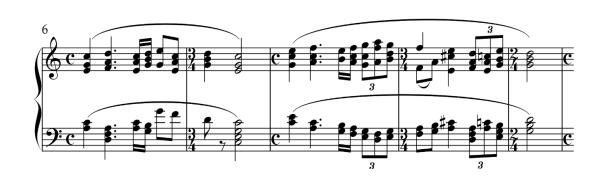
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[96] Ivanovitch, "Mozart and the Environment of Variation," 90.
[97] The following are Vaughan Williams's compositions that bear the label *fantasia* in their title: *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910, rev. 1913 and 1919); Fantasia for piano and orchestra (1896); *Fantasia on Sussex Folk Tunes* (1929) for cello and orchestra; *Fantasia (quasi variazione) on the Old 104th Psalm Tune* for piano, chorus, and orchestra (1949); *Fantasia on "Greensleeves"* (1934); Fantasia for piano and orchestra (1896); *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* for baritone, chorus, and orchestra (1912); Symphony No. 8, I. *Fantasia (Variazioni senza tema)*. Frogley and Ottaway. "Vaughan Williams, Ralph."

Example 4.1: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, iii. Theme.

planned to add a fourth movement to bring the work to a more traditional conclusion. On

the other hand, the unifying appearance of the motto (previously heard in movements one

and two) as the main theme of the *Fantasia (quasi variazioni)* does give the third movement the narrative heft that it needs to function as a warranted resolution of the musical questions presented in the previous two movements, and to validate its place as a finale.

The theme comprises two sections, each played first by the strings in unison and then repeated in the piano in a chorale-style texture, as shown in example 4.1. There are several features of this theme that resemble a chant: the monophony of the unison strings, the antiphonal nature of the dialogue between strings and piano, the modal quality (C Ionian), the cumbersome metric notation—somehow resembling modern notation of medieval chant—in which the time signatures change to adjust to the asymmetric shape of the phrase, and the explicit indications of *piano, senza espress.,* and *molto legato,* which suggest a hushed, vocal–like quality.

Example 4.2: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, ii. Theme.

In this movement, each module of the melody appears twice, first in the strings and then in the piano. In example 4.2, I have extracted only the melody in order to more easily clarify the structure of the theme and track the source material of the variations.

Each of the two sections can be divided into two modules, as shown in example 4.2. Module A is of special significance because it forms the basis of the motto from the *Allegro con fuoco* and the *Andante*, and with each reappearance it brings echoes of the previous movements.

The Quintet naturally invites the question of why, despite Vaughan Williams's decision to withdraw it from his oeuvre and ban all public performances, he elected to return to this theme (with a decidedly different set of six variations) nearly forty years later in his Violin Sonata in A minor (1952). In order to understand the reason for Vaughan Williams's captivation with this theme, it may be helpful to look briefly at the last movement of the Violin Sonata and compare the way Vaughan Williams reused the theme in a different (and much later) context.

The Sonata, one of Vaughan Williams last instrumental works, was dedicated to the Canadian violinist Frederick Grinke, who impressed the composer with his performances of *The Lark Ascending*. The Sonata was composed in 1952 and premiered by Grinke and the pianist Michael Mullinar during a BBC broadcast on the composer's 82nd birthday, 12 October 1954.[98] The piece is in three movements: I. *Fantasia: Allegro giusto*, II. *Scherzo: Allegro furioso ma non troppo,* and III. *Tema con variazioni: Andante*. It is in the third movement that the theme from the 1903 Piano Quintet is re-used, again as the source (theme) of a variations movement.

The melody and structure of the theme is preserved from the Quintet to the Violin Sonata almost in its entirety, with the only difference occurring in the second phrase, where a B from the original (the version in the Quintet) has been replaced by an A.

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[98] Andrew Burn, "Violin Sonata in A minor (Vaughan Williams)," Hyperion Records, 2002, https://www.hyperion–records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W3626_67313.

Compare the theme as it appears in example 4.3 with the version given in example 4.1. In the Sonata, the piano presents the theme in unison but uses a wide range in register between the left and the right hand. Following the theme, an A-minor pentatonic counter-melody appears, preparing the entrance of the theme in the violin, as seen in example 4.3. An elision occurs in m. 10, in which the ending of the first phrase in the violin dovetails with the beginning of the second phrase in the piano. As in the first phrase, the piano prepares the entrance of the second phrase in the violin with a mostly A-pentatonic minor scale (there is an F added to the A-pentatonic minor scale, presumably to prepare the entrance of variation 4, immediately after this phrase, centered around D). However, with regard to the treatment and development of the variations, there is little in common with Vaughan Williams's 1903 use of the theme. Importantly, though, in the Sonata the use of the theme is confined to the third movement as an independent musical thought, in contrast to the Quintet, where it surfaces as a unifying narrative factor in all three movements.

Why did Vaughan Williams decide to return to this original theme, nearly four decades after he first used it? Did he perhaps feel that he had not done it justice in the Quintet, and wanted to now develop it more fully? Perhaps he was simply enthralled by the theme itself and felt that it was worthy of fresh creative energy. We will never know for certain, but it is undeniable that the Quintet never fully left the composer's mind and that, after so many years, he apparently still felt a connection to the theme and its expressive potential.

Following the initial statement of the theme in the *Fantasia*, the first variation begins in m. 23, with the violin sounding the theme and the piano providing a transparent

Example 4.3: Vaughan Williams, Violin Sonata in A minor, iii. Theme.

accompaniment of ascending (right hand) and descending (left hand) scales. The light,

playful character of this variation in C major is underlined by the expressive indications *p*

grazioso and *p leggiero*. The source for the beginning of this variation is Phrase 1. Just as

in the original theme, the first phrase is repeated by the piano in m. 28, *p cantabile*, but now the scales appear in the strings, reversing the previous melodic and accompanimental roles. The entrance of module C in m. 33 returns the melody to the first violin and the accompaniment to the piano, continuing into module D in E major in m. 36, played by the cello and bass. This module moves back to C major at the end of the variation, as shown in table 4.1.

Variation 2 starts in m. 41 in $\frac{6}{8}$, centered in A major, and resembles a *barcarolle.* This variation also incorporates pastoral markers such as lilting rhythms and a serenely arpeggiated accompaniment, and although it modifies the rhythm of the theme's modules to fit the compound meter, it mostly preserves the original melodic contour. The second variation begins with a modified phrase 1, with the melody passed among the strings. A brief G#⁷ chord prepares an altered version of module D in the piano, this time in C♯ major, in m. 47. Module A then returns in A major in m. 50 with the melody in the cello, linking with module D in m. 55. A new idea—based on the tail of module D— emerges in the solo piano in m. 59 in A♭ major. The variation concludes with the repetition of this idea in m. 62, now transposed to C major.

The third variation hearkens back to the drama and pathos of the first movement and returns us to the motto that plays such a significant role in the prior movements. This variation is perhaps the furthest removed from the original character of the theme, with its dense harmonies, constant key center changes, thick textural writing, and thunderous dynamics. The third variation occupies an essential role in the narrative of this movement: it magnifies all the values that contrast most with the values of the theme, exploring the dichotomy between what the theme represents and its opposite. The

Table 4.1: Vaughan Williams, Piano Quintet in C minor, iii, formal organization.

Theme: mm. 1–22

Thematic Material	Phrase 1	Phrase 1	Phrase 2	Phrase 2
Key Areas	C (Ionian)			
mm.	1–5	6–10	11–16	16–22
Notes	Strings in unison 2 modules: Module A: mm. 1–2 Module B: mm. 3–5	Piano, planing. Melody is harmonized with triads.	Strings in unison 2 modules: Module C: mm. 11–13 Module B: mm. 14–16	

Variation 1: mm. 23–40

Textural variation; modules' structure remains

Source material	Phrase 1	Phrase 1	Module C	Module D
Key Areas	C (Ionian)	C	C	E–C
mm.	23–27	28–32	33–35	36–40
Notes	Melody in the violin. Piano/strings accompaniment.	Melody in the piano Strings accompaniment.	Fragmented Vln.	Bs+Vc melody.

Variation 2: mm. 41 –66

Variation in $\frac{9}{8}$. *Barcarolle*. Melodies are passed across the strings.

Source material	Phrase 1	Module D	Module A	Module D	Module D – Tail
Key Areas	A	C$\sharp$	A	A	A$\flat$–C
mm.	41–46	47–49	50–54	55–58	59–66
Notes	Melody on the cello, then moves across the strings.	Based on the tail of Module D.			Based on the tail of Module D.

Variation 3: mm. 67–97

Echoes of the first movement. Return of the motto.

Source material	Module D – Tail	Module D – Tail	Episode
Key Areas	E♭m, A, G♯	Em	
mm.	67–78	79–82	83–86
Notes	3 Entrances: 1st: mm. 67–70: E♭m 2nd: mm. 71–75: A 3rd: mm. 76–78: G♯ Dramatic piano solo.	Piano accompanies. Upper strings vs. Lower strings.	Piano vs. strings.

Source material	Module D – Tail	Module D – Tail + motto
Key Areas	G minor but moves	B–E minor
mm.	87–92	93–97
Notes		Violin: Module D. Cello+Bass+Piano L. H.: motto.

Variation 4: mm. 98–114

Short bursts of the modules. Light, *staccato* accompaniment.

Thematic material	Module A	Module B	Module C	Module D	Dissolution (Module D)
Key Areas	A, F♯	Gm, Em	C♯, E♭	E♭ , D	Unstable
mm.	98–101	103–105	105–107	108–110	111–114
Notes	2 Entrances: 1st: mm. 98–99: A 2nd: mm. 100–101: F♯	2 Entrances: 1st: mm. 102–103: Gm 2nd: mm. 104–105: Em	2 Entrances: 1st: mm. 105–106: C♯ 2nd: mm. 100–101: E♭	2 Entrances: 1st: mm. 108–109: E♭ 2nd: mm. 109–100: D	Leads back to C center?

Variation 5: mm. 114–135

Thematic material	Phrase 1	Module C	Module C	*Fortspinnung*	Module C	*Fortspinnung*
Key Areas	C	C	C		C	
mm.	114–116	116–119	120–123	123–126	126–129	129–135
Notes						Dissolves onto the next variation.

Variation 6: mm. 136–166

Thematic material	Module A	Module B	Module A	Module C	Module B
Key Areas	C	C	C	C	C
mm.	136–137	138–141	142–146	147–148	149–153
Notes	First two notes, augmentation. "Raindrop." gesture on the piano.	"Raindrop" continues. E–A is the range of the Module .	Melody on Cello and bass.		

Thematic material	Module D	Module A	Module A	motto + Moudle D
Key Areas	C– G♭–E	C	C	
mm.	153–157	158–161	162–163	164–166
Notes		Melody on Violin and Viola.	Melody on piano.	Subdued motto.

Coda: mm. 169–244

Thematic material	New module	Module D	Module A	New module
Key Areas	C–E♭	Em–C♯–B♭–E♭–A♭–Cm–A–E–F–F♯–Fm–D♭	C	C
mm.	169–182	183–224	225–234	235–244
Notes	Descending 6 note scale *ostinato*. Raindrop gesture.	• Based on the tail of module D • *Ostinato* is still present • Big crescendo to m. 225	Triumphant return of the head of module A.	Descending C major scale.

character of the theme is here defined by its antithesis. The conflict created by the third

variation occupies a central position in the overarching structure of the movement, only

to then be overcome by defeat in subsequent variations. Ivanovitch indicates that:

> Opposite mode variations, instead of shoring up the other parameters to
> preserve contact with the theme, tend to treat their inevitable harmonic
> freedom as a license to loosen the theme's bonds even further: they are
> often the most tenuously related of all the variations in a set, altering
> proportions, changing phraseology, etc. Sometimes it is difficult to discern
> their relationship to the theme at all (although in such cases they often
> begin with a nod in the theme's direction). This seems to be a
> manifestation of their status as "separate"—somehow divorced from the
> normal flow of the other variations (even as they contribute to the shaping
> of the set as a whole).[99]

The virtuosic solo piano writing brings an adjusted version of the tail of module

B, starting in E♭ minor and moving to A major and C♯ major, in measures 67, 71, and 76,

respectively. A new version of the tail of module B is introduced in m. 79 in E minor,

with the upper strings engaged in a back-and-forth dialogue with the lower strings, while

the piano provides a steady accompaniment. A change in texture occurs in m. 83, in

which the strings and piano exchange tense statements, finally reaching a passionate

return of the previously heard module D in m. 87. A surprising return of the motto

interjects with the current module D in measures 93 and 95.[100] This is an expressively

significant subsuming of the motto's character: module A appropriates the disruptive

values of the motto from the previous two movements, perhaps echoing memories of a

troubled past and trying to unsuccessfully regain relevance in this movement. Variation 3

ends abruptly in m. 97 with an unfulfilled crescendo that leads directly into variation 4,

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[99] Ivanovitch, "Mozart and the Environment of Variation," 90–91.
[100] The motto is based on module A but it is an independent element, given its use and meaning in the previous two movements.
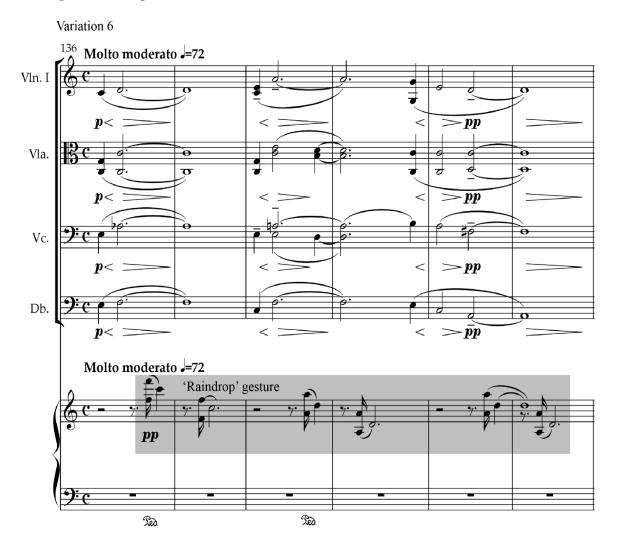
waking up abruptly from the nightmare in a gestural mirror image of the ending of section B in the *Andante* movement.

Variation 4 begins in m. 97, replacing the intensity of the third variation with a light and brisk character, though still with anxious undercurrents. The variation is organized in units of two measures each using all four modules of the theme, as shown in table 4.1. Each module is repeated twice, and each entrance of the different modules begins *p,* moving at each end to a quick *crescendo* to *fp*. The narrative purpose of this variation is to deescalate the rhetoric of the previous variation, and to restore calm to the theme: the thematic modules are presented in short bursts, using devices (such as soft dynamics and *staccato* patterns in the piano accompaniment) that represent values that are opposed to those of the previous variation. The last entrance culminates in a grandiose arrival to *ff*, signaling a change in character and launching the fifth variation.

The triumphant fifth variation features the solo piano with fast, forceful and technically explosive writing, punctuated by outbursts from the strings. The variation is a victorious march, celebrating the defeat of variation 4. This section uses thematic materials from the first phrase of the theme (modules A and B) in addition to module C, and it features some episodes of *fortspinnung*, as shown in table 4.1. Module C ultimately dissolves in order to set up the entrance of the last variation of the movement.

If variation 5 can be characterized as a large-scale, celebratory episode, variation 6 retreats into a more subdued and introspective expressive quality. The sixth variation begins in m. 136 with the strings sounding a compressed version of phrase A in a chorale setting, with the piano providing a gesture that resembles Chopin's falling "raindrop" motive from his Prelude op. 28, no. 15, as shown in example 4.4. Both modules—A and

Example 4.4: Vaughan Williams, *Piano Quintet in C minor*, iii. mm. 136–141.

B—have been distilled to their very essence, using only a few notes. A new melody

based on module A appears in m. 142 in the cello and bass, with an expressive character

that conveys a sense of nostalgia that links directly to the original theme of the

movement. Modified versions of these two sections follow, this time with a compressed

version of phrase 2 and with the nostalgic new melody on the violin and viola. The

variation (and the proper conclusion of the form) ends with the return of the modified

version of the motto in m. 164 on the bass and cello. This new entrance of the motto

combines elements from module A and module D; echoes of the first movement are brought back here, with the uses of B♭ and A♭ in the lower strings.

The Coda is a *tour de force* that starts in m. 169, with the double bass holding a pedal on C and the piano sounding a six-note descending scale pattern in the left hand that becomes a two-measure *ostinato*, continuing for most of the remainder of the piece. The "raindrop" gesture from the previous variation lingers in the Coda, creating a seamless connection between the two sections. This gesture dissipates with the entrance of a four-measure idea, a modified version of the tail of module D in m. 183, supported by the continued *ostinato* and a *crescendo* for the next 43 measures. The coda reaches its climax in m. 226 with the return of a victorious module A in the piano, which quickly moves to a repeated C major scale in the left hand of the piano, fading out towards the end. The movement ends like the previous two: with the tonic chord prolonged in a *pp* dynamic.

The third movement of the Quintet provides a glimpse into the composer's workshop. Vaughan Williams's inclusion of *Fantasia* in the title heralds the important role that this genre will play in his future compositional output. The use of the variations model gives Vaughan Williams the structural space for an in-depth exploration of the expressive potential of the motto, as the role of the motto itself is transformed from the disruptive one that it played in the previous two movements to the noble one that is at its core in the third movement. This movement thus realizes a successful, triumphant expressive trajectory for the motto itself that we may, in hindsight, interpret was latent from its very first appearance. The *Fantasia (quasi variazioni)* thus represents an important marker as the finale of an expressively coherent multi-movement work,

strongly suggesting that the Quintet should be regarded not as juvenilia but as one of

Vaughan Williams's most significant early compositions.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONNECTING THE DOTS: THE NARRATIVE TRAJECTORY OF A MUSICAL GESTURE.

To the Man who Wanted a Symphony to Have a Happy Ending
Do not suppose sequence is any clue,
or that serenity following on despair
cancels its pain, for both are true.
Grief's not dethroned by joy, or dark by light
They are man's equal hemispheres of day and night.

Do not suppose succeeding years make plain
A secret code transcribing joy and grief,
interpreting man's journey. This is vain.
Either may perish, either endure through skill;
The spirit is incarnate where it will.
–Ursula Vaughan Williams[101]

Following this survey of all three movements of the Quintet, it now remains to devote a bit more space to a teleological interpretation of what is perhaps the most interesting and meaningful feature of this piece: the motto. As we have seen, this musical device serves as a connecting thread between the three movements, creating a unifying narrative in the piece. To do this, I will adopt two essential concepts from the musical semiotics work of Robert Hatten, "musical gestures" and "markedness," to provide a coherent reading of the motto's role in Quintet, connecting the trail of breadcrumbs that Vaughan William left throughout the movements.

Musical gesture as an expressive vehicle has been discussed extensively by Robert Hatten in his seminal books *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* and *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert*. Hatten departs from David Lidov's definition of artistic gesture: "a movement that is marked for significance, whether by or for the agent (performer) or the interpreter (listener)."[102]

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[101] Greening, *Accompanied Voices*, 118.
[102] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 93.

Hatten argues that musical gestures: "Are grounded in human affect and its communication; have meaning that is both complex and immediate, and often directly motivated by basic human expressive movements; may be inferred from musical notation, given knowledge of the relevant musical style and culture, or may be inferred from a musical performance, even when we do not have visual access to the motions of the performer; may be comprised of any of the elements of the music, although they are not reducible to them; may also be hierarchically organized, in that larger gestures are comprised of smaller gestures; may be marked as thematic for a movement, especially in the case of certain motive-length gestures; these may be foregrounded and amenable to development, variation, or ongoing evolution by means of developing variation. May encompass, and help express, rhetorical action, as in the case of a sudden reversal, a collapse, an interruption, or a denial of implication. Rhetorical gestures disrupt or deflect the ongoing musical discourse, contributing to a contrasting dramatic trajectory."[103]

According to Hatten, however, the most important function of a gesture comes from the possibility of its thematization:

> A gesture becomes thematic when it is (a) foregrounded as significant, thereby gaining identity as a potential thematic entity, and then when it is (b) used consistently, typically as the subject of a musical discourse. In a coherent musical discourse, the gesture may be varied without losing its affiliation to the original form (its identity, perhaps generalized as a schema), as long as the stages of its evolution are progressive (no huge gaps in degree of development or variation) and temporally associable (no huge gaps in time between instances of the gesture.)[104]

The second essential concept relevant to my reading of the Quintet, that of markedness—a term generalized by Michael Shapiro—[105]comes from language and

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[103] For an expanded discussion of gestures see Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 93-95.
[104] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 135.
[105] Hatten, *Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation*, 34.

linguistics, and deals with the "asymmetrical valuation of an opposition."[106] According to

Hatten, "Markedness is perhaps the most productive concept linguistic theory has to offer

music theory,"[107] as "it can be applied to music in a way that helps explain the peculiar

organization and fundamental role of musical oppositions in both specifying and creating

expressive meanings."[108] In a language or in any kind of sign system that signifies

meaning, the marked term occurs less frequently than the unmarked one, making the

marked entity more specific and meaningful than the unmarked one. An example of

musical markedness cited by Hatten is the use of the minor mode in the Classical style,

where the minor mode is rarer in the style and is most often used as an expression of the

tragic, while the major mode, used with greater frequency, has a more general and non-

tragic connotation.[109]

Given the motto's markedness and the teleological expressive trajectory that I

described at the end of chapter 4, it is the most significant musical gesture of the Quintet.

This gesture serves as a cohesive thread winding through all three movements of the

quintet, binding them together into a unified narrative.

In my view, there are two lenses through which we can view the motto and

understand its markedness. The first one is linear, in which we can observe how the

motto moves through the timeline of the piece, negotiating its standing with the formal

and expressive elements that come after each appearance; in other words, we make

immediate, local connections (a sort of real-time auditory analysis) that influence our

characterization of the motto as we listen. This is what a concertgoer may experience

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[106] Hatten, *Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation*, 291–92.
[107] Hatten, *Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation*, 34.
[108] Hatten, *Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation*, 34.
[109] Hatten, *Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation*, 36.

after listening to this piece (or any piece) for the first time. The second lens is cyclical, which is what happens when the listener returns to the piece for a second or repeated hearings and makes global connections throughout the timeline that create more complex links back and forth between the movements and their sections. This approach may be experienced more often by performers or analysts, as it allows them to make non-sequential connections between different elements of the piece due to multiple, and perhaps frequent, hearings.

In order to understand the markedness and teleological trajectory of the motto, we must examine its source. As I demonstrated in chapter 4, the theme of the third movement—specifically module A—is the source idea from which the motto derives. In a way, we experience the first variation of the third-movement theme—the motto—long before we are actually introduced to the theme itself. If the theme of the third movement is considered the source and the motto is a variation, then it could follow that the theme is in some sense "normative" and thus the motto "non-normative," which would make the motto the marked element. This is also true of a linear reading of the piece: as has been demonstrated in the previous chapters, the motto acts mostly as a disruptive—and therefore marked—element within each movement.

It is useful to discuss how, in Hatten's words, "musical gestures, while inferred from notation, are also inferred from performance."[110] This statement rings especially true in the initial appearance of the motto in the first movement. The motto is written in a way that compels the performers to embody the musical gesture. The *fff molto pesante* markings and accents require a noticeable physical motion from the performers in order

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[110] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 113.

to satisfy the dynamic demands. The motto is also written in unison in the strings and the left hand of the piano, which requires the players to truly connect visually with each other in order to achieve maximum cohesion. These physical cues should catch the attention of even a distracted audience member. Thus the performers can be relied upon to highlight the markedness of the motto either consciously, by exaggerating their motions, or subconsciously, as immediate visual communication is necessary for the ensemble to perform these elements with unified precision.

The first appearance of the motto occurs in the first movement in m. 186, where it is used as what initially looks as a new module in the S-space in R1. However, this new gesture intrudes into the formal trajectory by deflecting the expected arrival of the EEC. The expressive abrasiveness of the motto and its formal placement gives it the feeling of an Aristotelian peripeteia, a 180 degree turn from the narrative trajectory that was seemingly irrevocably in motion—thus making it a marked event. Paradoxically, the "motto's" markedness elevates its status, because now we perceive a device that would otherwise have remained "external" to be an integrated part of the structure; as Hatten explains, "the more marked gestures are, the more likely they will be treated as thematic, since they provide the very individuality or "personality" that distinguishes a work."[111]

Fragments of the motto appear in R2, the development, elevating its perception as a structural element in the movement, as one can assume—at least for now—that the motto is now another module of the S-space of R1. A full return of the motto appears in m. 277, reaching the peak of R2. This episode is important, as it reinforces the idea of the motto as an integral part of the organizational plan of the movement. Given these

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[111] Hatten, *Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation*, 152.

multiple appearances of the motto, the listener has been conditioned to expect its return in R3, the recapitulation; however, due to the "telescopic" nature of R3, the motto is omitted from the S–space of that rotation. This exclusion of the motto implies that another disruptive event has intruded upon the narrative of sonata process and thus, in an expressive sense, has "shifted the level of discourse" that had prevailed up until this moment. In this instance, markedness occurs by omission, since the rhetorical expectation of the motto in this rotation was made clear in the previous two rotations.

Markedness in the second movement functions rather differently than in the first, since the motto is an integral part of the disruptive theme T in section B, previously discussed in chapter 3. In the *Andante*, the markedness of the motto comes from its unexpected return, as the module launches section B. There are several differences when compared to the use of the motto in the first movement: here, the gesture is first approached under the *p* (*ma marato)* dynamic in stark contrast to the *fff molto pesante* from the first movement. Also, the articulation changes from accents on every note in the first movement to a combination of *tenuto* and *staccato* markings here in the second movement. We can infer from these changes in dynamics and articulation that the values of intrusion and aggression in this gesture have decreased, dramatically altering the motto's discursive role. However, there is still some hesitation in the first appearance of the gesture in this movement, signaled by the mixture of conflicting performance indications of the motive: *p ma marcato* and the combination of *tenuto* and *staccato* markings.

As section B of the *Andante* progresses, the motto goes returns to its disruptive nature as part of theme T, which is in conflict with the other theme of this section, theme

S. The developmental processes in section B increase the markedness of the motto, since now its unsettling character from the first movement has been confirmed. The last appearance of the motto in section B occurs in m. 128, where it is expanded across four measures, dissolving into a *fortisssimo* unison figure that launches the return of the lyrical A section. Here, Vaughan Williams uses the marking *minacciando* (menacing) to highlight the nature of the passage, signaling the momentary return of the initial aggressive character of the gesture—as presented in the first movement—only to be abandoned a few measures later, as if there is some rhetorical regret for returning to this form of the gesture.

The motto appears once more in m. 171 in the coda. Here, the gesture has experienced another transformation: even though the dynamic and expressive indications are *f marcato,* the articulation is *tenuto* and both the cello and viola are muted, thus relaxing the character of the motive. Furthermore, for the first time, the motto is heard in the major mode, as the piano sounds a G-major triad. This motion to the major mode signals the final transformation of the gesture, revealing its final metamorphosis and the form it will take as the theme of the third movement.

The onset of the third movement is imbued with a feeling of *déjà vu*, as the main theme brings with it both a sense of familiarity and of resolution. The motto now has transformed into module A, and its values of disruptiveness and chaos have vanished. The only exception to this occurs in variation 3, which brings back the motto as a signifier of echoes of a troubled past, but these are quickly abandoned in the next variation. Perhaps the most significant process in this movement occurs towards the end, where the motto returns only to fuse itself immediately with module D, a sign that a

compromise has been reached and that everything that has occurred in this movement is a preparation for the grandiose coda.

At this point I will step back and propose an interpretation of the collective, aggregate meaning of these expressive gestures. The motto, with its teleological trajectory, serves as a connective tissue in the narrative that transcends traditional formal structures and processes, and the turbulence of its disruptive nature finds redemption at the twilight of the piece; a *deus ex machina* rescues the story at the end. Interpreting the expressive gestures beyond the surface of the music is subjective by nature and may involve speculation, some of which may relate to personal aspects of the composer's life, but it is a useful exercise in identifying parallel musical and expressive events that may map onto each other in order to shed light on their meaning.[112] The trajectory of the long-lived motto transcends the Quintet, connecting an early work that Vaughan Williams composed in 1903 with one of his last instrumental pieces, the *Violin Sonata in A minor* from 1952. In a sense, the motto's narrative of redemption within the Quintet parallels a thread that links the young Vaughan Williams with his mature self, in which the composer returns after nearly forty years to redeem a work that he seems to have previously rejected. The transformation of the motto underscores the concepts that time and circumstances effect change, and that something can evolve while yet remaining, in its core elements, the same.

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[112] Precedent for such an approach can be found in Edward T. Cone's seminal article, *Schubert's Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics,*[112] where, as Peter Smith explains, "[Cone's] interpretation of Schubert's *Moment Musical* as a "model of the effect of vice on a sensitive personality," can be mapped even more specifically onto Schubert's own struggles with a syphilitic infection."

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