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MUSIC
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Ralph Vaughan Williams
On Wenlock Edge

3 Songs from On Wenlock Edge
Teachers' Notes to accompany KS5 Webinar
by Mark Keith
Director of Music, Hull Minster

KS5

Ralph Vaughan Williams: 3 songs from *On Wenlock Edge*

Song 1: 'On Wenlock Edge': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCMmwLIHeCE>

Song 3: 'Is my team ploughing?': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQSMaXH62MM>

Song 5: 'Bredon Hill': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1gujVKXlcl>

On Wenlock Edge: is a song cycle consisting of 6 songs. We are studying number 1, 3 and 5. BUT... What is a song cycle?

Song Cycles: are most often a set of related poems set to music (not always a narrative). They are designed as a set of individual songs, performed in a sequence.

The convention of writing song cycles rose to prominence in Austro-Germany during the early years of the 19th Century. Beethoven and Weber helped to set the pattern of this convention.

This Austro-German convention is usually referred to as Lieder (for individual songs) or Liederkreis (song cycle).

Most commonly, the songs are written for solo voice (often Tenor or Soprano) with a piano accompaniment.

However: the accompaniment is an integral part of the composition because it is used to illustrate the meaning of the text. Therefore: it is sensible to think of them as duets for voice and piano/ensemble.

This relationship became especially prominent in the Lieder of Schubert. Arguably: Schubert defined the style, and his influence is central to the later composers of song cycles (particularly Schumann, Brahms, Hugo Wolf and Gustav Mahler).

More reading: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_cycle#Song_cycles_in_German_Lieder

- It is important to realise that song cycles use poetry as their primary vehicle.
- Poetry is an independent art form with a long and distinctive history. The text does not need the music to give it power.
- However: composers use the poetic text as a source to create musical ideas, often writing in a way that illustrates the words, arguably **enhancing** the communicative power of the poetry (re 'illustrate': think back to Debussy's use of music to *illustrate* a sense of place/culture).
- Therefore: song cycles are a marriage of 2 separate art forms whereby composers forge a relationship between the art of writing words and the art of writing music.
- Vaughan Williams (V.W.) exploits this convention by setting the poetry of A. E. Housman.
- Please read: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A. E. Housman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._E._Housman)
- Housman was not supportive of poetry being used as vehicle for music/song. He reluctantly agreed to V.W's request (after a letter from V.W asking for permission to set his poetry from **A Shropshire Lad** to music).
- So...
- We need to discover how V.W. uses musical language to illustrate/reveal the poetry he is setting.
- Therefore: we need to understand the compositional background of V.W. AND the meaning of the poetry itself.

- The underlying connection between Housman and V.W: they shared a fascination with folk traditions/heritage.
- I.e. the music and lives of people who (largely) lived and worked in the rural areas of England/G.B.
- In 1903:
Vaughan Williams started to 'collect' folk songs. This process was primary source research: visiting rural areas to find people who had learned traditional folk songs of their region by ear/heart, then recording them by using wax cylinders (early recording devices) and notation.
- More here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaughan_Williams_and_English_folk_music
- Housman's poetry focuses on the fates of young men from rural Shropshire.
- Rural life is often depicted as being romantic, cosy and idyllic. Housman's poetry contradicts this view.
- Many of the poems in A Shropshire Lad emphasise the struggles, pains and brevity of life.
- At the same time, Housman creates a vivid sense of place and identity: a place that has distinctive character, forged through centuries of occupation.
- <https://interestingliterature.com/2018/05/a-short-analysis-of-a-e-housmans-on-wenlock-edge-the-woods-in-trouble/>

Why did this fascination with rural life and culture exist?

- The late 19th Century was a time of rapid urban expansion. The industrialised cities were densely and massively populated by necessary factory workers. The process of industrialisation (from the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution) had been a major factor in depopulating rural areas (people moved to cities and towns where incomes seemed more readily available).
- Equally, industrialised processes were beginning to emerge in agriculture (machines reduced the need for manual labour).
- And: new transport and communications systems were effectively 'shrinking' the nation: the speed of transport (steam trains) would have been unimaginable a century earlier.
- These processes of modernisation and urbanisation eroded older ways of life. The distinctiveness of local cultures in rural areas began to fade.
- *Note: this process is still happening: mass communication systems have radically changed/diluted the characteristics/prevalence of local accents.*
- Consequently: the old traditions of local folk culture were in danger of disappearing, including music and dance.
- Therefore: the sense of 'genuine English' character seemed to be in danger of dying out.
- Composers such as Cecil Sharp, V.W and Percy Grainger went to enormous efforts to collect as much of these 'authentic' local musics as possible.
- Authors such as Housman and Thomas Hardy (ref: Jude the Obscure) explored the lives and contexts of rural people.

Investigate an example of song collecting

- Task: research
- Percy Grainger was a pioneer in the collection of traditional English folk song. When did he collect songs in North Lincolnshire?
- Where did he find the songs?
- How did he collect songs?
- Where did he reside/stay at the time?
- Who was his host? What type of professional career did he develop?
- Why is Grainger's host relevant to V.W's 'On Wenlock Edge' (what is the connecting factor)?
- Why do you think these local events in the history of folk song collecting were influential on a national scale in terms of musical composition?

- Clues (**wider listening**): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIF7t_WcXnY
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etyhfb0KYDk>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMiws35bf_k

Song 1: On Wenlock Edge



- Overview: the poem creates images of gales lashing the young trees on Wenlock Edge. They are bent to breaking point, their leaves stripped to bare (bone-like) branches by the wind. The poet connects current storms to those suffered by young soldiers during the Roman occupation of the same place.
- The suffering of the young trees is a metaphor for the suffering of the young people of the area (the storms of life). The poetic theme of suffering is not resolved or removed; it is accepted and reconciled via recognition that suffering will be a brief experience (like the storm itself). Life is brief and death will come quickly (as it did for the Romans all those centuries ago).
- This is a stark contrast to the Romantic notion of resisting adversity in a heroic way. There are no heroes here, only suffering and release via death.

- This song is a blend of being STROPHIC **and** THROUGH-COMPOSED.
- Strophic = music is the same for each stanza (verse)
- Through-composed = continuous development of new material.
- V.W. adapts and develops his musical material to reflect the development of the text in each verse.
- It is scored for Tenor (male) voice and String Quartet with Piano (in essence: a piano quintet).
- The musical language is reminiscent of folk song but doesn't use actual folk melodies. V.W. uses modes (traditional folk scale systems) in combination with diatonic Major/Minor/Chromatic scales to evoke a sense of rural/traditional context.
- V.W.'s use of modality and tonal centres owes much to Debussy and Ravel (briefly his teacher) as well as to music of the Tudor era.

Tonality

- We discovered that Debussy employed a variety of scales in Pagodes and La Soiree (and that the choice of scale influences the construction of chords/colouristic harmony).
- Vaughan Williams is using a very similar approach in his composition process for these songs.
- But...
- What are modes and how can we recognise them?
- The Pentatonic scale: a 5 note scale system. For example: G A C D F
- The Aeolian Mode: the Natural Minor WITHOUT the sharpened 7th



G A B \flat C D E \flat F G

- The Mixolydian Mode: the major scale, but with a flattened 7th



G A B C D E F G

Studying the score

The following slides are designed to help us think about the compositional devices being used by V.W, to help us recognise the musical techniques that he uses to express the meaning of the words.

We are seeking to explain why the composer has made musical choices.

We are looking for clues in the score that reveal the construction process of this work.

We are attempting to discover the thought processes of the composer, and therefore the expressive intent in this work of art.

By studying the score in this way, we can move towards explaining the construction/choices of the composer AND have an informed point of view about how the music should be performed (interpretation).

However, it is important to realise that the following slides are NOT comprehensive OR objectively factual. All analysis has to be recognised as being arguable or questionable. This is why essays are often framed as an argument...the process of presenting evidence and offering observation based deductions: presenting a point of view resulting from detailed detective work.

The Key Sig. is G minor/B flat Major.

The chords are all in 1st inversion (6/3 chords).

The chords are all in PARALLEL MOVEMENT.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, and Piano. The key signature is G minor/B flat Major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is annotated with several elements:

- Violin 1, Violin 2, and Viola:** These parts play parallel chordal movement in first inversion (6/3 chords). Orange arrows point to the chords in the first and second measures of each part, highlighting their parallel motion.
- Cello:** Plays a bass line with a forte (*f*) dynamic. It includes a *pizz.* (pizzicato) marking.
- Piano:** The piano part is marked *f* and *agitato*. It features a whole-tone scale in the right hand, with red arrows pointing to the notes. The left hand plays a bass line with triplets and sixths.
- Key Signature:** An orange arrow points to the two flats in the key signature at the beginning of the score.

The music is immediately reminiscent of Debussy's tonal language.

The use of 1st inversion chords prevents a stable sense of key from being established.

He does this because the nature of the storm is unstable and restless.

The use of parallel chordal movement/whole-tone elements enables V.W. to move quickly and easily into unrelated/contrasting tonal regions. The harmonic language is illustrating the unpredictable nature of the storm. These opening bars establish E flat. The tonal centres of E flat and G create a harmonic dialogue throughout this song.

V.W. colours the music by using parallel whole-tone scale elements

The texture of the music is best described as being **homophonic**

V.W. uses dynamics to indicate the forceful and rushing nature of the storm/winds by instructing *f* with frequent cresc./delesc. swells, responding to the pitch shape of the melodic pattern.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, and Piano. The score is in 4/4 time and features a 'f agitato' marking. The Violin and Viola parts play triplet eighth notes, while the Piano part features sextuplet and triplet eighth notes. The Cello part plays a few detached notes. Dynamics include crescendos and decrescendos, and the Piano part includes a 'pizz.' marking.

The strings and piano use **Tremelo** to imitate the rushing wind/shaking of the trees.

V.W. uses a pitch pattern that **falls and rises** because he is using the pitch shape to evoke the changes of storm/wind intensity

Agitato means **AGITATED**. It is used here because the storm is depicted as restless and disturbing.

The use of Pizz. in the 'cello compliments the agitato because the **detached notes** add to the sense of restlessness/discomfort.

The time sig. is 4/4 but V.W. manipulates the rhythm via a mix of triplet Qs and sextuplet SQs to create an **impression** of wind and rain **changing direction** swiftly and unpredictably.

The triplet rhythms move as one gesture; their homo-rhythmic qualities are used to depict the mass (force) of the storm/winds.

The opening sequence of parallel 1st inversion chords descends to a plateau, establishing G as the tonal centre of this song.

Notice:

G min is only **hinted** at...there is no Min 3rd in the chord.

He maintains ambiguity by using open 5th chords and added colouristic notes (particularly added 4ths)

V.W. reaches G by breaking free of the whole-tone elements at this point, using the F maj 1st inv chord to pivot into the adjacent G min

(F maj = relative maj of D min, dominant of G min)

Notice: the chordal movement oscillates between G+4 and F+6 (without the 3rd).

Again, the oscillation depicts the directions of the storm.

V.W. uses 'straight' SQ rhythms for the first time, creating a cross-rhythm effect (ref: Debussy Pagodes).

V.W. uses the piano part to maintain rhythmic impetus whilst the strings create an atmospheric oscillation.

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 5-6) shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part has a broken chord ostinato pattern. The strings have trills. Dynamics range from *p* to *f*. The tempo is marked *agitato*. The second system (measures 7-8) shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part has a broken chord ostinato pattern. The strings have trills. Dynamics range from *f* to *p*. The tempo is marked *agitato*.

The range of dynamics has widened: the music now has *P* as its base-line dynamic with brief surges/swells to *f*.

This also enables the Tenor vocal line to enter with clarity.

The trills in the string parts are very fast oscillations (remember: we saw this technique used in Clara Schumann's piano trio).

The harmony settles to the G+4 chord, in the form of a broken chord ostinato pattern in the piano part. The 'storm' seems to have settled into a relatively stable pattern.

The vocal part is set syllabically. The melody in this section uses five notes (GACDF) and may be described as pentatonic.

There is a degree of word painting here: 'Edge' is elongated to represent the ridge of the hill, and 'Trouble' is articulated via a quaver settling down to a longer note for the 2nd syllable (= a restless rhythm).

Leaping violin (5th and Octvs) SQ figure in the final beat is repeated here...establishing it as a motif.

The trills in the string parts are maintained here (the storm in the background).

The Bass parts: cello and LH of the piano double the vocal rise/fall melody to thicken the texture/create a sense of strength.

SQ/Cr motif (dissonant/sudden)

The vocal part maintains its syllabic treatment, but uses a brief falling **melisma** to represent the upheaval of 'Wrek-in heavens'. This is word-painting.



The **melisma** is a triplet (a storm motif).

By entering on beat 2, the violin emphasises the displaced strong beat in this phrase (difficult to hear where the beginning of the bar actually starts).

The melody rises to the (unstable) 7th at this point (word painting).

Rising leap motif

Again, VW reinforces the vocal melody by doubling it in bass parts (cello and piano).

Notice: the cello is instructed to play Arco

SQ/Cr motif (dissonant/sudden)

The vocal melody stays mainly on one note: is this word painting? Yes. Gale is an extended duration, the D is insistent like the storm, unyielding. It creates a tritone tension/dissonance with the Cello/Piano bass.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "The gale, it plies the sap - lings dou - ble,". The vocal melody is on a single note 'D' for the word 'Gale'. The piano accompaniment is on four staves. The right hand has a broken chord/ostinato pattern. The left hand has a bass line. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The second system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment includes a broken chord/ostinato pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The bass line is marked 'arco' and 'p'.

The rising leap motif is replaced by a rapid upward scale because... it represents a climatic moment of the storm...a sudden rush of wind, from *P* to *f*

This time, the upward motif is modified to be a scale in F

The piano broken chord/ostinato pattern maintains its tonality of G +4th.

But...the tonality of the Bass lines has changed to A flat

VW uses the bassline to create dissonant tension by... putting it in different key to the other music...a semitone up from G (A flat)

The technique of combining 2 different chords simultaneously is referred to as being **polychordal** or **bi-tonal**.

The word 'thick' is sung on an extended G because...?

G is the highest (most intense?) vocal pitch in the work.

The syllabic rhythmic movement has slowed to crotchets because...?

13

And thick on Se - vern

f *p* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *p* *f*

← The melodic line is now descending, using the chromatic Scale.

The use of descending semitones intensifies the depiction of the text because...what do you think?

How does the harmony change during bar 14?

Why does it change (is it prompted by a change elsewhere in the score)?

What expressive effect does it create?

15

snow the leaves.

p *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

pizz.

6 3 3 6 3 3

The chromatic descent of the melody enables V.W to land the start of bar 16 on a chord of....?

This chord creates a very unsettling feel because it is a form of cadence.

V.W immediately moves back to opening material/tonality, reiterating the parallel triplet material of the introduction.

This material is rhythmically displaced because...?

The Reflective Verses

As indicated by the previous bars, the mood of the poem (and therefore the structure of the music) changes for the next verses.

This is why the music is 'through-composed' as well as being strophic in nature.

The text of the poem looks backwards in time, drawing parallels between the suffering of the Romans and the current generation.

The conclusion is both reassuring and bleak...there will be release from the storm in the quietness of death.

V.W. responds to the textual changes by taking the music in a different direction (his use of melody, harmony, instrumental textures and dynamics).

V.W creates the impression of a timeless state, looking back in time. He does this by restricting the melodic and harmonic movement to a stasis.

The vocal melody sits on an E flat, **deep** in the Tenor tessitura. The elongated note on 'Then' helps to accentuate expectation...what is coming next?

The SQs followed by crotchets resemble a military fanfare (Romans are coming). The leap of a perfect 5th to 'Romans' is part of this fanfare. The off-beat anacrusis helps to enliven the sense of announcement.

The instrumental oscillations enter and stop at different times to maintain a restless uncertainty in the music.

V.W. uses the device of displaced entry throughout the piece.

He brings in a parallel CHROMATIC 6th movement on the 2nd beat of the bar, starting **P** swelling briefly.

The chromatic rise and fall represents the background threat of the surging storm.

The chromatic movement uses a mixture of major and minor nuances, keeping the tonality ambiguous and quietly sinister (uncertainty is threatening).

The instrumental ensemble sits on a D flat trill pedal note. The trill is significant: it oscillates rapidly (representing the underlying turbulence of the storm) between D flat and E flat. This gives the music a tonal centre of E flat with the 7th of the chord as its bass (and base).

Melismatic setting of 'heaving' over the parallel 6th chromatic surge (word painting).

Dotted rising perfect 5th: fanfare reference characterising the military nature of Roman history.

'The blood' enters higher in the Tenor tessitura at **f** for dramatic impact/contrast

37

At yon-der heav - ing hill would stare: The blood that warms an

f

fp

SCORE ERROR: should be **f FLAT**

THIS CHORD!!!

F flat major (enharmonically E major) in 1st inversion

Sudden climactic stop in the strings at **f** accentuates the contrast in harmony AND texture as the strings stop playing

The piano takes on the tremolo role from the strings in SQs

Semi-chromatic parallel chord movement is dense and intensifies the music.

D flat Trill Pedal note maintained until...

A **sudden** rising SQ arpeggio of E flat7 crescendos (with tremolo strings) leads into...

This bright tonality, entirely **unrelated** to E flat, is a semi-tone shift from the previous chord. It is a **shocking juxtaposition** to **accentuate** the word 'blood'

The tessitura climbs higher as the text meaning intensifies towards 'hurt'. 'Thoughts' is the extended word because they are the source of pain.

These phrases form a sequence.

G flat is in the higher range (not at the very top) of the Tenor tessitura.

Rising SQ motif in the violin part, leading to the higher portion of the sequence. This time the note is held, helping to shape the dynamic effect (instead of a sudden stop)

The dynamics are not clearly indicated in terms of Level. However, the dynamic *swells* indicate dramatic and sudden contrasts of volume level.

The image shows a musical score for voice and piano. The voice part is in the top staff, with lyrics: "Eng - lish yeo - man, The thoughts that hurt him,". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. Annotations with orange arrows point to specific musical features: one points to a rising sequence of notes in the violin part (the top staff of the piano accompaniment), another points to a held note in the violin part, and a third points to a G flat note in the tenor range of the voice part. The piano accompaniment features dynamic swells and a chromatic descent in the bass line.

G Flat minor (enharmonically F# min) chord, then descends chromatically, combined with dynamic *dim*: shrinking away from the pain inflicted by the storm.

As the text recedes back into the realm of a distant memory/time...

The melody falls by chromatic step, the dynamics *dim* further, and the harmony returns to the unstable E Flat7 chord

Strings in stasis, akin to suspended animation.

Linking colouristic scale/flourish from the end of Verse 2

The image displays a musical score for a song, featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The vocal line begins at measure 42 with the lyrics "they were there." The melody is characterized by a chromatic descent, moving from a higher note to a lower one by a half step. The dynamics are marked as *dim* (diminuendo), indicating a gradual decrease in volume. The piano accompaniment consists of a series of chords, with a prominent E-flat7 chord. The strings are in a state of stasis, with long, sustained notes. A linking colouristic scale/flourish is shown in the piano part, which is a chromatic scale. The score is annotated with orange arrows pointing to specific musical features.

Verse 4 repeats the musical material from Verse 3 (with some variations, reflecting the text).

Strings in stasis are threatening because of their dynamic changes, akin to the memory of an ancient storm threatening to take full effect again.

44

There, like the wind through woods in ri - ot,

f *pp* *p*

f *pp* *p*

f *pp* *p*

f *pp* *p*

ppp *pp* *p* *p*

Fanfare

The rising perfect 5th: the high note of the leap is used for 'riot' but the rhythm is not dotted, and it falls back down to the E flat immediately.

NOTICE:

strings chord enters on beat 4 to accentuate 'riot'

Linking colouristic scale/flourish from the end of Verse 2 (in a deep tessitura) at *ppp* may represent trembling/shivering

The sinister swell of chromatic movement in the vocal line is shadowed by the strings.

NOTICE: an octave leap is used for 'blew high' (word painting at its most literal)

Through him the gale of life blew high; The tree of man was

NOTICE:

Rhythmic displacement of strings to anticipate 'the gale' (unpredictable storms)

fp

NOTICE: after the same rapidly rising tremolo arpeggio, the music lands in **F Minor** (1st inversion).

This is a semi-tone lower than in Verse 3.

The sequence still climbs in pitch (to G min in 1st inversion) in the piano part, but is not now followed by the vocal line.

The melodic line previously sung now appears in the cello, anticipating the highest tenor note of the song in the following bar (53).

The Tenor joins half way through the bar with a chromatic step from D flat to C, before leaping a perfect 5th to the highest vocal pitch in the piece (G)

51

ne - ver qui - et: Then 'twas the

p

Notice: that the Tenor is singing D Flat...whilst the piano is playing C#...

Enharmonically the same note...

But not the same spelling!!!

Curious?

This G is the climactic moment in the work, reinforced by the way V.W stretches the notes of the chromatic descent, intensifying the expression of pain and fateful resignation. The rest in bar 54 is a literal intake of breath before admitting to his inescapable fate.

A sudden burst of **f** reintroduces the opening theme

The section ended on E flat 7 1st inversion.

Colla Voce:
instructing the pianist to 'follow the voice'

We are at the end of a section: V.W expects the singer to use Rubato, but does not instruct it. The music slows down and diminuendos as the text reflects on current pain. The ONLY reason that we know this music slows freely is because of **colla voce**

Notice: the words are re-used from end of Verse 1.

V.W. re-uses the opening material (including a very similar single note version of 'The gale...')

But...it is not a simple strophic repeat of the material from verse 1.

V.W is still developing his use of the material to suit the text (through-composed)

The tremolo chord creates a harmonic stasis ...rapidly oscillating between two chords, it creates the shimmering effect of two chords combined simultaneously (akin to added notes/colouristic dissonance.

Sul ponticello: playing close to the bridge creates a thinner and more chilling sonority (harmonics are more audibly disruptive to the overall sound in this position).

The musical score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is in two staves (treble and bass clef). The time signature is 6/8, and the key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The vocal line begins with the lyrics "The gale, it plies the sap-lings dou-ble,". The piano accompaniment features a tremolo chord in the right hand and a single-note line in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings such as *fp*, *p*, *legato*, and *f*. The text "sul ponticello" is written above the piano part. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system continuing the piano accompaniment.

V.W uses long notes to prolong the sense of loss.

Falling perfect 5th motif

The image displays a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The vocal line is at the top, with lyrics: "It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone: To-day the". The piano accompaniment consists of four staves. Annotations include "poco rit." above the vocal line, "tranquillo" above the piano part, and "p" (piano) dynamic markings. A red text box "NOTICE: painful dissonance" has arrows pointing to specific chords in the piano part. An orange arrow points to a falling perfect fifth motif in the vocal line.

The music maintains the stasis of the tremolo chords, but V.W lets the voice fall by chromatic step to D.

This enables him to **resolve** the music into the tonal centre of G at bar 62/63

Bar 62 is marked *Tranquillo* (peaceful).

This **implies** that peaceful acceptance of fate has been reached, the conflict has been resolved via resignation, the journey has reached its destination.

The closing section reintroduces the pentatonic Vocal Melody from Verse 1.

But this time it is played by the cello in a deep tessitura and at **pp** The deeper range and instrumental texture creates a sombre and gentle effect (sorrowful?)

At Bar 62, V.W changes the tremolo stasis, returning to G7/4 as per the introduction.

Rising perfect 5th motif (Romans/fanfare)

NOTICE: rising DIMINISHED 5th

The diminished leap steps down to E natural...NOT actually resolved...an unrelated chord ends the text setting in harmonic uncertainty/ambiguity.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The lyrics are: "To-day the Ro-man and his trou-ble... Are ash-es un-der U-ri-con." The piano accompaniment consists of three systems of staves. The first system has a treble and bass clef. The second system has a treble and bass clef. The third system has a treble and bass clef. Annotations with orange arrows point to various musical features: a rising perfect 5th motif in the vocal line, a diminished 5th interval in the vocal line, a tri-tone in the bass line, and various harmonic tensions in the piano accompaniment.

NOTICE: "the Roman and his trouble" vocal line is centred on D, creating uncomfortable harmonic relationships. The D against the A flat in the Bass creates a tri-tone.

Semi-tone clashes create dissonance for "trouble" (word painting).

"...ashes" is emptied of the strings texture, leaving a bare/harsh perfect 5th over a dissonant A Flat bass note...the intention here is to create a barren sound, reminiscent of dry/dusty death.

The sequence drops by a semitone to E Flat 7 (returning to related tonal centre chords), but with a dissonant E - A in the bass (still uncomfortable, unresolved tension)

This intentional clash of bassline and upper parts recalls bar 11

Slow chromatic rising bass builds quiet tension

E maj 7 chord, but with a B flat bass note instead of B!

The rise/fall chromatic motif from verse 3 (a variation of the rise/fall motif underneath "the gale" in Vs 1) is repeated in sequence from bar 68 onwards.

The music attempts to find the home key/tonal centre at bar 71.

But...it is still not at peace/rest, because the A Flat in the chord/piano tremolo creates a tri-tone with the D, and a minor 2nd dissonance with the G.

Bar 73, bt. 3: the A Flat resolves to a G, leaving the music on a chord of G in open 5ths (ambiguous/stark....not major OR minor...reminiscent of modal folk music)

The storm is dying, but has not quite gone...

Until...

the augmented version of the D-G bass motif...the last gasp!

più p and the decrescendo to *pppp* and less (dying out)

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