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Ralph Vaughan William's the Pilgrim's Progress: Problems and Solutions for Future Performances

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RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*:

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR FUTURE

PERFORMANCES

by

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Bachelor of Music Education
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a doctoral document submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting
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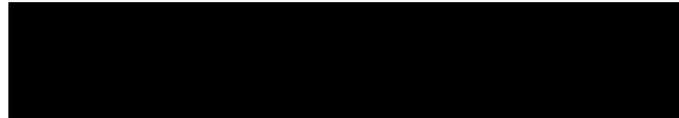
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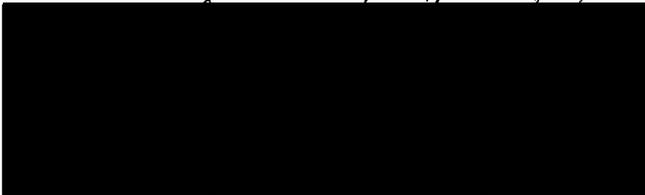
Ralph Vaughan Williams's *The Pilgrim's Progress*: Problems and Solutions
for Future Performances

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts



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ABSTRACT

Ralph Vaughan Williams's *The Pilgrim's Progress*: Problems and Solutions for Future Performances

by

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The 1951 premier of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by Ralph Vaughan Williams was not a success. Two years later, Vaughan Williams told Michael Kennedy that “the Pilgrim is dead.”¹ A handful of attempts have been made to revive the work in the last few years, and a second recording of the opera by Richard Hickox has revived some interest.

Despite this progress, three big problematic areas (outlined by contemporary critics and Vaughan Williams) continue to stand in the way of staging this work. These three areas are the Apollyon scene, the homogeneity of the tempi, and the lack of dramatic elements within the opera that affect the pacing of the production. In addition, two production considerations stood in the way of the premier's success, and these can be recognized and avoided in the future. The first was the inexperience of the stage producer, and the second – related to the first in many ways – was the lack of common vision and perception between composer, producer, and performers.

This document will explore all five issues mentioned above, will show how the

¹ Simon Heffer, *Vaughan Williams* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 125.

Trinity Lyric Opera and Sadler's Wells productions addressed them, and will therefore act as a guide that suggests possible solutions.

In preparing this paper I have been to the British Library to study the actual correspondence between Nevill Coghill (the stage director) and Hal Burton (the designer), photographs of the actual stage sets of the 1951 Covent Garden production, photographs and materials from the 1906 Reigate production that Vaughan Williams wrote incidental music for, Nevill Coghill's production notes, Vaughan Williams's personal copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan with his markings of texts later used in his libretto, and numerous newspaper reviews of the premier. I have also corresponded with Alan Thayer, the founder and director of Trinity Lyric Opera, gaining his insights into staging this work. Finally, I was able to attend final rehearsals and live performance of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at Sadler's Wells in London.

Other areas of interest are structural similarities between *The Pilgrim's Progress* and other operas that may have provided models for Vaughan Williams's musical and staging decisions. The inference that the work is inherently or fatally flawed, however, is contested. This work can and should be successfully staged.

The Pilgrim's Progress is not only the crowning work of Vaughan Williams's oeuvre, but is a profound work that deserves more frequent performance. As such, it should enter the public consciousness just as John Bunyan's book did nearly 400 years ago.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide a musical and historical context for Vaughan Williams's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, to identify specific reasons for the failure of the premier performance (to date only general reasons have been cited in other treatments), and to provide examples of successful performances as models for future attempts. Conductors may use this document as a reference guide to aid future performances.

In preparing this document primary documents have been consulted and transcribed, notably the letters from Nevill Coghill, the stage director, to Hal Burton, the set designer. These letters have never received an in-depth analysis until now. This document will trace the differences of creative vision between Coghill and Vaughan Williams in staging *Pilgrim*. These differences led directly to the failure of the premier. The reputation garnered from this failure has hampered *Pilgrim's* entry into the regular repertoire ever since.

Later chapters cite productions by the Trinity Lyric Opera and Sadler's Wells. These two productions, by either following Vaughan Williams's original instructions or taking a radically new approach, have overcome the elements which doomed the premier and demonstrated that *The Pilgrim's Progress* can be successfully staged and well-received.

The chapters dealing with related works are intended to provide a musical context in which to place *Pilgrim* within Vaughan Williams's works. The chosen related works most closely relate in their treatment of similar subject matter, and/or musical elements and gestures.

Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born in 1872 in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire. His father, Rev. Arthur Vaughan Williams, was the vicar of the parish. His mother, Margaret Wedgwood, was the great-niece of Charles Darwin. His being raised in the dual and sometimes competing cultures of the clergy and the intellectual elite has led later writers to question Vaughan Williams's religious feelings, or lack thereof. Regardless of the debates, Vaughan Williams was never a professing Christian and was described towards the end of his life by his second wife Ursula as a "cheerful agnostic." According to her, "He was far too deeply absorbed by music to feel any need of religious observance."¹

His early musical training included piano and violin lessons, but he decided he was a much better violinist than pianist, and gave up the latter for the former. After finishing at the Charterhouse School, he went to the Royal College of Music and studied under Charles Villiers Stanford. Vaughan Williams then went on to read history and music at Trinity College, Cambridge, before returning to the Royal College of Music to study composition under Sir Hubert Parry. During this period Vaughan Williams developed a friendship with fellow student Leopold Stokowski. Stokowski later premiered several of Vaughan Williams's works in the United States, including

¹ Simon Heffer, *Vaughan Williams* (Boston: Northeast University Press, 2000), 7.

Symphony No. 6. After graduating from the Royal College of Music, Vaughan Williams married Adeline Fisher and then traveled to Berlin to study briefly with Max Bruch in 1897.²

In 1904 Vaughan Williams was commissioned to revise the *English Hymnal*. This ignited an interest and provided the opportunity to begin to collect and transcribe English folk songs. With literacy beginning to proliferate throughout the poorer classes, traditional folk song, dance, and regional languages were disappearing. Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Percy Grainger, and others set about to preserve this rich musical tradition.³

His first major compositional success came in 1910, at the age of 38, with the premier of his *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*. The same year also saw the premier of his Symphony No. 1, *A Sea Symphony*⁴. This work called for orchestra, chorus, and soloists. The libretto is a setting of texts by Walt Whitman. Vaughan Williams enjoyed a lifelong love of Walt Whitman and set many of his texts to music.

In 1914, at the urging of his friend and fellow composer George Butterworth, Vaughan Williams wrote his second symphony, titled *A London Symphony*.⁵ This work

² Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W. A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), x. (Basic biographical information listed on this page as a chronological outline.)

³ By mid-century, Manx, Breton, Cornish, Gaelic and Welsh nearly disappeared as spoken languages. The preservation of traditional folk culture during the twentieth century was a common thread through many disciplines and in many countries. Fortunately, with the reversion of Welsh counties from English to Welsh names, and the introduction of the Welsh National Assembly, Welsh has since enjoyed a renaissance as a language and culture.

⁴ Vaughan Williams did not number his symphonies until *No. 8*. Previous symphonies are numbered in this paper for convenience.

⁵ Vaughan Williams revised this symphony twice, after its initial performance. The 1918 and 1920 versions are the most commonly performed versions. The 1918 version is the one that was dedicated to Butterworth, who had lost his life in WWI.

sets out to echo the sounds of London at different times of day and in different settings. During this pre-WWI period, Vaughan Williams also studied briefly with Maurice Ravel.

When World War I began, Vaughan Williams was 40 years old. Though military service was not required of him, he enlisted as a stretcher bearer for the medical corps. His experiences seeing the destruction of the War in France led him to compose his *Pastorale* Third Symphony, which premiered in 1921.

In the 1920s Vaughan Williams flourished. During this period he wrote two operas, including *Sir John in Love*, and his magnificent cantata, *Sancta Civitas*. He also traveled to the United States for the first time to guest conduct and give a series of lectures.

During the 1930s he wrote a piano concerto, another opera and his *Dona Nobis Pacem* which included many of Whitman's texts. In 1935 Adrian Boult premiered Vaughan Williams's violent and dissonant Symphony No. 4 in F Minor. Many of his works during this decade demonstrated dissonance and aggression. Paradoxically, his most serene and contemplative work, Symphony No. 5, premiered during the height of World War II at the Proms in 1943. Though he was then in his sixties, he was far from finished.

An oboe concerto, the *Thanksgiving for Victory* (to celebrate the end of World War II), and his Symphony No. 6 finished out the 1940s. Then in 1951, Vaughan Williams's lifelong work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, premiered at Covent Garden. (Vaughan Williams had composed music that was later used in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In 1922 he composed a one-act opera that was later incorporated into the final production of *Pilgrim*. Fifteen years prior to that, he had written incidental music for a church

pageant based on Bunyan's book. For further information, see chapter 3 and Appendix A.) Not long after, his wife Adeline died following a long illness. However he continued working, writing three more symphonies. He also married long-time friend and poet Ursula Wood, and lectured across the United States. Vaughan Williams finally passed away on August 26, 1958 of coronary thrombosis, at the age of 86.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

Related Works

In order to understand *The Pilgrim's Progress* (hereafter, *Pilgrim*⁶), it is important to be familiar with other works of Vaughan Williams. He spent forty years contemplating and writing *Pilgrim*, and elements and germinations of *Pilgrim* can be found in many other compositions.

Vaughan Williams wrote once that it is the job of the composer to find the “*mot juste*,”⁷ and it did not matter if he had used it before; if it needed repeating again, so be it. Though elements of *Pilgrim* can be found in many other compositions of Vaughan Williams, in his mind the quest for the “*mot juste*” would be enough justification for *The Pilgrim's Progress*. To him, music does not require any justification: “it is its own justification.”⁸

⁶ Italics will mark the difference between references to *Pilgrim* as the morality itself, and to the character in the morality, whose name is also Pilgrim.

⁷ Ralph Vaughan Williams, “How Do We Make Music?” in *National Music and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 217.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

It is difficult to make one overriding statement to describe Vaughan Williams's music. Descriptions of his music include "visionary,"⁹ "lovely, lyrical poetry."¹⁰ His most accessible music is lush and pastoral.

For a long time his reputation was inextricably enmeshed with the degree to which his art and life were deemed to reflect narrowly English concerns and influences. Specifically, a perceived association with the trope of Englishness dominant during the inter-war years – conservative, agrarian, insular and emotionally undemonstrative – made him a natural musical target for the wider post-1945 reaction against this national self-image.¹¹

Like many other composers, Vaughan Williams went through several creative periods. His early works are characterized by thick scoring and rely heavily on the influences of English folk song and folk hymns. After his studies with Ravel mid-career, his musical textures became more transparent, and leaned more to the pastoral characteristics that most people associate with him. In his later works he introduced elements of angry dissonance that belie the serenity of his earlier periods. (For instance, his Third and Fourth Symphonies are characteristic polar opposites.)

He was a nationalist only insofar as he believed in the cultural heritage of England; Tudor church music was profoundly inspiring to him. His first forays into composition were choral, mainly inspired by his love of Tudor church music, the editing of the English Hymnal, and his fondness for folk song.

⁹ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Vaughan Williams, Ralph," (by Hugh Ottoway and Alain Frogley), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/42507?> (accessed April 4, 2009).

¹⁰ Heffer, quoting Holst, 14.

¹¹ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Vaughan Williams, Ralph," (by Hugh Ottoway and Alain Frogley), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/42507?> (accessed April 4, 2009).

A handful of pieces relate in style, character, and subject matter to *The Pilgrim's Progress*: namely, the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, and *Sancta Civitas*. The symphonies relate directly to thematic material in *Pilgrim*, and the last two works contain subject material that illustrates Vaughan Williams's concept of salvation and the exaltation of man.

Related Works: The Symphonies

Music with distinctive English characteristics, such as the incorporation of English folk song, neo-Tudor music, and polyphonic textures, appears first in the twentieth century, the movement led primarily by Vaughan Williams. "To say that Vaughan Williams played a major part in bringing [the rise of English music] about is to state the obvious," says Hugh Ottoway.¹² His first symphony came only two years after Elgar's first (which premiered in 1908). Though Elgar was and is famous as an English composer, he did not employ English folk songs and hymns, or particularly English characteristics in his music. Further he only completed two symphonies, both nearly contemporary with Vaughan Williams own symphonic output. Elgar's style is primarily German (for example, his tone poem *Into the South* sounds remarkably similar to the style of Richard Strauss).

Vaughan Williams, however, was more than just a pioneer in this area; his symphonies span nearly 50 years. The First Symphony was written at age 38; the Ninth, at the end of his life at age 86. In fact, most of his symphonic output occurred in the last 20 years of his life.

¹² Hugh Ottoway, *Vaughan Williams Symphonies* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), 5.

His nine symphonies can be divided into three groups of three. The first three are the most programmatic; the middle three venture into modernist techniques¹³, and the final three show Vaughan Williams's continuing growth as a composer and artist even in his last decades.

Each of his symphonies, from the *London* to the *Antarctica* (Nos. 2–7), made a lasting impression; each created its own imaginative world and was felt to mark a new stage in the composer's inner development. . . . At the deepest level, Vaughan Williams was an intuitive artist, visionary and non-intellectual; a poet in sound whose perceptions, however complex, can usually be referred to one or other of his basic responses to experience.¹⁴

Despite statements of critics and musicologists to the contrary, Vaughan Williams's symphonies do not "mean" anything. The only truly programmatic symphonies are the first two: *A Sea Symphony* because of the text, and the *London* (though it does not tell any particular story or reference any particular event). The *Pastorale* is very impressionistic. Often the *Fourth* and *Sixth* have been claimed as representing war, with the *Fifth* representing peace. As Elliott Schwartz writes:

Critics and audiences have interpreted the Fourth Symphony as an angry, violent reaction to (or portrayal of) the rise of Fascism in Europe. The Fifth Symphony, similarly, has been directly related to the period of its composition. [1943] . . . The Sixth Symphony, written after the conclusion of the war, is anything but affirmative. The work may represent a reaction to the war, or perhaps disillusionment with the peace.¹⁵

Even given the prophetic nature of the middle symphonies, Frank Howes seems to go further than necessary:

¹³ For a discussion of the alleged modernism of the Fourth Symphony see Anthony Barone, "Modernist Rifts in a Pastoral Landscape: Observations on the Manuscripts of Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony," *Musical Quarterly* 91, nos. 1-2 (February 4, 2009): 60-88.

¹⁴ Ottoway, 5.

¹⁵ Elliott S. Schwartz, *The Symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1964), 18-19.

In No. 4 the prophet sees the nature of naked violence triumphant in Europe, and in No. 6 there is similarly a prophetic warning of what will happen to mankind if it persists in its foolish, wicked wars.¹⁶

Ursula Vaughan Williams, on the contrary, recalls:

His own story of the genesis of his Fourth Symphony was that he had read an account of one of the “Freak Festivals” in which a symphony, he couldn’t remember who had written it, was described in some detail . . . So, without any philosophical, prophetic, or political germ, No. 4 took its life from a paragraph in *The Times*¹⁷.

Fortunately, Ottoway seems to have grasped the truth between both statements:

Neither of these comments will do; the one gratuitously attributes a missionary intention, the other limits ‘genesis’ to the final prompting. That Vaughan Williams, both as man and artist, was concerned about the state of Europe goes without saying; that this concern was reflected in his Fourth Symphony seems very probable: but – and this is crucial – one cannot go further without (i) venturing beyond the demonstrable, and (ii) limiting the music’s potentiality. So both comments are limiting.¹⁸

Ottoway states clearly, that even if the war influenced the Fourth symphony, no overt influence can be demonstrated, and the music itself should not be assigned solely to the war. Vaughan Williams’s point is that the symphony was written because he wanted to write a symphony: the simple drive to create outweighed any other reason.

The most obvious relative to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is the Fifth Symphony.

Ottoway gives a summary of the actual material common to both works in his book (including musical examples that I will not duplicate here). Summarized, they are these:

- 1st movement: E major theme in bar 60; the falling semitone motive in bars 80-81.
- 3rd movement: the opening chords and cor anglais theme at bar 7; the woodwind material beginning at bar 32.

¹⁶ Quoted in Ottoway, 29.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

- 4th movement: the first five bars of the seven-bar ostinato bass.

The second movement has little, if any, obviously related material. As Ottoway puts it:

The important point is not the symphony's debt to the Morality [*The Pilgrim's Progress*] but its independent musical development; and this is the more striking in that the same vocabulary of chords and phrases is the basis of much of both works. . . . yet the symphony never strays into the theatre or suggests a translatable programme.¹⁹

Given Ottoway's comment, why should one wishing to stage *Pilgrim* bother with the Fifth (or any) of the symphonies? Because the more insight and understanding one has into Vaughan Williams and his music, the better equipped he or she is to interpret it. This is true for interpreting any composer's music.

The Sixth Symphony relates primarily in its apocalyptic nature (remembering to avoid assigning it any kind of program or extra-musical association). Schwartz related the following: "[Frank] Howes writes that he once publicly mentioned the work, which was completed in 1948, as the "War" symphony and was sharply reproved by the composer for this."²⁰

These three symphonies (Four, Five and Six) should be studied because their musical idioms reflect and expand the musical treatment of Pilgrim's journey. The Fourth and Sixth reflect the pain, desperation, violence, and despair of Pilgrim's journey; while the Fifth reflects the sublimity, peace and ultimate joy Pilgrim seeks in the Celestial City.

¹⁹ Quoted in Ottoway, 36.

²⁰ Schwartz, 106.

Related Works: *Dona Nobis Pacem* and *Sancta Civitas*

Dona Nobis Pacem takes much of its text from Walt Whitman. Somewhat like Vaughan Williams, Whitman was a professing atheist, yet used traditional Christian symbols and texts to voice his belief in mankind. This concept of a belief in mankind appealed to Vaughan Williams, and that concept is explored in *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *Sancta Civitas*, and especially in *Pilgrim*.

While these works have little thematic material in common, there are dramatic moments that are correlated. For instance, the funeral procession in *Dona Nobis Pacem* and the execution march in the Vanity Fair scene of *Pilgrim* resemble each other musically with funereal march music and timpani beating out the tonic and dominant pitches incessantly. Also the “Alleluia” section of *Dona Nobis Pacem* and the arrival of Pilgrim into the Celestial City are similar in the jubilation of the music and the chorus, and the continuous swelling of sound as it builds to the climactic moment in each work, then drops down to an intimate moment where a single voice (Bunyan in *Pilgrim* and the soprano soloist in *Dona Nobis Pacem*) gives an epilogue.

Understanding *The Pilgrim’s Progress*

Just before *Pilgrim’s* premier, Vaughan Williams said to Ursula, “It’s what I meant and there it is.”²¹ But exactly what did he mean? He has left us with a paradox because Ursula called him a “cheerful agnostic” yet he worked on *Pilgrim*, a Christian story, for most of his career. The central, moral, Christian message of Bunyan’s book and Vaughan Williams’s morality come through clearly: that of the striving of man for

²¹ Heffer, 124.

something better than this world — for exaltation. As Richard Morrison wrote in *The Times* review of the 2008 Sadler’s Wells production in *The Times*, “the story is such a fervent affirmation of steadfast goodness over grasping materialism,” and the allegory is about “a summons to proclaim the virtues of truth, faith, hope and charity over the lurid distractions of the world.”²²

The composer’s treatment of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* reflects Vaughan Williams the socialist, humanist and spiritual agnostic. He substituted Bunyan’s difficult journey with a much easier one, and any sort of dogma is replaced with the mode of English spirituality in which he grew up – ceremonialism and pageantry.²³

Vaughan Williams changed the name of the protagonist from Christian to Pilgrim and explains that this will make the message of the work more universal, appealing to people of any religion, or no religion at all. But it is difficult to discern the universality of the work because the work is fundamentally and overtly Christian in nature – the text frequently quotes the Bible, and the symbolism is Christian. It is universal only insofar as a person is able to look beyond the language and symbols and glimpse the message of hope.

Pilgrim has only had eight major productions in its 57-year existence. Reasons for its neglect have ranged from complaints of its non-traditional structure to its static tableaux and lack of drama, or that Vaughan Williams’s musical language is antiquated and provincial. This idea is echoed by some early critics who stated flatly that they

²² Richard Morrison, “The Pilgrim’s Progress at Sadler’s Wells,” *The Times*, June 23, 2008.

²³ Matthew Louis Kickasola, “Vaughan Williams and *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in the 20th Century” (master’s thesis, Washington University, 2004), 3.

expected *Pilgrim* to be another Sixth Symphony and that *Pilgrim* was a throwback to an earlier period of Vaughan Williams's compositional style.²⁴

So how should we view the work? Rob Ainsley describes Vaughan Williams's music as the place where "ancient and modern blend together."²⁵ Of *Pilgrim* Richard Hickox says, "His works have a spiritual radiance, and none more so than this. ... He put his absolute heart into it. ... It has the essence of VW [Vaughan Williams] – the spiritual quality, drama, the dissonance, the anger. He's not the quintessential pastoral composer that people think he was. He was an angry, passionate and explosive composer."²⁶

Morality or Opera?

Pilgrim should be viewed as a morality, not an opera. Specifically it is a modern morality, an updated genre. Medieval moralities did not have singing, and were not performed outside. Vaughan Williams took the concept of a morality, moved it off the steps of the church and into the concert hall and set it to music.

Morality plays were an offshoot of the miracle plays of the Middle Ages. They aimed to teach Christian doctrine, morals and ideals. A morality, as defined by William George Ward, is "a play enforcing a moral truth or lesson by means of the speech and action of characters which are personified abstractions—figures representing vices and

²⁴ "If we hoped for an operatic counterpart to the wonderful Sixth Symphony of 1948, we were in for a disappointment." *The New Statesman*, May 5, 1951.

²⁵ Rob Ainsley, "Ralph Vaughan Williams Symphony No. 5, Mass in G Minor," *BBC Music Magazine* July 2008, 40.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

virtues, qualities of the human mind, or abstract conceptions in general.”²⁷ Bunyan’s Christian, and Vaughan Williams’s *Pilgrim*, represent Everyman. There are no individual characters; each represents a vice, a virtue or human characteristic. *The Pilgrim’s Progress* teaches moral lessons. According to this definition, *Pilgrim* is a morality.

Many critics claimed *Pilgrim* was better suited as a pageant in a cathedral, (for example, “one must risk saying that anywhere—preferably a cathedral pageant—would be a better setting for this work”)²⁸ but that was a concept Vaughan Williams vehemently opposed. Medieval morality plays were not performed *in* a church, but outside, on the steps. With *Pilgrim*, Vaughan Williams expanded the medieval morality genre and re-invented it for the stage. According to stage director David Edwards:

This work is a remarkable reinvention of the mediaeval Mystery [morality] Play for the modern era. ... As a devout humanist, Vaughan Williams transformed the story of Bunyan’s hero into a tale for people of all faiths and creeds. The Pilgrim’s trials depict the striving for enlightenment that is at the heart of all religions.²⁹

This statement sums up Vaughan Williams’s vision for a work with a universal message.

In his dissertation “An Analysis and Case for Performance of The Pilgrim’s Progress,” Michael Doonan writes a very detailed analysis of *Pilgrim* and at the end gives some compelling reasons for the work’s performance. At one point he quotes a letter from Dr. Clayne Robison, retired professor of voice at Brigham Young University, who sang the role of Pilgrim in 1969 and 1970. In the letter, he writes:

²⁷ *Catholic Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. “Moralities,” (by K.M. Warren, transcribed by Kenneth M. Caldwell), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10557b.htm> (accessed October 27, 2006).

²⁸ P.H.-W. “*The Pilgrim’s Progress*” *Manchester Guardian*, April 27, 1951.

²⁹ David Edwards, stage director of 2008 Sadler’s Wells production; quote printed in *Vaughan Williams: The Pioneering Pilgrim*, commemorative program for the 50th anniversary of Ralph Vaughan Williams’s death, Philharmonia Orchestra, 2008.

The most outstanding strengths of *The Pilgrim's Progress* lie in its immediate musico-emotional accessibility to a lay audience (Vaughan Williams's hallmark) and its unabashed, straightforward, idealistic moralizing in an artistic world filled with doubt, cynicism, negativism, obscurity and darkness.³⁰

Robison's comment refers to Vaughan Williams's appeal to the layman—to Everyman.

Vaughan Williams believed that an artist could not shut himself away to create his art; he must live, work and breathe among his countrymen to produce something of value to them.³¹ Heffer writes:

Despite his atheism he was a deeply humane figure, bred with a strong sense of *noblesse oblige*, and also harbouring a deep sentimentality towards his environment, landscape and fellow countrymen. All these qualities would manifest themselves in his music.³²

Earlier in the same thought, Heffer says that Vaughan Williams was

... all too susceptible, however, to the aesthetic beauty of Anglican ritual, of the Prayer Book, the King James Bible and church music. His recognition of its quality was part of his instinctive sympathy with the culture of England.³³

The question arises: is a deep understanding of English culture and history necessary to understand this piece? Given that figures no less influential than Koussevitsky and Stokowski championed Vaughan Williams's works, the answer should be no; the music should speak for itself. However having an understanding and a

³⁰ Michael Robert Doonan, "The Pilgrim's Progress: An Analytical Study and Case for Performance of the Opera by Ralph Vaughan Williams" (doctoral diss., Indiana University, 1980), 339.

³¹ Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Should Music Be National?" *National Music and Other Essays*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 3–4. The whole concept of art being created by one person, insulated from others, is repudiated in this essay.)

³² Heffer, 7.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7.

“feeling” for England, its countryside, and its character, both at the different eras of Bunyan and Vaughan Williams, aid and enhance in interpreting *Pilgrim*.

Although *Pilgrim* has never yet been staged outside an English-speaking country,³⁴ it would be a major asset to any opera company’s repertoire. It only awaits someone with vision to produce it.

Doonan quotes a letter to him from Max Golightly, the stage producer from the Brigham Young University production:

Since it is such a spiritual piece, anyone who did not have a spiritual interpretation nor a desire to present the spiritual aspects of it, could very well do it great injustice. It is not just a great opera, it is a great spiritual musical message.³⁵

As Dyneley Hussey writes:

The Pilgrim’s Progress ... deals not with intrigue or sexual passion, two stock subjects of conventional opera. Its theme is the progress of man’s soul from this world to that which is to come. ... It is less concerned with physical movements than with inward conflicts. On that plane – the plane on which the composer has chosen to move, ... the work seemed to me dramatic and deeply moving.³⁶

The message of *Pilgrim* is a spiritual one, but for Vaughan Williams, it is not a religious one. Herbert Murrill sums it up well: “What Vaughan Williams ultimately did was bring a secular art form to Bunyan, and spirituality to the world of opera.”³⁷

³⁴ See Appendix A for a Timeline and list of known performances of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

³⁵ Doonan, 342.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 343.

³⁷ Kickasola, 45.

Other Comparisons

The Pilgrim's Progress was not nearly the anomaly it was taken to be at the premier. Other works with similar themes, dramatic elements and characterizations exist in the repertoire, even some contemporary with Vaughan Williams. Murrill gives some insight into the precedent of opera like *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He writes:

In the nature of things it can happen only very rarely that a work achieves greatness through its sheer disregard of the conventions of its medium. ... He positively disregards theatrical and operatic convention. ... So I say that if *Pilgrim's Progress* achieves greatness – as I think it does – it achieves it *through* its disregard of stage convention, and not *in spite* of this. ... It is not unsuited to the opera house, where the more exotic religious dramas of Wagner, of d'Annunzio and Debussy, of Claudel and Honegger have been seen.³⁸

Kickosola points out:

Consider the ritual pageantry in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal*, or Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*; Vaughan Williams's approach to the work was not completely foreign to the opera house.³⁹

Some superficial similarities exist between *Pilgrim*, *Parsifal*, and other quest stories. Like *Parsifal*, *Pilgrim* is a story of a man's search for redemption and salvation. The ultimate goal for Bunyan's Christian is to reach the Celestial City and commune directly with God. His journey is linear: he must leave the City of Destruction, never to return. On the other hand, for Parsifal, the journey is circular: he must leave in order to return and complete his quest.

Examples of morality tales being set to music, contemporary to Vaughan Williams, are Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* and *The Rake's Progress*. (Though

³⁸ Herbert Murrill, "Vaughan Williams's *Pilgrim*," *Music & Letters*, Vol. 32, No. 4. (Oct., 1951), 324.

³⁹ Kickosola, 75.

Vaughan Williams had little respect for Stravinsky's music, calling his techniques "monkey tricks.")⁴⁰

The two characters are very similar: Pilgrim is fairly two-dimensional, and there is rarely a question of him renouncing his quest and turning aside, even in the face of the temptations of Vanity Fair. Parsifal is rounded out in ways that Pilgrim/Christian is not. Parsifal's first actions are errors in not recognizing the Grail for what it is. They both retain the essence of Everyman: we do not know the history of either character. Why did Pilgrim leave the City of Destruction? What motivates him to stay the course? The same questions exist for Parsifal. What motivates him to seek the Grail?

Pilgrim and Parsifal are both passive heroes. They are not proactive or very decisive in achieving their goals. In large measure everything happens *to* them. Pilgrim rarely moves forward without divine help. Even against Apollyon, he is only victorious because of the sword given to him in the Arming scene. Parsifal is much the same; he defeats Kundry and Klingsor more out of naïve ignorance rather than through his own merit or skill.

Though Pilgrim and Parsifal may be considered as Christ-figures in some respects, they each fall short because of their relative passivity. They do not exhibit risk-taking or self-sacrifice. Other heroes from similar allegorical tales are better attuned to Christological comparison.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Quote from the letters of Vaughan Williams, cited by Barone, 62.

⁴¹ In Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, three Christ figures appear: Gandalf, Aragorn and Frodo. Gandalf is the theological leader and goes through his death and resurrection. Aragorn is the uncrowned king (also representing King Arthur), and Frodo is the one who suffers for others. Frodo is very active in achieving his quest for universal redemption, Peter Jackson and Elijah Wood's passive portrayal of Frodo notwithstanding.)

Like Wagner, Vaughan Williams spent a large portion of his life thinking about, ruminating over, and intending to set his chosen book to music. Unlike Wagner, Vaughan Williams did not consider the source author as “a poor confused medieval poet.”⁴² Each composer adapted, rewrote, and changed texts, dialogue and other elements to suit the music. Vaughan Williams added scriptural texts and other adapted texts (with the help of Ursula Wood) while Wagner wrote his own libretto, even adding plot lines not found in Wolfram’s original.⁴³

Vaughan Williams was familiar with Wagner’s works, and similarities can be drawn in comparisons of both the stories and the music. *Parsifal* has enjoyed wide success in its lifetime; yet *Pilgrim*, while visiting many of the same themes, has not. Vastly differing visions and presentations of *Parsifal* have been successful. However, this does not seem to have been the case to date with *Pilgrim*.

The following chapters will examine why by looking closely at three productions of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*: the 1951 premier at Covent Garden, the 2006 production of Trinity Lyric Opera, and the 2008 production at Sadler’s Wells. Each production is very different; yet only two – Trinity Lyric Opera and Sadler’s Wells – were considered successful. The difference is that in the latter two, a unity of vision existed between the stage director and the conductor. In the 1951 premier, no such unity existed – the stage director continually disregarded the vision of the composer in favor of his own vision of Bunyan’s book.

⁴² Lucy Beckett, *Richard Wagner, Parsifal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 3.

⁴³ The device of Parsifal going from carefree youth to old man, laden with knowledge and grief and thus inheriting Amfortas’ position, is not an overt plot thread in Wolfram.

Any production requires a unity of vision between the dramatic and visual elements and the musical ones in order to succeed.

CHAPTER 3

GESTATION OF *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

Vaughan Williams composed music for *The Pilgrim's Progress* at least four times in his career. He began in 1906 by providing incidental music for a community production in Reigate based on Bunyan's book. The second outing was in 1922, when he wrote his one-act opera on the scene *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*, which later became scene 2 in the fourth act. Then in 1942 he wrote incidental music for a BBC radio production of the book, his music this time consisting mainly of material from *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*. The final treatment culminated in the 1951 premier of the completed morality.

Reasons for the failure of the 1951 premier will be explored in this chapter. Briefly, these reasons are: lack of drama, static tableaux, and a lack of a unified vision between the Covent Garden administration, the stage director and the composer.

Vaughan Williams's 1951 version was greatly influenced by the Reigate production of 1906. Nearly every scene from the Reigate production is reproduced in the 1951 version. Some of these influences, though effective in the amateur Reigate production, proved fatal to the Covent Garden premier. One instance is the use of static tableaux. This device did not appeal to the critics of the Covent Garden production. This does not mean, however, that the work itself is inherently flawed.

Initial reactions to the first production were not favorable because the work did not fit comfortably into the standard framework of operas. After the first performance, Vaughan Williams told Ursula, “they won’t like it, they don’t want an opera with no heroine and no love duets – and I don’t care. It’s what I meant and there it is.”⁴⁴

Lack of Unified Vision

The cause of the failure of the 1951 premiere does not lie in the music, but in the staging and theatrical elements and designs. These were conceived by stage director Nevill Coghill and set designer Hal Burton. Though Coghill had some experience, this was his first time directing any production of this magnitude, or anything in a venue of this type. Moreover, he was not the first choice for the job (Dennis Arundell, who later directed the 1954 Cambridge production was unavailable in 1951). After reading letters from Coghill to Burton, it seems clear that Coghill was intent on remaining very true to Bunyan’s book, and on this point had several differences of opinion with Vaughan Williams. Perhaps Vaughan Williams could have been more forceful in promoting his own preferences for the production, but he was not.

In one of the first letters to Burton, Coghill writes:

I shall use all gentle persuasion with him [Vaughan Williams] and shall hope for the alliance of V-W. If all fails however I mean to withdraw. In such a work, as we agreed, co-operation between producer and designer is not enough. What is needed is an identity of vision subordinated to Bunyan and V-W.⁴⁵

However, as the letters progress, it becomes more apparent that Coghill’s vision was more subordinate to Bunyan than to the composer, and it is significant that in the

⁴⁴ Heffer, 124.

⁴⁵ Nevill Coghill to Hal Burton December 8, 1950, British Library, GB-Lb1 MS Add. 69448 A.

letter he lists Bunyan before Vaughan Williams. Coghill's notes on the production make clear that his first loyalty was to Bunyan's book, and Vaughan Williams's vision came second. He wrote a full page of notes discussing the book, but with only a cursory comment about the music. He writes:

Whoever reads *The Pilgrim's Progress* feels himself to be moving through a clear, natural landscape and meeting with actual people whose natures are precisely indicated by their names. This is what one might expect from *The Author's Apology for his Book* in which he says:

*Solidity indeed becomes the Pen
Of him that writeth things Divine to men.*

... Bunyan's sharp, uncomplicated vision therefore took its images from his own actual world. The house which traditionally inspired his conception of The House Beautiful still stands (Houghton Towers at Ampthill). ... He saw Apollyon in precise, familiar detail: "He was clothed in scales like a fish, he had Wings like a Dragon, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion." ... I have sought in this production, therefore, to be faithful to the conceptions of the Author and Composer as well as to the great tradition [of English mysticism discussed earlier in his notes] and have aimed at creating a sense of the holy, as well as of the unholy, by a clear naturalism and beauty, avoiding surrealistic fantasy, symbolist vagueness and other stylistic freaks of suggestion, whether in action, costume or decor, because I believe such things are hostile to the immediate sincerity and style of the work.⁴⁶

By tying the set design and costuming so closely with such specifically English places and landscapes, Coghill's own words oppose the composer's stated wishes that the work be universal, applicable and accessible to everyone. Bunyan calls his book an Allegory. Vaughan Williams uses the idea of the allegory and takes it further to create a Morality, where "surrealistic fantasy" and "symbolist vagueness"⁴⁷ are not only apropos, but essential, to the goal. In a letter to Edward Dent, Vaughan Williams wrote what should have been said to Coghill in the beginning:

⁴⁶ Neville Coghill to Hal Burton, not dated, British Library, GB-Lb1 MS Add. 69448 A folio 68.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

You refer a good deal to Bunyan, but remember that this is not Bunyan, but only based on Bunyan. He would certainly have had a fit at some of the things that I do! What we have got to decide is whether it is good and effective drama without any reference to Bunyan.⁴⁸

In fact, Coghill had conceived most of the set design and costuming before he had ever really heard any of the score. In another letter he writes:

R. V-W writes to say he was “much thrilled” by our “imaginative treatment of the opera most of which I approve of thoroughly and the rest I shall probably come to like later.” He urges me (and how rightly!) to get to know the music before setting a hard and fast scheme of production.⁴⁹

Since his letters to Burton with detailed descriptions of set designs predate Coghill’s actually getting to know the music, it is fairly certain that Coghill’s concept was more attuned to Bunyan than to Vaughan Williams. We cannot ascertain which parts of Coghill’s treatment Vaughan Williams still needed to “come to like later,” but despite the “imaginative treatment” Coghill’s set designs actually seem rather unimaginative. In his first extant letter to Burton, dated December 28, 1950, he wrote the following (the entire letter is reproduced in Appendix B, and gives us a feel for Burton’s concept and his undeniable enthusiasm for the project):

Prologue. Prison scene played in spot. As agreed.

Act I.sc. 1. You suggest linen-panelled sky lit from behind with groundrow landscape, featuring (at end of scene) wicket gate and lantern.

ACT I

SCENE 2

Exactly as you say: HOUSE BEAUTIFUL set on steps & rostrums behind backcloth before play begins in a landscape of cut-cloths, ground-rows and back-cloth.

ACT II

SCENE 1

⁴⁸ Michael Kennedy, *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, Rev. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), 218. Dent was a lifelong friend and fellow musician from school, with whom Vaughan Williams traded letters regarding the premier of *Pilgrim*.

⁴⁹ Neville Coghill to Hal Burton, December 28, 1950, British Library, GB-Lb1 MS Add. 69448 A.

Scene 2

Hillside. *Cut-cloth frame as before with luminous backcloth. Agreed; also agreed that we think over the Apollyon shadow-battle further before disputing it with V-W. Agreed to avoid unnecessary blackouts if permitted by V-W.*⁵⁰ Note

INTERVALS. Note *I absolutely agree with you that we run on in one continuity without interval until after the VANITY FAIR scene, for that is the natural break; it is Pilgrim's last view of the World. The next Act opens with his first intimations of Heaven.*

ACT III scene 1 *Vanity Fair.*

Red glow through downstage gauze, later flown. Booths on steps. Giant statue, court house. The whole framed in a cut-cloth. At end of scene lights fade to blackout leaving PILG on stage.

ACT III

Scene 2

Prison scene. *You suggest gauzed cut-cloth behind PILG during first four bars.*

Act IV sc. 1 Edge of a Wood. *Cut-cloth, ground-rows, back-cloth.*

ACT IV sc 2 THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS

Fly downstage gauze. Yes. You say "no clear idea of this scene yet . . . something in the nature of a framed gauze to allow for the vision of the HEAVENLY GATES in sc 3 Also some provision for the RIVER OF DEATH"

ACT IV sc 3 *I agree that this is to be, and will be, the most beautiful scene of all. But I do not see it quite clearly yet. I also agree that Bunyan will be a help.*

yours

Nevill

From this letter, we learn that Coghill designed nearly every scene with cut-cloth and gauze. With these, he makes good use of a fly system, thus enabling quick scene changes, but because of his inexperience working in such a highly visible professional arena, he also gives all scenes a homogeneity – a sameness – that belies the vastly different landscapes Pilgrim traverses. This also gives credence to one reviewer's

⁵⁰ Bold added. Note that even here Coghill is already going against Vaughan Williams's wishes for Apollyon and determined to not even try the composer's ideas of blackout and tableaux.

comment that the scenery “rarely rises above the banality of a second-rate pantomime, the result is like a local church pageant.”⁵¹

The next letter reinforces the fact that Coghill is more concerned with Bunyan’s book than with Vaughan Williams’s wishes.

Drishane, Skibbereen, Cork. 21 Dec 50

Dear Hal,

[portion omitted is unrelated material concerning weather in Cork, etc.]

2. Notes from a re-reading of Bunyan

(a) Doleful Creatures “These beasts range in the night for their prey” (LIGHTING) “we also saw these Hobgoblins, satyrs and Dragons of the Pit

(f) Apollyon “Hideous to behold”, he was clothed on scales like a fish . . he had wings like a Dragon and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion and he straddled over the whole breath of the way.⁵²

This letter shows even more clearly Coghill’s allegiance to Bunyan’s book rather than to Vaughan Williams’s concept of the production, which called for a shadowy figure for Apollyon, not a fish-scaled dragon.

The Daily Express invited-guest critic, Cecil Smith, editor of *Musical America*, had this to say regarding the premier:

All the more painful in the face of these musical excellences, was the crudity of the visual presentation. Hal Burton’s settings were, for the most part, of the quality of calendar art.

Nevill Coghill, the producer, put the crowds either in V-shape, or in a solid, undigested mass. He encouraged Mr. Matters to use the gestures of a rural vicar, and in general seemed to be drawing on Sunday school picture

⁵¹ Unnamed London Music Critic, “Vaughan Williams Opera,” *The Scotsman*, April 30, 1951.

⁵² Neville Coghill to Hal Burton, December 21, 1950, British Library, GB-Lb1 MS Add. 69448 A.

books for his inspiration. The B.B.C. listeners were the lucky ones. For them the music was not tarnished by the staging.⁵³

The first sentence here summarizes the main problems at the premiere: Smith praises Vaughan Williams's work as "musical excellences," and at the same time roundly condemns Coghill's efforts as "calendar art." To emphasize the point, Smith points out that the "lucky ones" – the BBC listeners – could listen without being forced to watch.

The lack of unity between Coghill's and Vaughan Williams's visions was the root of the failure of this premier. By failing to put musical concerns at the fore, with the composer's vision, instructions and wishes first, Coghill not only jeopardized the production, but effectively ruined it. Rather than enjoying a lengthy run at Covent Garden and then a tour of the country, *The Pilgrim's Progress* lasted only three nights with only one half-hearted revival a year later. It has yet to overcome the reputation it was saddled with at the premier.

Having a "unity of vision" is not simply some insubstantial concept. When a creator invites an audience to employ more than one sense (e.g., vision and hearing), then all sensory stimuli must be mutually supporting in theme, perspective, and quality – the overall vision and message of the work of art.

The need for a unity of vision can be substantiated by a common model in sociology. In the fields of sociology and organizational behavior, there is a continuum representing the five bases of social power: (1) coercive: one party holds fear over the other, (2) reward: one party works expecting a reward from the other, (3) legitimate: one party holds a title that deserves respect regardless of who holds the title, (4) expert: one party is recognized as an expert in a given area and should be respected, and (5) referent:

⁵³ Cecil Smith, "You Missed Very Little By Radio," (*The Daily Express*, 28 April 1951).

both parties share a vision or goal and are willing to do anything to accomplish that shared vision.⁵⁴

The base that achieves its goal consistently (and the one that concerns this subject) is the referent power. Vaughan Williams may or may not have been able to overrule Coghill's staging decisions that ran counter to Vaughan Williams's score. Even had he been able to, the result would not have been satisfactory because of discord amongst the artists. The only recipe for success is the referent model. Coghill should have taken up Vaughan Williams's vision and imparted that to the performers.

As we will see in chapters 6, 7, and 8, the successful performances of *Pilgrim* were those who enjoyed a referent model: a shared vision of what the composer intended.

⁵⁴ J.R.P. French and B. Raven, "The Bases of Social Power," in D. Cartwright (ed.), *Studies in Social Power* (Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, 1959), 155-165.

CHAPTER 4

CRITICAL RESPONSE

The critics who commented on the 1951 premiere fell into two camps: those who saw the performance live, and those who listened to it on BBC Radio. Radio listeners praised the work.⁵⁵ But those who saw the live performance were disappointed. The critics who saw the performance were the ones who criticized its lack of drama and labeled it as more suitable for the cathedral than the stage. The reviewer from the *Daily Worker* was harshest, writing:

27 April 1951 – “It Should Have Been a Ballet” – Pilgrim’s Progress (Covent Garden) “This morality falls between the stools of oratorio and symphonic poem with tableaux.

Had Vaughan Williams chosen ballet for his medium he would have got nearer the heart of Bunyan’s work in half the time.

Indeed, had more of his pictures the actuality of the episode vividly dominated by Mr. And Mrs. By-ends, presented by Parry Jones and Jean Watson, the work might hope to survive the exigencies of stage presentation.

I fear that lavish spectacle will not prevent this work from ending up as a concert suite.

The composer received a generous ovation. – H.G.S.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Cecil Sharp’s headline read: “You Missed Very Little By Radio” (*Daily Express*, April 27, 1951.)

⁵⁶ *Daily Worker*, 27 April 1951.

In his 2003 article on *Pilgrim*, Nathaniel Lew outlines in detail many issues that led to the failure of the premier⁵⁷. I dispute his inference that the work is inherently or fatally flawed.

The first performance did not live up to the composer's vision. According to Roy Douglas, who prepared the score and parts,

Alas, the production was a lamentable failure. Musically the standard of performance was reasonably good – V.W. had nothing but praise for the young conductor, Leonard Hancock, and for many of the singers. But the scenery and costumes, the staging, lighting, and production generally – all fell far short of the composer's conception. It is, I am sure, true to say that this shabby miscreation of his beloved *Pilgrim's Progress* was the bitterest disappointment of his musical life, and those of us who were close to him at the time felt very sad to see him so despondent.⁵⁸

But Vaughan Williams's despondency was unnecessary, according to the composer's friend Edward Dent. In a letter dated April 27, 1951, Dent wrote him:

I hope you were pleased with the performance of the *Pilgrim* last night, and with the way in which the audience were completely absorbed by it and gave it the tribute of a definite silence at the end. I felt very conscious all the time of the audience's tense concentration on the work.⁵⁹

These two statements lend credence to my position that the staging, not the music, nor the composer's vision, was the culprit in the premier's failure.

Dent and Vaughan Williams discussed the *Apollyon* scene extensively. In their correspondence they agreed that the scene contained several problems. First, Dent said that Apollyon's physical appearance in the scene was unconvincing. He suggested that this was due to the staging having ignored Vaughan Williams's directions. Second, the

⁵⁷ Nathaniel G. Lew, "Words and music that are forever England: *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the pitfalls of nostalgia" *Vaughan Williams Essays*, ed. Byron Adams and Robin Wells (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2003).

⁵⁸ Roy Douglas, *Working With R.V.W.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 20.

⁵⁹ Kennedy, 208.

stage designers, who were non-musicians, did not or could not grasp the musical concerns, particularly how the music was written to accommodate the blackouts in *Apollyon*, well enough to stage this scene adequately. Third, Dent did not understand Vaughan Williams's rationale for Apollyon's long speeches on one pitch, and thought the device ineffective. Dent speculated that it was probably unclear to the rest of the audience as well. Last, Pilgrim's fight with Apollyon seemed visually unconvincing and unbelievable.⁶⁰

Dent agreed with Vaughan Williams that a cathedral was not the proper place for a performance. But he was not impressed with Covent Garden in the production, either:

Of course the architectural environment of Covent Garden auditorium is definitely hostile to it, but it is a technical matter of lighting and stage-management to get over that . . . All the difficulties of the *Pilgrim* are purely technical and can be solved by skill, intelligence and ingenuity.⁶¹

More testimony that staging and directorial mistakes were made in the premier comes from Igor Kennaway, who directed the production of *Pilgrim* at the Royal Northern College of Music in 1991. He wrote the following:

Having spent the majority of my professional life conducting opera, I have never made a distinction between the visual and the musical elements which contribute towards, what ideally, should be a dramatic entity. I have worked with many directors, some of whom wished to impose their own unrelated and often perverse ideas on a work as written, often ignoring the music and the issues which face those who perform it. The rare practitioners of the art of direction concern themselves with revealing the material at hand and are not only aware of the plot and the text, but also of the music which gives life to the drama. Such directors go beyond a purely visual staging.⁶²

⁶⁰ Kennedy, 212.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁶² Igor Kennaway, "The Pilgrim's Progress" *RVW Journal* 35 (June 1996): 10.

When Kennaway met with Ursula Vaughan Williams and director Joseph Ward prior to the 1991 production at the Royal Northern College of Music, they all agreed that the overall concept of the work should be to “explore the visionary nature of the music drama.”⁶³

Kennaway’s statement suggests that conductor and stage director should together “reveal the material at hand,” and be aware of the plot, the text, and “the music which gives life to the drama.” In his inexperience, Nevill Coghill did exactly the opposite: he ignored the music in favor of his own view of Bunyan’s book. For no clear reason, Vaughan Williams, Roy Douglas, and Leonard Hancock were unwilling – or perhaps unable – to step in and defend the vision of the music.

Dent and Vaughan Williams also discussed the *Vanity Fair* scene and agreed it was too short and needed more material to make it aesthetically satisfying. Dent suggested enlarging the scene prior to Pilgrim’s entrance and making more use of the characters at Vanity Fair, exploring their wares in greater detail. He also suggested enlarging the role of Judas Iscariot, pointing out that such a crucial, pivotal and malignant figure in Christianity should receive prominent treatment in the music. Finally, he suggested to Vaughan Williams that the homogeneous tempi throughout the work grew tiresome. Dent suggested small adjustments in certain places to aid in the flow of the opera.⁶⁴

Evidence of these adjustments is found in the piano-vocal score at the British Library, which is the proof copy for Oxford University Press. Adrian Boult went through

⁶³ Kennaway, 10.

⁶⁴ Kennedy, 212.

this score in the early 1950s and amended it for the publisher, adding tempo markings, changing some of them, and copying in markings from the full score.

One week after the premier, the *Telegraph* critic (unnamed in the article, the byline reads: From Our Music Critic) returned to his own criticisms of *Pilgrim*. He argued:

... that the work was an ‘aftermath’, and that in the symphonies – the previous three in particular – the emotions that should have been expressed and realised by the *Pilgrim* had already been worked through; perhaps if Vaughan Williams had stirred himself to complete it earlier, its reception would have been better and its reputation more secure. However, by the time it was unveiled, his own art had already moved past it.⁶⁵

There are conflicting accounts over the reception of *Pilgrim*. According to Douglas, Vaughan Williams was despondent, and the audience did not know what to make of the piece.⁶⁶ On the other hand is Dent’s account that the audience was in rapt silence because of their awe over the work. Dent’s optimism was likely based on his own personal reaction to the work, and on his deference of his friendship with Vaughan Williams. Given that the work was only performed three times before Covent Garden pulled it from its future schedule, one may believe that accounts of the premier’s failure are closer to the truth. Martin Cooper wrote in the *Spectator*, “it must conform to the demands of the theatre or be judged a failure. It might be given at a Three Choirs Festival in cathedral precincts and succeed.”⁶⁷ Vaughan Williams vehemently responded that it was intended as a stage work. Dent agreed whole-heartedly, writing:

Newman [one of the reviewers] said it wanted the environment of a cathedral, but I am sure he is wrong; that is just what a conventional-

⁶⁵ Kennedy, 212.

⁶⁶ Douglas, 20.

⁶⁷ Martin Cooper, “Contemporary arts – music,” *Spectator*, (May 4, 1951): 585. Cited in Lew, 191.

minded critic *would* say. I am sure it would be dreadfully boring as an oratorio, and hard pews would make it unbearable! It does not want a cathedral environment, because Bunyan stands for “pure” religion without the external decorations of a church.⁶⁸

On the other hand, other critics felt that *Pilgrim* should be staged as a full-blown, traditional opera. For example, Kickasola points out that “The plot alone of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* lends itself easily enough to staged production – duel, murder, prison, narrow escapes, etc.”⁶⁹

In his book *Vaughan Williams*, Simon Heffer wrote:

The composer was angered by suggestions that it should be staged in a cathedral rather than in an opera house, but to an extent he had already contradicted himself by denying it the name of ‘opera’ in favour of ‘morality’.⁷⁰

Publicly Vaughan Williams preferred to call *Pilgrim* a ‘morality,’ though he did call it an opera in private and in some correspondence.

Heffer also noted the following:

The *Daily Telegraph* critic said that the production was ‘so wanting in the dramatic element – so anti-theatrical’. It certainly would have benefitted from not having to meet the conventional expectations of opera, and instead to have taken its place as a latter-day *Gerontius*.⁷¹ This, however, the composer was beyond seeing.⁷²

Heffer, like so many others, did not realize what a medieval morality was, or how Vaughan Williams had reinvented the genre.

⁶⁸ Kennedy, 209.

⁶⁹ Kickasola, 20.

⁷⁰ Heffer, 125.

⁷¹ *The Dream of Gerontius* by Edward Elgar.

⁷² Heffer, 125.

Not all the reviews were bad. Geoffrey Cumberlege, the publisher of Oxford University Press at the time, wrote the following in a letter to Dyneley Hussey, who had written a good review in *The Listener*:

I have read a certain number of the reviews and I felt so strongly with you that all the hard-boiled critics had been looking over their shoulders to see that the others were saying, and were all a good deal embarrassed by something that was frankly religious. I saw it the other night and I thought it was a most moving experience.⁷³

Only two years after the premier, Vaughan Williams appeared to abandon *Pilgrim*: when Michael Kennedy mentioned his admiration of the work, the composer replied, "The Pilgrim is dead, and that's that."⁷⁴ This remark is significant because it shows that Vaughan Williams had given up hope of seeing *Pilgrim* become a staple of British opera. He had moved on. By this time he was deeply involved in writing the music for film; namely, his future Seventh Symphony, the *Sinfonia Antartica*. The passing of his wife, Adeline, had also turned his mind away from *Pilgrim*.

Abandoning the work was a mistake, however. The premiere had simply failed to reveal the depth and potential of *Pilgrim*. Part of this is the producers' fault: Nevill Coghill had been hired as the stage director only five months before the premier and had never staged a production of this magnitude, nor anything at the Royal Opera House. His experience was in regional, amateur and student theatre. Noting this, Cumberlege wrote:

Compounding matters was the noticeable lack of enthusiasm from the administration of Covent Garden. In the end, because the preparation of the score and the details of the production were left unfinished for so long,

⁷³ Geoffrey Cumberlege to Dyneley Hussey, May 7, 1951. This letter is literally stuck inside the first printing of the piano vocal score which has corrections made by Adrian Boult. Held at the British Library.

⁷⁴ Heffer, 125.

the rehearsal period was rushed and by some accounts unsatisfactory, with predictably deleterious results for the performances.⁷⁵

Part of it might have been Vaughan Williams's fault as well. In spite of Vaughan Williams's objection to so much of the ceremonial staging, Lew rightly observes that:

Thus, although undoubtedly many of Coghill and Burton's design and directorial decisions, especially the concretizing of so much ritual action in specific historical terms, were poor, some of the responsibility for the (ultimately unsuccessful) visual element of the production must be ascribed to Vaughan Williams's own lack of imagination in this regard.⁷⁶

Unfortunately, Vaughan Williams allowed Coghill, Burton and the Covent Garden administration to overpower whatever imagination he had in favor of their own lack of imagination, including Coghill's inadequate skills in staging a higher caliber production, and the administration's lack of enthusiasm for seeing the work come to life.

⁷⁵ Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W. A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 306. Quoted in Lew, 187.

⁷⁶ Lew, 190.

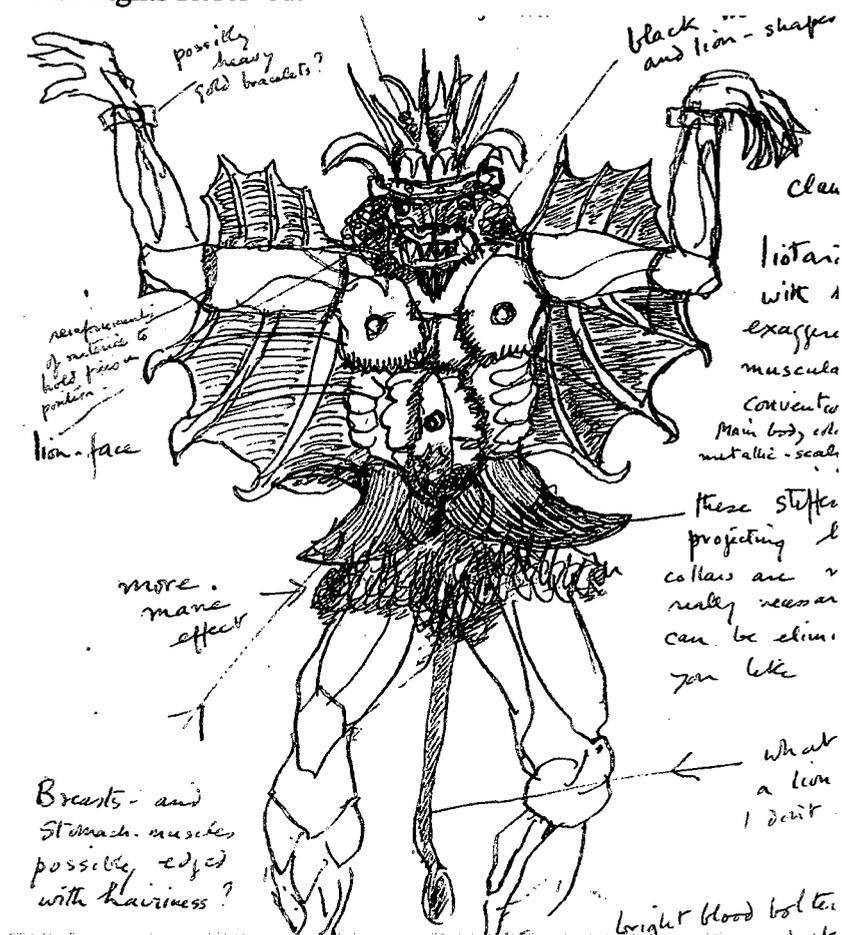
CHAPTER 5

PROBLEMATIC AREAS

One staging device that caused discussion from critics, and even from Vaughan Williams's friends, was the frequent use of *tableaux* or *tableaux vivantes*. Tableaux were used to recreate a painting or picture on stage, and its performers do not speak or move. The most striking use of tableaux in *Pilgrim* is in the Apollyon scene, in which Vaughan Williams wrote his music specifically to be used with blackout and tableau techniques. Pilgrim strikes a pose opposite Apollyon's shadow, after which a blackout occurs and the characters are seen in a new position showing the next stage of the conflict between them.

A related issue for the Apollyon scene was the conflict between Vaughan Williams and the inexperienced Coghill. Coghill did not like Vaughan Williams's stage directions for an ominous shadow of Apollyon and opted instead for a corporeal figure. This decision resulted in a papier-mâché headdress (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Coghill's sketch for the Apollyon costume. GB-Lb1 MS Add. 6948 A-B British Library ©British Library Board. All Rights Reserved.



In 1952 *Pilgrim* was revived with the changes Vaughan Williams and Edward Dent had worked on. He could not prevail on the authorities to scrap this costume, even after quoting them the Old Vic staging of the Bøyg⁷⁷ in *Peer Gynt* and Covent Garden's production of the Countess in Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*. In both cases the image was a large shadowy figure cast on stage.⁷⁸ Afterwards Vaughan Williams told

⁷⁷ The Bøyg is an incorporeal, shadowy figure in *Peer Gynt*. When asked what he is, the Bøyg replies, "I am myself." We never know what the Bøyg is.

⁷⁸ Ursula Vaughan Williams, 316.

Ursula he didn't like the "large and ridiculous Apollyon which looked like a cross between an Assyrian figure and the Michelin tyre advertisement."⁷⁹

Vaughan Williams's insistence on this staging device, even though it was ignored, can only be speculated. Several possibilities, however, suggest themselves, and three of them deserve discussion here. First of all, Vaughan Williams believed that the entire work should maintain a reverent, ritualistic feel. Although the staging in the rest of the premier bears this out, a corporeal Apollyon does not necessarily square with that vision.

Second, as we look back on historical depictions of demons and devils, in mystery plays and moralities from the late Middle Ages through the Reformation, we see the following examples:

"The devill in his fethers" (presumably black feathers) appears in costuming lists from Chester . . . which reputedly changed very little from 1499 to the 1670s. At Coventry a charge is recorded "for making ye demones head" in 1543 and "for a yard of canvas for ye devylles mall [maul]" in 1544. . . The St. John's College Cambridge Register if Inventories lists "ij blak develles cootes with hornes" in 1548-49.⁸⁰

These depictions were intended to inspire a combination of fear and loathing by audience members. But by the seventeenth century, frequent satirical and comical depictions of devils had led to the decline of their effectiveness as fear-inspiring entities. Essentially, no one took them seriously any more: these continued theatrical depictions had ruined the credibility of the supernatural.⁸¹

It is impossible to know whether these two factor played into Vaughan Williams's decision to depict Apollyon as a looming shadow, but it seems that there was no available

⁷⁹ Ursula Vaughan Williams, 316.

⁸⁰ John D. Cox, *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350-1642* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5-6.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 150.

costuming decision that could adequately (to Vaughan Williams) convey the terror of the character. An illusory shadow, for him, may have resolved the issue by allowing the viewer to create in the mind what could not be presented on the stage.

The use of tableaux and blackout, with music keyed to each tableaux, worried Coghill. In December of 1950 he wrote to Hal Burton: "This is the first scene in which violence is possible, and I think it is *necessary* because up to this the whole opera has been so ceremonial and liturgical."⁸² From a dramatic point of view, Coghill has a valid point. Lew points out that although the use of tableaux and blackout worked quite well in the amateur Reigate production of 1906, it was unsuited to the more sophisticated audience of Covent Garden.

Can these two issues now be resolved? Perhaps. Now, over 50 years after the premiere, technology has improved to the point where a truly frightening combat between Pilgrim and a corporeal Apollyon could be staged. If that were to be done, the only remaining issue would be coordinating the music with a live combat, rather than with shadowy tableaux separated by blackouts. Another possibility could include use of a projected computer-generated image (CGI). Either of these options would resolve the complaint that the scene in the original premiere was too short, and was not aesthetically powerful enough to accomplish its point.⁸³ A clever and innovative music director and stage director, working together, could present a powerful live-combat scene, while maintaining the integrity of the music.

⁸² Lew, 189.

⁸³ A similar problem of dramatic fear exists in trying to stage Siegfried's combat with Fafnir. How does one make a stage dragon scary enough? But it occurred to me that, for instance, the Balrog in Peter Jackson's film version of *The Fellowship of the Ring* was very effective on a dramatic scale. Surely stage and screen technology can be married in such a way as to provide a convincing depiction of Apollyon and Fafnir.

But should the issue be resolved at all? Interestingly enough, perhaps not.

Consider the third possibility: that Vaughan Williams's concept of a non-corporeal being has a psychological precedent as well as an operatic one. Simply stated, people fear the unknown. In fact, the unknown can be far more frightening than something made manifest. For example, the Black Riders in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* films are much more frightening before their faces are revealed. The same is true of the dementors in the *Harry Potter* films, who are far more terrifying before the audience sees them.

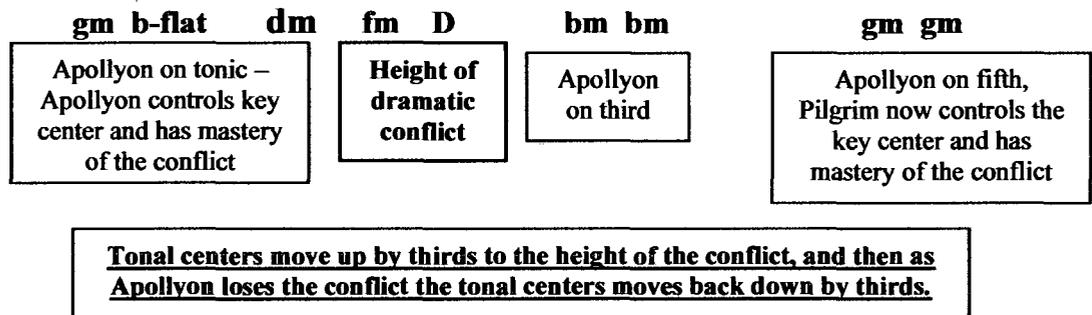
A final complaint about the Apollyon scene was that Apollyon does not sing; that is, he is monotonal, not melodic. However, the precedent of demons not singing melodically goes back through history. Music, defined as a divine art, was thought to be denied to beings from hell. A prime example of this is the demon Samiel in *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber. Samiel never sings; he only speaks. Vaughan Williams relies on this tradition when he gives Apollyon only a single pitch on which to sing.

Then Vaughan Williams goes even further. Throughout the course of the combat between Pilgrim and Apollyon, Vaughan Williams takes power away from Apollyon by modulating in each tableau. In the final tableau Pilgrim is the tonic and Apollyon is the dominant. Thus, not only does the combat turn to Pilgrim's favor dramatically, but the tonal center turns to his favor as well.

The tonal structure of the conflict is as follows:

Event	Key
Introduction	G minor
Transition	B-flat minor
Apollyon	D minor
Pilgrim	F minor
Fanfare	D
Transition	B minor
Apollyon	B minor
Pilgrim	G minor
Apollyon	G minor

A graphic portrayal of the tonal structure looks like this:



Musically this tonal structure is very effective. It is faintly reminiscent of the tonal structure of *Erlkönig* by Franz Schubert. As the Erlking gains control of the child, the tonal centers move upward to heighten the sense of terror in the child and the intensity of the conflict. Vaughan Williams uses the same idea to heighten the intensity of Pilgrim's battle. To aid the tonal shifts, Vaughan Williams also moves the overall tessitura of the chorus, and constantly adds to the instrumentation throughout the combat. All of these factors combine to an increase of intensity and drama of the combat scene.

CHAPTER 6

CAMBRIDGE PRODUCTION, 1954

In 1954 Boris Ord (as his apparent swan song with the Cambridge University Musical Society) chose to stage *The Pilgrim's Progress* with Dennis Arundell handling staging. "Dennis Arundell, who might have been the ideal producer [in 1951], was otherwise committed to a Thomas Beecham production, so the job went to Nevill Coghill."⁸⁴ This production was much more successful than the Covent Garden one. Ursula Vaughan Williams wrote that the "Cambridge performances were radiant." Vaughan Williams declared, "*This* is what I meant." Ursula went on to say that "Ralph's conception of Bunyan's dream was vindicated." Members of the cast reported that *Pilgrim* was a success with the audiences, the university community, and the cast and crew.⁸⁵ Regarding this production the (unnamed) music critic from *The Times* wrote:

Arundell . . . used great ingenuity with lighting and simple stage sets and properties to make each tableau visually effective – the fight with Apollyon was indeed more satisfactory in its medieval grotesquerie than in the Covent Garden production. . . . The work has a moving beauty that slowly envelops the hearer; it is not really drama, but it purges the mind not by pity and terror, but by serenity and peace.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *Ralph Vaughan Williams: The Pilgrim's Progress*, dir. Richard Hickox, The Royal Opera, Chandos B000005Z6Z, liner notes, 8.

⁸⁵ All anecdotes cited in Ursula Vaughan Williams, 344.

⁸⁶ *The Times*, February 24, 1954.

From these comments it is clear that Vaughan Williams's vision and his directions in the score can be successfully staged. Of particular interest are the comments of "simple stage sets and properties" and the concession that "it is not really drama, but it purges the mind."

After *Pilgrim* closed at Cambridge, Humphrey Trevelyan, who played Lord Hate-Good, wrote to Ursula Vaughan Williams:

I do want you and VW to know what an immense success the *Pilgrim's Progress* has been. People in the University began to realise about Thursday that something great was going on in the Guildhall and they started flocking and going two and three times and trying to go again and not being able to get in. ... it was wonderful to feel, as one of the cast, that one was taking part in a great and spiritual event, such as comes only rarely.⁸⁷

Further illustrating the unity of vision enjoyed in this production came from Paddy Hadley, reporting to Vaughan Williams: "I've never known such unanimity about anything that's ever happened in Camb[ridge]."⁸⁸

The simple stage sets worked where the elaborate (and yet unimaginative) sets of the original did not. Without that distraction, this critic was able to focus on the serenity and peace of the work, and not be bothered by the lack of drama. Of course, after the initial exposure of any new thing, knowing what to expect and what not to expect makes it easier to accept.

So why has the work still not entered the regular repertoire? The cast list is large. Rather than 6 main characters and a few minor characters, *The Pilgrim's Progress* only has one main character and no female lead, and over 25 solo roles – most of which do not recur from one scene to the next. The chorus, in order to produce the sound necessary to

⁸⁷ Ursula Vaughan Williams, 344.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

balance the music, requires at least 30 singers. In recent productions of this work the solo roles have been doubled and even tripled. This solution works well from a budgetary perspective, and as a way to give each performer more opportunity to participate.

Given the solo and chorus issues the question becomes: is a regular opera company the best vehicle for *Pilgrim*? Following is a discussion of some recent performances and lessons that can be learned to aid the success of future productions, and a possible answer to the question above can be found in the approach taken by Sadler's Wells.

CHAPTER 7

TRINITY LYRIC OPERA 2006

In 2006, Trinity Lyric Opera in San Jose, California, opened its premier season with *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Alan Thayer, founder and director of TLO, loved *Pilgrim* and felt it would be a perfect vehicle for TLO's first performance. Thayer greatly desired to stage this work as he believes "that *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a most undeservedly underappreciated work, most particularly in our times."⁸⁹

No other opera company in the San Francisco Bay area would even touch the piece, because after all, the soprano doesn't die or wear a horned helmet, there are no love duets, no sword duels or mistaken identities.⁹⁰

Trinity's approach to staging the work remained fairly true to Vaughan Williams's stage directions. "The very nature of the work itself demanded that it be done right, and doing it right required that it had to be big, with big sets, big singers, a huge orchestra, and a big theatre."⁹¹ Elaborating on the updating of *Pilgrim*, Thayer wrote:

I can't really say that the presentation itself was updated, rather, I prefer to say that it was removed from time and space . . . liberated from the trappings of any specific period, with the music being the very centerpiece of the production, framing the journey of Pilgrim till he reaches the Celestial City. That was the framework around which we wanted to form the entire production.⁹²

⁸⁹ Email correspondence with the author [April 4, 2008].

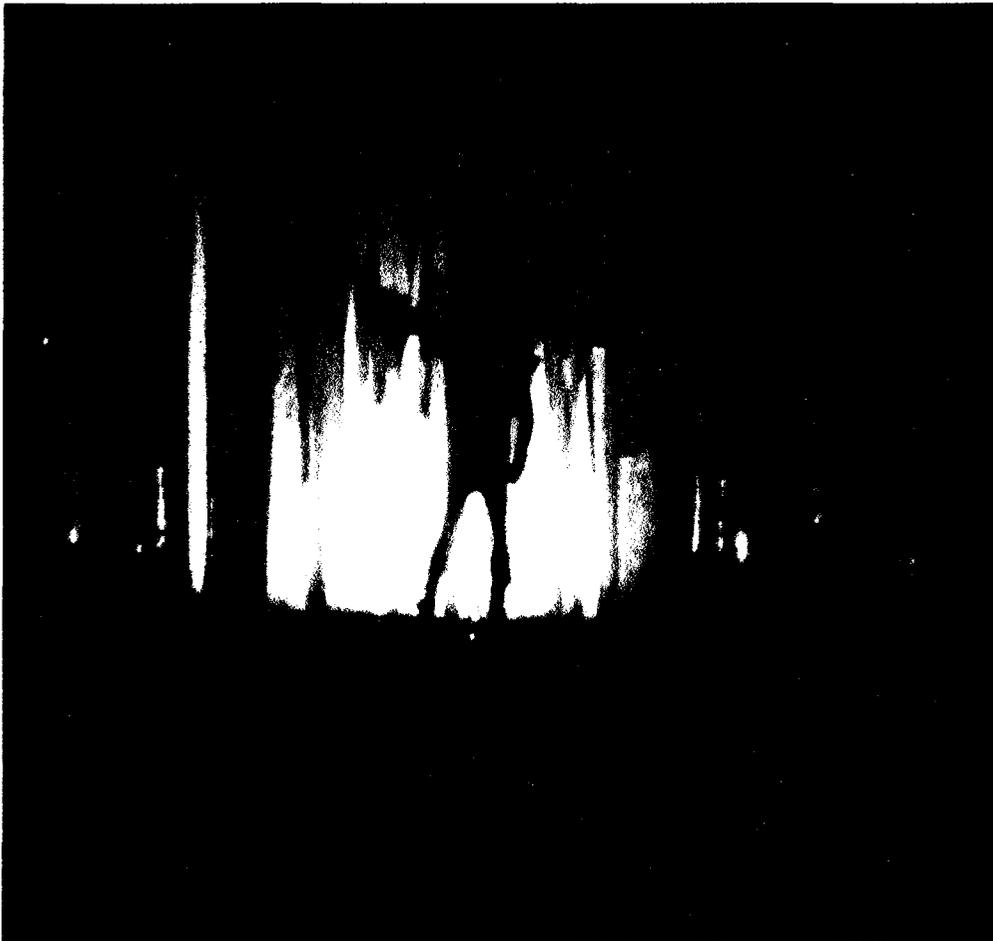
⁹⁰ Alan Thayer, "The Pilgrim's Progress in California" *RVW Journal* 37 (October 2006): 12.

⁹¹ Email correspondence with the author [February 12, 2009].

⁹² *Ibid.*

Figure 2⁹³ shows an enlarged, shadowy figure backlit onto a scrim with Pilgrim seeming small and insignificant in front. The blackouts were used and followed by tableaux.

Figure 2 Apollyon backlit as directed by Vaughan Williams. This method, used in the Trinity production, makes Apollyon appear a giant compared to Pilgrim, who can be seen stage right.



Though more action/drama is possible, this staging was effective, showing that Vaughan Williams's concept was not dramatically wrong.

⁹³ Photograph of Trinity Lyric Opera production by Thomas Estes and Patrick Kroboth. Used with permission.

Trinity's approach to costuming was not the same as in the original Covent Garden production. Rather than relying on period costumes to "date" the characters, some costumes were modernized to appear more socially relevant. The following picture from the Vanity Fair scene shows Lord Lechery looking more like a Las Vegas pimp than some diabolical figure:

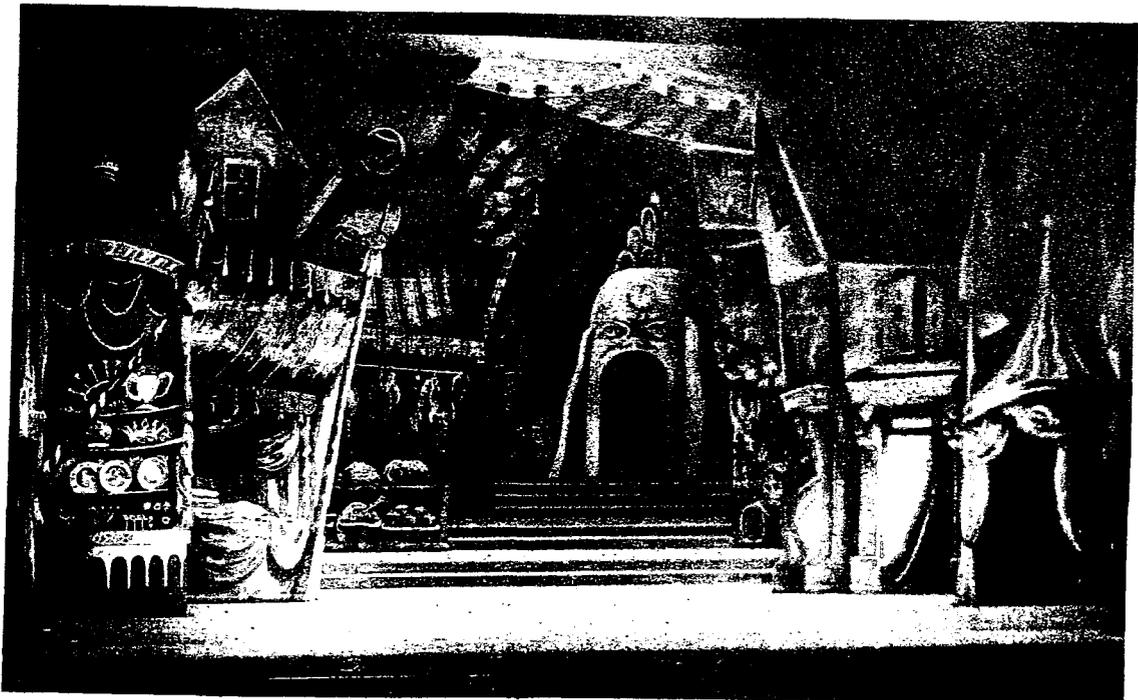
Figure 3 The Trinity staging of *Vanity Fair*, with garish red lighting. Note that the stage is not crowded by the set, as it was at Covent Garden, so there is room to see the action and the characters.



Removing the show from time and space helps universalize its message to any audience. The Covent Garden production was dated even for 1951. The spectacle was, at best, quaint: reminiscent of Bunyan's England, but with no social relevance for its audience. Compare this photo with the same scene from 1951 (Figure 4) where the focus

is so much on the visual spectacle of the scenery that the focus is drawn away from the characters and the message of the music.

Figure 4 The Covent Garden stage set for *Vanity Fair*. Red lighting dominated this scene. ©British Library Board. All Rights Reserved.



JOHN GRAHAM
PHOTOGRAPHER

Trinity also managed to balance the reverent nature of the work without all of the incessant kneeling that was criticized so much from Covent Garden, typified by the picture from the *House Beautiful* scene. (See Figure 5.) When asked about the supposed lack of drama, Thayer replied: “The perception of “lack of drama” is a jab by those critics who never liked his work, and who never will like it. Or, a jab by those who never

understood it.”⁹⁴ This thought agrees with Cumberlege’s statement that he felt the critics were “looking over their shoulders” to see what others were saying.⁹⁵

The most significant contribution of the Trinity production is proving once and for all that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* can be very successful, and enthusiastically received by the audience.

One review of the three-week run had this to say:

... a solid undertaking that made the case for the composer as one of the most important voices of his time. ... If this is heaven, count me in. ... [Having been] staged perhaps as the big man intended, [it] featured giant shadows of a *Lord of the Rings* Balrog/*Don Giovanni* Commandant devil by the name of Apollyon . . .⁹⁶

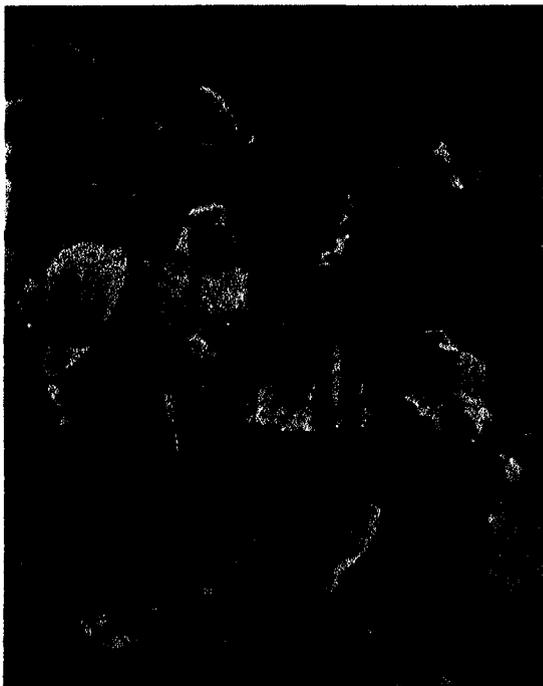


Figure 5 Though only Pilgrim is kneeling for his anointing in this particular scene from the Covent Garden production, many members of the cast and chorus often knelt, giving an overly ceremonious feel to the work. The straight-line staging of the chorus is evident. ©British Library Board. All Rights Reserved

⁹⁴ Email correspondence with the author [February 12, 2009].

⁹⁵ Geoffrey Cumberlege to Dyneley Hussey, May 7, 1951.

⁹⁶ Mark Alburger, “Double Blessing,” *San Francisco Classical Voice* sfcv.org, June 16, 2006. http://www.sfcv.org/arts_revs/trinitylyricopera_6_20_06.php (Accessed February 5, 2009).

CHAPTER 8

SADLER'S WELLS, 2008

Richard Hickox is a champion of British music in general, and of Vaughan Williams's music in particular. In 2008, he conducted performances of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Sydney, Australia; and at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London.

The Sadler's Wells production took a new turn in staging this work: billed as a semi-staged production, the chorus and orchestra were on the stage and the actors portrayed their characters in front of the orchestra. The following picture⁹⁷ illustrates this setup:

Figure 6 Pilgrim encounters the first inhabitants of Vanity Fair, who are some sort of paparazzi. No scenery other than the large wooden panels hung behind the chorus, coupled with the nondescript dress of the characters, adds to the 'universality' sought by the composer.



⁹⁷ All photos of Sadler's Wells production courtesy of Marilyn Kingwill. Used with permission.

This may seem an unusual and unwarranted setup for Vaughan Williams's morality, but a similar stage set was used by Stravinsky in his original staging of *L'histoire du Soldat*. In both productions, the musicians, the actors, and also the audience become part of the story.⁹⁸ Other examples of non-period costuming appear in the following photographs (see Figures 7 and 8):

Figure 7 From right to left: Lord Hate-Good, Lord Lechery, Madame Wanton, and Madame Bubble accuse Pilgrim at his show trial in *Vanity Fair*.



⁹⁸ The Sadler's Wells staging concept is in between the *Pilgrim's Journey* oratorio setting, which was done by Ursula Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas after Vaughan Williams's death, and the fully staged concept first envisioned by Vaughan Williams.

Figure 8 Pilgrim is anointed and healed by the Cup Bearer after his combat with Apollyon.



In rehearsals, the stage director emphasized the need to appeal to the universality of the work. He talked about including Oriental, Eastern, Hindi and Western elements in the entire work, but especially in the Celestial City. This, in his opinion, makes it more than just a Christian work, even with the references to God and the Lord. He wanted to emphasize the Divine in all of mankind.

The costuming, staging and pacing in this production were very good and the stage director and the actors did many things with visual cues, movements and facial reactions to capitalize on the dramatic moments which do exist in the work. Other curious details, which may have been attempts to appeal to a universality of time as well as location, were used. First, during the Arming of Pilgrim he was not given a sword, shield,

and armor, as is described in the text. Rather, he was given a staff and a large seashell pendant. Next, the combat with Apollyon was very different than is stipulated in the score. Apollyon was a disembodied voice. When the actual combat took place, three actors in brown robes with the hoods drawn over their faces came on stage with a large wooden beam. They struck each tableaux pose with Pilgrim as he sang his lines with Apollyon. It was a confusing scene both from character and dramatic aspects. However, in spite of these differences, reviews of this production were overflowing with praise:

It was one of the most revelatory and moving evenings that I can remember. The only sadness? Just two performances. ... Pageant-like and occasionally static it may be, but this monumental rarity deserves a place in the opera-house repertoire. Why? ...Because the story is such a fervent affirmation of steadfast goodness over grasping materialism.⁹⁹

While the Trinity Lyric Opera's production held more closely to Vaughan Williams's original intentions, the Sadler's Wells production was equally successful. This production, though veering away from Vaughan Williams's original directions, worked well because David Edwards and Richard Hickox had a unified vision for this production and its message. They worked in rehearsals to impart that vision to the performers, and thus to the audience.

The audience gave this performance a standing ovation and cheered wildly for Roderick Williams who played Pilgrim, Richard Hickox, and David Edwards. It only remains for others to take up the banner and continue where Hickox and Edwards left off in promoting this work.

⁹⁹ Morrison.

CHAPTER 9

ADVICE FOR FUTURE PRODUCTIONS AND THEIR CONDUCTORS

The goal of this paper is to facilitate, encourage, and promote future productions of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. If future productions are to take place, the catalyst must come from musicians and conductors who love this work and are willing to promote it. *Pilgrim* is not part of the regular repertoire for opera companies, and theater directors are less likely to take a chance on a work that is not well-known. In order to pitch this work, hurdles must be anticipated and solutions must be lined up to show that it can be staged successfully.

The first issue that needs to be addressed in any future production is the issue of repeated sections in the score. Richard Hickox takes nearly every repeat in the score, and he does this in his recording as well as in the Sadler's Wells production. The earlier Boult recording does not repeat sections. There is no adequate indication in the original full score as to whether repeats were taken or not. The issue is that most of these repeats are not in the score for musical reasons; they exist solely for extra-musical reasons, most often to accommodate scene changes.

There are eight points where repeats occur in the score: (1) Act I scene 1, between rehearsal 20 and the end of the scene – four sections with repeats with the instruction that the repeats are only to be played *if required by the stage* (emphasis added), (2) the

that “these repeats should not be made unless required by the stage.” (3) Act II scene 1, 11 bars before rehearsal 11 to rehearsal 13 – five sections with repeats with the instruction, “Unless required by the stage all repeats should be omitted. (4) Act II scene 2, beginning eight bars – This section bears the instruction, “This repeat is essential.” (5) Act II scene 2, rehearsal 28 to rehearsal 29 – with the instruction that “This repeat only to be made if required by the stage.” (6) Act III scene 1, beginning of scene – two repeated sections with no instructions. (7) Act III scene 1, rehearsal 5 to rehearsal 6 – in the vocal score the instruction says, “Note this repeat is optional.” In the full score this section is written out twice with no repeat. Repeating this section, however, raises the problem of Demas repeating his line twice. (8) Act III scene 3, two repeated sections at rehearsals 17 and 18, with instructions to “Repeat only if required by stage.”¹⁰⁰

The most effective demonstration as to why these repeats should not be taken is in Act II scene 1, eleven bars before rehearsal 11. The chorus from the Arming of Pilgrim has just sung “Go forward Pilgrim, he that overcometh, shall inherit all things.” Then the music begins the transition from the Arming scene to the Apollyon scene. Two themes are juxtaposed in this transitional section: the melody from the “Blest be the name of the Lord,” sung in the Arming scene, and melodic material that foreshadows the combat with Apollyon, as shown on the following page (Figure 9):

¹⁰⁰ Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Pilgrim's Progress: A Morality in a Prologue, Four Acts and an Epilogue, Founded on Bunyan's Allegory of the Same Name* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

Figure 9 Piano Vocal Score, 70.

In this line the trombones and horns play the “Blest be the Name of the Lord” melody antiphonally. Though the directions in the score say this should not be repeated unless needed by the stage, a repeat of these five bars does not necessarily hurt the musical drama. But the two lines that follow do. (See Figure 10)

The “Blest Be the Name of the Lord” melodic line merges into a frantic downward rush to the Apollyon material:

Figure 10 Piano Vocal Score, 71.

If the above passage is repeated, the dramatic forward motion of the music is interrupted and listeners will feel the interruption.

Figure 11 Piano Vocal Score, 71.

The image displays a piano accompaniment score for a vocal piece, labeled 'Figure 11 Piano Vocal Score, 71'. The score is written in 4/8 time and marked 'Allegro molto'. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system includes the tempo marking 'Allegro molto 4-84' and a dynamic marking 'p cresc.'. The second system features a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The third system includes a 'con cresc.' (con crescendo) marking. The score is characterized by a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with frequent repeated notes and chords, creating a sense of forward motion that is interrupted by the repeated sections mentioned in the text.

These repeated sections need to be studied carefully and discussed with the stage director to preserve the integrity of the music as much as possible. For this reason the semi-staging of David Edwards at Sadler’s Wells is a good solution: it does away with the need for set changes and costuming issues.

If this were musical theater, with its inherent “vamp” measures, repeated sections and the need to cut sections to fit each production’s needs, there would be no question –

in that arena the music is subservient to the stage, but in this arena, the music and its carefully crafted beauty must be paramount.

The second issue involves the tempi. In the original production, the homogeneity of the tempi was criticized. In future productions this should be taken into account, and the conductor must identify areas of the music where flexibility can be exercised in the suggested tempi. Pushing certain areas forward will aid the sense of drama. It will also rid the work of much of its ritualism.

The third issue involves leitmotifs. Vaughan Williams used several leitmotifs in *Pilgrim*. The two most prominent motifs are the “Danger” motif of the falling semi-tone, (see Figure 12) and the “Who Would True Valor See” motif. (See Figure 13)

Figure 12 Piano Vocal Score, 12. The descending semi-tone represents something negative, ominous or dangerous.

Enter four neighbours
 PLIABLE and OBSTINATE
 FÜGSAM und STÖRRIG

PI. I.
 FÜG.
 OB.
 STÖRR.

Rack! back! dan-ger! dan-ger! dan-ger!
 Halt! Halt! We-he! We-he! We-he!

MISTRUST and TIMOROUS
 MISSTRAUEN und FURCHTSAM

MIST.
 MISST.
 TIM.
 FURCH.

Back! back! dan-ger! dan-ger! dan-ger!
 Halt! Halt! We-he! We-he! We-he!

fp *fp* *cresc.* *fp*

The Danger motif first appears in Act I when the Neighbours enter and warn Pilgrim to go back with them because there is danger ahead. Throughout the rest of the morality, any time Pilgrim faces a dangerous situation, this motif appears. As the music transitions from the Arming of Pilgrim to Apollyon, this motif grows louder and louder, shouted by the trombones: this is when Pilgrim will face his greatest danger. Act III opens with the Danger motif played with stopped horns, giving it a nasal and malicious sound. Echoes of the motif abound throughout Vanity Fair.

The motif of a falling semitone occurs in several of Vaughan Williams's compositions and almost always represents some sort of negative change. For instance, in Symphony No. 5, this motif represents the transition in the first movement from major mode to minor mode. In the second movement it occurs several times as a hint of something dark interrupting the spirited dance. A careful listener will find other instances in many other works, with the same implication.

The other main motif is "Who Would True Valour See." (Figure 13) This motif appears whenever Pilgrim needs to show courage in the face of danger. Both of these motives come into direct conflict in the combat with Apollyon, providing a musical as well as a visual fight. This motif appears in many guises throughout as well.

Figure 13 Piano Vocal Score, 54. The “Who Would True Valour See” motif appears when the Pilgrim needs to show courage. Fragments of the motif appear in the trumpet fanfares throughout Act II.

The musical score for Figure 13 consists of several staves:

- TRUMPET (TRUMPET / TROMPETE):** Features a fanfare with a first ending bracketed and numbered '1'.
- PILGRIM (PILGER):** Labeled 'PILGRIM PILGER' and 'senza misura'. Lyrics include: 'way? — Weg? — Set my name down, Sir! — Ich will es wa-gen, Herr!'.
- CHORUS:** Includes parts for Soprano (SOP.), Alto (ALTO), Tenor (TEN.), and Bass (BASS). The tempo is marked 'Animato maestoso' with a quarter note equal to 140. Lyrics include: 'Who would true va - lour see / Seht ihr der Tu - gend Licht,'.
- PIANO:** Provides accompaniment for the vocal parts.

A central theme of the story is showing courage in the face of tribulation in order to overcome. These two motives represent this theme and should be brought out in the musical texture when they occur.

Other less important motives occur and a careful study will reveal them. The conductor wishing to perform this piece needs to be aware of their existence and what

they represent, and bring them to the fore to provide musical reinforcement of important ideas.

With all this said, the overriding concern in any production is to have a unified vision between the stage elements and the musical elements. Igor Kennaway, who conducted the production at the Royal Northern College of Music in 1991 wrote:

The interpretive “over-view” may depend on how the individual components of a work interact with each other. And this brings us to one of the major challenges of performing *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, for it had acquired the undeserved reputation of being “unoperatic” in both its content and its structure. The subtitle which RVW gave to the work of “a morality” gave credence to its so-called non-operatic nature, giving the impression of a didactic, rather than a theatrical composition, in which its critics saw merely a series of unrelated tableaux.¹⁰¹

He also writes that their

Main concern was to reveal the work in its innate operatic light to dispel the widespread misconceptions which had accrued since the disastrous production at Covent Garden in 1951. ... Joseph Ward’s [the stage director’s] overall conception was based on the first words which Bunyan sings: “ ... in the similitude of a dream.” Our joint overall conception was therefore to explore the visionary nature of the music drama and this remained our lodestar throughout.¹⁰²

The significant point from these quotes is that Kennaway and Ward had a joint concept and a singular vision.

¹⁰¹ Kennaway, 11.

¹⁰² Ibid., 10.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

As Richard Hickox said, this is “glorious music, isn’t it.”¹⁰³ The Sadler’s Wells production succeeded because the conductor, the stage director, the singers, musicians and the audience all believed in the work in the same way. They believed not only in its message, but in the music itself. They believed that this music deserves to be performed for its own sake, and not just for the message of the text. This is the fundamental issue: this is wonderful music and for no other reason than that, it deserves to be performed. As Vaughan Williams said, “music is its own justification.”¹⁰⁴

The Royal Northern College of Music, Trinity Lyric Opera, and Sadler’s Wells have all proved that successful productions can be mounted. The audiences have received all of these productions enthusiastically. Perhaps, rather than society having moved beyond Vaughan Williams’s music in general, and this piece specifically, audiences who have seen this work realize that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is very timely, even in today’s world.

The letters between stage director Nevill Coghill and set designer Hal Burton held at the British Library describe staging concepts and designs that show that Coghill never

¹⁰³ From personal conversation with Richard Hickox during a rehearsal for the Sadler’s Wells production, 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Ralph Vaughan Williams, “How Do We Make Music?”, 217.

shared Vaughan Williams's creative vision for *The Pilgrim's Progress*. By so pedantically trying to remain true to Bunyan's book, including Bunyan's descriptions of both landscape and characters, rather than following Vaughan Williams's vision, Coghill hobbled the success of the premier. Coghill's actions directly led to the perceived failure of the work. By studying the correspondence of Coghill and Burton, consulting photographs and reviews of the premier, and comparing these materials with the Trinity Lyric Opera and Sadler's Wells performances, this document reveals that by following Vaughan Williams's stage directions, and updating certain elements for a contemporary audience, *The Pilgrim's Progress* can be successfully staged and be visually, dramatically and musically satisfying.

The concept of maintaining a unified creative vision for this (or any) work has a basis in sociology and the continuum of the Five Bases of Power. By maintaining the Referent Base (mutual respect and a shared vision for the goal) the maximum potential for success exists. This concept deserves further study as a pedagogical tool for success in an ensemble and in a classroom setting.

It is my hope that this document will serve others as a guide and resource for any wishing to stage this deserving work.

APPENDIX A

TIMELINE OF *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

- 1906 – Reigate Production for which RVW wrote incidental music for twelve scenes; each scene later scored for the 1951 version was staged in Reigate
- 1922 – One-act opera, *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* (later incorporated into Act IV of *The Pilgrim's Progress*).
- 1925–1936 – Worked on Acts I and II. Decided *Pilgrim* would never be staged, later incorporated some thematic material into Symphony No. 5
- 1942 – BBC commissions RVW to write incidental music for a radio adaptation of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. First broadcast on September 5, 1943. Incorporated material from *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* into incidental music.
- 1944–1949 – Continued to work on operatic setting.
- 1951 – *The Pilgrim's Progress* staged at Covent Garden as part of the Festival of Britain. Added the Nocturne in between Acts I and II in 1951 for the premier.
- 1951–1952 – revised and expanded Vanity Fair scene.
- 1954 – Cambridge University stages production. Vaughan Williams praised this production over the Covent Garden production.
- 1971– *The Pilgrim's Progress* recorded by Sir Adrian Boult.
- 1972 – Brigham Young University (Provo, UT) stages a production.
- 1991 – Royal Northern College of Music produces *The Pilgrim's Progress*. First large-scale UK performance since 1954.
- 1996 – Royal Opera production conducted by Richard Hickox, later recorded with the same cast.
- 2005 – Community of Jesus, Rock Harbor, Orleans, Massachusetts. This is an ecumenical enclave. Little information about this performance is available other than a review which appeared in the *Cape Cod Times*. This review had many favorable things to

say. The reviewer, Anna Crebo, especially liked the updated costuming in Vanity Fair which scene “fairly sizzled with energy.”¹⁰⁵

2006 – Trinity Lyric Opera, San Jose, CA stages *The Pilgrim’s Progress*

2008 – Sydney Opera

2008 – Semi-staged production of *Pilgrim* at Sadler’s Wells Theatre.

Only known productions of the work:

1951 – Covent Garden

1954 – Cambridge

1972 – Brigham Young University

1991 – Royal Northern College of Music Opera

1996 – Royal Opera

2005 – Rock Harbor, Orleans, Massachusetts

2006 – Trinity Lyric Opera

2008 – Sydney Opera

2008 – Sadler’s Wells

¹⁰⁵ Anna Crebo, “‘Pilgrim’s Progress’ Production a Feast for the Senses,” *Cape Cod Times*, June 5, 2005. <http://archive.capecodonline.com/cctimes/edits/cctblogs/reviews/archives/000852.htm>. (Accessed December 14, 2007).

APPENDIX B

LETTERS FROM COGHILL TO BURTON

Letters from Nevill Coghill, stage director, to Hal Burton, set designer:

Letter 1, dated December 28, 1951:

[Some unrelated material not transcribed]

Prologue. Prison scene played in spot. As agreed.

(Note: am not sure whether orchestra lights will not spill upwards onto stage and so make a true blackout of Bunyan, table and desk impossible).

Act I.sc. 1. You suggest linen-panelled sky lit from behind with groundrow landscape, featuring (at end of scene) wicket gate and lantern.

(Note: I thought of that set-up too at first, but now am toying with another idea. My reason is that if you look at the text from EVANGELIST “Do you see yonder wicket-gate?” to . . . “there lies the road thou must go” you will see that both EVAN. And PILG. must be turned towards and looking at the wicket-gate; now if the gate is in the backcloth landscape, all that longish colloquy must therefore be sung with back to audience or at best 3/4s back. And back to conductor. I am therefore suggesting the sacrifice of the wicket-gate and lights in this scene (it comes in scene 2 of course) as a visual experience for the audience. Instead I propose that EVANGELIST should point into the wings R and that when he says “Do you see yonder shining light?” a spot of increasing intensity should shine onto him & PILG from the wings. This would have the advantage of bringing the 4 NEIGHBOURS on from the wings R, as if they had started out towards the wicket gate and had given up their pilgrimage out of fear, mistrust, pliability etc. (TIM. “The further we go the more danger we meet with!”) If this reasoning is sound, then the ground-row of sc 1 could be the roofs of a hamlet surrounded by trees, very low on the sky, in silhouette, at night — i.e. the village or town from which PILG is escaping). This might be discussed together.

Your suggestions that during the musical transition between sc.1 and sc.2 PILG should be seen behind the gauze walking — running — on his journey could still be fitted in by darkening stage completely on his “HE BEGINS RUNNING”, and, during the darkness, flying the groundrow, so that PILG reappears (behind gauze) against the backcloth (without hamlet), the sky faintly brightening to dawn. The disadvantage of this is that it involves one more darkening of the stage (I think) than your arrangement, because of having to fly the backcloth to reveal the House Beautiful, doesn't it? All the same it might be worth it.

ACT I

SCENE 2

Exactly as you say: HOUSE BEAUTIFUL set on steps & rostrums behind backcloth before play begins in a landscape of cut-cloths, ground-rows and back-cloth.

ACT II

SCENE 1

Open Road. (I have here been twice interrupted and have lost a thought I was going to have put down). You suggest cut-cloth with rostrums and steps set behind it, melting into luminous landscape & sky; Pilgrim's Way on backcloth. This seems excellent. I note that there is the armoury to be added.

Scene 2

Hillside. Cut-cloth frame as before with luminous backcloth.

Agreed; also agreed that we think over the Apollyon shadow-battle further before disputing it with V-W. Agreed to avoid unnecessary blackouts if permitted by V-W. Note In designing the Apollyon scenery, I hope you will remember the natural stone archway I showed you in the Patinir and if possible use it as an idea.

INTERVALS. Note I absolutely agree with you that we run on in one continuity without interval until after the VANITY FAIR scene, for that is the natural break; it is Pilgrim's last view of the World. The next Act opens with his first intimations of Heaven.

ACT III scene 1 Vanity Fair.

Red glow through downstage gauze, later flown. Booths on steps. Giant statue, court house. The whole framed in a cut-cloth. At end of scene lights fade to blackout leaving PILG on stage.

(Note This is almost as we agreed when we met, but I am doubtful on one point, this: my libretto says "PILGRIM IS SEIZED AND BOUND, THE CROWD SURGES ROUND HIM THREATENING HIM". There is then a chorus and it ends with GRADUALLY GOING OFF STAGE "He is Guilty of death!" Now if I copied the score properly this must mean that the Crowd (and soldiery) carry Pilgrim off with them. It would be most undramatic to allow them to leave him alone on stage after all that threatening. He has to be taken and cast into prison. So instead of your stage direction at the end, quoted above, I would like "At end of scene the crowd swirls round PILGRIM who is being bound by guards under the orders of LORD HATEGOOD and he is dragged into the courthouse, the crowd surrounding it while they sing "Away with him! Guilty of death!" The lights throughout the scene could indicate night . . . flares would be fine and garish round the booths . . . (anyhow V-W says it is NIGHT) and then empty stage and dim to blackout.)

ACT III

Scene 2

Prison scene. You suggest gauzed cut-cloth behind PILG during first four bars. Dark outside prison gate so that VANITY FAIR scene can be struck. Steps in position still. Pilgrim's way visible through prison gauze-cloth, same as Act II sc 1., with night lighting PILG to walk out of prison and towards Pilgrim's Way as curtain falls. I ABSOLUTELY AGREE, except that my note to the previous (Vanity Fair) scene must be taken into account, and therefore Pilgrim will not "remain" on stage but be "discovered" after the blackout in prison.

INTERVAL

Act IV sc. 1 Edge of a Wood. Cut-cloth, ground-rows, back-cloth. Concealed rostrums behind backcloth in preparation for GATES OF HEAVEN, but able to be used for vantage look-out point for view of Delectable Mts. Downstage gauze dropped during ENTRA CTE and perhaps PILG again seen climbing behind gauze during it. Agreed

ACT IV sc 2 THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS

Fly downstage gauze. Yes. You say "no clear idea of this scene yet . . . something in the nature of a framed gauze to allow for the vision of the HEAVENLY GATES in sc 3 Also some provision for the RIVER OF DEATH" And we agree of SAMUEL PALMER.

(Note: As far as I have got the necessities are (1) The Delectable (but really delectable!) Mountains at last must appear in full glory. I incline to nothing but rounded shapes with softened peaks, shading from freshest green to purple. (Wait till you see the Kerry Mountains!) This should be the backcloth I think. (2) I feel sure that the backcloth must NOT show the Heavenly City or any part of it. PILG will be led backstage by 2nd SHEPHERD and he will point off stage when he sings "Look so toward, there you can see the Gates" etc. But the Audience must NOT see them yet. (3) There must be a visible river. I imagine it as lying between the foot of the Delectable Mts and the rostrum at the back of the stage from which PILG is shown the Eternal City. The rostrum to be fringed with rushes to suggest it is a river-bank or above one. PILG goes down over the back of the rostrum as if wading into the river, out of sight. (4) Full afternoon soft light at opening of scene. Scene darkens deeply when MESSENGER WITH ARROW touches PILG's heart. (N.B. He is the Angel of Death and might be in black and gold, mainly black. I hope you agree) As the scene darkens the river becomes luminous by a projector behind the backcloth playing on the river (which is linen or gauze) and giving effect of dark and turbulent waves. The Chorus seen in silhouette, following PILG with their eyes. (They may have to be conducted from backstage)

ACT IV sc 3 I agree that this is to be, and will be, the most beautiful scene of all. But I do not see it quite clearly yet. I also agree that Bunyan will be a help. This is what he says: Thus they went along towards the Gate . . . the City stood upon a mighty hill . . . Pilgrim went up with ease because he had these two men to lead

him by the arms (i.e. 2 Shining Ones) . . . the foundations on which the City was framed was higher than the clouds. . . . the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible . . . Now while they were thus drawing towards the Gate . . . a Company of the Heavenly Host came out to meet them.

(Bunyan continued)

“Now when they were come up to the Gate there was written over it in letters of gold BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE; AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY. . . . (After Enoch, Moses and Elijah had taken the certificates from the pilgrims) . . . “the King then commanded to open the Gate; That the righteous nation, said He, that keepeth Truth may enter in. Now I saw in my Dream, that these two men (CHRISTIAN & FAITHFUL) went in at the Gate; and lo, as they entered they were transfigured, and they had Raiment put on that shone like gold.”

That is virtually all he says. What I seem to see is (from the front of the stage) rising rostrums with a central path of steps, flanked by chorus, rising in tiers above each other to a sky backcloth in the centre of which, at the top of the path are the gates of gold and pearl (rather Byzantine?) In the wall of Heaven (glistening white?) The chorus so arranged as to make a great oval of colour and splendour of which the TRUMPETER above the GATES is the peak. I then seem to see PILGRIM coming downstage L and turning up between the divided Chorus (on the rostrums) and going up the path towards the Gates. I see also a gauze between the last rostrum but one and the Gates themselves and PILGRIM passes through the gauze, on up to the Gate (is that possible?). The Gates open behind him to reveal dazzling white light and almost instantly then everything is rather swiftly dimmed down with the fading alleluias and the vision fades to nothing.

All this will have to be considered and reconsidered in greatest detail. Pray that Mr Webster will say “Yes”. I will write no more now.

yours

[Nevill]

*brackets indicate handwritten text.

Letter #2:

[next letter is all handwritten]

Drishane, Skibbereen, Cork. 21 Dec 50

Dear Hal,

[Non transcribed portion containing unrelated material dealing with weather in Cork, etc.]

2. Notes from a re-reading of Bunyan

(a) Doleful Creatures "These beasts range in the night for their prey" (LIGHTING) "we also saw these Hobgoblins, satyrs and Dragons of the Pit"

(f) Apollyon "Hideous to behold", he was clothed on scales like a fish . . he had wings like a Dragon and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion and he straddled over the whole breath of the way.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Neville Coghill to Hal Burton, December 21, 1950. GB-Lb1 MS Add. 69448 A.

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION TO COPY

Dear Richard Brunson,

The Library grants permission to use the images in question (Add. 69448 A folio 54 and Add. 69448 B folio 5) in your dissertation, the fee has been waived.

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Hello Richard,

Apologies for delay in replying to your email.

Sending you on a separate email the pictures from the production. There's really only one wide picture as I was shooting for a newspaper so most are tight shots.

They are medium res which should be sufficient I hope for your needs. I'm afraid I won't

have time to do hi res as have a mountain of work awaiting me. Don't worry about the fee.

Best wishes

Marilyn

On 19 Aug 2008, at 03:39, Richard Brunson wrote:

Ms. Kingwill,

Alice Walton from the Philharmonia gave me your email and said you were the person who took the photos of the Sadler's Wells production of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

I am a doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and I am writing my dissertation on that piece. I traveled to London to see that performance, and was hoping I could get copies of pictures of the stage set and some of the characters in costume to use as examples in my dissertation. I am willing to pay a fee if one is required. Please let me know if this is a possibility.

Thank you for your help,

Richard Brunson
1113 Pleasure Lane #103
Henderson, NV 89002
USA

From:
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:01 PM
To: Richard Brunson
Subject: Re: The Pilgrim's Progress

Hi Richard,

Yes, in answer to your request for permission to use the pictures from our site for your dissertation, you certainly may do so, but you must give credit as: "Photography by Thomas Estes and Patrick Kroboth." Thank you!

Again, I hope that all this helps you. Please stay in touch!

All the very best,

Alan Thayer

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