

## **Sea Songs**, Ralph Vaughn Williams. Boosey & Hawkes Pub.

### Resources:

Miles, Richard. Music Through Performance in Band, Vol. 2, pages 349-351. GIA Publications. 2010.

Recording: *Sea Songs · North Texas Wind Symphony Composer's Collection: Ralph Vaughan Williams* © 2006 GIA WindWorks Released on: 2006-01-01 Conductor: Eugene Migliaro Ensemble: North Texas Wind Symphony Composer: Ralph Vaughan Williams

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8qoOMyg5\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8qoOMyg5_0)

This piece was originally part of the English Folk Song Suite by Vaughn Williams. The publisher thought it would stand on its own, so it was removed. It is great and needs to be played much more by everyone.

It is like a minuet and trio form. But it also lives close to the march world. Uses three English folk songs. Keys of A flat, c minor, D flat.

I settled on a tempo that I liked from the recording listed above, MM=114. It will work at MM=108 as well. Which is much more English in nature.

Lots of layers, I found regardless of which group I was working with I had to make some dynamic adjustments to hear all of the layers. Check out the PDF of my score to see the layers. The snare drum has the same rhythm as the melody on several occasions and I think that to make it more authentic it is important to balance this as part of the tune.

I use the deepest snare I could find with a good sound. Once again to try and get it in the time period with authentic timbres. I was fortunate to have: Majestic Prophonic Concert Snare Drum Walnut 14x12. Absolutely wonderful drum! The Pearl Philharmonic might work. It is just not as deep. Because the snare is used melodically adjust the tension, so it sounds like drums of the period. I ask the player to play closer to the rim so it a little dryer.

It is critical to take the time to balance all melodic and counter melody lines.

Make sure everyone is playing and thinking the dotted eighth and sixteenth subdivision of four! Say “day---to-day.” First day is long, “to” is short.

There are several instances that you will need to release sustained sounds like dotted quarters for clarity.

Theme 1, “Princess Royal” has an octave leap. First one occurs in meas. 14. This is a concern for anyone playing the part! There is the interval of an octave in “Portsmouth” first seen in meas. 76.

The piece is fairly thickly scored at times. It is vital that everyone play a light detached staccato. Letter D, meas. 33, second time I balanced to the counter melody int Cl.3, Cl.4, AS. This is easy to cover if you are not aware and prepared to make the necessary changes.

Meas. 39, the down beat has three different values listed. I edited this to ask everyone to play the stand alone note on down beat as just a quarter that releases on beat 2. Clarity and precision is the goal.

Sudden changes in dynamics are common i.e.; mezzo prior to ff in meas. 38, beat 2! Do not anticipate.

Euphonium is used as a solo voice. Listen carefully so you are getting the correct balance. Counter lines are cool and especially important to capture the full character.

Meas. 71, the trio, "Portsmouth" is the tune. Cantabile! Clarinets need to be sure to shape the line.

Trio melody, meas. 73. Bass clarinet should play out to make it dark and resonant. If you need, have the euphonium play the cues. This trio is very musical. Give all phrases shape!

No repeats of beginning section on the D.C., take second ending at meas. 48.

I lengthen the last eighth note slightly for closure. Snare roll and crescendo in meas. 70 is vital and cool!