

# Notes

In 1940, Ralph Vaughan Williams was in his late 60's and already a well established composer when he undertook his first film score. It was for an award winning 1941 British WWII film "The 49th Parallel" (initially released in America as "The Invaders").

The "Prelude" is the opening credits music and the first piece in the orchestral suite of music that RVW fashioned from the full film score. In 1942, RVW wrote to Harold Child, a successful British writer and editor, to request that he write a text for the music to be adapted into a song. In a letter now in the British Library's collection, RVW asked for "something high falutin' 'noble and sentimental'" and included his own rather comical "nonsense verse" to demonstrate the meter and suggested rhyme scheme. He closed his letter to Child with the comment, "I do hope you will feel like it - it might be a popular success." Child obliged and provided two verses under the title of "The New Commonwealth," the title the piece known by in its choral adaptations by RVW.

In this arrangement for seven-part trombone ensemble (five tenors, two basses) I have lowered the key to C Major from the original G Major. The melody line is split between trombones 1 & 2. This will allow more connection of the melody and make it less taxing to perform. The tempo should be majestically paced but not too slow with the melody prominent, but not forced in tone. It is suitable for either one player or multiple players on each part, but care should always be taken to keep the clarity of the underlying contrapuntal lines and the melody prominent in either case.

Russell McKinney

Full Score

# Prelude

to the movie

## "The 49th Parallel"

for Trombone Ensemble

Ralph Vaughan Williams

arr. by Russell McKinney

Andante con moto ♩ = 72

Melody **A**

The musical score is arranged for seven trombones, labeled Trombone 1 through Trombone 7 (Bass). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto' with a metronome marking of ♩ = 72. The score begins with a dynamic of *mp* (mezzo-piano). Trombone 1 and 2 play the melody, with Trombone 1 marked *mp* and Trombone 2 marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) for the melodic line. Trombone 3 plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked *mp*. Trombone 4, 5, 6, and 7 play sustained notes, with Trombone 4 and 6 marked *mp*. A section marker 'A' is placed above the first staff at the beginning of the third measure. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

This musical score is for seven tubas, labeled Tbn. 1 through Tbn. 7 (B). The music is in 4/4 time and begins at measure 35. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into four measures. The first measure starts with a half note G2. The second measure contains a half note G2. The third measure contains a half note G2. The fourth measure contains a half note G2. The dynamics for each tuba are as follows: Tbn. 1 (mf, f, ff), Tbn. 2 (mf, f, ff), Tbn. 3 (mf, f, ff), Tbn. 4 (mf, f, ff), Tbn. 5 (mf, f, ff), Tbn. 6 (B) (mf, f, ff), and Tbn. 7 (B) (mf, f, ff). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. A *rit.* marking is present above the first measure of the fourth measure. The final measure of the score ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.