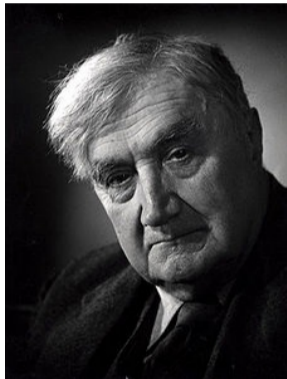


About the Music

This magnificent setting of Walt Whitman's poem established Vaughan Williams's reputation as one of the leading composers of the twentieth century. The idea of a spiritual journey - the passage of the soul from darkness to light, "Toward the Unknown Region" - is central to the text and fully reflected in the music. Beginning softly and simply, the music follows the text of the poem, building through a Wagnerian chromaticism toward a bold and dramatic climax. This was Vaughan Williams's first major choral piece, and its obvious inspirational qualities made it a success from the first. This arrangement for Concert Band and Chorus adheres to the original orchestration. The choral parts are included in the conductor's score as a reference, but are not part of the download or printed version. The choral parts are available for purchase from Stainer & Bell Ltd, London, England (www.stainer.co.uk).

About the Composer



Ralph Vaughan Williams is arguably the greatest composer Britain has seen since the days of Henry Purcell. In a long and extensive career, he composed music notable for its power, nobility and expressiveness, representing, perhaps, the essence of 'Englishness'. From the RVW Society website, Vaughan Williams was born on the 12th October, 1872 in the Cotswold village of Down Ampney. He was educated at Charterhouse School, then Trinity College, Cambridge. Later he was a pupil of Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music, after which he studied with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris. At the turn of the century he was among the very first to travel into the countryside to collect folk-songs and carols from singers, notating them for future generations to enjoy. As musical editor of *The English Hymnal* he composed several hymns that are now world-wide favourites (*For all the Saints, Come down O love Divine*). Later he also helped to edit *The Oxford Book of Carols*, with similar success. Before the war he had met and sustained a long and deep friendship with the composer

Gustav Holst. Vaughan Williams volunteered to serve in the Field Ambulance Service in Flanders for the 1914-1918 war, during which he was deeply affected by the carnage and the loss of close friends, such as composer George Butterworth.

For many years Vaughan Williams conducted and led the Leith Hill Music Festival, conducting Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* on a regular basis. He also became professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London. In his lifetime, Vaughan Williams eschewed all honours with the exception of the Order of Merit, which was conferred upon him in 1938. He died on the 26th August 1958; his ashes are interred in Westminster Abbey, near those of Purcell. In a long and productive life, music flowed from his creative pen in profusion. Hardly a musical genre was untouched or failed to be enriched by his work, which included nine symphonies, five operas, film music, ballet and stage music, several song cycles, church music and works for chorus and orchestra.

Band directors know Ralph Vaughan Williams especially for his original compositions for band, "*English Folk Song Suite*", "*Toccata Marziale*", and "*Flourish for Wind Band*". There is a very moving documentary of his life and works presented by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society: <http://rvwsociety.com/biography.html>.

About the Arranger



Paul Noble is a native Virginian and has spent much of his life in Virginia. A 32nd great-grandson of Alfred the Great, King of England from 871-899 A.D., his affinity for the Cotswolds, Gloucestershire, Winchester, Cheltenham, and the people from that part of England created an immediate bond between him and English composer Philip Lane. Upon hearing one of Philip Lane's orchestra compositions, Noble's passion for arranging music for the Concert/Wind Band took over and has been a most fulfilling endeavor in his "semi"-retirement years. His focus has been on the compositions in the style of British Light Music for its melody, orchestration, brevity, and audience appeal: William Walton, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, John Rutter, Philip Lane, Matthew Curtis, Gordon Jacob, Alun Hoddinott, William Blezard, and others. He is grateful to be named by Oxford University Press as "Licensed Edition Publishing Partner", and named Associate Member of the American Bandmasters Association.

With degrees from Shenandoah Conservatory of Music, Indiana University, The Catholic University of America, and with additional graduate studies at the Universities of Michigan and Virginia, he has taught music and conducted at every level from elementary through university and professional performing ensembles. He created the All-Student Groups, U. S. A., selected by audition from high schools and college students from throughout the U. S., to perform summer concert tours of Europe. Together with his wife, Mitzi, they formed Educational Tour Consultants, Inc. to plan and conduct groups tours and music festivals around the world. Domestically, they produced the music festivals for Six Flags Amusement Parks, and with this developed adjudication forms and standards which have had a lasting impact on music education and festival standards in America.

Dr. Noble was awarded honorary life membership in both Phi Mu Alpha and Kappa Kappa Psi fraternities, and is the recipient of the Shenandoah University Distinguished Alumni Award for Lifetime Achievement. He is the founder of the on-line publishing business, Bandmusicpdf.net, where over 250 of his arrangements are available for bands around the world.