



## CANTATA EIN FESTE BURG

J.S Bach (Somewhere between 1723-1731)

### MOVEMENTS 1, 2, 8

#### RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Mvnt 1: 4/2, melismatic passages containing continuous quavers, ties, occasional dotted rhythms,
- Mvnt 2: 4/4, moto perpetuo semiquavers, mostly semibreves for bass soloist, decorative passagework
- Mvnt 8: 4/4, anacrusis opening, pauses at the end of each phrase, mainly crotchet rhythms with quaver passing notes.

#### MELODY AND TEXT SETTING:

- Uses Cantus firmus, respecting melodic shape, varying rhythms and adding embellishments in the different movements.
- Sequence
- Transposition
- Ornamentation
- Scalic passages
- Melisma
- Chorale is entirely syllabic

#### CONTEXT:

- One of the greatest Baroque composers, much music of sacred nature and produced for the churches where he held the position of director of music.
- Cantata: an integral part of the Lutheran liturgy and followed immediately after the reading of the Gospel. A vocal composition with instrumental accompaniment and made up of many movements.
- Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott: composed this chorale cantata, in which both text and music are based on Martin Luther's hymn of the same name, whilst in the position of Cantor of St Thomas Church in Leipzig. Uses a cantus firmus, which translates as 'fixed song', and is a pre-existing melody forming the basis of a polyphonic composition.
- Cantata consists of 8 movements.

#### HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- D major with modulations to closely related keys.
- Chords are diatonic and functional.
- Frequent perfect cadences to confirm the modulation to a new key.
- Rare example of imperfect cadence in bar 10 of the eighth movement.
- Long tonic pedal note for 4 bars at the end of the first movement.
- Suspensions (common of Baroque period).
- Secondary and dominant sevenths
- Mostly root position and first inversion chords.

#### POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Features of Baroque music
- Features of choral sacred music
- How does the music reflect the text?
- Textural relationships between voices and instruments.

#### SONORITY:

- 4 vocal soloists (soprano, alto, tenor and bass), 4 part SATB choir, three oboes, and violin 1 and 2.
- Unusually for a cantata, writes for 'Violoncello e cembalo' and 'Violone e organo'.
- Mvnt 1: SATB choir and tutti orchestra. Vocal lines are closely doubled by the orchestra.
- Mvnt 2: Aria is a duet for soprano and bass with string accompaniment and solo oboe.
- Mvnt 8: Chorale for 4 part SATB choir with orchestral accompaniment doubling the vocal lines.

#### TEXTURE:

- Mvnt 1: Contrapuntal, fugal entries, subject and countersubject, unembellished cantus firmus played in canon with oboes and 2nd continuo.
- Mvnt 2: melody-dominated homophony, contrapuntal soprano and bass, soprano and ob in heterophony.
- Mvnt 8: homophonic (typical of chorale)

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MOVEMENTS 1, 2, 8



Composer: J.S Bach

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## WIDER LISTENING PIECES

### ANTONIO VIVALDI- GLORIA

- A choral sacred work from the Baroque period.
- The string writing in the second movement is characterised by leaps and repetition.
- Orchestration includes trumpet, oboe, strings, and continuo as well as a choir.
- Melismas and suspensions frequent throughout.

### DIETRICH BUXTEHUDE- GELOBET SEIST DU, JESU CHRIST

- Baroque composer who composed different types of chorale settings. This is an example of a chorale fantasia. This music for organ is based on the pre-existing hymn tune with the same name.
- Melody is extended and elaborated in a polyphonic texture.
- Each phrase of the chorale is treated differently to reflect the meaning of the text.

### ETHEL SMYTH- MASS IN D: GLORIA

- Mass written in the Romantic period.
- Contrasting textures: orchestra often doubles the choir. Majestic orchestration in call and response with choir.
- Decorative passagework includes semiquavers, dotted rhythms and syncopation.
- SATB soloists interact in polyphonic texture.

### HANDEL- AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD

- A Baroque sacred work (However, an oratorio, not cantata). Movement IV of 'Messiah'.
- Soloists and Chorus scored for SATB.
- Diatonic chords. Mostly perfect cadences, with some plagal cadences.
- Instruments often double the voices in different octaves.
- Mostly syllabic singing.
- Major keys all the way through.
- Imitative entries and homophonic textures dominate.

### J. S BACH- ICH ELENDE R MENSCH

- A church cantata in Protestant Germany
- Harmony is functional.
- Perfect cadences anticipate modulations into new keys.
- Contrapuntal textures predominate
- Movement 1: imitative entries in SATB.
- Suspensions commonly used (especially in the Chorale).
- Seventh chords frequently appear. (especially diminished sevenths to intensify the meaning of the text).



## ON WENLOCK EDGE

Vaughan Williams (1909)



### POINTS OF INTEREST:

- English folk song
- The English choral tradition
- French Impressionist influence
- The Song Cycle
- 20th Century techniques

NO. 1 'ON WENLOCK EDGE', NO. 3 'IS MY TEAM PLOUGHING?', NO. 5 'BREDON HILL'

### STRUCTURE:

- No. 1: Five verses: AABBA/B, last verse combines both A and B elements.
- No. 3: Williams leaves out third and fourth verses of Housman's poem. Modified strophic form with three pairs of verses: 1. AB, 2. AB, 3. A1B1
- No. 5: Seven verse structure: Introduction-A-A-B-B1-C-D-A1-postlude.

### HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- Mostly consonant harmony.
- Suggestion of whole tone progression.
- Parallel chords- typical impressionist feature.
- False relation
- Harmony is modal in character.
- Pentatonic style harmony.
- Dissonance for the word 'gale'- word painting.
- Chromatic chordal movement and slides.
- Dorian harmony: 'Is My Team Ploughing?'
- Extended chords: 7ths and 11ths in 'Bredon Hill'. Common in impressionist harmony.
- Occasional 2nd inversion 7th chords

### CONTEXT:

- Was an English composer of symphonies, operas and vocal music amongst other forms.
- Sought to break away from German Romantic style and looked to other important influences in his life:
- English folk song: Travelled around countryside and transcribed songs, modality influenced his style
- The English choral tradition: Modal Tudor church music particularly.
- French Impressionist influence: Had studied in Paris with Ravel. Tremolo strings and parallel harmonies.
- On Wenlock Edge: A song cycle. A group of 6 songs setting poems from A Shropshire Lad by A.E. Housman, written in 1896. Poems describe rural life and convey a nostalgic sense of lost innocence.

### RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Triplets and sextuplets
- Cross rhythms.
- Rippling hemidemisemiquavers
- Important rhythmic feature: accentuation of syllables and following natural rhythms of speech.
- Is My Team Ploughing?: Long held notes enable voice to sing in free time, in recitative-like way.
- Frequent time signature and tempo changes
- 'Bredon Hill': Sustained bell chords with tied semibreves.

### TEXTURE:

- Constantly varying textures.
- No. 1: Parallel first inversions, doubling, ostinatos, unison trills, end: reduced texture.
- No.3: Homorhythm, chordal homophony, block chord accompaniment, tutti.
- No.5: Sustained chords, melody-dominated homophony, triplet ostinato creating a three layered texture

### SONORITY:

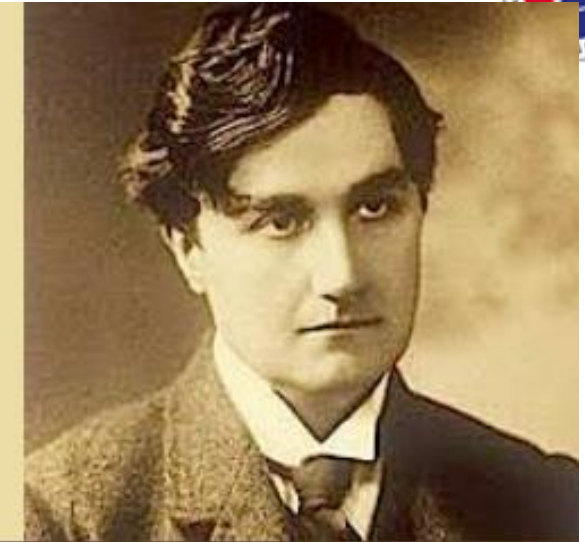
- Unusual choice of instrumentation: combination of solo voice and piano quintet
- Piano: Block chords (church bells), trills: parallel chords, una corda, ostinato accompaniment, arpeggios,
- Strings: Tremolo, pizzicato, cello in tenor clef, triple stopped pizz, sul ponticello, con sordino with ff for tone quality, open harmonics.

### MELODY AND VOCAL STYLE:

- The modal, folk influenced melodies.
- Pentatonic melodies.
- Repeated notes
- Chromatic descending melodies.
- Recitative style singing.
- No.3: Starts conjunct, but later there are larger leaps
- Non-virtuosic tenor soloist line- Occasional high notes but standard tenor range.
- Mainly syllabic, occasional melismas.
- Anacrusis fits iambic nature of the poetry.

# ON WENLOCK EDGE

NO. 1 'ON WENLOCK EDGE', NO. 3 'IS MY TEAM PLOUGHING?' AND NO. 5 'BREDON HILL'



Composer: Vaughan Williams      Date: 1909

## WIDER LISTENING PIECES

### TAVERNER- THE LAMB

- Set to a poem from Songs of Innocence by William Blake. Poetic structure used, strophic form.
- An anthem – a work with English text for the choir to sing in a church service.
- Uses Aeolian mode in melody and harmony.
- The music is flexible and guided by words.

### GRIEG- MORNING MOOD

- Influenced by Norwegian folk music.
- Romantic composer.
- Uses pentatonic scale of E major for the melody in the woodwind (reminiscent of string and piano theme in Wenlock Edge (0:40)).

### SULLIVAN- THE WINDOW

- Song cycle; A sequence of songs linked by a narrative. The song cycle was a novelty in the English language, as other composers like Schubert had done so before in German.
- 'On the Hill': rippling piano accompaniment.
- 'Gone': Recitative like, 'talking' with repetitive notes, Imitates natural rhythms of speech, restricted note range.

### TIPPETT- CONCERTO FOR DOUBLE STRING ORCHESTRA

- English music for strings from the early 20th century.
- Influenced by secular music of 16th and early 17thC which are flexible in metre. (madrigals and fantasias).
- British folk music influenced the melodic style of some themes (movements II and III).
- Ambiguous tonality as a result of modes and pentatonic scales. Uses Lydian Mode.
- Non-functional harmony: False relations bare resemblance with English Renaissance music that use mixolydian mode.

### DEBUSSY

- Prélude à l'après-midi d'un Faune: Inspired by symbolist poetry by Stephane Mallarme. Unusual instrumentation in its addition of antique cymbals, Colourful orchestration: Extended techniques on strings. Use of chord extensions; 7th, 9th, 11th and 13th notes. Chromatic harmony. Whole tone scale. Minor pentatonic on C#.
- Sarabande: Uses Aeolian mode- abandons major and minor kind of tonality. Parallelism.
- Pagodes: Accompaniment dissolves into trills towards the end.
- The bell effects in 'Bredon Hill' are reminiscent of Debussy's piano piece 'The Submerged Cathedral'.