

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

THE LARK ASCENDING

Romance for violin & orchestra

Full Score

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Vaughan Williams composed the first draft of *The Lark Ascending* in 1914. Borrowing the term from Beethoven, he called it a Romance for violin. The title comes from the poem by George Meredith (1828–1909), with twelve lines of which Vaughan Williams prefaced the score. The work probably existed only in a version for violin and pianoforte before he put it in a drawer, along with his opera *Hugh the Drover*, when he enlisted in the Army in 1914 after the outbreak of the First World War. The autograph score shows that he had originally quoted four more lines of the poem:

He is the dance of children, thanks
Of sowers, shout of primrose banks
And eyes of violets while they breathe;
All these the circling song will wreathe . . .

When Vaughan Williams returned to composition in 1919, *The Lark Ascending* was one of the first works he revised. He altered the initial tempo from *Andante sostenuto* to *Lento*, but changed it back again. He made a few cuts, elaborated some of the violin part, and considerably re-wrote other parts to make them simpler for the soloist, at the same time striving, long before Messiaen, to capture the bird-song. The first performance was given in Shirehampton, Gloucestershire, on 15 December 1920 at a concert of the Avonmouth and Shirehampton Choral Society. The performers were the violinist Marie Hall, to whom the work is dedicated, and the pianist Geoffrey Mendham. Marie Hall was again the soloist in the first performance of the orchestral version at a concert of the second congress of the British Music Society in the Queen's Hall, London, on 14 June 1921. Adrian Boult conducted the British Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1919 from professional musicians who had served abroad during the war.

Violinists welcomed the work into their solo repertory and it was several times recorded in the pre-LP era, notably by Frederick Grinke who often performed it with the composer conducting. When *The Lark Ascending* was written, the sound of the lark in the clear air was a feature of the summer landscape. Nearly a century later, with the decline in the bird's population and the destruction of much of its habitat, it is a rarer joy. Perhaps the increasing popularity of this work is symbolic of a nostalgia for an England that is vanishing, for a time when, in the words of Siegfried Sassoon, 'everyone was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done'.

Michael Kennedy
2004

INSTRUMENTATION

2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, triangle, and strings.

Parts and scores for both this original version and the composer's own version for chamber orchestra (1 fl., 1 ob., 1 cl., 1 bsn, 1 hn, tri., and str.) are available on hire from the publisher.

THE LARK ASCENDING

He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.

★ ★ ★

For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup,
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes.

★ ★ ★

Till lost on his aërial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings.

(George Meredith, 1828–1909)

The Lark Ascending

Andante sostenuto

1 senza misura

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Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

slow

poco accel.

loco

8^{va}

nat.

senza misura

Solo Vln



2 a tempo

Solo Vln

p cantabile

Vln I

pp

Vln II

pp

Vla

pp

Vc. div.

pp



3

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc. div.

Db.

ppp



4

Ob. *Solo*
ppp

Hn 1
(F) 2 (con sord.)
pp

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc. div.

Db.

10 10

5

Cl. 1 Solo
(A) 2
p

Solo Vln

Vln I
pp sub.

Vln II
pp sub.

Vla
pp sub.

Vc.
pp sub.

Db.
pizz.
pp

cantabile

6

1 Solo senza sord. **Poco animato** [*]

Hn (F) 1 2 *p dolce*

Solo Vln *sur la touche* *ppp*

Vln I *pp*

Vln II *pp*

Vla *pp*

Vc. (div.) *unis.* *pp*

≡ [*] Tempo marking from Boult's score, annotated 'RVW'

allarg.

Cl. (A) 1 2 *pp*

Bsn 1 2 *pp*

Hn (F) 1 2 (1)

Solo Vln *nat.* *f*

Vln I *allarg.* *pp*

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

7 a tempo

1 Solo

Fl. 1 2 *pp*

Cl. (A) 1 *pp* 2 *pp*

Bsn 1 *pp* 2 *pp*

Hn (F) 1 *pp* 2 senza sord. *pp*

Solo Vln *pp*

7 a tempo

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

8

Fl. 1 *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Fl. 2 *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Ob. *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Cl. (A) 1 *poco f sost.* *pp*

Cl. (A) 2 *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Bsn 1 *poco f sost.* *pp*

Bsn 2 *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Hn (F) 1 *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Hn (F) 2 *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Solo Vln *f* *f*

Vln I 8 *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Vln II *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Vla div. *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Vc. div. *poco f sost.* *pp sub.*

Db. *pizz. arco* *f* *pp sub.*

Soli *f* *pp sub.*

poco f sost. *pp sub.*

9 *Largamente**a tempo*
a 2

Fl. 1 2

Ob.

Cl. 1 2
(A)

Bsn 1 2

Hn 1 2
(F)

Solo Vln

ppp

ff *dim.* *p*

9 *Largamente**a tempo*

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

div. *unis.*

p *p* *p* *p* *pp*

11

Ob.

Cl. 1
(A) 2

Bsn. 1
2

Hn. 1
(F) 2

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

11

Solo

pp

1 Solo

pp

1 Solo

pp

(1)

pp

pp

12

(1)

Bsn 1/2

Solo Vln

Cadenza

pp sur la touche

Vln I

ppp

Vln II

ppp

Vla

ppp

Vc.

div. *ppp*

Db.



Fl. 1/2

1 Solo

p

Solo Vln

8^{va}

ppp

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

13 Allegretto tranquillo (quasi Andante)

14

(1)

Fl. 1 2

Cl. (A) 1 2

Bsn 1 2

Hn (F) 1 2

Solo Vln

13 Allegretto tranquillo (quasi Andante)

14

Vln I senza sord., pizz.

Vln II senza sord., pizz.

Vla senza sord., pizz.

Vc. unis. senza sord., pizz.

Db. senza sord., pizz.

poco rit. a tempo

15

Fl. 1 2

Ob. Solo *p* *pp*

Cl. (A) 1 *pp* 2 *pp*

Bsn 1 *pp* 2 *pp*

Hn (F) 1 *pp* 2 *pp*

Solo Vln *p*

15

poco rit. a tempo

Vln I arco *p cantabile*

Vln II (pizz.) *pp*

Vla (pizz.) *pp*

Vc. (pizz.) *pp*

Db. (pizz.) *pp*

16

Tranquillo

Fl. 1 2

Ob.

Cl. (A)

Bsn

Hn (F)

Solo Vln

Solo
p

7 6 6

tr

16

Tranquillo

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

pp

arco
pp

arco
pp

arco
pp

17 a tempo

17 a tempo

Fl. 1 *mf*

Fl. 2 *mp*

Ob. *mp*

Cl. (A) 1 *mp*

Cl. (A) 2 *mp*

Bsn 1 *mp*

Bsn 2 *mp*

Hn (F) 1 *mp*

Hn (F) 2 *mp*

Solo Vln *tr* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

17 a tempo

Vln I *mf*

Vln II *mf*

Vla *pizz.* *mf*

Vc. *pizz.* *mf*

Db. *mf*

Detailed description: This page contains two systems of musical notation for measures 17 through 20 of a piece marked 'a tempo'. The first system includes staves for Flute 1 and 2, Oboe, Clarinet in A (1 and 2), Bassoon 1 and 2, Horn in F (1 and 2), and Solo Violin. The second system includes staves for Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The Solo Violin part features a trill in measure 17 and triplets in measures 18, 19, and 20. The Viola and Violoncello parts have a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) marking in measure 17. The woodwinds and strings generally play sustained notes or chords.

18 Poco meno mosso

18 **Poco meno mosso**

Fl. 1 *mp* [*]

Fl. 2

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1 *p* Solo

Cl. (A) 2

Bsn 1 *p* Solo

Bsn 2

Hn (F) 1 *p* Solo

Hn (F) 2

Solo Vln

Vln I *pp*

Vln II *pp*

Vla *arco pp*

Vc. *arco pp*

Db. *arco pp*

[*] *pp* in previous editions of the score; changed to match other woodwind

a tempo

19

1 Fl.

2 Fl.

Ob.

1 Cl. (A)

2 Cl. (A)

1 Bsn

2 Bsn

1 Hn (F)

2 Hn (F)

Solo Vln

p *cresc.* *f* *pp*

mp *f* *pp*

[mp] *f* *pp*

[p] *f* *pp*

[p] *f* *pp*

f

a tempo

19

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

pp *p cresc.* *f* *pp*

p cresc. *f* *pp*

p cresc. *f* *pp*

p cresc. *f* *pp*

p *f* *pp*

Ob.

Cl. 1
(A) 2

Bsn 1
2

Tri.

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

Solo

p

pp

3

8

8

8

8

* Two beats in the bar

21

Ob.

p scherzando

2

4

2

Cl. 1
(A) 2

1 Solo

p scherzando

Bsn 1
2

1 Solo

p

Tri.

Solo Vln

8

8

8

8

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1 2

Bsn. 1 2

Hn. (F) 1 2

Tri.

Solo Vln

22

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1 2

Hn. (F) 1 2

Tri.

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

1 Solo

pp 8

2 2

Solo

pp 2 2

1

CL (A)

2

pp

Bsn 1 2

Hn 1 (F) 2

1 Solo

pp

Tri.

p

Solo Vln

tr

23

arco

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

pp

Db.

Fl. 1 2 (1) *p*

Ob. *p*

Cl. (A) 1 *[pp]* 2

Bsn 1 2

Hn (F) 1 2 *pp*

Tri.

Solo Vln *f*

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains ten staves for various instruments. The Flute (Fl.) and Oboe (Ob.) parts feature melodic lines with slurs and dynamic markings of *p*. The Clarinet in A (Cl. (A)) has two parts; the first part has a *[pp]* marking and a crescendo hairpin. The Bassoon (Bsn) part is mostly silent. The Horn in F (Hn (F)) has two parts, with the second part marked *pp*. The Triangle (Tri.) part has a few rhythmic notes. The Solo Violin (Solo Vln) part has a dynamic marking of *f* and a crescendo hairpin. The Violin I (Vln I) and Violin II (Vln II) parts play sustained chords. The Viola (Vla) part has a melodic line. The Violoncello (Vc.) and Double Bass (Db.) parts play sustained chords. The score is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature.

Fl. 1 *p cresc.* *f*

Fl. 2 *p cresc.* *f*

Ob. *p cresc.* *f*

Cl. (A) 1 *p cresc.* *f*

Cl. (A) 2 *p cresc.* *f*

Bsn 1 *p cresc.* *f*

Bsn 2 *p cresc.* *f*

Hn (F) 1 *[mp] cresc.* *f*

Hn (F) 2 *p cresc.* *f*

Tri. *p* *f* *pp*

Solo Vln *ff* *p*

Vln I *p cresc.* *f* *[p]*

Vln II div. *p cresc.* *f* *p*

Vla *p cresc.* *f* *pizz.* *p*

Vc. *p cresc.* *f* *pizz.* *f*

Db. *arco* *p cresc.* *f* *pizz.* *f*

25 Tranquillo

Fl. 1 *pp* *tr*

Fl. 2 *pp* *tr*

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1 *pp*

Cl. (A) 2 *pp*

Bsn 1 *pp*

Bsn 2 *pp*

Hn (F) 1 *pp*

Hn (F) 2 *pp*

Solo Vln

Measures 1-5 of the woodwind and string section. The woodwinds (Flutes, Oboe, Clarinets, Bassoons, Horns) play a melodic line starting with a half note, followed by eighth notes, and then a quarter note. The strings (Solo Violin) play a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The woodwinds have trills in measures 1, 2, and 3. The Solo Violin has a four-measure rest in measure 4.

25 Tranquillo

Vln I *pp*

Vln II *pp* *unis.* *tr*

Vla *pp* *arco, div.*

Vc. *pp* *arco*

Db. *pp*

Measures 1-5 of the string section. The Violins I and II play a melodic line starting with a half note, followed by eighth notes, and then a quarter note. The Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass play a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The Violins I and II have a trill in measure 1. The Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass have a four-measure rest in measure 4.

26

[illegible]

27

27

Fl. 1 2

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1 2

Hn (F) 1 2

Solo Vln

Vla

Vc.

pp

p

1 Solo

8

8

8

8

Fl. 1/2

Ob.

Cl. 1/2 (A)

Bsn 1/2

Hn (F) 1/2

Solo Vln

Solo

pp

1 Solo

pp

Solo

pp

8 7 7 8

28

Ob.

Cl. 1/2 (A)

Bsn 1/2

Hn (F) 1/2

Solo Vln

(1)

(2)

1 Solo 2

pp

8 7 7 8

pp

29 Allegretto molto tranquillo

Cl. 1/2 (A)

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

(1)

(tr)

8 8 8

senza misura

3

pp tranquillo

ppp

ppp unis.

ppp

ppp

30

Fl. 1 2

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1 2

Bsn 1 2

Hn (F) 1 2

Solo Vln

Solo
p cantabile

p *a 2*

30

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Db.

p *arco*

colla parte

32 a tempo

33 Tempo del principio

Fl. 1 *mf* *f sost.*

Fl. 2 *mf* *f sost.*

Ob. *mf* *f sost.*

Cl. (A) 1 *mf* *f sost.*

Cl. (A) 2 *mf* *f sost.*

Bsn 1 *mf* *f sost.*

Bsn 2 *mf* *f sost.*

Hn (F) 1 *mf* *poco f molto sost.*

Hn (F) 2 *mf* *poco f molto sost.*

Solo Vln *f*

32 a tempo

33 Tempo del principio

Vln I *pp cresc.* *f sost.*

Vln II *pp cresc.* *f sost.*

Vla *pp cresc.* *f sost.*

Vc. *pp cresc.* *f sost.*

Db. *mp* *f sost.*

1 Fl. *mp*

2 Fl. *mp*

Ob. *mp*

1 Cl. (A) *mp*

2 Cl. (A) *mp*

1 Bsn *mp*

2 Bsn *mp*

1 Hn (F) *mp*

2 Hn (F) *mp*

Solo Vln

Vln I *mp*

Vln II *mp*

Vla *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Db. *mp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 32, contains staves for various instruments. The woodwind section includes two flutes (Fl.), an oboe (Ob.), two clarinets in A (Cl. (A)), and two bassoons (Bsn). The string section includes two horns in F (Hn (F)), a solo violin (Solo Vln), and a string quartet consisting of Violin I (Vln I), Violin II (Vln II), Viola (Vla), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The key signature is indicated by a single sharp (F#) on the first line of each staff. The dynamics are marked as mezzo-piano (mp) for most instruments. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs, indicating the melodic and harmonic development of each part.

34

Fl. 1 *p* *Solo* *p*

Fl. 2 *p* *Solo* *p*

Ob. *p* *p*

Cl. (A) 1 *p* *Solo* *p*

Cl. (A) 2 *p* *p*

Bsn. 1 *p* *p*

Bsn. 2 *p* *p*

Hn (F) 1 *p* *p*

Hn (F) 2 *p*

Solo Vln *cantabile* *p*

34

Vln I *p* *pp*

Vln II *p* *pp*

Vla *p* *pp*

Vc. *p* *pp*

Db. *p* *pp*

35 Poco animato

36 a tempo

a 2

Fl. 1 2

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1 2

Bsn 1 2

Hn (F) 1 2

Solo Vln

pp *f*

p *[f]*

f

f

f

p *poco f*

p *poco f*

f

35 Poco animato

con sord.

36 a tempo

Vln I

pp *f*

Vln II

con sord. *pp* *f*

Vla

con sord. *pp* *f*

Vc.

con sord. *pp* *f*

Db.

con sord. *f*

div.

37

Largamente

Fl. 1/2

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1/2

Bsn 1/2

Hn (F) 1/2

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II div.

Vla div.

Vc. div.

Db.

f

ff

p

fpp

pp

37

Largamente

a tempo

38

Fl. 1 2

Ob.

Cl. (A) 1 2

Bsn 1 2

Hn 1 2 (F)

Solo Vln

pp tranquillo

1 Solo

pp

4

4

a tempo

38

Vln I

Vln II

Vla div.

Vc. div.

Db.

pp

pp tranquillo

pp tranquillo

pp tranquillo

pp tranquillo

pp tranquillo

ppp

40

rall.

41 senza misura

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla (unis.)

Vc. (div.)

Db.

ppp sur la touche

pppp

pppp

pppp

pppp

12/8

Solo Vln

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc. (div.)

7

7

7

7

Solo Vln

Solo Vln

3

Solo Vln

3

3

3

Solo Vln

3

3

3

3

3

Solo Vln

8

lunga lunga