1 The composer and society: family, politics, nation

JULIAN ONDERDONK

Assessing the social, political and religious views of a composer like Vaughan Williams is no easy task. He was a philosophically complex artist whose outspoken dedication to society and to the needs of musical amateurs coexisted with an intense privacy about the sources of his musical inspiration and a metaphysical belief in music as a spiritual force often far removed from worldly issues or concerns. A political radical and acknowledged atheist from early years, he cooperated with the most powerful political and cultural institutions of the day, including the monarchy and the Established Church. Further complicating the picture is the fact that these apparent contradictions have been flattened out and simplified at the hands of a 'nationalist' reception and historiography whose one-sided image of the composer has promoted conflicting interpretations of his work and influence. On the one hand, he has been hailed as a kind of populist hero whose determination to establish a national school of music, founded on the firmly democratic principles of folksong and musical amateurism, led to the establishment of a genuinely English compositional style that liberated native composers from foreign domination. On the other, he has been attacked as a cosy 'establishment' figure whose parochial focus on folksong and early English music resulted in the enshrinement of a genteel and reactionary pastoral musical idiom that exercised a generally harmful influence on British musicians who followed him.[1] So wide is the gulf separating the two images, and so acrimonious the debate between the two 'camps' forwarding them, that it is scarcely surprising that a coherent picture of his political beliefs and social assumptions has yet to emerge.

It helps that recent scholarship has begun to straighten out the tangled strands of the reception history. This work has shown that the competing images of the composer outlined above hinge on ideological attitudes towards nationalism and Vaughan Williams's associations with it. In this analysis, the

My thanks to Alain Frogley, Oliver Neighbour, Abe McCarmy, Nathaniel Lew, Peter Mondelli and Jeffrey Osgood for their generous assistance with this essay. Special thanks to Hugh Cobbe, whose monumental *Letters* have greatly expanded our understanding of Vaughan Williams's political views; and to Stephen Banfield who many years ago unknowingly inspired the direction of the research presented here.

composer's iconic identification with 'Englishness' was less of his own creation than socially constructed – the product of an unprecedented cultural chauvinism that promoted an intense focus on the 'national' features of his style while generally ignoring his cosmopolitan grounding in continental music, including his obvious links to twentieth-century modernism.[2] This was a development of the 1920s and 1930s, when the cataclysm and aftermath of World War I, abruptly awakening Britain to the reality of its decline on the global stage, prompted the wistful embrace of the nation's pre-industrial past. While the resulting focus on Vaughan Williams contributed to the enormous acclaim he enjoyed from the 1920s to the 1950s, the backlash against nationalism after World War II, compounded by a newly triumphant avant-garde musical aesthetics, ensured the lasting decline of his critical reputation among musicologists and cultural taste-makers from the mid-1950s on. Such judgements made little headway among non-specialists and amateur enthusiasts, however, whose admiration for the composer continues even today to rely on the attitudes and arguments of his mid-century peak. The result is the deadlock between popular and critical opinion characteristic of the 'pro' and 'contra' groups described above – ample proof, if any were needed, of nationalism's continuing ability to polarize public debate.

Recently, scholars have sought a way around the problem by shifting attention away from Vaughan Williams's nationalist legacy to his cosmopolitan interests and eclectic influences. This corrective approach is richly merited and has already uncovered important aspects of his work that have been too long obscured.[3] Yet there is a danger that this redirection can go too far to the opposite extreme. Clearly, Vaughan Williams was not the narrow nationalist claimed by advocates and detractors alike, but neither was he the rootless internationalist valorized by twentieth-century theories of modernist art. This is a man who entitled his most important book of essays *National Music* and who declared: 'I believe that all that is of value in our spiritual and cultural life springs from our own soil'.[4] Even allowing for the possibility that popular acclaim prompted him to exaggerate his English influences and downplay his continental ones, his lifelong devotion to England's musical heritage as composer, conductor and teacher cannot be disputed. He may well have been co-opted by the chauvinistic mood of the interwar years, with the consequences traced above, but we must not lose sight of the fact that he himself helped determine the framework by which that co-option took place.

For Vaughan Williams's embrace of 'Englishness' dates to the two decades *before* World War I, when the intense focus on the national past that later reached its climax in the culture of the interwar years actually began. From the late 1870s, a focus on the 'eternal' values of the English countryside and a vogue for the English past, notably the Tudor and

Elizabethan periods, became an increasingly dominant strain in the national culture. Rural preservation societies, designed to protect commons, footpaths and historical buildings, emerged around this time, while agrarian communes and farming cooperatives joined with the rise of the wild 'English' garden, 'alternative' rural schools and planned 'Garden City' suburbs in extending these ideas to the population at large. The Arts and Crafts movement, with its embrace of pre-industrial processes, flourished in this period, while the dominant theme among many writers and artists became that of the countryside.[5] Here were the true beginnings of the cultural shift in the national image described above, one which, in a few short decades, had replaced the mid-Victorian celebration of Britain as 'the workshop of the world' with its polar opposite. That Vaughan Williams was caught up in this cultural shift is suggested by his youthful enthusiasm for Elizabethan and Jacobean poets – his first settings of Herrick date from 1895, those of Shakespeare possibly from 1890 – as well as his early efforts at musical landscape painting – *Happy Day at Gunby* (1892), *Reminiscences of a Walk at Frankham* (1894) – and his interest in native folksong. He discovered Stainer and Bramley's *Christmas Carols New and Old* (1871) in the late 1880s, began arranging folksongs in the 1890s, and started the lecturing that would lead directly to his first efforts at collecting folksongs 'in the field' in December 1903. His engagement with early English music, likewise, quickened around this time with commissions to edit Purcell's *Welcome Songs* (1905/1910) and *The English Hymnal* (1906). The latter, in particular, was a labour of love that took up two years of creative work and brought him into contact with Tudor and Jacobean sources that remained a source of inspiration to the end of his life.

The pre-war origins of this nationalism, both in Vaughan Williams's case and in that of English culture generally, are significant, for failure to place it in its correct historical context explains some of the errors of interpretation that surround discussions of his politics and beliefs. These are obvious with respect to the egregiously ahistorical judgements of modernist writers who, following a left-wing tendency traceable to T. W. Adorno, tend to lump all manifestations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalism together with that which led to Hitler.[6] They also colour the attitudes of those supporters of Vaughan Williams who view his democratic embrace of folksong and musical amateurism, somewhat sweepingly, as a latter-day manifestation of the political liberalism of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century nationalist movements, or as an extension of the 'traditional English freedoms' handed down from the Glorious Revolution of 1688 if not the Magna Carta of 1215.[7] (A qualified defence of individual rights remained central to his political philosophy,

as we shall see, but its relationship to these historical developments is far more complex than simple causal assertions imply.) More recent work by revisionist historians, particularly those of the folk revival of the turn of the twentieth century, has offered an improved specificity in the study of the composer's nationalism, firstly, by placing it in its proper pre-war location, and secondly, by rooting it firmly in the ruralist movement described above.[8] But even as this scholarship has opened up new avenues of interpretation, its narrow reliance on Marxist models of class analysis has promoted oversimplification and distortion. Any understanding of the complexities and nuance surrounding Vaughan Williams's nationalist activities must therefore take this scholarship as its starting point while also seeking ways to temper and qualify it.

What this revisionist scholarship suggests is that pre-1914 'Englishness' was centrally promoted by a newly forming social and cultural elite that sought appeals to patriotism as a means to meet perceived threats to the national interest. The emergence from the 1870s of Germany and the United States as military and trade rivals, the administrative challenges of maintaining an increasingly far-flung empire, and the sharpening of class antagonisms at home initiated a series of social and cultural negotiations designed to improve inter-class cooperation and understanding and ultimately increase national 'efficiency.' The first sign of this was a growing *rapprochement* in this period between the industrial bourgeoisie, traditionally identified with cities and the factory system as well as with religious Nonconformity, and the landed aristocracy, long linked to agriculture and the Established Church. These two classes had been locked in a 'culture war' since the eighteenth century, if not earlier, but tensions now eased as both groups recognized the necessity of uniting in the face of a common threat. Middle-class radicals and liberals slowed their attack on the 'unearned' income of aristocratic privilege and softened their demands for social and economic reform, while the landed classes, for their part, relaxed their criteria for aristocratic membership and overcame their traditional hostility to business and 'trade'. The result was 'a revitalized leadership which would effectively combine the "mechanical" qualities of [middle-class] utilitarianism and political economy with those of the more "organic" traditions of the aristocracy'.[9] The shift in the national self-image – from the urban and industrialized representations of the 1840s and1850s to the firmly rural and neo-Tudor projections of 1900 – was only the outward sign of these developments.

This project of social consolidation and national solidarity necessarily encompassed the lower orders as well, but here accommodation was harder to effect, as the working classes had entered into a period of renewed political activism. In this reading, the embrace of the pre-

industrial past was an essentially psychological and defensive, if largely unconscious, reaction on the part of the new elite to the rise of trade unions and labour agitation – 'disruptive' developments unmistakably associated with contemporary urban life. 'Englishness', by contrast, was safely rural: its appealing depiction of a communal and essentially classless society in which self-interest and class difference are subsumed in the pursuit of the common good seemed to offer a means to foster a sense of shared identity and solidarity. But because this communitarian message was a myth, neither faithful to the realities of Tudor or contemporaneous rural life nor a truly realistic alternative in a highly industrialized and stratified society, it represented instead a form of covert cultural politics, one in which the egalitarian pretence of 'national unity' actually served to maintain the very class divide it claimed to bridge.

Vaughan Williams's susceptibility to this analysis can readily be imagined, for his family background resembles aspects of the class convergence described above. He was descended on his mother's side from Wedgwoods, celebrated potters and middle-class industrialists from the Midlands, and on his father's side from a long line of churchmen and lawyers (his grandfather was knighted for his service as Judge of Common Pleas).[10] Wedgwoods had long been involved in radical causes – they joined Wilberforce's anti-slavery movement and fought for electoral reform; some even supported the French Revolution – while Vaughan Williamses, though not themselves drawn from the aristocracy or gentry, had close connections to the elite through their Oxbridge educations and occupations in the church and the law. Eventually, even Wedgwoods felt the pull of the aristocratic lifestyle, as financial success prompted various family members to marry into the gentry, buy landed estates, reject Nonconformity for the Established Church, and in some cases join the Conservative Party.[11] By 1868, when Ralph Vaughan Williams's parents married, his immediate family had distanced itself completely from the pottery and relied on outside investments – their money was in railways – to generate wealth.[12] It was these investments, no doubt supplemented by rents from their Surrey estate, Leith Hill Place, that paid for the composer's education at Charterhouse, Cambridge and the Royal College of Music, and that provided the private income which relieved him of the necessity of regular salaried work.[13]

Further, Vaughan Williams was outspoken in his frequent calls for inter-class cooperation and national cohesion. 'Is not folk-song the bond of union where all our musical tastes can meet?' he wrote. 'One day, perhaps, we shall find an ideal music which will be neither popular nor classical, highbrow or lowbrow, but an art in which all can take part'.[14] Such appeals reflected the agenda of the nationalist composer seeking to

win popular support for English music; but they also reflected assumptions about the formation and implementation of cultural policy that ultimately derived from a privileged family background. For what stands out about Vaughan Williams's many pronouncements is their insistently *public* tone, the assertion that causes he supported were of 'national importance' or of significant cultural concern. This public orientation, in turn, was a reflection of the access to the foremost political and cultural institutions of the day that he enjoyed as a consequence of his social standing. The fiery (and numerous) letters to the editor, the high-profile committee work, the frequent communications with government officials and civil servants – all bespeak a familiarity with the workings of the 'establishment' and a readiness to use its power for social and cultural causes he believed in. Doubtless, his musical eminence greatly aided him in this work: his long association with the prestigious Royal College of Music and his later compositional acclaim clearly opened many doors and naturally encouraged his involvement.[15] But the impulse to address social issues was there from the first, as his earliest essays demonstrate, and there is no getting around the fact that social and family connections were crucial in helping him impact the highest levels of policy-making. His work on behalf of the Home Office Committee for the Release of Interned Alien Musicians during World War II was plainly expedited by personal access to Sir Cyril Asquith, chair of the Advisory Committee on Aliens.[16] Similarly, his successful campaign to have Cecil Sharp appointed a Government Inspector of Schools in 1919 – an important step in their crusade to prioritize anonymous and thus 'communal' folksong in the school curriculum – was a consequence of the private appeal he made to H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education and, not coincidentally, his brother-in-law.[17]

Finally, involvement in public life prompted Vaughan Williams at times to idealize the nation's pre-industrial heritage in ways that distorted the historical and contemporary reality of English working-class life. He located the 'folk' among unlettered peoples whose 'primitive consciousness' was the product of their isolation from urban life and culture. 'True' folksongs, as noted above, were 'anonymous' and 'communal' and were vastly superior to music hall songs, parlour ballads and other 'composed' and 'commercial' popular musics that he dismissed as 'vulgar' and 'banal'.[18] Such views betrayed deep-seated prejudices and did not fully resemble the singers' own practices and preferences, which Vaughan Williams occasionally ignored in his collecting work. His notebooks, indeed, reveal a sometimes blatant disregard for what he found in the field – urban and commercial songs, a high incidence of tonal (as opposed to modal) tunes, idiosyncratic departures from standard versions of well-known tunes – in the effort to

paint a picture of a tightly knit, essentially 'homogeneous' national community.[19] A similar idealization informed a tendency to sanitize Tudor life, a world (as he described it) in which composers, in the 'spirit of gay and careless adventure', ignored continental developments, and where class divisions between aristocrat and labourer seemed hardly to exist in the shared enjoyment of a common culture.[20]

Such distortions would seem to place Vaughan Williams squarely in the trajectory of 'Englishness' that the revisionists trace. Yet it is important to recognize that his actions and opinions, even his family history, do not quite fit the model, and that the picture is considerably more complicated than this narrative suggests. Close examination of his collecting work, for example, shows that his misrepresentations of traditional singing culture were less extensive than those of many colleagues, including Cecil Sharp, and were more than offset by a genuine appreciation of his singers' preferences and personal contributions, even where these contradicted folksong 'theory'. He may at times have idealized the culture in ways described above, but in most other instances he recognized the currency of urban popular musics in singers' repertories, openly acknowledged any verbal or musical literacy among them, and actually drew attention to their creative departures from well-known tunes.[21] By the same token, the questionable assertions of his writings on Tudor music find frequent contradiction in the Tudor-inspired works, whose historical re-creations of the era are surprisingly realistic, especially compared to the self-serving 'Merrie Englandism' of his contemporaries.[22] Indeed, by all accounts, Vaughan Williams was fully aware of the dangers inherent in rural idealization. His essay on the Tudor period warned of the tendency for folk culture to be 'perverted by the sentimental rich', whose glib talk about 'bringing Life and Joy to the working classes' obscured the 'real nature' of that culture. And in the famous essay 'Who Wants the English Composer?' he actually pointed to urban popular musics like Salvation Army hymns, barrel-organ tunes and music hall songs as no less worthy than folksong to inspire young composers to express 'the whole life of the community'.[23]

For all its idealizing tendencies, in other words, Vaughan Williams's nationalist vision included room for the recognition of historical and contemporary realities. The sincerity of his stance, the proof that it was no mere populist 'pose', resides in what Bernard Shore called the composer's 'passionate support of the underdog' – his embrace of the marginalized and dispossessed.[24] This is evident from the subject matter of many works (Synge's tragic seafolk, Bunyan's persecuted Pilgrim, the urban unemployed depicted in the last movement of *A London Symphony*)[25] but also, and more crucially, from his everyday actions and deeds: the

https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139043243.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

support he habitually gave to individuals in need, and the ready sympathy and aid he extended to historically underprivileged groups like women, Gypsies and Jews.[26] Then there are his political views and voting record, which testify to his sympathy with progressive social activism. Vaughan Williams 'stood out' as a Radical at Charterhouse; at Cambridge, he read the Fabian tracts and admired the success of the trade union leaders John Burns and Ben Tillett, who led the landmark 1889 London dockworkers' strike, and, 'in opposition to the majority of undergraduates', he became a socialist. Thereafter, with one important exception, he voted 'either Radical or Labour' to the end of his life.[27] A vote for either was a vote for progressive taxation and for the increased role of the state in the redistribution of wealth. Following the landslide Liberal victory in the 1906 election, radical elements within that party helped push through an ambitious programme of social reform, including the introduction of old-age pensions (1908), the Trade Boards Act (1909) that enabled the creation of a minimum wage, and the National Insurance Act (1911), which provided insurance for both health and unemployment. After the war, the Liberal Party, compromised by its historical connections to free trade, faded, and was replaced by a Labour Party that was better equipped to represent working-class interests. While Labour's time in government during the interwar period was relatively brief, they were triumphantly voted into office after World War II, and in perhaps the most far-reaching peacetime parliament of the twentieth century ushered in the modern welfare state with the National Health Service Act (1946).[28]

This impressive record has not so much been ignored by Vaughan Williams's revisionist critics as rejected as insufficient. His socialism, in particular, has been accused of actually bolstering the power structure of which it was critical.[29] Insofar as the developments described above did not result in the dismantling of capitalism in Britain, the charge has some point. But such a conclusion is also misguided and one-sided, the product of a disappointed Marxism that fails to appreciate the signal advance in working and living conditions that early twentieth-century social democracy brought to society's poorest members. It also overlooks the fact that 'progressivism' – the term that probably best describes Vaughan Williams's political philosophy – was responsible for the vast increase in civil machinery and governmental oversight that was actively overturning the principles of laissez-faire economics during this period.[30] Throwing his support behind a more collectivist and centralizing state, Vaughan Williams expressed his belief in the power of direct government action to correct the worst abuses of industrial capitalism, redistribute income and extend civil rights and equality of opportunity to the poorest segments of society.

But then, protest against the factory system and its cruel treatment of the labouring classes had always been one of the main messages of the ruralist movement itself. Traceable to the radical utopianism of figures like John Ruskin and William Morris, the embrace of the rural constituted not so much a rejection of the urban and industrial present as a condemnation of its dehumanizing effects. The idealization of a 'classless' pre-industrial world, in particular, was a call to reform a society in which mass production and commercialism had come to dominate the forms of contemporary culture, foisting the ready-made products of the 'business interest' on society as a whole and ultimately dampening individual creativity and self-expression.[31] This, surely, is the real explanation for Vaughan Williams's preference for rural folksong (what he called 'music made *by* the people') over urban popular song ('music made *for* the people'), as well as for his admiration of the Elizabethans, who by producing 'their own art' did not have to 'pay others to make it for them'.[32] Not that such 'anti-modernism' reflected only a progressive outlook. For some, the attack on urban squalor and commercial taint expressed reactionary concerns about physical and moral 'degeneration', and fed eugenicist fears about racial decline and its effects on military preparedness.[33] But for those who believed that unemployment and destitution were the products, not of individual laziness or shiftlessness, but rather of the inevitable cyclical depressions of an unregulated free market economy, the ruralist movement reflected a deeply humanitarian impulse to stem the abuses of industrial capitalism through the mechanism of the state. In these terms, ruralism played a major role in effecting the transition from an outmoded Victorian liberalism to new, twentieth-century forms of governmental and economic centralization.

In this way, 'Englishness' could be culturally backward-looking and politically progressive at once. That this was so in Vaughan Williams's case is borne out by his family background, a closer examination of which reveals patterns of behaviour and thought – generally overlooked by the revisionists – that help to explain how the composer could have connections to the 'establishment' and still remain on the political left. For while it is true that Wedgwoods generally abandoned industry and converted to Anglicanism in the early nineteenth century, the great majority did not go over to the Tories but rather remained staunchly radical in their viewpoint. This was possible because, in moving away from industry, family members – including some of those who bought country estates – eschewed landed *values* and entered the professions instead. Wedgwood sons and daughters became civil servants, mid-level government officials, lawyers, writers, journalists and university professors – occupations that elevated their social status while also situating them *outside* the merger of land and industry and thus in a still-subordinate position from which to

criticize the elite above them. And criticize they did, especially as the professional class, released by the industrial revolution from its traditional dependency on the upper classes, had struck out on an independent course defending the principles of meritocracy and equality of opportunity against all forms of inherited property and privilege. These principles – the inevitable outgrowth of the professional focus on trained expertise and selection by intellectual ability – naturally placed professionals in opposition to land. But they also placed them at odds with industry, which was rapidly abandoning its entrepreneurial (and meritocratic) ideals in favour of the values of aristocratic preferment and entitlement that it had once opposed. Indeed, the real danger of the alliance of land and industry, from the professional viewpoint, was that it had created a 'new plutocracy' of enormous power and scope whose unfair political and economic advantage threatened to undermine the very basis of civil society. Only government action could curb this power, and here professionals, with their statistical training and managerial expertise, found their natural place. It was they who carried out the research, produced the reports and effectively implemented the progressive tax, the new commerce laws (including the repeal of free trade in 1931), and the long expansion of social services that culminated in the National Health Service. The natural champions and instinctive administrators of an expanding civic apparatus, professionals were in fact the chief architects of the centralized state.[34]

Thus even as they changed occupations and improved their social standing, Wedgwoods did not abandon their old ideals. If anything, their embrace of professional values intensified their moral opposition to entrenched privilege and gave them the statistical and analytical tools to prosecute the 'culture wars' more effectively than ever. Even conversion to Anglicanism signalled no real loss of radicalism since Wedgwoods embraced Evangelicalism, a socially committed (if narrowly tolerated) branch of the Established Church whose focus on humanitarian issues owed something to the traditions and old resentments of Nonconformity.[35] It was precisely this combination of religious and professional zeal, in fact, that put Wedgwoods at the very centre of an influential 'pressure group' that the historian Noel Annan famously dubbed the 'intellectual aristocracy'.[36] This was an extensively intermarrying cousinhood of high-minded, Evangelical and professional middle-class families, including the Wilberforces, Darwins, Wedgwoods, Butlers, Keyneses, Stephens and Haldanes, who became over the course of the nineteenth century the principal theorists and apologists of an expanding centralized state. Through their accomplishments in economics, medicine and the natural and social sciences, as well as their influential work at the universities and in civil administration, this 'aristocracy of exceptional talent' brought the professional ideals of

meritocracy and public service into the mainstream of public opinion and policy.[37] Focusing their formidable analytical skills on the problems of society and communicating their views to the public by means of a direct literary style, they made the case for the State as the engine of humanitarian and democratic reform and the best means to ensure the common good. They valued hard work and intellectual endeavour, not merely because they felt duty-bound to account for the talents granted them by Providence, but also because freedom of thought and of conscience were necessary preconditions for freedom of contract and equality of opportunity. Personal duty and duty to society were thus twin pillars of a common impulse, and they came to view themselves as the disinterested arbiters of civility and common decency, criticizing the assumptions of the 'irresponsible' ruling class above them and establishing the principle of community over selfish class interest as a means to improve society as a whole.

Here is the true source of Vaughan Williams's social confidence and public-mindedness. His calls for social cooperation and national solidarity reflected his family's connections, not to a newly merging industrial and landed elite, but rather to an influential group of professional families independent of that elite who, for a variety of religious and historical reasons, saw themselves as stewards of the national culture. That Vaughan Williams identified with this Wedgwood inheritance is suggested by brief comments and anecdotes in letters and essays,[38] but also, and more importantly, by fundamental aspects of his life and personality. Upholding family traditions of independence, he refused a knighthood and the Mastership of the King's Music, and accepted the Order of Merit only on the grounds that it involved no 'obligations to anyone in authority'.[39] He placed high value on scholarship and learning, following the great Wedgwood and Darwin accomplishments in philology, moral philosophy and the natural sciences with his more modest but still important editorial work with hymn tunes and folksongs. (Proud of the Doctor of Music degree he earned from Cambridge in 1901, he preferred the academic title of 'Dr' to all others.)[40] An indifference to outward 'appearances' and the mindless social conventions of Victorian respectability, typical of a group that sought the general reform of society, was also characteristic of a man whose carelessness about his clothes, his handwriting and the shabby state of his home is the stuff of legend. He further conformed to type by marrying Adeline Fisher, a product of Oxbridge academics and high-ranking civil servants who shared connections with many of the same intellectual families as her husband.[41] Endogamy, as Annan points out, was a natural result of shared backgrounds and values, and was also an effective strategy for a group that relied on concerted action to influence public affairs.

Not that every feature of Vaughan Williams's personality fitted this profile. His ebullient high spirits and mischievous wit contrasted with the earnest humourlessness of many in the group, and he roundly rejected the Evangelicalism that surrounded him as a youth at Leith Hill Place, turning from its grey austerity and philistinism to embrace the High Church aestheticism of his dead father instead.[42] Nor as a musician did his work fit the typical professional pattern of applying expertise in law or civil administration to the creation of statistical reports and policy papers. In his insistence on music as a *public* art form, however, capable of exerting a positive moral influence on society, he clearly exhibited the assumptions of his class. Chiefly, this took the form of cultivating what he called a 'sense of musical citizenship': working with amateur musicians as composer, conductor and competition adjudicator, lecturing and writing essays aimed at non-specialized audiences, teaching, and providing financial and administrative assistance to numerous local musical organizations.[43] It also found expression in his outspoken advocacy for public arts funding, a practical endorsement of governmental centralization that he supported as early as 1902 and that culminated in his high-profile committee work, in the 1930s and 1940s, on the British Council, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) and its successor, the Arts Council.[44] His engagement at nearly every level of the nation's cultural life is striking, as are the values he characteristically promoted in this work: the emphasis on art as a spiritual necessity, the frequent appeal to democratic precept and moral argument, and above all the commitment to uphold standards of excellence for the benefit of all. 'Has it ever occurred to [the BBC governors] that they have a moral responsibility to *make* the best music popular?' he wrote in response to proposed cuts to the high-toned Third Programme in 1957.[45] As often with public statements by members of his class, the rebuke formed part of a larger campaign of letter-writing and face-to-face meetings with BBC officials organized by a group of eminent intellectual figures seeking to influence matters affecting 'the interests of the . . . nation as a whole'.[46]

Paternalistic assumptions are inescapable here, and serve as a reminder that even progressivism contained the seeds of a paradoxical conservatism and authoritarianism. For a group whose principled defence of democracy and promotion of the common good had elevated it to a position of cultural authority, this was perhaps inevitable. Thus the populism animating Vaughan Williams's embrace of folksong, that long-abused expression of the lower classes of society, also prompted him to condemn as 'positively harmful' the mass-produced Victorian parlour songs and hymn tunes that an 'undiscriminating' populace had taken to its heart.[47] It also informed a patronizing defence of elite culture, as in the fight over the

Third Programme cited above, or on those occasions when he expressed particular concern that children be exposed to 'good music' as a means to safeguard their 'spiritual health'.[48] And yet, as we saw earlier, he did not wholly reject urban popular musics, granting a limited place to them as source material for composers, even drawing on them himself in specific compositions. When organizing concerts in his home town of Dorking during World War II, he deliberately programmed the classics to educate the troops while still allowing them their popular favourites.[49] Nor did he always support the claims of high art. When in 1942 John Maynard Keynes, as CEMA chairman, sought to nurture professional performing ensembles at the expense of amateur groups, Vaughan Williams shrewdly checked him in committee meetings and secured amateur funding for the near future.[50]

This flexible and ultimately non-dogmatic approach to questions of popular versus elite culture is significant and gives the lie to claims that Vaughan Williams's 'public' stature necessarily led him to impose his views on others. A sense of cultural stewardship may indeed have prompted strong views and a 'crusading' activism, but a counterbalancing defence of civil liberties and respect for independence of thought – values also inherited from his family – guaranteed an open mind towards alternative viewpoints and an allowance for 'exceptions'. How else are we to explain the curious denials of omniscience and authority that creep into his highly opinionated essays,[51] or his remarkable defence of Alan Bush's and Michael Tippett's pacifism during World War II even though he himself was a firm believer in the war effort? (He protested against the BBC's 'victimisation of private opinion' in banning Bush's music by returning a BBC commission for one of his own works, while his testimony at Tippett's tribunal declared that he thought the younger composer's 'pacifist views entirely wrong, but I respect him very much for holding them so firmly'.)[52] That he should insist on these during wartime, when crisis conditions encouraged a culture of obedience to the state, suggests that the principle of individual freedom was even more important to him than the claims of 'nation'. Indeed, for all his faith in government centralization as the vehicle of social cooperation, he was quick to condemn the waste and inefficiency often attending bureaucracy and warned of the dehumanizing potential of a wholly regulated world. When, in an effort to streamline CEMA's administration of amateur groups, Keynes replaced a proven system of itinerant supervisors or 'music travellers' with impersonal, one-size-fits-all regional offices and officers, Vaughan Williams delivered a policy paper criticizing this substitution of real human contact with telephones and typewriters.[53] Looking back on the headlong expansion of centralized planning during the 1945–51 Attlee government, he asserted that socialism had overreached itself and created an 'unholy mess'.[54]

The contradictions and inconsistencies are striking, and yet were the logical consequence of a political philosophy that drew on eighteenth-century radical (i.e. individualist) arguments even as it embraced nineteenth- and twentieth-century notions of state collectivism as the best means to protect and extend individual rights. As he put it in a 1952 letter to Rutland Boughton: 'The truth is, I think, that when I am with Conservatives I become socialistic and when I am with Socialists I become a true blue Tory'.[55] The resulting tension between the claims of the individual and the group – between the private and the public, the local and the national, even the national and the international – meant that he could easily tip one way or another depending on the specifics of the case. Thus he sided with Hungarian dissidents who fought against Stalinist oppression in 1956 but also dismissed the protests of Ulster Protestants who felt threatened by Irish Home Rule in 1914. He condemned the Nazi suppression of free speech but also denounced as 'ruffians' independent-minded Greeks who called for the removal of allied British troops during World War II. Sometimes he took opposing positions on a single issue, as when he censured the government for fomenting 'class war' by recruiting volunteers to break the 1926 General Strike even as he could not 'deny the right' of any citizen to join up for this work.[56] What was nevertheless consistent in these instances was the effort, wholly characteristic, to work towards the 'common good': to examine carefully and dispassionately the rights and needs of the players involved (as well as any relevant practical or long-range strategic factors) in order to arrive at a solution that was fair to all. Where a situation did not admit of a clear solution, mutual cooperation and compromise – the give and take between competing interests negotiating in good faith – was essential. His self-memorandum on the General Strike strongly criticized both the trade unions and the government for 'refusing to budge' during negotiations, and he had even harsher words for the 'selfish [and] dishonest' behaviour of the Soviets, who craftily obstructed the drafting of the new United Nations charter after World War II.[57] Compromise and negotiation 'in good faith', indeed, drove his passionate embrace of Federal Union in the 1940s, and sustained his lifelong faith in graduated parliamentary reform, rather than revolution, as the only viable means to social change.[58] It is also what prompted him, in the 1945 election cited earlier, to reverse his usual practice and cast his lone vote for the Tories.[59] The 'mean trick' of the Labour party in 'forcing an election' lay in its abandonment of Churchill's government coalition for narrowly partisan goals directly after the peace was won, a move that, in Vaughan Williams's eyes, signalled Labour's rejection of the spirit of national unity and inter-class cooperation that the war had called forth.

Does this make Vaughan Williams, in the final analysis, a conservative? In a recent book on British music and modernism, Matthew Riley discusses the

limitations of political progressives like Vaughan Williams, suggesting that their 'liberal humanism' had become outmoded in a twentieth century characterized by 'mass democracy' and a 'factional and polarized politics conducted by megaphone'.[60] There is some truth to the assertion, insofar as Victorian notions of 'character', 'self-improvement' and 'altruism' remained central to the vocabulary and social outlook of British progressives long after they had been jettisoned by other left-leaning intellectuals, and that these values met with increasing indifference and hostility from many different quarters of society as the century wore on.[61] (The Third Programme campaign of 1957, to give but one example, failed utterly to achieve its aim.) It is further true that some progressives, offended by the new class politics and despairing of an 'uneducable' working class distracted by consumerism and media manipulation, moved politically towards the right.[62] But this was hardly the case with all progressives, many of whom, like Vaughan Williams, continued to seek ways to extend the professional ideals of meritocracy and equality of opportunity to society's poorest members. Their achievement was to construct a humane state apparatus that redistributed wealth and empowered the underprivileged while still managing to safeguard individual rights, protect private property and promote entrepreneurial activity. Indeed, it was probably the currency of those same 'outmoded' liberal humanist values that ensured that mass democracy in twentieth-century Britain, when it came, preserved the civil liberties that helped her resist the plunge into fascism and totalitarianism that consumed so much of continental Europe.

All of which brings us full circle to Vaughan Williams's music and its reception. Modernist commentators like Riley make an important point by linking the paternalism that undoubtedly did inform the progressive agenda with the 'conservative' and 'accessible' idiom of much twentieth-century British music. Clearly, a sense of social responsibility and cultural leadership prompted composers like Vaughan Williams to take a utilitarian and 'didactic' approach to music that led them, in turn, to reject the most extreme forms of modernist technique in their own creative work. By focusing only on the shortcomings of progressivism, however – its uneasy relations with mass culture rather than its long-range social and political achievements – these commentators slip all too easily into the familiar pattern of modernist criticism that equates artistic quality only with forms of political and stylistic disaffection. Such a viewpoint not only misses the irony surrounding modernism's own elitist aesthetic – one far more contemptuous of the masses than progressivism's cautious populism, in fact – but also skirts the duty of the cultural historian to push past orthodox 'theory' to consider the legitimacy of alternative responses to the modern world.[63] Doing so

ourselves, we can recognize in Vaughan Williams's music an independent voice poised between modernism and conservatism, innovation and tradition, that has its roots in his personal history and his family's heritage of commitment to society and nation.

Notes

1 For only two examples of the 'populist' tradition, see Sidney Finkelstein, *Composer and Nation: The Folk Heritage in Music*, 2nd edn (New York: International, 1989), 228–37; and Frank Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), 230–45. For detractors, see Donald Mitchell, 'Vaughan Williams', in Christopher Palmer and Mervyn Cooke (eds.), *Cradles of the New: Writings on Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 87–97; and Robert Stradling and Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance 1860–1940: Construction and Deconstruction* (1st edn, London: Routledge, 1993), 60–7, 135–79.

2 Alain Frogley, 'Constructing Englishness in Music: National Character and the Reception of Ralph Vaughan Williams', in *VWS*, 1–22.

3 Alain Frogley, *Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony* (Oxford University Press, 2001); Walter Aaron Clark, 'Vaughan Williams and the "Night Side of Nature": Octatonicism in *Riders to the Sea*', in *VWE*, 55–71. See also the essays on Vaughan Williams in the 'British Modernism' issue of *MQ* 91/1–2 (Spring/Summer 2008).

4 *NM*, 155.

5 Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850–1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Jan Marsh, *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in England, from 1880 to 1914* (London: Quartet Books, 1982). Frank Trentmann, 'Civilization and Its Discontents: English Neo-Romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth-Century Western Culture', *Journal of Contemporary History* 29 (1994), 583–625, though focusing on the interwar years, traces the movement to the 1890s.

6 Otto Deri, *Exploring Twentieth-Century Music* (New York: Holt McDougal, 1968), 148–50, 166–8 and 440, is representative.

7 James Day, *Vaughan Williams* (1st edn, London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1961), 83; Wilfrid Mellers, *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion* (London: Pimlico, 1989), 118–41. Hubert Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1950), 53, roots British (and thus the composer's) 'instincts . . . toward liberality' even more indistinctly in the culture of 'Celt and Saxon, Norman and Dane and Roman, German, even Phoenician'.

8 Vic Gammon, 'Folk Song Collecting in Sussex and Surrey, 1843–1914', *History Workshop Journal* 10 (1980), 61–89; Dave Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'Folksong' 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985), 198–210; Alun Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England', in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880–1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 62–88; Alun Howkins, 'Greensleeves and the Idea of National Music', in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, 3 vols. (London: Routledge, 1989), vol. III, 89–98; Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), 1–119.

9 Brian Doyle, 'The Invention of English', in Colls and Dodd (ed.), *Englishness*, 89–115 at 90.

10 *UVWB*, 1, is incorrect in stating that Edward Vaughan Williams was the *first* Judge of Common Pleas. See N. G. Jones, 'Williams, Sir Edward Vaughan', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online, accessed 11 June 2012).

11 Barbara and Hansleigh Wedgwood, *The Wedgwood Circle: Four Generations of a Family and Their Friends* (London: Studio Vista, 1980), *passim*, but esp. 105–6, 114, 137 and 238.

12 *UVWB*, 6; Wedgwood and Wedgwood, *Wedgwood Circle*, 250.

13 The only weekly salaried position that Vaughan Williams ever held, that of organist and choirmaster at St Barnabas, South Lambeth, from 1895 to 1899, was not a full-time job. It is, however, important not to overstate the family's wealth. Vaughan Williams's own description – 'I was born with a very small silver spoon in my mouth' – seems generally accurate given that 'until I was about forty . . . I could not financially afford to devote my whole time to composition – from the age from about 20 to 30 I supplemented my income

by playing the organ (very badly) and teaching and lecturing' (*LRVW*, 318). In conversation with the author (October 1992), Ursula Vaughan Williams described her husband's private income as 'small'.

14 *NM*, 39.

15 On the RCM, see Stradling and Hughes, *English Musical Renaissance*. See also *LRVW*, 228–9, 369–70 and 457–8 for examples of Vaughan Williams pulling strings for favoured pupils, performers and colleagues.

16 *LRVW*, 303–4.

17 *UVWB*, 151. See also Gordon Cox, *A History of Music Education in England 1872–1928* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993), 146.

18 *NM*, 21, 38. See also *VWOM*, 191, 193.

19 Gammon, 'Folk Song Collecting', 61–89; Harker, *Fakesong*, 198–210; Boyes, *Imagined Village*, 41–62, while focusing on Sharp's collecting methods, implicates Vaughan Williams as well.

20 *VWOM*, 69. See also *ibid*., 47–50 and *NM*, 166–9.

21 See Julian Onderdonk in: 'Vaughan Williams's Folksong Transcriptions: A Case of Idealization?' in *VWS*, 118–38; 'Vaughan Williams and the Modes', *Folk Music Journal* 7/5 (1999), 609–26; and 'The Revised (1904) Version of the Folk Song Society's Hints to Collectors', *English Dance and Song* 62/3 (Autumn 2000), 21–5. See also Georgina Boyes's recent retraction of her previous views in '"An Individual Flowering": Ralph Vaughan Williams's Work in Folklore', in *RVW Society Journal* 46 (October 2009), 7–8.

22 Roger Savage, 'Alice Shortcake, Jenny Pluckpears, and the Stratford-upon-Avon Connections of Vaughan Williams's "Sir John in Love"', *ML* 89/1 (2007), 18–55 at 33–4.

23 *VWOM*, 50, 41–2. Vaughan Williams clearly also enjoyed music hall songs and performed them himself in private settings. See *UVWB*, 118 and 129; *LRVW*, 60.

24 Vaughan Williams Memorial Issue, *The Royal College of Music Magazine* 60/1 (February 1959), 35.

25 Alain Frogley, 'H. G. Wells and Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony*: Politics and Culture in Fin-de-Siècle England' in Chris Banks, Arthur Searle and Malcolm Turner (eds.), *Sundry Sorts of Music Books: Essays on the British Library Collection. Presented to O. W. Neighbour on His Seventieth Birthday* (London: The British Library, 1993), 299–308.

26 Jennifer Doctor, '"Working for Her Own Salvation": Vaughan Williams as Teacher of Elizabeth Maconchy, Grace Williams and Ina Boyle' in *VWIP*, 181–201, details the composer's generous treatment of female students throughout their careers. For his public statements defending Gypsies, see *VWOM*, 227–8; and Lavender M. Jones, 'The Song Seekers – Hereford', *English Dance and Song* 27/1–2 (December 1964–February 1965), 4–6, 38–40. His work on behalf of Jews as a member of the Dorking Committee for Refugees from Nazi Oppression is documented in *UVWB*, 224 and 229 and especially in Celia Newbery (ed.), *Vaughan Williams in Dorking: A Collection of Personal Reminiscences of the Composer Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, O.M.* (Dorking: private publication by the Local History Group of the Dorking & Leith Hill District Preservation Society, 1979), 14–15. For his personal generosity to individuals, drawn from all social classes and walks of life, see *ibid*. as well as the Vaughan Williams Memorial Issue, *RCM Magazine*, *passim*, especially the testimonies of Henry Steggles and J. Ellis Cook.

27 Quotations are from the composer's 1952 letter to Rutland Boughton in *LRVW*, 502–3. The references to Tillett and Burns come from a letter to Vaughan Williams written by G. M. Trevelyan, quoted in *UVWB*, 39. Paul Harrington, 'Holst and Vaughan Williams: Radical Pastoral' in Christopher Norris (ed.), *Music and the Politics of Culture* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989), 106–27, provides a useful overview of the composer's left-leaning politics. See also *KW*, 388, for his admiration for William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army and champion of the urban poor; and *LRVW*, 403 and 560, for his views on economic levelling and the progressive tax. The 'important exception', mentioned in the same letter to Boughton, came right after World War II when Vaughan Williams voted for the Tories in the 1945 national election because 'I was so disgusted by what I considered the mean tricks of the Labour party in forcing an election'. I will return to this episode below.

28 Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State* (London: Macmillan Press, 1973), *passim*.

29 Harker, *Fakesong*, 199; Stradling and Hughes, *English Musical Renaissance*, 77; Howkins, 'Discovery of Rural England', 75.

30 The term 'progressivism' is more often encountered in discussions of turn-of-the-century American political developments, though a short-lived Progressive party, allied to the Liberals, dominated the London County Council from 1889 to 1907. See Pat Thane, 'Labour and Local Politics: Radicalism, Democracy and Social Reform, 1880–1914' in

Eugenio Biagini and Alastair Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organized Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 244–70.

31 Marsh, *Back to the Land*, 8–17. See also Peter C. Gould, *Early Green Politics: Back to Nature, Back to the Land, and Socialism in Britain 1880–1900* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1988).

32 *VWOM*, 46–7 (emphases added).

33 Paul Rich, 'The Quest for Englishness', *History Today* 37 (June 1987), 24–30; Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought 1895–1914* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1968), 18–42; G. C. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right 1918–1939* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986), 57–62.

34 For the complex social and economic developments summarized in this paragraph, see Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989) and *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780–1880* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 252–70 and 428–37. Perkin asserts that the merger of land and industry commenced in the 1840s and 1850s and that it resulted principally from industry's growing acceptance of landed aristocratic values, including, crucially, this notion of entitlement and preferment. Both observations contradict the revisionists' arguments that the alliance originated in shared concerns about national defence and social control – specifically, the threat of an unruly working class – and that it arose only in the last third of the century. Other important accounts of the period, including Wiener's *English Culture* and F. M. L. Thompson's still-influential *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1963), support Perkin's analysis. See also Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850–1930* (Oxford University Press, 1991) for a rich portrait of the moral and intellectual life of the educated and professional classes in this period.

35 Wedgwood and Wedgwood, *Wedgwood Circle*, 194, 198–200, 221–2. For the Evangelical Anglicans, see Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 5 vols. (Princeton University Press, 1961), vol. III, 210–40.

36 Noel Annan, 'The Intellectual Aristocracy', in J. H. Plumb (ed.) *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G. M. Trevelyan* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1955), 241–87.

37 David Cannadine, *G. M. Trevelyan: A Life in History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1992), 8.

38 See especially *LRVW*, 90 and *NM*, 180, where Vaughan Williams credits Steven Massingberd, a Wedgwood cousin, for introducing him to Hubert Parry's dictum that 'a composer must write music as his musical conscience demands'. I am suggesting here that the composer's social outlook was formed principally by the Wedgwood, not the Vaughan Williams, side of his family. While the facts of his life appear strongly to support this – his father's early death, his upbringing among Wedgwood grandparents and aunts at Leith Hill Place, his close friendship with cousin Ralph ('Randolph') Wedgwood – more research is needed on the Vaughan Williams line to confirm or qualify this claim. Especially valuable would be a detailed understanding of the social and cultural negotiations involved in the union of the Vaughan Williamses, an 'old guard' professional and mainstream Anglican family, with the Wedgwoods, an Evangelical family only recently converted to professional life after a long involvement in 'trade'.

39 *LRVW*, 502. Significantly, he appeared at the OM investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace in the plainest court dress allowable. See *UVWB*, 207.

40 *UVWB*, 207.

41 Annan, 'Intellectual Aristocracy', 277. See also the family tree diagrams in Paul Levy, *Moore: G. E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles* (Oxford University Press, 1981), 22–5.

42 See Byron Adams, 'To Be A Pilgrim: A Meditation on Vaughan Williams and Religion', *RVW Society Journal* 33 (June 2005), 4–6 at 5; and Eric Seddon, 'Turn Up My Metaphors and Do Not Fail: Religious Meaning and Musical Iconography in Ralph Vaughan Williams's *The Pilgrim's Progress*', *RVW Society Journal* 38 (March 2007), 4–13 at 4–6. The turn to aestheticism was almost certainly motivated by personal and artistic, not conventionally religious, considerations. See *KW*, 39; *LRVW*, 201 and 489; and, for his impatience with Evangelicalism, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Issue, *RCM Magazine*, 9–12.

43 Quotation from *VWOM*, 41. Vaughan Williams's work with amateur groups is too wide-ranging to list here, though his long association with the Leith Hill Musical Festival, as chief conductor and president, must take pride of place. See Brian Tucker (ed.), *And Choirs Singing: An Account of the Leith Hill Musical Festival 1905–85* (Leith Hill Musical

Festival, 1985). 'Citizenship' extended to non-musical life as well, as Vaughan Williams served on regional education committees and preservation societies, joined the Rotary Club, and lent his name and time to many local causes. His service in World War I, as an ambulance orderly and later a gunner, is likewise exemplary, as are his exertions as an ordinary citizen during World War II, when he contributed to the war effort by collecting junk, filling sandbags, raising vegetables, storing barley and serving as an air raid warden. See *UVWB*, 229–30 and 395; and Newbery (ed.), *Vaughan Williams in Dorking*, 8, 11–12, 15–16.

44 *UVWB*, 63, 264; *KW*, 153.

45 *VWOM*, 120, with original emphasis restored. His broadside goes on to express alarm that the Third Programme might start broadcasting 'the kind of standardised entertainment which is already being mass-produced in every country', and concludes that 'we should defend to the last this service which maintains the highest standards of art and scholarship in our midst'.

46 Letter to *The Times*, 26 April 1957, 11, signed jointly by Vaughan Williams and fourteen others, quoted in Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 437–46 at 437. J. B. Priestley's thinly veiled portrait of Vaughan Williams as 'Dr. Mountgarret Camden', the craggy octogenarian composer and outraged scourge of frivolous government arts officials, in his satirical 1964 novel *Sir Michael and Sir George*, humorously captures many of the attitudes and methods of the intellectual aristocracy that I am discussing here. See Michael Gainsford, 'So Who Was the Model for Mountgarret Camden?', *RVW Society Journal* 4 (November 1995), 17.

47 Quotations from *VWOM*, 32–3.

48 Vaughan Williams used these very terms in his 1952 letter to the *Bournemouth Daily Echo* concerning the proposed disbanding of that city's orchestra. The letter continues: 'When [children] grow up, this spiritual exaltation will die away and fade into the light of common day unless we see to it that this splendid vision of the ultimate realities is preserved for them.' *LRVW*, 500–1.

49 Newbery (ed.), *Vaughan Williams in Dorking*, 17. Works incorporating urban popular music include the *London* and Sixth symphonies, as well as *The Poisoned Kiss* and the Intermezzo from the Partita for Double String Orchestra of 1948, a homage to the popular bandleader Henry Hall. The discrepancy between Vaughan Williams's stated opinions and his actual practice is characteristic. For further examples, see Frogley, 'Constructing Englishness', 18–19, and the details of his editorial work with Victorian hymn tunes discussed in Chapter 7 of this volume.

50 Richard Witts, *Artist Unknown: An Alternative History of the Arts Council* (London: Little, Brown and Co., 1998), 104–7. My thanks to Andrew Pinnock for bringing this study to my attention.

51 See, for example, *NM*, 17, 55, 62, 67, 83, 84, 91, 108, 162, 176, and 206.

52 *UVWB*, 239, 255. Characteristically, a copy of the letter defending Bush, addressed to the Director-General of the BBC, was also sent to *The Times*. See *LRVW*, 314.

53 F. M. Leventhal, '"The Best for the Most:" CEMA and State Sponsorship of the Arts in Wartime, 1939–1945', *Twentieth Century British History* 1/3 (1990), 289–317 at 303.

54 *LRVW*, 501–2.

55 *LRVW*, 502–3.

56 *UVWB*, 378–9; *LRVW*, 93–4, 151–2, 249, 332. Hugh Cobbe (*LRVW*, 94) is uncertain about Vaughan Williams's Irish opinions, but the composer's talk of enlisting 'on the side of law and order when the fight comes' is a clear reference to the unprecedented chaos of 1913–14, when Ireland was on the verge of civil war owing to Tory mischief in derailing the Liberals' Home Rule bill. See George Dangerfield's classic 1935 account in *The Strange Death of Liberal England: 1910–1914* (New York: Capricorn Books, reprint, 1961), 74–138.

57 *LRVW*, 151–2, 471.

58 *LRVW*, 282, 290, 300, 307 and 397 provide both a brief introduction to Federal Union, a political theory and movement that stressed the union of 'free nations' operating under a 'common government', and examples of Vaughan Williams's enthusiasm for it. The composer's embrace of gradualism is clear from his undergraduate interest (cited above) in the Fabians, who urged the establishment of socialism through existing institutional channels, and from a comment in his essay on Holst about 'the weak points in [William] Morris's teaching' (*NM*, 135). Morris believed in revolution as the only means to achieve social change, and in 1887 led an unsuccessful workers' uprising in Trafalgar Square. Vaughan Williams's essay speaks admiringly of Morris's 'poetic socialism' and 'ideal of . . . comradeship', but the criticism makes it clear that he disapproved of his insurrectionist methods. The self-memorandum on the

General Strike does admit the possibility of 'revolution by violence as a last resort' but dismisses it on the grounds that the insurgents' plan for the future would probably not result in a '*better* state of things'; that being so, the 'temporary anarchy' that would necessarily accompany the revolution's first stages could hardly be justified. See *LRVW*, 152.

59 See note 27 above.

60 Matthew Riley, 'Liberal Critics and Modern Music in the Post-Victorian Age', in Matthew Riley (ed.), *British Music and Modernism, 1895–1960* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), 13–30 at 15.

61 Collini, *Public Moralists*, *passim*, esp. 85–90, 369–70; Collini, *Absent Minds*, 116, 446.

62 See, for example, Cannadine, *G. M. Trevelyan*, 158–61.

63 For an eloquent plea to judge twentieth-century British musical modernism on its own terms, see Jenny Doctor, 'The Parataxis of "British Musical Modernism"', *MQ* 91/1–2 (Spring/Summer 2008), 89–115.