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“Doing His Bit”: Ralph Vaughan Williams’s Music for British Wartime Propaganda  
Films

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

by

Jaclyn Howerton

September 2019

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Byron Adams, Chairperson

Dr. Walter Clark

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Dr. Leonora Saavedra

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2019

The Dissertation of Jaclyn Howerton is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“Doing His Bit”: Ralph Vaughan Williams’s Music for British Wartime Propaganda Films

by

Jaclyn Howerton

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Music  
University of California, Riverside, September 2019  
Dr. Byron Adams, Chairperson

Ralph Vaughan Williams espoused a practical aesthetic, as he believed that composers must first address national concerns. Too old to serve in the Armed Forces during the Second World War, Vaughan Williams was determined to serve his nation in its fight against fascism. Anxious for war work, he mentioned to Arthur Benjamin that he was willing to compose for films. Benjamin contacted Muir Mathieson, the musical director of the wartime Ministry of Information, who quickly offers Vaughan Williams the opportunity to score the 1941 Michael Powell film; *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. The film was a success and Vaughan Williams was fascinated by the new propaganda opportunities provided by scoring film music.

This dissertation examines in detail the film music of Ralph Vaughan Williams, especially in regard to its role as a propaganda tool used to support national morale during the Second World War. This research explores the role that Vaughan Williams’s nationalistic style of music played within the first three propaganda films

that Vaughan Williams scored—*49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (1941), *Coastal Command* (1942), and *Flemish Farm* (1943)—as well as their place within the war effort as an extension of the stereotype of the soft-spoken, resilient Briton. Despite Vaughan Williams’s firm place in the history and repertory of twentieth-century British composers alongside Edward Elgar and Gustav Holst, little research has been conducted on his film scores. In addition to analyzing the surviving original scores for each of these films, this study investigates some potential explanation for Vaughan William’s late entrance into film composition. This includes a brief analysis of the composer’s humanitarian efforts throughout the war, his involvement with the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), and his efforts on behalf of both European and Jewish immigrants. Although film music has often been relegated to a second-class status art-form, this research further traces the melodic themes that Vaughan Williams had not only written for each film, but also reused later in the “high-art” realm of the British concert hall.

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## **“Doing His Bit”: Ralph Vaughan Williams’s Music for British Wartime Propaganda Films**

### **Introduction**

At the start of the Second World War, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) was celebrated as Britain’s leading composer. By the 1940s, Vaughan Williams had completed four of his nine symphonies and had begun work on the fifth. He had also completed four operas, five ballets, folk song collections, as well as numerous symphonic suites, concertos, chamber music, choral, and ensemble compositions. In fact, one of the only genres that Vaughan Williams had not yet explored was film. He once wrote that genius is “the right man in the right place at the right time,” and he worked constantly to perfect his technique.<sup>1</sup> Michael Kennedy observes, “The outbreak of the war found Vaughan Williams in a strangely intense mood, less phlegmatic than was his usual outward appearance, his mind numbed by the possibilities of world catastrophe.”<sup>2</sup> Now entering his seventh decade, he was searching for a way to aid the British war effort.

Vaughan Williams was introduced into the world of film composition by the prominent British film music director, Muir Mathieson, who believed in the “importance of getting the right composer for each type of music.”<sup>3</sup> Writing in

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 258.

<sup>3</sup> John Huntley, *British Film Music* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 7. Huntley further quotes Mathieson as stating that “It is not this (musical films) sphere of film music that record is so impressive; it is background and featured serious music that we have so successfully employed in British films, especially background music.” See Huntley, *British Film Music*, 10.

*Tempo* magazine, Mathieson justified his reasoning in recruiting the best British composers:

Instead of noticing only the weakness in badly written or clumsily handled music, the film-goer is rapidly learning to understand and enjoy some of the finer music which has been written for him. The man in the street can not only discern good acting from bad (see box office receipts!) but is capable of discussing and criticizing, as well as enjoying, the various merits of a film. I have often been amazed at the amount of constructive criticism one hears on buses and trains in connection with such technical aspects of film-making as cutting, editing, and direction. Music is probably the latest of the technical ingredients to have captured this attention. This may be due to the new awareness and appreciation of music, as seen in all the concert halls around the country; it may have been helped by the romantic success of the 'Warsaw Concerto:' it has certainly been stimulated by the quality of work composers have put into films during the last few years. Whatever the cause, I can vouch for it that people are as quick to notice the distinguished in music on the screen as they are to deplore the commonplace.<sup>4</sup>

Recognizing that there was a keen audience for exceptional movie music, Mathieson saw that it was his duty to raise the general standard of British film music.

Mathieson wrote,

Whereas in earlier days people were apathetic and almost wholly unaware of the musical or aural aspect of the film, they now *demand* the best. And how do we know this? The film, after all, is a commercial enterprise, based on the idea of supplying a commodity that the public wants. With regard to the musical score, surely the composers' names on the credit titles of the successful money-making films are a reliable indicator of the public's discretion.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Muir Mathieson, "Aspects of Film Music" in *Tempo*, no. 9 (December 1944, published by Cambridge University Press), 8.

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

As audiences noticed the names of composers prominently featured within the movie credits, Mathieson endeavored to entice famous composers into writing film music. During the Second World War, Mathieson was responsible for almost fifty films and strove to find the right composer for every single motion picture.<sup>6</sup>

Vaughan Williams was therefore a logical choice for Mathieson to recruit into films.<sup>7</sup>

In 1940 Mathieson visited Vaughan Williams and offered him the chance to “do his bit” in the British war effort by scoring the music for the new government-sponsored film, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (1941). The composer eagerly accepted the film and began composing straightaway. Happily, Vaughan Williams was not temperamental and was glad to make changes to his scores.<sup>8</sup> From surviving accounts, it is evident that he thoroughly enjoyed the challenges of writing for film, and would often start composing music as soon as a script reached his hands (if not before). At no time did he attempt to create music to exactly mirror the action on the screen in the so-called “mickey-mousing” technique. Instead, he preferred to simply create an overall mood that captured the spirit of a scene or sequence, and then later adapted it to the

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<sup>6</sup> S. J. Hetherington, and Mark Brownrigg. *Muir Mathieson, 1911-1975: A Life in Film Music* (Dalkeith, Scotland: Scottish Cultural Press, 2006), 87.

<sup>7</sup> According to Ursula Vaughan Williams, the composer’s works were blacklisted by Nazi officials as early as 1939. See Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 218. The composer had also already helped with Ministry of Information events as he composed a piece for Adrian Boult to conduct at the 1939 World’s Fair Pavilion in New York. Boult later stated that it was extremely hot in the hall, as the air-conditioner went out and the temperature was around 89°F. See Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 258.

<sup>8</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 156.

screen by adding “specific points of color, very often at the recording sessions themselves”<sup>9</sup>

This dissertation will examine Vaughan Williams’s music for wartime propaganda films. This research explores the role that the nationalistic style of music in Vaughan William’s first three war films—*49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (1941), *Coastal Command* (1942), and *Flemish Farm* (1943)—fulfilled within these propaganda films, and thereby their place within the war effort as an extension of the stereotype of the soft-spoken and resilient Briton. Despite his firm place in the history and repertory of twentieth-century British composers alongside Edward Elgar and Gustav Holst, little research has been conducted on Vaughan Williams’s film scores.<sup>10</sup> In addition to analyzing the surviving original scores for each of these films, this study investigates some potential explanation for the composer’s late entrance into film composition. This includes a brief analysis of his humanitarian efforts throughout the war, including his involvement with the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), and his efforts on behalf of both European and Jewish immigrants. Although film music has often been relegated to a second-class status art-form, this research further traces the melodic themes that

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<sup>9</sup> *The Red Shoes: Classic British Film Music* conducted by Kenneth Alwyn with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Silva America Records, 1990, SSD1011. Liner notes by David Wishart.

<sup>10</sup> The research that has been done on Vaughan Williams’s film scores from a musicological perspective includes the following: Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997). This book contains a chapter that was also published in *Vaughan Williams*, Alain Frogely and Aiden Thompson (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013). See also Daniel Goldmark, “Music, Film, and Vaughan Williams” in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, Byron Adams and Robin Wells (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 216-17.

Vaughan Williams had not only written for each film, but also reused later in the “high-art” realm of the British concert hall.

### **British Wartime Film**

In 1940, a series of essays depicting the British life was released by the British Council to uplift the nation’s morale. Published as a complete series in 1941 under the title *British Life and Thought*, the essay entitled “The Englishman” by Earl Stanley Baldwin of Bewdley (1867-1947), a former British Prime Minister, described the prototypical values of an Englishman at that time:

The Englishman, he believed, was above all an individualist, given to grumbling certainly but in the main considerate and easy-going. He was a sentimental, a lover of home and garden, animals and sport. But, “he will not be interfered with by his employer, by his neighbor or on a greater scale by another nation. He is apt to resist at a point when his mind is made up and his tenacity...is...acknowledged even by his enemies. You can lead him a long way; you cannot drive him an inch. He will neither cringe nor be bullied.”<sup>11</sup>

Baldwin posted that Britain would win the war by maintaining their composure with the quiet dignity of a prototypical English gentleman.

The propaganda arm of the British government that was tasked with maintaining this image of the unbreakable and unwavering English gentleman at home and abroad was the Ministry of Information (MoI). This was a tall order, as both before and during the Second World War, the British government was hard-pressed to lift national morale. This task was executed in multiple ways, with

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<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).



technology playing a vital role in reaching mass audiences through photography, film, and radio broadcasting. The principle message that the Ministry constantly repeated was the importance of “what Britain is fighting for, how Britain fights, and the need for sacrifice if the war is to be won.”<sup>12</sup> One can compare the propaganda in these Ministry-produced wartime movies with the scoring techniques that Ralph Vaughan Williams used in the films for which he composed music. These films:

Provides the historian with a prism through which to view the complex relationships between the industry, the government and their peoples, to understand the interplay between propaganda and entertainment and to probe the interaction between conflict, propaganda, and morale.<sup>13</sup>

Before relating Baldwin’s characterization of “the Englishman” to Vaughan William’s scores for propaganda, it is useful to compare and explain these principles, as well as describe filmmaking and scoring techniques, between two very different styles of propaganda films. The first, is the Nazi propaganda film produced by Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will* (1935), and the second is the much shorter British-produced documentary, *London Can Take It* (1940).

As Nazi ideals required the re-molding of German culture to embrace National Socialist ideology, all forms of entertainment needed to comply with party propaganda. Therefore, once the Nazi party took power, all forms of media were placed under government control. German propaganda worked smoothly and seamlessly under the guidance of Joseph Goebbels, and party-approved images and

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<sup>12</sup> Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army*, 85.

<sup>13</sup> Jo Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany* (New York: Berg, 2007), 11.

films were produced as soon as Hitler became Chancellor in 1933. As Goebbels stated in April 1933, the Nazis were “not satisfied with having fifty-two percent of the nation and terrorizing the other forty-eight percent.” Instead, they wanted “the people as the people, not only passively, but actively.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the Nazis considered the use of propaganda to be “a positive and essential force in governing the nation.”<sup>15</sup> For example, *Triumph of the Will* (1935), Riefenstahl’s two-hour presentation of the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremburg, fits perfectly with Goebbels’ belief of effective propaganda.

From the opening shot of Hitler’s plane descending from the clouds to the adoring populace of Nuremburg crowding the parade route, this film is saturated with non-diegetic, symphonic music influenced by Wagnerian opera. Focusing musically on marches, German dances, and party songs, there is never more than a split second of silence. As soon as a speech ends from the party leaders, the marches and cheering resumes over images of ecstatic supporters—in order to suppress any doubts of the dialogue’s message. In essence, by constantly pairing sycophantic crowds with pseudo-Wagnerian grandiosity, the audience becomes highly receptive to subliminal messages and psychological manipulation. The viewer succumbs to the message, rather than critically engaging in the content of the Nazi speeches.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 25.

Despite its vile content, this film is still widely studied amongst scholars for its effective use of persuasive propaganda messaging.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to the Nazis, the British Ministry of Information was slow to embrace technological propaganda. When war broke out, the MoI was ill-equipped to create a propaganda campaign:

The Ministry appeared to struggle to gain public support and trust, and to define its identity and mission. It entered the war 'inarticulate' if not as 'speechless' as it had been in August 1914. Despite the fact that the Ministry had been planned for five years prior to the outbreak of war, "before Hitler's seizure of Prague in March 1939, few people in British governmental circles were prepared to accept the idea that a Ministry of Information would be necessary."<sup>17</sup>

Unlike the Nazi propaganda machine, when Britain declared war in 1939, all the cinemas were closed down because of the fear of air raids. Determined to avoid mistakes made during the First World War that had nearly caused the extinction of the young British film industry, Ministry officials swiftly reopened the movie theaters and studios. The goal was to generate government-sponsored films that were both instructive and entertaining, and composers were hired in to write music that would help boost the national morale.<sup>18</sup> Despite the overabundance of propaganda films that would soon flood British cinemas, movie audiences increased

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<sup>16</sup> Frank Capra even re-spliced images from the film into the opening of his *Why We Fight* (1942) documentary series, but changed its context in order to support the Allied forces.

<sup>17</sup> P.M. Taylor, "'If War Should Come:' Preparing the Fifth Arm for Total War 1935-1939," in the *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 16, no. 1, The Second World War: Part 1 (January 1981), 48, quoted in Jo Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany*, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 52. Even King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were shown attending a screening of *The Lion Has Wings* (1939) once they officially reopened, thereby promoting to the public a "sense of duty" to go and see such films. See Jo Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany*, 71.

in size during this period: “Going to the pictures’ gave structure to a disrupted social life and films with their specifically British subject matter drew large audiences – the average weekly attendance, estimated at nineteen million in 1939, had risen to over thirty million by 1945.”<sup>19</sup>

Consequently, the cinema gave the British people a needed escape and comfort of normal activity during wartime, whilst providing the Ministry with a captive audience for propaganda. As John Grierson, a leading figure in British and Canadian documentary film, noted:

The film appeals to all classes and speaks in a universal language. It is brief, vivid and simple in getting across its message...As a means of disseminating public information and propaganda it is often more striking and thus more effective than the written or spoken word...Under present circumstances no considered public service of information can disregard the tremendous value of films.<sup>20</sup>

In many ways, cinema and film music represented dual realities. Since the British public needed to escape the hard realities of wartime, filmmakers could promote:

“Locations assumed greater significance within the overall design schemes of British films....During the war years, English countryside locations were deployed to

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<sup>19</sup> Stephanie Muir, *Studying Ealing Studios* (Poland: Auteur, 2010), 35.

<sup>20</sup> Found in the Grierson Papers, Special Collections, University of Sterling, Scotland. John Grierson G3:6:2 ‘A Plan for a Wartime National Film Propaganda Service in Canada,’ Lido Hotel Hollywood, 15 September 1939. Cited in Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany*, 1. Additionally, from 1939-1944, the number of British cinemas decreased from 5,300 to 4,750, with overall seating capacity in 1944 averaging 4,500,000. Due to wartime conscription, studio stages decreased in number from ninety working sound stages to thirty. Despite this drop in available theaters and studio productions, weekly cinema attendance from 1939-44 averaged from 20,000,000 to over 25,000,000, thereby resulting in an estimated gross box office receipt total of £43,000,000-£110,000,000 – the modern day equivalent of two to five billion British pounds. See *The Factual Film* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 198-99.

construct a reassuring Arcadian mythology.”<sup>21</sup> In relation to this point, Vaughan Williams’s longtime engagement of the British countryside and folk traditions meant that his music was virtually a signifier for “Britishness.”<sup>22</sup>

The British film studios had a distinct advantage over their German counterparts in regards to promoting the war effort. Whereas the Nazis needed to ideologically mold their society through National Socialist entertainment, British democracy reinforced accepted stereotypes of British behavior, such as Baldwin’s “English gentleman,” and boosted morale for its citizens and troops.<sup>23</sup> One such successful example of this approach to propaganda is the British documentary *London Can Take It* (1940). Produced by the General Post Office Film Unit and directed by Humphrey Jennings and Henry Watt, the ten-minute film features narration by Quentin Reynolds, a U.S. war correspondent who was frequently featured on the radio during that time.<sup>24</sup> Besides Reynolds’ dry and detached voice, the only prominent sound heard throughout the film is that of bombs falling on London. Throughout the monologue, Reynolds speaks in an unemotional tone, and allows for frequent moments of silence in order to give the audience the ability to hear for themselves the sounds of London under attack during a Nazi air raid. By doing so, the documentary uses its own form of subliminal messaging to effectively generate

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<sup>21</sup> Laurie Ede, Laurie, “Art in Context: British Film Design of the 1940s” in *The New Film History* Ed. by James Chapman, Mark Glancy, and Sue Harper (Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 75.

<sup>22</sup> For more on this subject, see Eric Saylor, *English Pastoral Music: From Arcadia to Utopia, 1900-1955* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

<sup>23</sup> Jo Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany*, 7.

<sup>24</sup> The GPO Film Unit would later become the Crown Film Unit which produced *Coastal Command* (1942).

empathy for the Britons who, despite spending the night in public air raid shelters, uncomplainingly soldier on by going about their daily business.

Essentially, the British employ propaganda in a different manner of psychological warfare by highlighting the reality of human endurance, rather than Riefenstahl's aim of portraying Hitler and the Nazi party as gods that had descended upon Germany. In contrast to the abundance of music throughout *Triumph of the Will*, the only music used in *London Can Take It* can be heard in the first few seconds and the last few seconds of the documentary. Instead of patriotic party songs and marches, British directors Jennings and Watt calculatingly chose as the documentary's sole musical voice Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony* (1914). Already the composer's best-known symphony, the music provides an aural portrait of London, as, indeed, it was designed to do. The symphony becomes—and indeed became during the war in Britain and the United States—a signifier for “London.” Despite the current inconveniences, the people of London are shown enduring the destruction as they bravely return to work in the face of the terrors of the previous night. Just as Vaughan Williams's music was used as the lone voice defying Nazi Luftwaffe in the film *London Can Take It*, this research discusses and analyzes how Vaughan Williams's early film music was used as a symbol of British values in a manner similar to Baldwin's trope of the “English gentleman.”

### **Sources and Methodologies**

This study draws upon a number of influential theories and concepts from multiple fields. As film music is essentially an interdisciplinary subject, the three

films—*49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, *Coastal Command*, and *Flemish Farm*—have been analyzed and researched using sources from media and cultural studies, film studies, and musicology. From the perspective of film studies, one theoretical tool used to analyze film music in this study is Claudia Gorbman’s *Principles of Film Music*:

- I. Invisibility – technical apparatus of non-diegetic music must not be visible.
- II. Inaudibility – music is not meant to be heard consciously and should be subordinate to dialogue and visuals.
- III. Signifier of Emotion – can signify specific moods but must first and foremost signify emotion.
- IV. Narrative Cueing – referential/narrative: music that gives referential/narrative cues such as point of view, establishing setting and characters (supplying formal demarcations).  
Connotative – music “interprets” and “illustrates” narrative events.
- V. Continuity – music provides both formal and rhythmic continuity and fills “gaps”/transitions.
- VI. Unity – repetition and variation of musical material and instrumentation; music aides in construction/narrative unity.
- VII. A given film score may violate any of these principles, given the violation is in the service of fulfilling one of the other principles.<sup>25</sup>

These principles were applied to the musical score analysis sections, and are employed to describe key moments of cinematic propaganda that feature Vaughan Williams’s film music.

Another film theory that was explored in this dissertation is that of the “auteur.” First discussed by François Truffaut in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the early 1950s, the concept is derived largely from the cinematic theories of Alexandre Astruc, and his

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<sup>25</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 73.

elucidation of the perception of *camera-stylo* (“camera-pen”). It holds that the director, who oversees all audio and visual elements of the motion picture, is more to be considered the “author” of the movie, than is the writer of the screenplay.<sup>26</sup> According to Andrew Sarris, the first American critic to write about the theory, in order to be considered an “auteur,” the director or person with the most creative influence must have technical style, personal competence, and interior meaning.<sup>27</sup>

In response to this publication, Peter Wollen criticized Sarris’s assertion that the technical abilities of a filmmaker, including having a distinct and individual personality, were all values that went into defining a true auteur. Wollen states, “The auteur theory does not limit itself to acclaiming the director as the main author of a film. It implies an operation of decipherment; it reveals authors where none had been seen before.”<sup>28</sup> Instead, Wollen champions the hypothesis that a true auteur is to be found within the body of work of a particular filmmaker, and that the motifs and themes found within their cinematic oeuvre are what creates a great auteur. This opened the door for recent film scholars and critics who have begun to apply Wollen’s theory to any individual who has the greatest creative influence over a cinematic production or develops a distinct style over a corpus of films. Since Vaughan Williams was deliberately contracted to compose music for both high-

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<sup>26</sup> Andrew Sarris, “The film artist: Notes on the auteur theory in 1962” in Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 561-64.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Wollen, “Auteur Theory” in *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 76-115.



profile international films like *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, and home-front documentary dramas such as *Coastal Command*, this dissertation explores the creative impact his music had upon these films in terms of the new application of the auteur theory to other artistic supervisors besides the movie director.

A cornerstone of media analysis that was used in organizing this dissertation is the theories of ideology written by Louis Althusser. Propagated as a system of ideas that unconsciously shapes and constrains both our beliefs and behaviors, Althusser attempted logical explanation of this complex theory in 1970.<sup>29</sup> He charts how ideology limits the range of acceptable ideas that a person may consider within a particular cultural context, normalizes certain aspects of society by limiting the possible perceptions or interpretations of the world, and allows for privileging of some over others. In other words, ideology interpellates, or permeates, every aspect of a culture, fashioning the limits of knowledge, and influencing power structures at every level of social organization.<sup>30</sup> In regards to this study, Althusser's theory of subjects being "hailed," which occurs when individuals recognize and respond to an encountered ideology, thereby allowing it to represent them, is essential in creating a successful propaganda message.<sup>31</sup> This was done in the three films through not only the actors and the images on the screen interpellating audiences into the film's, and therefore by extension the British government's message, but through the

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<sup>29</sup> Louis Althusser, *On ideology* (London: Verso, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

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

music of Vaughan Williams that gives life and emotional warmth to the images on the screen.<sup>32</sup>

As an extension of ideological theories, propaganda can be defined as the act of mass persuasion. This term “cannot be defined by the nature of the material propagated; the definition must rest on the intent underlying the dissemination or, as in the case of censorship, the suppression of the material in question.”<sup>33</sup>

Effectively used in George Orwell’s literary novels such as *1984*, the term has long been linked to psychological warfare and manipulative practices. Despite the rampant abundance of propaganda used during the Second World War, not all of the underlying messages were negative: indeed such messages formed the backbone of national morality for the British.

Due to the subliminal nature of propaganda within the mediums of film and music, it is impossible to quantify scientifically its presence and effectiveness. In response to the lack of statistical tracking data of film media during the Second World War, this dissertation will highlight distinctive musical features that the composer used to characterize the Allied forces, as is demonstrated with *London Can Take It*.

In tracing the use of British “traditions,” this study relies on the theories of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger from their book *The Invention of Tradition*.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American “Neutrality” in World War II*, xi.

<sup>34</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-14.

Arguing that many practices considered “traditional” are in fact recently created inventions, these historians considered how such cultural practices are conceived.<sup>35</sup> Benedict Anderson’s work about borders and the effect of physical borders on cultural norms also assumes importance in this dissertation.<sup>36</sup> In parallel to Hobsbawm and Ranger providing examples of relatively recent encouraged national customs, this research applies the same promotion of nationalistic propaganda to the film music of Ralph Vaughan Williams, such as his inclusion of popular melodies to represent different countries into the score of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

Furthermore, Pierre Bourdieu’s work on high and low-culture is of crucial importance throughout this study.<sup>37</sup> In his collection of essays entitled *The Field of Cultural Production*, Bourdieu derived the concept of “cultural production,” including its particular functions and laws that can be rationally accounted for. Through this concept, Bourdieu demonstrates that high-art of the “elite culture” has no more inherent value than low-art of the “popular culture.” This concept was applied to Vaughan Williams’s practice of recycling his low-art film music themes into the high-art, or elite culture, world of concert hall symphonic works.

A narrow sample of national and global events of the Second World War will be considered in relation to Vaughan Williams’s film music. By narrowing the focus to a small part of the film-making process, this research attempts to elucidate the impact

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>37</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Columbia University Press, 1993).

that Vaughan Williams's film scores had on propaganda sponsored by the Ministry of Information. In doing so, this dissertation additionally acts as a compendium that traces the creation of Vaughan Williams's three wartime films from their inception to completion.

Through study of the composer's letters and musical manuscripts, this research seeks to untangle the chronology of the music's creation as well as describe the impact that it had on the war effort in Britain. Furthermore, handwriting identification is employed to classify the surviving film scores kept in the Music and Manuscripts Collection preserved in the British Library. As most of the scores kept in the British Library are handwritten by the composer, they "do not represent these works as the composer wished them to be performed," and therefore were deciphered by comparison to published versions of the film scores and suites.<sup>38</sup>

Almost all of the original sources used for this research are located at the British Library (BL) and at the British Film Institute (BFI) Archive in London. Some of Vaughan Williams's manuscripts and letters are located at the Royal College of Music, and there is a valuable collection of letters at the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester. The British Library holds the Muir Mathieson Collection, as well as the personal correspondence of individuals such as Michael Kennedy, Roy Douglas, and Ursula Wood (later the composer's second wife), all of whom were close to Vaughan Williams during the Second World War and after. The minutes and

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<sup>38</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 289-290.

letters for the CEMA meetings during the Second World War, in which Vaughan Williams was an important member, are located at the Blythe House of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Further documents pertaining to the Ministry of Information and wartime government policies are available in the National Archives Public Record Office at Kew in London.

### **The Dissertation Chapters**

The first chapter explores Vaughan Williams's humanitarian efforts on behalf of wartime refugees. It highlights the composer's involvement with CEMA, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, and his efforts on behalf of European immigrants. Besides providing needed context as to his eventual involvement in the British film industry, the research focuses on Vaughan Williams's strong commitment to the war effort. The composer's humanitarian efforts are discussed in relation to his financial situation, as the composer spent large sums of his personal wealth on refugees. Therefore, film music composition provided a lucrative income in addition to what Vaughan Williams viewed as a patriotic necessity.

For the rest of the dissertation, the three films are discussed over of the course of two chapters apiece. The first chapter for each film provides a media and film-based component that explores the development of the movie, its score composition, and reception. For the second half, each film score is analyzed through various musicological techniques including handwriting identification.

Following this pattern, Chapter Two discusses in detail the first film Vaughan Williams scored in 1941, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. In addition to exploring the filmmaking

process, my research charts the production in relation to important events at the time, and discusses the impact and reception of the music used in the film, both amongst British audiences and within the United States. As this is the most documented of the three films, there is an abundance of secondary source materials. Unlike the other two films, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* was made with an American audience in mind.

In Chapter Three, the second part of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, the surviving score materials from the British Library are decoded and analyzed for compositional patterns and elements of propaganda. The scores are analyzed in relation to the traditional sources of certain passages. It explores as well the connection this music has with the composer's chamber ensemble compositions that were typically designed for live-performance concerts.

Turning towards the second film, Chapter Four deals with *Coastal Command* (1942). Marketed as a documentary drama, the film fulfilled the aim of portraying real service men and women in a fictional story. As noted in surviving Ministry records, "the propaganda values of story films can be very great. They can put English life on the screens of countries overseas."<sup>39</sup> In addition, these same files contain arguments for the positive global reception that a documentary drama like *Coastal Command* could provide, stating that "we know that such films would be

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<sup>39</sup> See INF 1/628 located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

exceedingly well received, and go far to promote sympathy for Great Britain.”<sup>40</sup> In support of these views, this chapter examines the unusual quasi-documentary process of making this film, as well as important events at the time, including the impact of the music used in the movie and the influence and reception of it in Britain. This chapter additionally explores the aircraft that appear in this film, and discusses the place that the movie represents as a whole within the “aircraft genre” of British wartime films. Furthermore, it discusses the motion picture’s depiction of class structure among the crew members.

As with the score analysis for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, Chapter Five delves into the surviving score materials for *Coastal Command* at the British Library. In addition, the research discusses how Vaughan Williams made use of musical ideas first used in *Coastal Command* in his Sixth Symphony. Interestingly enough, there are actually two final cuts of *Coastal Command*: the longer British version without narration (the original theatrical release), and the American cut with narration that has since been made available to the public on DVD as well as the platform *YouTube*. Consequently, the film editors decided to edit the film to the music, instead of the other way around.

Chapter Six investigates the third film that Vaughan Williams scored in 1943, *The Flemish Farm*. In addition to exploring the filming process, the chapter tracks the impact of historical events taking place during production on the movie, as well as the reception of both the motion picture as a whole, and the music. Partially due

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

to the lack of source materials, this film has since fallen into relative obscurity. In addition, this study draws comparisons in the film to the real-life Belgian Air Force, which during the war was included into the Royal Air Force.

In the seventh and final chapter in this dissertation, the music scores for *Flemish Farm* are analyzed according to the composer's intention of using this particular film as a pretext to experiment with a theme or leitmotif-based score. As with *Coastal Command*, some discarded music from *Flemish Farm* ends up in the composer's Sixth Symphony. This connection is studied in addition to the new discovery of melodic materials that were recycled into Vaughan Williams acapella chorus work, "The Souls of the Righteous."



## **Chapter 1 – Ralph Vaughan Williams’s Humanitarian Work and Association with CEMA**

### **Introduction**

By the mid-1930s, many British subjects became uneasy about the rise of fascism in Germany. Ralph Vaughan Williams, a student of history who saw active service in the First World War, feared for his country’s safety. As Vaughan Williams was a patriot, the composer’s biographer Michael Kennedy wrote, “Vaughan Williams never advocated a chauvinistic nationalism. He merely urged composers to write the music that they felt was in them, and he thought that the best way for them to do that was to examine their own native art first and then to turn their eyes abroad if they wished.”<sup>41</sup>

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1937, Vaughan Williams was awarded the first Shakespeare prize by Hamburg University. With his detestation of fascism, it seems surprising in retrospect that Vaughan Williams agreed to travel to Hamburg to receive the prize in person on 15 June 1938.<sup>42</sup> While superficially the acceptance of this award would make little sense, the composer may have had a good reason to make the trip. Since Germany had aggressively annexed Austria in March 1938, one academic argument, which was raised by Hugh Cobbe in *Vaughan Williams Studies*, posits that Vaughan Williams went to Hamburg to make note of the coordinates of

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 186.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 255.

the shipyards (he visited Johannes Brahms' birthplace, which was located near the Hamburg shipyards). Upon returning to Britain, he then passed the information to the British Army.<sup>43</sup> In support of this theory, a letter dated 26 January 1939 to Professor H.G. Fiedler from Vaughan Williams confirms the composer received this award:

I enclose a letter from the Deutsches Bank, Hamburg on which I should like your advice - The circumstances are as follows: The young woman referred to, Baroness von der Hoven, is a Russian refugee. She is studying singing in Vienna and shows great promise - She is applying for German citizenship - She is being financed by some English friends and it occurred to me that some of my Hamburg money might be usefully used for her - I sent a full statement of the facts to the bank and as a preliminary only asked for a modest 500 marks - This is their reply - Really the situation seems impossible and I feel that the prize in future ought to be refused until its management by the German authorities becomes less tragically farcical.<sup>44</sup>

As Vaughan Williams was awarded 10,000 marks for the prize, this money had to be spent in Germany. In addition to using this income for his travel expenses, the composer additionally found ways to use the remainder of the award money to help the numerous refugees that were fleeing Germany during this period. Aside from quite possibly engaging in espionage, Vaughan Williams found other ways to serve his country.

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<sup>43</sup> One of Vaughan Williams's assignments during the First World War was to operate large heavy artillery that required accurate mapping coordinates, thus the composer was already trained to take these type of measurements when he traveled to Hamburg. For more on this theory, see Hugh Cobbe "Vaughan Williams, Germany, and the German Tradition: A View from the Letters" in Alain Frogley, *Vaughan Williams Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). It should be noted that the RAF later blew the Hamburg shipyards to bits during a successful raid.

<sup>44</sup> See MS Mus. 1714/1/11 from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

This chapter will discuss Vaughan Williams's involvement with the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) and his efforts on behalf of European, and specifically Jewish immigrants. It will reveal the composer's humanitarian pursuits and will provide context—as well as monetary speculations—as to his eventual involvement in the British film industry. Through examination of surviving letters and archival materials, this chapter will serve as an exploration of Vaughan Williams's involvement with the national war effort, including providing music for British propaganda films during the war.

Vaughan Williams articulated his conviction about the role of music to boost national morale in an official radio broadcast in 1940. Entitled "The Composer in Wartime," he states: "I have known young composers refer with annoyance to this 'boring war,' he said. 'Such a phrase as this, I confess, shocks me.' Times were not normal; the composer must condition his inspiration by the nature of his material."<sup>45</sup> While Vaughan Williams was already doing everything he could think of to help out, from collecting scrap metal to composing at discounted rates for government films and helping sponsor refugees, he still felt obligated to challenge his musical colleagues to step-up their own efforts.

He continued by asking, "Are there not ways, in which the composer without derogating from his art, without being untrue to himself, but still without the entire disregard for his fellows which characterizes the artist in his supreme moments,

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<sup>45</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 259-60.

[can] use his skill, his knowledge, his sense of beauty in the service of his fellow men?"<sup>46</sup> The problem posed by certain artists and composers who preferred to sit on the sidelines was a real one. For Vaughan Williams, another problem was the propaganda association, even in Britain, of classical music with Germany. Supporting any foreign-born art was, at that time, considered to be potentially dangerous to any individuals. Suddenly, Germany was once again the enemy, just as the Germans had been during the First World War.<sup>47</sup> In essence, history was repeating itself in Britain, as citizens called for censorship and boycott of nationally cherished composers such as Wagner and Beethoven at the start of the Second World War.

In addition to advocating for the continued performance of Teutonic classics by Brahms, Wagner, and others, Vaughan Williams worked tirelessly to support musicians of Germanic descent who fled Germany on ethical or racial grounds. While on the minds of numerous British citizens, many did not discuss the growing humanitarian refugee crisis of individuals fleeing the European continent to Britain

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>As an example of this, British authors during the beginning of the Second World War actually called upon the public to re-examine related texts in a way that could be similarly done with all forms of creative art such as music. A.E.F. Dickinson described this argument as follows: "E.M. Forster and others have made a strong concrete case for the reading of certain books at the present time. As direct reflections on what is now varying degrees a world-wide crisis the Napoleonic and Assyrian invasions (2 Kings xviii) are chapters of history that have only to be mentioned to command fresh study; and Samuel Johnson's 'common sense' view of the individuals recurrent problems is still uncommonly illuminating. Music offers a like stimulus and relevance in its own sphere. Not that stalwart modes and intense looks are the sole and special contribution music has offered and can offer again to a strained, reluctant public. But it can scarcely be denied that the simple-minded buoyancy of a piece like 'Calling all workers' infects the popular mind at the moment, where an exquisitely escapist fantasy such as 'L'après-midi d'un faune' is inclined to jar in frequent revival." See A.E.F. Dickinson, "What Do We Want with Music in War-Time?" from *The Musical Times*, vol. 81, no. 1174 (Dec., 1940), 479-80.

and America.<sup>48</sup> In addition to the government's lackluster efforts in regards to refugees, Vaughan Williams was unwavering in his efforts to welcome into Britain immigrant musicians fleeing the Nazis.<sup>49</sup> In fact, in the face of the anti-Semitic views expressed by the German Nazis, the composer once replied that: "I think, or I at least hope, that I have a little Jewish blood: that would indeed make me proud."<sup>50</sup> While it would be difficult at this distance to prove the genetic lineage of the composer, it can be shown that Vaughan Williams did do whatever he could to help people of both Jewish and non-Jewish descent find a new home in Britain.

After he met Ursula Wood in 1938, the composer wrote to her often. As paper was in short supply after 1939, many of the letters kept in the composer's correspondence at the British Library are written on the back of recycled documents that provide glimpses of Vaughan Williams's communications that were not appreciated fully at the time. For example, on the back of a letter to Ursula Wood that discussed poetry, is a note of thanks from the Dorking Urban District Council for the land that Vaughan Williams had generously lent them for allotments during the war.<sup>51</sup> Dated 7 August 1940, this proves that, while Britain was preparing for

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<sup>48</sup> For example, a film was supposed to be made by the government entitled *Refugees War Effort in Britain* and was financed September 23, 1942, but was on the list of abandoned films by 1944. A total of £35 had been spent before abandonment and the reason listed was due to a change in the political situation. Numbered F.691/37. See INF 1/199 located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>49</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 255.

<sup>50</sup> Harriet Cohen, *A Bundle of Time: The Memoirs of Harriet Cohen* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 292. Cohen was a famous touring solo pianist and friend of Vaughan Williams in which he eventually composed a piano concerto for besides showing support for Cohen's efforts to bring light to the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany throughout the 1930s.

<sup>51</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/13 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

invasion and imminent bombing, the composer was offering his own personal property to the Dorking community for the use of displaced citizens and refugees escaping the over crowdedness of the inner city.<sup>52</sup>

Some of these letters were also written on the back of old fliers from the Dorking wartime concerts that were organized and sponsored by Vaughan Williams. Thus, these documents provide hard evidence that Vaughan Williams was promoting music-making of amateurs as a way to uplift British morale during wartime air raids, food shortages, and privation. This is exactly what he proposed in his 1940 broadcast "The Composers in Wartime."<sup>53</sup> In other words, Vaughan Williams did not merely talk, he sprang into action.

Because most British subjects valiantly supported the war effort, reports of amateur musicians taking part to alleviate the humanitarian crisis were common. These examples would even turn up in college magazines. For example, the Royal College of Music (RCM) Magazine made a point of mentioning that a small number of refugees were invited to become scholars from both allied nations and countries where they faced persecution. Similar to the refugees personally sponsored by the composer, such as Robert Müller-Hartmann and his family, these new students were partially funded through the British Council.<sup>54</sup> As Mary Bennett (1913-2005), a relative of Vaughan Williams, recalled that Ralph and Adeline Vaughan Williams

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<sup>52</sup> In fact, these same areas would soon become the most heavily bombed sections of London by Nazi Luftwaffe.

<sup>53</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/13 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>54</sup> See *RCM Magazine*, vol. 37, no. 3 (October 1941).

were “never alone. There was a student, perhaps, who needed quiet to prepare for examinations, a refugee, someone who happened to be homeless or convalescent, the little great-niece who sent a jet of fresh life spurting through the house as one of its wartime residents.”<sup>55</sup> Many of the stories about Vaughan Williams’s humanitarian efforts were retold in a special memorial issue of the *RCM Magazine* that appeared after the composer’s death in 1958. As with Mary Bennett’s recollection, Jean Stewart, the solo violist to whom Vaughan Williams dedicated his Second String Quartet in A Minor, commented on the composer’s time as Vice-Chairman of the refugee committee in Dorking. He wrote to Stewart, “It is wonderful how people are hungering for music; perhaps the war will bring—[two words undecipherable]—that people will realize that they *can’t do without it*.”<sup>56</sup> This example testifies that despite his house’s distance outside of central London, Vaughan Williams was eager to share his large home in Dorking with friends and strangers in need.

One refugee family whom Vaughan Williams supported was the Hornstein family, who had immigrated to Britain before the war. After settling in Dorking, the wife of Jacob (Yanya) Hornstein, Genia, later wrote that she got to know Vaughan Williams better after he was invited to join the Committee for Refugees from Nazi Oppression in Dorking during the Munich crises of 1938. Despite his busy schedule,

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<sup>55</sup> See *RCM Magazine*, vol. 55, no. 1 (February 1959), 20. Bennett was the daughter of Adeline Vaughan Williams’s brother, H.A.L. Fisher (1865-1940).

<sup>56</sup> See *RCM Magazine*, vol. 55, no. 1 (February 1959), 41. This was originally quoted in a letter from Vaughan Williams to Jean Stewart dated 10 March 1941, (VWL 5087) now kept in Private Collection.

the composer attended most, if not all, of the committee meetings, which took place on a monthly basis in London at the Bloomsbury House. Genia Hornstein later recalled that:

He had obviously considered it his duty in the first place to do something about the refugee problem; but after a very short time it was no longer a feeling of duty only that made him come to all the meetings; he had become genuinely interested in the different individuals under the Committee's care.<sup>57</sup>

Although the refugees were comprised of a variety of different backgrounds and ages, Vaughan Williams did his best to help all of them, especially those who had directly suffered and had lost family members at the hands of the Nazis. As Hornstein affirmed,

Vaughan Williams never for one moment forgot, as charity workers so often do, that human beings do not become either nobler or more intelligent in distress; and he greatly objected to the Committee always expecting the unfortunate foreigners to be grateful for all that was decided and done for them.<sup>58</sup>

As Vaughan Williams possessed a gift for persuasion, it was inevitable that his close friends were convinced to help out.<sup>59</sup> Inspired by his work with the Dorking Committee, Vaughan Williams was recruited to join other professional charities and organizations as well, including the fledging group known as CEMA. An abbreviation of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, this organization was

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<sup>57</sup> See *RCM Magazine*, vol. 55, no. 1 (February 1959), 45.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Most notably, in a letter to Maud Karpeles dated 1 January 1939, Vaughan Williams inquired whether his friend Ursula Wood had made Maud's acquaintance in an effort to help with refugees. See MS Mus. 1714/1/12 from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.



formed in order to support musical outreach and performance during the Second World War.

### **Some Specific Examples of Vaughan Williams's Humanitarian Endeavors**

Early examples of Vaughan Williams's humanitarian efforts can be found in the late 1930s, before Britain declared war on Germany. For instance, the composer's name can be found as a signatory on a public declaration in *The Times* during November of 1938. At the top of a list of eighty-eight signatures were the words: "We wish to record our solemn protest, before the conscience of civilization, against the persecution of the Jews in Germany."<sup>60</sup> A similar declaration was reprinted, addressed to the editor of *The Times* in July 1940:

We, the undersigned, without presuming to criticize the principle of the Government's general internment policy, are aware that certain hardships connected with it could be rapidly disposed of. The following three points occur:-

1. Jewish and other refugees from Nazi oppression should not be interned with Nazi sympathizers. Could not the War Office make the distinction rapidly so as to avoid scenes of persecution such as have already been alleged?
2. Refugee husbands and wives, especially those between the ages of 50 and 70, should not be separated. Would it not be possible for the War Office to institute special camps for elderly married couples, as well as for young people aged 16 to 18, using existing large refugee hostels, which could be well guarded and run by an English warden?
3. We understand that tribunals may be set up in the camps with a view to exempting certain refugees. We feel that it is important that people with wide Continental experience should be included in these tribunals. Suitable names could be obtained from the Central Register.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Other Signatures include Vaughan Williams's brother-in-law, H.A.L. Fisher and leading members of a various professions, artists and scholars. See *The London Times*, (#48158, Tuesday 22 November 1938), 10.

<sup>61</sup> *The London Times*, (#48675, Tuesday 23 July 1940), 5.

Serving as concrete proof of Vaughan Williams's involvement in this manifest, this 1940 letter was sent from the composer's address in Dorking.

As has been documented here, Vaughan Williams was committed to not only helping his country through the crisis of the Second World War, but also by providing sponsorship to the growing amounts of refugees fleeing mainland Europe. Hugh Cobbe writes eloquently of Vaughan Williams's actions during this time:

On top of the concerts, there was his work with Jewish refugees, which fell into two separate fields of endeavor: he had been chairman of the local refugee committee for some time, and through it had come to know and make a lasting friendship with the Hornsteins and the Müller-Hartmanns. However, with the war came internment of such refugees as enemy aliens and their plight, especially of those who were musicians, affronted him to such an extent that he spearheaded a campaign for their release. The Home Office agreed to set up an advisory committee, of which Vaughan Williams accepted the chair, to advise on which internees were of such eminent distinction in music and had made such a contribution that they should be released. Some of those released later became household names in music.<sup>62</sup>

One such individual whom Vaughan Williams saved from certain death was the composer, Robert Müller-Hartmann. In fact, Vaughan Williams used his own savings to sponsor Müller-Hartmann's entire family.

Robert Müller-Hartmann was a distinguished German composer who immigrated to England in 1937. By 1938, he was living in Dorking with Jacob (Yanya) and Genia Hornstein and, at the recommendation of Imogen Holst, soon became good friends with Ralph and Adeline Vaughan Williams, as well as the poet Ursula Wood, who would in time become the composer's second wife. Together,

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<sup>62</sup> Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 282.

these three individuals did what they could to welcome these German-born Jews to Britain.<sup>63</sup> Born in Hamburg, Robert Müller-Hartmann (1884-1950) was contemporary with Vaughan Williams, and had begun to lay the groundwork for immigration in 1934. When “Jewish music” was banned in 1933, Müller-Hartmann was forced out of his teaching jobs, including his position at the University in Hamburg. With great fortune, Müller-Hartmann and his family managed to flee Germany before *Kristallnacht*.<sup>64</sup>

Upon settling in Dorking, both Müller-Hartmann and his wife actively took part in local refugee efforts, committees, and helping with sponsored events for the troops.<sup>65</sup> Once war was officially declared, Müller-Hartmann was unable to work due to his “enemy alien” status. As part of Ministry regulations, he was sent to one of the refugee internment camps set up on the Isle of Man. Alerted to this development, Vaughan Williams began at once to organize efforts to secure Müller-Hartmann’s release. Working with as many official committees as possible, a joint letter was sent in August 1940 by both the composer and folk song collector Maud Karpeles (1885-1976) to the Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, on behalf of the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe Tea

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<sup>63</sup> Steven K White, *Dear Müller-Hartmann: Letters from Ralph Vaughan Williams to Robert Müller-Hartmann* (England, 2009), 4.

<sup>64</sup> Steven K White, *Dear Müller-Hartmann: Letters from Ralph Vaughan Williams to Robert Müller-Hartmann*, 6-7.

<sup>65</sup> This is documented in the letter Vaughan Williams sent to Ursula Wood in October 1939 that Müller-Hartmann was very busy helping “internees and evacuees and low-brow concerts for the troops!” See MS. Mus. 1714/1/11 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

Time Concerts. According to the official heading of the letter, the composer was a patron of at least one of the Councils from which the request originates, and Karpeles served as the Council secretary. Vaughan Williams and Karpeles wrote that Müller-Hartmann:

Is a musician of the first rank, who, since he came to this country three years ago, has been making a valuable study of English music. Incidentally, his advice with regard to German music and musicians was of the greatest assistance in the promotion of the recent series of Tea Time Concerts. He is a man of the highest integrity both as regards his art and his general conduct and mode of thought, and he is absolutely loyal in his sentiments to this country. We believe that it can only serve the national interest for a man of his caliber to have free intercourse with the citizens of this country.<sup>66</sup>

While it took some time for Müller-Hartmann to be set free, Vaughan Williams intermittently met with Robert's family, and wrote to Muller-Hartmann in August 1940 that:

I feel that now there is great hope & I cannot but believe for what I think a great wrong will be put right. I had such pleasure in your lecture at Burchett House the other day. I hope very soon that you will be again able to contribute to our National Culture by your studies in English music. I feel sure then, in spite of all, you will still continue to believe in English freedom. The Government were in a terrible emergency and had to adopt all [of] a sudden whole sale measures which wanted enquiries on many perfectly innocent people. May you soon be free to work for the country of your adoption and for the cause we all have at heart.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See MS. S.P.S.L. 290/1, f. 34 kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, UK. Also available as VWL 4970 in online database of Vaughan Williams's Letters.

<sup>67</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/13 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Also found in Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 302.

The Burchett House was run by the Dorking Refugee Committee for Jewish refugees – an organization of which Vaughan Williams was a prominent member. Finally, through the combined efforts of everyone involved, Vaughan Williams noted in a post script of a letter posted to Ursula Wood in October 1940, “Muller-Hartmann is home again.”<sup>68</sup>

Besides the Müller-Hartmann family, another notable person whom Vaughan Williams helped was Dr. Richard Fuchs. Discussed in detail in a letter to Maud Karpeles from February 1939, Vaughan Williams implored:

I hate writing begging letters – I know in my bones that you have already done more than your share for refugees – Here is a case – I just send it for what it is worth....Dr. Fuchs (Jew) is an Architect from Karlsruhe – was in a concentration camp for two months – was then released and obliged to leave. He made arrangements to go to New Zealand. The authorities there required that he should bring £1000 for himself, wife and 2 daughters. This, at the time he had, but by the time he reached England the Nazis had left him only £300. His passage is already booked for Feb 17 but unless he can get the money he will have to forfeit it as it was paid in German money. He has now managed to raise £600 and it seems to me that it would be tragic if he could not sail to New Zealand where there are good prospects for him because of this. He is a fully qualified architect with all the German diplomas & incidentally an excellent musician & a charming cultivated man with a very nice and capable wife. Owing to the fact that he came to England at the private invitation of some friends in Dorking he is debarred from any of the public refugee funds.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/2/1 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Also found in Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 311-312. Additionally, there is a reference to another refugee that Vaughan Williams may have been helping to immigrate to Canada. The same letter notes: “I thank you so much for the Canadian documents. I have written twice to Rosemary now – and had no answer yet.”

<sup>69</sup> Maud Karpeles replied to this letter on February 5<sup>th</sup> with the promise to pay the requested fifty pounds. See MS. Mus. 1714/1/12 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Also found in Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 272. In addition to Karpeles, the composer is recorded as having requested money and help from the violinist Vera Hockman dated 3 February 1939. See MS. Mus. 1714/1/12 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

While surviving letters fail to trace fully the resolution of Dr. Fuch's predicament, Vaughan Williams was successful in helping the Jewish architect. As Vaughan Williams wrote to Frederick Page in January 1943, "If you ever go to Wellington, do make the acquaintance of my friend Dr. Fuchs, 8 Firth Terrace, Wellington Karori, N.Z."<sup>70</sup> This letter is proof that not only was Vaughan Williams soliciting financial aid from his friends and colleagues, but that he was personally giving financing support to refugees.

In addition to Dr. Fuchs and his wife, Vaughan Williams aiding other refugees through his many contacts throughout the British Commonwealth. For example, a letter to the Australian composer Alexander Burnard (1900-1971) dated February 1939 mentions that an Austrian refugee by the name of Julius Katay hoped to immigrate to Australia. According to Vaughan Williams, Katay was "very well spoken of by those whose judgment I trust - if you come across him & can help him I should be very grateful."<sup>71</sup> Additionally, the composer regularly sent his Dorking neighbors a prospectus for the Dorking & District Refugee Committee. Enclosed within this pamphlet would be a letter asking for financial pledges and support for refugees, listing Vaughan Williams as both the Financial Appeal Secretary and a member of the Executive Committee.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/26 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>71</sup> See Alexander Burnard Papers preserved at the Newcastle University library, Australia. Also available as VWL 3990 in online database of Vaughan Williams's Letters.

<sup>72</sup> Some letter recipients include Cedric Glover and Fiona McCleary. See MS. Mus. 1714/1/12 and MS Mus. 1737 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

Determined to leave no stone unturned, Vaughan Williams even wrote in June 1942 to Beryl Locke, Ursula Wood's mother, who lived in Canada about an Austrian refugee named Mrs. Sternbach. Living in Dorking with her daughter, this woman's husband, Karl Sternbach, was working in Toronto. He asked Locke to "advise me about any steps I could take" to get both Mrs. Sternbach and her daughter reunited with her husband as quickly as possible.<sup>73</sup>

In addition, Vaughan Williams assisted his friend Harriet Cohen, the noted pianist, with her charitable activities. A popular soloist who had premiered Vaughan Williams's Piano Concerto in 1933, Cohen worked tirelessly to save as many German Jews as she could; her efforts started in 1933 and lasted through the war. Additionally, she would perform concerts to benefit refugees, including a famous concert assisted by Albert Einstein in 1934 in order to raise funds for the immigration of Jewish scientists fleeing Germany.<sup>74</sup>

Vaughan Williams's collaboration with Cohen represented just one facet of his work for Jewish refugees. In 1938, Vaughan Williams also wrote to David Cleghorn Thompson, the Scottish Labour Candidate and Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, regarding Fritz Jahoda. A pianist and conductor who had fled from both Germany and Austria, at that time Jahoda was a refugee in

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<sup>73</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/13 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>74</sup> Even though Vaughan Williams dedicated his Piano Concerto to Cohen, he did not take sufficient account of her small hands: the concerto has many thick, wide-spaced chords that she had to arpeggiate. See Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Piano Concerto in C Major* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936).

England who was in the process of applying for residency.<sup>75</sup> Limited in his ability to help, Vaughan Williams wrote that he “already heard personally from Mr. Jahoda,” and that he had “written a testimonial - The best I could do after only hearing him play once for about 15 minutes.”<sup>76</sup> Even after the war officially ended, Vaughan Williams continued to contact Thompson about refugees, including one instance in 1948 regarding Dr. Sohn – a former refugee scientist who was trying to retrieve his scientific books, which had been misplaced during the war.<sup>77</sup> No matter how trivial or difficult a situation was, Vaughan Williams was prepared to lavish time and money to help them.

### **The Policies of CEMA**

As a direct result of the increase in refugees immigrating to Britain, those individuals who were professional musicians soon began to find work by freelancing in the numerous orchestras throughout Britain. This had a direct impact on the homegrown British performers, who, eager to help at first, found themselves unemployed due to the influx of foreign musicians. This circumstance, combined with the shrinking performance opportunities that encompassed the reality of wartime Britain, put British instrumentalists in a bind. In order to prevent the

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<sup>75</sup> Jahoda eventually immigrated to the United States after securing residency in England.

<sup>76</sup> Letter MS. S.P.S.L. 288/7, f. 540 kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford and also see VWL 4974 in online database of Vaughan Williams’s Letters.

<sup>77</sup> Apparently Dr. Sohn intended to travel to Palestine and sent eight hundred volumes of his books there before abandoning the plan, and therefore required two hundred pounds to have them returned to England. MS. S.P.S.L. 552/4, f. 381 kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford and also see VWL 4971 in online database of Vaughan Williams’s Letters.



disastrous loss of musical performance that had happened during the First World War, a national committee was organized in order to request both government aid and private support to ensure the continued performance of music and the arts during the war. This board was formally recognized as the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA).

The germination of CEMA began in December 1939, through an informal conference discussing the need for cultural activities to continue during wartime to uplift morale.<sup>78</sup> Dr. Thomas Jones describes the origins of the Council:

Lord De La Warr, then President of the Board of Education, rang up the Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust to sound him about an idea and a possible grant, nothing very much, £5000 perhaps;...and it was arranged that the president of the Board should meet, without prejudice, the Chairman of the Trust, Lord Macmillan. They met on December 14, 1939. Lord De La Warr was enthusiastic, and Lord Macmillan's grave judicial calm collapsed suddenly and completely.<sup>79</sup>

The Council was at-first allocated a budget of £25,000 in the form of a grant that proved to be insufficient to meet the needs of the organization. Therefore, in order to circumvent this, the Council members immediately began to campaign for more substantial sources of funding.

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<sup>78</sup> See EL 1-1 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK. This was actually a Victorian ideal that dates back to the mid-nineteenth-century when music was used as a socioeconomic tool in order to musically uplift and inspire the middle and working classes. For example, "music, and especially choral singing, with its perceived relationship to God and the church, came to be regarded as one of the most important means of achieving moral elevation." See Sarah E. Taylor, "Finding Themselves: Musical Revolutions in Nineteenth-century Staffordshire" in Rachel Cowgill and Peter Holman, *Music in the British Provinces, 1690-1914* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 234-35.

<sup>79</sup> "Music and the Arts – How a Growing Popular Demand Has Been Met: The Work of C.E.M.A." in *London Sunday Times*, Issue 49304 (Times Newspaper Limited, document #CS85277443, 3 August 1942), 5.

Set up in December 1939 with a grant of £25,000 from the Pilgrim Trust, with an additional sum of the same amount matched by the Treasury in April 1940, there were high hopes for CEMA. The “highbrow” version of the “lowbrow” ENSA [Entertainments National Service Association], which was also set up at the outbreak of war to recruit performers to entertain the armed forces, CEMA became the Arts Council in 1946.<sup>80</sup>

With their mission in mind to support “highbrow” music-making, CEMA members went to work defining their organization:

In the first weeks of the war several factors forced the state to recognize the vital importance of art and music. Several thousand artists and musicians had been thrown out of employment; evacuation meant that numbers of people suddenly found themselves in remote rural districts with no occupation for their enforced leisure; the black-out made ordinary concert and theater-going impossible. These misfortunes had one counterbalancing advantage: they made people realize that the concerts, theaters, and picture galleries which they had taken for granted did satisfy a need, so that without them they hungered for life-enhancing sights and sounds. It was thus by consciousness of real necessity that the Government were induced to undertake some of the functions of private patronage, and even to extend those functions in un-thought of directions.<sup>81</sup>

With the initial demand for live music serving as sufficient proof to the ministry that a societal need was being fulfilled through CEMA’s services, the membership began to expand upon its initial goals.

One important program instituted by the Council because of wartime needs was the public concert series. As the *London Sunday Times* reported: “Born of emergency,

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<sup>80</sup> John Vincent Morris, *Battle for Music: Music and British Wartime Propaganda 1935-1945* (University of Exeter, 2011), 57.

<sup>81</sup> “Music and the Arts – How a Growing Popular Demand Has Been Met: The Work of C.E.M.A.” in *London Sunday Times*, Issue 49304 (Times Newspaper Limited, document #CS85277443, 3 August 1942), 5.

C.E.M.A.'s first duty was to provide music and drama for people cut off from the arts."<sup>82</sup> The Nazi air raids gave CEMA a purpose, as during the winter of 1940-41 a chief activity of the Council was to supply musical performances in public air raid shelters and rest centers. In other words, CEMA was sending ensembles to perform publicly in places such as the London Underground. This also included the dispatching of traveling musicians to areas that were hit hard during the Blitz, such as London's East End and coastal towns. As the *Times* noted, "The adventures of the artists, driving with their instruments from shelter to shelter amid falling bombs and shrapnel, form a curious prelude to the growth of State patronage in England."<sup>83</sup> In support of these aims, CEMA's work in music functioned on two levels: providing concerts to people in severely stricken areas; and by supporting those groups—both amateur and professional—that would normally in peacetime had gotten together to perform, but lacked funds and equipment to do so during the war.<sup>84</sup>

By 1941, CEMA had a budget of £60,000 for musical activities alone, which was used to fund amateur music performance and concert series for public consumption. These events included chamber performances, string orchestra concerts, hospital and civil defense performances, and factory concerts.<sup>85</sup> In fact, Mary Glasgow, the Council's secretary, estimated there were fifteen hundred music concerts sponsored

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> See EL 2-11 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

by CEMA in 1941 alone.<sup>86</sup> The popularity of the performances quickly grew, and from October 1943 to April 1944 there was a monthly average of over six thousand people attending these concerts.<sup>87</sup> John Huntley recalled that CEMA maintained an aim in 1942 “to bring the best to as many people as possible to cheer them on to better times.”<sup>88</sup> At a meeting in September 1942, “it was explained that music was inevitably the most expensive of the Council’s activities at present,” but that “it was the most suitable to meet emergency war-time needs.”<sup>89</sup> The music budget was the largest allocation of all artistic endeavors because it could reach a much wider audience than other arts could at the time. Thus, CEMA concerts provided a noticeably needed service of performance entertainment in a climate where most outdoor activities, hobbies, and sporting events were canceled due to black-outs and rationing.

Furthermore, the efforts of CEMA filled a needed gap that contrasted with already-established music foundations that supported professional ensembles such as the London Symphony Orchestra and BBC ensembles. By supporting concerts by amateur and other local organizations:

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<sup>86</sup> See EL 2-9 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>87</sup> See EL 2-7 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>88</sup> John Huntley, *British Film Music* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 124.

<sup>89</sup> See EL 1-6 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

C.E.M.A., under the early inspiration of that lovable optimist, the late Sir Walter Davies, gave special encouragement to amateur music-making. The policy of encouraging local communities to make their own music continues, but the models provided for them, in C.E.M.A.'s touring orchestras and performers, are bringing about higher standard; and the present musical director, Dr. Reginald Jaques, is fully conscious of the truth that mediocrity, however well-meaning, is ultimately fatal to art.<sup>90</sup>

Vaughan Williams was acutely aware of the connections between music and philanthropy. During his tenure as a board member of CEMA, the composer played an active role in promoting musical outreach to all classes of British subjects throughout the war.

### **Vaughan Williams's Participation in CEMA**

With no regard for his own reputation, Vaughan Williams enlisted his fellow musicians to support the war effort. A.E.F. Dickinson observed the composer's efforts, which he mentioned in an article published 16 May 1940 that also discussed the need for professional support of wartime amateur music:

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<sup>90</sup> Music and the Arts – How a Growing Popular Demand Has Been Met: The Work of C.E.M.A." in *London Sunday Times*, Issue 49304 (Times Newspaper Limited, document #CS85277443, 3 August 1942), 5. In the meeting of 2 September 1942, after Vaughan Williams joined the Council, he is recorded as having "made a special plea that the Council should not dissociate themselves from amateur music-making activity." Dr. Jacques agreed with Vaughan Williams, and the Council dutifully listened to the composer's argument to begin supporting the salaries of professional musicians brought in to supplement amateur groups. This action, the composer argued, would allow for better, and more diverse performances to reach even rural areas, as well as an expansion of musical repertoire. See EL 1-6 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

In the *Listener* Dr. Vaughan Williams made some suggestions for the closer approach of composers and their potential public. Composers might begin with a wider cultivation of voices, the most likely instrumental group in times of dislocation and worse, and in general make a fresh study of amateur needs with a view to rendering musical culture more popular. The public might meet the dearth of concerts and broadcast music by joining forces, however unorthodox, in instrumental ensemble, in a revival of home music, and by being ready to welcome any composer who anticipates their demand for music apt for voices and/or odd, half-specified instruments. As conductor and composer, Vaughan Williams has led village singers to unbelievable adventures, and when he writes of amateur possibilities, he is in a position to give the young composer salutary advice, however unpalatable in its postponement of the higher flights which the professional music-makers offer. The time-spirit favors the awakening of the unpredictable amateur bodies more than ever. Composers must choose between these straggling village and suburban walks and the receding highway of major orchestral concerts.<sup>91</sup>

Once again, this article provides proof that Vaughan Williams was actively engaged in promoting amateur music, thereby setting the example he encouraged of his fellow colleagues.

Communication between Vaughan Williams and the council secretary for CEMA can be traced to the start of the war. While not yet officially affiliated with the organization, Vaughan Williams sent a letter to the Council. Dated 13 December 1939, his letter outlined his intentions and aim of assisting CEMA. As he wrote to composer Elizabeth Lutyens,

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<sup>91</sup> Dickinson, "What Do We Want with Music in War-Time?" from *The Musical Times*, vol. 81, no. 1174 (Dec., 1940), 479-80.

I shall be happy to do what I can on your Council – but not as Chairman please. For one thing I do not live in London and therefore cannot be sure of frequent attendance. Secondly, I do not know really enough of the details of the working of the society. Thirdly, I belong to the [committee] of several other societies and if they came into conflict my choice of loyalties [would] be more difficult than merely as a member of your Council. Honestly I think I shall be much more useful to you as an ordinary member.<sup>92</sup>

Vaughan Williams was an active supporter of CEMA's amateur music programs, a stance that would later put him in opposition to the Council's drift towards supporting professional groups.<sup>93</sup> In fact, in a letter to Lutyens dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1939 before officially joining the Council, Vaughan Williams clearly outlined his goals for aiding CEMA:

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<sup>92</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/12 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Also found in Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 295-96.

<sup>93</sup> As Jörn Weingärtner aptly stated: "Vaughan Williams was throughout his term on the Council a rather inconvenient voice who advocated all forms of amateur work contrary to the majority of the CEMA staff including Keynes and Clark." See Jörn Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War: Britain and the Shaping of National Morale in the Second World War* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 107. Additionally, Eric White's book on CEMA also contains some amusing anecdotes of Vaughan Williams and his support of amateur musicians. See Eric W. White, *The Arts Council of Great Britain*, 263.

I am most anxious to help and [would] be glad to give my name to your Council if I can be sure that it is not merely overlapping & creating yet another body of which there are already too many. You have doubtless envisaged these – but in case you have not – I mention a few which have all written to enlist my sympathy (1) I.S.M. ‘Concerts in Wartime’ (2) Federation of rural music (Miss Ibbetson 106 Gloucester Place W.1) (3) Society of Women Musicians Concert Parties (4) ‘Council of Music’ (or some such name with rather high falutin’ terms of reference with T. Beecham at the head & John Goss for Secretary) There are also, of course, the various rural community Councils, the ATNS (or whatever it is for concerts to troops) & the National Council for Social Service. Would it not be a good plan to get in touch with one or more of these & work with them rather than start a new organization? But I daresay you have already thought this all out.<sup>94</sup>

While a firm supporter of amateur music-making, Vaughan Williams also supported CEMA in underwriting “highbrow” concert performances, and he also assisted the Entertainments National Service Association (or as he mistakenly referred to as “ATNS”) promote “lowbrow” concerts for the troops. By all surviving accounts, the composer spent his early years on the Council by addressing these objectives.

From October-December 1940, Vaughan Williams was invited by Mary Glasgow to help organize music concerts for the growing number of evacuees and troops stationed in Surrey in order to escape the Battle of Britain. While beginning with concerts in central London, the idea was to eventually arrange a big concert in Dorking in December. Vaughan Williams stressed the importance of keeping ticket prices low, and advocated for free tickets for the troops.<sup>95</sup> After much difficulty

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<sup>94</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/12 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Also found in Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 293-294.

<sup>95</sup> See EL 2-61 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK. Also found in Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 312.



concerning logistics, the Dorking concert was given with great success: it provided a welcome short-term comfort to both stationed troops and evacuees from London.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, these concerts were performed on a shoestring budget. When money could not be found to pay for a planned event such as the Dorking concert, more often than not, Vaughan Williams donated the money himself. However, with the increase in performances came an increase in expenses, which accumulated over the years.

Two years later, due to his initial involvement, one of the first official notes from the Council secretary Elizabeth Lutyens sent to Vaughan Williams on behalf of the Council members implored, "I hope very much you will be able to join CEMA. I have already heard much of what you have done, personally, to assist the Council's activities and to make known its objects in your own county, and I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your very valuable help and interest."<sup>97</sup> A copy of this letter was eventually sent to Vaughan Williams on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1941, and an acceptance letter was dispatched to the Council by the first of May.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> More letters addressing this concert can be found in MS. Mus. 1714/1/13 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections, and in Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 312.

<sup>97</sup> See EL 2-20 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK. In her husband's biography, Ursula Vaughan Williams also mentions how Vaughan Williams was busy in London working for CEMA and helping refugees starting in 1942 and continuing in 1945 after the war had ended. See Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 247 & 264.

<sup>98</sup> See EL 2-20 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK. In fact, it is quoted in government papers that "Vaughan Williams can be credited with having no small part in the creation of CEMA, the predecessor of today's Arts Council. Established soon after the war had begun, by December 1940 and after only a year in existence, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts was 'carrying first-class music, drama and paintings, as a means of stimulus and refreshment both mental and spiritual, to places which have only infrequent opportunity of enjoying them and, under present conditions, might otherwise have no such opportunity at all.'" See Board of Education

The first mentioning of Vaughan Williams formally joining the Council in the CEMA minutes cannot be found until it is noted in the Council meeting occurring on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1941, were it further mentions that Professor B. Ifor Evans (1899-1982), Educational Director to the British Council, was appointed as a CEMA board member as well.<sup>99</sup> In addition to sponsoring of concerts, the Council further took an interest in the numerous societies in which Vaughan Williams was actively involved. Since many of these organizations had similar goals to those of CEMA, some of the societies were added to the list of supported charities/organizations by the Council.<sup>100</sup>

In addition, Vaughan Williams was an active supporter of the Council's traveler musicians.<sup>101</sup> Addressing this unique program directly on 31 July 1943, Vaughan Williams sent a confidential letter to Mary Glasgow, who served as Council secretary after the departure of Elizabeth Lutyens. This was a long letter on behalf of the traveler musicians, whose duties consisted of bringing music performances to rural villages and isolated populations who had limited access to music. Included in this letter was the specific mentioning of one particular traveler, the violinist Miss Sybil Eaton (1897-1989). Vaughan Williams describes the issue in detail to Ms. Glasgow:

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Administrative Memorandum No.268 to Local Education Authorities, 27 December 1940 in TNA ED 138/14 located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. Also found in John Vincent Morris, *Battle for Music: Music and British Wartime Propaganda 1935-1945*, 57.

<sup>99</sup> See EL 1-6 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK. Also found in Eric W. White, *The Arts Council of Great Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Davis-Poynter, 1975), 36.

<sup>100</sup> See EL 1-6 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>101</sup> See EL 2-20 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

Here is my promised cantankerous letter. It concerns a letter which was sent in your name to Miss Sybil Eaton and, presumably, to other of our travelers besides and Miss Eaton has given me full leave to comment on it. You already know, of course, that she has sent in her resignation as a result of this letter. She was chiefly upset by the sentence 'The Council will not expect the Music Advisers to take very much part themselves as performers at CEMA concerts.' Miss Eaton considers and I think rightly that unless she can take part as performer in the scheme she is being reduced to the position of a mere concert agent. I challenged Dr. Jacques [(1894-1969) organist and conductor that was the first director of CEMA] when I met him with the sentence and he told me that in her case 'it meant nothing.' But if it means nothing why write it? The next sentence starting 'how far it would be possible' etc seems to suggest that those travelers who do not fit in with some new scheme, not yet clearly defined, will receive their Congé. Miss Eaton also tells me that she has had instructions that 'CEMA concerts must be made to pay' and that in consequence the pioneer concerts in remote villages which obviously cannot pay and in which the services of the traveler as performer would be particularly valuable, must be discontinued. Unless Miss Eaton has also misunderstood this part of her instructions this policy seems to me to be drifting in the direction of 'window dressing' rather than fostering art, and reducing CEMA to little more than a commercial concert agency. These symptoms may be unimportant in themselves and would not trouble me so much if they did not coincide with the new policy which our new chairman appears to me to advocate in all his pronouncements.<sup>102</sup>

While describing the unique circumstances surrounding Miss Eaton's disagreement with the Council's policies, Vaughan Williams takes the side of the traveler fellows who sincerely hoped to bring music to everyone. He argues that the policy of CEMA to allow for only paid performances, including the frequent insistence that the

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<sup>102</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/15 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Also found in Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 360-361. The challenge to Dr. Jacques mentioned in this letter as further discussed between the composer and Ms. Glasgow, as both Council members did not really like Dr. Jacques leadership and were hoping he would leave CEMA. The letter indicates that he instead chose to stay at least until the end of the war. Addressing this in a letter dated 13 February 1944, Vaughan Williams stated "My two objects were (1) to shake people up generally (2) to get more cash for rural music. I hope I have succeeded in both." See EL 2-20 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

traveler not take part in these performances, was not an original aim of the Council. Instead, he countered, “this policy seems to me to be drifting in the direction of ‘window dressing’ rather than of fostering art, and reducing CEMA to little more than a commercial concert agency.”<sup>103</sup> While no concrete decision on the traveler music program is found in surviving CEMA minutes, the next few letters Vaughan Williams sent to Ms. Glasgow primarily discuss this issue. These communications repeatedly remind the secretary that he specifically wanted to be part of Council in order to help spread music to all corners of Britain.<sup>104</sup>

In fact, this issue was robustly debated by the Council from 1942 to 1944. At the meeting on 20 October 1942, Vaughan Williams once again championed moving funds designated to support established orchestras into helping develop amateur musicians, ensembles, and county music advisers.<sup>105</sup> In the meeting on 16 June 1943, Vaughan Williams once again championed the importance of the Council’s role in bridging the gap between professional and amateur musicians.<sup>106</sup> This is further supported in the minutes of the 20 July 1943 meeting, where Vaughan Williams “protested strongly that it was not the function of the Council to provide a setting for the arts, but rather to foster the arts themselves.”<sup>107</sup> Additionally, he did not want funds “diverted from the provision of concerts in places starved of music

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<sup>103</sup> See EL 2-20 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> See EL 1-6 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>106</sup> See EL 1-7 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

to the acquisition of buildings.”<sup>108</sup> In spite of the composer’s loyalty to amateurs, CEMA transitioned gradually toward subverting established professional ensembles. While Vaughan Williams took part willingly in victory concerts sponsored by CEMA in 1945 and 1946, he harbored an uneasy realization that the organization’s goals were beginning to change.<sup>109</sup>

Vaughan Williams began to part ways with CEMA. Once the Council formally changed its title to the “Arts Council of Great Britain” it appears as though Vaughan Williams began stepping away. He completely missed the meetings in July and October 1945.<sup>110</sup> In addition to a growing desire to lessen his commitments, it becomes clear that he disagreed with the direction that the organization was heading in, including the types of funding that it was providing to various projects. Some particular points of contention that Vaughan Williams had with the Council, and thereby hastened his decision to resign, can be found in surviving the CEMA meeting files. These issues include the disbanding of traveling musicians; lack of support for amateur performers; and ignoring of funding for all types of musical ensembles. While the composer personally supported high-ranking orchestras and

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. This comment was made in reference to CEMA possibly giving funds to help pay for a new performance venue for a professionally funded orchestra. See also Jörn Weingärtner *The Arts as a Weapon of War: Britain and the Shaping of National Morale in the Second World War*, 113.

<sup>109</sup> See EL 5-46 & EL 5-47 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>110</sup> In spite of these absences, he did make a point to be present for the December meeting, in order to support fair prices for factory worker concerts. See EL 1-7 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

the BBC ensembles, he felt that CEMA should be devoting their resources to groups that were less obviously known.<sup>111</sup>

As CEMA was reorganized into the Arts Council of Great Britain after the war and was separated into sub-categories, Council members found themselves more restricted as to what types of music the organization supported. For example, in discussing the Arts Council inheriting CEMA's active policies for assisting opera, ballet, music, and drama: "When the panels were originally set up, Dr. R. Vaughan Williams, who was then a member of the Council, on asking which panel would be responsible for opera and ballet policy, was rather unexpectedly told the Drama Panel, with the proviso that should a step prove necessary, a joint meeting of the Drama and Music Panels might be convened."<sup>112</sup> By the meeting held on 30 January 1945, Vaughan Williams hoped that "films would come within the Council's scope."<sup>113</sup> After all, it was at Vaughan Williams's suggestion that the new general terms for the Council include under Clause 4(a): "to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public throughout the country."<sup>114</sup> Unfortunately, none of his suggestions were taken. However, these examples further demonstrate that, despite Vaughan Williams's gradual disgust and pulling away from Council proceedings, he still

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<sup>111</sup> See EL 2-20 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>112</sup> See Eric W. White, *The Arts Council of Great Britain*, 128.

<sup>113</sup> See EL 1-7 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

maintained the same continual interest in protecting music. By December 1949, the composer resigned from the newly formed Arts Council of Great Britain.<sup>115</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In October 1940, Vaughan Williams wrote to the conductor Adrian Boult (1889-1983) that he had been asked by the Home Office to form a committee tasked with recommending the release of interned musicians of “special distinction.”<sup>116</sup> Similar to the hard work that the composer performed on behalf of Müller-Hartmann, his humanitarian efforts had quickly received government recognition. This special attention from Ministry officials would allow for more British-born musicians and European refugees to be excluded from activities that would put them in danger, and instead support both the war effort and the British public through musical outreach and entertainment. Nevertheless, his efforts came at a literal cost, as Vaughan Williams was forced to consistently search for financial sources to support both musicians and refugees throughout the war.

The simple fact was that by 1940 Vaughan Williams and his invalid wife Adeline needed extra income. Besides her medical expenses, and through his work with CEMA, the composer was spending large amounts of his personal income to pay sponsorship fees for incoming war refugees, and to pay for morale-boosting concerts. During the early 1940s, composers were paid much more for a film score

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<sup>115</sup> See EL 2-20 in the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives in London, UK.

<sup>116</sup> BBC Written Archives Center Music General Files, R27/509, RVW 1940-1949 file 1 and also see VWL 1458 in online database of Vaughan Williams’s Letters. See also Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 282.

than for a work for the concert hall. When Vaughan Williams first evinced an active interest in composing music for film, it seemed to be the perfect opportunity to serve his country and earn much-needed cash.

While no official invoices survive, it can be estimated that Vaughan Williams made around £1200-£1500 per film. In modern currency values, this represented, based on the value of the pound sterling during the years 1941-43, roughly £50-£67,000 today (about \$61,200-\$84,400 per film in dollars). However, this present day sum was lower than other well-known British composers were demanding during the 1940s—for instance William Walton received double this amount for his film scores.<sup>117</sup> For patriotic reasons, Vaughan Williams accepted lower pay from the financially strapped Ministry of Information. Even with a reduced fee, however, the additional wealth that Vaughan Williams accrued through film music during the war would assist both his bank balance and his vital philanthropy.

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<sup>117</sup> In comparison, Walton apparently made £3000 for composing the music for *Henry V* (1945). Recollection provided by Daniel Goldmark from a talk given by John Huntley in 2000.



## Chapter 2 - The Production and Reception of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*

### The British Pursuit of the United States

When Britain declared war on Germany in 1939, the United States stood firm behind the isolationist policies voted on by Congress and reluctantly upheld by the Roosevelt Administration. The United States provided a key advantage in power and was bombarded by both propaganda media and politics from European nations on both sides of the conflict. While German agents worked to encourage U.S. isolationist policies, or essentially ignore the European conflict, Britain knew that its survival depended on American support and resources. By 10 May 1940, German forces entered Holland and Belgium before marching towards France, and the survival of the Allied forces hinged on American aid. Within five days, no Allied forces stood between the Germans and the English Channel.<sup>118</sup> By July 1940, in an effort to counter Axis forces, Churchill urged the Ministry of Information (MoI) to develop its American plans “with all speed” in order to turn U.S. policies away from isolationism through propaganda.<sup>119</sup> In the summer of 1940, Britain’s emotionally-tinged message began to work, thus enabling the Prime Minister to purchase a consignment of American-made aircraft.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American “Neutrality” in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 68-69.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 77.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 64-67

The British ambassador to the United States in 1940 was Lord Lothian<sup>121</sup> – a man who understood that “the U.S., like all other nations, will only act when its own vital interests – which include its ideas – are menaced.”<sup>122</sup> Regular reports to and from Lord Lothian included information concerning where films could be shown, what types of movies would be most effective, and the use of subtitles internationally except for the United States.<sup>123</sup> Thanks to Lothian’s efforts, the German Embassy reported that “public opinion is being systematically whipped into a state of panic.”<sup>124</sup> With this aim in mind, the MoI subsidized production of informational shorts and a full-length feature film in order to persuade American audiences to abandon isolationism and join the Allies. The feature film, entitled *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* in the British Commonwealth and released under the title *The Invaders* in the United States, was the first film ever scored by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

This chapter will discuss *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (1941). Through extensive research into archival materials, it will trace the filming process, important events at the time, the

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<sup>121</sup> Philip Henry Kerr (1882-1940), known as Lord Lothian, served as British Ambassador to the United States from 1939 until his death and was instrumental in gaining American support for the British war effort.

<sup>122</sup> Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American “Neutrality” in World War II*, 63-4.

<sup>123</sup> See INF 1/628 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK

<sup>124</sup> Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American “Neutrality” in World War II*, 78. This technique was employed to the point that Kenneth Clark wrote in a memorandum to the Policy Committee 22 January 1941 that “urged propagandists to ‘stress the great difference between the Germany of 1914-18 and today by pointing out how in the last war all the best elements of German culture and science were still in Germany and were supporting the German cause, whereas now they are outside Germany and are supporting us.’” See INF/849 “It’s the same old Hun” memorandum to the Policy Committee by Kenneth Clark, 22 January 1941 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. Also quoted in Jo Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany* (New York: Berg, 2007), 146.

impact of the music used in the film, and the reception of the film both at home and in the United States. Unlike *Coastal Command* (1942) and *Flemish Farm* (1943), this film was made with an American audience in mind. As the most famous British composer of the time, the Ministry of Information was keenly aware of the propaganda value of his name, which was featured prominently in the opening credits. In addition, the makers of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* were aware of the contrast between Vaughan Williams and composers collaborating with Nazi Germany. Unlike later films scored by Vaughan Williams, the music was not composed in advance, thereby following more traditional scoring practices. These practices will be analyzed through the surviving scores for this film in the following chapter.

### **The Making of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel***

When the time came to generate the subject matter for the Ministry's first full-length film, it was decided early on that the scenario needed to address the threat of a Nazi invasion in Canada and the United States. In government records dated 28 June 1940 and entitled "We Stand Fast," it is recorded that the

Home Publicity Sub-Committee directed that, as a matter of urgency, propaganda should seek to illustrate 'what invasion would mean for the British way of life. When the Germans invade,' the Ministry warned, 'if they come here, their terrible secret police and their brutal soldiers would come into our homes. Any knock at the door might mean prison and torture in prison.'<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> See INF 1/251 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. Also cited in Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany*, 151.

For these reasons, it was believed to be vitally important to make a film like *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* set in Canada which, although distant, was part of the Commonwealth and right on the border with the United States.

For the success of the British film industry, John Huntley wrote, “The war gave us the answer in the fictional-documentary film.”<sup>126</sup> In keeping with Ministry propaganda, this film was meant to demonstrate the “why we fight” angle of MoI propaganda. As the American public was overburdened with wartime propaganda from both sides, “repeated exposure taught Americans to understand both the accent and the message beneath the British understatement.”<sup>127</sup> Due to the fear of overexposure, the British message had to be subtle and yet provide enough of an emotional charge to resonate on an ideological, yet still relatable level. In fact, the reason that the film was retitled for American consumers was because Colombia pictures and Ministry officials believed that the propaganda would be less effective if the title had to be explained to audiences. Essentially, they felt that most Americans did not know what the global longitude of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel was, or the significance of this open border. Therefore, the title was changed to make the acting and dialogue in the prologue more understandable to Americans. While the initial

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<sup>126</sup> John Huntley, *British Film Music* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 50. John Huntley (1921-2003) was a film historian who initially worked as one of Muir Mathieson’s film music assistants after serving in the Royal Air Force during the war.

<sup>127</sup> Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American “Neutrality” in World War II*, 86.

thought was to change the title to be “Five Men,” it was eventually decided to use “The Invaders.”<sup>128</sup>

Looking to craft a strong message, the Ministry gave approval to Michael Powell to direct the film with the original screenplay and story written by Emeric Pressburger.<sup>129</sup> In a demonstration of full support, Duff Cooper, the Minister of Information in 1940, gave Powell a blank check to make a large-budget propaganda film aimed directly at the U.S. market. Powell planned a film to “scare the pants off the Americans and bring them into the war sooner.”<sup>130</sup>

Before the script was even written, Powell pitched the idea to the Ministry of Information who in turn funded a research trip to Canada of about £2500 in April 1940. The team members included Powell, Pressburger, Bill Paton, film editor John Seabourne, and production manager Bill Gillet.<sup>131</sup> After this scouting trip, Pressburger wrote a script of “unrelenting propaganda” but the production was plagued with difficulties. Amongst location and financial troubles, one major setback

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<sup>128</sup> See TS 27/485 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK

<sup>129</sup> David Lean, the film editor for this film, was brought on to the project at the last minute and later remembered the great impression that Pressburger’s script had on him: “I settled down with it after dinner,’ he said, ‘and I couldn’t stop. I was still reading it at seven the next morning. It was fabulous.” On the opposite end, Lean found Powell’s footage to be wild and irregular – most likely due to the difficulties that arose while filming on location – and ultimately felt that the film did not live up to the script. See Kevin Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1994), 180. David Lean would later achieve notoriety as the director of epic films such as *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), and *Doctor Zhivago* (1965).

<sup>130</sup> Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American “Neutrality” in World War II*, 84.

<sup>131</sup> Kevin Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter* (Great Britain: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1994), 167. On this six-week trip, they traveled through Winnipeg to Vancouver and received numerous letters of introduction. “One of their letters of introduction was to a young playboy, the brother of a government minister. They spent the day with him at the races and dined on his yacht. He was to find his way into the film as the dilettante Philip Armstrong Scott, played by Leslie Howard.” See Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter*, 171.

included the original female lead Elizabeth Bergner (1897-1986) skipping south of the border with her “enemy alien” husband. Despite her intent to abandon the film, Bergner did manage to shoot some of the exterior scenes before she fled the country, and these shots were used as a double stand-in for Glynis Johns, who took over for Bergner during production at Denham Studios.<sup>132</sup> While the abundance of difficulties meant that the film was not finally released until after Pearl Harbor, thereby muting the intended propaganda message, it succeeded in winning the Oscar for best screenplay in 1942.<sup>133</sup>

Despite the issues caused by Bergner’s departure during filming, an even bigger concern was keeping the film’s screenwriter and collaborator from leaving Britain as well. Although he was allowed to undertake an initial scouting trip to Canada with Powell, Pressburger was detained from joining the film crew for location shooting. Pressburger wrote a letter to Powell during filming dated September 7, 1940:

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<sup>132</sup> This marked one of the few instances of the reversal of a known star becoming the stand-in for a newcomer actress. Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter*, 176. Known for films such as *As You Like It* (1936) and *Paris Calling* (1941), Bergner lobbied to Powell to have a role in the film. A copy of Bergner’s agreement letter is kept in the unclassified government documents from the production. The letter states that Bergner would be paid £2,000 for her role of Ruth in the film, and that if she would play the exterior scenes shot in Canada, the company would pay for all travel and living expenses to and from Canada. The letter finishes with: “The hope to be of help in a propaganda picture of national importance is the reason why I give my services under the aforementioned conditions.” See TS 27/485 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. Despite these hints as to Bergner’s intent, Powell did not suspect any difficulties from her as per a letter written to Pressburger during the crossing for principle location filming. See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19/3 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK. Some of Bergner’s account is saved in the Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19/17 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>133</sup> Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American “Neutrality” in World War II*, 84. This situation is also mentioned in surviving telegrams and letters during production, see Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

I think you will get this letter together with the one I wrote to you yesterday attached to the rest of the script. In the meantime I had to give up finally the trip to Canada. My passport has been found but the Home Office has declined to give me either an endorsement or a letter permitting me to return to this country. The MoI has declared that it is not able to do more in this matter than it has done already and I won't go without a positive assurance from the proper authorities.<sup>134</sup>

Pressburger was labeled an "alien" due to his Hungarian birth and consequently was under strict surveillance, including reporting weekly to the Home Office. He simply could not leave the country or obtain a valid passport. This same letter further addresses the enormous budget problems that Powell and the production were facing in Canada, to the point where the film was facing enquiry from the Select Committee on National Expenditure, and the MoI was considering pulling the plug. Desperate to be useful, Pressburger continues:

How on earth can I be helpful to you? You must have a very difficult time out there and you can certainly think that you are not getting the support you should from here. But the people here (The Ministry, Deutsch) see only the dark side of the production, from the nice side they never get a glimpse. If they would have seen some of the bits of the materials which you have got already perhaps everything would go easier.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter*, 176-178.

<sup>135</sup> See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19/7 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK. Also cited in Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter*, 176-178. There are letters regarding Pressburger's predicament and enemy alien status kept in the Emeric Pressburger Collection at the BFI. See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK. In an open letter dated 10 April 1940 from Kenneth Clark, head of MOI Films Division, to the Home Office, confirming that Pressburger's visit Canada was solely for the purpose of making the film under the auspices of the MOI, Clark wrote "It is essential to the interests of said picture that Mr Pressburger returns with his associates to England and that he be given a permit for that purpose." See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19/1 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

In an effort to support his friend and collaborator, Powell did everything he could to help Pressburger's situation, including writing to government officials and noting the delay this would cause the production. In the end, Powell eventually left without his screenwriter, but the two men stayed in constant contact through telegrams and letters.<sup>136</sup> This situation in which Pressburger was receiving help from Powell is similar to how Vaughan Williams went out of his way to help his immigrant friends and acquaintances labeled as "alien," such as the example of Robert Müller-Hartmann from the previous chapter, making the composer's involvement in this particular film all the more fitting.

Premiered on 8 October 1941, during the final month of the Battle for Britain, the film opens with a Nazi submarine stalking Canada. As a small party of Nazis lands for supplies, the Royal Canadian Air Force sinks the submarine before the stranded crew member's eyes. Having lost their crew, the rest of the film shows these Nazis' struggle to cross the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel—marking the Canadian border—into the neutral United States. From the French-Canadian trappers to the First Nation People outside Vancouver, the Nazi soldiers encounter obstacles at every turn as the crew is either captured or killed. In the end, only the commander is left and, despite nearly making it out alive, none of the Nazis obtain freedom. The film ends with the Canadians (and thereby British sovereignty) prevailing over the invasion threat.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>137</sup> An interesting review of the film is found in the *New Statesman* 18 October 1941 by William Whitebait: "Such tales of escape are not uncommon in wartime, when every hill in enemy territory becomes a Himalaya and every trout stream an unexplored Amazon; every day we are thrilled to



The film featured an all-star cast that included Raymond Massey, Eric Portman, Leslie Howard, Laurence Olivier, Anton Walbrook and Glynis Johns. The diversity of the actors who portrayed the vast differences of the British subjects who lived in Canada. As Andrew Moor writes, “wartime British cinema would create and perpetuate a myth of Britain (and its allies) as a team, with each individual sharing a common purpose. In contrast to the Canadian individuals and communities, Hirth’s landing party is deficient as a group, bickering and self-destructing.”<sup>138</sup>

In *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, the Nazis are portrayed as “brutal and murderous, destroying all the vestiges of tradition, split by internal divisions and petty rivalries, and devoid of cultural appreciation.”<sup>139</sup> Pressburger wrote the first draft of the film on his way back to England from the scouting trip to Canada and, even with its schematized structure, all the characters of the film were humanized. Since the story was to follow the journey of the antagonist characters consisting of the surviving Nazi party, each actor was given a specific background about their intended characters. Pressburger even went into detail about the Nazi submarine captain who dies in the beginning of the film. These descriptions were listed in the shooting scripts passed out to all members of the crew:

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read in the newspapers of French schoolboys crossing the Channel in a canoe, Polish soldiers who have struggled half across Europe to freedom....With each new episode the argument between Hitlerism and Democracy turns another page; the innately peaceful countryside, splendidly photographed and extending over a thousand miles of corn land and mountain, is Democracy’s trump card, and its half-dozen invaders are made to look like cobras in a Surrey garden.” Also see Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, *Britain Can Take It: British Cinema in the Second World War* (Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd., 1986), 39.

<sup>138</sup> Andrew Moor, *Powell and Pressburger: A Cinema of Magic Spaces* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 48.

<sup>139</sup> Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany*, 145.

Captain Bernsdorff is described as pagan man of blood and iron (anti Christianity) who dreams of dying a warriors death and welcomed into Valhalla. He is described as constantly listening to Wagner, dreaming of battle (quotes Bismark about his character "Leave them only their eyes to weep with").

Hirth is described by his fanatical belief in Germany's world domination and all of his actions are based off this fanatical "for the good of Germany" aspect.

Jahner is described as typical young Nazi fanatic "the type who, in the fighting in France, advanced in the face of machine-gun fire arms linked together, exaltingly singing and crying Nazi slogans."

Kuhnecke is the officer-engineer that is both incompetent and a failure before the rise of the Nazi party. Fond of drinking and resentful of others, he was one of the first million and therefore rewarded with a high power job he never would have achieved on his own and crawls to his superiors while bullying those beneath him.

Vogel is the typical Nazi educated young man whose natural kindness and possibilities of being a decent human being with normal instincts are being perverted by Nazi teachings. His true nature blossoms at the Hutterite settlement.

Kranz is described as still mentally being at the age of 12. He is "the ideal type of Nordic manhood" that uses only force and blindly follows orders.

Lohrmann is "sly, cunning and utterly amoral, a superb liar." Unlike Hirth, he lacks the true fanaticism but knows that under Nazi-ism he can prosper.<sup>140</sup>

From these descriptions, it is clear that Pressburger was as intent on demonstrating the diverse backgrounds of the Nazi villains as he was in presenting Canadian protagonists.

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<sup>140</sup> See George Blackler Collection Item 4 at BFI Reuben Library in London, UK.

Included in Powell's autobiography are a few anecdotes about the director and his desire for authenticity. Some of the actors, such as Eric Portman, were highly distrustful of Powell and believed that he would sacrifice anything, including the crew's safety, to complete the picture.<sup>141</sup> In an attempt to be as authentic as possible, the production crew built a complete replica of a German U-Boat in the Hudson Straits and arranged for it to be bombed by the Royal Canadian Air force.<sup>142</sup> Powell writes in his autobiography that during the recreation of the submarine, the actors were apparently unaware of the prop being built in movable sections and containing large amounts of explosives. During the filming of the action sequences, David Lean recalls that there was audio footage of Eric Portman acting out the scene while yelling at Powell that "you'll kill us all for your damn movie!" while Powell's small voice audibly replying "Keep rolling."<sup>143</sup> When it was time to blow up the submarine, the actors were replaced with dummies and the explosives were set from inside the submarine. To achieve the bombing effect, the Royal Canadian Air Force sent over three aircraft that, according to Powell, were actually the entire strength of the RCAF at that time, and were instructed to circle the submarine and get home before their fuel ran out.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Michael Powell, *A life in movies: an autobiography* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 365-375.

<sup>142</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 56. Interior shots for the film was completed at D&P Studios in Denham, England.

<sup>143</sup> Powell, *A life in movies: an autobiography*, 373. This sequence later has its sound removed and is instead replaced by Vaughan Williams's original score.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 374.

In order to obtain mesmerizing footage to support the storyline, Powell took a fully equipped unit over 20,000 miles across Canada to get location sequences, including to areas as far north as the 63<sup>rd</sup> parallel.<sup>145</sup> This trip is described at length in Powell's autobiography, with brief interjections from his continuity secretary and only woman on the expedition, Betty Curtis. Writing from his own perspective, Powell explains the film route, shooting the picture back to front, and praises the cooperation of the Canadian people, Government, and Eskimo villages encountered by the production team.

Owing to the large amount of time, effort, and money spent on obtaining this footage, Powell felt it was vital that the Canadian landscape shots be integrated into the story to establish connections between the characters and the land. The landscape itself was a character, representing the culturally diverse people who lived in Canada. As Andrew Moor writes about the film's aerial footage,

Separated by spectacular location footage of the Canadian landscape (including panoramic aerial shots), there is space enough here to entertain culturally diverse groups which together constitute a racially plural population, united in recognition of its shared Canadian identity, yet also loyal to more local and ethnic forms of organization. Canada's structures of national identity therefore deliberately mirror the constitution of the film's target audience, the USA.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 55-56. Powell also discussed the importance of the second unit of filming under the direction of John Seabourne in obtaining the aerial and landscape shots for the film in an article of the *Kine Weekly*. "One of the main jobs of the second unit,' he said, 'was to obtain the important backgrounds (back projection plates) for the studio sequences.'" See *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 5 December 1940), 23. The trip was also one of the first to shoot so far north of the equator, and went to extreme measures to ensure the safety of the film. "At times the exposed and unexposed negatives was stowed in Eskimo tent warmed by blubber oil stoves, and it is a minor triumph that not a foot of film was lost due to weather conditions." See *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 9 January 1941), 22.

<sup>146</sup> Moor, *Powell and Pressburger: A Cinema of Magic Spaces*, 48. The film was groundbreaking in its use of topical propaganda and "is bold both in using Nazis as protagonists and in showing them as

As another example of Powell and Pressburger's ambitions, the prologue to the first draft of the script for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* written by Pressburger in 1940 states:

We want to show to the French Canadians that they *are* threatened, to the foreign settlers that their privileges and their freedom *are* in danger, and to the easy-going English Canadians that they had better knock hard and knock first...There are many eyes to be opened north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. And south of it too.<sup>147</sup>

Pressburger, a Hungarian Jew educated in Germany and, as previously mentioned, considered an "enemy alien" during production, realized early on that the greatest challenge for him in a free country was to write valuable propaganda that was also entertainment. In a surviving copy of the script, the forward reads:

In Eastern Canada live three million French Canadians. They are isolated from the rest of Canada by strong Catholicism and the French language. The majority of the people are shrewd and tenacious farmers. Slogans like "Fight for Democracy!" and "Stop the Dictators!" mean very little to them, but if they were to realize how their whole existence is directly threatened by the War in Europe they would fight to the death.

In the great mid-western Prairies live hundreds of thousands of foreign settlers. They come from practically every country in Europe, they keep up their relations with their old countries, they retain their national costumes and languages, but they enjoy much greater freedom, a wider tolerance and a higher standard of living than ever in their lives before.

On the Pacific coast live English Canadians. Because the dangers and influence of the War are remote from their everyday lives many of them fail to see what they should take an active part in. They are the best raw material in the world, but they need a few good hard knocks.<sup>148</sup>

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ruthless, dedicated, and—up to a point—resourceful." (Liner notes by Charles Barr from the DVD *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* directed by Michael Powell. Grenada International Media, 2007.)

<sup>147</sup> See Michael Powell Collection S-34A in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK. Also cited in Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter*, 172.

<sup>148</sup> See Michael Powell Collection S-34A in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

Even though this actual dialogue is not spoken in the beginning of the cinematic version of the film, the propaganda intent is presented clearly and pervaded in both Powell and Pressburger's vision.

Before location shooting had completed in September 1940, Pressburger was finally granted permission to join the film crew in Canada by the Ministry. However, there were still numerous hold-ups and delays in figuring out not only the logistics of leaving but how to be re-permitted entry back in to Britain from Canada. The screenwriter wrote to Powell about this situation and put his struggles into historical perspective: "Quite a lot of the last sequences have been written in air-raid shelters and during air-raids, and actually Mrs. Gleitzman and myself, we write this letter during a raid. We are now getting used to it and people who have some business to do just go on with it...."<sup>149</sup> Eventually, Pressburger had to abandon the trip to Canada, as the difficulties with his passport status were too great to overcome. He wrote to Powell with the bad news that same month, but also eagerly showed his continual support for his adopted nation by sharing with his colleague that he was planning on buying a home for himself despite the German bombings.<sup>150</sup>

In the face of overwhelming odds and bureaucratic obstruction, Pressburger always kept faith with his adopted nation and the Ministry's propaganda aims. For example, in a dinner speech promoting the film, the screenwriter indicated that

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<sup>149</sup> See Emeric Pressburger Collelection EPR 1/19/5, EPR 1/19/6, and EPR 1/19/7 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>150</sup> See Emeric Pressburger Collelection EPR 1/19/7 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

unlike Nazi productions, “propaganda should be much more subtle. In a free country repetition is boring, you change the wavelength. Only in a totalitarian state can [they] use constant repetition since there is nothing different available.” He added that the “highest prize of successful propaganda for us...was to make of the U.S.A. an active ally.” He believed that the British public needed a film which “realistically portrayed the brutality, sadism and proto-religious zeal of the Nazis. Gagged and bound by appeasement, the British public still had very little idea what it was they were really fighting against. As someone who had experienced Nazism first hand, Emeric thought it was his duty to tell it how it was.”<sup>151</sup> However, American isolationism proved to be a formidable obstacle. According to Macdonald, he stated about making *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*:

‘All through my film-making career I have never wished so hard to solve a problem,’ recalled Emeric. ‘I spent a whole day locked in a room looking at a map of America, trying to find the solution. My eyes kept drifting to the north, off the map, to a line which separated America from Canada: the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Then it hit me!...My idea was that it didn’t make the slightest difference if we didn’t do it in the USA but did it in Canada instead, because the Americans would certainly know that anything which can happen in Canada could also happen in the USA.’<sup>152</sup>

Desperate to touch on as many aspects of Canadian life as possible, the initial screenplay was originally quite long, consisting of two hundred twenty-five pages. Even though a significant amount of sequences from this initial script were shot,

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<sup>151</sup> Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter*, 166.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid. Also see Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

such as one including parts in Vancouver, much of the original action had to be cut out of the finished film.<sup>153</sup>

As the script grew, so too did the budget, which forced the MoI to begin looking for outside sources of income in order to avoid further withdrawals from its depleted treasury. When two American Independent film producers, David O. Selznick and Samuel Goldwyn, both stepped in and offered to bankroll the remaining film budget in exchange for the American rights, British distributors finally realized how valuable the film actually was and felt relieved. As location shooting ended, J. Arthur Rank furnished the rest of the money himself, the acting disputes were finally settled, and production wrapped up in Canada in October 1940.<sup>154</sup>

On February 6, 1941, within six months of completing location footage, the interior shooting began for the film at Denham Studios.<sup>155</sup> While often interpreted as being shot on location, interior shots refer to scenes done largely inside of buildings and for close-ups of the actors. For example, the key scene in which Hirth and Peter, the leader of the Hutterites (played by Anton Walbrook), exchange speeches was done at Denham, and not in the Hutterite settlement in Canada. Powell describes the scene in that “There were about a hundred men, women and children seated on long

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 176. Also See Emeric Pressburger Collelection EPR 1/19/14 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>155</sup> Pressburger loved both Laurence Olivier’s and Anton Walbrook’s performances, but had difficulties with Leslie Howard who kept trying to write his own lines. Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter*, 179.



wooden benches at the long wooden tables, and we had picked every face. More than half of them were Germans and German Jews, refugees from Hitler.”<sup>156</sup> Instead of using Canadian extras, the filmmakers constructed a community of actual Germans that had fled fascism to fervently listen to Peter’s rebuttal of Nazi propaganda, and thereby show their support for Britain’s fight against tyranny.

As production for the film was done at Denham, Muir Mathieson (1911-1975) was chosen as music director for this film. Well-respected in the industry, the prominent musical director and overseer of London Films had influenced the boom of British film music from 1933-1937.<sup>157</sup> Beginning his career under the guidance of director and producer Alexander Korda, Mathieson learned quickly and worked efficiently. By the start of the war, he was “appointed musical director for the Ministry of Information which controlled film production in Britain, and after the war he joined the bolstered Rank organization, the nearest Britain probably ever

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<sup>156</sup> Powell, *A life in movies: an autobiography*, 381. According to an article in *The Kine Weekly* from June 1941, the recording of the score for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* had to be done at Pinewood due to fire in Denham recording studio. It reads: “Following the completion of the editing of the Ortus production, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, work will commence this week on the recording of the musical background, for which Michael Powell, determined to get the best music possible, has engaged Dr. Vaughan Williams, Master of the King’s Music [sic]. He will compose a special musical backing for the film, which, it is claimed, will give the picture added attraction in America and Canada. Owing to damage to the recording theaters by fire recently, the dubbing of the sound and music tracks will be carried out at Pinewood. The loss of equipment by fire was confined to one or two small amplifiers, and the studio inform KINE that all the mobile recording apparatus, projectors, etc. were saved and the fire did not affect the studios, which are working normally.” See *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 5 June 1941), 21. Vaughan Williams was never appointed “Master of the King’s Music” as the article claims.

<sup>157</sup> Mathieson worked as a music director for hundreds of British films during his lifetime. He later dabbled in directing, which included the prominently known short film *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra* (1946) featuring the same-titled original score by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). Mathieson later served as music director on some of the British-made live-action Walt Disney films, including *Third Man on the Mountain* (1959) and *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960).

came to a Hollywood-style studio.”<sup>158</sup> Mathieson was keenly aware of the growing need for British composers to support the war effort. Additionally, he contributed in his own way by conducting recording sessions on many of the propaganda and morale films produced by the Ministry of Information during the Second World War and through arranging many of the scores written for such films, including *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

Besides Mathieson conducting and serving as music director on the film, and due to the association with Denham Studios, the sound supervisor was A.W. Watkins and the recording was done with London Symphony Orchestra.<sup>159</sup> Like the work done by Powell and Pressburger that attracted Nazi attention, the films made by Denham and Beaconsfield Studios under the music direction of Mathieson were exceptionally effective as morale boosters to the point that they attracted the attention of the enemy. Hitler and Goebbels, the head of the Nazi film industry and Minister of Propaganda, were reportedly so appalled by the intelligence reports on the effects of the British films on national morale that they added Denham and Beaconsfield studios to the German’s list of bombing targets.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> K.J. Donnelly, *British Film Music and Film Musicals* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 16.

<sup>159</sup> Additionally, in 1943 the BBC made special recording of the “prelude” with the BBC Northern Orchestra (the suite by Vaughan Williams was first performed in 1946). Huntley, *British Film Music*, 57 and 225.

<sup>160</sup> S. J. Hetherington, and Mark Brownrigg. *Muir Mathieson, 1911-1975: A Life in Film Music* (Dalkeith, Scotland: Scottish Cultural Press, 2006), 83.

## **The Music for 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel**

Ralph Vaughan Williams held a firm belief throughout his life “that music lived only when it was played.”<sup>161</sup> Along with this practical down-to-earth aesthetic, Vaughan Williams believed that composers must first address national concerns before reaching out to the international. This belief is stated by the composer in his 1912 article “Who Wants the English Composer?” in which he argues,

The composer who is not wanted in England can hardly desire to be known abroad, for though his appeal should be in the long run universal, art, like charity, should begin at home. If it is to be of any value it must grow out of the very life of himself, the community in which he lives, the nation to which he belongs.<sup>162</sup>

The combination of Vaughan Williams’s practicality and his patriotism made him an apt candidate to become a composer of film music, but the two aspects coalesced only when he was faced with the cataclysm of the Second World War.

Although he was too old to serve in the armed forces during the Second World War, Vaughan Williams was still determined to be of use to his nation in its fight against Hitler. Anxious for war work, Vaughan Williams mentioned to his friend Arthur Benjamin that he would like to “have a shot” at film music.<sup>163</sup> Benjamin quickly contacted Muir Mathieson, the musical director of the wartime Ministry of

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<sup>161</sup> Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 156.

<sup>162</sup> *Vaughan Williams on Music*. Ed. by David Manning, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 39-40.

<sup>163</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Some Thoughts on Beethoven’s Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 107.

Information. Mathieson recalled meeting with the by then sixty-eight-year-old composer:

When I went to see Vaughan Williams at his country home in the spring of 1940, I found him strangely depressed at his inability to play a further part in the war. He felt that the musicians had done little to express the spirit and resolve of the British people. At this time he was “doing his bit” by driving a cart round the village and countryside, collecting scrap metal and salvage...<sup>164</sup>

Invigorated at the prospect of “doing his bit” by writing music for British propaganda films, Vaughan Williams, despite the fact that he was already in his late sixties, was energized by the prospect of playing such a vital role in the British war effort. He quickly went to work on the project of writing music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, thereby launching his film music career.

Intrigued by movie productions, Vaughan Williams had been an avid film consumer for most of his life and would often go to see films when he stayed in London. Once he was finally given a film project of his own, he thoroughly enjoyed the challenges of writing for film and would often start composing music as soon as a script reached his hands (if not before). At no time did he attempt to compose music that would exactly mirror the action on the screen—the so-called “mickey-mousing” technique. Instead, he preferred to supply an overall mood that captured

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<sup>164</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 56-57. See also The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/2/2e in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections, and Adrian Boult letter 18 April 1947 File 910 in BBC Written Archives Center VWL 2166. Arthur Benjamin (1893-1960), an Australian composer and pianist, was convinced to score films by Mathieson in 1937 (see S. J. Hetherington, and Mark Brownrigg. *Muir Mathieson, 1911-1975: A Life in Film Music*, 69).

the spirit of a scene or sequence and then adapting the score later by adding “specific points of color, very often at the recording sessions themselves.”<sup>165</sup>

Much like the frequently featured stories of unceasing struggle depicted in British cinema during the course of the war, Vaughan Williams worked tirelessly to make sure his film scores were powerful and integral to the finished product. In his essay on film composition, Vaughan Williams states:

I believe that film music is capable of becoming, and to extent already is, a fine art, but it is an applied art and a specialized art at that; it must fit the action and dialogue; often it becomes simply a background. Its form must depend on the form of the drama, so the composer must be prepared to write music which is capable of almost unlimited extension or compression; it must be able to fade-out and fade-in again without loss of continuity. A composer must be prepared to face losing his head or his tail or even his inside without demur, and must be prepared to make a workmanlike job of it; in fact, he must shape not only his ends, but his beginnings and his middles, in spite of the producer’s rough hewings.<sup>166</sup>

Soon after Mathieson recruited Vaughan Williams for the film, a very early draft of the script was sent to the composer. Eager to get started, Vaughan Williams began writing ideas for new melodic material almost immediately.<sup>167</sup> In support of this argument, a handwritten note from Mathieson that later reflected on Vaughan Williams’s enthusiasm for scoring *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* starts off by describing how: “he got

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<sup>165</sup> *The Red Shoes: Classic British Film Music* conducted by Kenneth Alwyn with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Silva America Records, 1990, SSD1011. Liner notes by David Wishart. As an added note, this was also the way Vaughan Williams preferred to score his operas—having composed five operas by 1940.

<sup>166</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Some Thoughts on Beethoven’s Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects*, 108.

<sup>167</sup> These notes are taken from an early copy of the script for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* dated June, 1940. See Michael Powell Collection S-34A in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

so carried away with a description of the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel in the script – that he sent me 75 pages of full orchestral score – almost within days.” Mathieson then points out that unfortunately, this moment in the film was later changed to an aerial shot lasting a duration of six seconds.<sup>168</sup>

Additionally, the hard working Mathieson would do frequent radio broadcasts on film music and often used the films scored by Vaughan Williams to prove the powerful impact a scoring moment could have within cinema. In one broadcast, he spent some time describing Vaughan Williams’s film composition approach: “He is famous for his use of the human voice in his concert works and it is striking how this characteristic style influences his film work. His first film *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* made use of voices: the melodic line of the prelude immediately establishes a composers approach, and stamps the music with his hallmark.”<sup>169</sup> In fact, this exact passage would later be transformed by Vaughan Williams into a “choral song” called *The New Commonwealth*, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

As previously mentioned, Mathieson believed “in the importance of getting the right composer for each type of music.”<sup>170</sup> It is for this reason that he felt that Vaughan Williams was the correct composer for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*— an insight shared by the director. As Powell wrote in his autobiography:

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<sup>168</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/3/3b in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>169</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/3/3d in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>170</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 7.

I had been using music for years as a tool, which I pretended to be able to handle. I had never looked on music as a language, a philosophy, or a science. I had used it in my films as just another sound. When Muir Mathieson suggested that we invite Ralph Vaughan Williams to write the music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, I had a glimpse of what could be done in our medium by a great composer, but I didn't follow it up.<sup>171</sup>

While film historians laud Powell and Pressburger as *auteurs*, it can be argued that the success of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is due in large part to the collaboration of many greatly skilled technicians, including film editor David Lean and Vaughan Williams. This creative collaboration is also reflective of the multiple talented actors and production crew who participated in the making of this film, including the emotionally-driven musical score supplied by Vaughan Williams.

Notes from Mathieson's pocket calendars indicate that studio work on the score began in February 1941. The first date that mentions the film by title with a note that music and sound recording would begin on the production was on Friday, 7 February 1941. The next entry that year that mentions *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is dated 30 March 1941, with the additional note that the film was to be "finished on the floor."<sup>172</sup> While there are a few notes in this calendar that mention Mathieson meeting Vaughan Williams, such as one on 11 April 1941, the last mention of the film title indicates that Mathieson was to record the film score on Monday, 9 June 1941.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Powell, *A life in movies: an autobiography*, 582.

<sup>172</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/8/1 in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

While it is interesting to find these dates in Mathieson's personal records, it is worth noting that this is the first archival source to track accurately the recording sessions. Despite the extensive discussions by musicologists about *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*—far more than that accorded to Vaughan Williams's later films—most of the previously published accounts of the film's creation do not mention any details of the music recording process, and those sources that do discuss the music have discrepancies as to when the events occurred. For example, the *Kine Weekly* published on 24 July 1941 in a small article announcing Vaughan Williams as composer of the background music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*:

For the past two Sundays at Denham the London Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Muir Mathieson, has been recording the special background music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* composed by Dr. Vaughan Williams, 'Master of the King's Musick.' [sic] Last Sunday, on stage 2, the orchestra spent the full day rehearsing and making dubbing tracks, which were handled by sound recordist R.A. Smith. Mr. M. Legg, of H.M.V., was also present to hear the original musical score, which will later be specially recorded by H.M.V., with a preface by the Rt. Hon. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada. Others present at the recording were Dr. Vaughan Williams, Michael Powell, director of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*; Harold Boxall, David [Lean], editor, and W.Watkins, chief of sound at Denham. Further tracks will be completed next Sunday at Pinewood, with a smaller section of the L.S.O.<sup>174</sup>

Besides the article stating the recording sessions happened after Mathieson's handwritten dates, the feature incorrectly labels the composer as "Master of the King's Music" – a title that Vaughan Williams had turned down when Elgar died in

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<sup>174</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 24 July 1941), 32.



1934.<sup>175</sup> Despite inaccuracies, this article verifies that the score was recorded at both Denham and Pinewood studios. More importantly, the mere presence of this published source in the weekly paper testifies to the importance of Vaughan Williams's participation.

As this marked the beginning of a new compositional period in the composer's life, Ursula Wood, who would become the composer's second wife after the war, touched upon the recording sessions in her biography of her husband.<sup>176</sup> Often known to accompany Vaughan Williams on outings during these years, Ursula wrote about attending some of the sessions:

The 49<sup>th</sup> *Parallel* recordings were most exciting – the London Symphony Orchestra, led by George Stratton, enjoyed themselves, the tunes seemed to fit well to the film sequences, Ralph did not appear to be at all nervous, he was prepared to cut, enlarge, alter, adapt – in fact he began to realize that, as he said later, you could use the same music for a landscape, a car crash, or a love scene; it would sound different if it looked different. But there seemed to be very little that needed changing, except for the short Austrian folk song he had put in for Glynis Johns to sing in the Hutterite settlement. She was very young, very frightened of the orchestra, and quite unable to sing it in the key in which it had been written – sing it as you like, said Ralph, and I'll change the key. But it was no good, so eventually George Stratton more or less played it in her ear, and she managed a husky hum, while Muir Mathieson whistled the second verse – and so after a delay of an hour or so the half minute was recorded. We saw the film in autumn and it had a great success.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 255. This title went to Sir Walford Davies from 1934-1941, followed by Sir Arnold Bax from 1942-1953, and Sir Arthur Bliss from 1953-1975.

<sup>176</sup> This book was published in tandem with to the biography of Vaughan Williams's compositions written by Michael Kennedy.

<sup>177</sup> Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 245.

While Johns' inability to sing the correct pitches is also alluded to in other eyewitness accounts, Ursula's version of events is the most detailed.<sup>178</sup> Keen on helping the young actress through this recording, Vaughan Williams had absolutely no trouble adapting his Hutterite Volkslied to keep it in the finished film, as it served as the main musical theme for the Hutterite settlement.<sup>179</sup>

Additionally, *49th Parallel* marked a change in who was influencing and consulting on the composer's finished works. For instance, the two men that Vaughan Williams turned to the most for consultation of his scores after his longtime friend Gustav Holst died were Gordon Jacob, a former student of the composer, and the copyist, pianist, and arranger, Roy Douglas (1907-2015). While the composer valued his opinion, Douglas believed that when Vaughan Williams later worked with him, the composer he wanted to consult the most was Holst.<sup>180</sup> Although Vaughan Williams did not require the assistance of Douglas for this particular film, Douglas was familiar with the composer's approach to film scoring. In the reflections on the film in his autobiography, Douglas wrote about Vaughan Williams:

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<sup>178</sup> It is also important to note that Ursula's book is filled with inaccuracies and discrepancies about the composer's life. Because this event is mentioned in other sources and the major story points are the same, it can be verified as true.

<sup>179</sup> For more detailed analysis of this theme, see chapter three. Hutterites were part of the Anabaptist movement that emerged in the sixteenth century while Hutterite settlements were founded in Canada in the 1870s. They are nonresistant and were conscientious objectors during the war.

<sup>180</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 241.

His scores for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* must have been neither legible nor pretty, for the puzzled copyists made a great number of misreadings and incorrect guesses (apart from the fact that the composer himself may have made a few 'small errors' which they could not have been expected to put right), and I was told that at the first three-hour recording session almost the entire time was taken up with correcting wrong notes in the band parts. This annoyed the film company because it wasted their money, and film companies consider they have better ways of wasting money than on the unnecessary luxury of music. The musical director sent a strong complaint to the copying bureau, with the result that when, in the following year, R.V.W. wrote the music for another film, *Coastal Command*, the offended copyists refused to have anything to do with the scores.<sup>181</sup>

Due to the initial inexperience the copyists had with Vaughan Williams's handwriting, the composer turned to Douglas for help in generating instrumental parts for *Coastal Command*, while the original scores for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* would remain untouched and mistake-ridden until after the conclusion of the war.

By all surviving accounts, it is clear that Vaughan Williams enjoyed the challenges of composing for films and was eager to continue writing for this genre. In a letter to Hubert Foss at Oxford University Press dated 3 August 1941 from The White Gates, Vaughan Williams wrote: "I thoroughly enjoyed my days at Denham – and am quite prepared to do another film provided (1) I like the subject (2) I get good money (3) I have a say as to when and how the music should come in – By the way I've had no money for *49<sup>th</sup>* // I yet – I forget when the 1<sup>st</sup> wodge of cash is due!"<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Roy Douglas, *Working with Vaughan Williams: The Correspondence of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas* (London: The British Library, 1988), 3. From 1944-58 Vaughan Williams consulted Douglas, although he first helped the composer in 1942 with *Coastal Command* and a surviving copy of the symphonic suite of *Flemish Farm* from 1943 is in his hand. See Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 286.

<sup>182</sup> Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 322-23.

Despite not yet receiving the money, Vaughan Williams was already spreading news of the film to his friends and colleagues. For example, the composer R.O. Morris (1886-1948), who was Vaughan Williams's brother-in-law, wrote to Alice Sumsion while staying at the White Gates 3 January 1942:

And now you are all in it too. I wonder if you wish now that you and the boys had stayed in England? It was one of the most difficult decisions to go or to stay, and the motives that prompted you to go were powerful indeed. I think it conceivable the war might have ended this year but for the Japanese complication; and as it is, I think the European end of the Axis may be the first to crack. After that it may take some time before the Japanese goose is properly cooked, and meantime we must be prepared to have a sticky time of it in the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Ralph and Adeline are both wonderfully well; the former as you may imagine is up to his eyes in all sorts of local activities, refugee committees and so forth, and between times he has made the opportunity to do some music – principally the incidental music for the film “Forty-ninth Parallel” – I don’t know whether that has been released yet in the U.S.A. Try and see it if it comes your way.<sup>183</sup>

While the first paragraph mentions Alice Sumsion's decision to leave England and escape the war for the sake of her family, Morris is keen to send the message to her that both Britain and the United States were standing together no matter what the outcome. As Alice Sumsion (née Garlichs), who was born in America, resided in the United States with her children during the war, it is more than likely to presume she had the opportunity to see the film.

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<sup>183</sup> See MS Mus. 1752/2/2 from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

## Reception of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*

As the film was sponsored and promoted by the Ministry of Information, numerous press materials and reviews that detail the reception of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* survive in both government files and press clippings.<sup>184</sup> In addition to the large amount of official support, the Ministry also negotiated the renting of 200-400 theaters within the Odeon cinema circuits in order to distribute the film to the public, with an additional 300 independent theaters persuaded to carry the first run. While Ortus maintained film rights within Britain, Columbia had purchased the distribution rights everywhere in the world except for the United Kingdom, Eire, and Australia.<sup>185</sup>

As film production progressed, the *Kine Weekly* was one of multiple British cinema periodicals that reported on *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* at a frequency of at least twice a month during 1940-41. These reports included updates on the progress of the location shoots in Canada, interior filming in England, and the eventual reception of the Ministry funded picture. The first article that mentioned the film appeared on 20 June 1940: "Michael Powell and associate producer Ronald Gillett, with British technicians from England, will co-operate with Mr. [John] Sutro and John Seaborne

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<sup>184</sup> For example, a large file of contract agreements is kept at the Public Records Office and includes information such as the percentage splits between the Ministry of Information and Ortus Films, studio contracts, and Leslie Howard's acting contract for the film. There are also numerous accounting letters and memos kept on file that deal with proper distribution of profits from the film as late as 1944 (including Leslie Howard's contract demands) and even into the 1950s. See TS 27/485 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>185</sup> Publicity agreements were even outlined with Ortus Films about how much money was to be spent on specific types of advertising for the film. See TS 27/485 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

in Canada in the production of a film with a Dominion background.”<sup>186</sup> This same article goes on to explain film studio conditions in Canada:

Interesting as these schemes may be, it must be pointed out that studio accommodation in Canada at the present time is restricted, the only stage being in Montreal, and there is some skepticism in British Studio circles as to the practicability of producing pictures on an adequate scale without a very considerable increase in the technical facilities available.<sup>187</sup>

As the *Kine Weekly* worked to keep *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* fresh in distributor’s minds, reporters even commented on the involvement of companies such as the Canadian National Railway becoming sponsors of the film.

These articles went to great lengths to mention the quota length of the intended feature.<sup>188</sup> During the war, distributors were required by law to show a minimal amount of British-made film footage that was sponsored or approved by government officials in order to promote wartime propaganda before showing popular imported films. Essentially, this was a “quota” to be filled, and *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* provided a huge selling point, as it would count as 11,037 feet, or thirteen reels, towards completing that requirement.<sup>189</sup> Due to the film’s length and classification, distributors could thereby provide an exciting story acted by major stars alongside imported films. This meant an important regulation was satisfied, instead of filling time with short-movies or documentaries that did not enthrall audiences.

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<sup>186</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 20 June 1940), 3.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 22 August 1940), 27.

<sup>189</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 20 November 1941), 10.

As a sign of appreciation to the people of Canada, a rough cut of the film was first shown to a select audience, including Vincent Massey, the Canadian High Commissioner and older brother of actor Raymond Massey, on 29 May 1941. The British première of the film, however, was not scheduled until months later on Wednesday 8 October 1941 at 2:45pm at the Odeon in Leicester Square, Piccadilly. Retitled *The Invaders*, the finished feature was finally premiered in America on 5 March 1942 at the Capitol Theater in New York—which is a surprisingly late date since the film was initially intended to persuade American audiences to join the war effort.<sup>190</sup> As a reminder, this delayed release essentially negated the propaganda value of the film—after Pearl Harbor, audiences in the United States were behind the war effort.

Shortly before the American première, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* was enthusiastically received in eighteen Canadian cities on 29 January 1942. In celebration of the film's reception, a joint cablegram was sent by some to the stars of the film, Powell, and Pressburger that read: "Greetings to Canada. This is your film. You made it, just as much as any of us. We thank every Canadian who helped us, and we are proud to be your partners in this and every other undertaking."<sup>191</sup> The article publishing this greeting also mentioned near the end how the film's plot—with German U-boats off

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<sup>190</sup> Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter*, 180-81. Also see *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 2 October 1941), 7 and 12. Most of the issue contains full page advertisements and descriptions promoting the film and even suggests how trade show owners could decorate and advertise for the film within their theaters.

<sup>191</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 5 February 1942), 16.

the coast of Canada in a fictional story—had come full-circle with German submarines operating off-shore from Canada in 1942.

As previously mentioned, Columbia Pictures obtained the world-release rights to the film for “the highest figure ever offered by America for the world distribution rights of a British film.”<sup>192</sup> The companies’ general sales manager Max Thorpe later stated that Columbia would release the picture worldwide except in Australia and Great Britain, and stated in a press release that

‘There has been a tremendous interest in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* all over the American continent. This is due largely, no doubt, to the fact that so much of it was filmed on location in Canada and in the U.S. with the co-operation of the Canadian and American authorities. Bidding for the rights was exceptionally keen and it was only after strong competition from other American concerns that we succeeded in making a record offer, in obtaining the right of what we consider to be one of the finest pictures ever produced anywhere.’<sup>193</sup>

Even the actors starring in the film saved press clippings of the film’s reception, as many of them had taken a significantly reduced fee—or no payment at all—in order to keep production costs low. For example, Laurence Olivier saved specific clippings and Emeric Pressburger sent clips to Eric Portman to read about his reviews. The screenwriter received letters praising Anton Walbrook’s performance as well.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 1 May 1941), 5.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> Newspaper and magazine cuttings from the film’s reception were also saved by Laurence Olivier and stored in his collection in the British Library. See 80462 from the Laurence Olivier Collection stored in Special Collections in the British Library, UK. Also the Emeric Pressburger Collection contains a handwritten letter dated 4 November 1942 from Eric Portman to Pressburger thanking him for the loan of the American cuttings on the film. Another letter to Pressburger from Reinhold Schunzel in Beverly Hills California makes a special note to praise Anton Walbrook’s performance. Reinhold wrote: “Please tell Walbrook that some paper said he gave the finest performance. It must have been an actor’s delight to play in the picture and to play this particular character. It certainly was a delight for the audience to listen to his speech. He did it marvelously.” See Emeric Pressburger



Despite the delayed international releases, the British home front eagerly pushed the government's propaganda message. In a review in the *Kine Weekly* entitled "A British Epic of Canada at War," the article starts off by stating that the "London World Premiere of History-making Film" is the story of:

One of the major romances of the history of war-time production in British films. Probably no other subject has aroused more keen anticipation among exhibitors or has provided material for so much controversy than this *Ortus* film...Perhaps the most notable feature of the project was the association for the first time of the Ministry of Information with a commercial feature production and the whole-hearted collaboration afforded by the Treasury and the Canadian Government with the sponsors of the picture, John Sutro, Oscar Deutsch, and director Michael Powell.<sup>195</sup>

The article provides a brief story of how Powell got the idea for this film, despite being slightly different than the version reiterated in published biographies of both Powell and Pressburger, and the article plays up the filmmaking challenges for this picture, especially the journey the filmmakers made up to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Parallel over a 20,000 mile trip.

Regardless of its undoubted facts, this same article is tinged with propaganda in that its author is praising the film in order to get trade technicians to go to the premiere and lease copies of the films for their own movie houses. It contains this description:

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Collection EPR 1/19/10 and EPR1/19/13 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>195</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 2 October 1941), 12.

One of the tensest sequences of the picture will be the commentary by the Canadian Broadcasting Cooperation on the chase across Canada of the fugitive U-boat men. To give the shots authenticity Michael Powell persuaded Jerry Wilmot, head of the C.B.C. in this country, to write the wording of the news flashes.<sup>196</sup>

After describing the stars of the film and discussing the different Canadian landscapes, the article's author ends with a small section on the music. Under the bold heading of "Outstanding Musical Score," it stated that: "The musical score was composed by Dr. R. Vaughan Williams and was performed by Muir Mathieson, musical director with the London Symphony Orchestra."<sup>197</sup> By making a point to highlight Vaughan Williams's score, the trade show paper is clearly following the government's initial intention to promote all the stars and technicians who contributed to creating this propaganda film, including the involvement of a major British composer of national significance. As a further point, Vaughan Williams was already well-known in the United States, having given a lecture series in 1934 and his music was frequently performed by the more prominent orchestras in America.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid. Another article in the same paper pushes the propaganda angle further for trade show owners, stating "British sense of humor not only brilliantly amplify the picture's formidable point, but convert its fine propaganda into marvelous box-office entertainment. Outstanding general booking, a film which all must, and will, see." Its point of appeals are described as "Fine story, inspired and graphic treatment, superb characterization, magnificent scenery, big thrills, exciting patriotic angle, worthy tribute to a Dominion's loyalty, provocative titles and non-precedented star values." See *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 16 October 1941), 19.

<sup>198</sup> See Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, for details about Vaughan Williams's trips to the United States.

Vaughan Williams was quite pleased with his first motion picture score and received accolades both from contemporaries and fans. For example, a surviving letter from a soldier, Stanley Bayliss, dated from 10 October 1942, congratulated Vaughan Williams on his seventieth birthday. This was, in fact, the same soldier who had written to Vaughan Williams two years previously but had left the war office to join the army, and therefore gave an account of the radio broadcasted music to the troops in his writings. In the letter, Stanley shares that “You may be interested to learn that one of the chaps, quite without prompting, confessed that of a recent broadcast of film music he much preferred your prelude to *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.”<sup>199</sup> As one of the reasons Vaughan Williams entered into film music composition was to support his country during wartime, it is understandable why the composer would value and save this praising letter from one of the men on active service.

Perhaps due to both the film’s success and the warm reception to the score, Vaughan Williams agreed to compile a suite of the main themes. Unlike *Coastal Command* and *Flemish Farm*, the suite for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* was completed in 1946—after the war ended. Despite this late release, Vaughan Williams was by all accounts pleased with the continuing life in the concert hall of the suite from *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. First documentation of the suite is found in a letter from Adeline to her sister, Cordelia, in 1948, which reported that Decca Records had sent Ralph an advance copy of the newly recorded “epilogue (without voices)” and that Mathieson was

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<sup>199</sup> See MS Mus. 1714/1/14 from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

conducting.<sup>200</sup> While Adeline's letter cites a date of 1948, this same recording session can be correctly verified by a letter was sent from T. Gibbs of Decca to Alan Grogan dated 15 August 1946 about persuading Mathieson to finish recording the music from the film on select dates in the end of October and mid-November. The London Symphony Orchestra was again used for these sessions. In October 1946, Mathieson was also scheduled to conduct the film music suite for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* for a concert of British Film Music during the British Film Festival in Prague.<sup>201</sup>

In the face of the initial positive reception to the film, some of Vaughan Williams's musical contemporaries were not overly impressed by the new suite. Ernest Irving, who would work with the composer at Ealing Studios after the war, wrote in *Tempo* magazine that:

As I write these notes I am listening to a broadcast performance of Vaughan Williams's music to '49<sup>th</sup> Parallel.' It is being played by the B.B.C. Northern Orchestra, conducted by Muir Mathieson. There is nothing else in the program except this Suite, so it is not open to the criticism made above, since there is no classical work to show up the weakness of inferior class. It is an energetic and lively performance, vigorous to the point of over accentuation, which makes the strings of the Northern Orchestra sound pale and sparse. It is certainly not V.W. at his best, none of the subtlety of the Pastoral Symphony or the Tallis Variations [sic] is here, nor would it be appropriate if present. I doubt if concert-goers would like it very much, but there is no doubt a large audience is to be found among the less fastidious, who will not be offended by the slight flavor of – dare I say – vulgarity which tinges the work...<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> See 1763/3/1b in the Muir Mathieson Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>202</sup> Ernest Irving, "Film Music" in *Tempo* no. 15 (June 1946, Published by Cambridge University Press), 13.

Notwithstanding Irving's chilly strictures, Mathieson was decidedly pleased with the resulting suite and programmed it frequently. As will be discussed later in connection with both *Coastal Command* and *Flemish Farm*, Mathieson often gave film music radio talks over the BBC that showcased excerpts from his collaborations with Vaughan Williams.<sup>203</sup>

Even with its positive reception and praise for its film score, some critics were concerned about the propaganda effectiveness of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. Some commentators noted that the plot centered on a group of Nazi anti-heroes. For example, the *Documentary News Letter* printed a notice on 2 November 1941 observing that while audiences might be led to sympathize with the hunted Nazis. However, the author noted that the brutalities committed by these men provided a corrective to this possibility. It also mentioned how important the scene with Leslie Howard was for propaganda purposes as this moment presents a stereotypically courteous and bookish Englishman fighting back to defend his homeland.<sup>204</sup> The author then makes a trenchant observation:

The MoI found it exceedingly difficult to sell the idea to the British public that all Germans should be tarred with the same Nazi brush. Perhaps, in the final analysis, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* was a success precisely because, for all its evident intentions, it did not resort to the simple propagandist expedient of painting the enemy universally black.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> See 1763 in the Muir Mathieson Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>204</sup> *The Documentary News Letter* (London: 2 November 1941), 215. Also found in Aldgate and Richards, *Britain Can Take It: British Cinema in the Second World War*, 40.

<sup>205</sup> Aldgate and Richards, *Britain Can Take It: British Cinema in the Second World War*, 41. Also found in Fox *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany*, 150.

In a similar vein, the New Films Section of the *Sunday Dispatch* chimed in on 12 October 1941 that “Of course the inevitable question is – What is the propaganda value of this Government-sponsored film? Frankly, I don’t know. Even more frankly, I don’t care. Democracy v. Hitlerism...Praise for the British character...Anglo-Canadian amity...Whatever the propaganda angle, this is an excellent film.”<sup>206</sup> *The Daily Mirror* lauded the movie, reporting on 7 November 1941 that “*49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is still doing terrific business, not only in London but at its special pre-release runs throughout the country. Quite a romance of real life in this, for at one time there was a doubt as to whether the film would ever be finished.”<sup>207</sup>

As if in echo of these appraisals, the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* published a good summary for the film on 1 November 1941. Entitled “Propaganda Without Pain,” the article contains this insightful passage:

If all British propaganda on our screens were as subtle and as fair as “*49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*” at the Odeon next week there would be fewer sighs in the stalls. For *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is first and foremost entertainment – a first rate thriller. Its propaganda is incidental to the plot and the argument tries so hard to explain the Nazi creed that one critic thought it was too kind to the Germans” .... “In the opinion of many critics this is the best film of the war. As one of them puts it – ‘*49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is a decided success. The local characterizations ring true, photography is first rate and the whole thing has a fine actuality.’ A cartoon comedy and news complete the program.”<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19/16 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

Additionally, an article in *To-day's Cinema* 14 October 1941 declared that the film had come within £3 of tying the Odeon Theater's recorded tickets sales the day before the war had begun, in spite of the war restrictions that only allowed customers to view the film between 2p.m.-8p.m.<sup>209</sup>

*49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* was not an inexpensive film to shoot and vastly exceeded its originally planned budget. For example, a cutting from the *News Chronicle* published October 1941 claims that the Ministry of Information spent £130,000 alone on producing this film.<sup>210</sup> According to financial records kept by government officials, for the first trip to Canada, Powell was paid a salary double that of Pressburger's to be paid by the Ministry—roughly £800 per week for eight weeks for the director in contrast to £400 for the film's screenwriter. With plans for the film to go forward, Powell would make an additional £3000 and Pressburger an additional £1500 to the shorter budgeted salary.<sup>211</sup> Despite these lavish fees in wartime—for both director and screenwriter—the film far exceeded its profit expectations and these contract fees were recorded into the totals kept by the Ministry. In the receipts from the commercial distribution of profits for Ministry feature films and of the £568,599 made by these productions from the years 1940-41 to 1943-44, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Approximately equivalent to over seven million pounds by today's monetary standards. See 80462 from the Laurence Olivier Collection stored in Special Collections in the British Library, UK. Also See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19/16 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>211</sup> See TS 27/485 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. The recorded film salary for Vaughan Williams remains unknown, although John Huntley believes it was between around £1200-£1500 per film. Recollection provided by Daniel Goldmark from a talk given by John Huntley in 2000.

accounted for £116,432 in profits. With inflation, the revenue totaled approximately the equivalent of over five to six million pounds, or almost nine million dollars, in today's monetary values. This accounted for over twenty percent of the Ministry's profit totals in the time frame.<sup>212</sup>

As the *Kine Weekly* reported, the Ministry's initial investment of £60,000 had been made back with an additional 50% profit with revenue still coming in. This success not only satisfied MoI involvement, but was further used as a plea for the freedom from the military drafting of artisans in the film industry in order to increase propaganda film production.<sup>213</sup> Flushed with the movie's success, *Kine Weekly* reported that *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* "claimed to be the biggest gross ever achieved by a British picture in the American market" and that the film had reached the million dollar mark, with actual listing in the article tallying in at 1.3 million dollars despite the film's title change that in retrospect proved limiting to the picture's recognition in the U.K. for its award.<sup>214</sup>

For his efforts in writing a balanced script displaying the best of both Canada and British sovereignty, Pressburger won the 1942 Oscar for Best Original Story. Furthermore, the success of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* additionally secured future backing for

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<sup>212</sup> See INF 1/199 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. According to other sources, the film made a profit of £132,331 in box office receipts. See Aldgate and Richards, *Britain Can Take It: British Cinema in the Second World War*, 41. Also found in Fox *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany*, 150. An article from Overseas Sky Mail dated 18 October 1941 quotes that the film would have "guaranteed earnings [that will] exceed £250,000." See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19/16 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>213</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 9 July 1942), 3 and 24B.

<sup>214</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 11 March 1943), 45. A million dollars in 1942 equals roughly fifteen and a half million dollars in today's monetary value.



Powel and Pressburger films. Royalties from the film were given to some of the starring crew and actors, including six percent for Powell, five percent for Pressburger, and seven percent for the trustees of Leslie Howard.<sup>215</sup> Pressburger's friend Reinhold Schunzel later congratulated the screenwriter, in a letter dated 15 April 1942 from Beverly Hills, California:

This is one of the finest pieces of writing I have ever seen and it puts you in front rank of all storytellers and rightly so. This is the first picture of this kind which faces the issue and does not try to ridicule the enemy. It is an honest picture and therefore an important one. It is excellently directed and performed and I want to pay everybody my sincerest compliment.

There are so many things in this great picture I like to mention and I hope someday we will sit together and then we will have a long long talk. Only God knows when the day will come. In the meantime we have got to keep our chin up and to do our best to help the cause. You did your share by writing this story and fighting for its production and winning the battle by scoring a smash hit. I doubt whether you could have done it here and therefore I am glad you stayed in England.<sup>216</sup>

For a Hungarian immigrant looking to support his adopted country, Pressburger's screenplay exceeded expectations and helped open new avenues of government film support.

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<sup>215</sup> The division of balance according to royalty statements for the film from 1967-82: Powell (6%), Pressburger (5%), Gillet (1 ½%), Ortus (5%), Trustees of Leslie Howard (7%), C.O.I. (Columbia) (34.126%), R.F.D. Ltd. (41.374%). See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/12 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

<sup>216</sup> See Emeric Pressburger Collection EPR 1/19/13 in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

### **Chapter 3 - The Surviving Film Scores from *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel***

#### **The British Library Scores and the Influencing Role of the Music within the Propaganda Film**

Along with the Ealing Studios film, *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948), *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* has the greatest number of sketches and scores held by the British Library. The abundance of materials for these two films is the primary reason why there has been the most comment on these scores by reviewers and scholars. Despite this rich trove of secondary resources about the film, Vaughan Williams's handwritten scores have yet to be discussed in detail, especially in relationship to its status as musical propaganda. This chapter will explore the surviving film music scores through both music and handwriting analysis, and will additionally delve into any connections the melodic material for the film has with later or contemporary concert hall compositions.

The earliest scores of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* preserved in the British Library consist of a set of nine small composition sketchbooks. Set as blank paper divided into a two-system or score formatted as a *particella* playable by a piano, these books contain initial melodic materials and themes from the period during which Vaughan Williams was sketching music for certain scenes, characters, or geographical locations. These small books constitute some of the most useful materials in analyzing this particular film score.

The first sketchbook in this series is labeled M.S. 50422A, heralded by the phrase on the cover handwritten in pencil “49<sup>th</sup> Parallel I.” The beginning pages are marked with the word “overture” but more-or-less match mostly with the music heard during the film’s opening credits. In order to be as clear as possible as to what the “overture” should represent, Vaughan Williams sub-labels the theme “Canada!” One interesting detail about the thematic material in this sketchbook is how Vaughan Williams appears to have been creating themes that would be played over visual images of major Canadian cities and landscapes. Presented as short motifs, these city cues would have become an aural representation of the different areas across the multiple landscapes that Canada encompasses. For example, an early discarded melody can be found on the bottom of page two in the bottom two systems that indicates the musical representation of a major city in an eastern Canadian province. Marked “Over French Canada (Quebec and Montreal),” this section continues onto page three but was not used in film, thus providing one of numerous early-draft examples of how the music was altered from its original format outlined in early scripts.<sup>217</sup>

In these drafted city motifs are found Vaughan Williams’s attempts to represent these different cities and areas with popular songs that even normal moviegoers could recognize. One of the most obvious examples is found on the bottom of page

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<sup>217</sup> See M.S. 50422A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. See Michael Powell Collection S-34A in BFI Special Collections at the Reuben Library in London, UK.

three in the section labeled “Over Ontario (Ottawa and Toronto – the seat of Government and the University).” Instead of incorporating a completely original theme, the music for the Canadian National Anthem, “O Canada,” is alluded to as a tribute to the Capitol.<sup>218</sup>



Ex. 1.1 Excerpt from “Over Ontario” composition draft from M.S. 50422A<sup>219</sup>

While there is no tempo indicated in this first draft, the music is marked *forte* at the beginning of the section and the piece is in the key of Bb major. Interestingly enough, even in this first rendition the measure that starts the “O Canada” melody quotation was initially crossed out and replaced with this opening motif. While this would appear as though the change was added to incorporate the melody, the scribbled out music actually was provided to accommodate a different harmonic structure and not necessarily a change of tune, thereby asserting the hypothesis that Vaughan Williams deliberately wanted to include this theme and did not write it in as a last minute whim. This early draft repeats the hemiola quarter-note triplet measures after what is shown in Example 1.1 before ending abruptly. Since the later

<sup>218</sup> Ibid. As this is a draft, the ending is different on page four from that heard in the film.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

drafts and final version conclude after the last measure in the above example, this indicates that the composer overwrote the music for a longer timed cue.

The second book in this sub-collection is labeled M.S. 50422B and the handwriting on the front cover states it contains the cues for the “Rockies, prairies, Winnipeg, Bush – St. Laurence.” Although this is notated in pencil, it is too neat to have been written by the composer, and is different from the marks in black ink on the cover that is in Vaughan Williams’s cursive script. Despite the previous sketchbook containing what is identified as an “overture,” M.S. 50422B actually contains an early draft of the “Prelude” or “Main titles” that would later become a pervasive theme in the movie. Interestingly, this early version of the score has the music jump between 3/2 and 4/4 time signatures with syncopation, as if the composer could not decide in which style he preferred to set the scene.<sup>220</sup> Additionally, M.S. 50422B contains the earliest version of the “Prairies” theme from the prologue section of the film that features solo oboe – a noticeably different thematic section from the early city and province ideas.<sup>221</sup> After this theme there are many crossed-out pages of followed by notes instructing the reader to jump to sketchbook two. This direction indicates that this must have been the original first book of 49<sup>th</sup> *Parallel* ideas before the prelude was written in M.S. 50422A.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> See M.S. 50422B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>221</sup> 2:51 in the suite. See M.S. 50422B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. This same cue can be found in M.S. 50423A in the cue labeled 1M2B and remains largely unchanged from its original version.

<sup>222</sup> See M.S. 50422B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

The next sketchbook in the series is labeled M.S. 50422C, but Vaughan Williams had actually indicated this was to be the second book following the initial prelude. The music in this book starts with the “Railways” sections, followed by Winnipeg, Rivers, lakes and forests section, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec, Ships, and ends with a labeled dams/river/gulf piece.<sup>223</sup> Due to the large amount of short cues in this book, it appears as though the composer was planning a short thematic section for each major city all based on prelude theme. Much of this material was discarded, as only the “Ottawa” and “Winnipeg” sections appear in the final cut. The music written in book M.S. 50422C contains a re-edited Ottawa section, including a recomposed quotation for “O Canada.” This effort to musically identify specific themes for the Canadian landscape testifies to Vaughan Williams’s desire to include national signifiers in the score.



Ex. 1.2 Excerpt from “Ottawa” composition draft from M.S. 50422C<sup>224</sup>

While largely maintaining its original similarity to the first draft shown in Example 1.1, by the second draft Vaughan Williams shortened his original ending to that which appears in the film. More importantly, he alters the key signature from two

<sup>223</sup> See M.S. 50422C in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

flats to one sharp. Since the music and harmonies remain mostly unchanged, the logical conclusion for this key transposition was to maintain a closer transition to the previous cue over the Canadian landscape without having to create a short transition or developmental section.

Curiously, the “Winnipeg” music in this sketchbook is not the same as the music found in either the suite or the film. Vaughan Williams must have cut this music at an early stage as it has divergent endings with the second ending indicating the beginning of a new section for “Calgary.”<sup>225</sup> The prelude found in this volume ends with “open sea” and entry of the Nazi submarine, which suggests that Vaughan Williams had been given a longer cue time or different scenes that were later altered in editing. Moreover, the Nazi submarine entrance included in this book is important to the aural context of the picture, as it represents the only musical representation of the Nazis’ power throughout the entire film: after the quotation of “O Canada,” Vaughan Williams immediately characterizes the German forces with a distorted by recognizable variant of the chorale “Ein feste Burg” composed by Martin Luther and later reused by J.S. Bach.<sup>226</sup> However, to signify the uneasy, evil nature of the Nazis, Vaughan Williams distorts the chorale theme by using tritones—the “diabolus in musica.”<sup>227</sup> In its initial form, both of the held chords after the three quarter-note pick-ups are heavily crossed out and changed by the

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Occurs at 08:08 in suite and 03:38 in the film *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

<sup>227</sup> See M.S. 50422C in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

composer in the bass clef and the inclusion in this early version further proves that Vaughan Williams chose to identify Nazism with German musical culture stretching back to Luther.<sup>228</sup> Vaughan Williams well knew that Luther's hymn "Ein feste Burg," additionally adapted by Bach, had been taken up by the Nazis as an anthem of sorts during their rise to power. This theme translates to "A mighty fortress is our God," which Vaughan Williams, as a student of history, understood that German nationalism had its first modern expression through Luther's translation of the bible into German.<sup>229</sup>

**Lento** "If one day a German submarine appeared"

Ex. 1.3 Excerpt from composition draft from M.S. 50422C quoting "Ein feste Burg" by Martin Luther.<sup>230</sup>

Another indicator of the above example being an early draft is the inclusion of the narrated text above the score "If one day a German submarine appeared" that is not spoken in the final version of the film. Because the text had the possibility of

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Wishart. See also M.S. 50422C in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Vaughan Williams would have known that Luther was a vicious anti-Semite as well. Luther further called for the expulsion of all Jews in German speaking Lands.

<sup>230</sup> See M.S. 50422C in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.



implying that the film's story was a fictional and hypothetical event, Powell and Pressburger decided to cut this line in lieu of showing the audience the peril of Nazism—they realized that showing trumps telling. Vaughan Williams uses the tritonal disruption in order to create a jarring dissonance that accentuates the contrast between the cold mechanical submarine and the bucolic—not to mention pastoral—Canadian landscape. The dissonance is at its most pronounced during the fermata and this effect is repeated in the final measure of the shown example, especially in the bass clef.

In the fourth book of this series of sketchbooks, labeled M.S. 50422D, most of the cues that were conceived early in the process do not appear in later scores or the final version of the film. While the music in this section sounds like a precursor of the score for *Coastal Command*, Vaughan Williams intended this particular passage to be a German-style dance to accompany the Nazi's trek towards Vancouver.<sup>231</sup> This theme is not heard later on, as the composer shifted towards scoring primarily for representatives of the heroic people of Canada. By observing the unused music in this sketchbook, one notes how Vaughan Williams later wrote in his film music essay about composers not getting too attached to their music: most of the material found in this sketchbook appears to be either altered or abandoned.<sup>232</sup> This early exposure to the abrupt nature of scoring film music surely is a contributing factor

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<sup>231</sup> See M.S. 50422D in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>232</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects*, 108.

for the composer’s realization that good music that ended up “on the cutting room floor” might be used later in the concert hall.

Despite most of the music in M.S. 50422D being abandoned for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, there is one important cue worth mentioning. Included in this volume is the only vocal selection in the entire film, titled “Anna’s song,” which outlines the original melody and words for the Hutterite settlement theme. Although it is an early draft, the cue maintains its similarity to what Glynis Johns sings in the final cut of film. That final version is written in three-quarter time and cast in the key of G major.<sup>233</sup> This is the same song that Ursula Vaughan Williams mentions in her biography of Vaughan Williams discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>234</sup>

**Allegretto voice distant**

Soprano Lasst uns das Kindle ein wie - gen Das Herz zum koopplein

S wie - gen Lasst uns un geisv - en freu - en Das Kindlein Geme\_\_

S dei \_\_ em u gesulen \_\_ süß O gesulen \_\_ süß

Ex. 1.4 Soprano part from Anna’s Volkslied in the score book M.S. 50422D<sup>235</sup>

<sup>233</sup> See M.S. 50422D in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>234</sup> Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 245.

<sup>235</sup> See M.S. 50422D in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. The text in the example is deciphered as written by Vaughan Williams in the sketchbook M.S. 50422D. The traditional text reads: Laßt uns das Kindlein wiegen, das Herz zum Krippelein biegen. Laßt uns im Geist erfreu en, das Kindlein benedeien. O Jesulein süß, o

In the above example, the soprano line is shown alone, as the composition piano staff is limited to suspending B natural in octaves while all the parts are notated on the treble clef. In this version, the music changes key from four flats to one sharp (G major) for the German *Volkslied*. It is clear from the notation in this score that this tune was originally meant to continue through the dinner scene. However in the film, the music cuts out after the Nazis approach Anna, and never returns.<sup>236</sup> In contrast to this, at one point a musical prayer was to be written for the leader of the settlement, Peter (portrayed by Anton Walbrook). This prayerful music was meant to be heard when the Nazis first meet this character. Nonetheless, in the final film the ordering of these scenes is reversed. Instead of either of the previous conceptions, the only music heard during Peter's initial meeting is diegetic choral voices singing after dinner.<sup>237</sup>

The fifth sketchbook is labeled M.S. 50422E and has "49<sup>th</sup> Parallel Vol. 3" written in blue crayon on front cover. Clearly meant as a middle book, Vaughan Williams starts off with a theme labeled Scene 10 "The Four Germans tramp wearily along the road."<sup>238</sup> While only being a short cue, the place this most closely matches in the film is the brief ten-second passage after the music for the plane crash ends before the

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Jesulein süß (Let us weigh the baby, bend the heart to the crib. Let us enjoy the Spirit, the little child. O Jesulein sweet, O Jesulein sweet). This excerpt is also discussed and analyzed in Daniel Goldmark, "Music, Film, and Vaughan Williams" in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, Byron Adams and Robin Wells (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 216-17.

<sup>236</sup> See M.S. 50422D in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>237</sup> This music is not composed by Vaughan Williams.

<sup>238</sup> See M.S. 50422E in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

Nazis arrive at the Hutterite settlement. Also included in this book, and more distinctive than the previously discussed material, is the cue labeled “Scene 15 – The Lake and Forest Summer,” a selection that can be heard almost an hour and a half into the film.<sup>239</sup> Scored for solo piano, this is the same tune that becomes a recycled theme in the composer’s 1947 solo piano piece entitled *The Lake in the Mountains*.<sup>240</sup> In addition to the scenery, the music for this section is meant to personify the stereotypical “Englishman” in the film, Philip Armstrong Scott (portrayed by Leslie Howard), who is studying Native Americans.<sup>241</sup> After inviting the Nazis to dinner, Scott is appalled after they tie him up and proceed to destroy his artworks and books. By doing so, the Nazis rouse Armstrong’s dormant fighting spirit and he proceeds to beat and capture one of the two invaders. As can be seen from Examples 1.5a and 1.5b, the music originally composed in the film sketchbook is exactly the same as what appears in the solo piano part published approximately six years later.



Ex. 1.5a Opening measures of “Scene 15” from M.S. 50422E<sup>242</sup>

<sup>239</sup> See 1:28:20 in *49th Parallel*.

<sup>240</sup> See M.S. 50422E in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>241</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

Ex. 1.5b Measures 9-18 of Vaughan Williams's *The Lake in the Mountains* for solo piano<sup>243</sup>

The three major differences between these two excerpts is that the published piano part from 1.5b is more elaborate and it contains a longer opening section in a different key, as well as having a shorter repeated section then the originally conceived passage from 1.5a. Additionally, the repeated section in 1.5a is twice as long as the published solo part and the initial marking of Lento was changed to Andante tranquillo. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the music for *The Lake in the Mountains* is not included in the full score for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* kept in the British Library.<sup>244</sup> One possible reason is that, because the score book M.S. 50423A was to be used for the full recording sessions, Vaughan Williams may have decided to save time by keeping the solo piano part separate. Since it was scored for solo piano, it may have been scheduled for a separate recording session without full orchestra. In

<sup>243</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Lake in the Mountains* (London: Oxford University Press), 1947.

<sup>244</sup> See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

addition, a conductor was not required for this cue. Despite its absence from the film recording score, this particular number is however included in the composer's arrangement of the 1946 concert suite of the music from *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

The composer designated the volume labeled M.S. 50422F as the original volume four in the series. One particularly interesting cue contained in this sketchbook is the music accompanying the short scene after the death of Kühnecke, the Nazi engineer and pilot, when the crash survivors are walking down a trail and stumble upon the Hutterite settlement. At this point, under title "View of Countryside," a solo oboe comes in.<sup>245</sup>



Ex. 1.6 "View of Countryside" oboe solo from M.S. 50422F<sup>246</sup>

Although brief, the melody is meant to evoke pastoral association with the Canadian wheat fields. This change of mood signals both a new geographical region of Canada and, marks the start of a new chapter or act within the film's story. Fittingly, Vaughan Williams uses the pastoral quality of the oboe over suspended chords—a virtual music shorthand for "the pastoral." From this point in the film, the trappers and Eskimos of Hudson Bay are left behind and the Nazis interact with the Hutterites. At the bottom of the second page Anna's song reoccurs and then

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<sup>245</sup> See M.S. 50422F in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

continues for another two pages. This represents a much longer cue than is used in the film; the last page containing another word marker of “312-316 Hutterites assemble for dinner,” with the same theme for Anna’s song continuing underneath.<sup>247</sup>

The seventh sketchbook in the series is labeled M.S. 50422G and marked “49<sup>th</sup> Parallel Vol 7” in pencil, but additionally has an arrow pointing towards this with scribbled text that reads: “Also Land for the People.”<sup>248</sup> This means that the music in this volume are preliminary composition sketches for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* as well as the documentary *The People’s Land* that, while begun in 1941, was not be released until 1943. The music in the beginning is labeled “Allegro Molto” with no indication of what it is for, but the melody is actually the Control Room Alert from the film and suite.<sup>249</sup> While only one and a half pages of material is used in the film, the entire entry, lasting about two minutes, is used in the suite movement. It encompasses over seven pages in the volume, but only the odd number pages contain the part used in the finished score for the suite.<sup>250</sup>

In the next volume, labeled M.S. 50422H and marked “49<sup>th</sup> Parallel Vol 8” on the inside cover, most of the score material was unaltered throughout the composition

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid. This is also the same music that Daniel Goldmark cites as a theme for the Hutterite settlement in his essay. See Goldmark, “Music, Film, and Vaughan Williams” in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, Byron Adams and Robin Wells, 216-17.

<sup>248</sup> See M.S. 50422G in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>249</sup> See 04:38 in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

<sup>250</sup> See M.S. 50422G in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

process and is found in both the film and suite.<sup>251</sup> The music in this book follows the suite in order: “Indian Music I-III,” and “Nazis on the Run.” While the “Indian” music is clean and contains minor changes, the “Nazis on the Run” and “Lake in the Mountains” cues are messy with notations that refer to other sketchbooks. Here is found the first sketches of “Nazis on the Run,” another theme from the film that Vaughan Williams recycled into his concert hall works.

As with *The Lake in the Mountains*, Vaughan Williams borrowed from this same section in completing his String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor dedicated to violist Jean Stewart. As Michael Kennedy notes about this quartet: “Some music from *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* found a more permanent form in this work, as well as a theme from a film about Joan of Arc for which Vaughan Williams had been asked to write music but which never materialized.”<sup>252</sup> Instead of using the same part from *The Lake in the Mountains*, the composer pulled from a short melodic cue just prior to the scene in the lake featuring the character played by Leslie Howard, Philip Armstrong Scott. This terse motif is heard as the Nazis are escaping the Indian lodge and are being pursued by Canadian forest rangers.<sup>253</sup> Despite its brevity, the theme is identifiable in the scherzo of the string quartet by the words “Theme from ‘49<sup>th</sup> Parallel’” in the viola part.

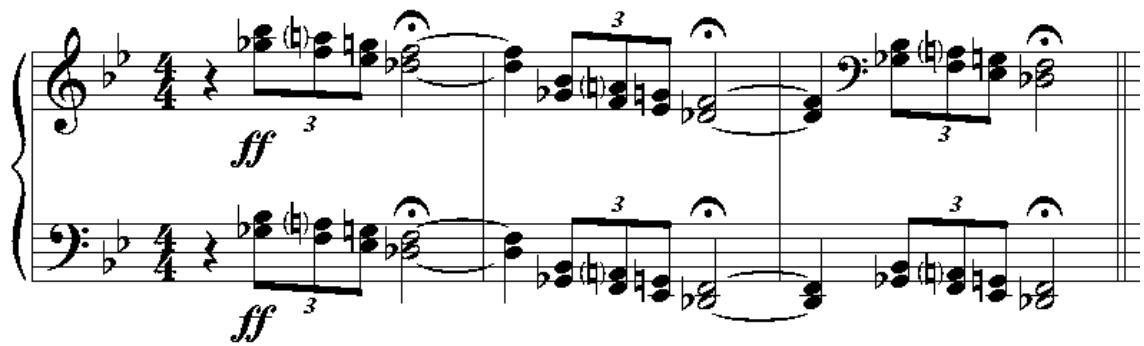
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<sup>251</sup> See M.S. 50422H in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>252</sup> Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 285.

<sup>253</sup> See 1:26:48 in the film *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. See M.S. 50422H in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.





Ex. 1.7a The Nazi pursuit motif from M.S. 50422H that is recycled into the String Quartet in A Minor<sup>254</sup>

Ex. 1.7b Opening measures of the scherzo from Vaughan Williams’s String Quartet in A Minor<sup>255</sup>

While this motif is notated with a key signature of two flats, basically G minor, Vaughan Williams want this motif to stand out and creates a sudden burst of Bb minor. This is done by adding an abundance of accidentals to the parts and makes the music sound dissonant and unnerving. Dedicated “For Jean on Her Birthday,” the scherzo in the string quartet apparently gave Vaughan Williams trouble: it was sent after Stewart’s birthday with the fourth movement separate from the first two

<sup>254</sup> See M.S. 50422H in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>255</sup> See Ralph Vaughan Williams, *String Quartet in A Minor* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947).

movements.<sup>256</sup> The performance markings reflect the uneasiness of the chase music by having the three accompanying instruments play tremolo with mutes, while the solo viola part, which contains the film motif, is performed loud and unmuted. This connection between *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and the Second String Quartet serves as another example of how Vaughan Williams reused his low-art cinema compositions and gave them new performance life in high-art chamber music.

The final sketchbook in the series is labeled M.S. 50422I and contains “49<sup>th</sup> Parallel Vol 9” in pencil on the front cover. Like M.S. 50422G, this volume contains a mixture of music from both *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and *The People’s Land*.<sup>257</sup> In regards to the *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* drafts, the most interesting material in M.S. 50422I is the last page labeled “Broadcasting Stuff.” This is an early draft of the prelude music and what would become the unison song the *New Commonwealth*, which was composed for BBC radio broadcast and will be discussed later in this chapter.<sup>258</sup>

While the nine volumes discussed thus far have contained drafts, sketches, and condensed scores, the first full score found in the British Library M.S. 50423A evinces edits in red pencil by both the composer and the music director, Muir Mathieson. As this was Vaughan Williams’s first film score, the music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* was organized and notated in a traditional format for movies by using short duration and numbered music reel cues (for example 1M1). This particular score is

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<sup>256</sup> See Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 260.

<sup>257</sup> See M.S. 50422I in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

the original master copy before individual parts or the conductor's score were created, as it is written predominantly in Vaughan Williams's own hand.<sup>259</sup>

Although this score included cues for instruments that were discarded before recording sessions began, the main titles are written in red and indicate an orchestration of two flutes (later piccolo), oboe, English horn, two clarinets in A, two bassoons, contrabassoon, Eb saxophone, Bb saxophone, four horns, three Bb trumpets, trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings consisting of both a solo and first violin line. While Vaughan Williams notated music specifically for both Bb and Eb saxophone in 50422 and this full score, difficulties in obtaining performers for the recording sessions along with sound mixing challenges led to the cutting and re-orchestrating of these parts.<sup>260</sup>

Marked "Prelude," the opening number starts out in G major and lasts for seven pages, with the cue marker 1M2 designating the beginning of the Prologue.<sup>261</sup> Following film order, section 1M2A is marked Lento and appears to match the film at two minutes and fifty-five seconds right after the opening dialogue "I see a long straight line..." designating the introduction to the story. This transitions into 1M2B, which was supposed to be the music for the different cities and locations in Canada

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<sup>259</sup> See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>260</sup> For example, one interesting section not labeled with a cue number is a selection of cut music featuring saxophones. The first section is marked Andante with the timing of almost two minutes written in red and a lot of cues are rewritten in the different instrument lines. The section following this contains a short Allegro moderato piece labeled "No 32" that features lots of moving 16<sup>th</sup> notes and a fermata ending in which the oboe would have needed to change to English horn. Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> In film music scoring, Reel # "M" (music) cue # (if something is added later, it will be marked with lower case letter ex. 1M2b. Incidentally, it is highly probable that this is the first composition in which Vaughan Williams orchestrated to include saxophones.

that was cut after being fully orchestrated into the full score.<sup>262</sup> The changes made in M.S. 50422 are evident at once, as the city and province sections have almost completely been removed.<sup>263</sup>

One of the more important cues from M.S. 50423A that can be traced to early composition drafts occurs in 1M2B. Marking the only surviving city music, this is the designated section for Ottawa that contains “O Canada.” To enhance the nobility—and hence the propaganda impact—of this striking moment, the melody is orchestrated and harmonized in nearly all the instrument parts and a fanfare is assigned in the brass instruments in Example 1.8.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> See 03:23 in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and 5:03 in “Prologue” movement of suite. Ottawa has been the capital of Canada since the 1850s.

The image shows a musical score for six brass instruments: two Horns in F, two Trumpets in B $\flat$ , and two Trombones. The music is in 4/4 time and features a fanfare of the 'O Canada' theme. The score is marked *ff marcato* and includes a dynamic marking *a2*. The music consists of several measures, with triplets and slurs indicating the specific phrasing of the fanfare. The instruments are arranged in a standard brass section layout, with Horns in F on the top two staves, Trumpets in B $\flat$  on the next two, and Trombones on the bottom two.

Ex. 1.8 Excerpt of brass parts from 1M2B composition score from M.S. 50423A featuring “O Canada”<sup>265</sup>

While this example is given here in the transposed keys of each instrument, the concert key is G major in order to maintain a tonal relationship with the previous music in cue 1M2A that depicts the mountains and open fields of Canada. Additionally, this fanfare is marked *fortissimo* and *marcato*, and the brass instruments are almost playing the quotation from “O Canada” in unison in order to make the musical point absolutely clear.

Like the “O Canada” quotation, the sinister allusion to Luther’s “Ein feste Burg” occurs early on in the film. The distorted “Ein feste Burg” is designated as 1M2D and

<sup>265</sup> See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

is marked *Lento* in this full score. As with the Canadian anthem, this quotation remains mostly unchanged from its initial appearance in Vaughan Williams's composition sketchbook.<sup>266</sup>

The image shows a musical score excerpt for four instruments: Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Violin I, and Violin II. The music is in 4/4 time. The trombone parts (Trombone 1 and 2) are in the bass clef and feature a hemiola motif (a 3-beat pattern over 4 beats) marked with *ff* and *a2*. The violin parts (Violin I and II) are in the treble clef and feature a similar hemiola motif marked with *sul pont.* (sul ponticello). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 1.9 Excerpt of trombone and violin parts from cue 1M2D from M.S. 50423A featuring “Ein feste Burg”<sup>267</sup>

For the fully orchestrated cue, the strings and woodwinds are given suspended tremolo chords that act as an orchestration of the clustered chords from the original conception in M.S. 50422C, while the motif is sounded by four trombones.

Immediately following this brief *Lento* section, Vaughan Williams has the music accelerate to *Allegro* and switches the hemiola motif to the trumpets who are instructed to play *con sordino*, in order to sharpen the sonority. Another interesting feature found in Example 1.9, is that in contrast to the unmuted trombones, the entire string section, including the violins, is marked *sul ponticello*. The combination of *sul ponticello* strings and muted brass produces a nasal-sonority that highlights higher frequencies while deadening the overall tone quality. By so doing, Vaughan

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

Williams creates a sonorous effect at once alarming and foreboding, signaling to moviegoers both the presence of the Nazi submarine and its evil mission.

In order to follow film order, the next cue, 1M2E, is found in the back third of the score, a pertinent example of a last-minute addition that was added either during or immediately before the recording sessions. The placement in the score as well as the nature of these cues strongly suggests that this full score could have been the one used by Vaughan Williams during the recording sessions. This particular cue (1M2E) appears to be the revised music for the telegraph scene, located under “Control Room Alert” in the suite version, and lasts for a full two minutes.<sup>268</sup> Again, this section is notated in an untidy manner: it contains references to the telegraph alert spreading through multiple cities in order to scramble air support.<sup>269</sup>

Jumping back to the original ordering, a cue numbered 1M3A occurs after 1M3B-D in full score starting on page fifty-seven. This is followed by 1M3B, which occurs in score after 1M2C. Both of these sections are heavily marked in multiple colors and contain cross-outs. It seems as if this is the short cue music for the montage during which the Nazis discard the Canadian refugee boat and proceed to Hudson Bay.<sup>270</sup> Here are many cuts, which implies that this sequence was altered after the initial

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<sup>268</sup> See 04:35 in *49th Parallel*. See also M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. These control room scenes were shot on set interiors at Denham Studios. As an added bluff to the propaganda of the film, the so called air fields and bases in Nova Scotia are greatly exaggerated to distract Axis forces into thinking how well equipped the Canadian Air Force was at this time. In reality, there were no high-tech bases in Halifax and the air strips stood in the middle of empty fields surrounded by livestock.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

music cues were re-sent to Vaughan Williams and the first full score had been written. This conclusion would not only explain the shortening and changing of time sequences, but also the significant alteration of the orchestration.

Continuing in the first reel sequence, cue 1M3C is found about nine minutes into the film when the Nazi captain is seen discussing potential iceberg hazards with Hirth.<sup>271</sup> While brief, this number is identifiable by horn and trumpet lines written in red on bottom of page forty-four and is immediately blended into the following section labeled 1M3D at around ten minutes into the film, as the onscreen map transitions over images of the Nazi submarine.<sup>272</sup> Again, there are more cuts and mislabeled music with some pages numbered twice—one particular page is partially ripped out from the master copy of the score. Despite there being more short cues for the Nazis sprinkled throughout M.S. 50423A, this appears to be the end of the 1M3 series.<sup>273</sup>

For the second reel of film, the first cue is designated 2M2 and has lots of rehearsal letters and timings written in red. In regards to recognizable material, only the first system of music is used at about eleven minutes into the film at the point where the Nazis enter Hudson Straits. This section was most likely orchestrated with flutes and clarinets in the 1946 suite prologue that lasts thirty seconds.<sup>274</sup> Despite markings for notes and edits appearing on a couple pages, most

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<sup>271</sup> See 09:06 in *49th Parallel*.

<sup>272</sup> See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*



of the music in the cue remains clean and therefore indicates that the most of this section was not recorded during the film scoring sessions.

Like “O Canada” and “Ein feste Burg,” one of the more important cues in M.S. 50423A is the selection numbered 2M3 that represents the introduction to the Hudson Bay Post and French trappers living amongst the Eskimo villagers.<sup>275</sup> To this end, Vaughan Williams quotes the French tune “Alouette,” which begins in the solo oboe before shifting to flute and bassoon in turn. As an interesting technique to highlight this tune, the song is first heard in the non-diegetic score before smoothly transitioning to diegetic song as sung by Johnny the Trapper (played by Laurence Olivier). He sings this tune while taking a bath after months of fur-trapping in the wilderness. Unlike the previous quotations, this cue was added later than the initial sketchbooks and could have been a change prompted after watching Olivier’s performance during the director’s film screening for music timings and before recording the score.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> See 15:29 in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. Occurs also at forty-five seconds into the Hudson Bay movement of the suite. See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>276</sup> This tune is not in the 50422 composer sketchbooks. Instead, the music for the Hudson Bay Post appears to be originally a variation of prelude theme which means “Alouette” was added during orchestration of the full score. See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piccolo, oboe, and bassoon parts. The first system shows the Piccolo, Oboe, and Bassoon staves. The Piccolo part begins with a *solo* marking and a *pp* dynamic. The Oboe part begins with a *solo* marking and a *p* dynamic. The Bassoon part begins with a *solo* marking. The second system shows the Piccolo, Oboe, and Bassoon staves, with the Piccolo part marked with a *5* and the Bassoon part marked with a *9*. The third system shows the Piccolo, Oboe, and Bassoon staves, with the Piccolo part marked with a *9*. The music is in 4/4 time and features a melody that is broken up among the instruments.

Ex. 1.10 Excerpt of piccolo, oboe, and bassoon parts from cue 2M3 from M.S. 50423A featuring "Alouette"<sup>277</sup>

As can be seen in Example 1.10, each segment of the melody is broken up among different instruments, and these phrases have been looped or repeated for the film recording. While moving between these three instruments doubled at the octave, a

<sup>277</sup> See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

brief statement of the “Alouette” motif is placed in the clarinet lines before the singing of Johnny the Trapper is heard emanating from the screen. Regardless of its origins, the quotation embedded in 2M3 emphasizes the transnational nature of the Canadian people and it serves to establish a connection between the moviegoers and the onscreen character. Essentially, it is a subconscious reminder of what the British were fighting for, and a relatable aural ear-worm.

There is a curious discrepancy between the numbers of this cue and its successor. The next cue is designated 4M1 and it contains the music for the “looting the store” section of the film. This cue was not used in film but is in the suite version in its entirety as a movement. In keeping of the order of events of the film, the cues in M.S. 50423A frequently appear out of order, as the next cue is numbered 9M2A and is heard immediately after the Nazis loot the store.<sup>278</sup> In addition to this cue, there are two pages labeled “start of 9M2A.” This music appears to be an early version of the music cue for the death of Kühnecke when the seaplane that the Nazis commandeer crashes in the water. The seaplane is stolen from the men sent to investigate the disturbance and loss of radio communication that occurred the previous night when Johnny the Trapper attempted to alert the Canadian authorities and was consequently shot by the Nazis. With the knowledge that the seaplane would come and investigate, commander Hirth instructs his men to loot the store and steal the seaplane. As the Nazis fight their way out, the aircraft is damaged,

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

which results in Kühnecke crashing into the water and consequently dying. Vaughan Williams must have toyed with the idea of giving a more mournful emotion to the scene, as the cue is listed as *lento* with a deep bell in the percussion line reminiscent of a funeral knell. While this cue was discarded for the film, the music for this scene is found on written-page seventy-seven of the full score.<sup>279</sup> While the timings on Kühnecke's death music match the film sequence, the version found in the suite is almost twice as long. This indicates that the entire cue is repeated for the suite movement. Again, the music for this death scene serves as a transition to the brief introduction of the Nazis walking to the Hutterites. As noted above, the music characterizing the Hutterite Settlement features an oboe solo over footage of wheat fields, and Anna's song performed by Glynis Johns. Previously discussed as part of M.S. 50422D, the song in the film is actually much shorter than what is written, as the music cuts out for the dialogue.<sup>280</sup>

The cue for Anna's *Volkslied* is labeled 6M1C in the full score, which is three reels lower than the previous cue and may have been planned to take place prior to the death scene music.<sup>281</sup> Another segment of Hutterite music is numbered 7M1 that is identified using a different reel number marker. This particular cue accompanies the haymaking scene, and was thoroughly re-edited in red pencil—most likely done during the recording sessions. Additionally, a blank page with "49<sup>th</sup> Parallel 7M1

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid. There are two separate song listings in the suite. See 48:18 in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

<sup>280</sup> See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

(revised version)” proceeds the entire track marked “Hutterite Settlement (B)” from both the suite and film.<sup>282</sup>

The next cue that should occur in movie order actually does not contain a number, but is instead entitled “Nazi March.” This appears to be the music that is heard after Vogel is executed by Hirth and later on when the three surviving Nazis are walking from Winnipeg to Vancouver. Vogel, the same soldier who gave Johnny the Trapper his rosary after being shot and tried to cross himself after Kühnecke’s death, identified with the Hutterites and wanted to stay as a bread maker for the settlement—a course of action in which Hirth viewed as desertion and breaking with Nazi ideology. Due to these attempted plans, Hirth executes Vogel and the three remaining Nazis immediately march to Winnipeg. The cue is quite long with numerous revisions and crossing-outs in red pencil, including a red line in the score marking an intended cut to the Winnipeg music almost immediately after Vogel’s execution.<sup>283</sup>

The image shows a musical score for a Bassoon solo. The top staff is labeled "Bassoon" and features a 4/4 time signature, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The music is marked "solo" and "crescibile". It consists of several measures with slurs and accents. The bottom staff is labeled "Bsn." and continues the melody with a dynamic marking of *sfz* (sforzando) and a second ending bracket labeled "a2".

Ex. 1.11 Bassoon solo from cue entitled “Nazi March” from M.S. 50423A<sup>284</sup>

<sup>282</sup> See 1:02:40 in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>283</sup> See 1:16:02 and 1:19:57 in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>284</sup> See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

As regards this music, it is a common practice to reuse the same music multiple times in a film. In fact, Vaughan Williams would later find his music repurposed in just this fashion on a much larger scale for *Flemish Farm* (1943).<sup>285</sup> For Example 1.11, the bassoon is accompanied by low strings playing off-beats that creates the sense of a forward march. Placing the melody in low woodwinds provides an ominous quality as the antagonist villains are still on the run in the Canadian countryside. From Winnipeg, the three Nazis under Hirth's leadership begin a long trek towards Vancouver in hopes of catching a Japanese ship as the authorities in Winnipeg had been alerted to the presence of enemy aliens. Vaughan Williams composed this sinister march to illustrate the Nazi discipline and ruthlessness. The repurposed march comes to a halt when the Nazis come upon a man changing a car tire, strike him down with a wrench, leave him for dead, and steal his car.

A final cue from M.S. 50423A that does end up in both film and suite is labeled 8M3 and contains the score for the scenes in Winnipeg.<sup>286</sup> Although this section is split into two separate tracks in the suite including the diner music, it is used completely in the film itself and is in fact looped in the diner scene. Like the Winnipeg music, another interesting section that was not assigned a cue reel number (but was always planned out since Vaughan Williams's early sketchbooks), is the "Indian" music that appears during the Vancouver scenes. All three

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<sup>285</sup> Coincidentally, even the orchestration in the "Nazi March" is similar to what is later used in *Flemish Farm*. For more on the walking music from *Flemish Farm*, see chapter seven.

<sup>286</sup> See 1:16:24 in *49th Parallel*. See M.S. 50423A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

movements are individually labeled in the suite and are fully orchestrated in the score with red pencil corrections. However, the “Indian Music I” is the only variation used and repeated to fit the designated time in the released film.<sup>287</sup>

The other full score found in the British Library is listed as M.S. 50423B and, like its counterpart, is in the composer’s hand. Judging from the material and songs listed inside, this appears to be an original full score of the suite for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, which was first performed in 1946.<sup>288</sup> Apparently, the suite was initially planned to be much shorter than the recorded version, as there are surviving notes and letters preserved in the John Rylands Library describing eleven separate movements as opposed to the final sixteen.<sup>289</sup>

The score M.S. 50423B opens with the Prelude written in blue ink on tattered paper with a note at the bottom for Oxford University Press to have this published. Similar to the full score, this is an early version of the suite and does not match the published score. It uses different instrumentation and the rearrangement of scene segments. For example, the music is written out of sequence when “Ein Feste Burg” is quoted *before* the music used for the map transition to the Nazi submarine surfacing that follows the opening Prelude—making these scenes out of order from the final film version. In addition, all the pages are out of order in this score and each

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<sup>287</sup> Like the previously unused and unnumbered music for saxophones, the “Indian Music I” already contains the excision of the saxophone parts, but the instruments are still written for all the “Indian Music” scores. The II and III movements are here as well. Ibid. See 1:23:04 in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

<sup>288</sup> See M.S. 50423B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>289</sup> See KEN 3/1/56 from the Michael Kennedy Collection in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, UK.

movement contains cross-outs.<sup>290</sup> It is almost as though Vaughan Williams was attempting to reconfigure the ordering of the original film sequences in order to create a connecting concert suite. Additionally, the suite “Prologue” movement that occurs after the “Prelude,” contains most of the cities and landscapes of Canada themes that Vaughan Williams had initially written in the full score that were cut from the final film. Due to the inclusion of this cut music, the Prologue in the concert suite is over eleven minutes long—a duration that is much longer than the film version. Even the movement names are altered to conform to traditional orchestral program music. Due to these changes, it appears as though this was an early draft of a concert suite of the film music—perhaps for the 1946 performance in Prague—before completing the version that was later distributed and which is now used in published recordings.<sup>291</sup>

As for other notable changes from film score to suite, the “A Lake in the Mountains” music, originally scored for solo piano is orchestrated and separated from the music “Nazis on the Run.”<sup>292</sup> Instead, the “Nazis on the Run” cue is extended to become a discrete movement labeled as a toccata. These alterations suggest that Vaughan Williams decided to lengthen short cues into full movements.<sup>293</sup> However, the terse motif for fleeing Nazis must have stuck in the

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<sup>290</sup> See M.S. 50423B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Interestingly, the “Hudson Bay” section in the suite is sub-labeled “Un Canadian” and “L’Alouette,” which helps highlight the different movie scenes and musical quotations represented within the lengthy movement.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.



composer's memory. As already noted, it opens the scherzo of the Second String Quartet in A Minor to Jean Stewart. The final movement in this book is an Epilogue section that is similar, if not the same, as the one from the final suite and film credits.<sup>294</sup>

As with the Second String Quartet, Vaughan Williams decided to reuse some of the more memorable ideas from *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* in stereotypically high-art concert works. For example, Vaughan Williams purposefully rewrote the opening Prelude into a choral song entitled the *New Commonwealth*.

Ursula Vaughan Williams tells the story of the *New Commonwealth*:

Ralph's opening music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* had been a broad and splendid tune which stood out against the dramatic mountain scenery of the Rockies, and he was now asked to turn it into a song. He wrote to Harold Child: "Here is the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel tune with a nonsense verse attached to show the metre of suggested rhyming scheme. To fit the tune we want something rather high falutin" – "noble and sentimental" either about Canada, or Freedom or Unity of Nations, "parliament of man, the federation of the world!"<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> The epilogue here also has chorus and words written into the part which could also be an early version of what would become the *New Commonwealth* choral work. See M.S. 50423B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. The only other score item listed under *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* at the British library is a small bound notebook of mixed scores labeled M.S. 57293. Located behind a selection from the *Poisoned Kiss*, there is a piano arranged composition sketch labeled as being for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* that looks like variation of control room alert music. There are more song arrangements stored in this notebook however none of the remaining pieces appear to be from the film. See M.S. 57293 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>295</sup> Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 249. Vaughan Williams sanctioned several versions of this Prelude, including one for brass band. All of these were made by Roy Douglas. In addition, he allowed Christopher Morris to arrange this music for organ. See Michael Kennedy, *A Catalog of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 169.

The letter that Ursula Vaughan Williams quotes to Harold Child was dated 18 May 1942, however, red pencil on the original letter dates it from 1941.<sup>296</sup> This earlier date gives evidence in that the recording of this score would have taken place during the recording sessions of the film music. In fact, a date in Mathieson's pocket journal from Saturday 3 January 1942 notes that Vaughan Williams Prelude was to be done that day—between Harold Child's and Ursula Vaughan Williams's dates. Therefore, Mathieson's diary confirms the Prelude was worked on after the completion of the film score recording sessions, but before the dates indicated by Ursula Vaughan Williams.<sup>297</sup>

As Ursula Vaughan Williams declares, "This became *The New Commonwealth* – which turned out *not* to be one of the greatest L.S.D. earners of Ralph's works."<sup>298</sup> More information about this choral work can be gleaned from the composer's correspondence. For example, the transcript of letters from Vaughan Williams to Adrian Boult confirms that the piece was commissioned before any work had been done on the film music suite: "Leonard Isaacs wants to do the Prelude only to *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* for an overseas broadcast...which I have agreed to. I hope to do a whole suite one day..."<sup>299</sup> Unfortunately, there is no date on this particular letter, but it

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<sup>296</sup> See MS Mus. 1714/1/14 from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>297</sup> See 1763/8/1 in the Muir Mathieson Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Michael Kennedy also lists Oxford University Press publications from 1943 but no first performance information. See Michael Kennedy, *A Catalog of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 169.

<sup>298</sup> Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 249.

<sup>299</sup> See KEN 3/1/7 from the Michael Kennedy Collection in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, UK.

most likely appeared before 1946 when the suite was being compiled for a performance in Prague by Mathieson and Vaughan Williams.

Additionally, a letter from Adeline Vaughan Williams to her sister Cordelia, reveals the Vaughan Williams took Ursula Wood (as she was then) to a benefit concert for the Army at Albert Hall in 1943. This concert featured “a bit of his *Sea Symphony* and his tune out of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (set to words by Harold Child).” Malcolm Sargent conducted this concert, which provides yet another example of Vaughan Williams’s movie music providing morale-boosting propaganda throughout the war years.<sup>300</sup> The British Library has the original scoring of the *New Commonwealth* in a bound mixed folio labeled 50480. Written in both blue and black ink, this is the full orchestral and choral score for the piece done after the film, and also appears to be a final, polished draft with limited cross outs in the score and contains the full text written out by Harold Child.<sup>301</sup>

In terms of analyzing key scenes within *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, much of the music for this film can fall under the principle of inaudibility, as outlined by Claudia Gorbman in her book, *Unheard Melodies*.<sup>302</sup> For example, music in this movie is hardly heard when the Nazi’s are committing their crimes, but can be heard distinctly following these brutal scenes. It is almost as if Powell and the other creative directors

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<sup>300</sup> See MS Mus. 1714/1/15 from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>301</sup> See 50480 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>302</sup> These compositional principles follow those laid out by Gorbman in Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 73.

deliberately pushed a lack of audience empathy on behalf of the Nazis, by denying the use of music in these high-emotion scenes. This technique is in complete contrast to Vaughan Williams's use of pastoral tropes to characterize the gentle people and lands of Canada. By contrast, the absence of distinctive musical signifiers for the Nazis—their deeds are heightened and their personalities are vilely characterized—is part of the propaganda message of the film: Nazis are less than fully human. Even the "Nazi March" theme represents the land of Canada instead of just the walking invaders, as the composer arguably does not give the Nazis truly their own theme except for the entry of the submarine before it blows up. By deliberately denying any sort of memorable thematic material for the Nazis outside of Luther's "Ein feste burg," Vaughan Williams takes an active role in shaping the impact of the film alongside Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger.

In addition to the scenes accompanied by music, silence is "heard" throughout this film when scenes are meant to depict high emotion or passion. Most particularly, this is effectively used during Peter's (Anton Walbrook) speech in response to Hirth, describing the Hutterites as proud that their children will never know what Germany is under the Nazis. To paraphrase Peter, although the Hutterites share German tendencies, they are not of the same race of people as the Nazis. Another principle that appears in Vaughan Williams's music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is unity. Used as a technique to bring back important melodic content or overarching themes, the composer employs this mostly by signifying the Canadians as good natured and peaceful people who, despite this nature, will not back down from

a fight. Through their encounters with the Nazis, the Canadians band together to overcome the invaders. Thus, this notion fits into the Mol's propaganda campaign "Britain (Canada) Can Take It."

## **Conclusion**

As the Australian composer Arthur Benjamin (1893-1960) published in *The Musical Times*, "Good film-music must never unduly obtrude, but should be missed if it were absent."<sup>303</sup> This opinion is apt for any discussion Vaughan Williams's music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. As early as December 1941, the British Film Institute had announced that the film should be selected to be preserved "as a good example of propaganda."<sup>304</sup> Even the Nazis shared this opinion, as by August of the following year it was confirmed that Argentina had banned the showing of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* in their country for fear that screening it would weaken their friendly relationship with Germany.<sup>305</sup> As if in support of the importance this film had in providing good propaganda for the Allied nations, an article by P.L. Mannoock described the importance of British cinema to the war effort:

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<sup>303</sup> Arthur Benjamin, "Film Music" in *The Musical Times*, vol. 78 no. 1133 (July 1937), 597.

<sup>304</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 25 December 1941), 5.

<sup>305</sup> *The London Times* (London, 10 August 1942).

Reading between the lines of the report of the Select Committee on Public Expenditure, it is unlikely that the Government will partly sponsor with taxpayer's money any feature picture after '49<sup>th</sup> Parallel.' This is no reflection on a film which promises admirably. I interpret it as an admission that feature production is simply not the business of a Ministry. I am glad of this, for ours is certainly one of the industries inherently unsuitable for nationalization. What we want is to be allowed to make such films as '49<sup>th</sup> Parallel' ourselves. We want the men to make them. We wish to be reasonably free from costly delays which are now daily arising from the shortage of experts. Also, we want to make films which are simple entertainment: films which by their very freedom from propaganda are the best propaganda of all.<sup>306</sup>

In an editorial praising this movie and its effectiveness as propaganda, the *Kine Weekly* stated, "looking at the work purely as propaganda, however, if an equal number of public were shown the film, the Ministry would have justified itself even without the financial satisfaction it has derived on this particular account."<sup>307</sup>

Today, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is often marginalized as simply a product of its time and its propaganda is interpreted as brash and obvious. In 1970, Pressburger defended the film:

There are some films which stand up to the passing of time. Others don't. Don't forget that this was one of the very first important films about the ideology of the Nazis and our own. We were fighting for our lives and everything else...Now all has faded a bit and you have to start with statistics. But you will never be able to show the feeling. The jackboot philosophy of the Germans was really so.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 27 February 1941), 23.

<sup>307</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 9 July 1942), 5.

<sup>308</sup> Kevin Macdonald, *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of a Screenwriter* (Great Britain: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1994), 181.

Unfortunately, the film was not shown in the United States until 1942, following in the wake of Pearl Harbor and the Congressional declaration of war on both Germany and Japan. However, it may well have played a propaganda role in the United States and elsewhere by illustrating Nazi brutality wreaked upon peace-loving Canadians. Determined not to waste the efforts of the British film industry and government money that had been poured into the film, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* was still shown internationally through the post-war medium of television in the 1950s.<sup>309</sup>

Regardless of the film's subsequent reception, the music for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* marked an important change in Vaughan Williams's compositional approach that led to a new terseness in works such as the Sixth Symphony, in which material is presented in the first movement in a manner reminiscent of a cinematic montage. Additionally, it marked the beginning of a fruitful and happy professional relationship with Muir Mathieson. Together, Mathieson and Vaughan Williams would continue to work on films and musical suites throughout the war and beyond. As the United States declared war on the Axis powers and Britain entered 1942 under constant bombardment from Nazi air raids, Vaughan Williams began work on his next film score, a project that would be geared towards buoyantly uplifting British citizens during the darkest days of the conflict.

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<sup>309</sup> See TS 27/485 in the Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

## Chapter 4 – The Production and Reception of *Coastal Command*

### Wartime film in 1942

The start of the year 1942 brought changes to the war effort and a spark of hope on the British home front. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that occurred in the early hours of 7 December 1941, the United States entered the war and joined the Allied fighters in both Europe and the Pacific.<sup>310</sup> The propaganda provided through films like *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* provided morale-based entertainment that showcased the close relationship between the British Commonwealth and the United States. As the film opened in Canada at the start of 1942 and continued to find box office success at home and in the United States, the Ministry of Information instructed its film division to continue supporting British-made war films and documentaries.

In addition to Ralph Vaughan Williams, other British composers were also doing their part to enhance the war effort through film music. William Walton was working on film scores at this time and wrote the music for Leslie Howard's *The First of the Few* (1942), a movie that told the story of the development of R.J. Mitchell's spitfire fighter planes. Despite both composers' propaganda contributions, Walton was upset about Vaughan Williams's involvement in the film

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<sup>310</sup> Despite the official entrance of the United States into the war in December 1941, The All-American 71 Eagle Squadron of the Royal Air Force had already been operational since January of that same year. These were Americans fighting in the RAF and the squadron was prominently featured in British propaganda aimed at Americans. One out of three of the squadron members were killed in action. Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American "Neutrality" in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 90.



business. Walton had the same publisher, Oxford University Press, as Vaughan Williams. This prompted Walton to write a letter to his agent that warned that Vaughan Williams might try to undersell himself to film producers during the war years: “it is not a help for the rest of the composers if someone of his caliber and reputation is asking half what most of us get.”<sup>311</sup> Undeterred by this criticism, Vaughan Williams maintained his devotion to helping the war effort and looked forward to his next film score.

This chapter will discuss the second propaganda film Vaughan Williams scored in 1942, *Coastal Command*. The process of making this unusual quasi-documentary film was a complicated one, and this investigation will trace the important events at the time; impact of the music used in the film; the overall reception of the film in Britain; and its impact as a documentary drama. In addition, there will be a discussion of the aircraft that appear in this film and thereby place the film as a part of the “aircraft genre” of British wartime films. The depiction of class differences in the film will be explored by tracing the lives of the actual RAF pilots and other personnel who acted in the documentary. In addition, the use that Vaughan Williams made of musical ideas first written for *Coastal Command* for in his Sixth Symphony of 1948 will be examined in detail, thus illustrating how he repurposed “low-art” film music into a “high-art” concert hall composition. Finally, the propaganda

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<sup>311</sup> Hayes (2002), 128. Found in Mervin Cooke, *A History of Film Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 249.

elements written into the surviving scores residing in the British Library will be scrutinized.

*Coastal Command* was a Crown Film Unit production directed by J.B. Holmes who additionally wrote the screenplay.<sup>312</sup> As a production crew member for the Crown Film Unit during the 1930s, Holmes was promoted to direct documentary-dramas during the Second World War. His expertise was employed by blurring the lines between documentary and dramatic films shot in a studio, expertise that he drew upon for the seven films he directed and produced during the war and immediately after. *Coastal Command* was the only script for which Holmes was given screen credit, and the action of the film follows the fortunes of an armed Sunderland Flying-Boat that patrolled and protected vital shipping lanes from Nazi U-boat attacks. The men and women of the RAF Coastal Command protected allied shipping from the Arctic Circle to the coast of West Africa, and from the Baltic Sea up to a thousand miles out into the Atlantic Ocean. The dramatic story created for the film included re-enactments of workday events for the flying crews, tactical officers, and ground staff of the Coastal Command. The protagonists were real serving “men and women who were called upon to play themselves in the film in preference to what might have been perceived as falsely heroic posturing by a cast of professional actors.”<sup>313</sup> As a result, there were no professional actors involved in most scenes.

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<sup>312</sup> *The Red Shoes: Classic British Film Music* conducted by Kenneth Alwyn with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Silva America Records, 1990, SSD1011. Liner notes by David Wishart.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

This radically new kind of casting allowed for noticeable speaking differences in the dialogue between the officers and crew. Jeffrey Richards writes that:

It is impossible not to notice the class difference between the strangulated upper-class drawl of the skipper, Lieutenant Campbell, and the unaffected regional accents of the crew – Hughie, Roy, Sean, Pam, Joe, Jammy, Henry, Izzy, Lew – who are Welsh, Irish, Northern, Southern, Jewish – but the film emphasizes the cross-class cooperation and genuine sympathy and affection between the crew and the shared qualities of dedication and good humour.<sup>314</sup>

These casting decisions allowed for representation of a wide range of social classes and ethnic groups, all organized under the umbrella of British subjects working together for victory. The interactions between the crew as they cohesively toil on patrol and maintaining the planes shows the crew members blending together in harmony as everyone “does their bit” to defend Britain from fascism.

As quoted in the introduction, the essay entitled “The Englishman” by Earl Baldwin of Bewdley described the values of an “Englishman” and is worth repeating here:

The Englishman, he believed, was above all an individualist, given to grumbling certainly but in the main considerate and easy-going. He was a sentimental, a lover of home and garden, animals and sport. But, ‘he will not be interfered with by his employer, by his neighbor or on a greater scale by another nation. He is apt to resist at a point when his mind is made up and his tenacity...is...acknowledged even by his enemies. You can lead him a long way; you cannot drive him an inch. He will neither cringe nor be bullied.’<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad's Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 296.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

This anticipates the manner in which the crew is presented in *Coastal Command*. The upper-crust commanders are meant to portray the quintessential, almost robotic calm and control of an English Gentleman, fulfilled with stoicism and displaying always a “stiff upper lip.” By contrast, the officers and enlisted men are portrayed as cheerful, brave, and uncomplaining as they risk their lives daily on patrol for Nazi anti-shipping vessels. By composing original music specifically for the common officers and fighters, Vaughan Williams obtained further control over not only the film scoring but of the entire cinema project itself. In this sense, due to his national stature, he assumed a director-like role in deciding exactly when, where, and what music was to be used within the film. In other words, Vaughan Williams, through the influence of his score, became the auteur of *Coastal Command*.

### **Film Production for *Coastal Command***

As director for this film, Holmes had to cope with a complex production.<sup>316</sup> Although he had started as a director at the Strand film company before joining the Crown Film Unit, Holmes’ most notable work came in British documentary film as a

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<sup>316</sup> When Cavalcanti left the General Post Office documentary film unit to join Michael Balcon at Ealing Studios in the summer of 1940, Holmes and Harry Watt were left in charge of producing for the GPO film unit (Grierson had already left and settled in Canada as head of documentary films). Watt admitted that both Holmes and he felt absolutely incapable of handling day-to-day operations, being better suited for their creative talents in directing documentaries. Together they decided to bring in Ian Dalrymple to head the GPO as it transitioned to the Crown Film Unit (all this happened mere months after Churchill became Prime Minister after Chamberlain and appointed Jack Beddington head of films division of the Ministry of Information). Dalrymple had acted as a producer on Alexander Korda’s *The Lion Has Wings* and also had worked as a scenarist in Korda’s studio. It was right after Dalrymple took over in August 1940 that the film unit put together *London Can Take It* in two weeks during the height of the blitz. See Elizabeth Sussex, *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary: The Story of the Film Movement Founded by John Grierson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 121-25.

cinematographer, with *Coastal Command* as the second film of the four he would direct.<sup>317</sup> From his experience as a cinematographer, Holmes developed his own style of employing various methods to restate reality. In fact, he was cited in the *Kine Weekly* as describing documentaries as trying “to put real people on the screen, so that the audience can think ‘I might have been there – that might have been me!’ often ‘That was me.’”<sup>318</sup> From this cinematography experience, Holmes took a hands-on approach to filming *Coastal Command* that resulted in audiences feeling as if they were actually *in* the planes with the crew members of the Sunderland and Catalina Flying Boats.

As the film was sponsored by the government, all of the materials and drafts needed to be kept as public records. These deteriorating files still exist in the Public Records Office in London but also, due to their obscurity, remain unorganized and mostly forgotten between unclassified military intelligence, RAF Coastal Command, and Crown Film unit classifications. These files additionally contain film shooting records and lists of who would be shooting in each unit and at what location.

Despite viewers believing that the battle sequences were real and shot all at once,

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<sup>317</sup> *The Factual Film* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 99. Shortly after the completion of *Coastal Command*, Ian Dalrymple resigned as head of the Crown Film Unit 10 May 1943 and was succeeded by J.B. Holmes until Basil Wright took over from January 1945-January 1946. Cited in Sussex, *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary: The Story of the Film Movement Founded by John Grierson*, 151 & 155.

<sup>318</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 4 September 1941), 35. Holmes further complimented his military support in the trade paper, stating “I learn from Ian Dalrymple that an elaborate feature-length subject, *Coastal Command*, is to have the full assistance of the Services and the closest co-operation of the Ministry of Information. ‘Production has actually started,’ said Dalrymple, ‘and the Royal Navy and R.A.F. personnel will figure in it in large numbers.’” *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 27 November 1941), 42.

Holmes and his two film units actually made the documentary all over the British Isles. For example, the submarine bombing was filmed in Northern Ireland, and some undisclosed shooting locations for battle sequences were filmed in Iceland, Shetlands, North Coates, and Pembroke Dock.<sup>319</sup> Unsuspectingly, a large portion of the film was done on sets in a studio, including the interior of the Sunderland (also shot at Pembroke Dock), the officer's operations room, officer's mess, the hospital room, and the scene in Captain Campbell's bedroom. While break-away sections of planes were built as sets, it appears that the Sunderland interiors shot in the studio were mostly for close ups of the crew in their wing and gunner positions.<sup>320</sup>

According to the surviving documents, Holmes did not travel to Iceland for shooting, but left it in the 2<sup>nd</sup> unit's hands.<sup>321</sup> In fact, for a film that is still occasionally shown and that was hastily done, it is astounding how many materials detailing the filming process survive. One of the lists filed under the production materials further details what specific scenes were to be shot and in what order. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Unit was to film the Iceland location shots early on so that they could rejoin the first unit and help out with the battle scenes.<sup>322</sup> According to unclassified materials—and in accordance with the shortage of planes in the 18<sup>th</sup> boundary—Campbell's Sunderland in the documentary was actually the same plane used for the

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<sup>319</sup> INF 5/86 located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> While officially remaining neutral throughout the war, Iceland severed its previously long-held ties with Denmark in April 1940 when that country was invaded by the Nazis. British troops peacefully took control of Iceland in May 1940, and were later joined by Canadian and American troops. Iceland formally declared its independence in June 1944.

Australian crew's aircraft that supposedly saves "T" for Tommy in the climax of the film. All the filmmakers had to do was change the different markings on the outside of the Sunderland, and audiences believed that they were seeing two different planes flying near each other in the finished product. As a proof of verification, there is no actual outside footage of the film's two planes present in the same frame. For filming, camera crews were instead given a separate plane in which to follow the sequences and these would change based on needs and availability. For example, in Northern Coates and in the unspecified battle scenes, the plane used for the camera was an Anson, but the shooting in the Shetlands had a Catalina transporting the camera team.<sup>323</sup>

As previously mentioned, the Ministry also wanted to ensure that the heroes of the war would be represented first and foremost within the film and therefore sanctioned that actual members of the Coastal Command could star in the film. Even the operations room sets included the Air Chief Marshal Sir Philip Joubert, air officer and commanding officer of the RAF division, at work with his staff. This inclusion of the real-life Air Chief Marshal and his staff – a risk to security that the Ministry must have deemed necessary in order to promote nationalistic fervor in this scene—were further featured and advertised as star attractions that were meant to validate the authenticity of *Coastal Command*.

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<sup>323</sup> The same file also contains handwritten notes and scheduling for the film, including some notes that indicate planning of crew and command personnel to be used. The notes are dated from May 1941 when pre-filming would have taken place and also describe Coastal Commands cooperation and help with filming. INF 5/86 located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

Due to the inclusion of previously classified information and military personnel, multiple versions of the full script have survived and are preserved at the National Archives and the British Film Institute. The script located at the BFI contains the names of the major people involved in the credits—even the name of Captain Cambell’s West Highland Terrier, affectionately called Beady.<sup>324</sup> While not all of the crew is identifiable in the film credits, which was most likely done for personal security of the military officers, some of the pilots from the planes are still traceable. The principal reason why these few select crew members can be found is because they were tragically killed in action right after completing their roles in making *Coastal Command*.<sup>325</sup> For example, a scene shooting script confirms that Johnny Hyde, full name Ernest Leslie “Johnny” Hyde (1914-1942), played Captain Campbell in this film.<sup>326</sup> Official military records confirm that within weeks of finishing his required shooting for the film, Hyde was flying a Beaufighter over Norway on the 27 April 1942 and was shot down. Dying of his wounds shortly after, Hyde never saw

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<sup>324</sup> Some listed crew include Camera – Jonah Hones, Second Unit Directors – Ralph Elton, Jack Lee, R.Q. McNaughton, Musical Director – Muir Mathieson, Editor – Michael Gordon, Sound – Ken Cameron, Construction – E. Garrick, Unit Manager – G. Bryant, Production Manager – Dora Wright, Continuity – Isobel Pargiter, Music – Ralph Vaughan Williams played by RAF Orchestra. Found in *Coastal Command S15212* in the British Film Institute Special Collections at Southbank, London.

<sup>325</sup> In fact, the only crew members mentioned on reliable film search databases such as imdb are pilot Roger Hunter and flight sergeant Charles Norman Lewis. Sergeant Lewis, an Airframe Fitter, was killed in the crash of Sunderland W4026 “DQ-M” of the 228 Squadron that killed HRH Duke of Kent on Tuesday, 25 August 1942. While Lewis is listed on imdb and searchable through official RAF records, a 1943 RKO film advertisement for cinema owners in the United States confirms that three members of the flight crew for the film perished in the Duke of Kent plane crash. In addition to confirming these deaths, this same advertisement claims that the shot of the Sunderland going in close was actually done in a real battle. Advertisement found in INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>326</sup> INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK



the completed film, while the downed plane is still visible in the water off the coast of Norway.<sup>327</sup>

With all the extra scenes and locations preserved in the records kept for *Coastal Command*, it is hard to believe that everything was fit into the sixty-minute cut of the film. There exists contradictory evidence about this matter, as there are extra scenes listed in both of the surviving scripts without the narration, including extended sections with the dog and discussions in the operations room. From the evidence provided by these scenes, it is clear that multiple versions of *Coastal Command* were released, but that the scripts stored in both the British Film Institute and the National Archives are from the original cut made in 1942.<sup>328</sup> After further investigation into the records kept at the National Archives in London, it can now be confirmed that the popular sixty-minute version is not the original release of the film. A note from 17 June 1943 circulated by the Government mentions that the final film lasted about eighty-minutes. This means that about twenty minutes worth of material was excised at some point and that the rest of the film had been re-edited after its initial release.<sup>329</sup> Additionally, both of the original scripts for the film confirm that the eighty-minute version of the movie does not contain any of the narration lines, unlike the sixty-minute version found more commonly in the United

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<sup>327</sup> More information about this historical site can be found at <https://ktsorens.tihlde.org/flyvrak/korsvika.html>.

<sup>328</sup> *Coastal Command* S15212 in the British Film Institute Special Collections at Southbank, London.

<sup>329</sup> INF 5/86 located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. Original film still available through British Film Institute.

States and available to the public on YouTube.<sup>330</sup> According to surviving records, the original cut of film was transferred to the United States sometime after its release. When moved to the States, the film was shortened and a narrator added, ultimately ending in three separate versions of the movie being made, including selections of the aerial shots from the Crown Film Unit production which were additionally used in an Icelandic documentary.<sup>331</sup>

Unlike both *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and *Flemish Farm*, the celluloid film of *Coastal Command* remains one of the most important sources in analyzing the existing film score. Because the film was shortened for its American release, one of the few ways to view the original version is to play the celluloid film stock preserved by the British Film Institute. From watching this footage stored on four separate reels, one is able to piece together the missing scenes from the shorter YouTube version and also hear the score without the distraction of narration.<sup>332</sup> Some major differences between the two versions include the opening credits and large selections of scenes featuring the upper class officers and Beady the dog. However, the most noticeable

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<sup>330</sup> INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. Also see *Coastal Command* S15212 at the British Film Institute Special Collections Southbank Location.

<sup>331</sup> INF 5/86 located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. The sixty minute version available for free on Youtube and published through Periscope films is one of the altered versions made in the United States. Through emails with Periscope, I can confirm that the company claims that the published version is the British version of the film and it was slightly altered to remove a scene with an injured crewman before distribution (this most likely being the final hospital scene at the end of the film). Periscope films was founded in 2007 and obtained publishing rights shortly after their creation.

<sup>332</sup> For example, Vaughan Williams's wrote the English horn solo analyzed in Chapter 5 that is heard in the suite but largely cut from the short version of the film. It is actually played in a cut scene as the soldiers walk into the hall from the outside after an image of a flying boat or Sunderland is shown. See short version *Coastal Command*, 2:45.

difference is the extended ending sequence that was rapidly shortened in the American version. In the short version, the film ends with “T” for Tommy coming home and the dialogue silenced under narration. In the original British release, the crew is seen recovering in the infirmary as Captain Campbell comes in and tells them that they will be leaving for West Africa almost immediately. It is unclear why this scene would have been cut, as it provides more closure to the story and allows the actual military men a chance to stand out and be recognized for their service and expose the audience to one more glimpse of their inexperienced acting. Additionally, this scene gives further opportunity for the men to personify the stereotypical “Englishman” propaganda image that the Ministry wanted its fellow Britons to embrace as a means of raising morale.<sup>333</sup> Furthermore, the music is better featured in the un-narrated British version as it actually plays a creative role in telling the story and shaping audience sympathy for the brave servicemen featured in the film. The final fact that this film is four reels as opposed to three, the average amount for an hour of film broken up into twenty minute segments, proves that close to fifteen to twenty minutes of film was cut for the American shortened version.

As to when *Coastal Command* was actually altered, copyright inquiries about Vaughan Williams’s musical score still kept in the film files at the National Archives in London have provided enough evidence to make an educated guess about the

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<sup>333</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).

film's various forms. A note on the broadcasting music rights from Mr. Monson of the BBC Bedford College dated 3 February 1943 shows a request to broadcast the film music on February 1, 1943, but stated that RKO had control over the American rights as that studio was currently in a two month process of re-editing the film for American audiences. Assuming that Mr. Monson's inquiry is correct, this means that the original version of the film was never intended to be shown in the United States and was edited within a year of the picture's initial release. It can only be assumed that it was at this time in 1943 when the running time of the film was cut to sixty-minutes and the narration added. In this version, that narration overshadows the musical score and provides further story explanation that was not needed from the original dialogue that was cut down. In order to broadcast the film score, Monson needed to contact and obtain permission from both Mathieson and Vaughan Williams.<sup>334</sup>

### **The Music of *Coastal Command***

Ian Dalrymple, director of the Crown Film Unit during the Second World War, testified to the crucial role played by Muir Mathieson at Pinewood Studios:

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<sup>334</sup> INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

We had the services of Muir Mathieson, who at the time was the leading film conductor, actually sort of producing music supplied by the composers, knocking it into shape, and exactly fitting it. He was an absolute genius at this. So through him and through an arrangement we made whereby the composers would accept the token fee of £50 or something (because the money we got was negligible) but kept the rights of the music, we were able to use Vaughan Williams and Bax, a number of the younger lot too. We were able to get some marvelous music, and of course we used classical music to a certain extent, obviously.<sup>335</sup>

Having worked with Vaughan Williams on Powell and Pressburger's *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* with enormous success, it seemed to be a logical step that Mathieson would again draw on the composer's eagerness to score for government sponsored films.

Despite the problems of filming and re-editing, the one aspect of *Coastal Command* that remained inviolate was the original score. About his next film score, Vaughan Williams wrote to his mistress, Ursula Wood—who would later become his second wife—in a letter dated July 1942: “I am pleased with the film music on the whole – though it was all rather against the collar. Of course I will take you to it my dear.”<sup>336</sup> It is clear from that letter's dating that the film music he was talking about was that for *Coastal Command*, and that the composer was content with his work. Additionally, Ken Cameron, the sound recordist in the Crown Film Unit studio, is quoted as saying:

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<sup>335</sup> Sussex, *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary: The Story of the Film Movement Founded by John Grierson*, 150.

<sup>336</sup> Hugh Cobbe, ed. *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 342. Letter also stored in the British Library incorrectly labeled for *Joanna Godden*. See MS. Mus. 1714/1/14 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

We knew that here was something great, something, indeed finer and more alive than any music we had ever had before...On rare occasions when the music was slightly too long or too short to match the existing picture, then it was the visual material which suffered the mutilation.<sup>337</sup>

This statement appears to be correct, as almost all of the surviving score materials in the British Library that relates to *Coastal Command* shows up in the documentary. Unlike *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and, as will be seen with *Flemish Farm*, very little music that was composed for *Coastal Command* was cut.

One major factor for this unusual occurrence in film composition, is due to Vaughan Williams's unique approach to creating the score. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, the music for this film was composed with the notion of simultaneously being formatted into a suite of movements for radio and live concert hall performances. Vaughan Williams side-stepped the usual procedure in order to preserve as much of his music as possible—this was done in the service of the music that was conceptually meant to be distributed and heard in the repetitive and more formal realm of live performance classical and pop concerts.

In keeping with the government's aim of featuring the British military in the film, the score for *Coastal Command* was recorded by the RAF orchestra under the musical direction of Muir Mathieson, with Ken Cameron in charge of sound recording.<sup>338</sup> As a sought-after film conductor during the war, Mathieson served as

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<sup>337</sup> John Huntley, *British Film Music* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 111. John Huntley had actually returned from war service in the *Coastal Command* in 1945 and began working at Denham Studios as Mathieson's assistant. Found in S. J. Hetherington, and Mark Brownrigg, *Muir Mathieson, 1911-1975: A Life in Film Music* (Dalkeith, Scotland: Scottish Cultural Press, 2006), 45.

<sup>338</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 17.

music director for the Army, Navy and Air Force film units in addition to being in charge of the music for the Crown Film Unit, and was therefore well accustomed with the musicians enlisted in the military orchestras.<sup>339</sup>

Although he did not keep complete personal records of his film recording experiences, Mathieson consistently championed documentary films: “In this country the ‘documentary’ filmmakers have always been the adventurers.”<sup>340</sup> Praising the documentary companies whenever he could, Mathieson affirmed that within these movies, “music plays a doubly important part, providing, as it must, a larger than usual share of the entertainment. Music can help to humanize the subject and widen its appeal. Music can make the film less intellectual and more emotional. It can influence the reaction of the audience to any given sequence.”<sup>341</sup> In full agreement with Mathieson’s published opinion, one of the goals of this chapter is to reveal the essential role Vaughan Williams’s score plays in providing effective emotional propaganda within *Coastal Command*. Despite some of these statements being made years after the making of this documentary, Mathieson always referred to Vaughan Williams’s score for *Coastal Command* in radio broadcasts in order to demonstrate effective propaganda and describe with pride his close partnership in shaping the concert suite. Mathieson knew that if the music for a propaganda film did not touch the viewer’s heart, then it was useless.

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<sup>339</sup> Hetherington and Brownrigg, *Muir Mathieson, 1911-1975: A Life in Film Music*, 87.

<sup>340</sup> Mathieson, Muir. “Aspects of Film Music” in *Tempo*, no. 9 (December 1944, 7-9. Published by Cambridge University Press), 9.

<sup>341</sup> Mathieson, Muir. “Music for Crown” in *Hollywood Quarterly*. vol. 3 no. 3 (Spring 1948, 323-326. Published by University of California Press), 323.

According to Huntley, the score was recorded at H.M.V. Studio, St. Johns Wood, in London.<sup>342</sup> Despite Cameron's underappreciated role in the film, he deeply respected Vaughan Williams's score to the extent that when the Crown Film Unit was disbanded, Cameron rescued the original score for *Coastal Command* from the bonfires made from destroyed documents—a short-sighted policy that resulted in the loss of countless historical film materials.<sup>343</sup> While taking into account the short length of this documentary, it is surprising to find that the recording dates for the film score appear to span a three-month period with initial reports of recording dates appearing in handwritten notes from 21 April 1942 filed in government documents.<sup>344</sup> However, after reviewing the dates in Mathieson's daily pocket notebooks, the music director first mentions the film recording being set for 10am on Wednesday 12 May 1942 at Pinewood Studios – not, as Huntley claims, at H.M.V. in St. John's Wood.

In fact, Mathieson even records in his day planner that both he and Vaughan Williams were scheduled to see the film for recording purposes on Tuesday 26 May 1942, as well as additional scheduled meetings between the two men, such as one set for Saturday 27 June 1942 at 10:30am in Uxbridge (close to Denham Studios) to discuss the film.<sup>345</sup> However, Mathieson does confirm Huntley's assertion much later than the initial government documents, as the date of Friday 17 July 1942 contains

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<sup>342</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 143.

<sup>343</sup> Hetherington and Brownrigg, *Muir Mathieson, 1911-1975: A Life in Film Music*, 103.

<sup>344</sup> INF 5/86 located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>345</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/8/1 in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.



highlighted and circled notes that *Coastal Command* was to be recorded at Abbey Road studios in St. John's Wood, with another session scheduled for 10am, Friday 24 July 1942.<sup>346</sup> By keeping in mind the unusual scheduling of Vaughan Williams and Mathieson working on the film score and concert suite at the exact same time for this film, one can reasonably assume that one of the reasons for the confusion and scattered dates is that the recording work done at Abbey Road was for the film suite. Additionally, the latest verifiable date found in Mathieson's planner was marked on Tuesday 28 July 1942 when he penciled in recording *Coastal Command* with the RAF orchestra, but it is crossed out, and a note to record the second day of the film was marked for Thursday 30 July 1942.<sup>347</sup> The conflicting recording dates match with the mix-up in the score books. This confirms that the suite of the film music was being planned at the same time that the film was being recorded and composed. By recording and releasing the film music suite parallel with the documentary, Mathieson and Vaughan Williams intended for both versions of the music to be used as propaganda over radio and in the concert hall as well to enhance the exposure and action of *Coastal Command*.

For further records of the music's emotional impact, the British Film Institute once commented on *Coastal Command*, "[T]he music has been used 'skillfully in conjunction with natural sound to heighten the dramatic effect.'"<sup>348</sup> In an effort to keep public interest in government-sponsored documentaries engaged, and to

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 111.

follow up the successful *Target for Tonight*, trade show magazines began advertising *Coastal Command* as early as late 1941, when the film was in pre-production. An article on the opening page headline from the *Kinematograph Weekly* dated 27 November 1941 heralded how another filming stage would be opened up to film government, factual, propaganda documentaries. These films would target service units such as the RAF and Navy and would be produced by the Crown Film Unit. The article further declares that: “plans already completed include the production of feature-length films, directly sponsored by the various services, and in which only members of the Forces will take part, as was the case in *Target for Tonight* and in the current production by the Crown Film Unit of *Coastal Command*.” This article proves that filming on Vaughan Williams’s second film was already underway by November 1941, while *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* was still being released globally.<sup>349</sup> In addition to this printed source, the RAF and Crown Film Unit were given permission to use the Pinewood sound stages and cutting rooms. Therefore, within months of this advertisement, Vaughan Williams had begun composing the score that would celebrate the courage of the brave men and women of the Coastal Command defense.

Despite the fact that only about thirty-minutes of Vaughan Williams’s musical score is used in the eighty-minute version, it is actually of great importance in establishing effective use of propaganda. From the placement of the music within

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<sup>349</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 27 November 1941), 3.

the film, the importance given to Vaughan Williams in the film credits, and highlighted promotion through advertising, it is clear that the musical work itself was to play a crucial role in building morale. A surviving cue sheet points out that Vaughan Williams was responsible for over ninety-five percent of the music heard in *Coastal Command*, as the only other listings of combined diegetic and non-diegetic music used in the film account for less than two minutes of the final cut eighty-minute film. These other selections include a little over a minute of the Grasshoppers' Dance from H.M.V. disc BD 794 by Bucalossi that is heard while the men clean and maintain the Sunderland before Captain Campbell returns; twenty-five seconds of the vocal and visual "We're riding Along on the Crest of a Wave" sung by the troops in the opening assembly performance; and thirty-one seconds of the "Rustle of Spring" composed by the Norwegian composer Christian Sinding (1856-1941) in partnership with a special direct recording used as the Sunderland crew watched the women ballerinas before leaving the same assembly performance to report for duty.<sup>350</sup>

Once the timing of the music was agreed upon, Vaughan Williams quickly composed the score and sent it to be orchestrated to save time. Roy Douglas (1907-2015) orchestrated *Coastal Command*, who was given the task of "making the scores more readable." This being Douglas' first exposure to the composer's scrawl,

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<sup>350</sup> Although only a few seconds were used, "We're riding Along on the Crest of a Wave" was an original anthem song used by Gang Anthems in their finales as part of their vaudeville stage shows (by Ralph Reader) and therefore fell under copyright. Licensed by Cinephonic Music Company Ltd. (London Branch). INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

Douglas wrote: “After my initial dismay and bewilderment – it was my very first sight of his manuscript writing – I nobly settled down to the tedious task of copying out all the band parts, which seemed the most practical method of dealing with the problem.”<sup>351</sup> The “problem” of course referring to Vaughan Williams seemingly illegible handwriting in which he quickly scribbled down his music; it is as if his hand could barely keep pace with his musical invention. Despite this daunting task, Douglas succeeded in completing the task according to the composer’s wishes and the score was recorded in the multiple sessions that were discussed above.

### **Reception of *Coastal Command***

*Coastal Command* was premiered on Friday 16 October 1942 in London at the Carlton Theater.<sup>352</sup> What is even more intriguing about this date is that the BBC lists the first performance of the suite for *Coastal Command* taking place 17 September 1942 with Muir Mathieson conducting the BBC Northern Orchestra – nearly a month before the film’s premiere.<sup>353</sup> As with *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, the government was keen to present the film to audiences as a way to make the most efficient use of musical propaganda. The film was documented throughout production in the cinema trade

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<sup>351</sup> Roy Douglas, *Working with Vaughan Williams: The Correspondence of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas* (London: The British Library, 1988), 3. A pianist, orchestrator, and composer, Douglas worked as Vaughan Williams’s collaborator and orchestrator for the last decade of the composer’s life.

<sup>352</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 15 October 1942), 6. Printed three days after Vaughan Williams’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, the film description published here also highlights the complete use of military personnel and how the film features Vaughan Williams’s music performed by the RAF Orchestra. Although it is unable to be fully confirmed, this recording most likely featured top musicians including the revered horn soloist, Dennis Brain.

<sup>353</sup> See KEN 3/1/12-13 in the Michael Kennedy Collection at the John Rylands Library Special Collections in Manchester, UK.

papers, which worked to build up intent for its release. The *Kine Weekly* was an example of such a paper, as articles began appearing the week before *Coastal Command's* London premiere. In an article entitled “‘Coastal Command’ Paramount to Release Epic Picture,” the paper states:

One of the most thrilling factual features of the Services is *Coastal Command* released by Paramount which will open simultaneously at the Carlton and Plaza on Friday, October 16. *Coastal Command* was produced by the Crown Film Unit under the direction of J.B. Holmes, with the complete cooperation of the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy. Officers, non-commissioned officers and men and women of Coastal Command Royal Air Force appear throughout in this great picture, music for which was composed by R. Vaughan Williams and played by the R.A.F. Orchestra. A special premiere of the film will be held at the Plaza in aid of the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund.<sup>354</sup>

One notes that for this review, Vaughan Williams was not only credited in the film billing, but his name was used as an advertising point just as if he was the star of the picture. This event was additionally important to Vaughan Williams, who writes to Ursula Wood about how she was invited to go with him to the film premiere and all the other festivities of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.<sup>355</sup> The film's release coinciding

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<sup>354</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 8 October 1942), 5. As this was a government sponsored film, the rental fees were offered at a flat twenty percent on open market terms to exhibitors in the usual order of business. See *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 22 October 1942), 12.

<sup>355</sup> See earlier citation from Cobbe, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 342. Letter also stored in the British Library incorrectly labeled for *Joanna Godden*. See MS. Mus. 1714/1/14 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Also mentioning this premiere, Ursula writes in the biography of her husband: “Four days later he was in London again for the world première of *Coastal Command* at the Plaza Cinema. This was the work of the Crown Film Unit and the music was recorded by the R.A.F. orchestra, a band that had absorbed some of the finest musicians. Once again Muir Mathieson conducted and Ralph was very pleased with the result.” See Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 250.

with Vaughan Williams's birthday celebrations enhanced the national propaganda value of the film.

Despite the disparity between the British and American versions, all presentations of the film appear to have been well received. This is especially true in Britain, as the *Kine Weekly* published 14 January 1943 in the yearly review of the best and award-winning films of 1942, *Coastal Command* is listed as the best documentary of the year. This same article further discusses how receipts from trade shows and film were the highest in history despite being in the midst of the third year of the war.<sup>356</sup> Furthermore, notwithstanding the lack of box office records kept during this decade, a few receipts from the commercial distribution of Ministry feature films have survived in the national archives declassified files. As of 31 March 1943 Ministry-sponsored film receipts totaled £237,180, a huge sum for the time, and as of the 30 November 1944, the total was listed at £398,318. Of the £568,599 made by Ministry feature films from 1940/41 to 1943/44, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* accounted for £116,432 – a figure that far exceeds the total of £25,140 earned by Alexander Korda's *The Lion Has Wings* (1939). The Crown Film Unit accounted for £199,660 of that total, with *Coastal Command* accounting for £47,797—not bad for a small documentary production.<sup>357</sup> To put these numerical figures into perspective,

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<sup>356</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 14 January 1943), 46.

<sup>357</sup> The modern-day equivalent of the earnings for *Coastal Command* would be slightly over two million pounds. *Coastal Command* was second on this earning list next to *Target for Tonight*. These numbers are again repeated on an evidence receipt for the public accounts committee in May 1944. INF 1/199 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. Also cited in James Chapman, *The British at War: Cinema, State and Propaganda, 1939-1945* (New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998), 132. The modern day

from Dec 1942 – Dec 1943 the Crown Film Unit spent £71,178 on producing films with only 1/12 of that (8.6%) being spent on abandoned films.<sup>358</sup> According to Library Memos for the Crown Film Unit, *Coastal Command* was one of a handful of important films:

[*Coastal Command*] automatically swelled our library with historical and immensely valuable material which has been eagerly sought by other filmmakers over the past few years. Obviously, if material existed which is required, it is more logical for the Government to sell it, and more economical for the user to buy it, than to go to the expense and inconvenience of shooting it again, particularly now that raw film stock is strictly rationed.<sup>359</sup>

Judging from the material in this government folder of archival documents, all of which date from the war years, this could partially account for how the original negative for *Coastal Command* ended up in the USA. As the Crown Film Unit had already done the risky leg work of gathering the difficult aerial shots with the help of the British military, these clips quickly became stock material that was sold and reused for profit in the United States and Iceland.<sup>360</sup> By encouraging the use of these

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equivalent of the *Coastal Command* earnings would be between two and three million American dollars.

<sup>358</sup> INF 1/199 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>359</sup> INF 1/466 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>360</sup> Film footage was used in an Icelandic documentary *Hernam II* made in 1968 and later the film director and government of Iceland requested to purchase material to preserve it in their national archive. In order to do so, Imperial War Museum representatives requested that the government purchase a preservation only copy of the entire film and not just pieces of it used in their documentary. As a reminder, the original negative of the film was sent to the USA in January 1943. INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK. However, a request was made to the Ministry of Information from the French Allied Division in June 1943 to convert *Coastal Command* into French for presentation in the occupied country. No further records of this have been found. See INF 1/933 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records

clips and presenting *Coastal Command* it both trade shows and free government screenings, the propaganda value of this film was assured. In recognition of the film's groundbreaking status, *Coastal Command* was selected for preservation by the Imperial War Museum during the years 1964-69.<sup>361</sup>

Wishing to keep production costs low, Ministry finances authorized 21 August 1941 up to £8,738.5.10d for *Coastal Command*. By 16 January 1943, production costs had roughly doubled to £16,846.<sup>362</sup> Even with the plaudits for the dangerous work undertaken on the film's production, one of the most consistently praised aspects of *Coastal Command* was Vaughan Williams's score. One example is a review by Evelyn Russell in which she praises the film's musical greatness, but still points out that *Coastal Command's* overall level of danger and excitement did not exceed that of Bomber Command in the documentary *Target for Tonight*.<sup>363</sup> In anticipation for the film's release and in a further effort to highlight the musical score, the cue

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Office at Kew in London, UK. A few reviews of the film from New York are also kept as micro images/micro film at the British Film Institute Reuben Library.

<sup>361</sup> Film retained a £210 royalty fee for its use through May 1957. Film was earmarked for preservation and transfer to the Imperial War Museum 30 January 1969 when it would no longer be needed by service. Note that this is not the BFI that decides to preserve the film. INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>362</sup> Of this total, £74.8.6d was reportedly spent by finance to entertain and recompense R.A.F. members for their services and work on the film. INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>363</sup> Russell writes: "No one could deny the sincerity of *Coastal Command*, which sought to do for that command what *Target for Tonight* did for Bomber Command. Yet in spite of its magnificent photography, for which we are indebted to Jonas Jones, its impressive music by Vaughan Williams so skillfully used by director J.B. Holmes and its first-class sound recording by Ken Cameron, there is not the same suspense and general excitement. It is, however, most interesting as a record of the work of that section of the Air Force which does not, perhaps, in the course of its duties have assigned to it the jobs with much likelihood of immediate drama." See Russell, Evelyn. "Films of 1942" in *Sight and Sound Magazine*, vol. 11, no. 44 (Spring 1943, published by the British Film Institute), 100.



sheet for the film was posted 8 October 1942. The cost of music production were further recorded on the music cue sheet, however these figures do not mention a fee for Vaughan Williams, but notes the music was “specially composed” by the composer.<sup>364</sup>

In part due to the promotion of Vaughan Williams’s participation, the music for *Coastal Command* touched the British public and proved to be vital in highlighting the emotional impact of the propaganda presented by the documentary. Demonstrating proof of this assertion and the importance of the score to the war effort and morale present in the film can be found in a letter sent to the composer on 24 June 1943 from two sisters who were admirers of his work. The family wished to “express our appreciation for the magnificent music which you composed for the film *Coastal Command*. We saw the film a second time especially to listen to the music and still haven’t had enough.” In addition to asking if the work would be published, the letter states that “My sister and I and no doubt countless others would treasure recordings in recognition of the grand work caused out by *Coastal Command*.” While no reply exists from the Vaughan Williams to the two sisters, it is more than fair to say the composer was pleased by this tribute to his desire to serve his nation as a composer.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>365</sup> British Library MS Mus. 1714/1/15 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

Alongside members of the British public, notable musicians weighed in on the reviews for *Coastal Command*. Ernest Irving, the music director at Ealing Studios who would later collaborate with Vaughan Williams, criticized the composer's score as "not quite up to his best standard, neither was it particularly good film music."<sup>366</sup> While it is unclear if Irving disliked the score in comparison to Vaughan Williams's concert hall works or simply wished to criticize a competing film, Irving did not let his opinion affect his collaboration with Vaughan Williams on later Ealing films like *Loves of Joanna Godden* (1946) and *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948).

Fortunately, Irving's dismissive words represented a minority opinion. More positive was one review from the "Documentary News Letter" that raved, "Vaughan Williams has done a magnificent score, but it suffers from the fact that while it tries to overlay the action, the director is endeavoring to underplay it."<sup>367</sup> Unlike Irving's opinion, this review gives Vaughan Williams credit as being the greatest contributor in the artistic and emotional content of the film—its auteur. This reviewer follows up his praise with the assertion that the composer's efforts were overshadowed by the inexperience of a director trying to steal the spotlight for himself. A letter from the British Museum dated 5 July 1972 requested the reproduction of a film still to

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<sup>366</sup> From Ernest Irving's article "Music in Films" in *Music and Letters* (Vol. XXIV, No. 4, 1943). Also quoted in Kennedy, *A Catalog of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 298. Additionally, Kennedy writes that Ian Dalrymple, who was a part of the creative team for *Coastal Command*, said about Vaughan Williams that "Mathieson, Ernest Irving, Anthony Asquith and Michael Balcon became his friends." See Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 259.

<sup>367</sup> Huntley, *British Film Music*, 111.

accompany a sample of the score at the centenary exhibition of Vaughan Williams's life that was put on the same year.<sup>368</sup>

As an important contributor to this score throughout the film's production and after, Mathieson merits high praise. Throughout his busy career, Mathieson regularly included music from *Coastal Command* in his radio talks and presentations on film music. In a transcript of a broadcast from 1948, Mathieson says, "Now this music doesn't imitate aeroplanes or the sound of the sea; it's pure music – beautiful on its own account. But it has got in it the tang of the sea, and something of the spirit of adventure and the heroism that this film is about. And that is what makes it so exactly right for the purpose."<sup>369</sup> As one of his favorite radio program music samples, the music for *Coastal Command* was used on radio shows throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s.<sup>370</sup> Another example includes Mathieson highlighting the score on 8 June 1943 for "Tuesday Radiogram" on the Forces Radio Programming. In this case, Mathieson provides an example of music skillfully providing emotion as he plays the sequence entitled "Quiet Determination:"

Now they weren't professional actors – they were the actual crew of that Sunderland. They naturally didn't use subtle dialogue, or express any terrific emotion – it was just another job. But the music showed something of their feelings – their spirit if you like and their quiet determination...in the face of an incredibly dangerous job. Quiet [Determination] I think is a case where of necessity music has to heighten an emotional passage of a film.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> INF 6/24 Central Office of Information record sheet located in the British National Archives and Public Records Office at Kew in London, UK.

<sup>369</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/2/2e in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

Mathieson's testimony here further confirms that Vaughan Williams needed to assume the role of an auteur in the creation of his score in order to make up for the inexperienced acting and directing of the cast and crew.<sup>372</sup>

Although he never again worked with the Crown Film Unit after *Coastal Command*, Vaughan Williams never stopped supporting the company's efforts to provide well-produced documentaries. When the decision to close the Crown Film Unit was made, Vaughan Williams wrote to the editor of the Times in protest of the decision. His protest was published 7 February 1952: "Those of us who have had the privilege of working with and for the 'Crown' cannot stand by and hear it condemned for death without petitioning against a sentence so discouraging to our colleagues at home and our prestige abroad."<sup>373</sup> Included in the company's lasting legacy, *Coastal Command* is now regarded as one of the most successful of the forty-three films released commercially by the Ministry of Information by December 1943.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Mathieson responds on the importance of a documentary being worthy of good film music: "Yes – and I should say even more so at the moment when a documentary is doing such a terrific propaganda job." Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> See MS. Mus. 1714/1/19 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>374</sup> *The Factual Film* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 76.

## Chapter 5 – The Surviving Scores and Musical Analysis of *Coastal Command*

### The Presence of *Coastal Command* in Vaughan William's Sixth Symphony

Following the successful repositioning of discarded material from *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* into his concert hall scores, Vaughan Williams continued this economical practice with his second film score. Even though there was little to no unused music for *Coastal Command*, the score directly anticipated the idiom and, in several instances, provided thematic material for the Sixth Symphony. With regard to Vaughan Williams's statements on his Symphony in E Minor (Sixth Symphony), it is clear that the final product does not reflect the composer's description:

Surely we should not accept at face value composers' statements about composers, including themselves. They are not always the best sources of information about creative process, and when pride and polemics are involved...we should not be inclined to agree with them but rather be suspicious of their motives if one disclaims the influence of another.<sup>375</sup>

Vaughan Williams remarked in response to the critic Frank Howes calling it the "War Symphony," that he: "conceded that any writer was at liberty to make such an attribution or to interpret the music in relation to events, but he refused to lend countenance to the idea that he himself had given, or would give, the smallest warrant for such a name or for that interpretation."<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> John Wiley Roland, "The Tribulations of Nationalist Composers: A Speculation Concerning Borrowed Music in *Khovanshchina*," in *Musorgsky: In Memoriam 1881-1981* (ed. Malcolm Brown. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982), 168.

<sup>376</sup> Frank Howes, *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 53.

In a letter written 22 January 1956 to Michael Kennedy, Vaughan Williams further stated: "With regard to the last movement of my No.6, I do NOT BELIEVE IN meanings and mottoes, as you know, but I think we can get in words nearest to the substance of my last movement in 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded by a sleep.'"<sup>377</sup> This is a clue to the mood of the symphony's slow last movement, a reference to Prospero's farewell in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.<sup>378</sup> This notion was quoted by Ursula Vaughan Williams to describe the aftermath of the first performance of the symphony:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.<sup>379</sup>

In complete contradiction to Vaughan Williams's evasions, Sir Malcom Sargent called the symphony after his initial hearing of the work:

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<sup>377</sup> Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 302.

<sup>378</sup> Byron Adams, "The Stages of Revision of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony" in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, Byron Adams and Robin Wells (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 1 and 13-14.

<sup>379</sup> *Vaughan Williams Symphonies Nos. 5 & 6* conducted by Leonard Slatkin with the Philharmonia Orchestra. BMG Classics, 1991 09026-60556-2. Liner notes by Ursula Vaughan Williams quoting William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

A frightening symphony, here we have a complete testament of a man who, in his seventies, looks back on the human sufferings of his time. I never conduct the Sixth without feeling that I am walking across bomb sites...Chaos, despair, desolation and the peace that flows from desolation.<sup>380</sup>

Additionally, this notion is reflected on in a conversation between Vaughan Williams and Howard Ferguson. Recorded in a letter dated 4 January 1994 to Oliver Neighbor, Ferguson recalled this discussion with Vaughan Williams during a BBC Orchestra rehearsal at Studio No. 1 at Maida Vale, London: "The occasion was at one of those run-throughs at Maida Vale No. 1...I said to him at the end of No. 6, 'That's a pretty grim piece;' to which he replied, 'I call it The Big Three.' And that was the end of that."<sup>381</sup> This comparison was made by Vaughan Williams in relation to the Yalta Conference in February 1945 where Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin met to not only plan the final stages of the war but to divide and agree upon the eventual partition of Germany after its surrender.

According to Vaughan Williams, the Sixth Symphony "was begun probably about 1944 and finished in 1947"<sup>382</sup> but was actually started in late 1942 or early 1943. Once again, Vaughan Williams called upon Roy Douglas as a copyist and musical assistant. In a letter dated February 13, 1947, Vaughan Williams tells Douglas:

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<sup>380</sup> Charles Reid, *Malcom Sargent* (London, 1968), 357.

<sup>381</sup> Oliver Neighbor, "The Place of the Eighth Symphony" in *Vaughan Williams Studies*, Alain Frogley (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 224.

<sup>382</sup> Michael Kennedy, *A Catalog of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 180.

I have been foolish enough to write another symphony, could you undertake the vet and then copy the score? If in the course of this you have any improvements to suggest I would receive them with becoming gratitude. On March 10 Michael Mullinar is playing through the sketch at room 46 Royal College of Music at 11:30 and 2:30 – could you (if you are able to undertake the work) come and hear it one of those times?<sup>383</sup>

Douglas says he was flattered with being asked to help with the symphony but after working on two previous orchestral scores with the composer, including *Coastal Command*, he nearly turned the job down. To accommodate everyone involved, the preview of the piece by Michael Mullinar was moved to June as Douglas was busy at that time and asked Vaughan Williams if he could have more time to complete the task.<sup>384</sup> As can be seen throughout the composer's life and most evidently with his film compositions, Vaughan Williams frequently sought advice from his peers and friends on how to revise and improve his compositions.

He did not invariably take their advice, however. This practice is documented in a letter the composer wrote in response to his friend Arthur Bliss, who had studied at the Royal College of Music just before and after the First World War. Bliss had been music director for the BBC during the Second World War. This letter is dated 6 November 1934 after Bliss had attended a play-through of Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony and had made a few suggestions:

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<sup>383</sup> Douglas, *Working with Vaughan Williams: The Correspondence of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas*, 9-10.

<sup>384</sup> Douglas, *Working with Vaughan Williams: The Correspondence of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas*, 9-10. Douglas did manage attend the preview played by Mullinar.



Thank you very much for your letter – as a matter of fact what you said set me thinking hard with the result that I had already made an alteration...You mustn't think your advice has not been valuable to me because I have not exactly followed it – when I give advice to my pupils I tell them they can do one of three things 1). accept it blindly – bad 2). reject it kindly – bad but not so bad 3). think out a third course for themselves – sound<sup>385</sup>

Another letter from Vaughan Williams to Bliss dated 27 April 1935 further displays gratitude of the composer on the advice of his friends and colleagues in regards to the Fourth Symphony:

You know that I owe two enormous last moment improvements entirely to you. What I should really like to do is to have composition lessons from you – I usually have my scoring vetted by Gordon Jacob<sup>386</sup> – & with you to put the stuff right you might between you make a composer of me yet.<sup>387</sup>

Many of the same friends who were present at early readings of the Fourth Symphony—Bliss, Howells, Finzi and Boult—attended the preliminary private performances of the Sixth Symphony.

Although there has been little previous scholarship linking *Coastal Command* to the Sixth Symphony, there has been scholarly speculation between the symphony and another wartime film. Most sources suggest the Sixth Symphony as being used in later films such as *Flemish Farm* (1943). One common entry writes: “with the Sixth Symphony, premiered in 1948, which some commentators regard as nothing less than a ‘war symphony.’ Interestingly this work utilizes some thematic material

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<sup>385</sup> Cobbe, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 233.

<sup>386</sup> Another British contemporary composer of Vaughan Williams, Jacob's advice on orchestration was widely sought after during his lifetime and was consulted regularly by Vaughan Williams. (Cobbe, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 236)

<sup>387</sup> Cobbe, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958*, 235-36.

dropped by the composer from his score for another wartime film saga – *A Flemish Farm*.”<sup>388</sup> Additionally, in the holographic short score containing the second movement of the symphony, the words “theme for Flemish Farm” are written and later crossed out. This addition on the title page suggests that the movement could have initially been written for the 1943 film *The Flemish Farm*, directed by Jeffrey Dell. But it can be proven that “Although the opening music of the second movement may have been initially composed for the film score, an examination of Vaughan Williams’s scores for *Flemish Farm* (BL Add. MS 50429 and 50430) fails to disclose any such connection.”<sup>389</sup> This action of writing a programmatic title across the score of the second movement disproves not only Vaughan Williams’s claim of starting the symphony in 1944 but also the declaration that he made that the symphony had no relationship to the Second World War. However, while it is correct that an unused theme from *Flemish Farm* is in the sixth symphony, it is also correct that the Sixth Symphony contains numerous references to *Coastal Command*. For more on this connection, see the section discussing the film scores of *Flemish Farm* in chapter seven.

Another connection of the symphony to the Second World War is a revised saxophone solo theme in the scherzo of the Sixth Symphony that has strong ties to the London Blitz.

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<sup>388</sup> Wishart

<sup>389</sup> Byron Adams, “The Stages of Revision of Vaughan Williams’s Sixth Symphony” in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, Byron Adams and Robin Wells (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 9.

The theme is recast rhythmically, through the introduction of more syncopation and two measures of triple time, and melodically, becoming more chromatic, with an emphasis on the interval of a tritone, a prominent melodic feature throughout the movement. The accompaniment is rewritten to suit the new form of the theme. (In its revised form the saxophone theme sounds suspiciously like a grotesque jazz improvisation on Stephan Foster's 'Swanee River'.<sup>390</sup>

In an interview given to Simon Heffer in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 4 November 1998, Ursula Vaughan Williams indicates that the jazzy saxophone passage in the scherzo was inspired by the deaths of members of a jazz band in the bombing of the Café de Paris during the Blitz.<sup>391</sup> The Café de Paris was popular due to the jazz orchestra under the direction of Ken Johnson. "Snakehips" Johnson was the best known African-American bandleader in Britain during the Second World War. He had been born in Georgetown, British New Guiana, where he showed talent in both music and dance and was sent to England for further education. His personal band, known as the West Indian Dance Orchestra, toured the West Indies and United States for a few years before taking the engagement at the Café de Paris in London. It is confirmed that they were performing the night of the bombing<sup>392</sup>

One of the articles that reported on the Café's destruction on 10 March 1941 included a clipping from *The Washington Post* on 11 March 1941. Headlined "Nurse Heroine of Bombed Café Used Tablecloths for Bandages," the article tells the gruesome tale of how a "23-year old Canadian nursing sister who used table clothes

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<sup>390</sup> Adams, "The Stages of Revision of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony" in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, 12.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid. This source cites *The Sunday Telegraph*.

<sup>392</sup> Ken Johnson, "Snakehips" by PF in *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*, David Dabydeen, John Gilmore and Cecily Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 240.

for bandages, table legs for splints, and champagne for antiseptic was hailed today as a heroine of the weekend bombing of the fashionable West End Café de Paris, where many persons were killed and injured.”<sup>393</sup> The tragedy was not officially disclosed in the London *Times* until 7 April 1941 in a small clipping listing the recent enemy air raids. The snippet reads: “It may now be disclosed that the Café de Paris, the restaurant in Coventry Street, was hit by a bomb during a recent raid at a time when it was filled with dancers and diners. Among those killed were most of the orchestra and M. Poulsen, the restaurateur.”<sup>394</sup> An obituary for M. Poulsen released by his family ran in the same paper 11 March 1941, the day after the bombing.

As these findings demonstrate, the relationship between the wartime propaganda films scored by Vaughan Williams and the Sixth Symphony are irrefutable, just not exclusively with *Flemish Farm*. Michael Kennedy summed up this connection by concluding that “Warmth and freedom characterize *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and *Coastal Command*, but their claim to attention is a sign of a mind moving towards the E minor symphony.”<sup>395</sup> As the following examples demonstrate, the similarities between the score of *Coastal Command* and the Symphony in E Minor are numerous.<sup>396</sup> For example, in the first movement of the symphony, the cellos at

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<sup>393</sup> *The Washington Post* article written by the Associated Press published March 11, 1941. From ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (1877-1997).

<sup>394</sup> The London *Times* first published April 7, 1941. Taken from the listing “Spitfires Over France” in the London *Times* Digital Archive.

<sup>395</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*, 279.

<sup>396</sup> All record times taken directly from the film unless otherwise noted. A recording of the suite can be found on *The Film Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* 3-disc collectors edition conducted by Rumon Gamba with the BBC Orchestra. Chandos Movies, 2009 10529(3).

rehearsal number 6 have a theme that is strikingly similar to what is heard in *Coastal Command* during the “U-Boat Alert.”<sup>397</sup>

The image displays two systems of musical notation for rehearsal 6 of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony. The first system includes staves for Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The second system includes staves for Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The score is in E minor and 4/4 time. Rehearsal 6 is marked with a circled '6'. The first system shows the beginning of the rehearsal, with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *f*. The second system continues the music, with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *f*. The score includes various performance instructions such as *arco subito*, *cantabile*, *Solo*, *Tutti*, and *dim.*

Ex. 2.1a Movement one of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony at Rehearsal Six<sup>398</sup>

<sup>397</sup> See *Coastal Command*, 11:05 in film.

<sup>398</sup> Vaughan Williams, *Symphony in E Minor*.

Ex. 2.1b Violin parts from “U-boat Alert” in *Coastal Command*<sup>399</sup>

Despite being written in different time signatures and with slightly different tempo markings, the music functions around the same tonal centers and both examples are similarly harmonized. What also allows the two examples to maintain a feeling of kinship is Vaughan Williams’s use of accented off-beats and slurring notes in groups of three (both in triplet and non-triplet form). This became a form of hemiola in the Sixth Symphony excerpt. Both of these scores also rely melodically on having a longer first note at the beginning of the measure that moves to a quick note acting as

<sup>399</sup> See M.S. 50424E in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

a pseudo pick-up into the following measure, thus giving the music its constant feeling of rocking and pushing forward as if the listener is speeding along on a wartime vessel.

Additionally, at rehearsal number 8 of the first movement of the symphony, the English horn, flutes, and first violins play one of the themes of the first movement that is very similar to another theme heard multiple times in *Coastal Command*. This same melody is anticipated in “The Hudsons take-off from Iceland,” around 26:43 into the film, 00:32 into the opening prelude, and around 56:31 into the film (about 01:00 into the Finale of the suite). These passages contain similar tonal centers and orchestral coloring to the music heard in the “U-boat Alert” sequence of the film (see Example 2.3b for additional film score comparison). As this musical theme or motif becomes repetitively used throughout the film, it begins to function as an audio indication of the heroism of the RAF Coastal Command crewmen as they work to defend their homeland and supply lanes from Nazi attacks.

Notice, for instance, how Vaughan Williams marks both the excerpts reproduced in Example 2.3 and that of Example 2.2 as “cantabile.” While not specifically labeled for the crewmen in the film, the theme is never played over images romanticizing enemy troops. Due to its nobility, this theme was clearly meant to function as propaganda in that it induced the viewers to identify with the crew of the RAF Coastal Command. This act of scoring a lyrical melody for the heroes of the film further provides an electric charge of emotion and promotes a patriotic response from audiences that works much more effectively than the troop’s clumsy attempts

at acting. Furthermore, these scores provide both visual and aural proof that Vaughan Williams was the true auteur of this docudrama. Additionally, as this music was incorporated into the Sixth Symphony, it may well have had a similar effect on listeners in the concert hall. This material further functions as a slower transition to the second subject within the first movement:

The image displays a page of a musical score, numbered 26 at the top left. It features three systems of staves. The first system includes parts for Flute 1 and 2 (labeled 'Fls. 1 2'), Flute 3 (labeled 'Fls. 3'), Oboe (labeled 'Obs.'), and Cor Anglais (labeled 'Cor. Ang.'). The second system includes parts for Flute 1 and 2 (labeled 'Fls. 1 2'), Oboe (labeled 'Obs.'), and Cor Anglais (labeled 'Cor. Ang.'). The music is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo/mood is marked 'p cantabile'. A circled 'S' with a double bar line is present above the first staff in the first system. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs.

Ex. 2.2 Movement one of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony at Rehearsal Eight<sup>400</sup>

In continuation with Example 2.2, another similarity with the film occurs starting in the second measure of rehearsal fifteen in the first movement of the symphony. Here the strings play a heroic melody that resembles a theme heard prominently throughout *Coastal Command*. This strain can be heard at both 25:57 and after 26:40 into the shortened sixty-minute version of the film in "The Hudsons take-off from Iceland." It is also implied in the orchestration between multiple parts

<sup>400</sup> Vaughan Williams, *Symphony in E Minor*.



in the opening of “Dawn Patrol (Quite Determination)” at 41:53 in the film. There are also similarities in both orchestral color and harmonic relationships between both of these passages, and Vaughan Williams transforms the second theme from a minor key to a major one in the coda of the first movement.

The image shows a page of a musical score for the first movement of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony, specifically rehearsal fifteen. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Harp, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The key signature is E major (one sharp). The tempo is marked 'Tranquillo' with a metronome marking of quarter note = 58. The score features a 'p cantabile' marking and 'Sul G' and 'Sul D' instructions for the strings. A circled rehearsal mark '15' is placed above the Violin I staff. The second system continues the orchestration with Harp, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Bass.

Ex. 2.3a Movement one of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony at Rehearsal Fifteen<sup>401</sup>

<sup>401</sup> Vaughan Williams, *Symphony in E Minor*.

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system is for Oboe and Violin. The Oboe part is marked 'Poco Animato' and the Violin part is marked 'p Cantabile'. Both parts are in 3/4 time. The Oboe part features a melodic line with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note and a quarter note. The Violin part features a similar melodic line with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note and a quarter note. The second system shows the Oboe part with a fermata over the first measure and the Violin part with a fermata over the first measure. Both parts are in 3/4 time and feature a melodic line with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note and a quarter note.

Ex. 2.3b Violin and oboe parts from “Hudsons take-off from Iceland” in *Coastal Command*<sup>402</sup>

Notice that while the excerpts from the symphony in Examples 2.2 and 2.3 contain the melody in a compound meter of 6/4, the feeling intended is that of three beats counted as one or a slow waltz tempo (1-2-3) like the one used in the film excerpt in Example 2.3b. The rhythmic motif reused in all of these passages is the dotted quarter-eight-quarter note figure. Once again, Vaughan Williams intentionally scores the melody as having a first note of longer duration that quickly moves through notes of shorter rhythmic values to the next landing spot, thus creating the constant feeling of pushing forward.

A further connection between the symphony and film score is that the brass fanfare at rehearsal eleven of the first movement is heard as background throughout the “U-boat Alert” scene, similar to the fanfare around 42:37 in the “Dawn Patrol (Quiet Determination)” part of the film, and a faster variant is distinguishable 26:00

<sup>402</sup> See M.S. 50425 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

into the film during “The Hudsons take-off from Iceland” and at 37:00 into the film. These terse fanfares have a dual function: first, to alert audiences to military action; and second, to conjure up a sound reenactment of klaxon horns used on the planes and vessels in the Coastal Command. Additionally, the seventh measure of rehearsal 12 in the woodwinds of the first movement play a fast passage that is similar to the music that the low strings play in the opening of the “Battle of the Beauforts” scene in the movie.<sup>403</sup> In addition, another similarity between the symphony and film score is distinguishable starting at rehearsal 10 of the first movement and coming out more prominently in the third measure of rehearsal 10 of the first movement. Here, the Bb clarinet plays a bouncy triplet tune, reminiscent of the opening of “The Hudsons take-off from Iceland” scene that appears at 25:37 into the film and the same theme is again heard in the low strings starting around 53:16 in the “Battle of the Beauforts” scene from the film.

While the previous examples all contain excerpts from the first movement of the Sixth Symphony, more material from *Coastal Command* can be found within the second movement. For example, the brass music at rehearsal 3 in the second movement is eerily similar to the music that the stings play 5:58 into the film during the “Take-off at night” scene. Note that both passages are scored for the lower registers of the instruments. The seventh measure of rehearsal 4 in the second movement, scored for strings, has a sustained passage that resembles a passage that

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<sup>403</sup> See *Coastal Command*, 51:30 in film.

appears at 3:05 in the “Battle of the Beauforts” track of the suite compiled by Vaughan Williams.<sup>404</sup> Finally, the most prominent connection in this movement is that six measures before rehearsal 14 in the second movement there is an exposed English horn solo. This passage is very similar to the solo English horn passage around 2:45 into the “The Hebrides” scene<sup>405</sup> as both employ themes and orchestration that are descriptive of barren solitude.

Ex. 2.4a English horn solo from movement two of Vaughan Williams’s Sixth Symphony<sup>406</sup>

Ex. 2.4b English horn solo from “The Hebrides” in *Coastal Command*<sup>407</sup>

<sup>404</sup> See rehearsal letter “N” in the suite. This section of the suite contains music that was written for the film but was not used in the final cut. Instead to music fades out before this part and moves back into a short main theme before the finale picks up about four minutes before the film ends.

<sup>405</sup> Most of the beginning and ending of this track on the suite was cut in the shortened version of the film (a little bit more but not all of it is heard for the full eighty-minute version) due largely to the diegetic music of the stage show entertainment for the troops that moves into a non-diegetic role as the crew for “T” for Tommy retires to their quarters to change into their flight clothes. The music for the live entertainment show was not written by Vaughan Williams.

<sup>406</sup> Vaughan Williams, *Symphony in E Minor*.

<sup>407</sup> See M.S. 50425 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

As already indicated, the biggest similarity in these two excerpts is the orchestration. Vaughan Williams keeps the instruments to a minimum of a few background strings suspending chords or absolute silence under the solo wind melody. Often used as a solo instrument in orchestral settings, the English horn has a middle-range voice that, when used in certain keys, naturally sounds mournful or reflective. In the case of the symphony, it is used to close the slower second movement as a poignant passage before the turmoil of the scherzo erupts. In the film cue, the solo is almost completely cut out from both versions of the film due to hasty editing. Just as in the symphony, the English horn acts as a transition piece to aurally represent the stillness of an early dawn at the Hebrides base as Captain Campbell prepares to report for duty with his dog, Beady. Both of these solos also have similar material, being characterized by conjunct motion. In addition, both passages are marked to be played softly in a cantabile or tranquil manner. Interestingly, neither solos end on a consonant resolution, but instead persist in leaving the melody hanging as if the composer's message is not yet quite finished.

The Scherzo of the Sixth Symphony is the one movement in particular that is often cited in support of the scores' connection to the Second World War.<sup>408</sup> In this case, there are also sections in the Scherzo that are similar to several found in *Coastal Command*. For example, the seventh measure of the third movement in the

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<sup>408</sup> Once again, for more on this see Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*, and Adams, "The Stages of Revision of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony" in *Vaughan Williams Essays*.

upper woodwinds is similar to a hard to distinguish background starting around 53:00 into the “Battle of the Beauforts” part of the film.

A musical score for the upper woodwinds section of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony. The score is written for Flute (Fl.), Piccolo (Picc.), Oboe (Obs.), Cor Anglais (Cor. Ang.), and Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. Bb). The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex, rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). There are dynamic markings such as *ff* and *sfz* throughout the piece.

Ex. 2.5a Upper woodwinds from movement three of Vaughan Williams’s Sixth Symphony<sup>409</sup>

A musical score for the upper woodwinds section from the film "The Battle of the Beauforts" in *Coastal Command*. The score is written for Flute, Oboe, English Horn, Clarinet in B-flat 1, and Clarinet in B-flat 2. The music is in 6/8 time and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The dynamic marking *ff* is prominent throughout the score.

Ex. 2.5b Upper woodwinds from “The Battle of the Beauforts” in *Coastal Command*<sup>410</sup>

During this same section in the film, the brass plays a fanfare made up of tritones starting at 53:00 into the film. This brass section from the film is similar to the tritone phrasing that Vaughan Williams wrote into the fifth measure of rehearsal 1

<sup>409</sup> Vaughan Williams, *Symphony in E Minor*.

<sup>410</sup> See M.S. 50425 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

in the third movement of the symphony. The fanfare was added to the Scherzo in 1950, some two years after the orchestral premiere in 1948 to represent “Diabolus in Musica” or the “devil in music.” The tritone basis of the fanfare that is similar to the Sixth Symphony was used by Vaughan Williams to characterize the Nazi fighter planes that sought to destroy the “T” for Tommy Catalina in *Coastal Command*. Heard throughout the Scherzo, these brass fanfares are also similar to those heard starting 10:27 into the film during the “U-boat Alert”—yet another example of Vaughan Williams representing the Nazi submarine within the score.<sup>411</sup> At the key change in the second measure of rehearsal 38 in the third movement, the frantic theme bears a distinct resemblance to the music heard at 11:53 in the film during the “U-boat Alert” scene, as the enemy submarine dives too late to escape the bombs from the Catalina. Once again, Vaughan Williams writes for brass in order to alert the audience to the danger present not only in the film, but in the Scherzo that represented the bombing of the Café de Paris in London.

One of the most dramatic and effective passages in the suite is the jarring “U-Boat Alert.” It depicts the section of the film wherein one of the Catalina Flying-Boats swoops down to attack a surfacing German submarine. One of the most widely used sea plane models during World War II, these aircrafts were produced by the American company Consolidated Aircraft. The planes were deployed in anti-

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<sup>411</sup> As mentioned in a previous chapter, Vaughan Williams also used tritones to distort Luther’s chorale “Ein feste Burg.” This music played during the scene in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* when the Nazi submarine is sunk by Canadian aircraft in the beginning of the movie and thereby stranding the Nazi party on shore.

submarine warfare, patrol bombing, convoy escort, search and rescue and cargo missions and were named after Catalina Island shortly before Britain ordered their first conscription of planes in 1941. During the course of the war nearly 3,300 Catalina Flying-Boats were deployed and used to the great advantage of Allied forces in both the Pacific and the Atlantic theaters. The blaring trombones are meant to mimic the Catalina's insistent klaxon horn as the frantic German crew desperately tries to escape certain death. Despite the urgency of the brass and strings, the music curiously recalls the lilting theme of the prelude before a final fateful coda describes a direct hit on the enemy vessel. This music is used as a transition to fill the gap between this scene and its successor.<sup>412</sup> Vaughan Williams's film score is non-diegetic in that it is designed to heighten the emotions felt by the moviegoers and give referential and narrative cueing for the battle situations that were reenacted for the film.<sup>413</sup> As previously stated, Vaughan Williams composes music to delineate the personalities and actions of working-class enlisted men and middle ranking officers alike. Their music includes the two instances of diegetic music heard during the opening scene during a stage show out on for the troops as well as the radio music listened to by the crew members as they are docked for repairs awaiting their captain's return.

Returning to the Sixth Symphony, at rehearsal 5 and at pick-up to one measure before rehearsal 11 in the fourth movement, there is a prominent and exposed oboe

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<sup>412</sup> Wishart

<sup>413</sup> These compositional principles follow those laid out by Gorbman in Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 73.



solo with sparse accompaniment from the orchestra. This passage can be compared to the opening theme of “Dawn Patrol (Quiet Determination)” occurring at 41:46 into the shorter film version, and 00:15 into the track “The Hebrides” of the suite.<sup>414</sup> As with the fourth movement of the Sixth Symphony, both of these spots in *Coastal Command* are presented as oboe solos over quiet orchestration. In fact, in the finale of the symphony, Vaughan Williams has the oboe playing alone and unaccompanied at four measures before the strings come back in to finish the movement. By so doing, Vaughan Williams alludes to the English horn solo at the close of the second movement that was discussed earlier. This effect is found in the film as the solo woodwinds become a musical representation of the Sunderland plane flying alone in the vast expanse of ocean. Instead of relying completely on solo oboe, the composer instead interchanges the melody between oboe and flute in the opening of “Dawn Patrol.” Using a similar rhythmic pattern, the film excerpt is much less chromatic and dissonant than the analogous passage in the symphony.

While the fourth movement of the Sixth Symphony may have been meant to evoke a barren landscape scarred by warfare, the score to *Coastal Command* is designed to express an ideology opposed to fascism as well as enhancing a frank piece of cinematic propaganda. Therefore, the music of the film is mostly more consonant and overtly more tonal than the symphony in order to create a noble mood of aspiration and heroism.

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<sup>414</sup> The opening section of this track was cut from the final version of *Coastal Command*.



Ex. 2.6a Oboe solo from movement four of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony<sup>415</sup>

Ex. 2.6b Oboe and flute parts from "Dawn Patrol (Quiet Determination)" in *Coastal Command*<sup>416</sup>

Furthermore, it is interesting to observe aspects of the scene featuring the "Dawn Patrol (Quiet Determination)" music. Here, the fighters are depicted showing grim determination and bravery by dipping below the cloud cover to view the damaged enemy ships. In truth, most of these planes and crews had an extremely low survival rate. A number of servicemen developed what was then called "flying stress," which

<sup>415</sup> Vaughan Williams, *Symphony in E Minor*.

<sup>416</sup> See M.S. 50425 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

was clearly a form of post-traumatic stress disorder, commonly known now as PTSD. In the RAF Coastal Command, those pilots who fell victim to “flying stress” were labeled LMF (“Lack of Morale Fiber”), which was official way of calling the servicemen cowards. Additionally, if the planes came back early due to mechanical failure, the pilots were held liable in LMF until the mechanics confirmed the malfunctions, and if the crew failed to complete bomb drops in suicidal situations, they were additionally labeled LMF.<sup>417</sup> This “Quite Determination” clip serves as complete propaganda for what the RAF officials wanted the public (and the enemy) to know about the Coastal Command crew, and not the more complex and unsettling reality. Furthermore, this cue serves as a perfect music example of what Baldwin was identifying in his essay “The Englishman” and the pilots are knowingly flying into danger while maintaining a “stiff upper lip.”<sup>418</sup>

### **The British Library Surviving Film and Suite Scores**

Unlike his process with *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, Vaughan Williams approached the composition for *Coastal Command* as one would a traditional concert piece broken up into movements. As noted previously, he developed the material into both the film score as it is known today and the brief suite simultaneously, and Vaughan Williams surely solicited Mathieson’s advice about shaping the film score from the

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<sup>417</sup> Christina J.M. Goulter, *A Forgotten Offensive: Royal Air Force Coastal Command’s Anti-Shipping Campaign, 1940-1945* (Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass Co., 1995), 155-56.

<sup>418</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).

music that he was simultaneously working on for the film. John Huntley, Mathieson's longtime assistant, recalled Vaughan Williams's introduction to the documentary:

Vaughan Williams received the script and then photos of the plane. It was clumsy on the ground and beautiful in the air. The music began with a prelude/overture for the plane. Music was written in advance with collaboration of director. Mathieson would sometimes pick out a phrase of music and place under a scene not initially written for – thus Mathieson did the mickey-mousing and not Vaughan Williams. If the director wanted a hit or a sting, Mathieson and Vaughan Williams would just go to percussion, add a lot, and there it would be. Vaughan Williams said "The film boys have wind machines, so why can't I?"<sup>419</sup>

As can be seen from Huntley's recollection, Vaughan Williams and Mathieson worked closely together on this film score.<sup>420</sup> This process can be followed by consulting the surviving sketchbooks preserved in the British Library.

Another interesting aspect of the manuscript materials for this film and proof of its unusual trajectory is that none of them follow the 1M1 film music cueing system. Instead, each of the sections are labeled more by the sequence in which they are used in the film. These sections are then assigned their coinciding suite names. Following his usual practices, Vaughan Williams began by drafting his initial themes into piano-style sketchbooks, in which he then transferred these rough drafts into fully orchestrated scores.<sup>421</sup> Further indication of Mathieson's early involvement in

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<sup>419</sup> Recollection provided by Daniel Goldmark from a talk given by John Huntley at the Charter House School in 2000.

<sup>420</sup> This also shows contradiction to the claim made by Christopher Palmer in the reprinted Oxford university Press score for the *Coastal Command* suite that will be discussed further on in this chapter.

<sup>421</sup> See M.S. 50424A-E, M.S. 50425, and M.S. 50426 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

the composition process can be seen on the first sketchbook labeled M.S. 50424A. Included in the numerous scribbles written on the cover in pencil is the name “Muir Mathieson,” which would suggest that this book was meant to be sent to Mathieson for both recording and editorial recommendations.<sup>422</sup> As is typical of film scores, there are lots of duration markings on these pages designated in seconds and numerous adding up columns on unused back pages in order to fit the music duration with the desired timing in the film. While the main title music appears similar—the ending is slightly different in the film—the music for the Hebrides sequence starts on last system of the title music page in this volume. As is typical of a first sketch, the music here is very similar to the suite but additionally contains numerous cross-outs which are difficult to follow, and instrumentation and timing markings are approximately written in margins and in between measures. In addition to these two main themes, the first book also appears to contain material from “Taking off at night” and “Battle of the Beauforts.”<sup>423</sup> As is clearly indicated already within this book, Vaughan Williams was composing in terms of sequences—not leitmotifs as found in *Flemish Farm* or as musical allusions as previously discussed in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. What is striking, however, is the way in which Vaughan Williams employs creative tactics for each film and does not repeat himself.

The next interesting note within these sketchbooks in the British Library can be found in the final book labeled M.S. 50424E, which is also larger than the previous

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<sup>422</sup> See M.S. 50424A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid. For short film version, see *Coastal Command*, 2:50 in film.

four books in size and has been reattached in alternating gaps of blank pages. What follows behind the next discarded page is in fact some of the most important text written in these early sketchbooks. The writing on it, while not Vaughan Williams's handwriting, is in fact mapping out the exact timing of cues/sequences that could be turned into the suite. There are seven movements listed here that coincide with the final 8 movements of the finished suite, with the unlisted movement identifiable as "U-boat Alert," and this handwriting can in fact be verified with previously confirmed writing samples from the Mathieson collection as that of Mathieson himself.<sup>424</sup>

This note on M.S. 50424E further provides support of the hypothesis that Mathieson, the music director, was in charge of mapping out the suite movements. According to the printed Oxford University Press score from 1990, edited by Christopher Palmer, Palmer mistakenly asserts that Mathieson was not the main person responsible for developing the suite movements. However, Palmer is also the individual who adds the "U-boat Alert" movement to the published suite, as this was found in the original planning outline of the suite but not included in the first broadcasted performance during the war. Of course, this suggestion is predicated on the handwritten note by Mathieson, and Palmer may not have recognized Mathieson's handwriting. Despite the confusion and in support of Mathieson's early involvement, this sketchbook, which was one of the early ones in the composing

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<sup>424</sup> See M.S. 50424E in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

process, and the handwritten note on M.S. 50424E disproves Palmer's claim that Mathieson was not really involved in the suite. Despite Palmer's version being written out by a copyist and not by Mathieson, what is discernable is that this is the version recorded by Rumon Gumba as the suite recording features eight movements including "U-boat Alert."<sup>425</sup>

Adding to the confusion, in his authoritative catalog of Vaughan Williams's collective works, Kennedy cites the suite as having just seven movements instead of eight. Kennedy further notes that some of the music for this film was used in a radio feature *See the Vacant Sea* about the work of the RAF Coastal Command. In that performance, Vaughan Williams apparently switched the labeling of "Quiet Determination" to "Nobilmente" which Kennedy cites as the only use Vaughan Williams ever made of Elgar's favorite expressive marking. The suite premiered 17 September 1942 in a Manchester broadcast by the BBC Northern Orchestra with only six of the eight movements performed—a performance that occurred about a month before the film's premiere.<sup>426</sup>

Another curious aspect of the volume M.S. 50424E is that the music found on the back pages is labeled presto, dotted half-note equals ninety beats per minute, and marked simply "M4"—the only cue so far to have a 1M1 type marking. The music designated as "M4" suggests that it was surely written later in the composition process, maybe even once recording had begun. After careful examination, it has

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<sup>425</sup> Ibid. My thanks to Mrs. Stephanie Wells for providing me with a print copy of the suite published by Oxford University Press.

<sup>426</sup> Kennedy, *A Catalog of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 171.

been discovered that this musical selection is actually “U-Boat Alert,” and that this movement was evidently not originally planned for the film or suite, as testified to by the composer’s initial drafts. Instead, it is the first iteration in the fully orchestrated form that comes from much later in the composing process. It is a long section with cross outs, red and blue pencil, and even a late-added long repeated section at the end. Additionally, the early number fits exactly the duration of the “U-Boat Alert” section in the suite and continues until the end of the book. In the film, this cue starts at 10:33 and the beginning sections appear to be repeated more in the film than in the suite version. The suite version additionally repeats the ending in the violin part while it only occurs once in the film. Furthermore, the ending in the film version is broken up by a pause before the second ending comes in at the end of the sequence, and much of this cue is played softly during the dialogue.<sup>427</sup>

Despite some full score notation showing up in the final volumes of M.S. 50424, most of the fully orchestrated score selections for the film version of *Coastal Command* are located in a bound volume labeled M.S. 50425 in the British Library.<sup>428</sup> In continuance with the unique combined scoring of both the film and suite, none of the cues have the traditional 1M1 listing that was present in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. Another interesting feature is that the cue for “Uboat Alert” is not found in

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<sup>427</sup> See M.S. 50424E in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. The blue pencil markings with the timings and rehearsal letters appear to be from Mathieson at the recording session.

<sup>428</sup> See M.S. 50425 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Paper cover for the score is not in Vaughan Williams’s handwriting and the scoring is for fl/picc (2), ob/Eh (2), Cl in Bb x2, 2 bssn, 4 hrn, 2 Bb trmp, 3 trmb, tuba, timp, perc, hrp, strings. This lines up with Kennedy’s listing in his catalog of Vaughan Williams’s works.



this book, thus reinforcing the hypothesis that this particular cue was added at a later time. This particular score was written by Vaughan Williams and contains multiple pencil markings in red and blue pencil as well as ink. The prelude appears to have been used for the ending as there is written in blue at the bottom of the first page “start here for ending.” Additionally, only about a minute of the prelude is used in the film opening as it suddenly cuts out for the live music hall scene.<sup>429</sup> As further validation, an obvious indication from the colored pencil markings strongly suggests that this score was used for recording. The numbering in this volume is also based on Vaughan Williams’s sequencing as found in M.S. 50424 in that the prelude is labeled number one, but the changed ending for the finale, which reuses most of the music from the prelude, is labeled 7A.<sup>430</sup>

The last important cue appears in M.S. 50425 and doesn’t have a label, but is simply marked “Poco mosso page 71.” The music written here is heard in the final sequence after a section of the prelude is played following a short break marked in the score in which the conductor and musicians had to jump back to the prelude and then finish the ending.<sup>431</sup> This cue starts right after the crew identifies the incoming planes as Beaufighters and stops for a short time before the last repetition from the prelude and new ending is heard for the final exit music.<sup>432</sup> Needless to say, the

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<sup>429</sup> This cut occurs on the beginning of pages 8-9 in the score. See M.S. 50425 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid. Also see short version *Coastal Command*, 57:21. Note - the first 1:15 of the suite is not from this section but the start of page 1 of finale sections occurs at 1:15 in suite finale.

<sup>432</sup> Also see short version *Coastal Command*, 58:37.

music written in this score is much different than the last section of the suite and represents the greatest difference between the film and concert suites. One hypothesis might be to conclude that the prelude and other sections were mashed together with this music to make the final sequence for the film. In fact, the opening minute and fifteen seconds of the suite is actually found in a completely different score labeled M.S. 71219 that was filed loose-leaf in the British Library. This not only matches the music in the suite recording, but the measure numbering in the score for M.S. 71219 is from one to thirty-eight and the finale sections from M.S. 50425, starting at 1:15 in suite, has measure numbering starting at thirty-nine. It therefore can be deduced that the part must have been separated after recording for the BBC broadcast designed to promote Vaughan Williams, the suite, and undoubtedly the film—which is also the reason why M.S. 71219 is stamped with a BBC heading.<sup>433</sup> As a final observation, more music from the finale is heard in the longer British version but even there the music is broken up for dialogue and scene breaks. The suite movement is just a compilation of shorter selections for the stitched ending and it is obvious that Vaughan Williams and/or Mathieson re-edited the suite finale to sound more conclusive than in the film.

After 50424A-E and M.S. 50425, the remaining scores at the British Library are not as impactful in providing insight into Vaughan Williams's process for this film. As mentioned earlier, the score for M.S. 71219 is extra unbound pages that appear

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<sup>433</sup> See M.S. 50425 and M.S. 71219 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Also see short version *Coastal Command*, 55:54.

to be mislabeled. In fact, it is titled No. 8 “Suspense” and is indeed the missing part to the finale from M.S. 50425 as explained above.<sup>434</sup> The last music volume for *Coastal Command* stored in the British Library is labeled M.S. 50426 and is a copy of a printed score of the original *Coastal Command* Suite. The copied parts were originally handwritten but not by the composer, nor Roy Douglas, nor Mathieson.<sup>435</sup>

An undated letter written on back of previous typed correspondence to the composer dated 9 July 1942 from Vaughan Williams to Mathieson regarding the film and suite confirms the two men’s close collaboration. The letter appears to have been sent as part of scores for the film as Vaughan Williams enclosed part of the music labeled “sequence 6.” He also tells Mathieson that he could not send the titles and rest of “sequence 6” as it is a part of a different score sequence that he was still working on. Therefore, it can be deduced that this letter proves the film music was never kept in one complete score and instead was pieced together from separate sources.<sup>436</sup>

As far as comparing the suite to later concert hall works beside the Sixth Symphony, there actually appear to be some resemblance in the “Hebrides” movement to the middle of *Thanksgiving for Victory*, performed in 1944 and later retitled *A Song of Thanksgiving*. This is mostly played in the organ with the chorus at

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<sup>434</sup> See M.S. 71219 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>435</sup> Christopher Palmer asserts in the Oxford University Press reprint of the score that it is a copyist’s hand and it looks like he could be right. My thanks to Mrs. Stephanie Wells for providing me with a print copy of the suite published by Oxford University Press.

<sup>436</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/3/2b in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

Andante Sostenuto between rehearsal numbers 6 and 7.<sup>437</sup> However, it is important to note that this comparison is not exact but a similar enough motion and the harmonics linger on a dissonant half step between chords. In addition, the opening theme of the Prelude to *Coastal Command* is similar to the Alla Marcia section of *Thanksgiving for Victory*. This leads into *Thanksgiving's* second Andante Sostenuto section that bears resemblance to the "Quiet Determination/Dawn Patrol" music from *Coastal Command*, but these excerpts are not in the same tonal centers.<sup>438</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Although Vaughan Williams always denied its relationship to war-like themes, it is no coincidence that there are intricate musical connections between the Sixth Symphony and the music for the 1942 war docudrama, *Coastal Command*. As the pilots of the RAF in the film flew off on another dawn patrol, the score composed by Vaughan Williams immortalized their determination to protect their nation. Vaughan Williams's deep feelings, thoughts and experiences were one with these fighting men and women. As in the case with the tragedy of the Second World War, the only way the seventy-year-old composer was able to serve his country was through the composition of music for propaganda films. Much like the *Pastoral Symphony*, the Sixth Symphony and war-time films were therapeutic for Vaughan Williams, the national composer who was just "doing his bit" to help Britain through the terrible crises of the Second World War. By doing so, Vaughan Williams helped

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<sup>437</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Thanksgiving for Victory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), 12 and 20.

<sup>438</sup> Vaughan Williams, *Thanksgiving for Victory*, 18.

to musically represent the stereotypical “Englishman” described by Baldwin and showcased within this RAF Coastal Command docudrama.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).

## Chapter 6 – The Production and Reception of *The Flemish Farm*

### The War in 1943

With the war still raging, it comes as no surprise to find that the biggest productions of the British film industry in 1943 were mostly related to warfare. After the celebration of his seventieth birthday, Ralph Vaughan Williams was eager to continue his service by composing music for the wartime film industry. While the two films scored by Vaughan Williams that made it through production that year were both war-related, there was also talk of the composer being commissioned to write music for the Gabriel Pascal/George Bernard Shaw production of *St. Joan*. However, “mention of a proposed film of Shaw’s *St. Joan* to be produced by Gabriel Pascal with Greta Garbo as Joan was made in the *Daily Telegraph* of 23, June, 1943, but there is no evidence to show that this was the film concerned.”<sup>440</sup> Instead, Vaughan Williams’s filmography for the year consisted of the feature film *Flemish Farm* and the documentary short, *The People’s Land*.

Chapters Six and Seven will investigate the third film that Vaughan Williams scored in 1943. Divided into two parts, these chapters will expand upon the filming process; the impact of historical events taking place at the time; the reception of the music used in the film; and reception of the film as a whole. Included will be a discussion and reflection on the impact of the Belgian Air Force and its collaboration

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<sup>440</sup> Michael Kennedy. *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 285.

with the Royal Air Force. Additionally, the music will be analyzed according to Vaughan Williams's intention on using this particular film as his leitmotif-based score in Chapter Seven. The use of thematic leitmotifs, or as he dubbed them "plug-tunes," in an anti-Nazi propaganda film constituted a deliberate contrast from the previous two film scores that Vaughan Williams contributed for war related media. Furthermore, the two chapters will explore the connection that this film music, often considered at the time to be "low-brow art," has with Vaughan Williams's later concert works, such as the Sixth Symphony, and choral compositions that are classified as "high art."

### **Two Cities Film Corporation and *The Flemish Farm***

*Flemish Farm* marks the first time that Vaughan Williams composed for a Two Cities film and the third time he would work with Muir Mathieson as music director. Two Cities was a small production company and, unlike larger companies such as Gainsborough or Ealing, had no production facilities of its own. As with other resistance films and storylines, such as *A Yank in the R.A.F.* (1941), *Flemish Farm* contains a romantic subplot but mostly focuses on the conquered Belgian people undertaking underground efforts to keep fighting and overthrow the Nazi Occupation. In accordance with this connection, the script tells a harrowing story of the last remnant of the Belgian Air Force and how one pilot saved their regiment's flag. Based on actual events, the film opens with the squadron receiving the news that Belgium has fallen under German onslaught. The story opens in a dramatic manner: down to five working planes and operating from a farm in Flanders, the

crew stages a burial of their regimental flag so that it will not fall into enemy hands. When the crew comes under attack, two pilots escape to Britain and join the R.A.F. Just before the Battle for Britain, Matagne, one of the pilots and assigned officer in charge of the squadron's flag, confides in the other pilot, Duclos that he had married the farm girl in Flanders and with her help they had secretly buried the flag in another location. Unfortunately, Matagne dies in the Battle for Britain, but Duclos survives and undertakes the dangerous mission to recover the flag and smuggle it back to Britain. Intended to boost the morale and support of the British Armed forces, this film portrays the hardships of day-to-day life in occupied Belgium and the struggle of a continent gripped by war. Vaughan Williams's music is intended to captivate audiences into identifying with the hardships of both the British and the Belgians while furthering a loathing of the Nazis barbarity.

Jeffrey Dell served as both director and co-scriptwriter with his wife at that time, Jill Craigie. This was Dell's first directing job, as he had mostly worked for years in the British film industry as a screenwriter.<sup>441</sup> Before filming began on this picture, Dell seems to have gotten the idea for the story when he read about a Belgian officer risking his life to retrieve the flag of the Belgian Air Force and presented it to the newly formed Belgian Squadron in the RAF. After viewing this presentation of the flag in a newsreel, Dell decided that the story would make for a good film that would spur resistance against the Nazis. Incidentally, the themes presented in this story

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<sup>441</sup> For example, he was the screenwriter for Alexander Korda's film *Sanders of the River* (1935).



also found their way into his book, *News for Heaven*.<sup>442</sup> Dell spent some time researching the story from the newsreel as well as looking into the living conditions in Nazi-occupied Belgium to make the story as realistic as possible. For example, according to an article in *Sights and Sound Magazine* from the Spring 1943 issue entitled, “News From Belgium,” under German propaganda practices, the cinemas in Belgium were required to show at least thirty-two German-made feature films a year. Additionally, Nazis had commandeered the film studios in Belgium to make similar propaganda films that would show the Germans in a favorable light. Only a handful of pre-war French films were allowed to be shown.<sup>443</sup> With all of this research in mind, Dell and his wife wrote the script in the hope that the film would fulfill the Ministry of Information’s stress on the need for sacrifice in order to win the war.<sup>444</sup> In this case, the sacrifice comes from the Belgium pilot who risks his life to save the regiment’s flag— the ideological symbol of the fight for freedom against oppression.<sup>445</sup> The film was originally planned to be heavily publicized, with early news relating to its production appearing in the *Kine Weekly* as early as July 1942. In

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<sup>442</sup> From the Exhibitor’s Campaign Sheet - listed under production stills for the film and stored as micro images/micro film at the British Film Institute Reuben Library. *News for Heaven* is one of two books written by Dell that function as social commentaries on the British film industry and wartime politics.

<sup>443</sup> “News From Belgium” in *Sight and Sound Magazine*, vol. 11, no. 44 (Spring 1943), 90.

<sup>444</sup> In one of many articles published about the film, it mentions how Dell was receiving full support from the Belgian Government and that “as his story is based on actual facts, he is determined that the film shall be a truthful documentation of events.” *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 10 December 1942), 19. This is further emphasized in a later article that details how some Allied Canadian and Belgian troops visited the studio while shooting final pick-ups and discussed the filming process with the current directors (including Jeffrey Dell). *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 14 January 1943), 26.

<sup>445</sup> Jeffrey Richards. *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 297-298.

an article dated 23 July 1942 describing upcoming films from Two Cities productions, it announced that Dell was to direct his original story of *Flemish Farm*.<sup>446</sup> After this statement there is a brief paragraph describing the basic plot of the film—the first of what became weekly updates on the film’s production.

According to the frequency of articles published in trade papers such as the *Kine Weekly*, it is possible to trace that principle filming on *Flemish Farm* in detail. Filming took place from September 1942 until March 1943 – a period of seven months during severe economic rationing due to the war. These weekly updates describe every little detail of the filming, how the Belgian Embassy-in-exile was lending enthusiastic support to the film, the location shooting taking place across the English countryside, and the innovative shooting techniques that were being used. As the *Kine Weekly* was circulated to local cinema owners, Two Cities hoped that these weekly articles would help generate interest for this film in an overly saturated market of modern wartime dramas. However, since the film was to be released conspicuously close to the four-year anniversary of Britain declaring war on Germany, it is evident that *Flemish Farm* was a casualty of wartime conditions. War-weary Britons were simply tired of seeing films about their present situation. With many communal activities and sporting events canceled due to black-out and curfew restrictions, one of the few escapes that British people had was the ability to

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<sup>446</sup> In addition to mentioning his book, *Nobody Ordered Wolves*, it stated: “In accordance with their policy of giving opportunities to newcomers with ideas in the directorial field, Two Cities Films have agreed to Jeffrey Dell directing his own story when the film goes on the floor in August.” *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 23 July 1943), 42.

go to the cinema. Because of this trend, theater owners knew that their audiences were looking for escapist films and therefore needed to be persuaded somehow by *Two Cities* that this was not just another grim, generic war story.

### **The Music for *Flemish Farm***

As with the previous two films scored by Vaughan Williams, the composer was brought in early on in the production process and worked closely with the music director and orchestra conductor for the film, Muir Mathieson. This was Vaughan Williams's first time working for Two Cities and, at the age of seventy, his third film commission. Although keen at the time to assert his authority as a first-time director, Jeffrey Dell seemed to later regret his behavior and attitude towards the composer, who at the time virtually symbolized British resistance to fascism. As Vaughan Williams's biographer Michael Kennedy put it: "Mr. Dell, who says that he blushes 'at the memory of our effrontery,' was only one of several directors who found that Vaughan Williams invited criticism at recording sessions and was ready and willing to alter his score on the spot to meet their ideas."<sup>447</sup> This remembrance not only reflects on Dell's brashness and need for complete control, but also demonstrates Vaughan Williams's willingness to collaborate. By putting his ego aside and allowing changes to be made at a moment's notice to an already finished cue, Vaughan Williams showed remarkable modesty. After all, in his 1945 essay *Composing for Films*, Vaughan Williams noted that: "a composer must be prepared to

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<sup>447</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 259.

face losing his head or his tail or even his inside without demur, and must be prepared to make a workmanlike job of it.”<sup>448</sup> Despite Dell being able to make any changes he deemed appropriate, it was still Vaughan Williams’s music that had the lasting emotional impact of persuading audiences to believe in the examples of British propaganda. Certainly, Vaughan Williams’s score for *Flemish Farm* is superior to both its cinematography and dialogue. Despite leading from behind, Vaughan Williams’s score is the primary driver of the emotional and artistic content of *Flemish Farm*. This alone is enough to classify the composer as an auteur-like figure for this production.

As with *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and *Coastal Command*, Vaughan Williams began composing the score as soon as he received the commission for the film. Ursula Vaughan Williams writes that while she was recuperating from a foot injury, her future husband invited her to write in his study: “I sat in the window seat, he at his desk, dashing to the piano every now and then, or stopping to say something about anything in the world, from weather to gardening to a curious technical point about film music or the story – this time an adventure about recovering a flag, the film being *Flemish Farm* – or cross-questioning me about what I was doing.”<sup>449</sup> During

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<sup>448</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *National Music and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987), 161.

<sup>449</sup> Ursula Vaughan Williams. *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 248. Ursula’s foot injury must have been the one mentioned in Hugh Cobbe’s collection of Vaughan Williams letters, more specifically No. 388 that the composer wrote in July 1942 when Ursula had a broken needle removed from her foot. See Ralph Vaughan Williams and Hugh Cobbe, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 342-43.

this same month, it can be confirmed through Mathieson's day planners that recording was being done concurrently on *Coastal Command* at Abbey Road Studios, as dates are marked regarding these sessions from 17-30 July.<sup>450</sup> After all, it had only been announced 23 July in *Kine Weekly* about *Flemish Farm* being in pre-production. In accordance with the timing, it is most unlikely that Vaughan Williams would be writing the music for *Coastal Command* as it was being recorded and leaving little or no time for copyists to make the orchestral parts. It can therefore be concluded that not only is Ursula Vaughan Williams in this rare instance correct about the period of time during which the film score was composed, but her testimony provides proof that Vaughan Williams began working on the score for *Flemish Farm* before principle photography and shooting had even begun, ten months before recording the score, and over a year before the film opened for trade shows.

Again, as with the previous two films, it appears that Vaughan Williams was happy with this commission. As Michael Kennedy states, "Vaughan Williams had enjoyed writing music for Jeffrey Dell's film *Flemish Farm* and had derived amusement from the exiled Belgian Government's protests over a love scene in a barn which had to be altered to make it clear that the couple were married."<sup>451</sup> The scene in question is the only romance scene in this entire film, and contains pivotal thematic development in the composers score. The scene is the last time that

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<sup>450</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/8/1 in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>451</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 286.

Trescha, the farm girl, and Matagne, her doomed husband in charge of the regiment's flag, see each other alone. Matagne is pulled into one of the last remaining fighter planes by Duclos the next morning and is eventually shot down and killed in action during the Battle for Britain.

As with the *Coastal Command* recording sessions, notes from Mathieson's pocket diary indicate that the musical score for this film was recorded 19 May 1943 at one o'clock in afternoon. Although this only accounts for one day of scoring, this particular date is verifiable with a note in the score marked Reel 7 of manuscript M.S. 50429B in the British Library.<sup>452</sup> Recording for the film was to be finished 2 June 1943. As it turned out, this was not the final recording day, as a pick up session was scheduled on 5 August 1943. Finishing just before the first showing to cinema renters, the final recording pick-up most likely consisted of last-minute re-editing by the director and other touch-ups. There is a further recording note for Vaughan Williams in Mathieson's day journals on 29 April 1943, but this particular date does not specify a film.<sup>453</sup>

Although it would be difficult to obtain documents describing the atmosphere of these recording sessions, a letter from Muir Mathieson to Michael Kennedy does exist. This letter confirms that Mathieson recorded this film score with an ensemble that he recalled was the London Symphony Orchestra at Pinewood Studio. Vaughan

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<sup>452</sup> Manuscript number M.S. 50429B in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection at the British Library in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>453</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/8/1 in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

Williams's suite from *Flemish Farm* was premiered at the Proms with the London Symphony Orchestra in 1945. Mathieson further remembers in the letter that this was the film, in which Vaughan Williams "decided to use a 'Plug-tune.' I suppose the idea of a theme song must have been around about then – anyway he insisted on calling his 'leit-motif' – a plug-tune."<sup>454</sup> This is an interesting and critical note in which Mathieson testifies that Vaughan Williams used this film as a pretext in order to experiment with composing a leitmotif-based score. In what would have been his first attempt at writing a film score in this style, it is curiously coincidental that a composing technique that has become frequently associated with the German anti-Semitic composer Richard Wagner, whose music Vaughan Williams admired, is used so prominently in an anti-Nazi British propaganda vehicle. After all, Wagner was one of the composers touted by the Third Reich as being a perfect example of a true Aryan patriot. Given Vaughan Williams's nationalistic trends in his music, his overwhelming desire to help the British war effort, and his insistence on calling them "plug-tunes," it is evident that the prominent use of leitmotifs in this film is not a homage to Wagner, nor his particular style of leitmotif. It is simply the composer experimenting with different composition styles in order to improve upon his craft. It also follows logical progression that Vaughan Williams would be drawn to experimenting with this technique instead of "mickey-mousing" his score, as the themes would allow for more overarching emotional impact to the scenes.

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<sup>454</sup> KEN 3/1/83/2 from the Michael Kennedy Collection at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, UK.

After Kennedy received this letter from Mathieson, he went on to document the incident:

While working on *Flemish Farm* with Muir Mathieson and Jeffrey Dell, the director, [Vaughan Williams] coined the phrase “plug-tune” for his *leitmotif*, and arrived one day full of excitement over his idea for coping with the 1/3 second that appears on all film-music time sheets. “He had added an occasional 1/8 bar to get rid of the 1/3 of a second,” Mr. Mathieson wrote to me. “It had the effect of “God Save Our (1/8) G-Gracious Queen.”<sup>455</sup>”

The third of a second time delay Vaughan Williams was trying to fix refers to early film recording synchronization made directly onto thirty-five millimeter film. Before the digital use of click tracks supplied to all the recording musicians through headphones, the music director needed to have a way of matching the music perfectly to the running time and frame cell. In order to account for the physical delay from the start of the down-beat until the sound is produced, film music time sheets had a third of a second delay written into the music that also functioned as a count off pickup for the players. This delay allowed the composer and players a leeway of three to four frames in order to be accurate with the synchronization. In order to avoid the delay that can sometimes occur, Vaughan Williams decided to split mathematically the meter into an occasional eight-note bar in order to make up for any time lag between the twenty-four frame per second film projector and the written click tracks that are rounded up in one third of a second increments.

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<sup>455</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 259.



Despite Vaughan Williams's good intentions, the delay of an eight-note bar written into the score ended up creating too large of a gap and, as Mathieson describes, caused a stutter effect in the scoring. Facing the lackluster results of this well-intentioned metrical "solution," Vaughan Williams kept experimenting within his compositions and did appear to have much better success with his "plug-tunes." Roy Douglas further recalled that while working either on this film or *The People's Land*, Vaughan Williams asked him to share some film scoring techniques such as which instruments stand out better in a film score as opposed to a concert hall work, thus also providing evidence to support the aging composers' desire to expand his techniques in the area of film music.<sup>456</sup>

Vaughan Williams's score for *Flemish Farm* has long remained in obscurity. Coupled with the often-cited lack of information that can be found about the film, most scholars that do write about the picture instead prefer to concentrate on a few factual nuggets. The connection frequently pointed to in writing on Vaughan Williams is that some of the themes for the film found their way into the composer's Sixth Symphony. For example, one common entry writes: "with the Sixth Symphony, premiered in 1948, which some commentators regard as nothing less than a 'war symphony.' Interestingly this work utilizes some thematic material dropped by the composer from his score for another wartime film saga – *A Flemish Farm*."<sup>457</sup> These

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<sup>456</sup> Roy Douglas. *Working with Vaughan Williams: The Correspondence of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas* (London: The British Library, 1988), 5.

<sup>457</sup> *The Red Shoes: Classic British Film Music* conducted by Kenneth Alwyn with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Silva America Records, 1990, SSD1011. Liner notes by David Wishart.

type of comments are prevalent when mentioning the film connection but stop there. Using more detail as to the exact themes, Kennedy points out:

Two themes conceived for the film but not used in the final soundtrack became the openings respectively of the second and fourth movements of the [Sixth] Symphony. The former, because of its rhythm, was called by the film orchestra “Two hot sausages” and the later “Miserable Starkey.”<sup>458</sup>

These themes will be discussed in detail in the course of chapter seven. It should be noted however that while these two themes do appear in the symphony, they were not used in the final version of the film, and the symphonic themes within the Sixth Symphony do bear more resemblance to *Coastal Command*.

### **Reception of *Flemish Farm***

*Flemish Farm* was first shown to a London trade-show on August 18, 1943 at Leicester Square Theater at 10:30 in the morning.<sup>459</sup> As mentioned above, the greatest hindrance to its success lay in the inopportune time of its release. By June 1943, there were almost weekly articles appearing in the *Kine Weekly* describing how the public had become bored with contemporary war films. Between living wartime hardships and seeing it repeatedly on the screen, cinema owners protested that the public had no relief from the constant turmoil and rationing of the day. Among British-made films, of the sixty-one released in 1943, forty-one dealt with

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<sup>458</sup> Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 286. This is also mentioned in Frank Howes. *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954). Mostly it is regurgitated information from Vaughan Williams’s and Kennedy’s published sources. For example, it simply restates how music from this film is found in the Sixth Symphony.

<sup>459</sup> *The Cinema News and Property Gazette* from 18 August 1943. Found in the British Film Institute Reuben Library in London.

the war and thirty were first features and therefore highlighted as the major film being screened.<sup>460</sup> By this time, members of the General Film Council record had begun calling for films that would provide a transition to post-war life. They state that while war films were still essential and should continue to be produced, not all the films needed to highlight war images and rationing.<sup>461</sup> This war-fatigue, coupled with the unfortunate timing and release of *Flemish Farm*, accounts for a major reason why this well-made film did not find favor with British moviegoers and was quickly forgotten.

Indeed, the frequency of articles published in trade papers throughout 1943 indicates the amount of attention and concern that cinema owners had in maintaining their audiences' interest in the mandatory screening of films sponsored by the Ministry of Information. By no means were audiences fooled by the fantasy that the films were meant to bolster the morale on the home front. As the *Kine Weekly* reported on the 17 June 1943: "Under present conditions propaganda was good, but if too many pictures dealing with this subject were on the screens, propaganda would defeat its own ends, for people just stayed away."<sup>462</sup> Two Cities was fully aware of the environment into which their film was to be launched and quickly formulated a new marketing strategy to attract audiences. Film exhibitors were encouraged to advertise this film with blurbs such as "this film is not 'another war film' but a true story, told with dignity and sincerity that is inspiring – more

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<sup>460</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 17 June 1943), 12.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*

brilliantly told than any masterpiece of fiction."<sup>463</sup> Despite their best efforts, it appears as though *Flemish Farm* could not escape the barrage of war-film disgust.

After the weekly updates of film production and development over a six-month period, by 12 August 1943, the London Trade Show review for the film released its first notice for viewing while also mentioning that *Flemish Farm* was currently not fixed for release. In addition to providing a synopsis, it gave a lukewarm review of the film:

Spectacular, if unhurried, 'stout fellow' melodrama, set for the most part in Nazi-occupied Belgium and based on fact, describing a courageous and intensely patriotic young Belgian flying officer's hazardous mission to his own country to bring back his squadron's flag, hastily buried to prevent its fall into enemy hands. The lofty and authentic narrative is handled with dignity-the principal characters, although representing Belgians, are very old-school-tie, speak in a whisper and refuse to be flurried-and it is photographed artistically, but it would have been even surer of general appeal if it had put punch before style. Nevertheless, it displays imagination and deserves a hand on many counts. Good British-made war fare, particularly for the carriage trade.<sup>464</sup>

The article was nearly the entire column in length, and goes on to describe the acting: "Clive Evans contributes a cool portrayal as Duclos, and Clive Brook and Philip Friend are adequate as Lessart and Matagne, but Jane Baxter has a very limited range as Trescha. The supporting players, too, are adequate, but all are more English than Belgian."<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> Exhibitor's Campaign Sheet listed under production stills for the film and stored as micro images/micro film at the British Film Institute Reuben Library.

<sup>464</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 12 August 1943), 18.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*

Despite the distinguished actors mentioned, it is clear that even the reviewers of the time found it somewhat unpatriotic to not cast the extras from the thousands of Belgian refugees currently residing in Britain, helping with the war effort, and undoubtedly also representing a sizable part of the home audience market. As *The Times* newspaper put it in as early as the previous year in September 1942:

It is surely time that producers should ask themselves whether, if they are determined to set their scenes in one of the occupied countries, they have anything fresh to say or any fresh way of saying what has become distressingly familiar. It is not that the tragedy of the occupied countries or the courage of those who keep up the fight can ever become wearisome – it is simply that heroic themes dragged down to the level of studio commonplaces are themselves degraded.<sup>466</sup>

Clearly not even Vaughan Williams's new score could save this film. Although the composer's thoughts on the film itself do not survive, there are opinions about it from those people closest to Vaughan Williams. Adeline Vaughan Williams, the composer's first wife, wrote a letter to her sister Cordelia from a Tuesday in 1943 expressing her thoughts about *Flemish Farm*. After stating that she liked it, she felt that the dog sequence came too late and was too long, stating "one wants the pace quickened after so many adventures – R's [Ralphs] travel music tends to become monotonous like the travels..."<sup>467</sup> She goes on to opine that the photography was cheaply done but found the acting good on the whole and that she liked the music.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> *The Times*, September 10, 1942, p. 6. Found in Chapman, James. *The British at War: Cinema, State and Propaganda, 1939-1945* (New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998), 225.

<sup>467</sup> British Library MS Mus. 1714/1/15 in the Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.* As the letter is discussing the premier of the film, it must have been written around mid-August or early September.

As with *Coastal Command*, a suite of the film music for *Flemish Farm* was arranged largely due to the efforts of the music director and conductor, Muir Mathieson. A note from Mathieson found in the British Library discusses some of the suite movements from this film and describes the premiere of the suite as taking place in 1945 in addition to mentioning *Flemish Farm* as the second feature film for which Vaughan Williams wrote music after turning seventy.<sup>469</sup> The suite would have further provided more publicity for the film and possibly could have influenced the film's short revival into cinemas after the end of the war, and certainly accounts for the keeping of some of the unused themes at the front of the composer's mind as the Sixth Symphony was being composed. Although it is unclear as to when Mathieson and Vaughan Williams would have started outlining the suite, notes from the handwritten scores located at the British Library plausibly suggest that discussions for the suite outline might have occurred as early as the recording sessions.

For a hodge-podge production and a lackluster film, Vaughan Williams's score using "plug-tunes" was the chief force that lent this formulaic propaganda story a deeper psychological and emotional level than it would have possessed otherwise. Most of the film's most memorable sequences are carried by the music. In keeping with the composer's practice of taking themes from "low-level art" like film music and recycling them into regarded "high-art" concert hall works, the propaganda or

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<sup>469</sup> British Library Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/2/2 in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. The suite was premiered as part of a BBC Proms concert on 31 July 1945. The London Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Vaughan Williams. Program information held at the Royal Albert Hall Archive.

British morale elements in Vaughan Williams “plug-tune” (leitmotif) driven score become visible through *Flemish Farm*’s influence on later war-related works.

## Chapter 7 – The Surviving Scores of *The Flemish Farm*

### The British Library Scores for *Flemish Farm* and the Persuasive Role of the Music within the Propaganda Film

Unlike Vaughan Williams's more often discussed films such as *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and *Scott of the Antarctic*, the number of scores that survive for *Flemish Farm* are few in number. There are two composing sketchbooks, two full scores, and one selection of two loose pages in the British Library. This chapter will go through in detail exactly what these sources contain as well as explain the music's origins. The first book that will be discussed is labeled M.S. 50429A in the British Library catalog; this is a *Flemish Farm* composing sketchbook of a sort commonly used by Vaughan Williams.

As most of the sketches in M.S. 50429A function largely as a rough draft containing sketches of thematic material, the music in this volume is hard to identify, as it does not match what actually appears in the final score. However, the most important cue in this sketchbook is for a song which does not appear fully in the film. In what at first appears to be a non-relatable and unorganized addition into this sketchbook, Vaughan Williams actually penned the draft of a piece for acapella chorus.<sup>470</sup> The title is written as "Souls of the Ryhtea" which is an older form of the word "righteous" as spelled by Geoffrey Chaucer in his translation of *Consolation of Philosophy* – an apparently popular and influential text during the Middle Ages. The

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<sup>470</sup> See M.S. 50429A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.



apocrypha for this piece are drawn from the Book of Wisdom (or the Wisdom of Solomon) from the Hebrew Bible written originally in Greek – the same passage that was also included as part of the Anglican Burial Service and the Book of Common Prayer from at least 1662 and still used during the war. The exact text Vaughan Williams sets is from Wisdom 3:1-5:

1 But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. 2 In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery, 3 And their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace. 4 For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. 5 And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself.<sup>471</sup>

It is curious to find a draft of this choral work in the middle of a score book dedicated to *Flemish Farm*, as Vaughan Williams did compose a motet called *The Souls of the Righteous* for acapella chorus for the dedication of the Battle of Britain Chapel in Westminster Abbey in July 1947.<sup>472</sup> This chapel was built as a memorial to the Royal Air Force, which subsequently included the Belgian Air Force divisions absorbed from occupied Belgium, and honored the role that they played in keeping Britain safe during the Second World War. The first concert performance of this piece occurred on 30 April 1948 and while both Michael Kennedy and Ursula

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<sup>471</sup> Book of Wisdom 3:1-5. In a similar connection with their relation to *Flemish Farm*, these same lines from the Book of Wisdom are also featured on the Scottish National War Memorial for the First World War in Edinburgh Castle, designed by Morris and Alice Meredith-Williams in 1927. Additionally, Vaughan Williams was also a veteran of the Great War and, although this relation could be purely coincidental, it is notable that a veteran of the First World War and commemorative monuments for fallen soldiers of the same war would feature the same biblical passage in their artistic works.

<sup>472</sup> Michael Kennedy. *A Catalog of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 179.

Vaughan Williams mention this piece in their books, both authors do not provide further details.<sup>473</sup>

After a cross comparison of both the melody and text written in Vaughan Williams's handwriting with the published 1948 motet, it is clear that the draft within this sketchbook is in fact one of, if not the earliest composition sketch.<sup>474</sup> While *Souls of the Righteous* does not appear in its finished version in *Flemish Farm*, the inclusion of the motet within the film's sketchbook suggests that the motet might have been intended for scenes relating to the death of Matagne. Text markings in the sketch indicate it would have been orchestrated for full chorus with upper woodwinds (such as oboes) supporting the melody. Even more interestingly, careful analysis of the sketch reveals that this first melody started by treble instruments is actually used in variant forms in the trumpet and upper winds solo passages in the "Night by Sea" cue for *Flemish Farm*, in the upper solo violin line in "Dead Man's Kit," and even appears somewhat transformed for the "Dawn in the Barn" solo violin line.<sup>475</sup> While they are all not in the same key, they do figure around the same notes and feature similar rhythmic structures.

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<sup>473</sup> Kennedy, *A Catalog of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 179. Also in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 284.

<sup>474</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Souls of the Righteous: Motet for Treble, Tenor and Baritone Soli with Treble, Alto, Tenor and Bass Chorus Acapella* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947).

<sup>475</sup> See M.S. 50429A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Cross checked as well with M.S. 50429B full score in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. The titles used for the themes are from the movements in the *Flemish Farm* suite.

TREBLE SOLO (*in free time, the relative note-values being only approximate*)

The souls of the right- eous are in the hand\_ of God, and there shall no tor- ment touch them. \_

Detailed description: This musical score is for a Treble Solo in G major, 4/4 time. It begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with two triplet markings over the eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff.

Ex. 3.1a The opening of Vaughan Williams's motet "The Souls of the Righteous"<sup>476</sup>

Trumpet in B♭

*p* *espress.* *p*

Detailed description: This musical score is for a Solo Trumpet in B-flat, 3/4 time. It starts with a piano (p) dynamic and an *espress.* (expressive) marking. The melody features a series of eighth and quarter notes, ending with a piano (p) dynamic and a fermata.

Ex. 3.1b Solo Trumpet excerpt from "Night By Sea" displayed in concert pitch<sup>477</sup>

Violin

Senza sord.

Detailed description: This musical score is for a Solo Violin in 3/4 time. It begins with the instruction "Senza sord." (without mutes). The melody is characterized by long, sweeping phrases with many slurs, consisting of eighth and quarter notes.

Ex. 3.1c Solo Violin excerpt from "Dead Man's Kit"<sup>478</sup>

Violin

Vln.

Detailed description: This musical score is for a Solo Violin in 6/8 time. It starts with a "Solo" marking. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with several slurs and a fermata at the end. The second staff shows a continuation of the melody with a different rhythmic pattern.

Ex. 3.1d Solo Violin excerpt from "Dawn in the Old Barn" part one<sup>479</sup>

<sup>476</sup> Recopied with permission from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society Trust from Vaughan Williams, *The Souls of the Righteous*.

<sup>477</sup> Recopied with permission from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society Trust the unpublished score books from the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

The image shows three staves of musical notation for violin. The top staff is marked 'Solo' and contains a melodic line with several slurs and accents. The middle staff has dynamic markings 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte). The bottom staff has a dynamic marking 'p' (piano). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor).

Ex. 3.1e Solo Violin excerpt from “Dawn in the Old Barn” part two<sup>480</sup>

After comparing the changes in these themes through score and aural analysis, the melodic line taken from *Souls of the Righteous* is evidently used by Vaughan Williams as the indicating leitmotif (or “plug-tune”) for Matagne and Trescha’s love and also for the Belgian soldiers’ lament for the regimental flag. By using the same melodic motif for both instances in the film, Vaughan Williams telegraphed musically the tragic fate of Matagne and combined his heroic soldiers’ lament, as indicated by the initial combination of the biblical text that is quoted in military shrines, into his love theme with Treshca. The placement of the sketch for the motet in the first book of composition sketches for *Flemish Farm* proves that Vaughan Williams initially composed this piece for the film, and that the leitmotifs used for the flag burial and Matagne in the film have more than a coincidental relationship to this choral work. Even though audiences would not have been aware of these

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<sup>480</sup> Ibid.

connections between the film score and motet, it does suggest the way in which Vaughan Williams wove a web of connections having to do with the idea of noble sacrifice—in this case the sacrifice of a Belgian pilot. As with *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, Vaughan Williams chose to exert his creative influence and “do his bit” by adding small references to support the British war effort within a transnational film topic. Through these subtle connections, the composer managed to convey propaganda messages in an auteur-like fashion. In addition, Vaughan Williams circumnavigated and quelled any perceived superseding of an insecure first-time director, Jeffrey Dell. Again, these messages were not meant to be overtly recognized by audiences watching the film, but instead provide an emotional warmth and interest to an otherwise formulaic propaganda film. As another point, by associating this “plug-tune” with the stoic Belgian pilots that are quintessentially represented as stereotypical “Englishman,” Vaughan Williams reinforces the British propaganda message of Baldwin’s essay as the Belgian fighters refuse to back down from the Nazis and maintain a “stiff upper lip.”<sup>481</sup>

The connection between *The Souls of the Righteous* and the themes from *Flemish Farm* could not have been detected during the film’s initial release. However, such connections should have been noticeable at re-releases of the film after the dedication of the RAF chapel in Westminster Abbey—that is, from 1947 onward.

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<sup>481</sup> Quoted in the introduction of this dissertation. Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).

Furthermore, it seems ironic that this film would have been chosen by Vaughan Williams as the one in which he experimented with leitmotif-like themes in a film score, whilst basing his themes on a biblical verse drawn from Jewish scripture. While it could simply be coincidental, it is far more likely that Vaughan Williams, a student of history, would have recognized these connections and therefore used the verses from Wisdom as a private act of defiance. As a reminder, leitmotifs were, and still are, associated with the music of Wagner—a known anti-Semitic whose music and beliefs were being championed by Hitler and the Nazi party as a true Aryan.<sup>482</sup> By using the biblical text, Vaughan Williams manipulates his “plug tunes” to champion the resistance against Nazi oppression and antisemitism in a similar vain to Duclos’s quite resistance to travel through German occupied Belgium and retrieve the flag.<sup>483</sup> The rest of the first score book preserved in the British Library contains drafts of unused melodic content; early variations of material that is used both in the film and concert suite, including Duclos’ walking theme; the Major’s fate plug-tune; and the beginning of a full score that appears to be brainstorming for the orchestration of *Flemish Farm*.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>482</sup> Note that Wagnerian leitmotifs are used more complexly than the simple themes used for this film. However, it is still common practice to academically refer to themes in film music as “leitmotifs.”

<sup>483</sup> This inclusion of religious text into a film score is similar to Vaughan Williams’s representation of the Nazis in *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* with a Lutheran chorale. See discussion of film music in previous chapter on *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

<sup>484</sup> See M.S. 50429A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Only one item in the score book looks as though it might not belong to the intended film composition. There appears to be a church song written in the middle of this book in between the film cues. Despite its title of “This Day,” the song bears no relation to the composer’s later work *Hodie* that is the only cataloged work under that same title. Other than the melody sharing some leitmotif figures to the “Major Meets his Fate” theme, there is no musical relation for this piece in the finished film. Perhaps it could have been intended for a church scene

The second sketchbook kept at the British Library labeled 50429B provides much more insight into connecting the music with the film's propaganda message. This volume is the full score with cue numbers for *Flemish Farm* used by both Vaughan Williams and Mathieson at the recording sessions. The score has been heavily marked up and looks as though it did not weather the recording process unscathed, as a number of pages have been refit onto thicker sheets to protect the edges. From a handwriting analysis point of view, it looks as though this score is in the composer's hand and also contains handwritten notes and changes from Mathieson. This is an important distinction as Kennedy asserted that the complete full score no longer existed.<sup>485</sup> While at this time I have not yet identified all of the cues from the film within this source due to the unorganized cutting of the score, I have positively identified over ninety-percent of the music used in the film, including many of the short cues that last only a few seconds. Thus, while a full and completely revised score may not have survived or even have been created due to wartime paper shortages, it is clear that this was one of the scores used in the recording sessions and more than likely the one used by Vaughan Williams himself.

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around Christmas time in the film but most likely it was just sketched in on blank pages. Vaughan Williams also employed leitmotifs in his opera *Hugh the Drover* (1914) and *The Pilgrim's Progress* (composed in 1936 and first performed in 1951).

<sup>485</sup> In original notes for the Chandos recordings of the film music by Michael Kennedy and obtained from his wife, Kennedy states that the full score for this film was composed in the summer of 1942 and no longer exists, only the suite remains. (Draft written for Chandos records 14 December 2005 by Michael Kennedy given to me by his wife June 2017. Also listed in booklet for *The Film Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* 3-disc collectors edition conducted by Rumon Gamba with the BBC Orchestra. Chandos Movies, 2009 10529(3).

Further proof that this score was used at the recording sessions is found in the labeling of the different cues. Like *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, Vaughan Williams does include the 1M1 traditional film score labeling used in the recording studios to keep track of the unnamed cues in relation to their placement within the film.<sup>486</sup> Another indication is the actual timing markings written in some of the cue sections in both Vaughan Williams and Mathieson's orthography. However, the score for this movie has more changes to it than were made to the scores for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and *Coastal Command*, as numerous notes and rewrites are marked in red and blue pencil. Due to the frequency of these changes and sloppiness of the score, the film may not have been completely edited when Vaughan Williams began writing the score or received the initial cue timings. This means that Mathieson, Dell, and the composer had to rework the music during the recording sessions to try and make the cues fit in their final form in the film. Additionally, most of the red pencil markings are not in Vaughan Williams's hand, and the red pencil markings for both time and cue numbers line up with the finished film. Therefore, one can assert with confidence that the music for many of the cues were cut during the recording sessions. Thus, it follows that Vaughan Williams worked on the score in isolation first and was later subjected to the inexperienced director's whims at the recording session. The

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<sup>486</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.



multicolor pencil markings are most likely Mathieson taking the raw score and refitting it as best as possible to the edited film.<sup>487</sup>

Understandably, it is because of the heavy editing that scholars such as Kennedy believed this to be simply a rough draft of the score. Even though the cross outs are not exact, the music does follow more closely with the film cues than with the recorded suite.<sup>488</sup> The most challenging aspect in following the cue numbers is that the large sections of composed score are completely crossed out. Judging from the amount of composed music that was not used in this eighty-minute film, it is evident that Vaughan Williams composed at least twice as much music, including extended developmental sections, than what was finally recorded and used in *Flemish Farm*. While not all of the unused music pages are completely crossed out, it is easy to suppose that the music used for the film was mostly those pages that have extra cuts, repeats, and time location markings written in the margins.

Following Vaughan Williams's "plug-tune" technique, there are a number of themes identified with specific characters and locations. For example, after the "opening-credit" fanfare, itself a musical representation of the Belgian Air Force, "plug-tunes" are assigned to the Major (later to serve as his fate theme); the burial of the flag; Duclos's traveling music; a Belgian café tune; and the love theme for Trescha and Matagne that occurs most memorably in the barn scene. The same

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<sup>487</sup> For example, the music labeled 1M2 has multiple themes and pages that are not used. However, the music cue is almost complete starting with the troops filing in to salute the flag at 3:52 in *Flemish Farm* after sifting through the cuts. Only the cornet fanfare appears to be missing (it is not in the suite either and must be an onscreen only cue in dialogue). Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

theme returns later in the suite number labeled “Dead Man’s Kit.” As with *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, it is clear that Vaughan Williams provided themes that would conjure up emotional sympathy for the heroes of the story, in this case the Belgian people and their flag, as opposed to writing music for the Nazis. The act of composing memorable music for the Belgian people and not for the Nazis is another argument for the hypothesis that Vaughan Williams functioned as the principal auteur in the film, and Vaughan Williams’s initiative in this regard enhanced the impact of the propaganda value of the music. Additionally, this neatly illustrates Claudia Gorbman’s principle of signifying emotion within the scenes. As a rule, Vaughan Williams preferred to have his music represent the overall emotions of a scene as opposed to “mickey-mousing” music to fit the action on the screen.

The composer’s various “plug-tunes” can be traced throughout the film through this particular score. For example, cue 1M2 in the score is in fact the motif for the “Major goes to meet his Fate” as will be used later.<sup>489</sup> While this particular cue was cut, if it appeared in the original order in a draft of the screenplay, there must have originally been a scene within the opening minutes that showed the Major and the news of the Nazi advancement into Belgium. An alternate possibility is that this cue could have been composed for the banquet scene that ended up using diegetic music in the film and that is followed by silence when the Major stands up to speak. Judging by the brevity of this specific cue, this bit of music seems to fit in that gap.

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

Instead, the music jumps straight to the flag burial scene that is also classified under 1M2. While the cue in question is only a brief introduction to this theme, the most prominent occurrence of the Major's plug-tune occurs much later in the film, when he intends to turn himself in and be executed by the Nazis to save innocent people from false accusations. This is the music from the suite labeled "The Major Goes to Face His Fate" and is labeled in the full score under 6M2.<sup>490</sup>

Despite its organized appearance in the suite, the music within the full score for the film contains a number of cuts and changes to this section, making it difficult to follow along and find the road map—it seems as if the part with the red pencil is Mathieson's notes that were used for attaching the recording to the film. The double line on page three indicates a small repeat of a few measures including the trumpet descent and most of the last few pages appear to be extended developmental sections that were not used in the film. These sections are variants of the music used for the corresponding movement in the suite.<sup>491</sup> The Major's plug-tune is again heard briefly for a cue labeled 7M1 when Duclos reads in a newspaper that the Major had turned himself in and was therefore shot.<sup>492</sup> The second page of 7M1 has pencil markings crossing out with the word "out" written in pencil as well, which again matches the cue in the film that only seems to last the first page. This short cue is followed by a single page, an allegro variation of Duclos' travel theme as the

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<sup>490</sup> Ibid. Starts at 57:34 in *Flemish Farm*.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid. Starts at 1:00:54 in *Flemish Farm*.

protagonist leaves a Nazi guarded work area by bike.<sup>493</sup> As the Major was one of the top-billed supporting actors for the film, his sacrifice in the film serves as a driving emotional force in order to create sympathy for the Belgian resistance. By giving this character a repeated plug-tune, Vaughan Williams effectively conveys a tribute to his heroism, thus offering a stark contrast to Nazi barbarity.

The next important plug-tune is the love theme for Trescha and Matagne – the same theme that contains elements of “Souls of the Righteous.” Like the Major’s motif, there are multiple cues written into the score featuring this theme that were later cut.<sup>494</sup> The most prominent occurrence of the love theme first appears in the film under the cue 2M1.<sup>495</sup> Also heavily marked, the full score version of this cue found in the 50429B composition book contains a repeated section in red, but the one written by Vaughan Williams does not appear to have been used in the film.

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<sup>493</sup> This is the transition section at 1:01:15 in *Flemish Farm* that is continuous with the previous cue. Due to the ordering, this cue must have been written for another section of the film or cut scenes, as it comes before music used earlier in the film. The only other conclusion would be that Vaughan Williams needed to find blank pages at the recording session to quickly write in a new cue for a previously unplanned section.

<sup>494</sup> An example of this is the Farm scene that was initially included in the cut 1M2 cue that started with the Major’s plug-tune. This entire music is a variation of the Barn music, or Trescha and Matagne’s love theme. Due to its placement in the scorebook, my guess is this extended cue was for a farm scene featuring Matagne and Trescha (perhaps showing them burying the flag or even discussing their marriage which, following the story’s timeline, would have taken place before the beginning of the film). Like the previous cut, Vaughan Williams must have been given this initial cue for a scene that was either filmed and cut or cut before filming began. See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>495</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 6:59 in film. In the suite movement, this selection is titled “Dawn in the Old Barn – the Parting of the Lovers.” The second part of this cue marks the entire sequence originally written by Vaughan Williams and based on an original longer timing marker. The barn scene in the final form of the film must have been cut in half, so that only the first part of the music is used while this second part is later incorporated into the suite movement (with slight variants in orchestration and phrasing that Vaughan Williams tweaked). The actual part in the film ends around the repeat section in the score, where the film timings in red pencil also end. This further makes sense as to having been cut during the recording sessions as there are no timing marks in red located in the second part of this cue.

Instead, the repeated section is found in the suite movement, and the resemblance to the “Souls of the Righteous” melodic figures are evident despite being written in a different key. The rhythmic figures and melodic motion are similar enough to indicate the underlying presence of the leitmotif for Matagne and Trescha, particularly as it is scored for the romantic combination of solo violin and solo cello. Additionally, there is a dramatic key change from Bb Major to F Major just before the big violin solo, and the music does not tarry a long time as it quickly segues into the next section found right after the barn scene in C major. The plug-tune connection to “Souls of the Righteous” is most noticeable in the triplet/compound falling pattern towards the end of the first period (see example 3.1 excerpts).<sup>496</sup>

As the lovers play a vital role in hiding and protecting the flag, it is therefore unsurprising that the plug-tune finds its way into later parts of the film—and multiple movements of the suite. In fact, the next occurrence of the theme comes after Matagne has died and Duclos is enquiring about him in Britain. While Duclos is rummaging through Matagne’s belongings just after being informed of his death, the music cue, labeled 3M2 in the full score and cross-referenced with the suite movement “Dead Man’s Kit,” is performed as non-diegetic music that signifies emotion.<sup>497</sup> While the aural cue is longer in the film, the written score indicates that the music only lasts two pages. The pages following this section additionally have cross-outs, but most likely was used as material for the suite, just as was the case for

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<sup>496</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>497</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 20:39 in film.

“Dawn in the Barn.” As most of the music for this short cue is quite soft, the main focal point of the love music “plug-tune” occurs as Duclos tries to pen a letter to Trescha telling her of Matagne’s death. As the theme is played on solo violin, it matches when the same theme—also played on solo violin—in the barn sequence (see examples 3.1d and 3.1e). With the highly effective matching of orchestration of this short but memorable tune, Vaughan Williams provides an emotional connector for the audience with the plight of Trescha and to Duclos’ grief as well. This additionally provides a small eulogy moment for the Matagne that further associates with the buried flag that Matagne was in charge of before his death.

A small variation of this theme also occurs later in the film as Duclos arrives back at the farm and tells Trescha in the barn of Matagne’s death.<sup>498</sup> In this short cue, the orchestration is different, as it functions as a combination of Gorbman’s principles of film scoring of inaudibility in support of the dialogue and signifier of emotion. Additionally, there are other indications on the last two pages of cue 3M2 that point to this music being transformed later in the film for short cues.<sup>499</sup> Once again, the use of this particular theme for both the “Dead Man’s Kit” and Duclos and Trescha’s reunion at the farm can be construed as a subliminal propaganda as Duclos, while

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<sup>498</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 38:09 in film.

<sup>499</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. The cue number 6M1 written on the pages in the score does not match anywhere in the finished film and may have been for an intended last minute cut scene towards the end of the film.

visibly touched by grief over Matagne, puts his duty first in maintaining the persona of the stereotypical “Englishman.”<sup>500</sup>

Of the plug-tunes used for the central characters in the film, the one that is used most prominently is that for Duclos. Unlike the Major’s tune, which signified his sacrifice, or Trescha and Matagne love motif, Duclos’ theme has less to do with emotion and more to do with dogged persistence. Referred to here as Duclos’ “travel music,” the plug-tune Vaughan Williams composed for this character does not manifest itself in the finished film until after the hero has already returned to occupied Belgium and is traveling back to the farm.<sup>501</sup> The first presentation of this motif in the full score happens in the cue labeled 4M2 and is explicitly called “Travel Tune.” As Duclos is the central character in the story, this theme makes up a large portion of the music cues heard in the film. In fact, considering the amount of music that was written by the Vaughan Williams and then cut out, it is arguable that the traveling music was meant to be much more refined and less repetitive than what appears in the final version of the film.

For example, the cross outs indicates the initial music for Duclos getting his papers checked in the guard house was supposed to be twice as long before the jaunty march returned. In fact, it appears as though Vaughan Williams had initially provided more variation of mood and emotion, as the Lento section was extensively

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<sup>500</sup> Quoted in the introduction of this dissertation. Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad’s Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).

<sup>501</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 33:08 in film.

developed. However, Mathieson or Dell or both opted to keep the music consistent and moving through the jaunty march tune. While it is not clear why this particular section was heavily altered, a sensible guess would be that Dell made so many last-minute changes to the edited film that Mathieson had to find quick solutions in order to rework a small portion of the material. To support this hypothesis, the “Travel Tune” is heavily marked up and quite jumpy. Additionally, the cue appears over multiple pages as if Vaughan Williams just wrote the whole thing and left it for Mathieson to modify as needed. The first rendition goes up until the first repeat.<sup>502</sup>



Ex. 3.2 “Travel Tune” as it first appears in the Bassoon part from 4M2 of *Flemish Farm* full score<sup>503</sup>

There are even notes in the margins indicating exactly where and for how long this music would be used for later cues in the film, including some quotations of dialogue on where the music should match up. These notes are written in blue by Vaughan Williams himself, thus suggesting that the changes were done quickly or “on the spot.”

As the “Travel Tune” kept being reused for Duclos, most of Vaughan Williams’s crossed out and unused selections in this source are related to the film’s protagonist. For example, the most talked-about music from *Flemish Farm* by scholars comes from the cue section of 4M2. On the twenty-fourth page of this cue,

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<sup>502</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.



the music appears to be a variation of the flag burial music crossed with Duclos' "Travel Tune" that was not used in the walking theme sections. Often obliging in regards to his film music, Vaughan Williams seems not to have protested these alterations of his music, and instead repurposed the music for his concert hall pieces.<sup>504</sup>

The music in this particular section contains the melodic fragment that reappears in Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony. Upon examination of the score, the first main melodic material is the same as in the symphony, but written in a different key from its appearances in the holographic score for the Sixth Symphony.<sup>505</sup> However, the two different themes from *Flemish Farm* that appear in the symphony are based upon the leitmotif for the flag burial, and these thematic motifs are variants in turn of the theme found in the *Souls of the Righteous* motet.<sup>506</sup> Therefore, it is correct to point out that unused themes from *Flemish Farm* are present in the Sixth Symphony, but it is also correct that the symphony contains several prominent references to *Coastal Command*, as is discussed in those previous

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<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> See M.S. 50373A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Compared with M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>506</sup> Note – Jeffrey Richards claims that the opening of fourth movement contains a theme from *Flemish Farm* based on his source: Dickinson, A. E. F. *Vaughan Williams* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 444. The theme in question would most likely be "Dead Man's Kit" but on score examination does not appear to be similar at all. Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad's Army*, 299. This theme is additionally the one referred to as "Miserable Starkey" by the orchestra musicians as quoted by Kennedy, but the actual theme is not fully distinguishable amongst the surviving sketchbook materials at the British Library. See Kennedy, Michael. *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 286. This is also mentioned in Howes, Frank. *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1954). Mostly it is regurgitated information from Vaughan Williams's and Kennedy's published sources. For example, it simply restates how music from this film is found in the Sixth Symphony.

chapters. Vaughan Williams must have liked these particular motifs from *Flemish Farm* enough to recycle it into the symphony—otherwise this material would have ended up on the cutting room floor.<sup>507</sup> Since the composer wrote at least twice as much music then was actually used for the eighty-minute film, there was ample material available to be worked into compositions relating to wartime propaganda.<sup>508</sup> As can be seen in example 3.3, the music from the film is nearly identical and is simply transposed.



Ex. 3.3a Violin 1 part from 4M2 of *Flemish Farm* full score M.S. 50429B<sup>509</sup>



Ex. 3.3b Violin 1 part from the opening of the second movement of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony<sup>510</sup>

The cue following 4M2 in the full score labeled 4M3 in the margins of the “Travel Tune” is additionally a continuation of the unused theme from 4M2 that ends up as

<sup>507</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter of this dissertation, in the holographic short score containing the second movement of the symphony, the words “theme for Flemish Farm” are written and later crossed out. This addition on the title page suggests that the movement could have initially been written for the 1943 film *The Flemish Farm*, directed by Jeffrey Dell. But it can be proven that “Although the opening music of the second movement may have been initially composed for the film score, an examination of Vaughan Williams’s scores for *Flemish Farm* (BL Add. MS 50429 and 50430) fails to disclose any such connection.” (See Byron Adams, “The Stages of Revision of Vaughan Williams’s Sixth Symphony” in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, Byron Adams and Robin Wells (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 9). With all due respect to that distinguished author, it is now quite clear that the published statement about the film music’s inclusion in the Sixth Symphony is actually incorrect.

<sup>508</sup> The music for cue 4M2 alone is easily 31 pages long with only a handful of pages actually being used in the final film. See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>510</sup> Vaughan Williams, Ralph. *Symphony in E Minor* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948).

the theme that appears in the Sixth Symphony – this time as the melody in the second movement.



Ex. 3.3c Oboe parts depicting the secondary unused melody from 4M3 of *Flemish Farm* full score M.S. 50429B<sup>511</sup>

Furthermore, there are actually numerous handwritten directions and notes written into these two pages that are *not* in Vaughan Williams’s handwriting. While the blue pen is in the composer’s hand, the pencil notations appear to be in Mathieson’s writing—including the breakdowns of desk numbers and timings with melodic expressive text additions. This music was not only cut at the recording sessions, but at the very last minute, after both composer and music director had already been fine-tuning the fittings of the cue to the film. The numbers 4M3 were further written into the margins of Duclos’ “Travel Tune,” thus indicating this was the initial music for the cue. However, this was replaced by the same jaunty march used previously. Oddly enough, this cue does not even make it into the published suite, along with a large section of music following 4M3, labeled “Country Row,” that additionally seems to have been a planned variation of Duclos’ travel plug-tune that was cut from the final film score.<sup>512</sup>

<sup>511</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>512</sup> The “Country Row” section also represents another large cut music section lasting seven pages. See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

The image shows a musical score for the first main theme from "Country Row" of *Flemish Farm*. It consists of four staves: Oboe, English Horn, Clarinet in A, and Horn in F. The Oboe, English Horn, and Clarinet in A parts are nearly identical, while the Horn in F part is distinct. The Horn in F part includes a "Il solo" marking and a "pp" dynamic marking.

Ex. 3.4 The first main theme from “Country Row” of *Flemish Farm* full score<sup>513</sup>

As can be seen in example 3.4, the woodwind part-writing for this theme is almost identical to the original bassoon line in the “Travel Tune” with the second horn acting as a transition for a development of new material.

In agreement with Vaughan Williams’s use of the “plug-tunes,” one of the critical story elements that required memorable music was the Belgian Air Force. This “plug-tune” starts at the beginning of the film as an overture used in the credits that is then dispersed in sections and with slight variations throughout the film.<sup>514</sup> To enhance effectiveness as propaganda of *Flemish Farm*, it was imperative that the composer write music that projected the noble and military valor of the Belgians without feeling phony or sappy. Instead of using snippets of national themes within the score as he did with *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, Vaughan Williams composed an entirely new fanfare that could be repeated and re-edited to fit the desired scene lengths. The

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

<sup>514</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, opening credits.

theme itself is additionally introduced in the brass sections with woodwind support, an allusion to military wind bands, before moving to the strings.

As previously stated for the film *Flemish Farm*, Vaughan Williams composed more music for the Allied fighters than for the enemy soldiers. Since the music used in the film is meant to generate an emotional association that can be triggered on the subconscious level, it makes sense that the propaganda being reinforced by the music would create an empathetic response for the British and Belgian fighters. These fighters were meant to represent people that the target audience members could relate to as every able bodied man and woman was drawn into the war effort. This follows the practice of effective propaganda—or morale boosting material. In order for it to be effective, it must touch the viewer or listener personally on an emotional level. This is the reason why Vaughan Williams and his collaborators spent so much time on repeating memorable plug-tunes for the fighter squadrons of both the Royal Air Force and the Belgian Air Force. Continuing to trace the cues surrounding 2M2, the opening plug-tune was continued into 2M2 and then it is quickly reused in cue 3M2 for the film. Albeit a short cue that only lasts about fifteen seconds, the motif is just a repetition of the first few seconds of the theme “plug-tune” from the opening credits. Its heroic strains accompany the men as they run to their planes to defend Britain, and therefore functions as the subconscious signal to the audience: these are the good guys.<sup>515</sup> By scoring with special consideration and

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<sup>515</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 18:58 in film. Cross checked with M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

giving musical plug-tunes to specific characters, Vaughan Williams gave himself a level of creative interpretation that could be classified as an auteur for this film, just as he did for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*.

Although Duclos' return to Brussels in occupied Belgium is brief, the scene that has the most emotional impact on audiences in terms of propaganda within this section of the film has very little music. This score occurs right after the café music scenes in which Claudia Gorbman's principle of invisibility is effectively used to efface the melody from audience ears and allow more attention to be focused on the action of the screen. In this scene, Duclos is meeting his mother discreetly on a park bench for the first time in years, but, because they are being watched by the Nazis, neither person can show any signs of recognition. The music remains noticeably silent until Duclos' mother is about to break and turn to touch her son when two Nazi guards appear.<sup>516</sup> Vaughan Williams's music enters with a muted trumpet, marked *fortissimo piano*, which alarms the pair on the bench. The trumpet note is followed by quiet but steadily growing low strings providing a militaristic eight note rhythm under the repeated dissonant trumpet note that accompanies the pair as they end their meeting. The music is an economical representation of German oppression. As this film was made with British and Belgian refugee audiences in mind, those watching this scene from *Flemish Farm* would have been affected by the war in a similar way and most assuredly would also have had loved ones and family

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<sup>516</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 32:30 in film.

members currently fighting or had already died as a result of the war. Furthermore, the audience members would also most likely be suffering from lack of contact with family members and friends and struggling with the inability to know for certain whether they would see each other again or if they were alright. Unlike all the previous cues, this concise moment of music is not in any source and must have been written during the recording sessions. As such, this remains one of the few cues that cannot be readily identifiable from what most assuredly is one of the full scores used at the recording sessions.

The most important passage that enhances the overt propaganda of this film is the one cue that is hardest to find in the film score. This is the music heard at the climax of the film at its final dramatic and hurried conclusion. As with the café music, it is not a plug-tune in its finished form. Vaughan Williams seems to have written a large amount of music for this section, and it appears that any new plug-tunes were completely crossed out in favor of a piece-meal, motif-bit recycling designed to fit a section that was clearly over edited and hastily re-cut by the director. The pivotal sequence in question begins when Duclos must smuggle the flag across a Nazi patrolled bridge in order to rendezvous with the people assisting his escape back to England.<sup>517</sup> In order to do so, Duclos relies upon the help of a man, identified as Ledoux in the credits, and his dog, which is given the task of swimming the flag across the river.<sup>518</sup> Unfortunately, the plan fails and the dog is

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<sup>517</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 1:10:55 in film.

<sup>518</sup> Exhibitor's Campaign Sheet listed under production stills for the film and stored as micro images/micro film at the British Film Institute Reuben Library.

killed by the Nazis just as it crosses over to the far bank. This triggers the final heroic rescue sequence as Duclos goes back to retrieve the flag from the dog's body while under heavy fire from German soldiers.<sup>519</sup>

As previously noted, the music for this section is utterly disorganized and scattered all over the back half of the full score book labeled 50429B from the British Library. After careful scrutiny, it appears to start with the section marked "reel 7 & 8" with a crossed out title of "Duclos and Lenier."<sup>520</sup> In fact, the music is so fragmented that a detailed comparison with the music in this section and the final film version would lead to the assumption that this was an early draft that was later broken up into separate cues, especially as there are many more music numbers labeled 7 or 8 that come up after this part. One can only tentatively deduce that this section is supposed to be an early draft of the music that starts as the Nazi sentry demands Duclos' papers on the bridge.<sup>521</sup> Although the flow of the score begins to follow the film and has written repeats, the cue actually ends much earlier than the notated music, thus following the scattered use of musical snippets to piece together the final product. It is this fragmented appearance that I believe lead to the scholarly assumption that this particular score remained incomplete.<sup>522</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

<sup>520</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>521</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 1:09:50 in film.

<sup>522</sup> This music is heavily laden with the Duclos traveling leitmotif which leads to the conclusion that this could have been an original cue written as a continuous section that was later cut out or repurposed at other sections in the film. It also follows Vaughan Williams's established composing process of fleshing out an early simple melodic tune that was previously developed in the piano score M.S. 50429A. Further proof of last minute rearranging of cues at the recording session is indicated by the cue labeled 7M1 actually being written in the middle of the 5M cues in the full score book. See



As with other heavily cut and edited sections, the music that was eventually used in the film can be somewhat followed by tracing the additional edits made in blue and red pencil. For example, Vaughan Williams appears to have originally written in blue on the first page that this was for “Duclos and Lenier” but it is crossed out with pencil. There is no character credited under this name, but it might very well refer to Ledoux.<sup>523</sup> Additionally, the simple labeling of this cue as “reel 7 & 8” indicates that it was composed early, as the final cuts for the film would all finish within reel seven. In support of this conclusion, the film does not appear to be cut from the publicized finished running time of eighty-two minutes. Another aspect is that this sequence distinctly follows Vaughan Williams’s already formulated pattern of writing out longer cues, a practice that he established in *Coastal Command*. After receiving a generic cue of what was to be expected for the ending, the composer kept writing the leitmotif as he would a movement of a symphony, thus giving him lots of repeated variations of the “plug-tune” that could be pieced together in a re-edited cut. This was the case with the music for the final sequence of *Flemish Farm*. This hypothesis is further backed up with the following music cues in the score that follow more closely with the ending of the 6M2 cue before this one and that the

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M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>523</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. For name clarification see Exhibitor’s Campaign Sheet listed under production stills for the film and stored as micro images/micro film at the British Film Institute Reuben Library.

music on the final page does not really end before the new reel seven section begins with the bikes—a scene that occurs right before the incident with the dog.<sup>524</sup>

In contrast to Vaughan Williams's initial cue numbers, the bike scene in question begins on the final reel of the finished film. This reel is number four, not seven or eight, and thereby follows the standard average of twenty minutes of film per celluloid reel. In other words, the ordering of the cues in this sketchbook do not follow the exact order of the final film and the exact music that is used in *Flemish Farm* was not decided upon until after a few music cues had been labeled with the same heading. From this evidence, it is clear that the film was obviously planned to be much longer, as the music cue reels go up to seven or eight – putting a final running time around the two hour mark. Instead, the actual film copy fits on four reels, thus consistently matching the final timing of eighty-two minutes. Vaughan Williams probably received the initial estimated running time and as a result wrote much more music than was needed for the final cut. This gave him lots of material to pull from and rearrange during the actual recording sessions. Further indication of the repurposing appears in the form of the final movement of the suite entitled “Wanderings of the Flag,” which essentially is a compilation of memorable plug-tunes that did not constitute a full separate movement within the suite.<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 1:02:10 in film. Reel version of film viewed at BFI private screening rooms in London April 2017. Film kept in preservation by BFI and viewed with special permission.

<sup>525</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Connection to the suite starts on the ninth page of this section.

The changing of pre-written cues is also present from the cue labeled “Reel 7 Mountain Music” that has a note at the bottom of the page stating it was wanted for 19 May 1943 - the same recording session marked in Mathieson’s pocket calendar and what appears to be the first recording session.<sup>526</sup> This short cue continues right through to the transition scene’s music as Duclos is seen traveling with the flag. The music is repeated a couple times although the repeats are not clearly indicated, which makes it a little difficult to follow. The cue does conclude with the flute and oboe passage as Duclos enters the house of the man who owns the dog.<sup>527</sup> As the score for this section is sloppily cut up, tracing exact starting and ending points proves to present quite a challenge. However, rehearsal letter E in red pencil matches up fairly well with the start of the “walking with the dog music”—the beginning marker for the pivotal climax that illustrates for Belgian courage against Nazi oppression.<sup>528</sup> This section actually follows as a continuation of the previous music, as the rehearsal letters continue and starts with letter “E,” following the travel music that had ended with rehearsal letter “D.” Again, the cuts make it hard to follow the road map, and a page of the music containing rehearsal letter G has been completely ripped out of the volume.

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<sup>526</sup> The Muir Mathieson Collection 1763/8/1 in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>527</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 1:04:28 in film. Cross checked with M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>528</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

Again, this missing music might suggest that this volume is not a complete recording score, but from examining carefully the pages it does appear as though the sketchbook initially contained the missing score. This would be the music from after Duclos' and Ledoux's mountain ledge fall through putting on his hat and then up until the music changes as Duclos prepares to walk across alone and Ledoux leads the dog smuggling the flag down to the water.<sup>529</sup> At first the music reflects the relationship of the men walking but changes when the two men and the dog reach the bridge. Here it is possible to discern where the editor made alterations to the film and score from their original format. Different music is employed for the Nazis versus the Belgians and the orchestration and dynamics build until the final climax when the dog is shot by a Nazi officer.<sup>530</sup> The dog is therefore turned into a martyr, a potent symbol of Belgium's fight for freedom, while the action also illustrates vividly the presentation of the vile Nazi soldiers. For dog-loving Britons, the killing of a dog was an act of utter depravity that should have made them ready to kill a Nazi on sight. This was the film's most naked appeal, and its most effective tool of propaganda.<sup>531</sup> In spite of its brutal obviousness, the message is thoroughly hammered home emotionally to audiences with the help of the musical scoring that

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<sup>529</sup> See *Flemish Farm*, 1:08:30 – 1:09:26 in film. Cross checked with M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>530</sup> There are also lots of notes on the bottom of the pages referring to action on the screen that the music is meant to be paired with. This could be because the music/scenes were altered so much and were off, thus explaining the multiple drafts/cut music in this book, and/or this is the closest Vaughan Williams ever came to mickey-mousing the music. The sequence ends on page 11 with the guard's "Halt" written into the music. See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>531</sup> An extreme British stereotype as well by alluding to the notion that the only way to get the British people to take the Nazis seriously is to show them attacking their hounds.

vividly indicates which characters are to be despised and which are sympathetic:

Duclos and the dog.

As noted above, this scene is crucial as to the overlay of the music onto the finished cut film. As the importance of key climaxes and cadences in the musical score illustrates the important moments on the screen, it is evident that the film was re-edited after the cue times were sent to the composer and recorded. The fact that Vaughan Williams was so revered in Britain at the time could have also intimidated Jeffrey Dell into leaving the pre-composed cues intact and editing the film around the music cues. Furthermore, this foreshadows Vaughan Williams's practice of composing scores in advance for later films such as *Scott of the Antarctic*.

After this long and confusing section of the musical cues, the madness continues as the film abruptly ends.<sup>532</sup> As previously discussed, the high cue numbers versus the actual final length of the film are evidence that *Flemish Farm* was meant to be much longer and, possibly due to Dell's inexperience, was hastily chopped up and abruptly concluded. Whether the startling ending was for artistic reasons or made to fit the required quota length for the film's projected theater groupings, it is clear that both Mathieson and Vaughan Williams faced a Herculean task in piecing together the originally planned cues to fit the butchered climax and ending. The last cue in the full score book is labeled "7<sup>th</sup> Segue" as it is the transition from the

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<sup>532</sup> The *Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 26 November 1942), 43. Furthermore, there are numerous listings in the same paper that describe a frequency of touch-up scenes being re-shot that appear on an almost weekly basis from January-March 1943. See the *Kinematograph Weekly* (London, January-March 1943). Filming did not officially conclude until the middle of March (The *Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 11 March 1943), 45.

dramatic music to the finale.<sup>533</sup> The music here is similar to that used in the titles and further contains cuts and references back to the title music. As with the other, later cues, this section is messy and it is hard to follow how the last two minutes of the film was put together. While the music was planned in three parts, the opening and part one that was to be repeated do not match the final version of the film. Instead, Mathieson must have simply used part of the opening credits for a few bars, as was to be indicated for part two, and then transitioned to a repetition of part one before finally recording the last two pages of part three.<sup>534</sup>

As the music contained in the full score M.S. 50429B is virtually one hundred percent complete, the remaining two score books from the British Library are materials that were intended for the suite of the film music and therefore do not need to be covered in as much detail for this chapter. The first of the remaining two books is labeled M.S. 50430A and functions as a composer's piano reduction of what Vaughan Williams desired to have put in the suite.<sup>535</sup> Marked "for control only," the cover pages give a listing of the numbers and timing of each for the suite as well as written notes about the film. These notes also have written in some number cues such as 3M2b21, 2M2b31, and 4M1 and the handwriting appears to be that of Vaughan Williams as well as Mathieson's – a logical conclusion as both men worked on the score together. Furthermore, the blue numbers next to the suite movements

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<sup>533</sup> See M.S. 50429B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> See M.S. 50430A in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

appear to be page numbers and the second page does indicate this was to be a piano score edition in Mathieson's handwriting.<sup>536</sup> Additionally, Mathieson's notes on page three of the score indicate that this was initially planned on being a seventeen movement suite of much smaller sections/themes that was actually shortened to seven movements. As this music has been reworked to fit a concert hall suite format, none of the movements or cues presented fully match the music used in the final film.

As with M.S. 50430A, the last score book stored in the British Library is 50430B, a more neatly organized full score book for *Flemish Farm* that appears to be an arrangement of the suite for Oxford University Press to sell or rent.<sup>537</sup> The final printed version was copied out by Roy Douglas and a very limited run of the scores was made before Oxford University Press pulled the publication.<sup>538</sup> Because of this, a few rare editions still exist and most likely served as the source material that Chandos records used to make a recording of the suite with Rumon Gamba and the BBC Orchestra.<sup>539</sup> As with the piano edition, the full score of the suite kept in the British Library is heavily marked up and is more than likely the same score from which Roy Douglas copied the hire score for Oxford University Press. The only other

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<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

<sup>537</sup> See M.S. 50430B in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections. Unlike copies of this same score that exist in Roy Douglas's hand, this one is mostly in Vaughan Williams's handwriting.

<sup>538</sup> Handwriting confirmed by comparing printed version of the suite with letter sent to Ursula Vaughan Williams from MS Mus. 1714/1/24 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>539</sup> See *The Film Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* 3-disc collectors edition conducted by Rumon Gamba with the BBC Orchestra. Chandos Movies, 2009 10529(3). My thanks to Mrs. Stephanie Wells for providing me with a print copy of the suite published by Oxford University Press.

scores kept at the British Library from *Flemish Farm* appear to be two loose sheets that were not bound in the full score book M.S. 50429B and contain music from the last forty-five seconds of the film.<sup>540</sup>

## Conclusion

As with so many forms of media made in Britain during the early 1940s, *Flemish Farm* was a piece of frank propaganda that became a casualty of war-weariness among the British public. Despite the long build-up for the picture amongst film exhibitors and eventual flop in movie theaters, the music from the Belgian story found new life in the concert hall. After its premiere in 1945, Vaughan Williams's suite was championed by Muir Mathieson and programmed on both radio broadcasts through the BBC and in concerts.<sup>541</sup> Whether or not these performances were somewhat responsible for the theatrical re-release of the film after the war, the suite remained in Mathieson's repertory for performances, radio broadcasts, and talks about film music. In terms of Vaughan Williams's movie score, it appears as though scholars and audiences alike have much more familiarity today with the unused film themes that appeared in the Sixth Symphony than with the actual film music. Like *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and *Coastal Command*, Vaughan Williams completes a musical progress from both propaganda and the sound studios to the concert hall. But Vaughan Williams's contribution to this otherwise ephemeral piece of

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<sup>540</sup> See M.S. 72073 in the British Library Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection in the Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.

<sup>541</sup> See Muir Mathieson Collection of Papers 1763/2-3 in the British Library Music and Manuscripts Special Collections.



propaganda cannot be underestimated: this score not only helped make a poorly-edited and erratically directed film better at conveying its propaganda message, but that Vaughan Williams acted as the greatest creative influence on the emotional content of the story and fulfilled a crucial role as the chief auteur on this film. Finally, Vaughan Williams's use of "plug-tunes" further served as an aide to direct audiences to sympathize with propaganda undertones for the Belgian protagonists—the brave individuals who were personified with the same British stereotypes that Baldwin wrote about in "The Englishman."<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>542</sup> Quoted in the introduction of this dissertation. Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad's Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).

## Conclusion

As Germany surrendered in 1945 and Britain moved into the post-war era, the importance of wartime cinema to victory over fascism became abundantly clear. Despite the constant threat of air raids, requirement to have gas masks at all times, and disregard for safety evinced by patrons stubbornly remaining in their seats during active bombings, movie theaters provided an escape for a nation determined to maintain “a stiff upper lip.”<sup>543</sup> In support of these findings, the *Kine Weekly* published a few statistical facts praising the government’s decision to keep cinemas open during the war. The data describes how in 1941, despite a ten percent decrease in open theaters (roughly four hundred sixty-four theaters), the takings of films rose twenty-five percent.<sup>544</sup>

Furthermore, while estimates of weekly cinema attendance before the conflict was around twenty million patrons, the new estimate in 1942, with less open theaters, was a weekly average of twenty-three and a half million patrons.<sup>545</sup> With each ticketed presentation—including the required government propaganda shorts and films—the efforts on behalf of the Ministry to explain what Britain was fighting for was given a valuable asset in the form of film music.<sup>546</sup> British film critic Leslie Halliwell summed up the situation well: “No doubt about it, the cinema was

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<sup>543</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 11 July 1940), 14. Also see *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 18 July 1940), 5.

<sup>544</sup> Adjusted for the increase in prices due to taxation, the actual improvement figures in at 17.5%. *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 5 February 1942), 3.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>546</sup> *The Kinematograph Weekly* (London, 2 January 1941), 34

providing a great morale booster, as well as the nation's most effective weapon of propaganda."<sup>547</sup>

British composer Arthur Bliss once stated, "in the last resort film music should be judged solely as music – that is to say, the ear alone, and the question of its value depends on whether it can stand up to this test."<sup>548</sup> As can be seen through the gradual transformation of the musical scores from *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, *Coastal Command*, and *Flemish Farm* into concert suites, it is more than plausible that both Muir Mathieson and Ralph Vaughan Williams shared this same viewpoint.

In essence, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, *Coastal Command*, and *Flemish Farm* were vital to the British war effort as propaganda tools funded by the Ministry of Information in order to answer fully to the British people the questions of how, why, and what they were fighting for against the Axis powers. The scores were heard throughout Britain, in the films themselves, and in arrangements of suites that were regularly broadcast by the BBC. Despite this music's prominence during the Second World War, these scores have been eclipsed in comparison to the composer's symphonic compositions. As can be seen from the information outlined in the previous chapters, Vaughan Williams's scores for these films helped to accent the propaganda messages of the stereotypical "Englishman" described by Baldwin, and additionally contained specified themes and leitmotifs that influenced audience subconscious

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<sup>547</sup> Leslie Halliwell, *Seats in All Parts: Half a Lifetime At the Movies* (London: Granada, 1985), 86.

<sup>548</sup> John Huntley, *British Film Music* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 40.

interpretation and reception.<sup>549</sup> Eventually, these scores would also find new life in recordings.

After the war, Vaughan Williams continued to write music for films. Ernest Irving, the music director at Ealing Studios who would work with the composer during the post-war 1940s, published in his article on film music: “Dr. Vaughan Williams said to me in conversation the other day that he had discovered one of the secrets of film music – *never to write a long tune*; because it is bound to be interrupted, obscured, or extirpated before you can state it – let alone develop it.”<sup>550</sup> True to his word, Vaughan Williams never protested changes or alterations to his scores. In fact, he even praised the rearranging that Irving did on his most well-known motion picture score, *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948).<sup>551</sup> Until the end of his long life, the composer held fast to his belief “that music lived only when it was played.”<sup>552</sup>

In a statement released in the middle of January in 1953, Vaughan Williams declared:

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<sup>549</sup> Quoted in the introduction of this dissertation. Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad's Army* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 14. Quoted from Stanley Baldwin, *The Englishman* (London: Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1940).

<sup>550</sup> Ernest Irving, “Film Music” in *Tempo*, no. 3 (March 1947, published by Cambridge University Press), 26.

<sup>551</sup> For more on *Scott of the Antarctic*, see Daniel Goldmark, “Music, Film, and Vaughan Williams” in *Vaughan Williams Essays*, Byron Adams and Robin Wells (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), and Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

<sup>552</sup> Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 156.

We should know and love each other through our art – and it must be our own art, not a colorless cosmopolitanism. I believe that one’s own community, one’s own language, customs and religion are essential to our spiritual health. Out of these characteristics, these ‘hard knots,’ we can build a United Europe and a world federation. But without local loyalty there can be nothing for the wider issues to build on. Everything of value in our spiritual and cultural life springs from our own soil.<sup>553</sup>

Echoing Vaughan Williams’s convictions, Mathieson praised the success of British film music, publishing: “It would, I think, be fair to say that the standard of music in British films is at the present time as high, if not higher, than in any other country.”<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> Ibid, 324.

<sup>554</sup> Muir Mathieson, “Aspects of Film Music” in *Tempo*, no. 9 (December 1944, published by Cambridge University Press), 9.

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