

wind, is far the greater man of the two because the wind was the divine afflatus."

This may be a surprising view to us today, but it must not be forgotten that it was when Vaughan Williams was a young man that Dvořák began scoring his earliest successes in England, the first country outside his homeland in which he was to find fame and fortune. The popularity of his Slavonic Dances and the Symphony in D major had paved the way for his growing international reputation, and in 1883 the first London performance of his Stabat Mater consolidated Dvořák's success to such an extent that he was immediately invited to England for a series of personal appearances. The British public responded to Dvořák's visits with unparalleled enthusiasm. At the Royal Albert Hall he conducted his Stabat Mater to rapturous acclaim and introduced several new works to his London audiences, including the Slavonic Rhapsody in G Minor, the Scherzo capriccioso and the Nocturne for strings. In all, he paid nine visits to England, composing several works specially (including The Specter's Bride and the D minor Symphony) and was made an Honorary Doctor of Music at Cambridge in 1891.

All this success, however, came when Dvořák had turned forty. His Serenade for Strings dates from 1875 when the composer was in his mid-thirties. Vaughan Williams was roughly the same age when he first conceived his Tallis Fantasia and both works represent their respective composers' most popular essays in the string orchestra form.

Dvořák's Serenade is in five short movements: an evocative and nostalgic Moderato first movement is followed by a Waltz which has an ardent Trio for its middle section. The central movement is a Scherzo which gives way to a romantic suffusion of mood before a final return to the tempo of its opening bars. The Larghetto which follows has the passionate, moonlit qualities of a nocturne and features a beautiful theme which Dvořák also recalls in the last movement. This is a bustling and high-spirited Finale which - together with a touching reminder of the closing moments of the first movement - brings the whole Serenade to an enthusiastic conclusion.

Although Leopold Stokowski had recorded the Tallis Fantasia in early mono LP days (an event for which the composer pronounced himself being "much honored"), this is his first recording of the Dvořák Serenade for Strings. Perhaps more surprising is the fact that all available research suggests that prior to the recording sessions he had never even conducted it before. He does so here with a vital and deeply sensitive feeling for the romantic poetry of Dvořák's charming music. - By EDWARD JOHNSON, 1976 (original Desmar liner notes).



# THE STOKOWSKI STRING SOUND

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS  
FANTASIA  
ON  
A  
THEME  
BY  
TALLIS

DVOŘÁK  
SERENADE  
FOR  
STRINGS  
IN E  
OP. 22

PURCELL  
DIDO'S  
LAMENT

LEOPOLD  
STOKOWSKI

THE  
ROYAL  
PHILHARMONIC  
ORCHESTRA



## **Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis**

Born in 1872, Ralph Vaughan Williams received his musical education principally at the Royal College of Music in London where his studies overlapped with those of the young Leopold Stokowski, ten years Vaughan Williams' junior. His musical development was strongly influenced by the folk song revival then taking place and he dedicated himself to the concept of a new nationalism in English music. Another formative influence was the renewed interest in the music of Purcell, whose Dido and Aeneas was revived in 1895 by pupils of the Royal College of Music, with Ralph singing in the chorus.

Within a few years, Vaughan Williams had begun to make a name for himself with his own early compositions and with articles written for various musical journals. In 1904 he was asked to become the music editor of the new English Hymnal and in this task, which was to last about two years, he set about compiling the finest hymn tunes which could be found. He was able to restore some great sixteenth century melodies to general circulation and came across many of the fine tunes which had been written by Thomas Tallis, one of the fathers of English church music. It was one particular melody in the Phrygian mode (from E to E on the white notes of a piano keyboard) which inspired Vaughan Williams to produce his first orchestral masterpiece. The Tallis theme is the third of nine Psalm Tunes which Archbishop Parker printed in his Psalter of 1567 to accompany Addison's words "When rising from the bed of death."

The Tallis Fantasia is scored for a large string orchestra and solo quartet, with a small string orchestra placed distantly in the background. Not long before, Vaughan Williams had studied orchestration with Ravel in France, and he undoubtedly wrote his Fantasia with a notion of tone color in his mind. In suggesting the vast echoing ambiances of a cathedral, he expertly contrasted the sonorities of the two string orchestras by 'writing in' the reverberation period for the smaller of them and thus produced what must be one of the most effectively scored string compositions ever written. As Ursula Vaughan Williams has said: "The echo idea of three different groups of instruments was well judged. It seemed that his early love for architecture and his historical knowledge were so deeply assimilated that they were translated and absorbed into the texture and line of the music."

The composer conducted the first performance of his Tallis Fantasia in Gloucester Cathedral in 1910. The work opens with block chords and a brief suggestion of the theme by

pizzicati lower strings before the Tallis melody is stated with rich sonority by the full orchestra. Our present conductor, Leopold Stokowski, has written: "Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis spans the 16th and 20th centuries -- it is timeless and universal in its expression and appeal ... the mysticism of Vaughan Williams and Tallis blend as if coming from the spirit of one man. ... those who love beauty, deep emotion, and the unseen mystery of life, will find intense joy in listening to it."

## **Purcell: "When I am laid in Earth" (from Dido and Aeneas) (arr. Stokowski)**

To follow Vaughan Williams' free Fantasia on an ecclesiastical mode of the 16th century, we hear Leopold Stokowski's own beautiful realization of a noble English aria from the 17th century. Purcell's opera Dido and Aeneas was first heard in London in 1689 and has as its concluding number the great tragic outpouring of the Queen of Carthage known as "Dido's Lament." This poignant death-song, which culminates in the words "Remember me, but ah! forget my fate," has here been arranged for strings and comes from a Suite of Five Pieces which Stokowski made up from various works of Purcell. This Suite received its first performance in 1949 with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of the arranger.

## **Dvořák: Serenade for Strings**

The juxtaposition of a sublime masterpiece of mystical English beauty and this romantic Bohemian serenade proves to be more appropriate than might at first be imagined. Each composer was a true nationalist and, like Vaughan Williams, Dvořák's musical upbringing was strongly influenced by native folk song and a deep feeling for the music of his own country. Vaughan Williams certainly admired Dvořák's music and recognized in him a kindred spirit who shared his love of nature and the countryside. He also championed the Czech composer's works by conducting Dvořák's Stabat Mater in 1922 and preparing an English adaptation of his Te Deum for the Leith Festival in 1937. In an article for Music and Letters Vaughan Williams wrote: "The best composer is surely he who has the most beautiful melodies, the finest harmony, the most vital rhythms and the surest sense of form. There is no other criterion. I lose patience with those people who try to put up Berlioz as a great composer because he interpreted Shakespeare, because he could give literary reasons for his beliefs, and do not see that a composer like Dvořák, a reed shaken by the

# THE STOKOWSKI STRING SOUND

## **Ralph Vaughn Williams**

1 Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis 16:33

## **Henry Purcell**

2 Dido's Lament (From Dido and Aeneas) 4:55

## **Antonín Dvořák Serenade In E Op.22**

3 I. Moderato 5:03

4 II. Tempo Di Valse 6:04

5 III. Scherzo (Vivace) 7:30

6 IV. Larghetto 6:14

7 V. Finale 5:40

Recorded by Desmar in No. 1 Studio, Abbey Road on August 16, 18 & 19 1975

Engineer – Neville Boyling    Executive Producer – Marcos Klorman    Producer – Antony Hodgson

This recording was transferred from the original Desmar Master Tapes



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