

Harriet Lindeman:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Harriet Lindeman:

Welcome to morning prayers at Appleton Chapel. Our speaker this morning will be Edward E. Jones, the Gund University Organist and Choirmaster. Please rise in body or in spirit for our responsive reading, Psalm 33, found in your black Psalter. "Sing forth, O you righteous to the Lord. It is fit that the upright acclaim Him."

Congregation:

"Praise the Lord with the lyre, with the 10-stringed harp sing to Him."

Harriet Lindeman:

"Sing Him a new song. Play sweetly with shouts of joy."

Congregation:

"For the word of the Lord is right, his every deed is faithful."

Harriet Lindeman:

"He loves what is right and just. The earth is full of the Lord's faithful care."

Congregation:

"By the word of the Lord, plans were made. By the breath of His mouth, all their host."

Harriet Lindeman:

"He heaps up the ocean waters like a mound, stores the deep in vaults."

Congregation:

Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world dread him..

Harriet Lindeman:

"For He spoke and it was. He commanded and it endured."

Congregation:

"The Lord frustrates the plans of nations, brings the plans of the nation, brings to naught designs of the peoples."

Harriet Lindeman:

"What the Lord plans endures forever, what He designs for ages on end."

Harriet Lindeman:

You may be seated.

Choir:

(Singing)

Edward Jones:

This morning's lesson is taken from Ecclesiasticus. "Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that beget us, such as found out musical tunes and recited verses in writing. Rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations. All these were honored in their generations and were the glory of their times."

As you enter All Saints Church in the beautiful English Cotswold village of Down Ampney, the music desk of the organ console has a handwritten manuscript of the hymn tune that bears its name. Ralph Vaughan Williams was born there in 1872 where his father, Arthur, was the church's vicar. His mother, Margaret, was the niece of Charles Darwin and when the young wraith asked her about the controversy surrounding on the origin of species, she answered, "The Bible says that God made the world in six days. Great Uncle Charles thinks it took longer, but we need not worry about it, for it is equally wonderful either way." His agnosticism might have taken roots early, but nevertheless, Vaughan Williams would compose voraciously for the church. In 1906, he edited the English hymnal in which appears the hymn tune Down Ampney, set to an English translation of Bianca of Sienna's Pentecost text.

The hymn was sung at the composer's funeral in Westminster Abbey before his ashes were interned in Musician's Corner next to the likes of Purcell and Stanford. The virgin countryside of Down Ampney and perhaps even the melody and harmonies of this undulating hymn might give some justification to the composer Peter Warlock's snide quip concerning Vaughan Williams's music as being, "Just a little too much like a cow looking over a gate." But I have always been intrigued by the multifaceted of nature of Vaughan Williams's compositional voice, whose 150th birth anniversary occurs this coming Wednesday, October 12th.

A pupil of Parry and Stanford at London's Royal College of Music, where he began a lifelong friendship with another student, Gustav Holst, Vaughan Williams also studied in Berlin with Max Brooke and in Paris with Maurice Ravel, experiences that both expanded the composer's musical horizons, but also, conversely, elicited the commitment to exploring the roots of English music. Indeed, he was soon to become a British musical institution. Cycling around village pubs, he collected and notated folk songs. Similarly, he was active in the English folk dance society, setting texts of Shakespeare, George Herbert, Kipling and Houseman. He even wrote an opera on Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

Coming from a well to do family with progressive social values, Vaughan Williams believed strongly in the civic merits of communal music making, which needed to be available to everyone. He thus wrote for student and amateur organizations, as well as for national occasions. This morning's Anthem, O Taste and Sea, was written for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Two works, perennial national favorites in Britain, are largely responsible for the composer's reputation as quintessentially English; The

Lark Ascending and the Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis. But these are not wholly representative of the composer's pain. The deep impression made by the First World War was to remain and to haunt the composer for the rest of his days.

During the war, Vaughan Williams served in France and Greece, holding commissions in the Royal Army Medical Corp and the royal artillery. He lost close friends in the conflict, including fellow composer George Butterworth, and his exposure to gunfire during his service resulted in deafness in his old age. His own war requiem is the pastoral symphony, a deeply misunderstood work, which rather than portraying the English countryside as was assumed by contemporary critics, is in fact an elegy to all those lost on the battlefields of France. The lone bugle call in the second movement is answered by the angelic wordless soprano at the work's conclusion. This is followed by a succession of works that lean in a spiritual direction. Lord, Thou Has Been Our Refuge, which the Harvard University choir will sing in our commemoration of the War Day of Service in November, the Mass in G-Minor and [foreign language 00:12:13].

Like so many of his generation, Vaughan Williams did not talk openly about his experiences in the war, but his music reveals so much. The enormously dissonant Fourth Symphony is an expression of pure rage at the senseless carnage of that conflict. The Fifth, written in 1942, is a haunting plea for peace. The shattering Sixth Symphony, written after World War II, culminates in the posts apocalyptic final movements. Composers of the generation immediately following Vaughan Williams reacted against his music, which was perceived to be too old fashioned for the Avant Garde 1960s. But the tide is turning and the composer's significant contribution across many genres is being reevaluated.

150 years after his birth. The legacy of the childless Vaughan Williams is perhaps most acutely felt through the many composers who have benefited from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust, a fund set up by the composer himself to nurture and support the work of British composers and which still distributes its royalties to underwrite new works, an inspiring gift to the musical world from an inspired composer.

Let's us pray. Oh Lord, God almighty, whose glory, cherubim and seraphim and all the hosts of heaven with ceaseless voice proclaiming, hear and accept, we humbly pray, the praises of your church below and pour down upon your ministers in choir and sanctuary such as spirits of faith, reverence, and joy, as shall lift both their hymns and their lives to you. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name ...

Congregation:

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those we trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, amen.

Harriet Lindeman:

Amen. Please rise and let us sing the hymn Come Down O Love Divine, number 241.

Congregation/Choir

(Singing)

Harriet Lindeman:

And now, The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Go in peace. Amen.