

Vaughan Williams was an extraordinary ordinary man and a very great composer who has reached during his lifetime the hearts of a very large section of his countrymen. Music was the mainspring of his being and he put all that he knew into his music. The essential importance of this composer consists in symphonic and song work. He is an author of nine symphonies, ballet, film music and five operas but the very best success reached he with his choral works. He found the basis and inspiration in the music of his own land and has devoted a good deal of energy to the collecting and arranging of folksongs. The influence of that association on his work is obvious but it is equally evident that he is far from being merely an imitator of folksong. The accents of traditional melody appeal to him but his mode of expression is his own - it is wholly personal and it makes use of passing dissonance in a way which no study of folk melodies could possibly have suggested. He was a friend and admirer of romantics but showed distaste for several favourite romantic emotions. His style is half traditional half modern and that is why his music is understandable.