

**The Later Orchestral Works of William Walton:  
A Critical and Analytical Re-Evaluation**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## Abstract

Although the British twentieth-century composer William Walton enjoys a continuing presence in the international canon, the body of scholarship that seriously engages with his life and work is small. The post-war music, which includes the Cello Concerto (1956), Second Symphony (1961), *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith* (1963), *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten* (1969), and the film score for *Battle of Britain* (1969), has been particularly underrepresented in critical and analytical writing. In this thesis, I give detailed analyses of these scores, alongside an investigation of the contemporary critical climate and reception history of these works.

I argue that the series of significant lifestyle changes that Walton underwent in the years immediately following the Second World War – including exchanging the busy musical life of London and a series of affairs with high-profile figures for the ‘dolce far niente’ of an isolated Italian island and a stable marriage – are suggestive of a broad shift in the composer’s social and cultural values with consequent changes in musical attitudes and compositional tendencies. Walton’s later music is differentiated from the pre-war works by the presence of octatonic, twelve-note, hexatonic and other non-diatonic harmonic constructions in the foreground, and a change from teleological to network-based or rotational background structures. My analyses adopt a deliberately eclectic range of analytical strategies, combining aspects of set-class approaches alongside tools from the tonal tradition. This methodological pluralism reflects my argument that the vitality of these scores derives from a tension between modernist and traditional tendencies. I argue that Walton appropriates a wide range of influences, including to some extent that of the European avant garde, in contradistinction to the assertion prominent in contemporary reception literature that his music had stagnated into a single outmoded and rarefied style.

I conclude that although Walton’s post-war music was indeed conservative in comparison to that of several of his younger contemporaries, his music engages, through opposition and assimilation, with many of the most characteristic trends of twentieth-century concert music. Nevertheless, I argue that the temptation to label Walton as a ‘modernist’ should be avoided; his works should be judged on their own terms and not according to the regressive—progressive axis prominent in much of the contemporary reception literature. These scores may not have been progressive, but they have a distinctive sound-world and an invigorating vitality that makes them exceptionally engaging both as works of art and objects of study.

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## Chapter 1:

### Introduction: William Walton, 'Late Works' and 'Late Style'

#### William Walton: The Rolls-Royce of Music?

Gerald Finzi described William Walton as 'The Rolls-Royce of music',<sup>1</sup> expressing his status as one of the canonical English composers of the twentieth century, and reflecting the refined synthesis of traditional techniques and new influences within his music. Rolls-Royce was formed – in March 1906 – almost exactly a year after Walton was born, and like the composer enjoyed considerable success. But especially in the context of Walton's later works – those produced in the 1960s for example – the 'Rolls-Royce' analogy also has a less flattering connotation. During the 1960s several government subsidies were required to keep the company afloat, with nationalisation ensuing in 1971: the heyday of this prestigious vehicle was passing. In vehicle manufacture, the spectacular success of the mini in the 1960s reflected significant growth in affordable mass motoring, whilst in music, continental modernism was taking hold amongst younger British composers and critics. The Rolls-Royce and its musical analogy were both beginning to look somewhat out of date.

There are surprisingly few book-length studies of the composer (to date, three biographies, a single monograph devoted to the music, and a single edited volume). In addition, much of the literature that is available is devoted to, or strongly emphasises, the composer's pre-war achievements (especially *Façade*, the First Symphony, *Belshazzar's Feast* and the Viola Concerto), so that there is strikingly little analytical and critical comment on the composer's several substantial post-war orchestral scores. However, this later music is especially interesting since it opens up a range of interesting interpretative questions concerning the 'late' phase of a creative life, and the relationship of the music to powerful contemporary critical trends.

A divide in critical opinion on Walton's post-war music is fascinatingly played out in two lectures on the composer given at the National Sound Archive (now the British Library Sound Archive) in 1984. In the first lecture, Angus Morrison, who knew Walton

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Stephen Banfield, 'Weighing Walton', *The Musical Times*, 144 (Summer 2003), p.61.

well in the first half of his career, dedicates his talk to the ‘four masterpieces’: *Façade*, the Viola Concerto, the First Symphony, and *Belshazzar’s Feast*.<sup>2</sup> All of these are pre-war works, and Morrison argues:

It is a sad and melancholy thought that the more honours and awards are bestowed upon a composer, [...] the more likely it is to be accompanied by a gradual slowing-down of the creative urge – a sort of hardening of the arteries of his imaginative faculties [...] This happened to Willie; it was – and has always remained – a tragic enigma. An enigma to which, try as I will, I have never been able to find an even remotely satisfying answer.<sup>3</sup>

In the second lecture, Gillian Widdicombe (whose ‘official’ biography of the composer, which never materialised, was being researched at this time) offers quite a different perspective. Widdicombe takes issue with Morrison’s position, hinting that it is associated more with the waning friendship between the two men, and more generally a weakening connection between Walton and London, than with a decline in the quality of the music: ‘If you examine the later works they are different from the early big masterpieces but in my view they are no less successful.’<sup>4</sup> In the previous year, Widdicombe had written: ‘Some say his post-war music is less good, less energetic; certainly it is less experimental, more polished and purely musical. But posterity will, I think, upgrade works such as the ‘Variations on a theme of Hindemith’.’<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately Walton’s later music still awaits this upgrade in critical attention, especially within the academic community. The present thesis aims to begin to rectify this situation, through detailed analytical and critical commentary on the composer’s post-war orchestral works.

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<sup>2</sup> Angus Morrison, ‘Willie: The Young Walton and His Four Masterpieces’, recorded lecture, recorded 31 January 1984 (British Library Sound Archive, T8850WR). An edited transcript of the lecture is found in Angus Morrison, ‘“Willie”: The Young Walton and His Four Masterpieces’, *RCM Magazine*, 80(3) (1984), pp.119-127.

<sup>3</sup> Morrison, ‘“Willie”: The Young Walton and His Four Masterpieces’, p.119.

<sup>4</sup> Gillian Widdicombe, ‘Walton, the Later Years’, recorded lecture, recorded 14 February 1984 (British Library Sound Archive, 2CDR0012088 / 2CDR0012089).

<sup>5</sup> Gillian Widdicombe, ‘The Quiet Musician of Ischia’, *The Observer*, 13 March 1983, p.7.

## The Scope of the Thesis

**Table 1.1: The scope of the thesis**

Work	C-Number <sup>6</sup>	Composed	First Performance
Cello Concerto	C65	1955-1956	1957
<i>Partita for Orchestra</i>	C67	1957	1958
Second Symphony	C68	1957-1960	1960
<i>Variations on a theme of Hindemith</i>	C76	1962-1963	1963
Music for the film <i>Battle of Britain</i>	C81	1969	
<i>Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten</i>	C82	1969	1970

The present study focuses on Walton's substantial orchestral works from the Cello Concerto (1956) to the *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten* (1969). The starting point of this selection is marked by the completion of Walton's opera, *Troilus and Cressida*, in 1954. There were a number of changes in the composer's lifestyle following the Second World War, such that the completion of the opera is one of a number of biographical milestones that converge to suggest a significant turning point in Walton's life around this time.<sup>7</sup>

The substantial gap in the list of later major orchestral works, in 1964-1967, is explained partly by Walton's lung cancer and the subsequent debilitating treatment,<sup>8</sup> and partly by his preoccupation with the one-act opera *The Bear* (composed 1964-1967). A final creative spell in 1969 (in which the *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten* and two film scores were composed)<sup>9</sup> saw the end of Walton's major orchestral output, save for a few ceremonial pieces. In the early 1970s Walton was occupied with revisions to *Troilus and Cressida*, and few further compositions followed. The selected works (Table 1.1) thus encompass all of Walton's substantial orchestral compositions from the completion of *Troilus and Cressida* to the end of the composer's creative output. It should be noted that some smaller orchestral works – the

<sup>6</sup> The C number is the catalogue number in Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). Dates of composition and first performance are taken from this catalogue.

<sup>7</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 3, p.37ff.

<sup>8</sup> Hayes, *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.344-345.

<sup>9</sup> The two film scores were for *Battle of Britain* and *Three Sisters*; these are discussed in Chapter 8, p.226ff.



*Johannesburg Festival Overture* (C66; 1956), *Capriccio Burlesco* (C80; 1968), and *Prologo et Fantasia* (C100; 1981-1982) – have not been considered, in order to sharpen the focus on the longer scores. In addition, Walton's film score for *Richard III*, composed in 1955, is not examined here: it is best considered as part of a trilogy alongside the two earlier Laurence Oliver Shakespeare films (*Henry V* and *Hamlet*).

*Troilus and Cressida* itself is a notable omission from the scope of the thesis. This opera – which occupied so much of Walton's time and energy, and raises such a large range of compositional and interpretative questions – deserves a thesis in its own right, and could not have been dealt with adequately here. The concerns of the analysis of opera (both in terms of analytical tools and interpretative questions) are different enough from those of orchestral music to merit separate consideration. However, *Troilus and Cressida* casts a long shadow over Walton's biography and the reception of his music, and it is thus inevitable that discussion of the opera (at least, the work's composition and reception) does surface at a number of points in the thesis.<sup>10</sup>

## Late Period and Late Style

Styling Walton's post-war music as 'later' reflects the importance of 'late period' and 'late style' constructions in critical writing on music. Ian Bent has noted that in the thirty years after Beethoven's death in 1827, it became popular to construct a three-phase division of the composer's life and works.<sup>11</sup> The *New Grove* article on Beethoven suggests that despite high profile attacks on such a framework, it has persevered as a useful if blunt instrument for assessing differences in musical style and biographical influences upon them.<sup>12</sup> Of course, the idea of lateness is not restricted to Beethoven, but has had currency in the study of a large number of creative figures from composers such as Richard Strauss and Richard Wagner, to those from the other arts, including Shakespeare and Rembrandt.

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<sup>10</sup> See this thesis, p.52ff. and p.62ff.

<sup>11</sup> See Ian Bent, 'Four Essays on the Styles of Beethoven's Music', in Ian Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century: Volume I: Fugue, Form and Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Kerman, Alan Tyson and Scott G. Burnham, 'The "Three Periods" [of Beethoven]', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 3 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp.95-96.

Such a three-phase framework can be usefully applied to Walton. In 1982, the BBC radio presenter Michael Oliver suggested a tripartite division of Walton's musical output: *early*, covering works up to the Violin Concerto; *middle*, covering the majority of the film music; and (by implication since Oliver only discusses the early and middle periods) *late*, covering *Troilus and Cressida* and after.<sup>13</sup> Jürgen Schaarwächter has argued for a late style or 'altstil' category for understanding Walton's music,<sup>14</sup> and, indeed, a three-phase notion lies behind the very first sentence of Kennedy's standard biography:

William Walton's is a classic example of the career of a British creative artist: at first regarded as subversive; then acclaimed as the answer to all prayers and absorbed into the body politic of music as part of the establishment; and finally treated as an institution, though one whose foundations are by then found to be suspect.<sup>15</sup>

Walton himself corroborates the idea that the Second World War marked an important boundary in his creative life:

Of course, after the war, things could never be the same again, and my own life changed dramatically. I married, and eventually settled in the Bay of Naples – a bit noisier now than it was then. I suppose looking back, the war had actually divided my life into two halves.<sup>16</sup>

There is, therefore, some precedent for identifying a distinct late period in Walton's life.

The constructions 'late period' and 'late style' have enjoyed a resurgence of scholarly interest recently, especially in music, prompted especially by Edward Said's monograph *On Late Style*.<sup>17</sup> Said offers several (not always compatible) constructions of lateness in which case studies in Western art music feature prominently. It is worth dwelling on some of Said's discussion as it offers an intriguing context for a consideration of late period and late style in Walton.

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<sup>13</sup> *Portrait of Sir William Walton* (Music Weekly), radio broadcast, written by Michael Oliver, transmitted 31 March 1982 (BBC: British Library Sound Archive, T4862BW C1).

<sup>14</sup> Jürgen Schaarwächter, 'On Walton's Late Music', *British Music: Journal of the British Music Society*, 20 (1998), pp.53-58.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). p.3.

<sup>16</sup> Walton, in *William Walton: At the Haunted End of the Day* [1981] (South Bank Show); DVD, directed by Tony Palmer; released 11 March 2002, Decca, 52:30.

<sup>17</sup> Edward W. Said, *On Late Style* (New York: Pantheon, 2006). Said's monograph was one of the principal motivations for a conference 'Rethinking Late Style' held at King's College, London in November, 2007, at which art music was strongly represented.

Whilst lateness might be considered as maturity, expressed through youthful works that ‘crown a lifetime of aesthetic endeavour’,<sup>18</sup> Said’s interest is in a different kind of lateness: ‘What’, he asks, ‘of artistic lateness not as harmony and resolution, but as intransigence, difficulty and contradiction? What if age and ill health don’t produce serenity at all?’<sup>19</sup> In the opening pages of *On Late Style*, Said reflects on Adorno’s view of late Beethoven.<sup>20</sup> (Adorno provides the backdrop to much of Said’s discussion.) For Adorno, Said asserts, late Beethoven is contradiction and resistance, rather than the celebrated pinnacle of a successful career.

Said’s discussion of Richard Strauss introduces the idea of lateness as regression. Received opinion on Strauss, Said asserts, was that after *Salome* and *Elektra* the composer ‘retreated into the sugary, relatively regressive, tonal, and intellectually tame world of *Der Rosenkavalier*’.<sup>21</sup> Whilst Said agrees that these works have a ‘strangely recapitulatory and even backward-looking and abstracted quality’,<sup>22</sup> he nonetheless finds this very ‘backwardness’ to be an interesting trait, compounded all the more by the composer’s consistently high level of musical craftsmanship.<sup>23</sup>

One of the most interesting aspects of the ‘late style’ concept is the way that it integrates biographical and analytical considerations. This is especially true given the ongoing influence of so-called ‘new criticism’ in which extra-textual information, and especially biography, is regarded as a spurious source for the interpretation of texts. Returning to Beethoven, nineteenth-century writers often associated the composer’s late works with his increasing social isolation, with illness, and especially the onset of deafness from

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<sup>18</sup> Said, *On Late Style*, p.7.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Said, ‘Thoughts on Late Style’, *London Review of Books*, 26 (15) (5 August 2004), p.3. The same passage, slightly reworded, appears in Said, *On Late Style*, p.7.

<sup>20</sup> Said, *On Late Style*, pp.7-24.

<sup>21</sup> Said, *On Late Style*, p.26. For just such an opinion, see Peter J. Pirie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Gollancz, 1979), pp.68-69.

<sup>22</sup> Said, *On Late Style*, p.25.

<sup>23</sup> Said, *On Late Style*, p.45.

1801.<sup>24</sup> In Said's chapter on Mozart's three Da Ponte operas, he supplements his comments on the message and musical idiom of the opera with biographical context drawn from Andrew Steptoe's monograph on these works.<sup>25</sup> Steptoe asserts that alongside health and financial problems, and waning public interest in his solo piano performances, Mozart went through 'a loss of creative confidence' prior to the composition of *Così fan Tutte*.<sup>26</sup> He finds a residue of these circumstances in the opera itself, for example in the profusion of references to earlier works which 'suggest some constraints on Mozart's melodic inspiration'.<sup>27</sup> More generally, Steptoe links his historical commentary with changes in musical style, such as an increased interest in polyphony, and an even distribution of 'expressive weight' across movements rather than an emphasis on opening movements.<sup>28</sup>

It is notable that operas feature prominently in Said's discussion of late style. Perhaps it is easier to circumscribe lateness in works where themes related to the last phase of a lifetime – such as the nature of time or mortality – can be explicitly dealt with. But in the work of Said and others, it is clear that lateness is relevant to *musical* style as well as to such issues as biography and operatic subject matter. Thus in the construction of late style, three distinctive disciplinary areas converge: composer biography, musical style, and critical reception.

This provides, to some extent, a model for the present thesis, which argues for a distinctive biographical late period, highlights the characteristics of the orchestral works produced in that period, and uses both biographical and analytical evidence to attempt a fresh reassessment of the works under investigation. Jean-Jacques Nattiez's tripartite model of music and musical discourse is relevant here; borrowing from Jean Molino, he neatly captures the different strands of musicological study within a single model

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<sup>24</sup> See for example Françoise-Joseph Féti's, 'The Three Periods of Beethoven's Music', in Ian Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century: Volume I: Fugue, Form and Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.314; Wilhelm von Lenz, 'Beethoven's Three Styles', in Ian Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century: Volume I: Fugue, Form and Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.323-324.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Steptoe, *The Mozart-Da Ponte Operas: The Cultural and Musical Background to 'Le Nozze Di Figaro', 'Don Giovanni', and 'Così Fan Tutte'* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).

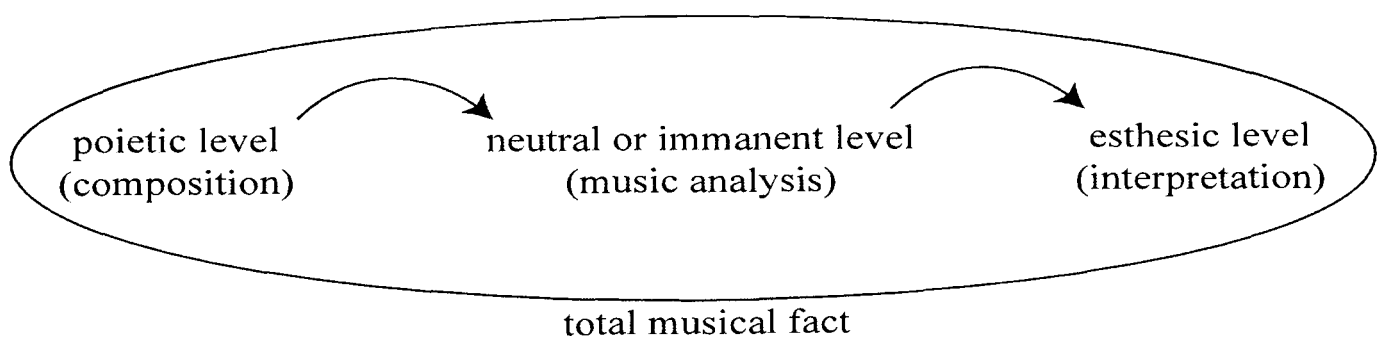
<sup>26</sup> Steptoe, *The Mozart-Da Ponte Operas*, pp.208; also see pp.58-89 and 208-210.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.209.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.210.

(Figure 1.1).<sup>29</sup> Nattiez states his hypothesis in the opening sentences of the book: that the musical work comprises not only the internal workings of the music itself, but in addition is ‘constituted by the procedures that have engendered it (acts of composition), and the procedures to which it gives rise: acts of interpretation and perception.’<sup>30</sup> The neutrality of Nattiez’s ‘neutral’ level has been disputed,<sup>31</sup> and here the model has been extracted from the very specific, semiological context in which it is presented; nonetheless, this offers a useful scheme in which the different levels can be seen as part of an inclusive whole. Nattiez argues that it is only in considering all three levels together that the ‘essence’ of a musical work can be captured. Nattiez’s tripartite scheme provides a useful backdrop to the present thesis in which historical and biographical information about the composer (the poietic level) provides context for music analysis (the neutral or immanent level), which is further overlaid with discussion of contemporary interpretation and my own re-interpretation (the esthetic level).

**Figure 1.1: An interpretation of Nattiez’s tripartite model for the ‘total musical fact’**



A full engagement with the biographical and stylistic questions that arise in dealing with Walton’s later works will be left for subsequent chapters, but by way of introduction, it is interesting to develop further the idea of ‘late’ Walton in terms of ageing, illness and isolation. In a 1981 interview, Walton described his attitudes to ageing: ‘I loathe being, growing old. It’s you know, gaga. Incapacitated and gaga. I don’t like it. Does anybody?’

<sup>29</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.ix-x and 10-16.

<sup>30</sup> Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, p.ix.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Alistair Williams, *Constructing Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp.26-27; Anthony Pople, ‘Modelling Musical Structure’, in Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook (eds.), *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.142.

I don't suppose they do. I don't see how anyone can.'<sup>32</sup> When asked 'what do you look forward to?', Walton sardonically replied: 'Oh I don't know. I suppose death.'<sup>33</sup> Laurence Olivier and Alan Frank – both men who knew Walton well and worked closely with him – have characterised such comments as a kind of act, a deliberately choreographed attitude. Olivier commented in 1981, 'He works on the old crusty act, and this sort of eccentricity, eccentric old man of music, and it's fine, he does it very well!'<sup>34</sup> whilst Frank stated in 1982:

In my opinion he has been kind of acting the old man part for a large number of years, and making out that he was a gaga man when he was not. And he is still by no means gaga, so don't be deceived by that!<sup>35</sup>

The extent to which failing health and failing creativity genuinely affected the works under consideration in this thesis is open to debate. Walton did not suffer from serious illness until he contracted lung cancer in the mid-60s, well into the period under investigation here. Nevertheless, as Frank's comments above imply, the *image* of Walton as an isolated, ageing composer has had considerable currency, not least in the contemporary reception of the later works in which Walton was portrayed by several critics as out-of-date in comparison with the activities of younger composers.

Walton's admission into the establishment, through his commissions for two coronation anthems, a knighthood in 1951, and the more prestigious and selective Order of Merit in 1967,<sup>36</sup> must have lent weight to the perception of the composer as an old-fashioned figure. The opening comments on the sleeve note to the Naxos recording of Walton's choral music sums up the prevailing critical outlook:

William Walton spanned a compositional divide in twentieth-century British composition. Before the Second World War, as audiences looked forward from the era of Elgar and Holst, he was regarded as the great new hope of British music, with his jazzy rhythms, his bravura orchestration and astringent harmonies. After the war, the rise of European modernism made Walton look like a conservative force and he consequently fell from critical favour.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 93:53.

<sup>33</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 94:20.

<sup>34</sup> Laurence Olivier, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 1:45.

<sup>35</sup> Alan Frank, in the radio broadcast *Portrait of Sir William Walton*.

<sup>36</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.150 and 235.

<sup>37</sup> Barry Holden, sleeve notes to *English Choral Music: Walton* (Naxos 8.5557932002), p.3.

The task of the present thesis is to investigate and where appropriate challenge this received opinion.

## Overview of the Thesis

It is necessary, before embarking on more detailed analysis of the later orchestral works, to set multiple contexts: Walton's musical education and heritage (Chapter 2); the biographical circumstances that suggest a different phase of life, and hence a potentially changed musical outlook (Chapter 3); and the reception of these works, primarily as recorded in newspapers and contemporary musical periodicals (Chapter 4).

The central part of the thesis considers issues of musical style in Walton's later works. Starting from a consideration of applicable analytical tools and indeed the status of analytical knowledge (Chapter 5), stylistic features are then considered through analytical case studies. These are grouped around two sets of themes: sonata forms and their attendant harmonic relationships (Chapter 6); and variation forms and twelve-note structures (Chapter 7).

In Chapter 8, the technical and historical strands of the thesis come together in an interpretation of Walton's *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten* in terms of its 'filmic' qualities. An engagement with the scholarship of film music is perhaps the most promising amongst the gamut of possible new critical perspectives, since Walton composed much film music himself, and wrote two film scores in the same year as the *Improvisations*.

The conclusion (Chapter 9) reconsiders Walton's later orchestral music in several contexts: its status as the creative output of a unique human being; its status as a symbol of anachronism in a modern world; and the potential for re-evaluation given the new terms of reference of our current times, in which musical modernism itself is 'late' and seems – like Walton and his Bentley seemed a generation ago – to be 'out of date'.

## Chapter 2:

### The Sources of Walton's Musical Style

Before embarking on analytical discussion of Walton's music, it is helpful to examine the roots of the composer's musical style. Two broad themes emerge in considering the foundations of Walton's musical language: his formal training in traditional skills and repertoires, and his informal exploration of modern music. A consideration of Walton's school and university education, as well as the links he developed with a number of supportive colleagues after leaving university, serve to qualify the somewhat mythological notion that he was a self-taught composer. In fact, the interaction between the traditional and the modern which is a hallmark of Walton's later scores can be seen as the outworking of traditional and modern influences in the composer's education, which was not always as self-directed as he later liked to maintain.

#### Review of Biographical Sources

Before discussing some of the details of Walton's life (which is broadly the focus of this and the following chapter), it is helpful to review the relevant historical sources and literature.<sup>1</sup> There are three published book-length biographies of Walton, by Neil Tierney (1984), Michael Kennedy (1989), and Stephen Lloyd (2001). Of these, Kennedy's *Portrait of Walton*<sup>2</sup> is the standard biography, officially sanctioned by the composer; it is well-written and includes an abundance of factual information. Lloyd's *William Walton: Muse of Fire*<sup>3</sup> is a detailed scholarly account that usefully engages with source materials that have been made available more recently; but the book is strongly weighted towards the early and middle Walton, with eight chapters devoted to life up to 1945, one devoted mainly to *Troilus and Cressida*, and only one to subsequent life and works. Neil Tierney's *William Walton: His Life and Music*<sup>4</sup> is notable for the use of some interview sources not available elsewhere, but in other respects has been superseded by more recent accounts.

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<sup>1</sup> Literature that primarily deals with Walton's music is outlined in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.96ff.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Hale, 1984).



In addition to the three biographies, the composer's wife, Lady Susana Walton, has published her own memoirs, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*.<sup>5</sup> Lady Walton's perspective is, of course, vitally personal and unique, and her account includes many quotations of the composer's own letters and statements, and lively anecdotes about life with the composer, some of which have been disputed.<sup>6</sup> She has also given a number of interviews about her husband in the years after his death, which include further useful information from the composer's perspective.<sup>7</sup>

*The Selected Letters of William Walton*,<sup>8</sup> edited by Malcolm Hayes, provides an extremely useful selection of relevant letters. Walton's unpublished letters are distributed far and wide, and are thus not an easy source to mine; Hayes' edition provides sufficient coverage of both personal and professional matters to meet the needs of the present thesis. In addition to the letters, Hayes provides an insightful accompanying commentary. Finally, two centenary publications, *William Walton, The Romantic Loner: A Centenary Portrait Album*<sup>9</sup> and *William Walton, Composer: A Centenary Exhibition*<sup>10</sup> usefully reproduce extracts from archive sources; both include brief commentaries on Walton's life and works.

Together these various materials provide a good range of factual detail about Walton's biography. Nevertheless, it is a life which has too readily been taken at face value and recounted in sometimes uncritical terms, so that the biographies – whilst they have different focuses and styles – each paint a broadly similar picture of the composer. The present study has the advantage of some distance from the composer, both personally

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<sup>5</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> See for example the comments in Hans Werner Henze, *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography*, trans. Stewart Spencer (London: Faber, 1998), pp.134-5.

<sup>7</sup> These include interviews in *Married to Music*, radio broadcast, transmitted 8 March 1985 (BBC Radio 4: British Library Sound Archive, T7853W); *Classic Widows* (The South Bank Show), television broadcast, transmitted 5 February 1995 (London Weekend Television: British Library Sound Archive V3362/2); *The Landscape Changes (1945-1962)* (Classic Britannia), television broadcast, transmitted 22 June 2007 (BBC Four).

<sup>8</sup> Malcolm Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Humphrey Burton and Maureen Murray, *William Walton, the Romantic Loner: A Centenary Portrait Album* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Vincent Giroud, *William Walton Composer: A Centenary Exhibition in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University* (New Haven: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2002).

and chronologically, allowing some of the less viable received opinions to be critically reviewed. Stephen Lloyd has begun this task; he takes the opportunity to suggest alternative perspectives of some important aspects of Walton's early- and mid-career, including the alleged notoriety of *Façade* in the 1920s, and the BBC's commissioning of *Belshazzar's Feast*.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless there are further areas of investigation which are ripe for reconsideration.

In reviewing the perspectives presented in the published biographical sources, a number of broadcast interviews with the composer – many of them from the 1950s and 60s and hence contemporaneous with the works to be examined in the present study – have proved valuable for the insight they give into Walton's own opinions and reminiscences, unfiltered by the particular concerns of the various biographers, and indeed less affected by the selective memory that Walton displayed in later interviews. The majority of these interviews were conducted for BBC radio programmes and have been preserved in the BBC's archive; they are available to researchers via the British Library Sound Archive (BLSA). Only a selection of these are referred to in existing accounts of the composer, although they contain extensive commentary in Walton's own words, not only about his own music and career, but also on contemporary political and musical topics. In addition, Tony Palmer's 1981 film documentary *William Walton: At The Haunted End of the Day* is a particularly evocative source of commentary from Walton and those close to him.<sup>12</sup>

A further notable source is the arts journalist Gillian Widdicombe, who spent many hours with Walton during the 1970s preparing for a biography she intended to write. The relationship between Walton and Widdicombe began fruitfully; in 1975, Walton wrote to Walter Legge, 'I am glad you appreciated "la Widdicombe". It is a great help having her as a biographer rather than, say, Michael Kennedy. Who is not at all bad, but I can talk to Gillian far easier than I could to him.'<sup>13</sup> Given that Kennedy's *Portrait of Walton* became the official biography of the composer, this comment whets the appetite for a taste of Widdicombe's alternative perspective. In April 1978 Widdicombe had 'a

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<sup>11</sup> In Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, pp.28-58 and 88-109.

<sup>12</sup> *William Walton: At the Haunted End of the Day* [1981] (South Bank Show); DVD, directed by Tony Palmer; released 11 March 2002, Decca.

<sup>13</sup> Walton, letter to Walter Legge, 15 September 1975. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.423.

lot on tape, but not a word in writing’;<sup>14</sup> her illness in September 1978 delayed work further. Widdicombe was still described as Walton’s ‘official biographer’ as late as March 1983,<sup>15</sup> but the proposed biography never materialised; the reasons for this are unexplained, although it is tempting to speculate that the politics of relationships had some bearing. Nonetheless Widdicombe’s outlook survives in a handful of articles, in record sleeve notes, and in a 1984 ‘illustrated lecture’ entitled ‘Walton, the Later Years’, now preserved in British Library Sound Archive.<sup>16</sup>

Alongside more traditional historical researches (primarily involving biographical and autobiographical accounts of those in Walton’s circle, and notices and commentaries in the national press and in music periodicals), these sources provide plenty of thought-provoking material with which to readdress some of the traditionally held ideas about Walton. It is not that received opinion need be completely overhauled, but rather that new light can be shed on potentially unsubtle interpretations of the composer as a self-taught, arch-conservative ‘romantic loner’.<sup>17</sup> The present thesis includes a critical review of a number of biographical topics, including Walton’s education and the influence of his circle of friends in London (the main topics of this chapter), and his romantic relationships and financial circumstances (which are covered in the next chapter). These topics are discussed in the present study not merely because an alternative to the received viewpoint may be presented, but because the discussion of these topics impinges on the study and interpretation of Walton’s music, especially the later orchestral scores.

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<sup>14</sup> Walton, letter to Walter Legge, 18 April 1978. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.447.

<sup>15</sup> *The Observer* reported on 13 March 1983 that Widdicombe ‘is writing his [Walton’s] official biography’. Gillian Widdicombe, ‘The Quiet Musician of Ischia’, *The Observer*, 13 March 1983, p.7.

<sup>16</sup> Gillian Widdicombe, ‘Walton, the Later Years’, recorded lecture, recorded 14 February 1984 (British Library Sound Archive, 2CDR0012088 / 2CDR0012089).

<sup>17</sup> The epithet ‘romantic loner’ is taken from the title of Burton and Murray, *William Walton, the Romantic Loner: A Centenary Portrait Album*.

## Formal Education

One aspect of Walton's life that must surely influence our understanding of his musical style, but has been somewhat misrepresented in scholarship thus far, is his education in music. An obituary for Walton in *The Times* stated that the composer was 'largely self-taught' and 'never went through the academic mill'.<sup>18</sup> This myth pervades biographical writing on the composer: Stephen Lloyd comments that 'like Elgar and Delius, Walton was mainly self-taught';<sup>19</sup> whilst Kennedy writes that 'the extent to which Walton taught himself orchestration [...] is even more remarkable than in the case of Elgar'.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the most influential proponent of this view has been Walton himself. Lady Walton described her husband's education as 'pretty poor', commenting that 'William would often say that their education was almost nil [...] He would often express the opinion that his musical education consisted of nothing but ploughing through the English anthems.'<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to note that in a number of interviews the composer downplays the formal aspects of his education (such as schooling and mentor figures) whilst emphasising informal experiences (such as going to concerts).<sup>22</sup>

The view that Walton was self-taught is largely exaggeration, perhaps in the service of a romantic image: the artist whose compulsion to compose motivated him to teach himself, succeeding against the odds. In reality, Walton's early life was filled with music teachers and mentors. The report that he could 'sing Handel before he could talk' is hardly believable,<sup>23</sup> but nonetheless expresses the truth that the family home was a very musical one; Walton conceded 'I knew all of my classics before I was born, so to

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<sup>18</sup> [Anon.], 'Sir William Walton: Central Figure in Modern British Music', *The Times*, 9 March 1983, p.14.

<sup>19</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.2.

<sup>20</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.9. That Kennedy would draw such a parallel is hardly surprising since he is the author of both *Portrait of Elgar* and *Portrait of Walton*.

<sup>21</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.43.

<sup>22</sup> See for example Walton's comments on his formative experiences in Murray Schafer, *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber, 1963), pp.73-82; and in *The Composer Speaks: William Walton Interviewed by Felix Aprahamian* (London Calling Europe), radio broadcast, transmitted 18 February 1959 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, CDA 25903).

<sup>23</sup> This claim is made in Stephen Williams, 'An English Composer', *The Evening Standard*, 5 November 1935, p.7.

speaking. Or certainly during my birth anyhow!’<sup>24</sup> Walton’s father insisted on the children’s attendance at rehearsals and services at St John’s Church, Werneth, where he was the choirmaster.<sup>25</sup> Walton is known to have sung works by Haydn, Handel and Gounod, as well as anthems at the weekly Anglican services;<sup>26</sup> he noted ‘my early upbringing was very Church of England.’<sup>27</sup> Walton recalled his father’s strict discipline: ‘He made me sing in the choir, which I must say I didn’t like at all. If I sang a wrong note, he used to rap me on the knuckles with his ring, which hurt!’<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, he had respect for his father’s singing: Lady Walton reports, ‘William would often remark that his father was a very good singer and, had he been alive after broadcasting started, he would have been very well known indeed.’<sup>29</sup>

Walton also took lessons in piano and organ, and in violin until they were stopped by his father when he was ten years old.<sup>30</sup> According to Neil Tierney, Walton used a Smallwood piano tutor;<sup>31</sup> this publication included an introduction to notation, notes on scales and keys, and a brief dictionary of (mainly Italian) musical terms,<sup>32</sup> perhaps an indication that Walton was taught *about* music as well as how to play it. Musical experiences were not limited to the family home; Walton recalled with affection occasions when his father took him to orchestral concerts at the Manchester Free Trade Hall.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Walton, in *Walton Interviewed by John Amis on His Childhood* (Talking About Music), radio broadcast, transmitted 1977 [exact date unknown] (BBC: British Library Sound Archive, LP0202106).

<sup>25</sup> Noel Walton, letter to Hugh Ottaway, 11 April 1970. Discussed in Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, pp.21-22.

<sup>26</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.5.

<sup>27</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 4:25.

<sup>28</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 5:36. Lady Walton makes very similar comments in *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.41.

<sup>29</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.41.

<sup>30</sup> Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.3; Hugh Ottaway, *William Walton*, Novello Short Biographies (Borough Green: Novello, 1972), p.2.

<sup>31</sup> Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, p.22.

<sup>32</sup> William Smallwood, *Tutor for the Pianoforte* (London: Francis Bros & Day, 1881). A combined piano and harmony tutor was published in 1912. Frederick William Smallwood, *The Combined Piano and Harmony Tutor* (London: J. H. Larway, 1912).

<sup>33</sup> Williams, ‘An English Composer’, p.7.

The choral tradition of Walton's home life was reinforced at the choir school of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, where Walton was a pupil from 1912 to 1918. The routine involved two choir practices and two church services each day. Letters home indicate that Walton performed a number of solos, including in pieces by Bach, Stainer, Greene, Mendelssohn, Garrett, Samuel Wesley and Samuel Arnold.<sup>34</sup> The choir school provided not only singing lessons, but also instruction in music theory. A number of letters home from 1916 give an indication of the teachers and subjects that Walton encountered: he studied harmony with Ernest Walker and Henry Ley, and counterpoint with Frederick Iliffe;<sup>35</sup> these were musical figures affiliated to various colleges of the university.<sup>36</sup> Walton's letters also make reference to piano lessons during his time at Christ Church. Whilst the precise character of Ernest Walker's harmony teaching is unknown, it is understood to have combined strictly controlled exercises with free composition.<sup>37</sup> It is easier to speculate about the teaching of Frederick Iliffe, the organist at St John's College, Oxford, from 1883 to 1921, who is best known for his textbook for students, *Analysis of Bach's 48 Preludes & Fugues*.<sup>38</sup> Walton's illuminating comment from 1916 that 'I have t[w]o counterpoint lessons during the week and I expect to be able to do Florid Counterpoint in four parts before half term'<sup>39</sup> indicates Walton was following a course in species counterpoint, where the term 'florid' identified the fifth species.

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<sup>34</sup> Walton, letters to Louisa Walton, 11 July 1915 and 23 January 1916, in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.8.

<sup>35</sup> See Michael Kennedy's 'Critical Appreciation' in Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Thematic Catalogue of His Musical Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp.3-5.

<sup>36</sup> Brief comments relating to Iliffe's time as organist at St John's College, Oxford can be found in Dotted Crotchet, 'St. John's College, Oxford', *The Musical Times*, 47(759) (1 May 1906), p.309; Francis Knights, 'Church and Organ Music: The History of the Choral Foundation of St John's College, Oxford', *The Musical Times* 131(1770) (August 1990), p.447.

<sup>37</sup> Margaret Deneke, *Ernest Walker* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p.64.

<sup>38</sup> Frederick Iliffe, *The Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues of John Sebastian Bach Analysed for the Use of Students* (London: Novello & Ewer, n.d. [c.1897]). This work includes comments on the form of each prelude, harmonic reductions (some with figured bass), and analysis of the counterpoint in each fugue, with annotations indicating the principal modulations.

<sup>39</sup> Walton, letter to Louisa Walton, 8 October 1916. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.11.

Walton later spoke of being ‘tutored in all the usual things such as harmony and fugue [...] Handelian “drops” and that sort of thing’.<sup>40</sup>

Walton’s letters further reveal that around 1916-17 his compositions were seen by Henry Ley and Basil Allchin, the organist and assistant organist respectively at Christ Church Cathedral.<sup>41</sup> The Dean of Christ Church, Thomas Strong, was himself an experienced musician who took a particular interest in the cathedral choir;<sup>42</sup> he arranged for Walton to see Hugh Allen,<sup>43</sup> Professor of Music at Oxford University, and a leading figure in Oxford’s musical life.<sup>44</sup> Meetings with Allen seem to have been frequent.<sup>45</sup> Walton later described him as ‘at that time my chief mentor and guide’, although he commented that the important teachers in his life were ‘inspirational, so to speak, rather than technical’.<sup>46</sup> Walton further recalled, ‘It was from him [Allen] that I obtained some insight into the mysteries of the orchestra, as he could bring scores vividly to life by playing them on the organ’.<sup>47</sup>

Surviving juvenilia from 1916 include the Shakespeare song setting ‘Tell me where is fancy bred?’ and the Chorale Prelude for Organ on ‘Wheatley’.<sup>48</sup> These otherwise unremarkable compositions show a teenage composer beginning to get to grips with part-writing and with tonality (the prelude, for example, is in a tenable G<sub>b</sub> minor, although littered with parallel fifths and octaves, whilst ‘Tell me where is fancy bred’ exhibits an elementary ternary structure in E<sub>b</sub> major with passing modulations in the

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<sup>40</sup> Walton, in Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*, pp.73-74.

<sup>41</sup> See Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.12 and 14; Ottaway, *William Walton*, p.4.

<sup>42</sup> Ellie Clewlow, ‘Strong, Thomas Banks (1861-1944)’, in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*, vol. 53, Strang-Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.104.

<sup>43</sup> See Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.12 and 14; Ottaway, *William Walton*, p.4.

<sup>44</sup> Some account of Hugh Allen’s activities can be found in Frank Howes, *Oxford Concerts: A Jubilee Record* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), pp.32-38; and in Cyril Bailey, *Hugh Percy Allen* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p.33ff.

<sup>45</sup> Several of Walton’s letters home casually mention meetings with Hugh Allen. See Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.12-17.

<sup>46</sup> Walton, in Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*, p.74.

<sup>47</sup> Walton, in Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*, p.74.

<sup>48</sup> Manuscripts of these two works are held in the British Library, Add. MS 52384.

central section). The motet 'A Litany', also composed 1916,<sup>49</sup> is more extraordinary, demonstrating adept choral part-writing and a powerful and confident handling of the minor mode; the modal inflections are a portent of Walton's later harmonic style.

Walton eventually became head boy at the choir school, and he was encouraged in various musical pursuits, including composition; he was awarded several prizes for his achievements.<sup>50</sup> The headmaster wrote in his journal in 1917:

The Dean's prize is awarded to Walton. He is head boy and is helpful to me in that position and shows great promise in music. He has been encouraged in musical composition so far that he attends the lectures of Dr Walker and Dr Allen. When a little while ago we were disturbed by a Zeppelin alarm [air-raid warning], he at once proceeded to sit down with his music manuscript. I suppose if there had been a bomb or two dropped, there would have been some discordant crashes in the bass! Walton also receives Mr Ley's prize for work in the choir.<sup>51</sup>

When Walton finished at the choir school in the summer of 1918, Thomas Strong arranged for him to enter Christ Church as an undergraduate student; as Dean of the college, Strong was able to arrange for Walton's expenses to be paid from an assistance fund.<sup>52</sup> 'They said I was the youngest undergraduate since Henry VIII',<sup>53</sup> Walton later recalled.

Much has been made of Walton's inability to complete his studies at the university, but this can be overemphasised: his failure to obtain a degree was not related to any study of music, but was a consequence of failing Responsions (an early university examination undertaken by all students involving Latin, Greek and Algebra) three times. Walton recalled that he could pass each subject in turn, but not meet the university's

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<sup>49</sup> The autograph score is dated Easter 1916, with 'Chris' (standing for Christmas) erased, whereas the published score is dated 1917. Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.13. This work displays considerably more confidence and competence than the other scores dates 1916; it is difficult to believe it was not written later.

<sup>50</sup> See Burton and Murray, *William Walton, the Romantic Loner: A Centenary Portrait Album*, pp.27 and 31.

<sup>51</sup> Reproduced in Burton and Murray, *William Walton, the Romantic Loner: A Centenary Portrait Album*, p.31.

<sup>52</sup> See Thomas Strong, letter to Charles Walton (William's father), quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.10.

<sup>53</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 19:07.



requirement that all subjects be passed at the same time.<sup>54</sup> In fact he was successful in passing other examinations, including the first and second parts of the Bachelor of Music in June 1918 and June 1920 respectively.<sup>55</sup> In November 1918, Walton received an exhibition (a scholarship peculiar to the Oxbridge colleges and usually awarded on merit) worth £45 a year for two years.<sup>56</sup> He finally left Oxford in November 1920, when the exhibition expired.<sup>57</sup>

## Informal Education

Regardless of Walton's failure to complete his academic career, it is clear that his musical education was continuing apace. In a tribute to Thomas Strong, Walton remembered, 'While I had to endure innumerable castigations from my tutor and the late Sir Hugh Allen, the Dean was very tolerant, and was but gently stern about my scholastic failings, as long as I got along with my composing'.<sup>58</sup> Later he recalled 'I didn't work at all, I couldn't be bothered when I suddenly had masses of scores there to be read'.<sup>59</sup> Both during and after his time at university, Walton was engaged with a network of important figures who offered him the opportunity for an informal education in contemporary music and musicians that complemented the more formal training in historical figures and techniques he received at Christ Church.

Walton's patrons at Christ Church provided the young composer with an introduction to modern music. Hugh Allen, for example, enjoyed playing modern scores, including Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, to the pupils on the piano.<sup>60</sup> Thomas Strong also encouraged an interest in modern music; following Sunday morning church services, if the weather

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<sup>54</sup> *Walton Interviewed by Kevin Byrne on Aspects of His Career* (London Echo), radio broadcast, recorded 16 March 1972, transmitted November 1972 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP34404; British Library Sound Archive, 1LP0196064).

<sup>55</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, pp.7-8.

<sup>56</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.11.

<sup>57</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.8.

<sup>58</sup> Walton, in Harold Anson, *T. B. Strong: Bishop, Musician, Dean, Vice-Chancellor* (London: SPCK, 1949), pp.116-117.

<sup>59</sup> Walton, in J. W. Lambert, 'Imp and Sceptre: Conversation with Sir William Walton', *The Sunday Times*, 25 March 1962, Magazine, p.39.

<sup>60</sup> This is mentioned by both Ottaway and Kennedy, although neither gives a citation. Ottaway, *William Walton*, p.5; Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.8.

was bad, Strong would entertain the schoolboys by playing music on the piano. Walton recalled:

On one of these occasion we had our first introduction to modern—in fact ultra-modern—music, when he played us Schönberg's six Short Piano Pieces [sic]. They caused a good deal of mirth amongst us, and he fairly bubbled with amusement. He was greatly interested in modern music, and possessed a great deal of it, which he was always willing to allow one to borrow if one wished.<sup>61</sup>

Walton is presumably referring here to Schoenberg's *Six Little Piano Pieces*, Op. 19, which would indeed have seemed 'ultra-modern' in the late 1910s. Walton recalled further Schoenberg renditions by Strong; he played through *Three Piano Pieces* (Op. 11) and the songs *Fifteen Poems from the Book of the Hanging Gardens* (Op. 15).<sup>62</sup> Walton evidently emulated this propensity to play through modern scores on the piano; his brother, Noel, recalled that he would make 'horrible noises for hours, playing from scores of *Le Sacre du Printemps* and Bartók – especially *Allegro barbaro*.'<sup>63</sup>

Thus Walton had already been introduced to some contemporary music when he discovered a wealth of modern scores at the Ellis Library (for which the Radcliffe Camera would have been the reading room):

Then there was also the Ellis Library in the Radcliffe Camera and it was full of scores of Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel and so forth. That opened up an entirely new world to me, and I fear I spent perhaps too much time there, to the detriment of my scholarly studies in Latin, Greek and algebra.<sup>64</sup>

Surviving lending records give an interesting insight into Walton's musical tastes, which ranged from staple classics such as Mozart quartets, to a number of remarkably recent scores including examples by Richard Strauss, Bartók, Stravinsky and Schoenberg (Table 2.1).<sup>65</sup> As Hugh Ottaway points out, getting to grips with these

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<sup>61</sup> Walton, in Anson, *T. B. Strong*, p.116.

<sup>62</sup> Walton, in Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*, p.74.

<sup>63</sup> Noel Walton, quoted in Ottaway, *William Walton*, p.6.

<sup>64</sup> Walton, in Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*, p.74.

<sup>65</sup> This borrowing book is now housed at the Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford University. My thanks to the music librarian there, Peter Ward Jones, for help with this information.

works would have involved many hours of studying the scores, since no recordings or radio broadcasts were available.<sup>66</sup>

**Table 2.1: Tabulation of the Walton's lending record from the Ellis Library at the Radcliffe Camera, from the first remaining 'borrowing book' of the Music Students Library, Oxford University**

Date	Composer	Work
18 November, 1919	Arnold Schoenberg	<i>Three Piano Pieces</i> (Op.11, 1909)
	Erik Satie	piano pieces [not specified]
19 November	César Franck	<i>Le Chasseur Maudit</i> (symphonic poem, 1882)
2 December	Wolfgang Mozart	quartets [not specified]
10 June, 1920	Richard Strauss	<i>Tod und Verklärung</i> (tone poem, 1889)
	Ralph Vaughan Williams	<i>Five Mystical Songs</i> for baritone, chorus and orchestra (1911)
14 June	Franz Liszt	<i>Faust Symphony</i> (tone poem, 1857)
	Maurice Ravel	<i>Daphnis et Chloé</i> (ballet, 1912)
9 October	Forsyth	<i>Orchestration</i>
	Richard Strauss	<i>Symphonia Domestica</i> (tone poem, 1903)
	Arnold Schoenberg	String Quartet No.2 (Op.10, 1908)
	Arnold Schoenberg	<i>Five Orchestral Pieces</i> (Op.16, 1909)
	Igor Stravinsky	<i>Feu d'artifice</i> (Op.4, orchestral fantasy, 1908)
	Frederick Delius	<i>Paris: The Song of a Great City</i> (orchestral nocturne, 1899)
	Béla Bartók	<i>Two Portraits</i> (for orchestra, Op.5, 1907 / 1908)
14 October	Edward Elgar	<i>Falstaff</i> (for orchestra, Op.68, 1913)
	Maurice Ravel	'Valses' [not specified; possibly <i>La Valse</i> (1920) or <i>Valses Nobles et Sentimentales</i> , (1911)]
19 October	Béla Bartók	<i>Two Pictures</i> (for orchestra, Op.10, 1910)
	Claude Debussy	<i>La Mer</i> (three symphonic sketches, 1905)
	Franz Schubert	Piano music [not specified]
25 October	Igor Stravinsky	<i>Le Rossignol</i> (opera, 1914)
	Frederick Delius	<i>Sea Drift</i> for baritone, choir and orchestra (1904)
7 November	Wolfgang Mozart	quintets [not specified]
9 November	Richard Strauss	<i>Don Quixote</i> (tone poem, 1897) piano score
	Richard Strauss	<i>Symphonia Domestica</i> (tone poem, 1903) piano score
10 November	Richard Strauss	<i>Don Juan</i> (tone poem, 1889) piano score
	Richard Strauss	<i>Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche</i> (tone poem, 1895) piano score
	Richard Strauss	<i>Don Quixote</i> (tone poem, 1897) full score
	Richard Strauss	<i>Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche</i> (tone poem, 1895) full score
	Stravinsky	<i>Le Sacre du printemps</i> (1913)
23 November	Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov	<i>Le Coq d'Or</i> (opera, 1909)

<sup>66</sup> Ottaway, *William Walton*, p.6.

Some of these influences can be seen in the composer's early Quartet for Strings (1922; C11), which was performed in a revised version at the first International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM) festival in Salzburg, in August 1923, the only British work to be performed there.<sup>67</sup> As well as linking Walton to the very first gathering of this important contemporary music association, the Quartet is interesting for its dense counterpoint and near-atonal idiom; it even caused controversy amongst the ISCM jury, some of whom considered that the work did not adequately represent British music.<sup>68</sup> This work is also noteworthy for the number of times Walton referred back to it in interviews in later life. 'When I first started in about 1923', he suggested, 'I was an atonal composer myself.'<sup>69</sup>

Another work of Walton's youth – *Façade* – is notable for its affinity with Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, a connection that has been observed by a number of commentators.<sup>70</sup> The short movements of *Façade* were arranged in seven groups of three, on the suggestion of Constant Lambert, as a parody of *Pierrot Lunaire*'s three groups of seven.<sup>71</sup> Walton wrote to Kennedy that he 'had studied the score of *Pierrot* "assiduously"',<sup>72</sup> although he claimed that he had not heard the Schoenberg piece until after the première of *Façade*.

The notion that Walton was 'largely self-taught' perhaps relates to the fact that – under the influence of the Sitwell brothers with whom he stayed for several years after leaving Oxford – he did not attend one of the London music colleges as might have been expected.<sup>73</sup> Walton was later to emphasise this fact; in response to a suggestion that he

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<sup>67</sup> Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, p.47.

<sup>68</sup> Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, p.47.

<sup>69</sup> Walton, in the radio broadcast *The Composer Speaks: William Walton Interviewed by Felix Aprahamian*. See also Walton's comments in [Anon.], 'Sir William Walton on the Musical Schisms of Today', *The Times*, 29 August 1960, p.12.

<sup>70</sup> Including Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, pp.32-34; Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, p.193; Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.34-35.

<sup>71</sup> Kennedy, 'William Walton: a Critical Appreciation', in Craggs, *William Walton: A Thematic Catalogue of His Musical Works*, p.13.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Kennedy, 'William Walton II?' *The Musical Times*, 119(1620) (February 1978), p.125.

<sup>73</sup> Osbert Sitwell, *Laughter in the Next Room: Being the Fourth Volume of Left Hand, Right Hand!: An Autobiography* (London: Macmillan, 1949), p.170; Ottaway, *William Walton*, p.7.

had been the *enfant terrible* of the Royal College of Music, he replied: 'I wasn't at the RCM – or anywhere else'.<sup>74</sup> Osbert Sitwell recalled that one of the Sitwells' accomplishments was 'to have prevented his being sent to one of the English musical academies'; instead, 'we were able to keep in touch with the vital works of the age, with the music, for example, of Stravinsky'.<sup>75</sup> Stravinsky's earlier works certainly remained a strong influence on Walton; when asked by Hans Keller to pinpoint 'one very essential musical experience', Walton described hearing *Le Sacre du Printemps* under Eugene Goossens for the first time (probably the 1921 London première).<sup>76</sup> Of course, Walton had already studied the score at Christ Church (see Table 2.1).

Having avoided an 'academic' education at one of the London music colleges, Walton continued to receive input from important musical figures. He recalled:

Later in London I was lucky enough to meet Ansermet and Busoni who were kind enough to give me advice and encouragement with my immature compositions [...] A little later I came to know well that neglected Dutch composer Bernard Van Dieren; and then Cecil Gray and Philip Heseltine—or Peter Warlock as he became known.<sup>77</sup>

These latter names are associated with a wide circle of artists, including a number of musicians, who were linked with The George public house in West London.<sup>78</sup> The George had been nicknamed 'the glue-pot' because musicians from the Queens Hall, an active concert venue and home to the Henry Wood promenade concerts before it was destroyed in the Blitz in 1941, would 'stick' there causing them to be late for rehearsals.<sup>79</sup> The composer Elisabeth Lutyens recalled that Walton and a number of important musicians were regulars, including the composers John Ireland, Alan

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<sup>74</sup> Walton, letter to Stephen Tenant, 1 October 1936. Quoted in Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.2.

<sup>75</sup> Sitwell, *Laughter in the Next Room*, p.170.

<sup>76</sup> *A Conversation between William Walton and Hans Keller*, radio broadcast, recorded 21 March 1972, transmitted 28 March 1972 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive LP34404; British Library Sound Archive 1LP0196064).

<sup>77</sup> Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*, p.74. Osbert Sitwell also recalled that Busoni wrote Walton 'a kindly polite letter' about his compositions, and that Walton 'had the benefit of consulting Ernest Ansermet on various problems of composition'. Sitwell, *Laughter in the Next Room*, p.171.

<sup>78</sup> The George is still located today on the corner of Great Portland Street and Mortimer Street, W1.

<sup>79</sup> Elisabeth Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl* (London: Cassell, 1972), p.140.

Rawsthorne, Constant Lambert, and Humphrey Searle.<sup>80</sup> Searle recalled in his memoirs that BBC producers, writers, and actors regularly met at The George, which remained a meeting place for artists well after the Queens Hall was destroyed.<sup>81</sup> The music critic Cecil Gray recalled further members of the drinking circle at The George, including the conductor and orchestrator Hyam Greenbaum, the minor composer Leslie Heward, and the artist Michael Ayrton (who later spent time with Walton and painted his portrait).<sup>82</sup>

This long list of personalities serves to demonstrate that well after leaving a formal education behind, Walton was surrounded by experienced musicians. Indeed, there is some evidence that members of this circle provided him with encouragement and practical help. Walton – introduced by Philip Heseltine – went to Cecil Gray for advice; Gray recalled that in around 1918, ‘I was not greatly impressed either by his personality or by the work of his which I saw’.<sup>83</sup> Gray further recalled advising Walton on his First Symphony, composed 1932–5.<sup>84</sup> According to Gray, Hyam Greenbaum – who would later assist with the conducting and orchestration of Walton’s scores for the films *Escape me Never*, *A Stolen life* and *As You Like It*<sup>85</sup> – gave advice to Walton, Lambert and Rawsthorne, amongst others: ‘Not merely did they frequently come to him with their scores for advice on technical matters but also for constructive aesthetic criticism in the process of composition. He had a deep understanding of, and insight into, all the

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<sup>80</sup> Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl*, p.140.

<sup>81</sup> See ¶5 of ‘6. Five Hundred Copies of Messiah’ in Humphrey Searle, *Quadrille with a Raven: Memoirs by Humphrey Searle* 1982, Available: <http://www.musicweb-international.com/searle/titlepg.htm>, Accessed 13 October 2006.

<sup>82</sup> Cecil Gray, *Musical Chairs or between Two Stools, Being the Life and Memoirs of Cecil Grey* (London: Home & Van Thal, 1948), p.285.

<sup>83</sup> Gray, *Musical Chairs*, p.285.

<sup>84</sup> Gray, *Musical Chairs*, p.286.

<sup>85</sup> Stephen Lloyd, ‘Film Music’, in Stewart R. Craggs (ed.), *William Walton: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp.109-110 and 114-115; Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.91. Spike Hughes’ recollection was that ‘A great deal of Willie Walton’s film music was scored at great speed and with typical expertness by Bumps Greenbaum when the composer was pressed for time.’ Spike Hughes, *Opening Bars: Beginning an Autobiography* (London: Pilot Press, 1946), p.355.

problems of artistic creation.’<sup>86</sup> Walton also admitted to having had lessons in conducting from Eugene Goossens in 1922-3.<sup>87</sup>

Walton downplayed the presence of mentor figures, but there may have been more than he liked to acknowledge. In fact, Walton was rather coy when asked about his musical education: ‘I wanted to have lessons from various people. And I don’t know whether I should have been better with them or without them’.<sup>88</sup> One potentially revealing comment is recorded in a 1939 letter from Dora Foss to her husband Hubert, at that time Walton’s publisher at the Oxford University Press. Dora Foss had asked what Walton was planning after completing the Violin Concerto, and reported the composer’s reply: ‘He said he was going to learn composition and start in chamber music, beginning by a duet, a trio, a quartet and so-on...’<sup>89</sup>

This comment may well have been tongue-in-cheek for a composer who had already successfully completed several substantial works including a symphony, yet there is further evidence that Walton still considered himself to have much to learn. One way in which he may have been pursuing this agenda of ‘learning composition’ was by taking a number of lessons with Humphrey Searle after the war. This intriguing information is not mentioned in any of the published biographies, probably because it was kept somewhat hidden: Kennedy, for example, did not come across any information about lessons from Searle in interview with the composer or in the course of his research.<sup>90</sup> David C. F. Wright, an amateur composer and musicologist who knew Walton and Searle personally, and who had studied with Searle in the 1960s both privately and at

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<sup>86</sup> Cecil Gray, ‘Hyam Greenbaum (1901-1942)’, *The Music Review*, 3(3) (August 1942), pp.221-222. Spike Hughes repeats the assertion that Walton went to Greenbaum for technical advice in Hughes, *Opening Bars: Beginning an Autobiography*, p.355.

<sup>87</sup> *William Walton Interviewed by Dilys Powell and Anthony Hopkins for the Series Frankly Speaking*, radio broadcast, recorded 2 April 1962, transmitted 20 June 1962 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive LP27281).

<sup>88</sup> Walton, in *William Walton at 75* (The Lively Arts), television broadcast, transmitted 26 March 1977 (BBC: British Film Institute, VB 22704).

<sup>89</sup> Dora Foss, letter to Hubert Foss, 4 February 1939, quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.100.

<sup>90</sup> Michael Kennedy, private correspondence with the author.

the Royal College of Music,<sup>91</sup> has claimed in two articles published online, and in a letter published in *Tempo*, that Walton had composition lessons with Searle for two years from 1945.<sup>92</sup> Wright claims that in later years, Walton described the lessons with Searle in a private letter, writing:

Humphrey was the focal point of music in London. All important musical events seemed to involve him and yet he was never in the limelight [...] I could have studied with anyone but only Humphrey would do. He was a brilliant teacher. [...] He said that it was not in my interests to say that I was having music lessons.<sup>93</sup>

Wright maintains that Walton's music changed as a direct result of Searle's teaching, especially in refining his orchestration to create a clearer and leaner texture: 'With Searle, Walton corrected the faults in his earlier music for his current scores [...] his work since the last war is of a far better texture and now has a technical assurance. The recklessness has gone.'<sup>94</sup>

There is some documentary evidence to support Wright's claims. In a letter from Ischia of April 1952, Walton wrote to Searle: 'When I get back I shall take some lessons from you (strictly professional) in the 12 tone system. I'm getting sick of tonic and dominant!'<sup>95</sup> Subsequent letters reveal that the two met at least twice in the summer of 1952,<sup>96</sup> and that Searle sent Walton a draft chapter on twelve-note music.<sup>97</sup> Lady Walton has also corroborated the suggestion that lessons took place; replying to

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<sup>91</sup> Extracts from Wright's as yet unpublished autobiography, entitled 'Some Rain Must Fall', appear as David C. F. Wright, *The Music Years 1961-1967*, 1997, Available: <http://www.musicweb-international.com/wright/rain1.htm>, Accessed 13 October 2006.

<sup>92</sup> David C. F. Wright, *The Unknown Walton*, 2002, Available: <http://www.musicweb.uk.net/Walton/wright.htm>, Accessed 6 June 2005; David C. F. Wright, 'Letters to the Editor: From David C. F. Wright', *Tempo*, 172 (March 1990), p.51; Wright, *The Music Years 1961-1967*.

<sup>93</sup> Walton, letter to David Wright, quoted in Wright, *The Unknown Walton*.

<sup>94</sup> Wright, *The Unknown Walton*.

<sup>95</sup> Walton, letter to Humphrey Searle, 15 April 1952. In the Humphrey Searle Collection at the British Library, Add. MS. 71838, f.182.

<sup>96</sup> See Walton, letter to Humphrey Searle. 1 September 1952. In the Humphrey Searle Collection at the British Library, Add. MS. 71838, f.183.

<sup>97</sup> This was presumably an early version of Searle's chapter 'Schoenberg and Twelve-tone Composition' that appeared in Humphrey Searle, *Twentieth Century Counterpoint: A Guide for Students* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1954), pp.71-117. Walton acknowledged receipt of a copy of the book in 1954, the year it was published, suggesting 'I know it will be of great use to me'. Walton, letter to Humphrey Searle, 13 December 1954. The Humphrey Searle Collection at the British Library, Add. MS.17838, f.187.



Wright's comments, she rejects the notion that Searle influenced Walton's orchestration, and makes intriguing comments about the content of the lessons:

My husband never took serial music seriously (no pun intended), and his 'lessons' with Searle were not music lessons in the accepted sense. He felt he ought to find out something technically about serialism (as he used to say: how they used their slide-rules); having found out what he needed to know, he decided he did not need to know it.<sup>98</sup>

Why might Walton have chosen to have lessons from Searle, a much younger composer? Searle had studied Classics at Oxford, where his musical outlook had benefited from regular meetings with Hugh Allen,<sup>99</sup> some eighteen years after Walton had benefited in the same way. Some time around 1935, Searle had been introduced to Walton; Searle recalled, 'Walton was very kind; he looked at my songs and an overture which I had sketched out and gave me encouragement, which was what I needed.'<sup>100</sup> In the same year, Searle, having been 'utterly shaken by the power of the music' at a performance of Berg's *Wozzeck*, had been learning about twelve-tone technique from Theodor Adorno.<sup>101</sup> In 1937-8 he spent the summers studying with John Ireland at the Royal College of Music (on Walton's recommendation)<sup>102</sup> and the winter studying privately with Webern in Vienna.<sup>103</sup> In October 1940, Searle's notes on this visit were published in *The Musical Times*.<sup>104</sup> He recalled,

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<sup>98</sup> Susana Walton, 'Letters to the Editor: From Lady Walton', *Tempo*, 174 (September 1990), p.69.

<sup>99</sup> ¶3 of '4: You cant [sic] take the Civil Service Exam', in Searle, *Quadrille with a Raven: Memoirs by Humphrey Searle*. It is unfortunate that this online version of Searle's memoirs, including the chapter titles, is haphazardly edited.

<sup>100</sup> In ¶4 of '4: You cant take the Civil Service Exam', Searle, *Quadrille with a Raven: Memoirs by Humphrey Searle*.

<sup>101</sup> In ¶8 of '4: You cant take the Civil Service Exam', Searle, *Quadrille with a Raven: Memoirs by Humphrey Searle*.

<sup>102</sup> See ¶2 of '5, London and Vienna', in Searle, *Quadrille with a Raven: Memoirs by Humphrey Searle*. Searle was enrolled at the Royal College of Music from May to July in both 1937 and 1938; thanks to Chris Bornet, archivist at the RCM, for confirming these dates.

<sup>103</sup> Humphrey Searle, 'Conversations with Webern', *The Musical Times*, 81(1172) (October 1940), p.405.

<sup>104</sup> Searle, 'Conversations with Webern'. pp.405-406.

I had gone out to Vienna as an admirer of the music of the Schönberg school and with some theoretical knowledge of the methods of construction of twelve-tone music, but what I chiefly learnt from him was its exact development from the music of the past and the logical necessity which compels Webern to compose in the way he does.<sup>105</sup>

Following army service in the Second World War, Searle became a producer at the BBC and was influential at the start of the BBC's new 'Third Programme' in 1946. It was at around this time that Walton seems to have had lessons with Searle. Aside from Wright's rather surprising claims and the exchange of letters in *Tempo*, no details have emerged about these meetings, perhaps because of Lady Walton's rejection of the idea that they had any significant influence. Replying to Wright's letter, she wrote:

If we hear greater 'clarity' and 'originality' in the texture of Walton's post-1950 music we need attribute this only to his own natural development and not to any outside influence, least of all (with all respect) to Humphrey Searle's.<sup>106</sup>

Thus the details of the relationship between the two composers remain to be discovered, but two important points emerge from what is known. Firstly, that Walton – by this time an established and indeed successful composer – wanted to have lessons at all demonstrates that he must have been, on some level, dissatisfied with his current approach. He was not content with what he knew, but sought further knowledge, and was not afraid to ask a much younger man, and one that had previously come to him for advice. Secondly, that Walton chose Humphrey Searle, a composer who publicly evangelised about the Second Viennese School, suggests that something of his discontent was connected with the resurgence of interest in twelve-note music that became increasingly influential amongst certain younger composers after the war. Walton did not go on to write twelve-note music, except for a brief passage in the final coda of the 1949 Violin Sonata (C55) that Wright suggests was written as a homage to Searle;<sup>107</sup> nonetheless twelve-note structures have greater presence in later Walton than

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<sup>105</sup> Searle, 'Conversations with Webern', p.405. Also see '5, London and Vienna' in Searle, *Quadrille with a Raven: Memoirs by Humphrey Searle*.

<sup>106</sup> Susana Walton, 'Letters to the Editor: From Lady Walton', p.69.

<sup>107</sup> ¶9 in Wright, *The Unknown Walton*.

is usually acknowledged.<sup>108</sup> But whilst some direct influence can be traced, what is of significance here is that Walton took active steps to acquire knowledge and understanding of twelve-note music.

### **Walton and Contemporary Music in the Later Years**

The social network that developed around The George, and which was the source of much informal support to Walton during his years in London, is indicative of a more general point: that Walton took a highly active interest in the musical figures and movements of his day. Some consideration of the form that this interest took in later years (after the composer moved away from London to the Italian island of Ischia) offers a counterbalance to the criticism that he had withdrawn from contemporary musical life and its concerns.<sup>109</sup> A counterbalance is certainly necessary, since Walton's interest in contemporary musical developments (like his formal education) has tended to be somewhat underreported in musical and biographical accounts. Christopher Palmer – a long-time advocate of Walton's music – wrote in his introduction to Cragg's authoritative catalogue of works that the composer 'was used to leading critics up the garden path (he fooled even Hans Keller into thinking he was genuinely interested in contemporary music and composers)'.<sup>110</sup> Hans Keller was certainly convinced<sup>111</sup> – but not fooled, for Walton did indeed make time and effort, throughout his life, to understand something of the newer trends in music.

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<sup>108</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 7, especially p.220ff. See also Michael Byde, 'Re-Evaluating William Walton's Second Symphony', MMus Dissertation, University of Leeds, 2004, 34-45.

<sup>109</sup> These criticisms are discussed in greater detail in this thesis, Chapter 4, p.59ff.

<sup>110</sup> Christopher Palmer, 'Introduction by Christopher Palmer', in Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.2. Two broadcast interviews, from 1968 and 1972, included Walton and Keller discussing, amongst other things, contemporary music. *Walton Talks with Hans Keller About Contemporary Music*, radio broadcast, transmitted 12 March 1968 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP31959; British Library Sound Archive, M4597W); and *A Conversation between William Walton and Hans Keller*, radio broadcast, recorded 21 March 1972, transmitted 28 March 1972 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive LP34404; British Library Sound Archive 1LP0196064).

<sup>111</sup> See, for example, Keller's comments on Walton's 'illuminating' discussion of experimental art. in Hans Keller, 'Is There Performing Genius?' *The Listener*, 87 (9 March 1972), p.318.

Before leaving London, Walton had become involved in the administrative side of contemporary musical life. He was quite heavily engaged with the planning of the 1938 ISCM festival (he was a patron of a 'Festival of German Music', according to Elisabeth Lutyens, although the festival was not exclusively German),<sup>112</sup> which was held in July in London and Oxford.<sup>113</sup> Correspondence with the composer Christian Darnton indicates that Walton visited Hermann Scherchen, the festival's principal conductor, in Amsterdam, where programming for the festival was arranged.<sup>114</sup> Walton was also present at other ISCM festivals, including the society's first meeting in Salzburg in August 1923 (noted above), and in Amsterdam in 1933, where Constant Lambert conducted *Belshazzar's Feast*. Edwin Evans wrote about the latter occasion that the audience 'fêted Walton, Lambert and Henderson [the soloist] to an almost embarrassing extent'.<sup>115</sup>

After moving to Ischia, Walton made a marked effort to remain aware of contemporary developments. Indeed, contemporary influences were present in Ischia itself, in the form of island resident Hans Werner Henze, and a number of prestigious visitors, among them Michael Tippett, Luigi Nono, Herbert von Karajan, and possibly Stravinsky.<sup>116</sup> Henze was a resident on Ischia from 1953; although he moved to Naples in 1955, the two composers remained in regular contact, with Henze making visits to the Waltons' home on the island.<sup>117</sup> In his autobiography, Henze makes the intriguing comment that 'I showed him [Walton] how to write music using twelve notes ("which are related only

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<sup>112</sup> Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl*, p.77.

<sup>113</sup> Historical sources on this ISCM festival a hard to come by, but useful summaries can be found in two reviews in *The Musical Times*: [Anon.], 'Notes and News', *The Musical Times*, 79(1145) (July 1938), pp.528-529; Alan Frank, 'The I.S.C.M. London Festival', *The Musical Times*, 79(1145) (July 1938), pp.537-538.

<sup>114</sup> Walton, letter to Christian Darnton, 1938, in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.116-117.

<sup>115</sup> Edwin Evans, 'The I.S.C.M. Festival at Amsterdam', *The Musical Times*, 74(1086) (August 1933).

<sup>116</sup> See Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, pp.116-117 and 150; Henze, *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography*, pp.134-135. Lady Walton's claim that Stravinsky visited the island is disputed by Henze; see *Bohemian Fifths*, pp.134-135. That Michael Tippett visited is recorded in his autobiography; Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), p.214.

<sup>117</sup> Henze, *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography*, p.134 and 216; Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 7 March 1960, in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*.

to one another”), but he was not especially interested’;<sup>118</sup> perhaps he had already learned everything he wanted to know from Humphrey Searle. It is evident from a number of comments in interviews and correspondence that Walton regarded Henze’s music very highly,<sup>119</sup> and that he asked the younger composer for his thoughts and advice on compositions as they progressed.<sup>120</sup>

Walton further took the opportunity to engage with contemporary figures who were visiting nearby mainland Italy. He reported in 1955 that Gian Carlo Menotti and Samuel Barber – two American composers whom he had met in Capri – were ‘extremely amiable’.<sup>121</sup> Henze recalled one particularly memorable visit that the two composers made to the Italian mainland, to attend a festival of modern music:

We got to Venice and he spent the whole time with the avant garde composers, including Luigi Nono, we had all these meals together and so on. And he felt very happy, and very amused, and very critical of the pieces that he heard! Well I think he even listens to my records from time to time! It’s very kind of him because I don’t think that it is his stuff, but he might understand that the craft is ok.<sup>122</sup>

Walton also corresponded with Stravinsky during the 1960s, and has made a number of comments about Stravinsky which indicate a broad knowledge of the composer’s works and style. He has argued that Stravinsky’s turn to serial techniques under the influence of Robert Craft went against instinct: ‘I think he’s gone misguidedly into something he didn’t really understand’.<sup>123</sup>

In addition, there is some evidence that Walton took an interest in the younger generation of contemporary composers, those whom – as we shall explore in Chapter 4 – were championed by some critics who felt that in comparison Walton’s music was

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<sup>118</sup> Henze, *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography*, p.126.

<sup>119</sup> See, for example, Walton’s comments on Henze in [Anon.], ‘Sir William Walton on the Musical Schisms of Today’, p.12.

<sup>120</sup> Walton makes reference to Henze’s input in correspondence concerning the Second Symphony. See for example Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 31 March 1960. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.318.

<sup>121</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 18 July 1955. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.268.

<sup>122</sup> Hans Werner Henze, in *Portrait of Sir William Walton* (Music Weekly), radio broadcast, written by Michael Oliver, transmitted 31 March 1982 (BBC: British Library Sound Archive, T4862BW C1). See also Henze, *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography*, p.126.

<sup>123</sup> In the radio broadcast *A Conversation between William Walton and Hans Keller*.

out-of-date. We have already noted Walton's encounter with Luigi Nono in Venice. Walton also recalled attending a concert of Stockhausen in Rome, describing it as 'sort of mother's milk as far as I was concerned. I wasn't at all impressed by it as being something very advanced. It seemed to me rather old fashioned in fact'.<sup>124</sup> The most recent developments in British music also drew comment from Walton. Speaking of the music of Harrison Birtwistle and the Manchester school, Walton said: 'I read about composers of Wardour Castle, the Manchester school... On the whole I prefer the Liverpool school, but that maybe not what people expect for contemporary music!'<sup>125</sup> Walton further expressed this sense of being in touch with contemporary developments in a 60<sup>th</sup>-birthday article for *The Sunday Telegraph*:

I believe that, unlike many composers, I am one who does appreciate the works of my contemporaries or near-contemporaries. For instance, I admire tremendously Britten's Serenade and Nocturne, Tippett's "Midsummer Marriage", Rawsthorne's concertos and Arnold's Second Symphony, to mention only a few works. Nor am I indifferent to the many gifted composers who express themselves in the 12-note technique, for instance Henze, and I possess nearly all the available records of this school.<sup>126</sup>

Walton's residency in Italy resulted in correspondence with friends, collaborators and publishers in England that further reveal his desire to keep in touch with contemporary music. Walton asked his publisher, Alan Frank, of Oxford University Press, to send scores and recordings of both contemporary and historical works, especially where they were relevant to his current projects;<sup>127</sup> whilst working on *Troilus and Cressida*, for example, he asked Christopher Hassall to send scores and descriptions of Carlo Menotti's opera *The Consul* (1950) and Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd* (1951).<sup>128</sup> Michael Tippett recalled in his autobiography that Walton 'constantly demanded tapes

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<sup>124</sup> In the radio broadcast *The Composer Speaks: William Walton Interviewed by Felix Aprahamian*.

<sup>125</sup> In the radio broadcast *Walton Talks with Hans Keller About Contemporary Music*. Wardour Castle was the location of Cranborne Chase School, whose musical director from 1962 was Harrison Birtwistle. Two summer festivals, founded by Birtwistle and with strong representation from the Manchester school, were held there in 1964 and 1965.

<sup>126</sup> William Walton, 'My Life in Music', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 25 March 1962, p.8.

<sup>127</sup> This is evident from a survey of Walton's letters. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*. Kennedy provides a long list of works that the Oxford University Press sent to Walton; see Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.283-284.

<sup>128</sup> Letter to Christopher Hassall, 12 March 1951; letter to Christopher Hassall, 21 December 1951. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.208 and 210-211.

of all my latest pieces'.<sup>129</sup> Walton developed an extensive record collection; 'I've got a very good record library', he suggested in reply to a question about whether he listened to other composer's music.<sup>130</sup>

Indeed, his knowledge of a broad range of contemporary music was put to active use when asked to suggest works to programmers. For example, in 1947, he suggested performances of the music of Kaikhosru Sorabji for broadcast to George Barnes,<sup>131</sup> who was at that time head of the BBC's Third Programme, whilst in 1953 Walton recommended to David Webster, then the director of the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, that he programme Schoenberg's twelve-note opera *Von heute auf morgen* (1930, Op. 32), which Walton described as 'unexpectedly captivating'.<sup>132</sup>

Thus far a picture has been painted of a composer who was well-versed in various facets of contemporary music. Walton knew the music of Schoenberg, Bartók and Stravinsky from his time at university, and thus could appear somewhat ahead of the game when these composers returned to the spotlight in the 1950s and 60s (a time when the lack of performances and recordings of these composers was lamented by critics).<sup>133</sup> Walton – whilst he was somewhat isolated geographically – made a considerable effort to remain in touch with both British and continental trends in music, including those that were quite far removed from his own compositional style. And further, in radio and newspaper interviews, Walton took the time to comment on – and thus project an image of polite understanding of – the newest trends in music. The extent to which these various contemporary trends did (or did not) influence Walton's music will be discussed in greater detail in the central, analytical part of this thesis; for now, it suffices to note that the true extent of a digested influence of contemporary trends, including serialism, remains to be accurately assessed.

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<sup>129</sup> Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, p.214.

<sup>130</sup> *Walton Interviewed About His Work by Arthur Jacobs* (Music Now), radio broadcast, recorded 18 November 1977, transmitted 9 December 1977 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive LP38004; British Library Sound Archive 1LP0197490).

<sup>131</sup> Walton, letter to George Barnes, 31 January 1947. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.160.

<sup>132</sup> Walton, letter to David Webster, 22 January 1953. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.222.

<sup>133</sup> Consider Peter Heyworth's comments in 'Twentieth-Century Records', *The Observer*, 25 December 1960, p.14: and 'Berg's Version of Büchner', *The Observer*, 4 December 1960, p.27.

Given that both Walton's music and biography reflect interests in contemporary music, how was it that Walton – returning to Palmer's comment that he had *fooled* Hans Keller 'into thinking he was genuinely interested in contemporary music and composers'<sup>134</sup> – could have appeared so out of touch with contemporary concerns? Despite the evidence that Walton conscientiously kept abreast of new trends, there are occasions on which a less sympathetic viewpoint emerges. In private correspondence Walton referred to Stockhausen as a 'ghastly man'; in 1974 he advised Malcolm Arnold to 'keep away' from Stockhausen's latest piece, *Inori*.<sup>135</sup> And having noted Walton's careful comments on the twelve-tone school in the 60<sup>th</sup>-birthday piece for *The Sunday Telegraph*, other comments from the same time seem rather less guarded and certainly less sympathetic, with the composer describing the contemporary music scene as 'dribbling', comparing it to Action Painting.<sup>136</sup> Elsewhere, he was more specific:

Even Boulez, you know, the hammer chap, well it's a nice tinkly sound and all that, but after ten minutes one sags. A lot of this music, or whatever it is, is very much like a lot of the painting that's going on – I can't think it'll last, even in Germany. After all, if you work it out strictly, you can't help making rather a disgusting noise!<sup>137</sup>

Walton was certainly aware of his own position outside of the newest developments. Consider the comments Walton made when discussing the Manchester School and the importance of the Darmstadt summer schools:

Well of course, I'm not frightfully up in the contemporary situation - but who is, you see! [...] I feel all the Darmstadt people... frankly I'm not really what's known as 'with them', I believe.<sup>138</sup>

Walton related this feeling to old age; in a private letter to Benjamin Britten of 1963, Walton expressed admiration for Britten's music, which he suggested,

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<sup>134</sup> Christopher Palmer, 'Introduction by Christopher Palmer', in Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.2.

<sup>135</sup> Walton, letter to Malcolm Arnold, 19 November 1974. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.415.

<sup>136</sup> In the radio broadcast *William Walton Interviewed by Dilys Powell and Anthony Hopkins for the Series Frankly Speaking*.

<sup>137</sup> Walton, in Lambert, 'Imp and Sceptre', p.39.

<sup>138</sup> In the radio broadcast *Walton Talks with Hans Keller About Contemporary Music*.



shines out as a beacon [...] in, to me at least, a chaotic and barren musical world, and I am sure it does for thousands of others as well. I know that I should understand what is going [on], but I suppose it is a matter [of] age – old age maybe; but there it is – I don't.<sup>139</sup>

Thus Walton – however much he may have wanted to keep abreast of contemporary trends in music – began to feel increasingly isolated from them, and, because of his age, unable to understand the newest developments. This allowed the composer – rightly or wrongly – to be characterised as someone who (in the words of J. W. Lambert in *The Sunday Times*) ‘speaks up for tradition’,<sup>140</sup> such that the image of Walton as out-of-date and out-of-touch began to gain precedence in critical writings.<sup>141</sup>

The two overlapping areas of investigation in this chapter – Walton's music education, and his interest in contemporary music and musicians – suggest formative influences that combine the traditional and the modern. Walton's education at Christ Church involved close study of the rudiments of tonal harmony and counterpoint with plenty of practical experience in English church music; this complements and contrasts with his interest in modern composers, evidenced by the scores he examined in the Ellis Library at university, and subsequently developed through more informal channels.

In considering Walton's post-war life and works, the ‘modern’ side of this balance becomes somewhat problematic. There is evidence to suggest that he remained engaged with new compositional schools and trends, although he was increasingly aware of a disparity between the music of the younger composers and his own. This disparity fuelled (and was fuelled by) a critical reaction against Walton's music, which began to seem out-of-touch and out-of-date. Before embarking on a more detailed discussion of this press criticism (Chapter 4), it is worthwhile dwelling on the changes in lifestyle that accompany the idea of a late phase in Walton's creative development. A number of biographical considerations – some of which were factors in the cooling reaction to Walton in the British press – contribute to the construction of a ‘late period’ in the composer's life; these are the topic of the next chapter.

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<sup>139</sup> Walton, letter to Benjamin Britten, 23 November 1963. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.338.

<sup>140</sup> Lambert, ‘Imp and Sceptre’, p.39.

<sup>141</sup> See this thesis. Chapter 4, p.59ff.

### Chapter 3:

## Milestones of Change: Ischia, *Troilus and Cressida*, and Walton's Finances and Relationships

We have noted that artistic lateness has been discussed, by Edward Said and others, in terms of composer biography as well as musical style: thus late Beethoven is linked with the composer's deafness and ill health; and late Mozart with health and financial problems, and an attempt at a freelance career in Vienna.<sup>1</sup> For Walton, the early 1950s was a time of considerable transition: his financial circumstances, personal relationships, and living arrangements all saw significant changes. These biographical circumstances coincide with the drawn-out composition of the opera *Troilus and Cressida*. These are the defining circumstances of Walton's life after the war, and thus can inform our understanding of the later music.

### Patronage, Film Music and Finance

Walton often complained about a lack of money, especially in reference to his days in London with the Sitwells. In contrast to others in the Sitwell circle – who either had inherited wealth or could perform or teach to earn an income – Walton could only compose: 'I was in that unlucky category of not being able to play any instrument. And naturally I didn't make very much.'<sup>2</sup> In interviews, Walton repeatedly refers to himself as a 'scrounger', and laments the lack of income from institutional sources.<sup>3</sup> 'Things like the Performing Right Society didn't exist. And there was no BBC and no films. So there was nothing you could do to make money. You had to live off your friends actually.'<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Walton lived off his friends for many years, and thus his art was, in some sense, conditioned by patronage. When Walton first went to London, the Sitwells, Dr Strong, Lord Berners and Siegfried Sassoon together financed an income of £250 a

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<sup>1</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 1, p.4ff.

<sup>2</sup> Walton, in *William Walton at 75* (The Lively Arts), television broadcast, transmitted 26 March 1977 (BBC: British Film Institute, VB 22704).

<sup>3</sup> See for example *William Walton: At the Haunted End of the Day* [1981] (South Bank Show): DVD, directed by Tony Palmer; released 11 March 2002, Decca, 26:14.

<sup>4</sup> Walton, in *Talking About Music 134*, radio broadcast, date unknown (prior to 1977) (BBC: British Library Sound Archive 1LP0153533).

year for the young composer.<sup>5</sup> Walton remembered that ‘lots of people contributed. I suppose I had about £100 a year, £200 a year or something.’<sup>6</sup> During his relationship with Imma Doernberg, when Walton spent much of his time with her in Switzerland, he wrote several times to Siegfried Sassoon – a sure ‘soft touch’ – requesting gifts and guarantees for overdrafts.<sup>7</sup>

The biographical accounts understandably do not include detailed information about Walton’s finances, but there is enough evidence to draw the conclusion that, partly because of his work on films, his financial situation began to improve considerably during the 30s and 40s. The beginnings of a release from reliance on others occurred in 1932, when Walton received a bequest of £500 a year for life from Samuel Courtauld, funded by his wife, Elizabeth Courtauld’s, estate. Walton wrote to Sassoon, ‘It is too marvellous for words. I can hardly realise what it means to my life and really to everyone else to whom I have been a willing burden’.<sup>8</sup> Walton asked Sassoon to guarantee an overdraft one further time,<sup>9</sup> but from this point forward, Walton’s improved finances allowed him to detach himself from the patronage he had enjoyed up to this point. (It is unclear whether this was a cause of or a result of deteriorating relationships with Sassoon and with the Sitwells.)<sup>10</sup> He was beginning to receive regular commissions, and was entering the more lucrative world of film music: ‘I got my first film, *Escape Me Never*, which I got three- or four-hundred down for. Which I’d never

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.18.

<sup>6</sup> Walton, in *The Vintage Years: A Musical Portrait of Walton*, radio broadcast, transmitted 11 November 1992 (BBC Radio 3: British Library Sound Archive, H830).

<sup>7</sup> See letters to Siegfried Sassoon, 2 March 1930, 10 March 1930, 28 January 1932, 6 February 1932. In Malcolm Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), pp.56-58 and 70-71.

<sup>8</sup> Walton, letter to Siegfried Sassoon, 6 February 1932. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.71.

<sup>9</sup> See Walton, letter to Siegfried Sassoon, 29 May 1932. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.76-78.

<sup>10</sup> Walton’s weakening relationship with Osbert Sitwell is discussed in Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Hale, 1984), p.77. The potential for a rift between Walton and Sassoon – a topic avoided in the biographies – is discussed in Paul Chipchase, ‘Book Review: *Portrait of Walton*: Michael Kennedy’, *Tempo*, 171, 50th Anniversary 1939-1989 (December 1989), pp.41-42.

seen such a sum in all my life. And from then finances were no real question'.<sup>11</sup> Walton further recalled:

*Belshazzar* was a sort of big break-through. But even then it didn't make me any money, *Belshazzar*. Fifty pounds a year was as much as I could get out of the Oxford Press. The first break was that, and *Escape Me Never*, the films. [...] That gave me an entirely different view of life; about ten days work and got paid much more than I'd ever made in a year.<sup>12</sup>

From 1935, Walton was no longer welcome at the Sitwells' house in Carlyle Square where he had been living for several years; this was partly because his new romance with Alice Wimborne was unpopular with Osbert Sitwell, and partly because Osbert's lover, David Horner, had recently moved in.<sup>13</sup> Walton needed a base in London, and purchased a property at 56A South Eaton Place. In one of the first letters from his new home, Walton wrote to Sassoon, 'There has been a slight chilliness between me & Carlyle Squ, so I've settled down here & I must say I much appreciate being on my own.'<sup>14</sup> Walton comments on a number of 'commercial' projects including the ballet *The First Shoot* and the film *As You Like It*, and states, 'So I shall be able financially to keep my head, I hope, well above water for the time being'.<sup>15</sup>

Walton achieved some success in film scoring, his early film scores being *Escape Me Never* (1934, for a fee of £300),<sup>16</sup> *As You Like It* (1936), *Dreaming Lips* (1937), and *A Stolen Life* (1938). However, a long letter Walton wrote to Hubert Foss in 1938 reveals that he wanted to avoid the prospect of writing further film scores: 'It all boils down to this, whether I'm to become a film composer or a real composer [...] I think I can wipe

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<sup>11</sup> *Walton Interviewed About His Work by Arthur Jacobs* (Music Now), radio broadcast, recorded 18 November 1977, transmitted 9 December 1977 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP38004; British Library Sound Archive, 1LP0197490).

<sup>12</sup> Walton, in *William Walton at 75* (The Lively Arts), television broadcast, transmitted 26 March 1977 (BBC: British Film Institute, VB 22704).

<sup>13</sup> Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, p.77.

<sup>14</sup> Walton, letter to Siegfried Sassoon, 21 October 1935. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.100-101.

<sup>15</sup> Walton, letter to Siegfried Sassoon, 21 October 1935. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.100-101. Lady Walton's comment that the score for *Escape Me Never* (1935) 'helped pay the mortgage during the composition of the First Symphony' is a little misguided as the first complete performance of the Symphony, on 6 November 1935, occurred only shortly after Walton brought his first home. Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.87.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Lloyd, 'Film Music'. in Stewart R. Craggs (ed.). *William Walton: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p.109.

out films, which have served their purpose in enabling me to get my house etc.’<sup>17</sup> In 1938, Walton turned down, despite repeated requests from the director Gabriel Pascal, the opportunity to score Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* along with two subsequent films for a total of £1650 – a considerable sum in 1938! – preferring instead to concentrate on the less lucrative but more ‘artistic’ Violin Concerto.<sup>18</sup>

However, the Second World War substantially reduced the availability of everyone involved in music, from musicians and publishing staff to promoters and audiences. Furthermore Walton, who would have been in his late thirties at this time, was not exempt from military service; the upper age limit was increased from 40 to 51 at the end of 1941. In early 1940, Walton was driving ambulances for the war effort ‘somewhere in the Midlands’<sup>19</sup> (not in France, as some American press reports stated). Unfortunately Walton had difficulty controlling the vehicles, especially because of the rather complex double declutch technique required to operate the gearboxes. ‘After I’d run it into a ditch several times’, Walton commented, ‘they said perhaps you’d better not drive an ambulance!’<sup>20</sup> He received call-up papers for military service in early 1941, but was subsequently granted an exemption. According to Kennedy, this was arranged by Jack Beddington at the Ministry of Information ‘on condition that he would write music for films deemed to be “of national importance”’.<sup>21</sup> Thus Walton wrote scores for four openly propagandistic films, *The Next of Kin* (1941), *The Foreman Went to France* (1942), *The First of the Few* (1942), and *Went the Day Well?* (1942). Two further projects, the radio play *Christopher Columbus* (1942), and the Laurence Olivier film *Henry V* (1944), may also have been considered to have propaganda value.<sup>22</sup> Walton’s

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<sup>17</sup> Walton, letter to Hubert Foss, 11 May 1938, in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.115.

<sup>18</sup> Walton, letter to Hubert Foss, 11 May 1938, in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.114-115.

<sup>19</sup> Walton, letter to Janet Goosens, 8 January 1940. Quoted in Carole Rosen, *The Goossens: A Musical Century* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1993), p.220.

<sup>20</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 50:13.

<sup>21</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.112.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Lloyd reports that *Christopher Columbus* was designed as a tribute to the United States, which had recently joined the war after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, whilst Shakespeare’s *Henry V* was viewed as ‘a clarion call for war-time Britain’. Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), pp.186-187 and 196.

return to film music, during the 'middle' period, was thus borne out of twin necessities: financial need, and the requirement that he do something 'useful' for the war effort.

During the war, the house at South Eaton Place was 'bombed flat',<sup>23</sup> but Walton's financial situation continued to improve. He spent much of his time living with Alice Wimborne (who will be discussed in more detail below); when she died in 1948, she left him a Bentley, a fashionable two-storey semi-detached home in the heart of Westminster known as Lowdnes Cottage, and £10,000.<sup>24</sup> These were assets he boasted about to his future wife on his 1948 trip to Buenos Aires.<sup>25</sup>

When Walton and his wife first moved to Ischia, conditions were bad, partly because of the effects of the war,<sup>26</sup> but they were able to finance living in Italy for much of the year, including employing a caretaker,<sup>27</sup> alongside regular visits to London. In 1957, the couple purchased a number of small properties on the island and refurbished them to let out to holidaymakers; they moved into one of the properties, San Felice, in 1959.<sup>28</sup> A measure of the couple's increasing prosperity is found in that fact that when Lady Walton's father died in 1958, the small bequest was spent on luxuries: antiques for their planned new home on Ischia, La Mortella, the construction of which was begun in 1961.<sup>29</sup> Thus the various bequests, regular commissions from Oxford University Press, and the film scores, had helped fund Walton's increasingly independent, indeed detached, lifestyle. Of course there were still significant influential figures in these later years (George Szell and André Previn, for example); but these were helpful supporters rather than patrons with a potentially directive influence.

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<sup>23</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 48:42.

<sup>24</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.140.

<sup>25</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.101.

<sup>26</sup> Susana Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 61:30.

<sup>27</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.100.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.109 and 169.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.170 and 175.

## Walton's Girlfriends: Alice Wimborne and Susana Gil

Walton's improved finances must have been a pre-requisite for one of the most surprising and certainly life-changing decisions of his life. He married Susana Gil, an unknown twenty-year-old Argentinean, in December 1948. The marriage contrasts in a number of significant ways with Walton's previous romantic relationships, especially the immediately preceding thirteen-year long affair with Lady Alice Wimborne, a baroness 22 years his senior. Lady Wimborne was married to Viscount Wimborne, but they led separate lives, only coming together for social occasions.<sup>30</sup> On the Viscount's death in 1939, Walton and Lady Wimborne moved in together to her London home, Lowdnes Cottage. Byron Adams describes the relationship as 'long, happy and intimate',<sup>31</sup> an idea with which the biographical sources concur. Gillian Widdicombe noted that Wimborne was Walton's 'closest and most encouraging companion',<sup>32</sup> whilst Lady Walton recalled that 'he told me that she had been the most important woman in his life, and that, as with me, he had known on their first encounter that he had met the right person with whom to share his life'.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Lady Walton even suggests that the composer declined Lady Wimborne's offer to marry him when the Viscount died: 'After a lifetime of being the exquisite Lady Wimborne, he could not allow her to become Mrs Walton.'<sup>34</sup> When interviewed for the film documentary *At the Haunted End of the Day*, Walton wistfully recalled his time with Alice:

Most of [the Violin Concerto] was written here at Ravello, near Amalfi at the Villa Cimbrone, where I spent a lot of time with a lady I loved very dearly, Alice Wimborne. Ah, very beautiful. Very intelligent, very kind. Oh she was full of all the virtues, a marvellous woman [...] She was a few years older than me, a grand hostess, very rich and very musical.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.105.

<sup>31</sup> Byron Adams, 'Walton, William (Turner)', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 27 (London: Macmillan, 2001), p.66.

<sup>32</sup> Gillian Widdicombe, 'Walton Revised', *Music and Musicians*, 25(291) (November 1976), p.34.

<sup>33</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.32.

<sup>34</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.80.

<sup>35</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 75:28. Lady Walton quotes very similar comments in *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.79.

Wimborne was an active figure in aristocratic and musical circles. Her society parties were legendary, and she was also involved in hosting musical events. According to Carole Rosen, biographer of the Goossens family, it was Walton who encouraged Wimborne to host regular private subscription concerts of chamber music, known as the Quartet Society.<sup>36</sup> These events were held at Wimborne House in central London. Edith Oliver described the venue in her journal after attending a Quartet Society concert: 'a magic room for music, vaulted ceiling, rose red walls, great hanging candelabra'.<sup>37</sup> Spike Hughes recalled attending a Wimborne House concert where Hyam Greenbaum conducted a small orchestra by candle light.<sup>38</sup>

Of course, Wimborne's interest and influence in music was reflected in the relationship. She hosted parties after each of the two 'first' performances of Walton's First Symphony;<sup>39</sup> the second event prompted a *Sunday Times* reviewer to write 'I cannot think of any precedent for a leading London hostess celebrating the first performance of a new symphony under such circumstances'.<sup>40</sup> Wimborne was the dedicatee and muse of Walton's Violin Concerto,<sup>41</sup> and he wrote the anthem 'Set Me as a Seal upon Thine Heart' for the marriage of her son, Ivor Guest, in November 1938.<sup>42</sup> She was especially influential – both practically and spiritually – in the early stages of the composition of *Troilus and Cressida*. She introduced Walton to the librettist, Christopher Hassall,

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<sup>36</sup> Rosen, *The Goossens*, p.185. A painting by Sir John Avery of Walton and Wimborne at a musical evening at Wimborne House is reproduced in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* as Figure 3, between pp.172 and 173.

<sup>37</sup> Penelope Middelboe, *Edith Oliver: From Her Journals 1924-48* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), p.138.

<sup>38</sup> Spike Hughes, *Opening Bars: Beginning an Autobiography* (London: Pilot Press, 1946), p.350. Hughes later wrote of a performance of Mozart's Symphony No. 1 in E-flat, K.16, conducted by Greenbaum at Wimborne House. Spike Hughes, *Second Movement: Continuing the Autobiography* (London: Museum Press, 1951), p.319.

<sup>39</sup> These two extravagant social occasions are described by Dora Foss, quoted in Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, pp.81-82.

<sup>40</sup> Ernest Newman, 'William Walton's Symphony: Performance of the Completed Work', *The Sunday Times*, 10 November 1935, p.5.

<sup>41</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 75:28.

<sup>42</sup> Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.69.



corresponded with Hassall about the opera's subject, and arranged meetings with him for further discussions.<sup>43</sup>

Wimborne also appears to have looked after aspects of Walton's administrative affairs. When he injured his eye in 1944, she wrote on his behalf to Leslie Boosey in connection with the future of the Covent Garden Opera House.<sup>44</sup> Further, she seems to have been influential in terms of encouraging or even coercing him into working. The Wimbornes' country house at Ashby St Ledgers provided a quiet and comfortable environment for composing which would have been difficult to find in wartime London.<sup>45</sup> Roy Douglas recalled that after a day's work Walton would come down from the music room and play a few bars: 'And she'd say, "Oh no, Willie, you can do better than that, that's not nearly good enough," and he'd meekly go away and do some more'.<sup>46</sup> Douglas further recalled that when Wimborne listened to rehearsals of the Violin Concerto 'she frequently expressed acute and valuable opinions'.<sup>47</sup> Walton later reminisced, 'Alice was very good at making me work and would get very cross if I mucked about.'<sup>48</sup> She was also influential in other ways: she discouraged Walton from regular drinking with Constant Lambert and the circle associate with The George;<sup>49</sup> whilst Roy Douglas recalled that 'she had a very good influence on his character. When he was with her he

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<sup>43</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.136-138. There has been some debate about whether it was Wimborne or the BBC that first suggested Hassall, although it is clear she was involved at the very early stages. See Scott Price, "'A Lost Child": A Study of the Genesis of *Troilus and Cressida*', in Stewart R. Craggs (ed.), *William Walton: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p.184 and 189. Gillian Widdicombe has been the strongest proponent of Wimborne's influence in the early genesis of the opera; see Widdicombe, 'Walton Revised', p.34.

<sup>44</sup> Walton, letter handwritten by Alice Wimborne to Leslie Boosey, 1 August 1944. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.149-150.

<sup>45</sup> Gillian Widdicombe, 'Walton, the Later Years', recorded lecture, recorded 14 February 1984 (British Library Sound Archive 2CDR0012088 / 2CDR0012089).

<sup>46</sup> Roy Douglas, in conversation with Stephen Lloyd, Tunbridge Wells, 23 July 1996. Quoted in Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.136.

<sup>47</sup> Roy Douglas, letter to Michael Kennedy, 1 September 1987. Quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.118.

<sup>48</sup> In the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 76:23.

<sup>49</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.135. Gillian Widdicombe goes so far as to suggest that Wimborne 'more or less cut him off from his friends', saving him from the fate that befell Constant Lambert who died early from an alcohol related illness. Widdicombe, 'Walton, the Later Years'.

was a much kinder and more thoughtful man and not so inclined to be bitchy at other people's expense'.<sup>50</sup>

Lady Wimborne's death, on 19 April 1948, had a significant impact on Walton. Widdicombe suggests that he was 'totally distraught and depressed',<sup>51</sup> Lady Walton blames a bout of jaundice that Walton suffered some time before August of 1948 on her death;<sup>52</sup> whilst Kennedy notes that he had nightmares about it for the rest of his life.<sup>53</sup> Later in life, Walton – with a sad face and painfully long pauses – recalled:

I'd met Alice at the Sitwell's, oddly enough. She had a house near Sachie's at Weston, and we spend most of the war together there. Then one day after the war, she fell ill and the doctor there said she's got cancer. Well she was being treated in London by a very eminent old German called Plesch. And he said there was nothing wrong with her at all. Typical. Of course in those days I suppose it wasn't easy to find out if you had lung cancer or whatever, she had it in the bronchus. It was a very painful for everybody concerned, you know. Fairly slow. Months, six weeks. All very very sad. You know, one forgets about it if one can.<sup>54</sup>

We have dwelt on some of the details of Walton's relationship with Wimborne – especially on her influence in society and musical circles, and her influence both musically and socially over Walton – for the contrast it provides, in a number of respects, with the composer's new relationship. Walton's marriage to Susana Gil – in December, 1948, only seven months following Wimborne's death – seems to have been somewhat abrupt. Walton's trip to Buenos Aires with the Performing Right Society – where he met and married Susana – had been encouraged by the music publisher and president of the society Leslie Boosey 'to try and cheer me up after Alice's death'.<sup>55</sup> Kennedy observes that in a series of 'escapes' – from Oldham to Oxford to the Sitwells to Wimborne – this marriage represented the next step: 'Now he had to escape as far as he could from his memories of Alice, and how much farther could he go than to an

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<sup>50</sup> Roy Douglas, letter to Michael Kennedy, 1 September 1987. Quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.118.

<sup>51</sup> Widdicombe, 'Walton, the Later Years'.

<sup>52</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.33.

<sup>53</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.140.

<sup>54</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 78:05.

<sup>55</sup> Walton, quoted in Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.4. Kennedy makes the same assertion in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.143.

Argentinean girl?’<sup>56</sup> Eric Coates, another composer in the delegation, recalled ‘I can still see him sitting with us late into the night, looking the picture of distress, while he opened his heart to us over his inability to choose the right woman to take as his wife.’<sup>57</sup> Walton’s own recollections of meeting and marrying Susana are recorded in a BBC interview:

After that there was a press conference which I had to give and I saw a rather attractive girl in the corner. Of course one of the journalists asked what I thought of Argentinean girls, so I nearly said, ‘do you see that girl over there, I’m going to marry her’, but I controlled myself just in time. Anyhow we met, went off to lunch and I proposed to her the next day. As far as I can remember she said: ‘Don’t be ridiculous Dr Walton.’ But we got engaged three weeks after that.<sup>58</sup>

Walton’s treatment of Susana seems to have been rather callous. In the words of the commentator Malcolm Hayes, ‘Walton had no illusions, and offered none, as to how difficult an individual he was going to be to live with.’<sup>59</sup> Walton was openly unfaithful during their engagement;<sup>60</sup> forbade her to have children (although he failed to bring this up until after they had married);<sup>61</sup> and, when their contraception failed, required her to go through a humiliating and potentially dangerous back-street abortion.<sup>62</sup> Her reactions to Walton’s behaviour were extraordinary: of his unfaithfulness prior to their marriage she recalled ‘I had to admit some sense in this arrangement’;<sup>63</sup> of the abortion, she commented ‘I had only myself to blame’;<sup>64</sup> and of Walton’s sudden insistence they would not have children she wrote – rather understatedly – ‘It crossed my mind that, if this was so important to him, he ought to have mentioned it before’.<sup>65</sup> Lady Walton’s recollections of the early months of their time in Ischia reinforce this image of her as patient and bearing character:

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<sup>56</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.144.

<sup>57</sup> Eric Coates, *Suite in Four Movements: An Autobiography* (London: Heinemann, 1953), p.257.

<sup>58</sup> William Walton and John Warrack, ‘Sir William Walton Talks to John Warrack’, *The Listener* (8 August 1968), p.178.

<sup>59</sup> Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.175.

<sup>60</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, pp.8-10.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

When we came to Ischia for the first time [...] there was no way of shopping for food, we had to have a little man go to Naples one a week for vegetables. And it was very, very uncomfortable because there was no heating, and we had no money [...] I would say luckily it was a honeymoon, because it was so awful. It dripped rain through the roof, my embroidery was all ruined, and there were terrible rats in the house and every time you tried to cook one jumped out of the cooker or out of the fridge.<sup>66</sup>

One can only imagine how Lady Wimborne might have reacted in the same circumstances. Walton had chosen a wife who bore their living conditions and her husband's sometimes harsh attitudes with astonishing grace. Furthermore, she viewed Walton as a 'special' person, one whose unique talent created a terrible artistic burden. She suggests: 'I found I had a job to do. Apart from the pleasure of doing it, I mean, it is my job. I was produced, evidently, to take care of William.'<sup>67</sup>

This would seem to be a different kind of relationship to those with Christabel McClaren, Imma Doernberg, and Alice Wimborne that had given impetus and motivation to earlier works. (Walton explicitly linked, for example, the First Symphony, the Viola Concerto and the Violin Concerto with the ups and downs of his romantic relationships with these women.)<sup>68</sup> Wimborne was rich, musically educated, and had access to many influential musical figures; she compelled Walton to work harder and not to go out drinking. Susana, on the other hand, had no knowledge of music and no European connections at all; she was educated but naïve, and totally dependent on Walton. Indeed, her lack of musical training was perhaps important to the composer; she recalled,

I can't read music. I offered to learn by correspondence. But of course William said that was the only reason he'd married me, because I didn't know anything about music and one in the family was enough.<sup>69</sup>

Given that it is precisely the passion and instability of previous relationships that is linked with the difficulties and triumphs of Walton's 'great' earlier works, how did this new, different and stable relationship affect his music? Lloyd goes so far as to say that *Troilus and Cressida* – inspired and influenced by Wimborne and severely delayed by

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<sup>66</sup> Susana Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 61:30.

<sup>67</sup> Susana Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*. 91:38.

<sup>68</sup> For example, he discussed how relationships with women directly affected the mood of the movements in the First Symphony, in the radio broadcast *Walton at 70*.

<sup>69</sup> Susana Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 65:36.

her death – was ‘the last of Walton’s scores to be inspired by love’.<sup>70</sup> This statement does disservice to Walton’s marriage, which – although it was different to earlier love affairs – certainly formed a loving, deeply committed and stable backdrop to Walton’s later compositions. Rather, the newfound stability, the discovery of a companion who saw it as her very *raison d’être* to ‘look after’ Walton, fostered a more refined musical technique, in which emotive excesses of earlier works are replaced with a more reflective mood.

### Ischia and Self-imposed Exile

If Walton’s marriage to Susana Gil represented an ‘escape’ of sorts, the escape was compounded by Walton’s decision that the couple would spend much of their time in Italy. These events are broadly speaking connected: Widdicombe reports that Walton’s friends at The George were ‘absolutely astonished’ by Walton’s marriage;<sup>71</sup> the unfriendly reception given to Susana<sup>72</sup> can only have encouraged Walton’s plans to move away. In Lady Walton’s account, his decision (and it definitely was his) to leave London appears – like their marriage – to have been rather sudden. She explained that during the journey back from Argentina,

William explained he did not wish to live in London and have a good time; instead we were going to find a place in the Bay of Naples. [...] I wondered why he had extolled the virtues of his house in London, his housekeeper, and his car, if we were to live abroad.<sup>73</sup>

Initially the couple spent six months of the winter on the island of Ischia in the Bay of Naples, returning to London for the summer months.<sup>74</sup> However the couple spent more and more of their time in Italy: by 1956, the Waltons had become ‘foreign residents’ in order to limit their tax obligations,<sup>75</sup> a consequence of which was that their time in the United Kingdom was restricted to 93 days each year. Indeed, Walton felt that Ischia was

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<sup>70</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.223.

<sup>71</sup> Widdicombe, ‘Walton, the Later Years’.

<sup>72</sup> See Susana Walton’s comments in *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.34.

<sup>73</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, pp.31-32.

<sup>74</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.100.

<sup>75</sup> See letter to Louis and Griselda Kentner, 21 November 1956. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.288.

not all that isolated, especially as the years went by and transport and communication links improved; in May 1965, he wrote to Walter Legge, who had settled in Ascona in Switzerland, suggesting that he move to Ischia: 'Nor should [Ischia] be more out of the way than Ascona – 2¼ hours to London, 65 mins to Milan, 45 to Roma, so it's not so far from the centre of things as one might think.'<sup>76</sup> Legge declined the invitation.

Whilst the effect of Walton's self-imposed exile in Ischia has been debated, it is clear that it was a significant change from the composer's point of view; he commented to Roy Plomley that his move to Italy 'changed my whole aspect of life!'<sup>77</sup> Susana recalled:

The general opinion of friends in England continued to be that it was 'not done' to live abroad. William had not wished to live in England since our marriage and never changed his mind. We were happy to visit England, but after a few weeks he would ache to get back to the sun, the quiet of his music room, and the garden.<sup>78</sup>

There has been speculation that Walton's move to Ischia had been especially motivated by a desire to cut down on his increasing involvement in official and administrative duties in order to concentrate on composition. Kennedy asserts that 'Walton's primary objective in this self-imposed exile was that he would be able to work on his music without the distractions of London life, which now involved him in boards and committees.'<sup>79</sup> Walton has lent some support to this view, stating that 'It was very difficult to work in London with the telephone going, and everything of that kind.'<sup>80</sup> The composer further commented that 'I never did any work in London', citing the 'time wasted' visiting friends as one of the principal distractions.<sup>81</sup>

Precisely what Walton's administrative life involved is unclear, although some possibilities can be inferred from historical sources. We have already noted Walton's

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<sup>76</sup> Walton, letter to Walter Legge, 3 May 1965, in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.355.

<sup>77</sup> *Desert Island Discs: Sir William Walton*, radio broadcast, transmitted 2 April 1982 (BBC: British Library Sound Archive, T4959BW C1).

<sup>78</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.178.

<sup>79</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.145.

<sup>80</sup> Walton and Warrack, 'Sir William Walton Talks to John Warrack', p.178.

<sup>81</sup> *William Walton Interviewed by Dilys Powell and Anthony Hopkins for the Series Frankly Speaking*, radio broadcast, recorded 2 April 1962, transmitted 20 June 1962 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP27281).

involvement in planning for the ISCM festival in London in July 1938.<sup>82</sup> In January 1940, he was involved in the short-lived 'Association of British Musicians', run by Edward Clark and Elisabeth Lutyens; Walton donated money that was used to officially register the association as a charity.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps more time-consuming was his role on the organising committee for the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Walton was involved in the early stages, with Leslie Boosey asking the composer's advice concerning the projected project in which the firm would take over the lease for the opera house.<sup>84</sup> Walton appears to have been involved in encouraging Edward Dent to join the committee,<sup>85</sup> and he evidently worked hard on this project: consider, for example, his lengthy memo of August 1944, which comprehensively covers issues including funding and finance (including reference to such complex documents as the Social Insurance and Allies Services Report); personnel management; programming policies; and the propaganda benefits of the scheme.<sup>86</sup>

Some measure of Walton's increasing frustration with the demands of administrative roles can be gathered from his May 1946 reply to an invitation, by Lady Wood, to join the Committee of the Henry Wood Concert Society:

I am on far too many committees as it is & I am sorry but I cannot undertake to become a member of yet another. In fact I am resigning from most of the ones I am on as I find they get so much in the way of my work, so I am sure you will understand why I don't wish to join.<sup>87</sup>

One further administrative role that Walton took on was the presidency of the London Symphony Orchestra from 1948 to 1957. However this position – in keeping with the idea that the composer was attempting to cut down on his involvement in administrative affairs – seems to have been largely honorary. Walton did not attend board meetings and wrote to the orchestra's secretary from Ischia on 21 October 1949: 'Here I am & destined to remain here till the end of May 1950. I can only say that I did warn you that

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<sup>82</sup> See above, p.31.

<sup>83</sup> Elisabeth Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl* (London: Cassell, 1972), p.100.

<sup>84</sup> See Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.149.

<sup>85</sup> Walton, letter to Edward Dent, 19 August 1944. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.151.

<sup>86</sup> This memo is reproduced in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*. pp.472-479.

<sup>87</sup> Walton, letter to Lady Wood, 20 May 1946. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.158.

I should make a most unsatisfactory President'.<sup>88</sup> There is some evidence, then, to support the idea that the move to Ischia was, at least in part, conceived as an 'escape' from these considerable demands on Walton's time and energy.

Edward Said has stated that 'the achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever.'<sup>89</sup> Perhaps there is a sense in which Walton wanted to leave the memory of Wimborne behind; she had been actively involved in his circle and indeed, when Walton and his wife had first arrived back in England, they had lived at what had been Wimborne's home, Lowdnes Cottage. However, in Walton's case, his exile on the Italian island of Ischia, where he spent much of his time from the autumn of 1949, was self-imposed, such that London and its musical life was not left behind 'forever'. Walton frequently returned to London, and took careful advantage of his available time, for example attending premières of his own and other important works.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the composer frequently travelled – for example to Israel, New Zealand, and to the United States – to conduct his own works.<sup>91</sup>

Walton recalled, 'there are those who think it's been somewhat unpatriotic of me to have lived abroad for the last thirty years or so, but I've often been back to London with my wife to visit the old places and see old friends'.<sup>92</sup> Walton certainly disagreed that living in Ischia made his music any less British. In a 1959 interview, he expanded illuminatingly on this topic:

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<sup>88</sup> Walton, letter to A. D. Wrench, 21 October 1949. This letter and minutes of a December 1948 board meeting confirming Walton's acceptance of the presidency are held at the Archives of the London Symphony Orchestra, The Barbican Centre, London. My thanks to Libby Rice, archivist for the LSO, for assistance with this information.

<sup>89</sup> Edward W. Said, 'Reflections on Exile', *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta, 2001), p.173.

<sup>90</sup> Something of Walton's careful arrangement of his time in the UK can be summarised from his letters; see for example, Walton, letter to David Webster, 10 November 1957; letter to Laurence Olivier, 15 November 1957; letter to Alan Frank, 4 January 1958; in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.301, 303-304, and 309.

<sup>91</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.240.

<sup>92</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 18:30.



I think possibly feelings towards England are more intense, or one becomes more intensely English, by being outside it than in it. One gets a romantic point of view about things which is difficult to get when you're here. At least I find it's.... It makes one more English than Mediterranean, [the] fact of living there.

[...]

Living abroad emphasises one's Englishness rather than otherwise. One gets sort of nostalgic say for Gloucestershire or something of that kind. I think one is unconsciously more English for that reason and one is not, doesn't become Italian because one lives there, you know.<sup>93</sup>

Walton later clarified, in interview with Murray Schafer, 'being away from Britain, if anything, has possibly made my music more British than it might have been had I stayed at home'.<sup>94</sup> Certainly the compositional process was affected by living in Ischia, since he was able to maintain a strict daily work routine that would have been impossible in London.<sup>95</sup> The question of the 'Britishness' or of the 'Italianate' in his music is much thornier, of course, but in Walton's case, given the self-imposed nature of his exile, perhaps it is accurate to say that his achievements were not undermined, but rather enriched, by what was left behind.

### ***Troilus and Cressida***

Walton's marriage and the move to Ischia are both associated with the composition of the opera *Troilus and Cressida*. Walton recalled that 'I was writing *Troilus* in about 1950 or 1951 and I wanted to find somewhere where I could work to finish it';<sup>96</sup> Ischia was the chosen destination. He dedicated *Troilus and Cressida* 'to my wife', and the opera has been linked with her in various ways: Neil Tierney writes that 'the real

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<sup>93</sup> *The Composer Speaks: William Walton Interviewed by Felix Aprahamian* (London Calling Europe), radio broadcast, transmitted 18 February 1959 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, CDA 25903). Walton makes similar comments in Murray Schafer, *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber, 1963), p.78; whilst Lady Walton's comments are found in *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.178.

<sup>94</sup> Walton, in Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*, p.78.

<sup>95</sup> Walton discusses his daily routine as it was in 1962 in some detail in the radio broadcast *William Walton Interviewed by Dilys Powell and Anthony Hopkins for the Series Frankly Speaking*. He worked fixed hours from 9am to 1pm and 5pm to 8pm, and claimed 'I can work sixteen hours a day, you know, without bother'.

<sup>96</sup> William Walton and John Warrack, 'Sir William Walton Talks to John Warrack', p.178.

impetus for the opera seems to have been activated [...] during those early, blissful days on Ischia',<sup>97</sup> whilst Christopher Palmer suggests that that the opera's inspiration was 'his love for his then newly-wedded wife Susana.'<sup>98</sup> These views are too simplistic, since Wimborne (whose practical assistance during the early formation of the libretto has already been noted) was certainly significant in early stages (she referred to the opera as 'our child').<sup>99</sup> Walton hardly clarified the issue when asked by John Amis if *Troilus and Cressida* was 'a kind of love-present for Su'; 'Well it's dedicated to her,' he replied, 'that's as far as it went, I think'.<sup>100</sup> It is not necessary to disentangle the web of interpersonal relationships here, or their interpretative significance: the point is that Walton was involved in a deeply personal way with *Troilus and Cressida*, and that the work stands at a boundary in his personal life.

A review of the circumstances surrounding the composition and early performance history of *Troilus and Cressida* serves to emphasise that the work absorbed Walton's creative energies for several years, leaving little time for other projects. This highlights the sense in which the years in question can be seen as a turning point in the composer's life. The opera was commissioned by the BBC in February 1947,<sup>101</sup> with the libretto prepared by March 1949;<sup>102</sup> Walton, however, did not complete the work until September 1954.<sup>103</sup> The progress of the work was affected by problems with the libretto, written by Christopher Hassall. It is debatable whether the quality of the libretto was affected by the collaborators' inexperience with opera, or by Hassall's previous work as poet and as a lyricist for Ivor Novello's operetta-style musical shows.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, p.129.

<sup>98</sup> Christopher Palmer, CD Liner Notes for Chandos Digital CHAN 8772 (1990), p.5.

<sup>99</sup> Alice Wimborne, letter to Ernest Newman, 13 March 1948. Quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.140.

<sup>100</sup> *Walton Interviewed About Troilus and Cressida by John Amis* (Music Now), radio broadcast, transmitted 5 November 1976 (BBC Radio 3: BBC Archive, LP35709; British Library Sound Archive, 1LP0197311).

<sup>101</sup> Victor Hely-Hutchinson, letter to Walton, 8 February 1947. Quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.136.

<sup>102</sup> Walton, letter to Stanford Robinson, 28 March 1949. Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*. p.145.

<sup>103</sup> Walton wrote in a letter to Christopher Hassall, September 1954, 'I'm finished. Next please!' In Hayes (ed.). *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.255.

<sup>104</sup> Compare, for example, the viewpoints on the collaboration between Walton and Hassall presented in Price, "'A Lost Child": A Study of the Genesis of *Troilus and Cressida*', p.184.; Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.148; and Widdicombe, 'Walton Revised', p.34.

However it is certain that whatever the source of the difficulties, they took considerable time and voluminous correspondence to overcome.<sup>105</sup> The range of topics covered by the correspondence include the plot, especially at the close of the opera; overall structure and timing; and numerous suggestions for sometimes extensive revisions to the text. Walton's uncertainty about the quality of the libretto is reflected in the fact that he sought further advice from Ernest Newman<sup>106</sup> and from W. H. Auden.<sup>107</sup> In January 1950, he reported that there had been 'a lot of libretto trouble which has taken time to get right at this distance',<sup>108</sup> whilst Lady Walton has suggested that 'the libretto remained a continuous problem' and has attributed to her husband the rather sardonic comment: 'He came to believe that Ivor Novello had taken possession of Christopher's soul'.<sup>109</sup>

The drain on Walton's energy that *Troilus and Cressida* proved to be was not limited to the opera's composition. The first performance – at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden on 3 December 1954<sup>110</sup> – was plagued with difficulties, especially of personnel. Walton had had to correct 'more than 238' copying errors in the orchestral parts;<sup>111</sup> the result, according to Kennedy, was that the first orchestral rehearsal – on 2 November 1954 – was 'almost entirely wasted'.<sup>112</sup> Malcolm Sargent was engaged as conductor, but he managed to offend the singers by addressing them with the name of their character rather than their own name, and offend Walton by making numerous revisions to the score which subsequently had to be edited into the orchestral parts each night after

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<sup>105</sup> The correspondence between Walton and Hassall is amply documented in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.147-178 and in Price, "'A Lost Child": A Study of the Genesis of *Troilus and Cressida*'.

<sup>106</sup> See Ernest Newman, letter to Walton, 18 April 1948. Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.141.

<sup>107</sup> Walton, letter to Roy Douglas, Summer 1952. Quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.161. Walton also mentions Auden's involvement in a letter to Hassall, 10 June 1952, quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.160-161.

<sup>108</sup> Walton, letter to Harry Blech, 22 January 1950. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.194.

<sup>109</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.135. The influence of Novello is a topic that arises in the Walton-Hassall correspondence. See Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.151.

<sup>110</sup> Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.117.

<sup>111</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.146.

<sup>112</sup> Walton, letter to Geoffrey Cumberlege, 6 November 1954. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.255.

rehearsals.<sup>113</sup> In addition, despite repeated requests, Sargent refused to beat time for the singers unless the orchestra was playing.<sup>114</sup> Lady Walton recalled further problems: Sargent didn't know the score at all well, 'complained' about Walton's handwriting, and refused to wear glasses that would have enabled him to read the score properly.<sup>115</sup> Further personnel issues surrounded the production of the opera. Henry Moore was asked to be the designer, but declined.<sup>116</sup> Walton then hoped that Laurence Olivier would produce the opera, with Isabel Lambert (Constant's widow) as designer.<sup>117</sup> Olivier, however, requested a colleague, Roger Furse, as designer; in the end, however, Olivier was unavailable, being engaged with acting in and producing the film *Richard III*.<sup>118</sup> Eventually George Devine was appointed as producer with Sir Hugh Casson as set designer, with costumes by Malcolm Pride.<sup>119</sup>

Perhaps one of Walton's primary personnel concerns was the role of Cressida. The opera had been written with the German soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in mind for the part,<sup>120</sup> but she was married to Walter Legge, who had criticised the libretto harshly;<sup>121</sup> Schwarzkopf declined the role.<sup>122</sup> Instead, the Hungarian soprano Magda Laszlò created the part of Cressida; Lady Walton claims that even after coaching Laszlò, her English was poor: 'no one could understand a single word she sang'.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Richard Temple Savage, *A Voice from the Pit* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles Newton, 1988), pp.151-152.

<sup>114</sup> Savage, *A Voice from the Pit*, pp.151-152.

<sup>115</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, pp.147-148.

<sup>116</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.162.

<sup>117</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.162. Why Isabel did not design the opera after Laurence Olivier pulled out is unclear.

<sup>118</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.171, 174.

<sup>119</sup> Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.118.

<sup>120</sup> Walton, letter to David Webster, 21 May 1954. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.249; Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.144. See also Walton, letter to Hassall, 23 February 1954, in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.172.

<sup>121</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.145.

<sup>122</sup> The precise reason for Schwarzkopf's decision is disputed. See the varying accounts in Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 21 January 1954, Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.239-240; Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.172-174; Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.146; and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, *On and Off the Record: A Memoir of Walter Legge* (London: Faber and Faber, 1982), p.143.

<sup>123</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.147.

Even long after the première, *Troilus and Cressida* took up much of Walton's time and energy. The composer was anxious to secure an international reputation for the opera, and thus was particularly disappointed with problems at a production at the illustrious Teatro alla Scala in Milan. On the opening night, in Lady Walton's words, the opera was 'over-produced'; the first act was a 'complete shambles', and the night ended in disarray when the sword Cressida was supposed to use to kill herself had been inadvertently taken off stage.<sup>124</sup> Later, Walton revised the opera considerably, making cuts for performances in 1963, and later still, between 1972 and 1976, making further revisions and editing the vocal range of the part of Cressida.<sup>125</sup>

Just as David Clarke has argued that *The Midsummer Marriage* and *King Priam* were catalysts in Tippett's recurring re-evaluation of his own musical style,<sup>126</sup> a project that absorbed so much time and energy as *Troilus and Cressida* – which Walton (perhaps optimistically) referred to as his Magnum Opus<sup>127</sup> – must have had an impact on the composer's creativity. 'I sweated blood over it', he recalled, 'In fact, it nearly killed me!'<sup>128</sup> The opera certainly had an effect on his creative output; Walton composed nothing save it and a handful of short ceremonial pieces in the years 1950-1955.<sup>129</sup> 'This opera has absolutely ruined my life as regards work', he wrote to Gertrude Hindemith.<sup>130</sup> In addition, this work was one of the principal catalysts in the developing characterisation of Walton in the press as 'out of date'.<sup>131</sup> *Troilus and Cressida*, then, is an important landmark in Walton's life, marking the boundaries of significant personal and creative changes.

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<sup>124</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, pp.154-155.

<sup>125</sup> Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, pp.120-121.

<sup>126</sup> David Clarke, 'Tippett, Sir Michael (Kemp)', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 25 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp.505-520.

<sup>127</sup> See for example Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 19 April 1950. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.204.

<sup>128</sup> Walton, in the DVD *At the Haunted End of the Day*, 83:48.

<sup>129</sup> These were arrangements of Happy Birthday (C57) and the National Anthem (C60), *Coronation Te Deum* (C58), *Orb and Sceptre* (C59), and a short variation on Sellinger's Round for the Aldeburgh Festival (C61). See Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, pp.111-116.

<sup>130</sup> Walton, letter to Gertrude Hindemith, 10 May 1955. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.266.

<sup>131</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 4, p.62ff.

Problems with the orchestral parts for *Troilus in Cressida*, and concerns over the opera's international prospects, are linked with another sign of change during this time: Walton's uncertainty over choice of publisher. As early as 1937, Walton had considered a move away from Oxford University Press, who had been his exclusive publisher since *Portsmouth Point* in 1928.<sup>132</sup> Boosey and Hawkes – who had promoted early performances of *Façade*<sup>133</sup> – attempted to attract the composer,<sup>134</sup> leading to a swift, personal, and effective response from Hubert Foss at the Oxford Press.<sup>135</sup> Over fifteen years later, Boosey and Hawkes made two further attempts to attract Walton, in around August 1951 and February 1952.<sup>136</sup> Whilst Walton was tempted by these offers (Boosey and Hawkes had considerably greater experience and bargaining power in the area of opera), he stayed with Oxford University Press, partly through loyalty and partly because the company offered to make a 'special effort' with respect to *Troilus and Cressida*.<sup>137</sup> However, the problems with the orchestral parts for the opera at the first orchestral rehearsal again prompted Walton to consider a change of publisher. On 6 November 1954 – a few days after the rehearsal – Walton wrote a lengthy and strongly-worded letter to Geoffrey Cumberlege, who was the head of Oxford University Press, complaining about the large number of copying errors and the time and effort required to correct them, and threatening to leave the firm.<sup>138</sup> A month later, on 16 December, Walton had been pacified by an apology from Cumberlege and the promise of changes to the copying procedure, and wrote, 'Now that the première is over we can proceed as we were, having, I hope, learnt a rather bitter lesson.'<sup>139</sup> There is considerable evidence that Walton had a consistent eye on the business side of composition, with financial details of commissions and royalties being a prominent theme of his letters. In this

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<sup>132</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.76.

<sup>133</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.200.

<sup>134</sup> Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.465.

<sup>135</sup> Hubert Foss's letter to Walton is reproduced, along with a useful commentary, in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.465-468.

<sup>136</sup> See Walton, letter to Christopher Hassall, 14 February 1952, quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.213-214.

<sup>137</sup> Walton, letter to Christopher Hassall, 14 February 1952, quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.213-214.

<sup>138</sup> Walton, letter to Geoffrey Cumberlege, 6 November 1954. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.255-256.

<sup>139</sup> Walton, letter to Geoffrey Cumberlege, 16 December 1954. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.257.

respect, it may not be surprising that he considered a change of publisher in order to give *Troilus and Cressida* the best prospects from a business point of view. Nevertheless, the fact that that he seriously considered this change away from a publisher who had provided consistent support for him for many years, and with whose staff he had significant and strong relationships, is indicative of a certain dissatisfaction with the status quo.

A number of biographical factors together allow a strong case to be made that that the composition of *Troilus and Cressida* marks an important boundary in Walton's career. His marriage and move to Ischia resulted in significant changes in the composer's life, providing greater personal and emotional security. At the same time, increased income – from film music and frequent performances of successful works – provided greater financial security. These changes had a practical impact, for example in providing Walton with time and space to work without distraction. In addition, there was a creative impact, and although it is too early to draw conclusions on this, it is pertinent to note certain possibilities. Walton's turbulent lifestyle – especially romantically – had been the inspiration for important pre-war works; the dissimilarity with the circumstances of the later works suggests they may have been conceived quite differently. Gillian Widdicombe takes the view that the move to Ischia was motivated by, and influenced, musical concerns: 'Walton deliberately cut himself off, and concentrated on an opera, *Troilus and Cressida*, and a series of works in traditional forms. The isolation enabled him to stick fast to his own musical language and not to be subject to whim or fashion.'<sup>140</sup> Thus Widdicombe suggests that one reason for Walton's move to Ischia was to escape from unwanted British critical pressure. A discussion of the terms and motivations of this critical pressure, and its effect on received opinion about Walton (especially later Walton), is the task of the next chapter.

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<sup>140</sup> *William Walton's 80th Birthday Concert*, television broadcast, transmitted 29 March 1982 (BBC: British Film Institute, VB43441).

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Critical Contexts and Interpretations**

The suggestion has already been made that Walton fell out of favour with critics after the Second World War, and that opinion on the later works has been somewhat divided. The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of contemporary critical opinions of these later orchestral works, and of the climate into which they were received. As well as setting the context for analytical and interpretative discussion, an examination of these matters contributes further to the definition and characterisation of Walton's later period and later music; critics made a sometimes sharp distinction between the later music and the composer's earlier efforts, and the idea mooted by certain of them, that Walton was out-of-date and out-of-touch has, however unfairly, come to characterise discussion of these scores.

The chapter falls into three main sections. Firstly, the reception of Walton's later music in Britain after the war – and the contrast of this with the reception of earlier works – is considered. Early signs of a changing critical climate are evident in the immediate post-war years, but through the reception of *Troilus and Cressida* and the orchestral works of the 1950s and 60s, a more consistent critical pressure emerges. Secondly, some of the broader aspects of the critical climate are considered; these include an examination of the characterisation of composers into generational groups, and a brief consideration of the increasing prestige of continental musical modernism and of the way in which these issues crystallised around the figure of William Glock, the BBC's controversial controller of music from 1959 to 1972. Finally, consideration is given to the impact of contemporary criticism on Walton's place in music history, and on Walton himself.

#### **From 'White Hope' to 'Black Sheep'**

Before embarking on a more detailed examination of the reception of Walton's post-war music, I will consider the critical reception that he received earlier in his career; in this respect, responses to the composer's First Symphony provide an illuminating case study. A number of comments – both public and private – indicate that at this time Walton was considered in many quarters to be not merely a good composer, but *the* leading force in contemporary British music. After the première of the complete four-



movement work (the first three movements had, largely against Walton's wishes, already been performed the previous year), the First Symphony was hailed in *The Manchester Guardian* as 'the most commanding and challenging and powerful composition of the post-war period by an Englishman',<sup>1</sup> and in *The Times* as 'full of invention and containing passages of great beauty,' with 'remarkable eloquence from first to last'.<sup>2</sup> *The Daily Telegraph* reported that the première was 'recognised by London as a great occasion', and that 'called to the platform, Mr Walton was cheered for some minutes by the excited audience'.<sup>3</sup> The most quotable headline was in a provincial paper, *The Yorkshire Post*: 'Historic Night for British Music'.<sup>4</sup> The only negative note, albeit one mentioned in several reviews, was the question of the extent to which the fourth movement completed or fitted with the first three.<sup>5</sup> But overall, the tone of most notices concurred with Arthur Hutchings' description of Walton as the 'exemplary leader' of a new generation of composers that could bring a new vitality to British music.<sup>6</sup>

At the time of Walton's First Symphony, it was Sibelius who was championed in Britain as the example to be followed. J. P. E. Harper-Scott has noted that two of the leading writers to advocate Sibelius – Cecil Gray and Constant Lambert – were amongst Walton's close friends.<sup>7</sup> Walton has made explicit reference in interviews to the

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<sup>1</sup> N[eville] C[ardus], 'William Walton's First Symphony', *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 November 1935, p.10.

<sup>2</sup> [Anon.], 'William Walton's Symphony: First Performance of Complete Work', *The Times*, 7 November 1935, p.12.

<sup>3</sup> C. D. G., 'The Complete Symphony: William Walton's Imposing Work', *The Daily Telegraph*, 7 November 1935, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> [Anon.], 'Historic Night for British Music: William Walton's "Compleat Symphony"', *The Yorkshire Post*, 7 November 1935.

<sup>5</sup> See for example [Anon.], 'Walton's Symphony', *The Musical Times*, 76(1114) (December 1935), pp.1130-1131; C. D. G., 'The Complete Symphony: William Walton's Imposing Work', p.12; Ernest Newman, 'William Walton's Symphony: Performance of the Completed Work', *The Sunday Times*, 10 November 1935, p.5.

<sup>6</sup> A[rthur] J. B. Hutchings, 'The Symphony and William Walton', *The Musical Times*, 78(1129) (March 1937). p.215.

<sup>7</sup> J. P. E. Harper-Scott. "'Our True North": Walton's First Symphony and Sibelianism' (paper presented at British Music and Modernism 1901-1939, Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-Upon-Avon, 6 May 2006). Felix Aprahamian has also noted the importance of the Sibelian context of the First Symphony. Felix Aprahamian, 'Walton and His New Symphony', *The Listener*, 25 August 1960, p.321.

influence of Sibelius symphonies on his music of this period.<sup>8</sup> It was partly this context which ensured the critical success of the First Symphony, which has a number of Sibelian features.<sup>9</sup> (Neville Cardus meant it as a compliment when he suggested about Walton's First: 'It has been pretty certain for some time that if Sibelius did not hurry up and write his eighth symphony, somebody else would write it for him'.)<sup>10</sup>

Aside from discussion over the adequacy and appropriateness of the finale, the impression given from a survey of the reviews that followed the première of the complete First Symphony is of a generally euphoric tone, summarised by the epithet attributed to Nicolas Slonimsky, that Walton was 'the white hope of British Music'.<sup>11</sup> And more generally, a number of prominent writers around this time made extremely positive judgments of Walton's achievements and potential. Tovey argued that the Viola Concerto was 'one of the most important modern concertos for any instrument' and noted, 'I can see no limits to what may be expected of the tone-poet who could create it';<sup>12</sup> whilst Philip Heseltine was of the view that 'Walton's work improves at every hearing. He is the best musician this country has produced for a long while.'<sup>13</sup>

In an interview given to the *New York Times* in 1939, Walton – speaking about the rapid pace of the modern world – said of a composer's permanence and reputation:

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<sup>8</sup> In, for example, *Desert Island Discs: Sir William Walton*, radio broadcast, transmitted 2 April 1982 (BBC: British Library Sound Archive, T4959BW C1); *Sir William Walton: His First Symphony*, radio broadcast, transmitted 24 September 1965 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP34332).

<sup>9</sup> For more on Sibelius and Walton's First Symphony, see this thesis, Chapter 6, p.177ff.

<sup>10</sup> C[ardus], 'William Walton's First Symphony', p.10.

<sup>11</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, quoted in D[onald] M[itche]ll, 'Contemporary Chronicle: Revaluations: V. William Walton', *Musical Opinion*, 78(934) (July 1955), p.603.

<sup>12</sup> Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis (III): Concertos*, vol. II (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p.226. That Tovey makes these comments in the closing sentence of this volume serves to especially emphasise them.

<sup>13</sup> Philip Heseltine, letter to E. J. Moeran, 6 October 1930. In Lewis Foreman, *From Parry to Britten: British Music in Letters, 1900-1945* (London: Batsford, 1987), p.139.

Today's white hope is tomorrow's black sheep. These days it is a very sad thing for a composer to grow old – unless, that is, he grows old enough to witness a revival of his work.

I seriously advise all sensitive composers to die at the age of 37. I know: I've gone through the first halcyon periods, and am just about ripe for my critical damnation.<sup>14</sup>

Although such a situation was dismissed as 'unlikely' by the reporter, Walton's words proved to be remarkably prophetic in terms of the critical pressures that were to develop following the war. By the time of Walton's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, in 1962, the composer had developed a deep cynicism about music critics and their opinions: he was hurt by the critical reception of *Troilus and Cressida*,<sup>15</sup> and described himself as being 'very angry' about reactions to the Second Symphony.<sup>16</sup> Walton was not entirely written off, but he was certainly no longer the 'white hope' of British music.

How, and when, did this change of critical fortunes come about? Before embarking on detailed discussion of critical reactions to Walton's later orchestral works (those that are the main subject of this thesis), consider the reception of *Troilus and Cressida*. A glimmering of critical disappointment with Walton's development began to appear in the writings of some critics in the 1950s. In 1952, Wilfred Mellers, whose prolific writings on contemporary music emphasise the role of music as expression of present-day society, assessed the state of British music and warned:

The somewhat jaded romanticism of Walton's recent works, such as the Violin Sonata, makes one doubtful about his future development. On the other hand the dramatic immediacy of opera [the forthcoming *Troilus and Cressida*] might well put him on his mettle and safeguard him from what seems to me a dangerous nostalgia – a yearning for a world that, however regrettably, has vanished.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Walton, in G. Gilbert, 'Walton on Trends in Composition', *The New York Times*, 4 June 1939, p.X5.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Kennedy has commented about *Troilus and Cressida*: 'the general feeling was that it had been a flop, and he was hurt by that for the rest of his life.' *The Landscape Changes (1945-1962)* (Classic Britannia), television broadcast, transmitted 22 June 2007 (BBC Four).

<sup>16</sup> Walton, in J. W. Lambert, 'Imp and Sceptre: Conversation with Sir William Walton', *The Sunday Times*, 25 March 1962. Magazine, p.39.

<sup>17</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, 'Recent Trends in British Music', *The Musical Quarterly*, 38(2) (April 1952), p.194.

Both Mellers, and Donald Mitchell – another writer critical of Walton’s conservatism – looked forward to *Troilus and Cressida* as the work that could potentially revitalise what was seen as Walton’s increasing compromise with tradition.<sup>18</sup> After the première, a sense of disappointment that Walton had written a traditional opera in a conservative idiom was voiced by a number of critics. Mitchell considered *Troilus and Cressida* a ‘substantial psychological failure’ since it failed to be true to the age, instead looking to the past;<sup>19</sup> Mitchell’s notice in the *Musical Times* was as insightful as it was damning:

Would the turn to a new musical sphere result in a fresh departure in Walton’s art? Would he hark back to his earlier manner or continue in his later? Which would gain the upper hand, his always innate orthodoxy or his capacity to compose in an authentic and highly personal contemporary idiom?

The first performance of ‘Troilus and Cressida’ [...] answered all the questions. Far from marking any new development in Walton’s music, the opera maintains the progressive relaxation and conservatism [...] Throughout the long work, there are few, if any, attempts to revive the athletic vigour and virility of his earlier compositions.<sup>20</sup>

The problem, for Mitchell as well as for a number of other critics,<sup>21</sup> was that that whilst *Troilus and Cressida* was a convincing and authoritative attempt at Grand Opera, the work’s very ‘grandness’ represented the fading of an outworn tradition. Indeed, critics that received *Troilus and Cressida* positively similarly emphasised the work’s traditional ambience, with references to ‘time-honoured tradition’, to ‘familiar and well

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<sup>18</sup> Donald Mitchell, ‘Some Observations on William Walton, I’, *The Chesterian*, 26(169) (January 1952), p.35.

<sup>19</sup> Donald Mitchell, ‘*Troilus and Cressida*: Two Further Opinions’, *Opera*, 6(2) (February 1955), pp.88-91.

<sup>20</sup> Donald Mitchell, ‘Opera in London’, *The Musical Times* 96(1343) (January 1955), pp.36-37.

<sup>21</sup> See for example [Anon.], ‘Royal Opera House: *Troilus and Cressida*’, *The Times*, 4 December 1954, p.8; Wolfgang von Einsiedel, ‘*Troilus and Cressida*’, *The Times*, 17 December 1954, p.9; David D. Boyden, ‘Current Chronicle: England’, *The Musical Quarterly*, 41(2) (April 1955), pp.238-241; [Anon.], ‘Editor’s Notes’, *The Musical Times*, 96 (February 1955), p.69; Paul Müller, ‘*Troilus and Cressida*: Two Further Opinions’, *Opera*, 6(2) (February 1955), pp.91-92.

tried devices', and to 'stock opera characters in stock situations familiar to opera for generations'.<sup>22</sup>

It was inevitable that Walton's opera would be compared with other works of a freshly burgeoning English opera scene:<sup>23</sup> 'British composers are all writing operas now',<sup>24</sup> he is reported to have said, a year before the completion of *Troilus and Cressida*. In this respect Walton's opera (with its Classical hero, villain, and heroine singing set-piece arias and duets) seemed to lag behind Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* (with metaphor and imagery derived from contemporary psychology) and the six operas that Britten had produced in the years 1945-1955 (which had involved experimentation with various aspects of musical idiom, and dealt with such contemporary themes as the relationship of individuals to society, albeit set in past times).

For Mitchell, *Troilus and Cressida* prompted a wholesale 'reevaluation' of Walton;<sup>25</sup> the conclusion was not a happy one: Walton had progressively relaxed into an invalid conservative idiom in which the necessary tension of earlier works was no longer present.<sup>26</sup> Thus for Mitchell in particular, and more generally, *Troilus and Cressida* acted as a catalyst to a thread of critical thought which was to be increasingly prominent in the reception of Walton's later orchestral works.

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<sup>22</sup> See [Frank Howes], 'Walton's Opera: A Parallel with Wagner', *The Times*, 10 December 1954, p.10; Philip Hope-Wallace, 'A New Opera in the Old and Honoured Tradition: Walton's *Troilus and Cressida*', *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 December 1954, p.3; Ronald Eyer, '*Troilus and Cressida* – East and West', *Musical America* (1 November 1955), p.3.

<sup>23</sup> Consider, for example, Donald Mitchell, 'Opera in London', *The Musical Times*, 96(1345) (March 1955), pp.150-151.

<sup>24</sup> Walton, quoted in [Anon], 'Late-Blooming Prodigy', *Time [Magazine]*, 17 August 1953, p.42.

<sup>25</sup> D[onald] M[itche]ll, 'Contemporary Chronicle: Revaluations: IV. William Walton', *Musical Opinion*, 78(933) (June 1955), pp.539-541; M[itche]ll, 'Contemporary Chronicle: Revaluations: V. William Walton', pp.601-603.

<sup>26</sup> M[itche]ll, 'Contemporary Chronicle: Revaluations: V. William Walton', p.603.

## The Reception of Walton's Later Orchestral Works in the British National Press

By the time of the Second World War, Walton was a well-known and respected British composer, and for this reason a reasonable body of reception literature can be gathered for the later orchestral works under consideration in this thesis. In order to arrange this material, I shall consider firstly, reviews in national newspapers; and secondly, commentary in the specialist musical periodicals. In terms of the national press, *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Observer* and *The Manchester Guardian*<sup>27</sup> all regularly published notices of London premières; less regularly, previews, and notices of premières elsewhere, were noted. The bibliography of these materials presented in Table 4.1 (covering reviews of first concert performances) complements, but also substantially augments, references found in existing bibliographic resources.<sup>28</sup>

Commenting on the classical music scene in Britain in 1965, Andrew Porter noted that a new generation of composers (a topic to which we will return) was complemented by a new and enthusiastic generation of critics.<sup>29</sup> Walton also spoke of 'a new set of young critics', set in contrast against the 'old world'.<sup>30</sup> In terms of the reactions of the British press to Walton's music, this generational change is played out most clearly in *The Daily Telegraph*. Martin Cooper, the chief music critic on the paper from 1954 to 1976, was of the same generation of Walton, having been born in 1910. He wrote reviews of the Cello Concerto and *Partita* for the paper. Donald Mitchell – fifteen years younger (born 1925) – joined the paper for a brief spell between 1959 and 1964.<sup>31</sup> He reviewed the Second Symphony and *Hindemith Variations* for *The Daily Telegraph*, and wrote several articles elsewhere dedicated to his views on Walton.

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<sup>27</sup> *The Manchester Guardian* was renamed *The Guardian* in 1959. Finding aids sometimes do not make this distinction.

<sup>28</sup> The principal bibliographic resources are Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Source Book* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993); Carolyn J. Smith, *William Walton: A Bio-Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood, 1988).

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Porter, 'Some New British Composers', *The Musical Quarterly*, 51(1), Special Fiftieth Anniversary Issue: Contemporary Music in Europe (January, 1965), pp.12-21.

<sup>30</sup> Walton, in *William Walton at 75* (The Lively Arts), television broadcast, transmitted 26 March 1977 (BBC: British Film Institute, VB 22704).

<sup>31</sup> David Scott and Richard Alston, 'Mitchell, Donald (Charles Peter)', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 16 (London: Macmillan, 2001).

**Table 4.1: Tabulated bibliography of reviews of first performances of Walton's later orchestral works in the British national press**

	<i>The Times</i>	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	<i>The Observer</i>	<i>The Manchester Guardian</i>
<b>Cello Concerto</b>	A Boston Music Critic, 'Walton's Cello Concerto: Boston Première', 1 Feb 1957, p.3.	Special Correspondent, 'Boston Hears New Walton Concerto', 26 Jan 1957, p.9	Peter Heyworth, 'Music of the Establishment', 17 Feb 1957, p.11.	Colin Mason, 'Walton's New Cello Concerto: Piatigorsky soloist for R.P.O.', 14 Feb 1957, p.7
	[Anon], 'Sir William Walton's New Concerto', 14 Feb 1957, p.5	Martin Cooper, 'New Walton Work Intense and Exciting', 14 February 1957, p.8.		
<b>Partita for Orchestra</b>	[Anon], 'Walton's new <i>Partita</i> : First Performance in London', 3 May 1958, p.3.	Special Correspondent, 'Walton's Gay <i>Partita</i> : Premiere in U.S.', 1 February 1958, p.8	Peter Heyworth, 'Walton's <i>Partita</i> ', 4 May 1958, p.15	C[olin] M[ason], 'Walton's Cello Concerto: A modern masterpiece', 1 May 1958, p.7.
		Michael Kennedy, 'A Captivating Walton Work: Halle Premiere of Witty <i>Partita</i> ', 1 May 1958, p.10		
		M[artin] C[oooper], 'London Hears Walton <i>Partita</i> : Robust Jocularly', 3 May 1958, p.8		
<b>Second Symphony</b>	Music Critic [Frank Howes], 'Walton's Second Symphony' 3 Sep 1960, p.9.	Donald Mitchell, 'Walton's 2nd Symphony Looks Back: Scots Premiere', 3 Sep 1960, p.8	Peter Heyworth, 'Walton's New Symphony', 4 Sep 1960, p.26	Neville Cardus, 'Walton's Second Symphony', 3 Sep 1960, p.9
			Peter Heyworth, 'Walton Marks Time', 27 Nov 1960, p.24	
<b>Hindemith Variations</b>	[Anon], 'Walton's New Music for a Birthday', 9 Mar 1963, p.4	Donald Mitchell, 'Walton's New Ideas from Hindemith', 9 March 1963, p.10.	Peter Heyworth, 'Walton Free-Wheels', 10 Mar 1963, p.27	J. H. Elliot, 'Review: Philharmonic Anniversary Concert', 9 Mar 1963, p.5
<b>Capriccio Burlesco</b>	Peter Davis, 'Walton's New Work', 10 Dec 1968, p.7.	Martin Cooper, 'Clarinet work packed with ideas', 6 February 1969, p.21.		
	William Mann, 'Philharmonic's Cheerful Novelties', 6 Feb 1969, p.13.			
<b>Britten Improvisations</b>	Stanley Sadie, 'Bang on: Aldeburgh Festival', 29 June 1970, p.11.	A.E. Payne, 'Walton's leisurely air in <i>Improvisations</i> ', 29 June 1970, p.12	Peter Heyworth, 'Tippett 25 Years on', 5 Jul 1970, p.27	Edward Greenfield, 'Walton's <i>Improvisations</i> at Aldeburgh', 29 Jun 1970, p.8.
	Joan Chissel, 'LPO: Festival Hall', 21 Oct 1970, p.15.			

The positive tone of Cooper's *Telegraph* notices is revealed immediately by their headlines: 'New Walton Work Intense and Exciting' (the Cello Concerto), and 'London Hears Walton *Partita*: Robust Jocularly'.<sup>32</sup> He described the Cello Concerto as 'extraordinarily attractive', with a 'masterly' final coda that 'so entranced the audience that they were unwilling for a moment to break the silence after the last note had died away'.<sup>33</sup> In addition to these reviews, Cooper wrote two impassioned apologia, in 1957 and 1972, defending Walton against the charge of being an 'establishment' composer.<sup>34</sup>

In comparison, Mitchell's reviews of Walton's next two important orchestral works, the Second Symphony and *Hindemith Variations*, seem somewhat disparaging. Mitchell – whose reevaluation of Walton following the composer's 'regressive' *Troilus and Cressida* has already been noted – commented about the 'disappointing' Second Symphony that Walton's language had 'scarcely developed' since the First, 25 years before; indeed, the work 'represents a step or two in reverse'.<sup>35</sup> Mitchell was slightly warmer about the 'well-made and nicely contrasted' *Hindemith Variations*, in which he suggests the composer's personality is clearly evident; but he questions: 'Is personality enough? One senses even in this modest piece a lack of really compelling inspiration and a curious want of adventurousness'.<sup>36</sup>

Mitchell's views, and the ideology behind them, are explored in greater depth in two earlier pieces of writing in which the constraints of space were less acute than in the daily press: in 1952, in a two-part article 'Some observations on William Walton' for

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<sup>32</sup> Martin Cooper, 'New Walton Work Intense and Exciting', *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 February 1957, p.8; M[artin] C[ooper], 'London Hears Walton *Partita*: Robust Jocularly', *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 May 1958, p.8.

<sup>33</sup> Cooper, 'New Walton Work Intense and Exciting', p.8.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Cooper, 'Walton & the Outsider', *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 February 1957, p.8; Martin Cooper, 'The Age of Walton', *The Daily Telegraph* (25 March 1972), p.12.

<sup>35</sup> Donald Mitchell, 'Walton's 2nd Symphony Looks Back: Scots Premiere', *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 September 1960.

<sup>36</sup> Donald Mitchell, 'Walton's New Ideas from Hindemith', *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 March 1963, p.10.



*The Chesterian*,<sup>37</sup> and in 1957, in the BBC's weekly magazine *The Listener*.<sup>38</sup> The first part of the *Chesterian* article deals with *Façade*, a work which draws Mitchell's admiration but which he regards as a 'misleading and freakish start' to the composer's career.<sup>39</sup> The second part builds on this foundation with the thesis that Walton is a 'fundamentally conservative composer'; here a group of adjectives, scattered liberally amongst the prose, serves to qualify: 'conservative'; 'traditional'; 'epilogic': 'regressive'; 'backward-looking'.<sup>40</sup> Mitchell admits that such conservatism can be beautiful (as in the Violin Concerto), but comments:

If Walton is to retain his creative impetus I think he must renew the struggle to discover a way out of the historical impasse which at present is stifling his more adventurous instincts. Perhaps the opera [the forthcoming *Troilus and Cressida*] will not only open up hitherto unexplored territories of Walton's mind but reinvigorate sources of energy which seem to have become fatigued.<sup>41</sup>

As has been noted, for Mitchell, such a renewal was not forthcoming: a few years later, following the composition of *Troilus and Cressida* and the Cello Concerto, and writing partly in response to the recent publication of an English translation of Adorno's article 'The Ageing of the New Music',<sup>42</sup> he explained:

In the person of William Walton it seems to me that we have, close at hand, a 'make-up' that very singularly illustrates Dr. Adorno's prognoses, not only his notion of contemporary music produced as a duty but that slackening of tension—decrease in anxiety—that has resulted in some modern music reaching a premature old age.<sup>43</sup>

Of course, in both Adorno and Mitchell, the idea of 'growing old' is not complimentary. Despite Mitchell's somewhat selective appropriation of concepts from Adorno's

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<sup>37</sup> Mitchell, 'Some Observations on William Walton, I', *The Chesterian*, 26(169) (January 1952), pp.35-38; Donald Mitchell, 'Some Observations on William Walton, II', *The Chesterian*, 26(170) (April 1952), pp.67-72. See also M[itche]ll, 'Contemporary Chronicle: Revaluations: IV. William Walton'; M[itche]ll, 'Contemporary Chronicle: Revaluations: V. William Walton'.

<sup>38</sup> Donald Mitchell, 'The "Modernity" of William Walton', *The Listener*, 7 February 1957, p.245.

<sup>39</sup> Mitchell, 'Some Observations on William Walton, I', p.38.

<sup>40</sup> Mitchell, 'Some Observations on William Walton, II'.

<sup>41</sup> Mitchell, 'Some Observations on William Walton, II', p.71.

<sup>42</sup> The translation in question is Theodor W. Adorno, 'Modern Music Is Growing Old', *The Score*, 18 (December 1956), pp.18-29.

<sup>43</sup> Mitchell, 'The "Modernity" of William Walton', p.245.

critique – which warns that post-war serialism has become too safe, having diluted and distorted the principles of the Second Viennese School without having its vital impulses – his article demonstrates that criticisms of Walton emerged against the backdrop of a growing awareness of modernist musical techniques and associated aesthetics. In this context, a ‘conservative’ element to Walton could be identified, and this conservatism was liable to be thought of as implicitly negative.

In comparison to the thoughtful (if not always encouraging) notices by Mitchell, those by Peter Heyworth, who wrote a weekly column for *The Observer* from 1955, seem somewhat one-dimensional. It is surprising – given the regular occurrence of Heyworth’s name in Walton’s correspondence and interviews – that current biographical and bibliographical resources refer to only a limited selection of his reviews; in fact, Heyworth reviewed the London premières of all of the works under consideration in the present thesis (see Table 4.1, p.66 above). His reviews of Walton premières are all negative in tone: the Cello Concerto is criticised for being ‘music of the establishment’ and for having a ‘stagnant quality’;<sup>44</sup> the Partita for a lack of melodic inventiveness;<sup>45</sup> the *Hindemith Variations* for triviality;<sup>46</sup> and the *Britten Improvisations*, somewhat sarcastically, for ‘pleasing Walton’s admirers by its very familiarity.’<sup>47</sup>

The theme of a lack of progress in musical language, present in Mitchell’s writings, is more prominent and more explicit here. Heyworth comments of the Second Symphony that ‘there is little in this score that could not have been written in 1902’; and whilst – according to Heyworth – this need not be an issue in itself, it does signal a problem with Walton: ‘What worries me here’, Heyworth comments, ‘is that within the terms of his own idiom Walton shows so little growth’.<sup>48</sup> Heyworth’s view of the symphony did not improve with a second hearing: ‘The lack of thematic development in the first movement is more apparent, and so is the absence of any strong melodic or harmonic impetus in the lento [...] the final impression it leaves is of Walton chewing the cud’.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Peter Heyworth, ‘Music of the Establishment’, *The Observer*, 17 February 1957, p.11.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Heyworth, ‘Walton’s Partita’, *The Observer*, 4 May 1958, p.15.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Heyworth, ‘Walton Free-Wheels’, *The Observer*, 10 March 1963, p.27.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Heyworth, ‘Tippett 25 Years On’, *The Observer*, 5 July 1970, p.27.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Heyworth, ‘Walton’s New Symphony’, *The Observer*, 4 September 1960, p.26.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Heyworth, ‘Walton Marks Time’, *The Observer*, 27 November 1960, p.24.

No less damning are Heyworth's comment's on the *Hindemith Variations*, which serve as a summary of his views of later Walton in general: 'It all wears the air of a veteran performer going wearily through his accustomed hoops. There is no conviction about it, and the general effect is of a creative talent free-wheeling down the tracks it cut for itself many years ago.'<sup>50</sup>

The question remains as to why Heyworth reserved so many column inches for criticism of a composer whose music he regarded with such disdain. Perhaps part of the answer lies in an examination of Heyworth's principal musical concern: the advocacy of musical modernism, especially from the continent, to which the criticism of Walton's music provided a convenient foil. Heyworth enthusiastically praised works of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, lamenting the lack of availability of performances and recordings of these composers in Britain.<sup>51</sup> He was also an advocate of the next generation of continental composers, praising works and recommending recordings of Stockhausen, Berio, Lutosławski, Xenakis and others,<sup>52</sup> at a time when these composers were not well known in the UK. The contrast between these concerns and the music of Walton is made explicitly in an review of recordings from the 1960s: Heyworth considers what his descendents might make of contemporary music, and asks: 'Will they regard Walton's *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith* (1963) as a gallant attempt to shore up a collapsing order, or will they salute Stockhausen's *Hymnen* as the herald of a new age?!'<sup>53</sup> (Heyworth's answer is, of course, disappointingly predictable).

Unlike Heyworth's views, those of Mitchell – arguably more balanced and thoughtful – cannot be so easily categorised as the outcome of an advocacy of continental modernism. Nonetheless, Mitchell's criticisms of Walton must also be understood in the context of his own prevailing interests and aesthetics. Mitchell was indeed an advocate of continental modernism, although his focus was on earlier generations of composers (consider his *The Language of Modern Music*, in which Schoenberg and Stravinsky

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<sup>50</sup> Heyworth, 'Walton Free-Wheels', p.27.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Heyworth on Stravinsky in 'Twentieth-Century Records', *The Observer*, 25 December 1960, p.14; and Heyworth on Schoenberg in 'Berg's Version of Büchner', *The Observer*, 4 December 1960, p.27.

<sup>52</sup> See, as an example, Peter Heyworth, 'Around the avant garde', *The Observer*, 12 January 1969, p.27.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Heyworth, 'Music of the Sixties', *The Observer*, 11 January 1970, p.27.

form the central case studies,<sup>54</sup> and his three monographs on Mahler).<sup>55</sup> At the time when Mitchell regularly criticised Walton's music, he was becoming a supporter and close associate of Britten; indeed, alongside Hans Keller, Mitchell published a book on Britten as early as 1952.<sup>56</sup> Mitchell's writings on Britten emphasise the innovative aspects of his musical style, including in orchestration and form, and in musical language, especially the influence of serialism and of far-eastern musics.<sup>57</sup> Mitchell was concerned to point out the European pedigree of Elgar,<sup>58</sup> and rallied against what he saw as insularity in the music of Vaughan Williams.<sup>59</sup> It is thus clear that innovation – especially that which involved awareness of European trends – was particularly important in Mitchell's aesthetics, and it is from this background that his criticisms of Walton emerge.

If Mitchell was supportive of Britten, Heyworth was similarly supportive of Tippett.<sup>60</sup> At the time of *The Midsummer Marriage*, Tippett – unlike Walton – was an emerging composer, and did not have such a substantial reputation to sustain; in addition, the opera represented the culmination of a stylistic evolution,<sup>61</sup> and Tippett would continue to evolve and develop his idiom, most starkly in a change to a dense, modernist

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<sup>54</sup> Donald Mitchell, *The Language of Modern Music*, New ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1976).

<sup>55</sup> These are Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Early Years* (London: Rockliff, 1958); Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years* (London: Faber, 1975); Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death: Interpretations and Annotations* (London: Faber, 1985).

<sup>56</sup> Donald Mitchell and Hans Keller (eds.), *Benjamin Britten: A Commentary on His Works by a Group of Specialists* (London: Rockliff, 1952).

<sup>57</sup> Consider, for example, Mitchell's comments in 'Benjamin Britten: The Quiet Innovator', especially on serial influences in *The Turn of the Screw*, which, of course, predates *Troilus and Cressida*. Donald Mitchell, ed. Mervyn Cooke, *Cradles of the New: Writings on Music 1951-1991* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), pp.305-337, especially 318-320.

<sup>58</sup> See Christopher Palmer's comments on and quotation from Mitchell's writings in Mitchell, *Cradles of the New*, pp.xxv-xxvi.

<sup>59</sup> See Mitchell, *Cradles of the New*, pp.87-96, especially 93.

<sup>60</sup> See Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), p.220.

<sup>61</sup> Ian Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and His Music* (London: Eulenburg, 1984), p.278.

chromatic musical style around 1960,<sup>62</sup> a change which has been linked with the increasing influence of the ‘new generation’ of serially-influenced composers.<sup>63</sup> Heyworth himself remained unconvinced about the development of Tippett’s style;<sup>64</sup> nevertheless, more generally, Tippett could be characterised as a composer who (unlike Walton) was developing his musical idiom in response to contemporary musical concerns.

Arnold Whittall has argued that whilst the music of Britten and Tippett does seem ‘essentially conservative’<sup>65</sup> in comparison with contemporary musical trends of the post-war period, the two composers – in both musical style and in the themes which their works address – ‘confronted the essential issues and provided memorable solutions’.<sup>66</sup> Thus, whilst of they were not wholly a part of the post-war avant garde, both Britten and Tippett can be viewed – and have been viewed – as composers who were fully engaged with its principal concerns. In contrast, Walton was geographically and, to some extent, stylistically isolated from these trends, and could not therefore be fully admitted into the professional and critical world of the other two composers; instead he remained an outsider who was vulnerable to attack from the younger critics.

Of course, Walton had advocates as well as detractors. Frank Howes was chief music critic at the *Times* from 1943 until 1960; whilst a large number of the notices in *The Times* were officially anonymous, Howes’ characteristic writing manner is sufficient evidence to conclude that he wrote the paper’s reviews of London performances of Walton’s Cello Concerto, *Partita*, and Second Symphony. Howes was a staunch supporter of Walton (as demonstrated by his monograph on the composer’s music),<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The demarcation of stylistic evolution in Tippett’s oeuvre, and especially his turn to a modernist style around this time, is well established in Tippett studies. See for example Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and His Music*, pp.322-327; David Clarke, ‘Tippett, Sir Michael (Kemp)’, in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 25 (London: Macmillan, 2001), p.509ff; Arnold Whittall, *The Music of Britten and Tippett: Studies in Themes and Techniques*, Second ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.185, 193.

<sup>63</sup> Whittall, *The Music of Britten and Tippett*, pp.184-185.

<sup>64</sup> See Peter Heyworth, ‘Tippett’s New Manner’, *The Observer*, 8 September 1963.

<sup>65</sup> Whittall, *The Music of Britten and Tippett*, p.11.

<sup>66</sup> Whittall, *The Music of Britten and Tippett*, p.11.

<sup>67</sup> Frank Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, Second ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

and his reviews were always positive. He described the first London performance of the Cello Concerto as an ‘exciting event’ and a ‘brilliant occasion’,<sup>68</sup> and the *Partita* as a ‘brilliant, entertaining work’.<sup>69</sup> Howes commented of the Second Symphony’s première at Edinburgh, ‘here at last was something by which to remember this festival’.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the regular publication of short news items on Walton in *The Times* throughout the 1950s and 60s – including notifications of new commissions, previews of first performances, and reviews from foreign correspondents – amounts to something not far short of a PR campaign. And just as Howes’ assessment of Walton provides a sharp contrast with that of Heyworth and Mitchell, so also do his views of continental modernism, which he regarded with some disdain.<sup>71</sup>

Thus far the caricature – of a new post-war generation of critics with interests in continental modernism criticising Walton’s music, with older critics defending it – seems to be holding true. One figure who breaks this mould is Colin Mason, a writer on music for *The Manchester Guardian* from 1950 to 1959, and subsequently editor of *Tempo*.<sup>72</sup> Mason took an active interest in continental modernism, having made a special study of the music of Bartók; he also admired Stockhausen.<sup>73</sup> For Mason, Walton’s Cello Concerto was a ‘modern masterpiece’, ‘his freshest and most inspired music for many years’, in which a serene mood is coupled with an economical manner.<sup>74</sup> Mason was less enthusiastic about the *Partita*, but his comments on a lack of melodic interest are tempered by the excuse that the performance (with Walton conducting the Hallé Orchestra) may not have done justice to the work.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps Mason’s views were influenced, to some extent, by his unusual sensitivity to Walton’s ‘lateness’; commenting on a ‘serene and “objective”’ mood in the work, Mason notes:

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<sup>68</sup> [Anon], ‘Sir William Walton’s New Concerto’, *The Times*, 14 February 1957, p.5.

<sup>69</sup> [Anon], ‘Walton’s New *Partita*: First Performance in London’, *The Times*, 3 May 1958, p.3.

<sup>70</sup> [Frank Howes], ‘Walton’s Second Symphony’, *The Times*, 3 September 1960, p.9.

<sup>71</sup> See Howes’s comments in ‘Health and Decadence in Modern Music’, *The Times*, 15 February 1957, p.3.

<sup>72</sup> Some brief factual details of Colin Mason’s biography are found in Martin Cooper, ‘Obituary: Colin Mason’, *The Musical Times*, 112(1538) (April 1971).

<sup>73</sup> Cooper, ‘Obituary: Colin Mason’.

<sup>74</sup> C[olin] M[ason], ‘Walton’s Cello Concerto: A Modern Masterpiece’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 May 1958, p.7.

<sup>75</sup> M[ason], ‘Walton’s Cello Concerto: A Modern Masterpiece’, p.7.

‘Walton is still a few years short of 60 but his music here seems to have something of that characteristic quality of serenity and light that we associate with the music of composers in their old age’.<sup>76</sup> Thus in Cooper’s review, a sense of relaxation or conservatism, as noted by Mitchell and Heyworth, is transformed into a compliment rather than a criticism. Howes similarly moulds a compliment from stylistic traits of Walton’s music which to other authors have been a source of criticism, arguing that ‘from the Viola Concerto onwards a greater intensity of feeling, a gradual broadening of sympathies, and a consolidation of character are discernable in his scores.’<sup>77</sup>

Whilst the reaction to Walton’s later music was mixed, sometimes hostile, the works received plenty of attention in the British national press. Three main points emerge from examination of this reception literature. First, Walton’s own assessment of a critical divide between old and new worlds, whilst it seems too caricatured to withstand a detailed examination, is in fact borne out to a considerable extent in the press notices of this time. Second, there emerges a consensus, amongst most critics, that Walton’s musical language was becoming more relaxed, in some cases more lyrical, and more concentrated and economical. Finally, the interpretation of these changes was divided, roughly although not exclusively along generational lines, amongst those who viewed them as positive (the serenity and consolidation induced by old age) and those who viewed them as negative (the unfortunate withdrawal from the pressing musical issues of the day).

### **Music Periodicals and Walton’s Second Symphony**

A similar contrast between older and younger writers, and similar concerns over the development of Walton’s musical language, are found in British specialist musical periodicals of this period. In addition, some further, perhaps more penetrating issues surface here, concerning – in particular – the question of the ‘seriousness’ or ‘lightness’ of the orchestral works. Here, a focus on reactions to the Second Symphony is instructive, since the work and its reception provides a useful contrast to the First Symphony, and because a concern with the seriousness of symphonic argument arose

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<sup>76</sup> Colin Mason, ‘Walton’s New ’Cello Concerto: Piatigorsky Soloist for R.P.O’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 14 February 1957, p.7.

<sup>77</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.237.

most strongly with respect to this work which, being a 'symphony', created particularly intense expectations in this respect.

The difference in publication timescales between the national press and the more specialist periodicals meant that many of the reviews in the latter commented on the general impression of the former, with each writer adding their own slant on the theme of Walton's up-to-dateness. Scott Goddard, a prolific reviewer of concerts for several important music periodicals, and a writer with a special interest in contemporary British composers, berated the national press for 'going on and on' about the lack of change in Walton's idiom; but went on to spill plenty more ink over the same issue, suggesting that the symphony was 'full of things heard before'.<sup>78</sup> Arthur Hutchings offered a defence of Walton's musical idiom, arguing that 'the new symphony contains more than outmoded rhetoric, and expression is not validly assessed by its relation to changes of taste'.<sup>79</sup> In fact, Hutchings argues that Walton's symphony is most effective in those places which make no concession to contemporary fashions.<sup>80</sup> Robert Elkin suggested 'I am on the side of those who feel that, after the lapse of a quarter of a century since his First Symphony, Sir William might have been expected to produce something more substantial'.<sup>81</sup>

Thus the music periodicals represent the same divide of opinions as were to be found in the national press; but – as is hinted at in Robert Elkin's comments – a further topic emerges here: the discussion of whether the Second Symphony was 'substantial' enough. In this respect the long gestation periods of Walton's works may have worked against him, arousing or increasing an expectation of length and weight. Noël Goodwin – who was not complimentary about any of Walton's later works – wrote about the Second Symphony in *The Musical Times* that 'I failed to sense much compulsion of thought behind its façade of brilliant orchestral technique, as there undeniably was in its predecessor.'<sup>82</sup> Christopher Grier praised the work but suggested it was 'not in competition' with the First; he asserted that 'as well as being shorter, it was much

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<sup>78</sup> Scott Goddard, 'London Letter', *The Chesterian* 35(204) (Autumn 1960), p.58.

<sup>79</sup> A[rthur] H[utchings], 'Reviews of Music', *Music and Letters*, 42(2) (1961), p.182.

<sup>80</sup> A[rthur] H[utchings], 'Reviews of Music', p.183.

<sup>81</sup> Robert Elkin, 'Walton's Second Symphony', *The Musical Times*, 102 (January 1961), p.38.

<sup>82</sup> Noël Goodwin, 'The Edinburgh Festival', *The Musical Times*, 101 (October 1960), p.644.



slighter in content'.<sup>83</sup> Arthur Hutchings argued that 'both finales in Walton's symphonies present a series of symphonic studies rather than an integrated discussion of symphonic matter.'<sup>84</sup>

It is evident from some of the reviews quoted above that even those who were unconvinced about the musical idiom or symphonic argument of the symphony felt bound to comment on aspects of the work's superior craftsmanship. Thus Noël Goodwin comments on the symphony's 'brilliant orchestral technique'<sup>85</sup>, Christopher Grier calls the work 'effective, assured [and] colourful',<sup>86</sup> whilst Robert Elkin refers to the composer's 'skill and brilliance'.<sup>87</sup>

In general terms, then, the notion of a cooling critical reaction to Walton's later works is evidenced clearly enough in contemporary reviews, to the extent that Walton later commented that the Second Symphony 'had the worst reception from the press that any work of mine ever had.'<sup>88</sup> That the orchestral technique of the Second Symphony, amongst other later works, continued to attract positive comment is interesting since several of the later orchestral scores are considered technically difficult.<sup>89</sup> Partly for this reason, it is interesting to consider responses to Walton's music in America, where professional orchestras were able to play Walton's later works to a higher standard than in the UK.

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<sup>83</sup> Christopher Grier, 'The Edinburgh Festival', *Musical Events*, 15(10) (October 1960), p.9.

<sup>84</sup> A[rthur] H[utchings], 'Reviews of Music', p.183.

<sup>85</sup> Goodwin, 'The Edinburgh Festival', p.644.

<sup>86</sup> Grier, 'The Edinburgh Festival', p.9.

<sup>87</sup> Elkin, 'Walton's Second Symphony', p.38.

<sup>88</sup> Walton, letter to Oliver Knussen, 9 March 1981. Malcolm Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p.461.

<sup>89</sup> For example, the Second Symphony and the *Partita*. See the comments in Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.283; Gillian Widdicombe, 'Walton, the Later Years', recorded lecture, recorded 14 February 1984 (British Library Sound Archive, 2CDR0012088 / 2CDR0012089).

## Walton's Reception in America

A number of commentators have noted that the cooling reception of Walton's music in Britain was contrasted by a rise in interest in America. Tierney, for example, considers the commission from the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra for the *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten* as evidence 'of Walton's lofty reputation in the United States',<sup>90</sup> whilst Malcolm Hayes has commented on a 'serious rising of Walton's stock in America' from 1957 onwards.<sup>91</sup> An enthusiasm for Walton is indeed reflected to some extent in the American music press, although a similar concern over his conservatism was present there as it was in the UK. As might be expected, Walton premières were reported less consistently in America than in London, but enough reviews can be located to give an overview of critical opinion there.

*Troilus and Cressida* – the work which proved to be a turning point for cooling criticism in the UK – was certainly received positively in America. Howard Taubmann – music critic for the *New York Times* and an opera specialist – wrote three rave reviews of the work.<sup>92</sup> Three further critics wrote effusively positive accounts of the work in the pages of *Musical America*<sup>93</sup> (a monthly periodical that published reviews of concerts from around the US),<sup>94</sup> with one reviewer – Cecil Smith – placing *Troilus and Cressida* on a par with *Peter Grimes* and arguing that 'Walton need not yield an inch to Britten in technical skill and sense of the theatrical' and that 'the emergence of a valid rival to

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<sup>90</sup> Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Hale, 1984), p.155.

<sup>91</sup> Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.265.

<sup>92</sup> Howard Taubman, 'Walton's Opera Hailed on Coast: *Troilus and Cressida* Shows High Professional Ability in American Premiere', *The New York Times*, 9 October 1955, p.80; Howard Taubman, 'Music: Walton's *Troilus*', *The New York Times*, 22 October 1955, p.22; Howard Taubman, 'Opera: Season Opens at City Center', *The New York Times*, 29 March 1956, p.22.

<sup>93</sup> Cecil Smith, 'Walton Opera: *Troilus and Cressida* has Successful Premiere'. *Musical America* (1 January 1955), p.5; Eyer, '*Troilus and Cressida* – East and West', p.3 & 15; Marjory M. Fisher, 'San Francisco—American Premiere', *Musical America* (1 November 1955), p.3.

<sup>94</sup> The bibliography of *Musical America* is somewhat complex. The magazine, which published news on classical music and concert reviews, was published either monthly or bi-monthly up until 1965, at which point it was incorporated, as an optional supplement, into another magazine, *High Fidelity*. Nevertheless, *Musical America* retained its own identity with a separate cover and page numbers. Citations here refer only to *Musical America*, with issues identified either by month and year, or full calendar date, as appropriate.

Britten is a healthy development in English operatic composition, which for some years past has been too largely a one-man show.<sup>95</sup> *Troilus and Cressida* was voted 'best new opera' in the 1955 season by the New York Music Critics Circle.<sup>96</sup>

However, Walton's later orchestral works encountered a rather more mixed reaction. Consider the reviews that appeared in *Musical America*. Positive accounts can be found here: the Cello Concerto was described as 'fine, warm, and songful' and 'written superbly well';<sup>97</sup> whilst Frank Hruby – *Musical America*'s regular reporter on events in Cleveland – described the *Hindemith Variations* as 'inventive' and 'maintaining a constant rhythm of contrasts'.<sup>98</sup> But there were less sympathetic notices as well, with echoes of the same criticisms that Walton's works faced in the UK. Hruby noted that the Second Symphony was bold and attractive, but voiced concerns over whether the work was truly symphonic;<sup>99</sup> when the symphony was played by Szell in New York, Robert Sabin reported that it was 'a lively, entertaining, cleverly orchestrated (and yes, rather superficial and sentimental) work.'<sup>100</sup>

Given that the reception of Walton's music in American periodicals was mixed, just as it was in the British press, how is that several commentators have contrasted cooling reactions in the UK with success in America? Aside from critical commentary, there are a number of other indications that Walton was considered with increasing esteem in the United States. The *Partita*, *Capriccio Burlesco*, and the *Britten Improvisations* were all commissioned from, and first performed in, the US. Walton made several visits during the 1960s; in 1963, he was invited to conduct a concert of his own works at New York's Lewisohn Stadium, a rare honour according to the *New York Times*, on a parallel with a

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<sup>95</sup> Smith, 'Walton Opera', p.5.

<sup>96</sup> [Anon.], 'Music Critics Cite Martinu, Walton', *The New York Times*, 21 February 1956.

<sup>97</sup> Cyrus Durgin, 'First Symphony by Smit Has Boston Premiere', *Musical America* (March 1957), p.16.

<sup>98</sup> Frank Hruby, 'National: Ohio: Four Firsts', *Musical America* (June 1963), p.12.

<sup>99</sup> Frank Hruby, 'National Report: Cleveland: New Walton Work', *Musical America* (February 1961), p.20.

<sup>100</sup> Robert Sabin, 'Orchestras in New York: Annie Fischer Heard with Cleveland Orchestra', *Musical America* (March 1961), p.38.

similar concert the previous year conducted by and devoted to Stravinsky.<sup>101</sup> The composer's letters reveal that he was very pleased with the 1963 tour, the response of audiences, and indeed the financial rewards.<sup>102</sup> Walton undertook a further conducting tour of the United States in January 1969 which included appearances with the Houston Symphony Orchestra (Texas) and the American Symphony Orchestra (New York).<sup>103</sup> In addition, Walton received two invitations to teach in the US: at the Yale School of Music in 1949,<sup>104</sup> and at the Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer school at Tanglewood in the summer of 1950.<sup>105</sup> He declined both invitations, commenting: 'teaching very knowledgeable students is beyond me!'<sup>106</sup>

Walton developed relationships with a number of American conductors, most importantly George Szell, who was principal conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1946 to 1970, and who made regular guest appearances with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.<sup>107</sup> Hayes argues that orchestras in the U.S. brought a freshness of approach as well as a hitherto lacking technical proficiency to Walton's scores.<sup>108</sup> This may provide one reason for there being greater favour for Walton's music in the US than in the UK. A full review of performance standards is beyond the scope of this thesis; but a qualitative assessment of a difference in playing standards can be made from examination of comments made by the composer and by reference to contemporary reviews. Gillian Widdicombe, reporting on the composer's views of

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<sup>101</sup> Raymond Ericson, 'Music: Walton at Lewisohn Stadium', *The New York Times*, 9 August 1963, p.14. Walton also conducted performances in Chicago and Vancouver as part of this tour. Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 8 January 1963. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.331.

<sup>102</sup> See Walton, letter to Helga and Melvin Keller, 2 September 1963. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.337.

<sup>103</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton Muse of Fire* p.248

<sup>104</sup> Vincent Giroud, *William Walton Composer: A Centenary Exhibition in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University* (New Haven: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2002), p.38.

<sup>105</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 18 January 1950. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.194.

<sup>106</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 18 January 1950. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.194.

<sup>107</sup> Michael Charry, 'Szell, George [Georg]', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 24 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp.880-881.

<sup>108</sup> Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.265.

performance standards, asserts that many of the premières of later works were a ‘shambles’, and that it was only George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra, and later (in the 1970s) André Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra, that reached the kind of standard Walton had hoped for.<sup>109</sup> John Pritchard – who conducted the Liverpool Philharmonic in the première of Walton’s Second Symphony – reported on considerable apprehension amongst the orchestra before the first rehearsal;<sup>110</sup> Robert Angles, for one, was disappointed with Pritchard’s interpretation, suggesting that the ‘terse and superbly constructed British symphony’ became a ‘weary piece of music’ at the hands of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.<sup>111</sup>

In contrast, Walton (and indeed several commentators) expressed considerable pleasure at the performances of American orchestras. Robert Angles lamented that Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra were ‘the only conductor and orchestra yet to reveal the true stature’ of the Second Symphony, and commented, ‘How much music relies upon its interpreters’.<sup>112</sup> Even Heyworth found room for positive comments on Szell’s Walton recordings; he suggested about recordings of the *Hindemith Variations* and the Second Symphony:

I wouldn’t go so far as to proclaim Walton’s Variations a masterpiece, but a brilliant and marvellously exact performance by George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra certainly makes it sound a far more interesting affair than did its première on this side of the ocean [...] his account of the Variations is coupled with a justly famed performance of the Symphony No. 2. The recordings are excellent.<sup>113</sup>

Szell and the Cleveland orchestra were responsible for the American premières of the *Partita*, the Second Symphony, and the *Hindemith Variations*, and went on to make acclaimed recordings of all three works. Walton was clearly extremely pleased with Szell’s performances; after a visit to the US in February 1961, he reported to Alan Frank: ‘Szell did the [Second] Symph[ony] really splendidly and it was tremendously

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<sup>109</sup> Widdicombe, ‘Walton, the Later Years’.

<sup>110</sup> John Charles, ‘Sir William’s 2nd Symphony’, *Musical Events* (October 1960), pp.14-15.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Angles, ‘Dispiriting Walton’, *Music and Musicians*, 11 January 1963, p.44.

<sup>112</sup> Angles, ‘Dispiriting Walton’, p.44.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Heyworth, ‘Music of the Sixties’, *The Observer*, 11 January 1970, p.27.

well received by the audience and strange to say, by the critics as you will have seen'.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, he described a performance of the *Hindemith Variations* in Amsterdam, conducted by Szell, as 'flawless in every respect'.<sup>115</sup> Later, on receiving the Cleveland Orchestra recording of Second Symphony, he wrote to Szell: 'It is a quite fantastic and stupendous performance from every point of view'.<sup>116</sup>

In the later years, Walton also developed good relationships with other American conductors, including André Kostelanetz and Josef Krips (who were responsible for commissioning *Capriccio Burlesco* and the *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*, respectively), and André Previn, who became a staunch supporter of Walton and his music. Of course, at this time, Previn was mostly active in the UK and was rapidly becoming a TV celebrity; Walton's *Orb and Sceptre*, *Henry V* suite, and *Vari Capricci* all featured in Previn's primetime TV show *André Previn's Music Night*.<sup>117</sup> Previn's support for Walton can be surmised from his comments in a 1972 radio interview:

William Walton I think is England's greatest composer and I admire him boundlessly and he is a good close dear friend, and *Troilus and Cressida* is I think the last of the great romantic operas, and it's high time it was revived, and I was terribly pleased when the Garden asked me to conduct it.<sup>118</sup>

Examining reasons *why* Walton may have been more favoured in America – aside from the technical proficiency of her orchestras – is difficult, since the range of opinions and political motivations to be considered is large and complex. Nonetheless, some sense of the political and social influences can be gathered. As ever, the Second World War may have had some influence on the American position. Suzanne Robinson has pointed out

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<sup>114</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 12 February 1961. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.322.

<sup>115</sup> Walton, quoted in Alan Poulton, *Sir William Walton: A Discography* (Kidderminster: Bravura, 1980), p.103.

<sup>116</sup> Walton, letter to George Szell, 11 May 1962. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.328-329.

<sup>117</sup> *Vari Capricci* and the suite from *Henry V* featured in 7 July 1976 and 18 May 1977 respectively, whilst *Orb and Sceptre* was performed on 4 July 1972, 25 June 1975 and 1 June 1977. Brief details of works performed were featured in *The Radio Times*.

<sup>118</sup> *André Previn Talks to Marjorie Anderson* (Women's Hour), radio broadcast, transmitted 26 January 1972 (BBC: Available: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews/profilepages/previna1.shtml> Accessed 1 October 2007).

that American musical periodicals enthusiastically reported on the wartime activities of British composers, including the false report that Walton was driving ambulances in France.<sup>119</sup> Thus Walton may have been viewed as a somewhat patriotic figure, an image of Britishness that played well with American audiences. Certainly the war affected America differently to the way it had affected Britain and the continent, and the influence of continental post-war integral serialism was less direct in the US. Of course, a brand of high-modern serialism was indeed developing in America at this time, primarily through Milton Babbitt at Princeton; but without public broadcasting of the kind so prominent in the UK,<sup>120</sup> this music remained largely the province of specialists rather than mainstream ensembles and audiences.<sup>121</sup> (The importance in the UK of the BBC, and especially William Glock, will be examined in more detail below; these would not have been significant for US audiences.)

### **Generational Divisions amongst British Post-war Composers**

We have noted that a number of those writers who criticised Walton's music for being conservative in style were advocates of continental composers whose music was stylistically progressive. Since it was during the 1950s that a critical pressure on Walton's perceived out-of-dateness emerged, it is instructive to consider changes in contemporary musical life around this time, especially the increasing influence and prestige of continental modernism. Heyworth himself was astute enough to observe that Walton (along with his contemporary Hindemith) suffered because of a shift in musical perceptions and tastes:

In their youth both men passed as bright young sparks, but since the war the tides of taste have moved so decisively away from their sort of music that today they appear rather as companions in misfortune, isolated and beleaguered bastions of a tottering order.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Suzanne Robinson, "An English Composer Sees America": Benjamin Britten and the North American Press, 1939-42', *American Music*, 15(3) (Autumn 1997), p.341.

<sup>120</sup> A contemporary commentary on the contrast between tax-supported radio in Europe and commercial radio in the US can be found in Virgil Thomson, 'Virgil Thomson Surveys the State of Music in Europe Today', *Musical America* (January 1961), pp.11, 147 and 186.

<sup>121</sup> Milton Babbitt's infamous 'Who Cares if you Listen?' is relevant here. *High Fidelity*, 8 (February 1958), pp.38-40, 126-127.

<sup>122</sup> Heyworth, 'Walton Free-Wheels', p.27.

An examination of issues of the *Musical Times* of the 1960s reveals a musical world in which composers were often viewed in generational terms. A March 1960 editorial entitled 'The Younger Generation' featured eleven invited contributions from composers mostly born in the 1920s.<sup>123</sup> Reading through the composer contributions, an interesting theme emerges: conservative aspects of musical language, especially tonal language, seem to require a defence. Thus Philip Canon defends himself against 'fashionable atonalities'; Arthur Butterworth contrasts his own music with that which is 'fashionable', 'mathematical' and 'pseudo-scientific'; Adrian Cruft, noting his preference for writing music with tonal centres, goes on to discuss intelligibility and 'direct communication'; Stephen Dodgson rejects membership of any "school" of musical thought', regarding them as 'refuges for unadventurous minds'.<sup>124</sup>

The epithet 'younger generation' has echoes of the terms applied to creative artists on the continent who were approximately in their 20s at the end of the war;<sup>125</sup> and the influence of the composers amongst this continental younger generation became increasingly prominent. Under the editorship of Andrew Porter (1960-1967), *The Musical Times* published several two- or three-page articles on a number of still younger composers (see Table 4.2). Three of these, Goehr, Davies, and Birtwistle, have been termed the 'Manchester School', referring to common educational experiences centred on Manchester, and making oblique reference to the Second Viennese School which was a significant influence.<sup>126</sup> The label 'Manchester School' risks over-generalisation, but the concept does capture the sense in which these composers were regarded as being part of a single movement that was particularly influenced by Viennese serialism and its newer continental incarnations.

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<sup>123</sup> [Anon.], 'The Younger Generation: John Addison; Arthur Butterworth; Philip Cannon; Hugo Cole; Adrian Cruft; Stephen Dodgson; Alun Hoddinott; Bryan Kelly; Thea Musgrave; Leonard Salzedo; Graham Whettam', *The Musical Times*, 101(1405) (March 1960), pp.145-50.

<sup>124</sup> [Anon.], 'The Younger Generation', pp.145-50.

<sup>125</sup> M. J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.12.

<sup>126</sup> Jonathan Cross, 'Manchester School', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 10 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp.726-727.



**Table 4.2: Articles on a younger British composers appearing in *The Musical Times*, 1961-1964**

<b>Featured Composer</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Edition</b>
Peter Maxwell Davies	Robert Henderson	<i>The Musical Times</i> , 102(1424) (October, 1961), pp. 624-626
Richard Rodney Bennett	Nicholas Maw	<i>The Musical Times</i> , 103(1428) (February, 1962), pp. 95-97.
Alexander Goehr	Hugh Wood	<i>The Musical Times</i> , 103(1431) (May, 1962), pp. 312-314.
Nicholas Maw	Susan Bradshaw	<i>The Musical Times</i> , 103(1435) (September, 1962), pp. 608-610.
Malcolm Williamson	Colin Mason	<i>The Musical Times</i> , 103(1437) (November, 1962), pp. 757-759.
Thea Musgrave	Susan Bradshaw	<i>The Musical Times</i> , 104(1450) (December, 1963), pp. 866-868.
Harrison Birtwistle	Robert Henderson	<i>The Musical Times</i> , 105(1453) (March, 1964), pp. 188-189

At least in Porter's view, this youngest generation was characterised by having absorbed serialism, although it was not always strictly implemented.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, several of these composers were linked to important figures in the continental avant garde. Goehr studied with Messiaen, Boulez and Yvonne Loriod in Paris in around 1956-7,<sup>128</sup> whilst Nicholas Maw and Thea Musgrave had both studied with Nadia Boulanger, also in Paris. British composers were not strongly associated with the Darmstadt summer schools at this time,<sup>129</sup> but some of this youngest generation did attend the courses: Goehr attended in 1954 and 1956,<sup>130</sup> whilst Richard Rodney Bennett and Peter Maxwell Davies went in 1957.<sup>131</sup>

Porter, an active music critic alongside his editorial duties at *The Musical Times*, contributed an article in 1965 to a special edition of the US periodical *The Musical Quarterly* dedicated to contemporary music in Europe, in which he described fashions

<sup>127</sup> Porter, 'Some New British Composers', p.20.

<sup>128</sup> Hugh Wood, 'The Music of Alexander Goehr', *The Musical Times*, 103(1431) (May 1962); Nicholas Williams, 'Goehr (2) (Peter) Alexander', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 15 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp.76-79.

<sup>129</sup> It was not until a later generation of composers (of the so-called 'new complexity' school) that British music became a significant influence at Darmstadt. Christopher Fox, 'British Music at Darmstadt 1982-92', *Tempo*, 186 (September 1993), p.21.

<sup>130</sup> Wood, 'The Music of Alexander Goehr'; Williams, 'Goehr (2) (Peter) Alexander'.

<sup>131</sup> Fox, 'British Music at Darmstadt 1982-92', p.21.

in the musical interests of the British public.<sup>132</sup> Here, Britten is considered the dominant composer, whilst Walton is regarded along with Tippett, Berkeley, and Rawsthorne as being amongst the ‘older “established” composers’. Porter notes a 1960s ‘vogue’ for ‘new music’; with the seven composers he names as being in fashion corresponding to the seven *Musical Times* articles (Table 4.2). Considered alongside the composers from the earlier *The Musical Times* articles and Porter’s ‘established’ composers, the composers group into near-perfect generational patterns (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3: Three generations of British composers active in the 1960s.**

Dates refer to the composer’s year of birth.

<b>A</b> Porter’s Older Generation		<b>C</b> Composers featured in <i>The Musical Times</i> ’ ‘Younger Generation’ editorial in March 1960		<b>D</b> Porter’s ‘Younger’ Composers	
Lennox Berkeley	1903	Hugo Cole	1917	Thea Musgrave	1928
William Walton	1902	John Addison	1920	Malcolm Williamson	1931
Alan Rawsthorne	1905	Adrian Cruft	1921		
Michael Tippett	1905	Leonard Salzedo	1921	Alexander Goehr	1932
<b>B</b> Benjamin Britten		Arthur Butterworth	1923	Peter Maxwell Davis	1934
		Stephen Dodgson	1924		
		Graham Whettam	1927	Harrison Birtwistle	1934
Benjamin Britten	1913	Thea Musgrave	1928	Richard Rodney Bennett	1936
		Philip Cannon	1929		
		Alun Hoddinott	1929	Nicholas Maw	1936
		Bryan Kelly	1934		

<sup>132</sup> Porter, ‘Some New British Composers’, pp.12-21.

It is in the context of these generational patterns, and the changes in interests and tastes that they represent, that the critical reception of Walton's later works should be understood. Kennedy's claim that Walton transitioned from being 'regarded as the outstanding figure among the younger composers' in 1942, to being 'written off as an almost-extinct reactionary' less than ten years later, is somewhat exaggerated.<sup>133</sup> But it does capture the sense in which the substantial shifts in cultural life following the war left Walton looking like he had grown old in comparison with the interests of the youngest generation. Felix Aprahamian – discussing the Second Symphony – contrasted the musical climate of the First (with Vaughan Williams and Bax the dominant figures, and Sibelius the principal influence), with the 'very different musical world' of the Second, in which Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók and Webern were the prevailing influences.<sup>134</sup> For Aprahamian, Walton had succeeded in maintaining a unique and accessible musical language that resisted the vagaries of musical fashion; but – as we have seen – many disagreed with this positive assessment, characterising Walton's failure to keep up with times as a failure of his creativity.

Something of the considerable influence of this youngest generation of composers (whose various complex compositional idioms were and are subsumed under the general rubric 'serialism') is evident from reminiscences of the time made recently by Michael Nyman, who went on to become a renowned composer of music for film. Nyman recalled,

I was beholden to write serial music, but it didn't interest me, as I was writing music that was like Tippett or Hindemith or Shostakovich. And I wasn't sufficiently strong enough as a creative force to fight my way through to find a personal voice within the new demands, the new prescriptions and proscriptions that were coming through Birtwistle and co. So I just gave up and became a music critic, became a proselytiser for that music.<sup>135</sup>

Thus a new generation of serial composers, influenced by but going beyond the Second Viennese School, came to set the prevailing musical climate of this time.

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<sup>133</sup> Compare Kennedy's comments on Walton reception in Michael Kennedy, *Britten*. Master Musicians (London: Dent, 1981), pp.37 and 62.

<sup>134</sup> Aprahamian, 'Walton and His New Symphony', p.321.

<sup>135</sup> Michael Nyman, in *Modernism and Minimalism (1962-1980)* (Classic Britannia). television broadcast. transmitted 29 June 2007 (BBC Four).

In considering the critical context in Britain, a final figure is worthy of note: divided opinion amongst critics and composers coalesced around one particularly influential individual, William Glock. Glock was dissatisfied with the BBC's 'middle-of-the-road' policies of the 1950s on classical music programming,<sup>136</sup> and sought to buck what he perceived as a conservative trend through a number of projects that were part of what he has described as a 'musical underground' and as a 'campaign of insurrection'.<sup>137</sup> This included the Dartington Summer Schools (which featured, amongst others, Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono and Berio, in addition to some of Porter's 'younger' British composers, including Maxwell Davies and Birtwistle);<sup>138</sup> and the publication of *The Score*, a music magazine that placed particular emphasis on the avant garde (and which published Boulez's infamous exhortation in favour of multiple serialism, 'Schönberg is Dead').<sup>139</sup>

Glock was appointed Controller of Music at the BBC in 1959, a role that included oversight of programming for the Third Programme, the Proms, and the BBC's orchestras. His tenure in the post is famously controversial: Glock disbanded the conservative Music Advisory Committee and the Proms Committee, and appointed a number of staff with what were perceived as avant garde interests, including Alexander Goehr and Hans Keller. Porter's view, in the 1965 article referred to earlier, was that Glock had 'cut through British musical conservatism and opened the door to "new music"'.<sup>140</sup> Whilst eliciting excitement from those with similar interests, Glock's reforms were vigorously opposed by those who felt that the emphasis on the avant garde excluded other equally valuable music.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> William Glock, *Notes in Advance: An Autobiography in Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.58.

<sup>137</sup> 'Musical Underground in the 1950s' is the title of the chapter in Glock's autobiography that deals with *The Score* and the ICA. Glock, *Notes in Advance*, pp.87-96.

<sup>138</sup> Glock gives an impressive list of musical figures who taught at Dartington in *Notes in Advance*, p.62. Some information on important premières further appears on p.59. Boulez's *Le Marteau sans Maître* was performed at Dartington, but in contrast to the other continental composers mentioned, he did not teach at the school, although he had planned a visit in 1957. Glock, *Notes in Advance*, p.62.

<sup>139</sup> Pierre Boulez, 'Schönberg Is Dead', *The Score*, 6 (May 1952).

<sup>140</sup> Porter, 'Some New British Composers', p.13.

<sup>141</sup> Robert Simpson, *The Proms and Natural Justice* (London: Toccata, 1981), p.38.

In a recent article on Glock's influential tenure at the BBC, Neil Edmunds argues that it was primarily musical idiom that informed Glock's (and hence the BBC's) programming choices during the 1960s, with composers writing in a more conservative idiom loosing out.<sup>142</sup> As a result – Edmunds argues – the distinction between 'avant garde' and 'contemporary' became blurred, reflecting Glock's (and a number of critics') modernist aesthetics. David Wright offers a more sophisticated view of Glock, arguing that his programming (in this case for the Proms) was considerably broader than he is sometimes given credit for, embracing a range of compositional idioms in new commissions and an expanded repertoire from established past composers.<sup>143</sup> Nonetheless, Wright refers to 'Glock's radicalization' of the Proms,<sup>144</sup> and to an 'assault on established Proms programming'.<sup>145</sup> This was, according to Wright, reflected in a 'sense of new adventurousness in audience response to Glock's programming'.<sup>146</sup> Overall, there is little doubt that Glock was a stimulus to and a reflection of the growing prestige of continental modernism.

Where does Walton fit into this cultural context? Edmunds' comments on Walton are intriguing; he notes that Walton was able to sustain his career through this time because of his previously-acquired standing; nonetheless, 'Walton might not have been able to enhance his reputation during the 1960s in the way that Britten and Tippett did.'<sup>147</sup> Glock had formed a strong friendship with Tippett (a 'trusted advisor'),<sup>148</sup> and, to a lesser extent, Britten;<sup>149</sup> but Walton – partly because of his notable absence from London by this time, and partly because of the perceived conservatism of his musical idiom – was distant physically and aesthetically from Glock's circle.

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<sup>142</sup> Neil Edmunds, 'William Glock and the British Broadcasting Corporation's Music Policy 1959-1973', *Contemporary British History*, 20(2) (June 2006), pp.233-261.

<sup>143</sup> David Wright, 'Reinventing the Proms: The Glock and Ponsonby Eras, 1959-1985', in Jenny Doctor, David Wright and Nicholas Kenyon (eds.), *The Proms: A New History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), pp.168-209.

<sup>144</sup> Wright, 'Reinventing the Proms', p.171.

<sup>145</sup> Wright, 'Reinventing the Proms', p.176.

<sup>146</sup> Wright, 'Reinventing the Proms', p.174.

<sup>147</sup> Neil Edmunds, 'William Glock and the British Broadcasting Corporation's Music Policy 1959-1973', p.250.

<sup>148</sup> Glock, *Notes in Advance*, p.98.

<sup>149</sup> See Glock, *Notes in Advance*, especially pp.35-36.

## Walton and his Critics

Having built up a picture of the emerging critical pressure on Walton, and the context in which this pressure developed, it is interesting to consider what impact the cooling critical reaction to his music may have had. Without a complete survey of business records – which is beyond the scope of the present chapter – it is hard to draw concrete conclusions on the influence of criticism on the commercial success of his music. However, the impact of these critical and cultural developments can be assessed in two other important respects: on Walton's place in scholarly accounts of music history, and on the outlook of the composer himself.

In considering summaries of Walton's compositional career in musicological accounts, a clear consensus emerges that his most important works were composed before the war. Arnold Whittall argues that Walton never repeated the achievements of the First Symphony or the Viola Concerto,<sup>150</sup> and regrets the composer's 'failure' to match the fine construction and confidence of these earlier works in his later career.<sup>151</sup> Peter J. Pirie has referred to Walton's 'decline', describing the Cello Concerto as a 'bore' and the Second Symphony as 'less progressive, characteristic and vivid than the First'.<sup>152</sup> Arthur Hutchings' chapter on Music in Britain in the 1974 volume on 'The Modern Age' for the *New Oxford History of Music* reserves some space for discussion of *Façade*, *Belshazzar's Feast*, and of course the First Symphony, of which several music examples are given; the only two post-war works considered are given only a brief honourable mention: the Cello Concerto and Second Symphony 'reveal no significant refreshment of his powers'.<sup>153</sup> In the more recent *Oxford History of English Music*, John Caldwell offers a more sensitive portrait of Walton's later years and the criticism that accompanied them; nonetheless, considerably greater space is dedicated to discussion of

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<sup>150</sup> Arnold Whittall, *Music since the First World War*, Clarendon Paperbacks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.90.

<sup>151</sup> Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.157.

<sup>152</sup> Peter J. Pirie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Gollancz, 1979). p.220.

<sup>153</sup> Arthur Hutchings, 'Music in Britain 1916-1960', in Martin Cooper (ed.), *New Oxford History of Music*, vol. X: The Modern Age 1890-1960 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp.526-531.

pre-war works, especially the First Symphony.<sup>154</sup> Richard Taruskin's colossal new multivolume *Oxford History of Western Music* finds no space for any mention of Walton at all.

Indeed, this somewhat unbalanced view of Walton's life surfaces even in the accounts of confirmed Waltonians, if only implicitly. In his biography of the composer, Neil Tierney omits any post-war works from his list of four creative 'landmarks' in Walton's oeuvre;<sup>155</sup> whilst Stephen Lloyd devotes considerably more time and space to the earlier works than to the post-war compositions.<sup>156</sup> Christopher Palmer – who would go on to make arrangements of Walton's film music for publication – suggested in an obituary for the composer that his best work was produced under pressure; the more congenial circumstances of marriage and the move to Ischia contrived to reduce this pressure and thus Palmer finds himself agreeing with the prevailing critical perception, that 'the bulk of Walton's best work was done by the time he was 40'.<sup>157</sup> Hugh Ottaway had the view that 'one of Walton's problems was his tendency always to do his best work the first time he used a form or medium.'<sup>158</sup>

Overall, it appears that from the point of view of the academy, Walton was an important figure of the 1920s and 30s, but not a composer who made a significant contribution to the 1950s or 60s. Demonstrating a bias in general musicological reading towards Walton's earlier works does not of itself establish that the prejudice is unfair, for those works might genuinely be of greater quality and thus merit greater attention. Nonetheless, it is evident that the view of post-war Walton as outdated, and as less worthy of attention than the pre-war 'masterpieces', is not restricted to those writings in which that view first emerged. (This roll-call of music history volumes also serves to emphasise the lack of scholarly interest in Walton's later life and works, despite the fascinating range of analytical and critical issues to be investigated.)

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<sup>154</sup> John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, vol. II: From c.1715 to the Present Day (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Discussion of the earlier works appears on pp.367-371; discussion of the later works on pp.422-423.

<sup>155</sup> Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, p.14.

<sup>156</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton, Muse of Fire*.

<sup>157</sup> Christopher Palmer, 'Obituary: Sir William Walton', *The Musical Times*, 124(1683) (May 1983), p.316.

<sup>158</sup> Hugh Ottaway, 'William Walton', *New Grove Twentieth Century English Masters: Elgar, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Walton, Tippett, Britten* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p.191.

In his later years, Walton was famously and at times humorously cynical about music critics. Speaking in 1977 about the reception of *Troilus and Cressida*, Walton recalled:

They really got their knives out. A new set of young critics had arrived at the time. [...] So I'd got the old world pro me, and the new world was against me. I don't know what happened. It did me irreparable harm actually, for a long time. And now I shall settle down again, old age is upon me and they won't be rude. [...] It was all rather sad at the time.<sup>159</sup>

Walton's cynicism when looking back is matched by the comments he made at the time, both publicly and privately. He wrote in 1964 to Benjamin Britten that 'all my later works always receive such a drubbing from the press';<sup>160</sup> the subsequent year, in a letter to Malcolm Arnold commiserating on the negative reception of Arnold's *Sinfonietta* No.3 (Op. 81),<sup>161</sup> Walton disparaged critics as 'really insufferable – all of them'.<sup>162</sup> Writing about the 'pages and pages' of tributes in the press on the occasion of Walton's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1962, Walton wrote to Helga Cranston, 'it was quite refreshing after the cloud I've been under with the new young critics'.<sup>163</sup> And in public, Walton was equally expressive; these comments were published in *The Sunday Telegraph* in 1962:

To that inevitable question about the critics. I am sure my views about them coincide with those of every other composer: a certain pleased indifference to their praise and a maddening irritation when they are rude, which they are more often than not. [...] I shan't emulate Shostakovich and write "A British Artist's Reply to Just Criticism"—I shall confine myself to physical assault. I did once wing a critic in the Wigmore Hall with a crutch I was using after a car accident.<sup>164</sup>

The critic in question was none other than Peter Heyworth, although Walton's comments are somewhat exaggerated: recovering from his car accident, he was capable only of brandishing his crutch rather than actually using it;<sup>165</sup> and in fact, the two men

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<sup>159</sup> Walton, in the television broadcast *William Walton at 75*.

<sup>160</sup> Walton, letter to Benjamin Britten, 2 January 1964. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.347.

<sup>161</sup> This work was first performed on 30 January 1965. Alan Poulton, *The Music of Malcolm Arnold: A Catalogue* (London: Faber Music, 1986), p.105.

<sup>162</sup> Walton, letter to Malcolm Arnold, 20 February 1965. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.351.

<sup>163</sup> Walton, letter to Helga Cranston, 14 April 1962. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.327.

<sup>164</sup> William Walton, 'My Life in Music', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 25 March 1962, p.8.

<sup>165</sup> See Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.202.



had a friendly personal relationship despite their professional differences.<sup>166</sup> Nonetheless, Walton's frustration with Heyworth – who is singled out for special attention in several of his letters<sup>167</sup> – helps to make the point that it was the younger generation of critics, supporting the younger generation of composers, with whom Walton found himself out of favour.

Even within Walton's cynicism about critics, we can detect an immense concern with their views: for if they genuinely didn't matter, then they would not have been the topic of so much of his public and private comment. Certainly Walton gave the impression that the critics had more than a passing influence on his outlook on his own work; as Tony Palmer recalls about the making of the TV documentary *At the Haunted End of the Day*,

I began to have the feeling that Walton considered much of his life's work to have been a waste of time, that much of what he'd done had been a failure, that the end result of his – but only, he said, to other people – immense achievements was a black hole, a nothingness from which there was no escape.<sup>168</sup>

Walton's well-documented slowness in composing and deeply self-critical attitude cannot have been helped by negative reviews, but the impact upon the quality of the music, however slowly or self-critically produced, is more open to debate. Alan Frank, who was Walton's Oxford University Press publisher, viewed Walton as a 'good' self-critic;<sup>169</sup> in other words, it is a classic case of quantity against quality. Walton himself implies as much:

One can write music in five minutes if one wants to, but it's not very good probably. [...] Fluency is not a question of actually writing the notes down, it's thought I think, the actual creative business. [...] There's far too much music being written anyhow. I'm not one of those who wants to make myself too much of a nuisance.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.199-202.

<sup>167</sup> See for example Walton's letters to Alan Frank, 21 November 1957; 15 February 1963; letter to Helga Keller, 10 June 1967. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.304, 334, and 374.

<sup>168</sup> Sleeve notes to the DVD *William Walton: At the Haunted End of the Day* [1981] (South Bank Show), released 11 March 2002, Decca.

<sup>169</sup> *Portrait of Sir William Walton* (Music Weekly), radio broadcast, written by Michael Oliver, transmitted 31 March 1982 (BBC: British Library Sound Archive, T4862BW C1).

<sup>170</sup> Walton, in the radio broadcast *Portrait of Sir William Walton*.

But additional to the potential impact of critical reactions on the creative process, John Caldwell offers a perceptive suggestion as to the effect on Walton's music:

In the main Walton's later work is characterized by an emotional reticence that may have been born of his extreme sensitivity, not least to criticism of his music—a sensitivity to which the pages of Kennedy's biography bear ample witness. The schoolboy humour was a protective mask paralleled in the gloss of brilliance that is rarely absent from his scores; he too often concealed his inner self for fear of being, like Belshazzar, found wanting, and as a result his music still arouses ambivalent reactions.<sup>171</sup>

What this 'emotional reticence' might mean, in terms of musical features, is something to which we can return; for now, it is sufficient to note that the changing critical climate weighed heavily on Walton's mind, and thus may well have affected his expression through music.

The view that Walton was growing old, and had become 'out-of-date', develops – as I have argued – from a particular aesthetic standpoint that is situated very much within a geographical and chronological space: Britain, in the 1950s and 60s. Of course, there are occasional proponents of this view today, and the outlook of that particularly controversial commentator, Norman Lebrecht, provides an evocative case study. Writing on the occasion of Walton's centenary celebrations, Lebrecht's article 'How Walton Killed His Own Talent'<sup>172</sup> is a polemical exposition of the criticisms levelled at Walton's later works. Lebrecht argues that Walton squandered a talent evident in *Façade* and the First Symphony, exchanging promising compositional directions for relaxation and withdrawal. And, very recently, this view of Walton has again been mooted quite prominently, in the BBC's series *Classic Britannia*, a three-part documentary on British classical music from 1945 to the present. Here, Robert Saxton, a composer and scholar, links Walton's move to Ischia with an implied relaxation in necessary personal and artistic tensions: 'I don't think he had enough inner demons. Living in a hot climate with good food on a beautiful island, is most people's idea of a lovely life. Why write music and face the critics?'<sup>173</sup> The fact that there is a lack of

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<sup>171</sup> Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, p.423.

<sup>172</sup> Norman Lebrecht, *How Walton Killed His Own Talent*, 9 January 2002, Available: <http://www.scena.org/columns/lebrecht/020109-NL-Walton.html>, Accessed 15 June 2005.

<sup>173</sup> Robert Saxton, in the television broadcast *The Landscape Changes (1945-1962)* (Classic Britannia).

serious analytical or critical comment to substantiate or reject such views is one motivation for the present study.

Indeed, Walton's works – and especially those neglected later works – have seen a revival of interest recently in some quarters. Christopher Palmer, discussing the 'anti-traditional ambience' at the time of Walton's Second Symphony, observes that 'Nowadays, fortunately, we are more inclined to appreciate Walton's later work for what it is, for its intrinsic qualities, rather than for what elitist critics wanted it to be.'<sup>174</sup> Oxford University Press's ongoing work on the newly edited 24-volume William Walton Edition<sup>175</sup> is one indicator that there is no waning of interest in his music. The record label Chandos made an extensive series of Walton recordings in the 1990s, and both Naxos and Hyperion released albums for Walton's centenary in 2002. The centenary also saw two UK festivals of his music in London (Royal Festival Hall, 24 February to 28 March) and Oldham (throughout October), as well as a number of national and international performances.<sup>176</sup> Unfortunately, this revival of interest has only slowly filtered into academia: the only scholarly study to emerge recently has been Stephen Lloyd's centenary biography in which the post-war works are seriously underrepresented.<sup>177</sup> Forthcoming articles and a monograph on Walton's music by J. P. E Harper-Scott (Royal Holloway, London), and the present thesis, indicate the beginnings of a renewed scholarly interest in the composer; again, it is the earlier works which have been the focus of Harper-Scott's work thus far.

When reading accounts of Walton's music in contemporary newspapers and music periodicals, an impression is formed of a composer who started brightly, but failed to respond to modern artistic concerns as his career progressed. Reactions to *Troilus and Cressida* provided a catalyst for the view the Walton's music was conservative and regressive, a view which – whilst it was not of course shared by all critics – was prominently mooted through the late 1950s and 1960s. Music journalism provides a

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<sup>174</sup> Christopher Palmer, CD Liner Notes, *Walton Symphony No. 2, Suite: Troilus and Cressida*, Chandos Digital: CHAN 8772 (1990).

<sup>175</sup> See <http://www.oup.co.uk/music/repprom/walton/catalogue/waltonedition/>.

<sup>176</sup> See the press release [Anon.], 'William Walton: A Nationwide Year-Long Centenary Celebration of the Man and His Music', 2001, DBPR Associates, Available: [http://www.henrymoorestudio.co.uk/dbpr/walton/ww\\_centenary.html](http://www.henrymoorestudio.co.uk/dbpr/walton/ww_centenary.html), Accessed 4 July 2007.

<sup>177</sup> Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001).

number of eminently quotable summaries of this critical view: Arthur Hutchings wrote about the Second Symphony, ‘after a quarter of a century Walton supplies the mixture as before’;<sup>178</sup> Peter Heyworth commented in 1963 that ‘he has in recent years become the prisoner of the idiom he has created’.<sup>179</sup>

The biographical and historical trends I have noted are, to some extent, caricatures: the closed, discrete lines that the historian draws around historical data (such as delimiting a ‘later’ period and suggesting generational divides between composers and critics) are in reality somewhat blurred. Indeed, occasional sources are found that contradict the general trends for which I have argued here. Nonetheless, the historical sources, taken as a whole, do suggest that a convincing argument can be made for a later period in Walton’s life that reflects and is reflected in his post-war orchestral music. This later music divided critics, along approximately generational lines, with a younger generation arguing that Walton’s music did not advance his compositional idiom and hence had lost its vitality. How this notion of a later period might be reflected in a later style – and how this later style might be investigated analytically – is the focus for the next chapters.

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<sup>178</sup> A[rthur] H[utchings], ‘Reviews of Music’, p.182.

<sup>179</sup> Heyworth, ‘Walton Free-Wheels’.

## Chapter 5: Analytical Strategies

The historical and biographical details of Walton's life are intriguing, but any convincing discussion of Walton's later style must include a detailed study of the music itself. This, however, is not a straightforward task, for Walton inhabits a musical world between the traditional and the modern for which analytical and interpretative tools remains surprisingly underdeveloped. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the pertinent issues, and to propose analytical strategies that can be employed in subsequent chapters. Rather than *mere* methodology, the aim is to indicate ways in which methodological theory, analytical practice, and critical discussion may connect together to form an integrated interpretative position on Walton's later music.

### Review of Analytical Literature

The published biographies of Walton include scant analytical discussion of the composer's music; even Neil Tierney's 'life and works' study includes only a few paragraphs about each score.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary reviews of Walton's works include occasional analytical insights, whilst overview texts (such as Francis Routh's *Contemporary British Music*)<sup>2</sup> provide further brief summaries of particular pieces. For in-depth analytical study we must turn to Frank Howes's *The Music of William Walton*.<sup>3</sup> The effusive journalistic descriptions in this monograph whet the appetite for analytical investigation, but there is considerable room for further study, not least because of the significant developments in analytical methods since his book was written. Robert Meikle gives an analytical account of the symphonies and concertos with a particular focus on sonata forms.<sup>4</sup> He makes some useful observations, but is constrained by the

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Hale, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Francis Routh, *Contemporary British Music: The Twenty-Five Years from 1945 to 1970* (London: Macdonald, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> Frank Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, Second ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

<sup>4</sup> Robert Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', in Stewart R. Craggs (ed.), *William Walton: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp.67-108.

lack of space (covering five large multi-movement works in one chapter), and some of his readings can be profitably reconsidered.

Only one doctoral dissertation has been traced that provides focused study of any of Walton's later orchestral music. Anne Marie de Zeeuw's *Tonality and the Concertos of William Walton*<sup>5</sup> provides an account of the three concertos which is very much a product of its time and place: the author poses interesting questions, but the adherence to an essentially Schenkerian methodology throughout limits interest,<sup>6</sup> and there is no attempt to contextualise or interpret the music.

An alternative line of enquiry – investigation of Walton's compositional methods through the study of sketch materials – has not been possible because of a lack of sources. Whilst it appears that Walton did make sketches during the compositional process, they do not survive. In response to a request from the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra for the sketches for Walton's *Partita*, the composer wrote to Alan Frank: 'I've replied that [...] my sketches, quite unintelligible to anyone save myself, I destroy as I go along'.<sup>7</sup> Experience with other composers would suggest that such comments are not always trustworthy; indeed, Walton also maintained that he didn't write or collect letters, which was clearly not the case.<sup>8</sup> But it remains true that sketches – if they do exist – are not available to researchers. The principal collection of Walton manuscripts, in the Fredrick R. Koch collection at the Beinecke Library, Yale University, contains only full autograph scores, with full-score drafts for only two works.<sup>9</sup> Thus it is the completed scores – published by Oxford University Press – that are the main sources for the analyses that follow.

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<sup>5</sup> Anne Marie de Zeeuw, *Tonality and the Concertos of William Walton* (PhD: University of Texas at Austin, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the limitations of Schenkerian methodology with respect to this repertoire, see below, pp.123-129.

<sup>7</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 21 November 1957. Malcolm Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p.306.

<sup>8</sup> See Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Source Book* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993), p.243. Hayes's *Selected Letters* provides ample evidence that Walton was indeed a regular writer of letters; living in Ischia meant that letters and telegrams were an important part of the composer's communications.

<sup>9</sup> The two works with drafts are *Variations on a theme by Hindemith* and *Prologo e Fantasia*. The finding aid to this collection, available online, includes item-level descriptions of each Walton autograph score in the collection. See <http://webtext.library.yale.edu/xml2html/beinecke.KOCH2.con.html>.

My investigation is focused on form, and on harmony and tonality. This is not to suggest that other aspects of the scores under discussion are not interesting or engaging: there remains much work to be done beyond the scope of the present thesis. Nonetheless, there are several reasons for focussing on form and on harmony/tonality. First, musicology has relatively well-developed analytical and interpretative apparatus for investigating these areas, such that (with the present chapter excepted) the focus can remain on Walton's music rather than on the methodological apparatus required to interrogate it. Orchestration, for example, has not been covered in detail, since there are virtually no widely accepted methods (beyond simple description) for examining it; the time and space required to develop the necessary analytical tools would have shifted attention away from the music and on to the theory. Second, it is especially within form, harmony, and tonality that Walton's musical language develops in distinctive ways in the later works. Thus although the composer's rhythmic vocabulary is highly characteristic, it remains relatively stable over the course of his oeuvre, such that it has not been felt necessary to discuss it in detail here. Finally, Walton's later music gains its special vitality especially from the tension between the traditional and the modern in the domains of form and harmony/tonality. These areas (and the relationship between them) thus provide the centre of attention for the present thesis, although it will be appropriate to comment occasionally on other factors, such as rhythm and orchestration, where these are especially salient.

### **Analytical Strategies: Form**

The thriving fields of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music studies have enabled a familiar and well-developed vocabulary to develop with respect to the analysis of form. The scores discussed here employ versions of sonata and variation forms, amongst others, which can be linked to clear musical and musicological traditions. Of course, Walton's application of these forms does not conform to textbook models – but equally, neither do many nineteenth-century works. A body of recent scholarship – developed especially by James Hepokoski under the rubric of 'Sonata Deformation Theory' – provides useful theoretical frameworks for dealing with twentieth-century

reinterpretations of these formal models.<sup>10</sup> Sonata Deformation Theory seeks to pay appropriate attention to the legacy of textbook forms but without slavish adherence to those models that could blind analysts to the interesting features of the works. Instead, the individuality of each work is acknowledged alongside a discussion of the dialogue that each maintains with conventional formal models. Overall, then, the choice of methodological frameworks for the analysis of form is relatively straightforward: familiar formal categories and labels are supplemented with theoretical frameworks from Sonata Deformation Theory. Further details on the relevant approaches are included as necessary in the analytical discussion.

### **Analytical Strategies: Harmony**

Selecting appropriate analytical frameworks for harmony and tonality, however, is not as straightforward. A model of tonality that deals with harmonic relations can be extended to some twentieth-century works, especially those (such as Sibelius' Fifth Symphony and Walton's First) in which sustained pedal points reconstruct traditional harmonic function.<sup>11</sup> In many of Walton's later orchestral works, however, harmonic function of this type is significantly eroded. The harmonic language in these scores has a heritage in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tonality and harmony, but engages with such twentieth-century developments as octatonic, hexatonic and twelve-note structures, and more generally presents a post-Wagnerian dissolution of hierarchically ordered

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<sup>10</sup> See James Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); James Hepokoski, 'Rotations, Sketches, and the Sixth Symphony', in Timothy L. Jackson and Veijo Murtomaki (eds.), *Sibelius Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.322-351; James Hepokoski, 'Back and Forth From "Egmont": Beethoven, Mozart, and the Nonresolving Recapitulation', *19th-Century Music*, 25(2/3) The Long Century, 1780-1920 (Autumn, 2001 - Spring, 2002); James Hepokoski, 'Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?: Strauss's *Don Juan* Reinvestigated', in Bryan Gilliam (ed.), *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992); James Hepokoski, 'Elgar', in D. Kern Holoman (ed.), *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony* (New York: Schirmer, 1997). The more recent *Elements of Sonata Theory* is less relevant with respect to Walton's music, since its focus is eighteenth-century sonata forms, and it relies for many of its propositions on formulations (not least perfect authentic cadences) that occur rarely in twentieth-century music. James A. Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Aspects of sonata theory deformation in relation to these works are discussed in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.177ff.



tonal relationships. This makes analyses based on harmonic function and scale-degrees relevant yet problematic. Dealing with harmony and tonality is thus one of the primary challenges facing the analyst. It is therefore necessary to discuss at some length strategies for analysing harmony and tonality in Walton's music.

### **Chord Identification: Problems and Examples**

An analytical approach to tonal music typically begins with chord identification: the musical surface is segmented into analysable units which are categorised as one of a set of standard types (for example, triads and seventh chords). There are several different chord labelling conventions which can be used to communicate the results, including, for example, Roman numerals, figured bass, and letter names with suffixed annotations (e.g. Cm<sup>7</sup>). In order to deal with the expanding chord vocabularies of the twentieth century, new concepts, categories and symbols can be added to these analytical vocabularies, including, for example, an increasing array of alternative suffixes to letter names (such as Cm<sup>M7</sup> or Em<sup>maj7,9</sup>). However, referring every pitch to a triadic foundation – as is necessary in Roman numeral or letter-name labelling conventions – leads to problematically complex chord names, stretching chord-naming conventions to their limits. Furthermore, ambiguity is introduced: complex structures may be referred to two or more different triadic foundations.

Frank Howes' work is representative of such an approach to Walton's music. For example, Howes describes the opening chord of the Second Symphony (see Example 5.1) in typically florid terms: 'a chord of G, i.e. tonic and dominant G and D is to have a top constituent—one must not call it garnish for it is part of the substance—of B flat and C sharp'.<sup>12</sup> Howes is correct that the B<sub>b</sub> and C<sub>#</sub> are 'part of the substance', but his vocabulary frustrates this notion with the tendency to view the harmonies as triads with 'extra notes'. Howes gives a similar analysis of the opening of the Cello Concerto (see Example 5.2): 'A flat is an added sixth to the chord of C, which gives it a slight, very slight curdle, but above, D sharp alternates with E natural, as in Chopin's second Prelude, to create instability.'<sup>13</sup> Meikle updates the vocabulary but not the approach,

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<sup>12</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.43.

<sup>13</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.103. Howes is presumably referring to the rocking quaver motion between A<sub>#</sub> and B in Chopin's Second Prelude, which does have some resemblance to the Walton example.

describing the harmony as ‘a gently rocking C major/minor chord with added flattened sixth.’<sup>14</sup> We could add that the D# can be read as an accented neighbour note to E, but the A $\flat$  has no voice-leading justification and so is relegated to being described as an ‘added’ note. This solution – to read the harmonies as essentially triadic or diatonic – seems satisfactory, but only on the surface. It is problematic because embedded within such a discourse is the notion that the triad is focal, and that the added notes are indeed ‘added’. Howes’ analysis exemplifies the problem well, for his triad-biased reading leads him to ascribe ‘instability’ to the opening harmony of the Cello Concerto. The ‘instability’ Howes refers to is in reality a lack of referability to a simple chord category; the sound of the chord is in fact very stable, with both the harmony and its articulation creating a sense of stasis, reflecting its function as tonic.<sup>15</sup>

**Example 5.1: The opening of Walton’s Second Symphony**

**Allegro Molto**  
♩=138-144

Cl., Fl. 5 +Cor A. Vll., Vlc. +8va  
fp f p  
5  
Cel. Tr. Vll2., Vlc.  
Cl. Vlc., Cb. pizz.

**Example 5.2: The opening of Walton’s Cello Concerto**

**Moderato** ♩=66-69 c.

WW, Str. pizz. Str. pizz. Vc. solo  
mf pp  
Vc., Cb. pizz.

<sup>14</sup> Meikle, ‘The Symphonies and Concertos’. p.84.

<sup>15</sup> This example is discussed in further detail in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.137ff.

The reality of the sound world in these examples is that it is the ‘added’ notes (the B $\flat$  and C $\sharp$  in the Second Symphony, and the A $\flat$  and D $\sharp$  in the Cello Concerto) – that is, their treatment and effect – that make the harmony characteristic. In the case of the Cello Concerto, for example, it is not satisfactory to reduce out the A $\flat$  and D $\sharp$  by referring to the chord as a version of a C major triad, or by using the ‘root’ C to represent the harmony in a reductive analysis. Furthermore, the apparent roots, G and C in the Second Symphony and Cello Concerto respectively, appear on the first beat of the first bar, but are then omitted from the succeeding bars which otherwise prolong the respective sonorities. This ‘disappearing tonic’ further problematises the use of techniques which, in nomenclature and in theories of chord relationships, prioritise chord roots and their associated triads. Nonetheless, we need not totally dismiss approaches found in tonal music theory, for several concepts (such as dominant and tonic function, chromatic mediants, and major-minor mixture) can be usefully employed at times in describing the content of Walton’s later scores.

The inadequacy of exclusively adopting approaches founded on triadic chord labelling means that they are best supplemented by alternative theoretical and analytical tools which have more sensitivity to non-triadic elements. Several theoretical frameworks might have a claim to be useful in this respect, including Hindemith’s as outlined in *The Craft of Musical Composition*; Fred Lehdahl’s Tonal Pitch Space Theory; Neo-Riemannian Theory; the Tonalities Project, as developed by Anthony Pople; and – perhaps surprisingly given its association with atonal music – Set-Class Theory. Each of these is considered in turn below, and although not all prove to be appropriate with respect to the analysis of Walton’s music, the resulting discussion highlights relevant analytical problems and contributes towards building analytical strategies for dealing with them.

### **Hindemith’s Theoretical Framework**

In a detailed theoretical treatise, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, Paul Hindemith discusses concerns about the traditional theory of harmony similar to those outlined above, criticising conventions that describe all chords in terms of superimposed thirds.<sup>16</sup> He notes that forcing chords into triadic categories leads to unrealistic results, including

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition Book 1: Theoretical Part* (London: Schott, 1945). Hindemith’s critique of conventional theory is found on p.90ff.

identification of suspensions and appoggiaturas where none actually exist, and the categorisation of some structures as ‘incomplete’ chords, a notion that he labels ‘ridiculous’.<sup>17</sup> Hindemith instead proposes a new classification system, which – whilst it has considerable weaknesses and has not been widely adopted – rewards further consideration.

Using the overtone series as a starting point for a survey of musical intervals, Hindemith argues that octaves, fifths, and major triads are embedded in the acoustic properties of tones; they are ‘natural’ and hence are valid for all historical periods.<sup>18</sup> He suggests that human hearing is more sensitive to whole-number acoustic ratios, and hence will try to hear such tonal relationships wherever possible.<sup>19</sup> However, he conceives of all twelve chromatic notes as more-or-less related to a tonic, thus rejecting an absolute distinction between ‘consonant’ and ‘dissonant’ and freeing his theory from the constraints imposed by diatonic interpretations.<sup>20</sup> From these foundations, he constructs ‘Series 1’, which ranks pitches according to the closeness of their relationship to any given ‘parent’ tone (Example 5.3). Continuing his discussion of the acoustic properties of sound, Hindemith uses the relative dissonance of ‘combination tones’ (the additional harmonics created by the simultaneous combination of two distinct pitches) to create a classification of intervals, ‘Series 2’, ranking them according to their ‘harmonic clarity’ (Example 5.4).<sup>21</sup> Properties of combination tones are used to assign a root to each interval (notated with a small arrow in Example 5.4).

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<sup>17</sup> Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, pp.90-91.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.14-24.

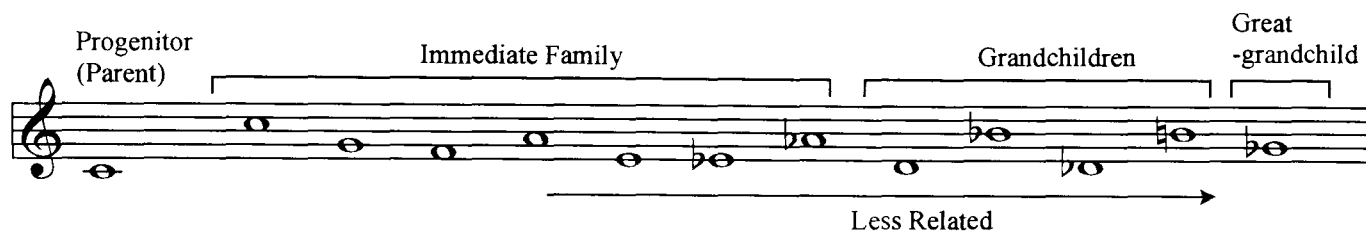
<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.23-24 and 44-45.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.46-47. Robert Wason notes that ‘Hindemith’s major innovation as a theorist of harmony was to obviate distinctions between diatonicism and chromaticism by invoking various continuums of tonal relationships based on acoustical grounds’. Robert W. Wason, ‘Musica Practica: Music Theory as Pedagogy’, in Thomas Christensen (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.69.

<sup>21</sup> Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, pp.57-68.

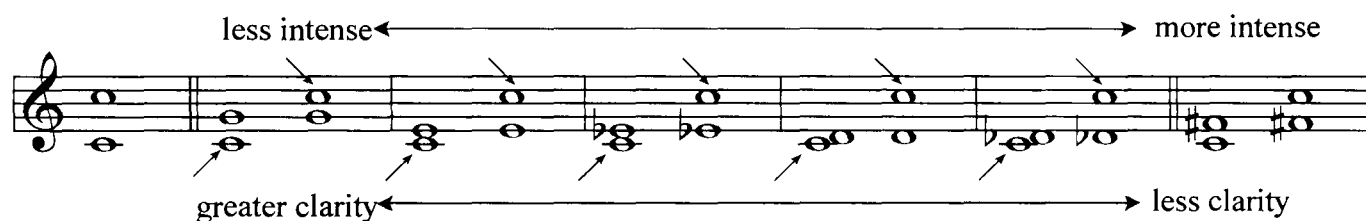
**Example 5.3: Hindemith's 'Series 1'**

The labelling of the pitches in terms of 'progenitor tone' and family members is found within Hindemith's text,<sup>22</sup> where they serve to emphasise his appeal to the 'natural'.



**Example 5.4: Hindemith's 'Series 2'**

The roots of intervals according to Hindemith's theory are indicated by the small arrows.



Hindemith uses this classification of intervals to propose chord categories based primarily (although not exclusively) on the chord's interval content (see Table 5.1). (In this sense, Hindemith's work is an important precursor to set-class theory.) Intervals from each note to every other note are counted, and the type and number of intervals present are used to group chords into one of six different categories, labelled with Roman numerals I – VI. Hindemith asserts that chords classified with lower numbers have less 'intensity' and are more stable.<sup>23</sup> As such, the classifications allow composers to compose, and analysts to define, variations in intensity (or 'harmonic fluctuation') in a chord progression.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, pp.39-41.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.116.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.115-121.

**Table 5.1: Summary of interval-class criteria for Hindemith chord categories I-IV.**

The table summarises the criteria extracted from Hindemith’s prose.<sup>25</sup> Tabulating the criteria in such a manner highlights the fact that interval content is the principal determinant of the chord categories, but also draws attention to inconsistencies (for example in the definitions of categories V and VI, for which the tabulation no longer works since Hindemith diverges from his scheme up to that point and gives special criteria).

Interval Class →	IC1	IC2		IC6
Intervals →	Minor Seconds / Major Sevenths	Major Seconds	Minor Sevenths	Tritones
↓Chord Group				
I	No	No		No
IIa	No	No	Yes	Yes
IIb	No	Yes		Yes
III	Yes (at least one of either type)			No
IV	Yes	No criteria		Yes

The concept of harmonic fluctuation, based as it is on absolute stability ratings for chords, takes no account of chord distance from one chord to the next. Instead, Hindemith uses the succession of chord roots to assess the strength of a progression. The root of the ‘purest’ interval in a chord (that closest to the beginning of Series 2) determines the root of that chord.<sup>26</sup> If there are two equally pure intervals, the root of the lowest is chosen. The interval between two chord roots determines the strength of the progression: the closer the interval is to the beginning of Series 2, the stronger it is considered to be. Thus root progression forms an ‘abbreviated reckoning’ of chord connection, such that whilst Hindemith notes the importance of voice leading above the root, it is not explicitly theorised.<sup>27</sup>

Hindemith’s theoretical work benefited from a surge of popularity in the US in the few years after its publication, followed by increasing marginalisation in the wake of competition from two directions: Schenkerian theory (especially Salzer’s *Structural*

<sup>25</sup> Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, pp.101-108.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.97.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.121.

*Hearing*) on the one hand, and Babbitt's work on atonal music on the other.<sup>28</sup> There were also prominent criticisms: Norman Cazden, for example, comments on a number of errors in the derivation of tonal principles from acoustics, not least that in the sounds of real musical instruments, overtones and combination tones do not exist in the theoretically pure patterns that Hindemith relies on.<sup>29</sup> As Ian Kemp points out, Hindemith's quasi-scientific derivation from acoustic principles often gives way to unsubstantiated dogmatism.<sup>30</sup>

Whilst it is important to be aware of such inadequacies, concerns over the correctness or validity of Hindemith's theory should not detract from the fact that *The Craft of Musical Composition* provides considerable insight into the composer's methods, and provides analytical tools for dealing with complex chord progressions. The principal concern here is whether Hindemith's methods are useful for investigating Walton's music. Indeed – as prominent music theorists have pointed out – there are some promising elements of Hindemith's work. Allen Forte argues that 'the pillars of Hindemith's theory, series 1 and series 2, may not withstand scrutiny as instances of "empirical" music theory, but many of their features are intuitively plausible, suggesting a reappraisal and fresh applications'.<sup>31</sup> Ian Kemp suggests that the 'considerable claim to attention' of Hindemith's theoretical work 'lies in the means it provides for functional harmonic progression within a language of expanded tonality'.<sup>32</sup> Hindemith and Walton had significant personal and musical connections,<sup>33</sup> and so there is some justification for speculating that there may be similarities in their ways of thinking.

Nonetheless, close scrutiny suggests that wholesale adoption of Hindemith's methods would not be satisfactory. The problems of a reliance on the reduction of chords to representative roots have already been discussed. In addition, Hindemith's chord

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<sup>28</sup> See Wason, 'Musica Practica: Music Theory as Pedagogy', pp.69-70; Allen Forte, 'Paul Hindemith's Contribution to Music Theory in the United States', *Journal of Music Theory*, 42(1) (Spring, 1998), pp.3-5 and 8-9. Felix Salzer's well-known work is *Structural Hearing: Tonal Coherence in Music* (New York: Dover, 1962).

<sup>29</sup> Norman Cazden, 'Hindemith and Nature', *Music Review*, 15 (1954), pp.290, 292.

<sup>30</sup> Ian Kemp, *Hindemith*, Oxford Studies of Composers (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.39.

<sup>31</sup> Forte, 'Hindemith's Contribution', p.12.

<sup>32</sup> Kemp, *Hindemith*, p.40.

<sup>33</sup> Some of these are noted in this thesis, Chapter 7, p.202ff.

classifications have incomplete definitions: only three out of the six interval classes are taken into account (see Table 5.1), and the categories are not exclusively defined. Furthermore, there is little differentiation between the categories that occur most often in Walton's music. Categories I and II contain major and minor triads and seventh chords respectively, a very small and closed group which is already well defined by tonal music theory. Categories V and VI are defined by special criteria and contain only two and four chords respectively. This leaves only two categories, III and IV, for the majority of Walton's more interesting harmonies. Overall, Hindemith offers us some useful theoretical concepts but we must reject his actual chord classification system on the basis that it is insufficiently differentiated. Similarly, his tools for assessing harmonic fluctuation through assessment of root progressions are unsuited to analysis of Walton's music because of the reduction of complex sonorities to single roots.

What can be salvaged from Hindemith's theoretical work? First, the attempt to retain sensitivity to important aspects of traditional tonality (such as chord roots and chord progression) whilst embracing complex sonorities that are irreducible to triadic categories offers a promising outlook. Second, the classification of chords according to interval content points to the potential usefulness of set-class theory. Finally, Hindemith's theory of chord progression foregrounds the question of 'rootedness' – an especially interesting issue in several examples from Walton's later scores – and provides an initial strategy for identifying potential roots. (Whilst *reduction* to a root is unsatisfactory, the *identification* of a root is salient in a number of the following analyses).

### **Tonal Pitch Space Theory**

A more recent theoretical framework with a claim to attention is Fred Lerdahl's *Tonal Pitch Space*.<sup>34</sup> The theory derives many of its premises from empirical investigations into perceptual systems. Starting from his earlier influential collaboration with Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*,<sup>35</sup> Lerdahl constructs mathematical models of the spaces in which pitches, chords and regions operate. These are intended to represent psychological models; that is, they model the supposed unconscious

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<sup>34</sup> Fred Lerdahl, *Tonal Pitch Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>35</sup> Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983).



frameworks that make sense of musical information in the mind. The mathematical expression of the theory allows Lerdahl to calculate tonal tension and attraction in the form of numerical measures of chord distance.<sup>36</sup>

However – like tonal chord classification systems discussed above – the pitch spaces thus defined rely on reduction of chords to a representative root, and the reduction of a succession of roots to a tonal region which is again represented by a single root. Such a move is understandable within the field of diatonic space, but it does not help us to deal with the particular properties of many of Walton's characteristic harmonies. In Lerdahl's diatonic pitch space, chords may be treated as equivalent to triads and seventh chords even if they have added or missing notes; this is not adequate for analysis of Walton's later music in which the added notes are especially important. Lerdahl constructs similar models for other non-diatonic pitch spaces (such as the octatonic, hexatonic, and whole-tone),<sup>37</sup> but each relies on assumptions about the 'stability conditions' of some pre-existing tonal scheme. What is interesting about much of Walton's harmonic language is precisely the inapplicability of such a preconceived model, and deriving a new model exclusively for Walton's later works – or perhaps even for each individual movement – is impractical.

There is one further barrier to adopting Lerdahl's analytical scheme. Although he concedes that 'I [do not] eschew applying, from time to time, the concepts and representations of the model in an informal, more traditionally analytic way',<sup>38</sup> the presentation of the work – increasingly complex exegesis of a mathematical model – in effect makes it a totalising theory which must be either adapted or rejected wholesale. In other words, the ideas and concepts which prove useful are immensely difficult to extract from the overall scheme, and as a complete theory the work is unsuited to the analysis of Walton's later scores.

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<sup>36</sup> See the chapter on 'Tonal Tension and Attraction' in Lerdahl, *Tonal Pitch Space* pp.142-192.

<sup>37</sup> See the chapter 'Chromatic Tonal Spaces' in Lerdahl, *Tonal Pitch Space*, pp.249-297.

<sup>38</sup> Lerdahl, *Tonal Pitch Space*, p.vii.

## Neo-Riemannian Theory

A further recent theoretical perspective, developed in response to ‘chromatic music that is triadic but not altogether tonally unified’, is Neo-Riemannian Theory (NRT).<sup>39</sup> Richard Cohn and David Lewin, amongst others, have adopted ideas from German nineteenth-century analytical writings (not just those of Hugo Riemann), and renewed them without their original diatonic constraints. Rather than relating chord progressions to a pre-determined tonal hierarchy, the focus here is on harmonic patterns that result in closed groups.<sup>40</sup> For example, a chord progression might involve root-movement along symmetrically patterned paths (e.g. C – A – F# – E<sub>b</sub> – C), which are extremely hard to interpret within a diatonic system but whose coherence can be explained by the closed properties of the resulting pattern. There is a particular emphasis in NRT on ‘voice-leading parsimony’, the term used to explain the way in which one chord may progress to another with a minimum of movement in the constituent parts (a number of these voice-leading operations are shown in Example 5.5.)<sup>41</sup> A simple progression based on Riemannian transformations (Example 5.6) demonstrates a number of typical features: parsimonious voice-leading, root-movement by thirds, and the need at some point for an enharmonic translation (marked \*). The recurring patterning that such passages represent lends itself well to visual representation in the form of a tonal network or *Tonnetz*, where the different transformations are represented by straight-line moves in different directions (see Figure 5.1).<sup>42</sup> The beauty of the equal-temperament *Tonnetz* is that it retains relationships along the circle of fifths (in the horizontal plane), caters for mediant and relative shifts (in the diagonal planes), and is a self-replicating structure that can be represented as a closed three-dimensional shape (a toroid, or ‘doughnut’).

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<sup>39</sup> Richard Cohn, ‘Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective’, *Journal of Music Theory*, 42(2) Special issue on Neo-Riemannian theory (1998), pp.167-180. Cohn gives an overview of relevant nineteenth-century writings and their influence on more recent work. This quotation appears on p.167.




<sup>40</sup> A useful introduction to some of the relevant issues is found in Edward Gollin, ‘Neo-Riemannian Theory’, *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie*, 2(2), Available: [http://www.gmth.de/www/artikel/2005-07-09\\_08-20-25\\_7/](http://www.gmth.de/www/artikel/2005-07-09_08-20-25_7/), Accessed: 2 April 2008. Gollin’s concise introduction has proved to be a useful source for the following discussion.

<sup>41</sup> See Richard Cohn, ‘Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions’, *Music Analysis*, 15(1) (March 1996), pp.9-40.

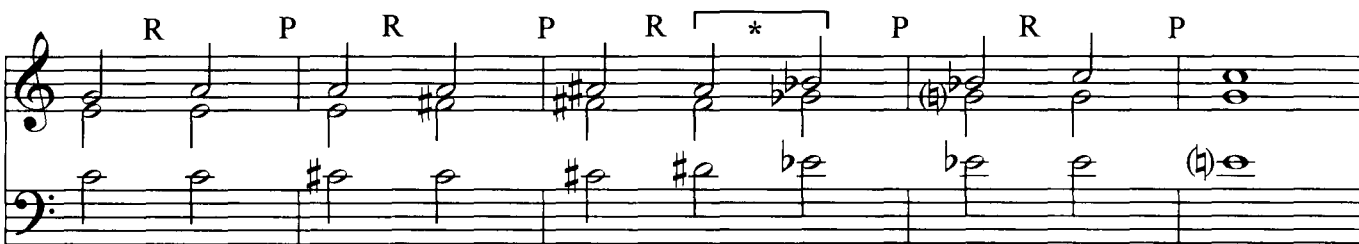
<sup>42</sup> For a recent example of work mapping key centres onto a Riemannian tonal space, see Daniel Harrison, ‘Nonconformist Notions of Nineteenth-Century Enharmonicism’, *Music Analysis*, 21(2) (July 2002), pp.136-140.

**Example 5.5: Riemannian P, L, and R transformations**

The letters P, L and R refer to the German terms *Parallel*, *Leittonwechsel* and *Relative*, which are translated as parallel, leading-note exchange, and relative.

Parallel	Leading-note Exchange (Mediant shift)	Relative
		
<p>(P or PAR) maps any triad onto its parallel major/minor</p>	<p>(L, MED, or LT) maps any triad on to its mediant/submediant</p>	<p>(R or REL) maps any triad onto its relative major/minor</p>

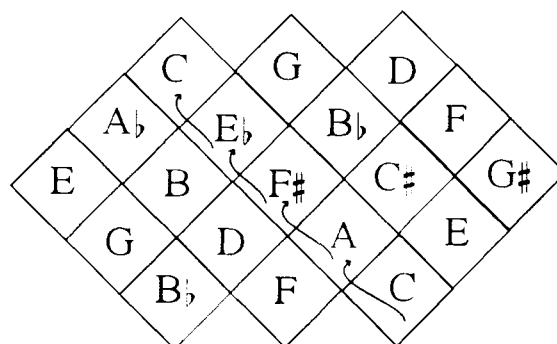
**Example 5.6: A simple chord progression based on Riemannian transformations**



Root progression  
 C      A      F#      D#      (Eb)      C

**Figure 5.1: The progression from Example 5.6 mapped on to a Riemannian Tonnetz**

The diagram uses the traditional form of the equal-temperament *Tonnetz*.



These various frameworks provide a way of explaining chord progressions – especially those involving root movements by thirds – that have smooth voice-leading, create a sense of progression and of completion or closure, but lie outside the diatonic system and its related analytical apparatus. Of course NRT has developed in rather more sophisticated ways than these simple examples demonstrate, including group-theoretic explorations of the shapes, patterns, and unique properties of pitch space and its graphical representations.<sup>43</sup>

Such apparatus might indeed be usefully applied to Walton's music, in passages containing the relevant features (such as smooth voice-leading and root-movement by thirds).<sup>44</sup> However, in analysing the later orchestral scores, NRT's assumption that triads are the basic units – as with tonal chord labels and pitch space theory – is problematic. Adrian Childs points out that 'the composers whose works seem best suited for neo-Riemannian analysis rarely limited their harmonic vocabulary to simple triads', and hence extends the relevant apparatus to seventh chords,<sup>45</sup> but Walton's harmonic vocabulary extends well beyond mere sevenths. In addition, NRT has explanatory power only for particular passages in which the relevant features occur. Where these appear contiguously with pitch structures that are not amenable to such analyses, NRT must be employed in conjunction with other analytical tools.

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<sup>43</sup> See for example Richard Cohn, 'Neo-Riemannian Operations, Parsimonious Trichords, and Their "Tonnetz" Representations', *Journal of Music Theory*, 41(1) (Spring 1997), pp.1-66.

<sup>44</sup> Some examples occur in the Cello Concerto, and are described in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.146ff.

<sup>45</sup> Adrian Childs, 'Moving Beyond Neo-Riemannian Triads: Exploring a Transformational Model for Seventh Chords', *Journal of Music Theory*, 42(2) Special issue on Neo-Riemannian theory (1998), p.181.

## The Tonalities Project

Anthony Pople's untimely death in October 2003 interrupted the development of the Tonalities Project, which offers an exciting, potential-laden theory and software tool that are of interest here for a number of reasons.<sup>46</sup> The focus repertoire of the project is music 'written around 1900' that lies outside the bounds of traditional tonality but which is not 'atonal';<sup>47</sup> the music under consideration in the present thesis was written somewhat later, but is exactly the kind of repertoire that the project was designed to deal with. Pople argued that analytical writing about this music tends to over-emphasise 'discontinuities and disjunctures'; instead, he developed theory which sought to emphasise 'continuity and congruence', to identify what different tonal systems have in common.<sup>48</sup> The resulting theory maintains sensitivity to familiar features of the diatonic system, giving weight to interpretations that (amongst other things) reflect traditional conceptions of function and that most strongly resemble the triadic structures of common practice tonality. However, the theory is built on note-class set inclusion relationships that are not restricted to any individual system, diatonic or otherwise. Harmonic groupings in the music are compared with the properties of numerous pre-defined chords and scales (known as 'gamuts'), with each possible interpretation assessed for its suitability. These calculations rapidly become so complex that computer software is needed to make practical the use of the theory.<sup>49</sup> In principle, then, the Tonalities Project would seem to have potential with respect to the analysis of Walton's later orchestral scores, since it has both sensitivity to tradition and the flexibility to operate outside that tradition.

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<sup>46</sup> See Anthony Pople, 'Using Complex Set Theory for Tonal Analysis: An Introduction to the Tonalities Project', *Music Analysis*, 23(2-3) (2004); Michael Russ, "'Fishing in the Right Place": Analytical Examples from the Tonalities Project', *Music Analysis*, 23(2-3) (2004); Robert Adlington, *The Pople Tonalities Project - Download Page*, 2005, Available: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/music/tonalities/tonalitiesdownloads/>, Accessed 16 May 2006. For a brief overview of Pople's life and work see Arnold Whittall, 'Anthony Pople Remembered', *Music Analysis*, 22(3) (October 2003); Jonathan Dunsby, 'Anthony Pople, 1955–2003: An Appreciation', *Twentieth-Century Music*, 1(2) (September 2004), pp.277-283.

<sup>47</sup> Pople, 'An Introduction to the Tonalities Project', p.153.

<sup>48</sup> Pople, 'An Introduction to the Tonalities Project', p.153.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Pople, 'Modelling Musical Structure', in Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook (eds.), *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.149.

There are a number of areas that a critique of the Tonalities Project could cover, including the software's response to enharmonic spellings, the eschewing of ambiguity such that one interpretation is exclusively preferred, and the usability of the software. However there is one more significant barrier to the wholesale implementation of the Tonalities Project in the present thesis: the decision-making processes that lie at the heart of the project remain largely unexplained. Pople's unfinished article on the theory has been posthumously published, but much of the detail that would have been included in a proposed book-length study is not available to us.<sup>50</sup> Pople's theory is formal and computational, and he argues that decision-making criteria should be made explicit;<sup>51</sup> however, as he concedes, the published article is more indicative than prescriptive and gives informal rather than formal definitions.<sup>52</sup> Thus important details – such as by what degree enharmonic spellings, note durations or previous analytical results actually affect the likelihood of a particular interpretation being preferred – are unknown. This, combined with the significant amount of labour required to translate even short orchestral passages into the format that the software requires, renders the Tonalities Project impractical for use in the present thesis.

Nevertheless, the Tonalities Project – in spirit if not in practice – may inform analysis of Walton's later orchestral music, as the regular recurrence of Pople's name in the discussion below suggests. The idea that any number of harmonic structures – from the triadic to the diatonic to the octatonic to any other conceivable structure – can be referential on equal terms for any given passage is intriguing. The Tonalities Project encourages us to think of harmonic structures and the collections to which they refer as configurable according to context, a concept that is useful when considering Walton's music, which employs a number of different families of harmonic structure often side-by-side within the same movement. Furthermore the influence of the methodological framework that underpins the project – the identification of sets in relation to referential collections, the use of set-class inclusion relationships, and the combination of set-class analysis with analytical tools from the tonal tradition – is much in evidence in the analytical strategies adopted in this thesis.

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<sup>50</sup> Jonathan Dunsby makes brief comments on this in Dunsby, 'Anthony Pople, 1955–2003: An Appreciation'. pp.279-280.

<sup>51</sup> Pople, 'An Introduction to the Tonalities Project', p.157.

<sup>52</sup> Pople, 'An Introduction to the Tonalities Project', p.165.

## Set-Class Theory<sup>53</sup>

Set-class theory has the considerable advantage that it can be applied to any harmonic structure that an analyst identifies as being significant, regardless of referability to triadic, octatonic or other existing schemes. In combination with a sensitivity to other analytical concerns (such as chord roots and traditional tonal functions), set-class tools could illuminate aspects of the harmonic structures found in Walton's later orchestral scores. Before reviewing the potential use of set-class theory in Walton's later music, it is first necessary to revise the foundational assumptions on which set-class theory is predicated, namely the categorisation of pitches into pitch-classes, of intervals into interval-classes, and of sets into set-classes. Although these are well known, they are often misunderstood, and a clear formulation of these concepts is important to a critique of the applicability of set-class theory to Walton's music.

Set-class theory assumes tuning in equal temperament, and alternative enharmonic spellings (such as C# and D<sub>b</sub>) are considered to be equivalent. Alongside this, octave equivalence is assumed: pitches one or more octaves apart are considered equivalent for analytical purposes. Together, these assumptions allow the full range of musical pitch to be divided into twelve categories called pitch classes: all enharmonic spellings of a pitch in all octaves are considered to be in the same pitch class. This has a number of consequences: note spelling and register are reduced out, removing the tonal associations of letter names and accidentals, and the pitch classes can be denoted by integer digits from 0 to 11 (C and all its enharmonic spellings in all registers is denoted '0'; this thesis adopts the convention of using the letters X and E in substitution to 10 and 11, to avoid potential confusion). This abstraction allows groups of pitch classes to be represented as mathematical sets to which set-theoretic procedures can be applied. Adopting equal temperament and octave equivalence has further useful consequences: it 'closes' the space in which the chromatic pitches reside such that symmetry and closed-group structures may be considered (as in aspects of Neo-Riemannian Theory discussed above).

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<sup>53</sup> Since the term 'Set Theory' is borrowed from mathematics, some authors have preferred to use qualifiers: 'Musical Set Theory', 'Pitch-Class Set Theory' or the fussier but technically accurate 'Pitch-Class Set-Class Theory'. I have preferred the term 'Set-Class Theory' since it emphasises the *classification* of sets that is the central tenet of the work, and is commonly used in musical (as opposed to purely mathematical) contexts.

In set-class theory, equivalence criteria apply to intervals as well as pitches. There is some precedent for this in the invertibility of tonal intervals: Hindemith, for example, asserts that whilst intervals and their inversions are markedly different, they group together as similar perceptual units.<sup>54</sup> Howard Hanson similarly classifies intervals and their inversions together on the basis that they 'perform the same function in the sonority'.<sup>55</sup> In set-class theory, this similarity grouping becomes more important and more formalised, such that intervals and their inversions are considered equivalent.<sup>56</sup> This arises in part from dealing with pitch classes: since abstract pitch classes (as opposed to pitches) cannot be 'higher' or 'lower' than others, the twelve ordered intervals between pitches (ignoring compound intervals) must be reduced to six unordered interval classes.

The final stage in the basic operation of set-class theory is the categorisation of sets (that is, any group of musical pitches) into set classes. The 302,060,157 possible ordered sets are first reduced to 4096 unordered sets. For each of these, the interval-class content is considered (that is, the total number of intervals of each class, counting intervals from every pitch class to every other pitch class). The interval content can be represented by an interval-class vector that lists the numbers of each interval class: [001110] for the major triad, for example, meaning that there are no minor seconds/major sevenths; no major seconds/minor sevenths; one each of minor thirds/major sixths, major thirds/minor sixths, and perfect fourths/fifths; and no tritones. There are 200 distinct patterns.<sup>57</sup> In Allen Forte's early work on set-class theory, this was the sole basis for classification of sets,<sup>58</sup> although later, in his seminal text *The Structure of Atonal Music*, Forte placed so-called Z-related sets (those with the identical interval-class content but which are not related by transposition or inversion) in

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<sup>54</sup> Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, p.66.

<sup>55</sup> Howard Hanson, *Harmonic Materials of Modern Music: Resources of the Tempered Scales* (Irvington Pub, 1960), pp.7-8.

<sup>56</sup> Allen Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p.14. Miriam Goder gives an outline of the history of interval-class analyses in music theory in Miriam Goder, 'The Interval-Triangle', *Journal of Music Theory*, 16 (1/2) (Spring - Winter 1972), pp.144-147.

<sup>57</sup> Allen Forte, 'A Theory of Set-Complexes for Music', *Journal of Music Theory*, 8(2) (Winter 1964), pp.143-4.

<sup>58</sup> Forte, 'A Theory of Set-Complexes for Music', pp.143-4.



different classes with different names.<sup>59</sup> Note that in set-class theory, the term ‘inversion’ refers to the mirror image of a set (or interval) in pitch-class space, rather than the rearrangement of pitches in a chord; in other words, inversion is the reversal of the direction of intervals in a set. In its final form, then, set-class theory is founded on the classification of any of the 302,060,157 possible ordered sets into 219 set classes, based primarily on interval-class content. Sets in the same class are related by some combination of transposition and/or inversion. Each set class is given a unique name (a combination of two numbers, for example 3-11, the first indicating the cardinality of the set, the second the location on Forte’s list).<sup>60</sup>

### **Set-Class Theory and Tonal Music**

Set-class theory is explicitly focused on atonal repertoire,<sup>61</sup> and to some, set-class analysis would seem to be incompatible with tonal music, whether that tonality is diatonic, extended, or completely non-triadic. Analysis of this music ought to retain some sensitivity to tonal characteristics, but some of the assumptions of set-class theory appear to conflict with understood conventions of tonal music. For example, fifths and fourths are considered equivalent in set-class theory, but are quite different in the theory of tonal music. Indeed, in set-class analysis, major and minor triads are considered equivalent and have the same name (3-11). More generally, there has been something of a divide between the theory and analysis of tonal and atonal repertoires. (The division of Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall’s classic analysis textbook into two almost independent parts, dealing with ‘aspects of tonal analysis’ and ‘the elements of atonality’ respectively, is a case in point.)<sup>62</sup> However, application of set-class theory in analysing Walton’s music ought not to be dismissed. Pople argues that analysis of ‘non-triadically tonal’ music may usefully incorporate set-class theory, suggesting that the identification of referential collections in set-class terms, and the use of set-class

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<sup>59</sup> Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music*, pp.21-22.

<sup>60</sup> The full list of set-class names is found in Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music*, pp.179-181.

<sup>61</sup> Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music*, p.ix.

<sup>62</sup> Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall, *Music Analysis in Theory and Practice* (London: Faber, 1988).

inclusion relationships, both have significant analytical applications.<sup>63</sup> Pople later used the term ‘tonal set theory’ for an amalgam of tonal referential categories with set-class methodology.<sup>64</sup>

In considering the criticism that the equivalence criteria adopted by set-class theory do not apply in tonal music, it is useful to reappraise the meaning of equivalence, since ‘equivalent’ does not mean ‘equal’. Forte has clarified this point in response to criticisms of his work, stating about various occurrences of the set class 4-17 in *The Rite of Spring*, ‘I do not regard these forms as “identical” but rather as equivalent in the mathematical sense – i.e., as members of the same referential set class.’<sup>65</sup> In tonal music, a major chord can be categorised as being in the same class as other major chords, but its sound and function in actual music is determined by its instrumentation, voicing and context. In the same way, sets in the same class do not necessarily sound the same or perform the same function; rather, they bear structural similarities which may illuminate structural relationships, which may be audible. If set-class equivalence (or other set-class relations) can be identified between important pitch collections in a piece, this should be considered alongside reference to other musical factors and description of *how* sets are deployed. Some characteristics – such as the voicing and instrumentation of chords, which note of a sonority is in the bass, and major or minor character – are omitted from the equivalence-class definitions which make up set-class theory; however these properties are not negated or denied, and analysis need not eliminate sensitivity to such features.

Indeed, the equivalence criteria used in set-class theory are not alien to tonal music. Notes an octave apart *do* belong in the same ‘class’, as conventional note-names imply; intervals and their inversions *are* grouped together perceptually for many musicians, as demonstrated by the importance of inversions in tonal music; and interval content has been considered an important property of chords in a tonal context, as suggested by

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<sup>63</sup> See the chapter ‘Analytical Method’ in Anthony Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky, 1908-1914: Studies in Theory and Analysis*, Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities (New York: Garland, 1989), pp.15-37, especially 28-33. The Tonalities Project clearly incorporates and develops the analytical strategies that Pople suggests in this earlier work.

<sup>64</sup> Pople, ‘An Introduction to the Tonalities Project’, p.155.

<sup>65</sup> Allen Forte, ‘Letter to the Editor in Reply to Richard Taruskin from Allen Forte: Making Stravinsky Soup and Other Epistemological Pursuits: A Hymenopteran Response’, *Music Analysis*, 5(2/3) (July/October 1986), p.332.

Hindemith's chord classifications and Pople's tonal set theory. A useful analytical system reduces and simplifies categories in order to extract useful information from a complex musical surface. Forte puts this quite succinctly: 'When we consider, even casually, the range of possible pitch-relations in music we are naturally interested in any limiting factors, since they suggest fruitful approaches to the study of syntactic structure'.<sup>66</sup> Christopher Hasty, who has authored and edited a substantial body of work in the theory of post-tonal music, explains:

The concept of set class has achieved its powerful generality through progressive abstraction. What defines a set class must surely be the intervallic relations among its pitch-class constituents, not the pitch classes themselves (already highly abstracted) nor their temporal order nor the myriad other possible relations and qualities which inhere in actual musical structure. These abstractions, however, are not pure negations because the excluded qualities can be recovered to gauge the degree of transformation a set undergoes or the similarity of various forms of the same set class.<sup>67</sup>

Overall, set-class theory may indeed provide useful tools for analysing Walton's later orchestral music. Nonetheless, some modification and qualification may be usefully appended to the basic framework of set-class theory in recognition of the different sensitivities of tonal music. These various qualifications suggest that the exclusive use of set-class analysis might be unwise, and that aspects of the music that are not taken into account by set-class theory ought to be borne in mind when conducting the analysis.

First, it is important to note that set theorists have often dealt with abstract notions of pitch-class relationships outside any musical context; the analyst is left to decide how to group notes in the score into sets for comparison. Segmentation is given an important role in set theory, but – as Pople has pointed out – it is just as important, if less explicitly acknowledged, in analysis of tonal music.<sup>68</sup> However, in set-class theory – as George Perle has noted – all elements must be accounted for: 'there is nothing in Forte's theory of atonal music that is to be construed as a non-set element'.<sup>69</sup> This is in contrast

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<sup>66</sup> Forte, 'A Theory of Set-Complexes for Music', pp.137-138.

<sup>67</sup> Christopher F. Hasty, 'An Intervallic Definition of Set Class', *Journal of Music Theory*, 31(2) (Autumn 1987), p.185.

<sup>68</sup> Pople, 'An Introduction to the Tonalities Project', pp.155-156.

<sup>69</sup> George Perle, 'Pitch-Class Set Analysis: An Evaluation', *The Journal of Musicology*, 8(2) (Spring 1990), p.155.

to tonal music theories where an identifiable construction (such as a major chord) can include other elements (such as passing notes). Pople reconciles these two outlooks in the Tonality Project by employing set-theoretic tools that embrace inclusion relationships: thus a four-note set comprising a major chord with a passing note *includes* a major chord and is *included in* a major scale.<sup>70</sup> In relation to Walton's music, it is important to be aware that strictly exclusive criterion for set-class membership do not always reflect the construction or effect of the music. Inclusion relationships are therefore potentially useful. Notation borrowed from mathematics is used:  $A \subset B$  for 'A is included in B', and  $A \supset B$  for 'A includes B'. Inclusion relationships can be literal (a dominant seventh on G includes a G major triad), or abstract (dominant seventh chords include a major triad;  $3-11 \subset 4-27$ ).<sup>71</sup>

Second, some care and attention is needed in applying the assumption of enharmonic equivalence to Walton's music, since the spelling of chords might reveal something useful about traditional tonal or triadic conception.

Finally, the inversional equivalence employed by set-class theory may be rather less applicable to tonal music; Larry Solomon has argued that it is 'of dubious value'.<sup>72</sup> Instead, Solomon proposes a set-class list that reinstates inversional forms, labelling inverted alternatives with a B; thus the minor chord [0, 3, 7] is in set-class 3-11, whilst the major chord [0, 4, 7] is in set-class 3-11B. Some sets do not have a 'B' form as they are 'mirrors' (they have symmetrical interval construction and are thus inversions of themselves); these are identified with a \*, e.g. 3-1\*. Solomon's resulting set-class list has 352 (as opposed to 219) separate set-classes; his list includes common names of chords and scales represented by the sets, and his reinstatement of inversional forms allows for more precise reference (since, for example, major and minor triads are in

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<sup>70</sup> Pople expands upon the potential for set-theoretic analyses of 'non-triadically tonal' music, including the use of inclusion relationships, in the chapter 'Analytical Method' in Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky*, pp.15-37, especially p.29.

<sup>71</sup> Robert D. Morris, *Class Notes for Atonal Music Theory* (New Hampshire: Frog Peak Music, 1991), pp.4 and 8. Morris provides a complete list of abstract inclusion relationships for sets of three to nine pitch classes on pp.112-155.

<sup>72</sup> Larry Solomon, 'The List of Chords, Their Properties and Use in Analysis', *Interface, Journal of New Music Research*, 11(2) (1982), p.62.

separate classes).<sup>73</sup> Although Solomon's alternative to Forte's set-class list has not been widely taken up, it is used in a modified form by Pople, precisely because of his interest in analysing tonal (although not triadically tonal) music.<sup>74</sup> In the present thesis, sets identified in musical examples are usually named using an abridged version of Solomon's conventions, with the qualification that the suffix 'A' is included for the inversions of 'B' forms.<sup>75</sup> This means that set-classes named using Solomon's list always include a suffix (A, B, or \*): 5-11A, 5-11B, 4-7\*. In more abstract discussion of motivic relationships, Forte's further abstracted list may be used; the lack of a suffix indicates this: 5-11, 8-8. (Forte and Solomon's names are aligned such that, for example, 5-11A and 5-11B are both forms of 5-11).

On the topic of set nomenclature, octatonic collections – a common feature of several of Walton's later orchestral scores – are identified using van den Toorn's system, developed for analysis of the music of Stravinsky.<sup>76</sup> Since octatonic collections are modes of limited transposition, there are only three distinct versions (Example 5.7).

**Example 5.7: Nomenclature of octatonic collections**

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a different octatonic collection. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are written as half notes. The first staff, labeled '|1 2 4 5 7 8 T E] Octatonic Collection I', contains the notes G#4, B4, D5, E5, F#5, G#5, A5, and B5. The second staff, labeled '[0 2 3 5 6 8 9 E] Octatonic Collection II', contains the notes G4, Bb4, D5, E5, F#5, G#5, A5, and B5. The third staff, labeled '[0 1 3 4 6 7 9 T] Octatonic Collection III', contains the notes G4, Bb4, D5, E5, F#5, G#5, A5, and B5.

<sup>73</sup> See Solomon, 'The List of Chords, Their Properties and Use in Analysis'. Solomon's set-class list is also available via his website at <http://www.solomonsmusic.net/pcsets.htm>.

<sup>74</sup> See Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky*, p.24.

<sup>75</sup> For the reference table consulted in research for the present thesis, Solomon's list was converted into an Access database and some of his naming conventions converted to extra data fields. The use of the additional 'A' suffix follows this usage in Pople, *Skryabin and Stravinsky*.

<sup>76</sup> Pieter C. van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, Composers of the Twentieth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp.31-72.

As an example, consider the opening of Walton's *Partita for Orchestra* (Example 5.8). The passage has a distinctive sonority that is important in articulating the form of the movement, and to which the harmony makes a significant contribution; it is therefore desirable to be able to describe and characterise the harmony, and compare it with other passages which may be related. The trombone and violin parts, playing reiterated patterns over the opening bars, comprise the pitch-classes [C E<sub>b</sub> E<sub>4</sub> G G<sup>#</sup>(A<sub>b</sub>) B] or [0, 3, 4, 7, 8, E], set-class 6-20\*. Although the name '6-20\*' fails to acknowledge the clear importance of the sense of 'E-ness' of the passage, even simple identification is a useful first step, not least because this particular set-class recurs with some frequency in other Walton works.<sup>77</sup>

**Example 5.8: The opening of the *Partita for Orchestra***

Brioso (♩=c.159) WW., VII.

VI.2, Vle.

Cor., Trombe

VI.1, WW.

Timp., Vc., Cb. pizz.

Perhaps more interestingly, the sets can easily be compared with others at later points in the movement. Consider the passage beginning in b.59 (Example 5.9); the harmonic construction in the string parts here, reflected in the woodwind melody, is similar to that

<sup>77</sup> For example in the Second Symphony and Cello Concerto; see this thesis, Chapter 6, p.137ff. and p.160ff.

of the opening. The relationship can be identified in set-class inclusion terms: [2, 3, 6, 7, E] is in the class 5-21B, and  $5-21B \subset 6-20^*$ . The addition of the B $\flat$  (in the clarinet part in b.61) completes the superset [2, 3, 6, 7, X, E] (hence  $[2, 3, 6, 7, E] \subset [2, 3, 6, 7, X, E]$  and more abstractly expressed  $5-21 \subset 6-20$ ).

**Example 5.9: The *Partita*, bb.59-61**

One could instead describe this without set-class tools: the sets are related by transposition and inversion (as are all sets in the same class), and the voicing of the chords is reconfigured. However, matters of enharmonic spelling and chord voicing mean that identifying such relationships without the aid of set-class tools is a time-consuming process. All of the information that the set-class tools provide is of course present in the music itself, but the tools provide quick and easy ways of accessing particular properties of the sets and help to provide an alternative perspective. Solomon's reference list provides further information: the set is the 'augmented scale'. The term 'augmented scale' points to the potential relevance of literature on other music, literature which might not necessarily employ set-class theory. Further, sets in the class 6-20\* are symmetrical, a fact that is not so obvious when focussing on the 'E-ness' of the chord or the passage. The set-class relationship is simple to calculate (using computerised reference tables) and pithy to communicate, and alongside other techniques can contribute significantly to an understanding of harmonic relationships in the scores under consideration. In research for the present thesis, a Microsoft Access software tool was developed to look up Forte's and Solomon's set-class names, chord roots according to Hindemith's theory, and other simple data, based on pitch or pitch-class input.

## **Analytical Strategies: Tonality**

Having discussed at length the analysis of Walton's harmonies, and the various tools that might be employed, it is necessary to turn to a closely related area, that of tonality. Set-class theory may be a useful addition to tonal analytical tools when it comes to classifying and characterising individual sonorities, but the complex formulas developed in set-class theory to examine longer-range relationships in atonal music (such as Forte's K and KH relationships) have little relevance to the repertoire under discussion here.

Most theories of harmonic function and tonality rely to some extent on reduction of chords and keys to their roots: chords have a function in a key based on the position of the root in relation to the tonic, and keys are related to other keys in hierarchical arrangements based on the interval relationship between the roots. Walton's later music makes sufficient connection with the frameworks of tonality that it is tempting to identify structural harmonies and to attribute significance to relationships amongst the roots of chords and keys. However – as has been discussed above – it is inadequate to reduce many of Walton's harmonic structures to simple roots and chord labels, and this makes the analysis of tonality – the longer range relationships between harmonies – particularly problematic. In considering the sense in which harmonies can be thought of as referential, or the extent to which they are prolonged, I will survey of a range of analytical traditions, examining aspects of the theory of harmonic function, of prolongational claims (such as those made implicitly in Schenkerian analyses), and of long-range tonal relationships more generally. Insights from this discussion are used to develop a theoretical position on which the subsequent analyses draw.

The notion of the function of chords – that is, the ways in which chords relate to each other and to the tonic – was developed in Austro-German music theory of the late nineteenth century, especially by Hugo Riemann (1849-1919) and Heinrich Schenker (1868-1935). Whilst Riemann and Schenker explored similar problems, their work exhibits significant contrasts in approach. Riemann's 1893 treatise defined all potential chords in the diatonic key system in terms of subdominant, dominant or tonic



functionality.<sup>78</sup> Ruth Solie has argued that Riemann's interests in psychology prompted a focus on the listener that results in an emphasis on surface events.<sup>79</sup> The identification of the function of any particular harmony is dependent on the immediate context, namely scale degrees in the prevailing key and interval relationships within the given harmonic context.

Schenker's music theory and analytical practice has, in comparison to Riemann, less emphasis on surface features and greater focus on the unification of the whole musical artwork, especially with reference to metaphors of organicism. This results in greater attention to background processes and thus to the organising role of the tonic. In Schenker's theory the notion of harmonic function is applied not only to surface events but to deeper structural levels and eventually the *Ursatz* or 'fundamental structure', a basic elaboration of the tonic triad. Thus the tonic is a controlling force about which elaborations, departures and returns are qualified. What Riemannian theory views as modulation, Schenkerian theory views as elaboration of an overarching tonic: the tonic is prolonged through successive structural levels, and a Schenkerian analysis attempts to describe this prolongation through notational symbols.

### **Prolongational Claims**

There have been a number of attempts to reconstitute meaning for Schenkerian analytical concepts – such as prolongation, structural levels, and the role of tonic – in relation to post-tonal music. Discussing music of the late nineteenth century, Robert P. Morgan has outlined what he terms 'dissonant prolongations', identifying passages of Schubert, Liszt, and Wagner which he claims prolong diminished seventh or augmented triad chords.<sup>80</sup> According to Morgan, these dissonant chords may take on a stable, tonic character in contradiction to their place within the traditional tonal hierarchy. As James

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<sup>78</sup> Hugo Riemann, *Harmony Simplified, or, The Theory of the Tonal Functions of Chords*, trans. H. Beyer (London: Augener & Co, 1895).

<sup>79</sup> Ruth A. Solie. 'Review of William C. Mickelsen, *Hugo Riemann's Theory of Harmony, with a Translation of Riemann's History of Music Theory, Book III*, *19th-Century Music*, 2(2) (November 1978), pp.179-180.

<sup>80</sup> Robert P. Morgan. 'Dissonant Prolongation: Theoretical and Compositional Precedents', *Journal of Music Theory*, 20(1) (Spring 1976), pp.49-91.

Baker points out, in these examples, there is frequently a more-or-less implied consonant tonic lying behind the surface dissonance.<sup>81</sup>

A better-known effort to expand Schenkerian models is found in Felix Salzer's often-cited monograph *Structural Hearing*.<sup>82</sup> Salzer, one of Schenker's most notable pupils and one of the main carriers of Schenkerian ideas to the Anglophone world, applied Schenkerian analysis (and thus the concept of prolongation) to a wider range of music than Schenker would have admitted. Salzer defines tonality as 'prolonged motion within the framework of a single key-determining progression'; every detail at every structural level functions within the 'one tonality of the whole composition'.<sup>83</sup> In formulating Schenkerian analyses that include examples from Debussy, Hindemith, Stravinsky, and Bartók, Salzer expanded the vocabulary of available key-determining progressions, introducing alternative background structures; nonetheless, the fundamentally triadic basis of prolongation (and the importance of scale degrees) is retained. Although giving brief mention to prolonged 'polychords' and 'color chords',<sup>84</sup> Salzer typically reduces dissonant sonorities to triads for the purposes of outlining prolongations. For this reason, Baker criticises Salzer for 'reducing out' as colouristic devices extra-triadic elements, rather than admitting them as elements of a non-triadic structure.<sup>85</sup>

In a further attempt to make available the Schenkerian notion of prolongation to music that lacks a triadic tonic, Roy Travis has described what he calls 'tonic sonorities' in the music of composers such as Bartók and Stravinsky.<sup>86</sup> A sonority that is, from a traditional standpoint, dissonant and unstable, can – Travis argues – through repetition, emphasis, voicing, and placement in the musical context, take on a 'stable character' that 'no longer requires resolution'.<sup>87</sup> Thus the tonic sonority becomes a stable reference

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<sup>81</sup> James Baker, 'Schenkerian Analysis and Post-Tonal Music', in David Beach (ed.), *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p.159. Baker offers a useful critique of a number of 'dissonant prolongation' theories, including those of Morgan, Straus and Travis.

<sup>82</sup> Felix Salzer, *Structural Hearing: Tonal Coherence in Music* (New York: Dover, 1962).

<sup>83</sup> Salzer, *Structural Hearing*, p.227.

<sup>84</sup> Salzer, *Structural Hearing*, pp.193-195.

<sup>85</sup> Baker, 'Schenkerian Analysis and Post-Tonal Music', p.156.

<sup>86</sup> Roy Travis, 'Towards a New Concept of Tonality?' *Journal of Music Theory*, 3(2) (1959), pp.257-284.

<sup>87</sup> Travis, 'Towards a New Concept of Tonality?' p.260.

point, analogous to the tonic triad. Travis defines music as tonal ‘when its motion unfolds (i.e. prolongs) through time a particular tone, interval or chord.’<sup>88</sup> Thus the examples at hand (including the opening of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, and ‘Staccato’ No. 124 and ‘Syncopation’ No. 133 from Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos*) become amenable to Schenker-style analysis, in which a dissonant sonority is considered to be prolonged over a background structure that articulates that sonority as tonic.<sup>89</sup> In a further article, Travis applies such analyses to examples even further removed from tonal tradition: the second of Schoenberg’s *Six Little Piano Pieces* (Op. 19, No. 2) and the second movement of Webern’s *Piano Variations* (Op. 27).<sup>90</sup>

Such attempts to circumscribe prolongation in post-tonal music are not without their critics. In an influential paper, Joseph N. Straus argues that prolongation as it occurs in tonal music relies on a consistent precompositional framework that includes distinction between consonance and dissonance, a hierarchy of consonances based on scale degrees, a consistent model of voice-leading, and a clear distinction between melodic and harmonic axes.<sup>91</sup> According to Straus, analysis of prolongation at middle and background levels in post-tonal music (such as that suggested by Travis and Salzer) fails because there is no consistent precompositional system to support the necessary conditions.<sup>92</sup> Straus makes a clear distinction between prolongation and centrality: through emphasis in local context any pitch or combination of pitches might be heard as ‘consonant’ or at least as having high structural weight; such sonorities are, however, not *prolonged* in the Schenkerian sense, as the conditions for prolongation are not supported outside tonal music.<sup>93</sup> Thus dissonant local centres may occur, but their controlling influence over longer passages of music is questioned: ‘For the larger musical spans, and for music that is most characteristic of the twentieth century,

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<sup>88</sup> Travis, ‘Towards a New Concept of Tonality?’ p.261.

<sup>89</sup> Travis, ‘Towards a New Concept of Tonality?’ p.263.

<sup>90</sup> Roy Travis, ‘Directed Motion in Schoenberg and Webern’, *Perspectives of New Music*, 4(2) (Spring - Summer 1966).

<sup>91</sup> Joseph N. Straus, ‘The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music’, *Journal of Music Theory*, 31(1) (Spring 1987), pp.2-5.

<sup>92</sup> Straus, ‘The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music’, pp.8-13. In a similar if more polemical vein, Ernst Oster has argued that the meaning of prolongation in tonal music derives from the triad, and hence if the triad is not present as an organising force then the concept of prolongation becomes meaningless. Ernst Oster, ‘Theory Forum: Re: A New Concept of Tonality (?)’, *Journal of Music Theory*, 4(1) (April 1960), p.96.

<sup>93</sup> Straus, ‘The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music’, p.6.

prolongation has proven an attractive but ultimately useless tool.<sup>94</sup> Straus points out that middleground and background structures may often appear to be similar to those of tonal music (for example, bass outlines of fourths or fifths, or stepwise melodic descent); in these cases, the music ‘mimics’ prolongational spans ‘without using truly prolongational voice leading.’<sup>95</sup>

### **Associational Claims**

As an alternative to attempts to discover prolongation in post-tonal music, Straus argues that motivic patterns (specifically, sets identified in set-class terms) may have referential significance; such ‘associational’ claims assert that musical events separated over time can be related in a structurally significant manner without making assertions as to the prolongation of such sonorities through whatever intercedes.<sup>96</sup> Middleground and background associations may be formed between surface events (through one or more of many possible dimensions, including similarity of harmonic structure, instrumentation and articulation); such associations may be structurally significant and lend coherence to the music, but they do not control the passages that separate them.

The work of Travis, Salzer, and Straus offers useful perspective to the analyst of Walton’s later music. Here, the legacy of traditional tonality is apparent enough, and yet diatonic harmonic and voice-leading principles are dissolved sufficiently to destabilise prolongational claims, especially when considering the larger-scale sections up to movements and whole works. Harmonies may have roles (equivalent or analogous to tonic and dominant, for example) that draw on the inheritance of tonal tradition. However, to extend this to a Schenkerian notion of prolongation, and especially to suggest coherence through different structural levels (the *raison d’être* of Schenkerian analysis), would have considerably deteriorated interpretative power for these scores. Nonetheless, the local presentation of particular non-triadic or extra-triadic sonorities often does imply some level of structural function; especially salient are those that take the role of tonic. In respect to these tonic sonorities, associational claims about structural significance are on much more stable ground than prolongational claims. In Chapter 6, I make and explore some of these associational claims, and examine the how

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<sup>94</sup> Straus, ‘The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music’, p.13.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.

tonal contrast operates in a context in which the influence of the hierarchy of scale degrees and harmonic functions is lost, or at least significantly reduced. The most pertinent tonal relationships in these scores are not accessible to Schenkerian techniques. Even where long-term relationships appear to fulfil traditional criteria – an interval of a fifth between two tonal centres, for example – the hierarchical nature of the relationship may be undermined by the intervening music.

Consider as an example the middle movement of Walton's Second Symphony, which would seem to be the most 'tonal' movement amongst those in the post-war orchestral scores. The movement develops around a framing B major tonality (in bb.5-24 and 89ff.); the composer even uses a key signature for the opening and closing passages, a feature that is unusual amongst his works of this period. The central section, however, explores atonal and tonally ambiguous sonorities, so that to relate them hierarchically to the framing B major sections would be tenuous at best. At the point at which the initial B major tonality dissolves, in b.25, a cadential progression in B major is interrupted by an F major chord (see Example 5.10); Howes suggests there is 'a change of key to F major'.<sup>97</sup> But to what extent can this F major 'tonality' (or indeed the opening B major) be said to be present or controlling the music from this point onwards? The tonal ambiguity of the bars immediately following does not allow F to settle as anything more than a temporary harmonic centre, and one which is related tenuously if at all to the B major with which the movement begins. More pertinent than hierarchical relationships that relate keys to each other is the sense of contrast between the relatively stable tonality of the opening with the highly ambiguous and at times atonal character of the central section. It is perhaps telling that the composer abandons the use of a key signature for this central section (it is certainly not in C major or A minor throughout!). B major does indeed act as a 'tonic', but the relationship is one of association between the framing sections rather than of prolongation through the intervening music.

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<sup>97</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.47.

Example 5.10: Bb.22-27 of the second movement of the Second Symphony

23 *movendo* Fl. *Pochiss. più mosso* ♩=54-56

Str. *arco.* *tr.* *tr.* *tr.* *tr.* *tr.* *tr.* *pizz.*

WW., Tbn.

26 Fl. Ob.

Debate about the viability of prolongational claims in post-tonal music will continue, but it is evident that harmony and tonality in Walton's later music do not rely exclusively on hierarchical relationships based on scale degrees. We shall continually return to this point in the following chapters; for now, it is sufficient to note that prolongational claims have a questionable status in relationship to Walton's later music. It is not only that reducing chords and keys to their respective roots (the process used to determine relationships in most theories of tonality) is questionable, but that the entire basis of tonal relationships based around scale degrees seems to hold little power of explanation in many of these scores. This being the case, an alternative framework for understanding harmonic function is necessary.

If, in Walton's music, the status of the tonal precompositional hierarchy of chord and scale-degree relationships is sufficiently weakened, this in turn liquidates existing ways of defining chord function from both Riemannian and Schenkerian perspectives; alternatives are needed. Travis argues that in respect of the non-triadic tonic sonorities that he postulates, chronological location at the beginning or end of a musical process is

an obvious criterion for determining structural weight and hence status as tonic.<sup>98</sup> This seems logical enough, although James Baker has criticised Travis on the grounds that beyond this he relies predominantly on ‘musical intuition and a good ear’.<sup>99</sup> Baker argues that to sustain prolongational claims, criteria for determining tonal function (a ‘closed system of operations and functions’) must be made explicit.<sup>100</sup> To build this kind of music theory is beyond the scope of the present thesis, and – as I have suggested – it is associational rather than prolongational claims that best capture the operation of harmonic function in Walton’s later orchestral scores. Nonetheless, some ground can be gained by considering criteria for defining harmonic function in greater detail.

In this respect, Paul Wilson’s study of the music of Béla Bartók provides a view of harmonic function in terms of generalised behaviours rather than specific roles within the tonal system. He argues that in Bartók’s music, harmonic function (in terms of tonic, dominant etc.) is separated from scale degrees and from specific intervallic relationships with a tonic.<sup>101</sup> As an alternative, Wilson provides concise descriptions of different harmonic functions based on traditional harmonic practice but independent of the specific workings of diatonic tonality. He posits five functional behaviours in tonal music: tonic, dominant, subdominant, dominant preparation, and tonic substitution or extension.

**Table 5.2: Tonic and dominant functions and their behaviours according to Paul Wilson**

<b>Behaviour / Category</b>	<b>Properties and Actions</b>
Tonic (p.35)	destination or goal tone initiating event root or generator stable centre
Dominant (p.36)	tension or instability that implies forthcoming resolution to the tonic

<sup>98</sup> Travis, ‘Towards a New Concept of Tonality?’ p.266.

<sup>99</sup> Baker, ‘Schenkerian Analysis and Post-Tonal Music’, p.157.

<sup>100</sup> Baker, ‘Schenkerian Analysis and Post-Tonal Music’, p.168.

<sup>101</sup> Paul Wilson, *The Music of Béla Bartók* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p.34.

Of these, it is the tonic and dominant functions that are the most pertinent (these are described in Table 5.2). According to Wilson, the most important function of the tonic is as the main destination or goal of a musical process.<sup>102</sup> In the absence of a determined tonic scale degree within a stable gamut (e.g. a diatonic scale), criteria are needed for defining a tonic goal; Wilson cites the obvious criterion of physical location at the end of a musical process, and notes that ‘the corroborative effects of non-pitch elements in a given passage are crucial’.<sup>103</sup> The tonic may also serve as the initiating event, and as a stable centre existing in a central and neutral ground between dominant and subdominant.<sup>104</sup> Further, the tonic may be seen as the root or generator of chords and collections, such as the major triad or the diatonic scale.<sup>105</sup> Wilson notes that the role of the dominant is to create the instability or tension that is released by arrival at the tonic goal; as such, the dominant is usually the preceding event to the tonic.<sup>106</sup>

The subdominant function has – as Wilson points out – a special place in diatonic systems because of its scale-degree position a perfect fifth below the tonic, symmetrically opposite the dominant; if this relationship is weakened or destroyed in music that eliminates or blurs diatonic scale-degree relationships, the notion of subdominant function becomes less meaningful.<sup>107</sup> Nonetheless, one behaviour of the subdominant function – that of dominant preparation – is picked up in a separate named category. The last two behaviours, dominant preparation, and tonic substitution or extension, are more self-explanatory, having ‘action-orientated’ names.<sup>108</sup> Wilson notes that events that might function as dominant preparation lack precompositional status in Bartók’s music. This results in the need for obvious repetition in the music before aural recognition of such a function becomes possible.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Wilson, *The Music of Béla Bartók*, p.35.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

<sup>107</sup> Thus Wilson argues that the subdominant function has no ‘meaningful analogy’ in Bartók’s music. Wilson, *The Music of Béla Bartók*, p.38.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.



The interests and emphases of Walton's music are different from those of Bartók's, and thus it is the framework rather than the detail of Wilson's study that is useful here. Wilson's descriptions of functional behaviours would not satisfy Baker's demand that the analyst disclose the closed system of operations and procedures that would explicitly define a kind of non-triadic tonality,<sup>110</sup> but they do help to clarify what is meant by such terms as 'tonic' or 'dominant' used in relation to Walton's later orchestral music. It is in movements that most closely resemble sonata forms that functional behaviour is most apparent and contributes most powerfully towards musical processes; this is perhaps because tonic-like articulation of a sonority and its placement at structurally significant locations are mutually reinforcing. Of the various harmonic functions, it is that of tonic that is best defined and the obvious starting point: it is the most powerful concept in functional tonality, and indeed is the most defining feature of many of these scores. Nontonic behaviours are less differentiated aside from their identity as 'other' to the tonic; this is especially true of the subdominant function which has a poorly differentiated status outside of a diatonic system. Nonetheless, nontonic elements may assume a particular role (such as 'dominant') through repetition in a musical context, and/or relationship to scale-degree functions.

### **Methodological Pluralism**

The foregoing discussion of analytical strategies, especially in respect of the analysis of harmony, leads to the conclusion that several of the commonly available analytical tools might prove useful in analysing Walton's later orchestral music, but that to employ any one exclusively is unwise. The tools and labels associated with Classical harmonic and formal analysis provide a useful grounding that parallels this music's tonal heritage; however, particular extra-triadic sonorities become fundamental to the harmonic structure such that it would be inadequate to view non-triad pitches as 'extra' to an otherwise triadic framework. However, turning to analytical tools developed with post-tonal musics in mind (such as set-class theory) is also problematic: an approach that is deliberately purged of any sensitivity to tonal features takes insufficient account of this music's harmonic heritage. Whilst it is possible to trace hitherto under-acknowledged influences of modernism in Walton's pitch structures, the music is built on (or at least,

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<sup>110</sup> Baker, 'Schenkerian Analysis and Post-Tonal Music', p.168.

is heard against) a bedrock of triadic references. It is therefore appropriate and necessary to employ a range of tools from varied analytical traditions.

In what way does analysis supply the evidence for a re-evaluation? The first and most obvious answer is that received opinion on late Walton is at least partly based on superficial analytical claims, and thus more detailed analysis can support or undermine such arguments. For example, Peter Heyworth's absurd claim that the Second Symphony contains nothing 'that could not have been written in 1902'<sup>111</sup> can be directly tested against analytical evidence. On a more subtle level, however, there is no simple relationship of analysis to re-evaluation: the 'objective' or 'subjective' nature of analysis and the nature of the information it provides must be interrogated further.

The methodological pluralism advocated in this thesis seems at odds with significant swathes of analytical and theoretical tradition, since several of the most prominent theories of music are (or at least present themselves to be) mutually exclusive. In this respect it may be helpful to differentiate between theory to which analysis provides examples, and analysis for which theory provides tools. Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook have suggested that 'totalizing, mutually incommensurable theories place the emphasis less on the analysis than on the theory which the analysis serves to illustrate'.<sup>112</sup> As an alternative to totalising systems, Clarke and Cook argue for a 'pragmatic, tool-oriented approach' to a number of musicological fields, including analysis.<sup>113</sup> My aim in this thesis is to foreground the music via analysis, rather than to articulate any particular music theory or theories: adopting this pragmatic approach allows focus to be maintained on the music. The focus and approach of each different method has its own sensitivities, advantages, and disadvantages; different tools can be combined to give a more complete picture than any one approach on its own.

This methodological pluralism is, however, a theoretical and perhaps even 'totalising' position in and of itself. The choice of analytical tools is the starting point for music analysis, and it affects the nature and quality of the information that is gathered. Opting

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<sup>111</sup> Peter Heyworth, 'Walton's New Symphony', *The Observer*, 4 September 1960, p.26.

<sup>112</sup> Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook, 'What Is Empirical Musicology?' in Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook (eds.), *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.8-9.

<sup>113</sup> Clarke and Cook, 'Empirical Musicology', p.9.

to combine tools from tonal and atonal traditions emphasises and serves my own conviction that Walton's later music straddles these two well-defined traditions. Opting for multiple analytical strategies highlights the possibility of multiple viewpoints on the same music and emphasises my belief in the multiplicity of musical influences that is one of the unique characteristics of these later scores. In other words, the selection of analytical tools reflects and influences critical interpretation.<sup>114</sup>

This raises questions over the status of analytical knowledge. There is a temptation, under the influence of totalising theories, to presume that analysis is (or ought to be) objective; hence to use multiple tools and to admit that such use reflects and serves a critical position might seem suspiciously subjective. There is a substantial body of literature concerning the status of the relationship between analysis and criticism, sparked off by Joseph Kerman's critique of the discipline in which he argues that partly through a phobia of hastily conceived and researched journalistic 'criticism', and partly in deference to an in-vogue model of objective scientific inquiry, that analysis as a discipline has shied away from appropriate critical engagement with music.<sup>115</sup>

The reality is that analysis that presents itself as objective hides subjectivity rather than avoids it. Analysis is, should be, and cannot avoid being subjective: describing music in words and symbols cannot be anything but interpretative. The selection of works to be analysed, the identification of significant aspects of the music, and the choice of analytical tools each represents an interpretative stance towards the music. Rather than hide this, it is better to explain it, laying out (to the extent that this is possible) the critical approach inherent in the methodology such that it is openly available for appraisal and counter-argument. In other words, this study is avowedly subjective, and the question of how analysis provides (objective) evidence for (subjective) re-evaluation becomes redundant, for the analytical and critical aspects of the study are two sides of the same coin. The methodological pluralism advocated here and employed in the analyses below is 'critical' as well as 'analytical': it suggests recognition of a range of influences in Walton's orchestral music and argues that the music appropriates a number of alternative approaches, including those of contemporary music, in contradistinction to the argument prominent in the contemporary reviews that Walton's music had stagnated into a single outmoded and rarefied style.

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<sup>114</sup> See Joseph Kerman, 'How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out', *Critical Inquiry*, 7(2) (Winter 1980), pp.311-331.

<sup>115</sup> Kerman, 'How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out', pp.311-314. Kerman takes up his critique again in Joseph Kerman, *Musicology* (London: Fontana, 1985).

## Chapter 6:

### Harmony, Tonality and Sonata Forms: The First Movements of Walton's Cello Concerto and Second Symphony

It has been noted that contemporaneous reviews of Walton's Second Symphony particularly highlighted the feeling – usually of concern – that the work was 'lightweight' in comparison to expectation or in comparison to the First Symphony; something appeared to be lacking in the work's symphonic argument.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, it is the opening movement of a symphony or concerto which has tended to carry the greatest expressive weight, and the traditions of sonata form are especially well developed and extensively theorised. In addition, the link between harmony, tonality and form is especially relevant in theories of sonata form in tonal music. Thus in embarking on analysis of Walton's later music, it is to sonata-form opening movements that one naturally turns first (Walton used the term 'first-movement form' to refer to these sonata-like structures).<sup>2</sup> Two such examples stand out in Walton's later oeuvre: the opening movements of the Cello Concerto and the Second Symphony. Taking these movements as case studies, this chapter examines aspects of Walton's harmonic and tonal language, and its use in the articulation of form.

#### Cello Concerto (1956; C65): First Movement

Walton's Cello Concerto provides an especially interesting example of the way in which his later music combines a traditional harmonic vocabulary with new elements. The concerto was written in response to a US\$3000 commission from the cellist Gregor Piatigorsky,<sup>3</sup> who performed in the première of the work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in their home city on 25 January 1957.<sup>4</sup> The concerto had had a

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<sup>1</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 4, p.74ff.

<sup>2</sup> For example in [Anon.], 'Sir William Walton on the Musical Schisms of Today', *The Times*, 29 August 1960, p.12.

<sup>3</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 9 November 1956. Malcolm Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p.285.

<sup>4</sup> Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.129.

characteristically protracted genesis, having been started as early as July 1955.<sup>5</sup> Walton had intended to travel to London for the UK première, but was forced – after being hospitalised in a car accident in Italy – to listen instead to a broadcast specially arranged by the BBC and Italian radio.<sup>6</sup> The concerto shares with its two predecessors for viola and violin (C22, 1929 and C37, 1939 respectively) a three-movement structure, with the opening theme of the first movement returning at the end of the third.

Walton and Piatigorsky corresponded regularly during the composition of the concerto. Walton took a very meticulous and detailed approach towards the work, particularly towards the notation of pitch; for example, in a postcard dated October 1956, he noted that he had omitted a single ♯ sign from music he had already sent to Piatigorsky.<sup>7</sup> The letters indicate that Piatigorsky had a strong influence over certain aspects of the composition, including (as might be expected) aspects of cello technique, but also broader structural concerns. Walton sent different possible versions of particular passages in response to Piatigorsky's criticisms, for example rewriting the entire second movement to incorporate his suggestions.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, on 11 February – a few weeks after the première, and only two days before the first British performance – Piatigorsky spent two hours discussing his intended alterations with Roy Douglas (an accomplished pianist, and copyist for Oxford University Press); Walton listened to and approved the proposed changes over the telephone.<sup>9</sup> Piatigorsky's input can be further noted in a total of three new endings that Walton wrote at his request; two in 1956, and one in 1975.<sup>10</sup> Walton's 'more intense' ending produced in December 1956<sup>11</sup> was dropped only a few

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<sup>5</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 18 July 1955. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.268-269.

<sup>6</sup> Walton, letter to Gregor Piatigorsky, 4 February 1957, Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.294; Colin Mason, 'Walton's New 'Cello Concerto: Piatigorsky Soloist for R.P.O', *The Manchester Guardian*, 14 February 1957, p.7.

<sup>7</sup> Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.276.

<sup>8</sup> Walton, letter to Piatigorsky, 10 August 1956. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.274.

<sup>9</sup> Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.129.

<sup>10</sup> Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.130. The autograph score of the original work and revised endings are in a private collection and are not accessible to researchers. Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Source Book* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993), pp.136-137.

<sup>11</sup> Jascha Heifetz had made suggestions to Piatigorsky that resulted in this particular revised ending. Letter to Piatigorsky, 19 December 1956. Hayes (ed.). *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.290.

days later.<sup>12</sup> The further revised ending written in 1975 was not performed.<sup>13</sup> It seems especially apt to note these unused revisions since the original ending (that which appears in the published score) is – as will become apparent – particularly analytically significant.

As has been noted previously, Peter Heyworth and Donald Mitchell's comments on this work extended, in Heyworth's case for the first time, criticisms that emerged with the première of *Troilus and Cressida* to Walton's orchestral oeuvre.<sup>14</sup> Walton described the work as the best of his three concerti, and remarked to Piatigorsky that 'you have made (and made for me) a terrific impression here [London] with the concerto'.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, he was well aware of the mixed critical reaction, writing to Alan Frank, 'to hell with Messrs. Heyworth and Mitchell. They should, by the way, be both blacklisted so don't send them *any* scores of my works!'<sup>16</sup>

### The Tonic Sonority

The concerto opens with a delicate rocking chord figuration that presents the tonic sonority, a distinctive harmonic and instrumental flavour that performs a structural function through its return in various guises at later points in the concerto. This sonority (see Example 6.1) has a C-triad foundation, and includes an alternating major and minor third (D# and E $\flat$  in the score), and an A $\flat$ . This A $\flat$  is picked out by the opening Cello motif, alongside a further chromatic inflection, a B $\flat$ . Overall, the harmonic and melodic material is confined to the set [C D# E G A $\flat$  B], the symmetrical hexatonic 'augmented scale', set-class 6-20\*.

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<sup>12</sup> Walton, letter to Piatigorsky, 25 December 1956. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.292.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.199.

<sup>14</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 4, especially p.68ff.

<sup>15</sup> Walton, Letter to Piatigorsky, 12 March 1957. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.295.

<sup>16</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 10 July 1958. Quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.198. Emphasis in original.

**Example 6.1: Pc-sets in the melody and harmony at the opening of the first movement of the Cello Concerto**

The musical score is in 4/4 time, marked *Moderato* with a tempo of 66-69 c. It features three staves: Violin (Vc.), Woodwinds and Strings (WW., Str.), and Cello/Double Bass (Vc., Cb.).

- Violin (Vc. solo):** Starts with a *p espress.* melody. A bracket above the first two measures identifies the Pc-set **5-21A [D# E G A# B]**.
- Woodwinds and Strings (WW., Str.):** Play a *pizz.* accompaniment. A bracket above the first two measures identifies the Pc-set **5-21B [C D# E G A#]**. A bracket above the next two measures identifies the Pc-set **4-7\* [D# E G A#]**. Dynamics range from *mf* to *pp*.
- Cello/Double Bass (Vc., Cb.):** A bracket below the first two measures identifies the Pc-set **6-20\* [C D# E G A# B]**.

**Example 6.2: Tendency tones in the set [D# E G A# B C] in a C-major context**

The diagram shows a single staff with two sections, A and B, illustrating tendency tones.

- Section A:** Shows the notes D#, E, G, A#, B, and C. A bracket below the notes D#, E, G, and A# identifies the Pc-set **6-20\***.
- Section B:** Shows the notes D#, E, G, A#, B, and C. Arrows point from D# to E, A# to A, and B to C, indicating their tendency to resolve to the members of the C major triad.

The obvious interpretation of this sonority is to take the C major triad as a foundation, with the D#, A# and B acting as ‘tendency tones’ with a pull to resolution by a semitone to members of the triad (Example 6.2B). Consider the voicing of the opening chord (see the bottom two staves in Example 6.3A): the positioning of a root C, with its fifth and tenth above it, creates a triadic framework that is acoustically stable. The chromatic A# and D#, that would threaten the chord’s stability, are left for the higher registers. Thus there is some justification for Howes’s analysis of the tonality: ‘a clear C major acidulated with some discordant high overtones’.<sup>17</sup> In respect of this passage, de Zeeuw notes only the diatonic harmonic patterns and is silent about the sonority’s more interesting properties.<sup>18</sup> More generally, de Zeeuw seeks evidence primarily for traditional tonality, commenting on the strength or weakness of preconceived tonal frameworks in Walton’s music, and concluding that tonality in the Cello Concerto is

<sup>17</sup> Frank Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, Second ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.102.

<sup>18</sup> Anne Marie de Zeeuw, *Tonality and the Concertos of William Walton* (PhD: University of Texas at Austin, 1983), pp.244-250.

‘highly conventional’.<sup>19</sup> However, the analysis would be incomplete if other properties of this sonority and the tonality which it defines – some of which are less accessible to viewing through the lens of traditional tonality – were left unconsidered. These aspects include the voicing of the quaver lines in woodwind and violins; pitch-class symmetry and subset structures; a closer examination of the quality of ‘rootedness’ of the sonority; and consideration of how the sonority is contrasted against other harmonic types. The investigation reveals that whilst tonality in this movement does have links with tradition, it is hardly ‘highly conventional’, if conventional at all.

**Example 6.3: The voicing of the opening chord of Walton’s Cello Concerto (A) and an alternative voicing with the same pitches in the same instruments (B)**

The musical score is divided into two parts, A and B, both marked 'Moderato' with a tempo of quarter note = 66-69 c. Part A shows a complex, circular voicing of the opening chord, with overlapping quaver lines in the woodwinds and violins. Part B shows an alternative voicing with the same pitches in the same instruments, but with a more traditional, linear voicing. The instruments are: Flute (fls.), Oboe (ob.), Violins (vls. pizz.), Harp/Vibraphone/Viola (Harp, Vib., Vlas.), and Violoncello/Contrabass (Vc., Cb. pizz.).

To what extent does the voicing of the sonority support the reading of  $A_b$ ,  $D^\sharp$ , and  $B$  as tendency tones? The unusual part-writing in the quaver groupings that articulate the harmony (Example 6.3A) must be put down to deliberate authorial intention; simpler notation would have produced the same notes in the same instruments (Example 6.3B), but at the expense of the sense of circularity (the ‘rocking’) that is so pertinent to the aural impression of this passage. In the violins, a resolving motion downwards from the

<sup>19</sup> De Zeeuw, *Tonality and the Concertos of William Walton*, p.250.



first A $\flat$  quaver to the G is frustrated by the reappearance of the same A $\flat$  in a different part. A similar situation pertains in the two flute parts: each A $\flat$  moves to G via an upwards leap of a major seventh, whilst the other part returns to the A $\flat$ , creating an unresolved major-seventh interval on each successive quaver. Finally, a D $\sharp$  in the oboe resolves conventionally to an E on the next quaver, whilst the same D $\sharp$  in the violin parts moves away to a G, with the resolving E appearing in a different part. These features, alongside the reiteration of the quaver groups over the first four bars of the movement, create a degree of harmonic stability in which a sense of movement is balanced by a sense of stasis. Resolving motions are present, but partly through the part-writing, triadic resolution is not achieved. These non-triad pitches are integral to the sound of the sonority, and not merely extra chromatic pitches that resolve into it.

A balance between resolution and frustration, identified in the harmony, is similarly present in the opening phrases of the cello melody (see Example 6.4): the B is not resolved to C, whilst the A $\flat$ , over the course of the phrase, does resolve to the G, but by an upwards leap of a major seventh. This tendency to frustrate the ‘pull of the semitone’ is an important characteristic of Walton’s melodic writing; here, this feature echoes the presence of major sevenths within the harmony. Indeed, the melodic and harmonic (or horizontal and vertical) patterns are strongly related. The two subsets which comprise the opening harmony and the opening melody respectively are [C D $\sharp$  E G A $\flat$ ], class 5-21B, and [D $\sharp$  E G A $\flat$  B], class 5-21A (see Example 6.1 above): the pitch content of the cello theme is a transposed and inverted form of the chord which opens the movement, and there are four pitch classes shared between the sets. Thus there is a sense in which the cello melody horizontalises the opening harmony. This cello motif – especially its first four notes – is the main melodic feature of this movement, and it bears the harmonic fingerprint of the tonic sonority.

**Example 6.4: Emphasis on G in the opening bars of the Cello Melody**

3 [Moderato ♩ = 66-69c.] \*

Vc.

4-17\*

5-21A

5 \*

[G A B D E F#]

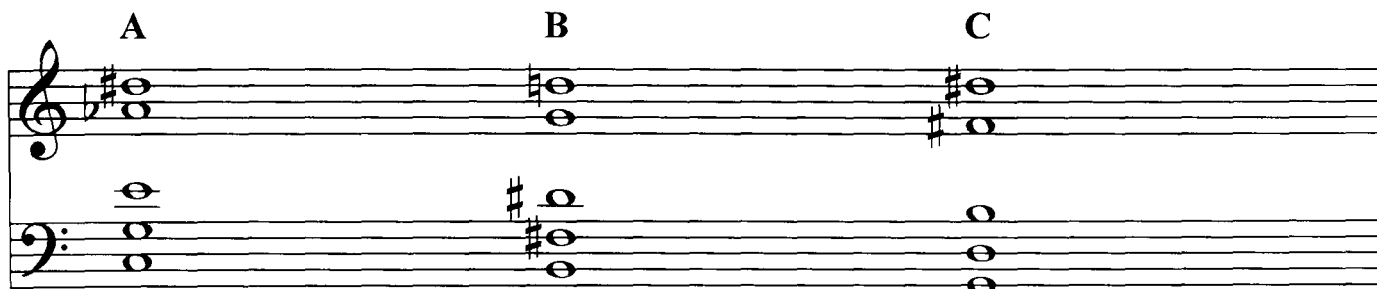
+Cb = G major diatonic collection

+C# = D major diatonic collection

The symmetrical structure of the superset 6-20\*, which consists of three equally-spaced pairs of semitones, admits several subset groupings with identical interval structure: removing any one pitch results in a subset 5-21A or 5-21B. These related subsets allow the tonic sonority to retain its distinctive character whilst undergoing a subtle ‘composing out’ process as the movement progresses. At b.12, the opening gestures of the movement return at an intermediate stage of the opening paragraph. The set here is rooted – at least at first glance – on a G major triad; it is [G B D E<sub>b</sub> F<sub>#</sub>], class 5-21B. However, the placing of G in the bass represents a subtle play on the harmonic configuration. If the original harmony (Example 6.5A) had been simply transposed from that of the opening, the bass note would have been B (Example 6.5B); instead, the harmony is rearranged with G in the bass (Example 6.5C). The change in configuration has the effect of moving the semitone clashes from the third and fifth above the bass to the fifth and octave above. The effect of this is to complement formal and gestural aspects of the music at this point: harmony, theme and gesture combine to mitigate any sense of return. The harmony is subtly different from ‘home’, and – unlike the opening – is not allowed to circle and settle before thematic gestures (now in the oboe) move the music forward. The passage thus functions formally and harmonically as an extension of the opening statement and as a transition to the first episode, rather than as a return to previous material.

**Example 6.5: Configurations of the tonic sonority 5-21B**

(A) 5-21B at b.1; (B) 5-21B from b.1 transposed down a semitone; (C) 5-21B at b.12



With respect to the potential ambiguity in the root of this harmony, it is instructive to return to Hindemith's theory of chord roots. Sets in the class 5-21 have two pairs of perfect fifths; in this case, the set [D E $\flat$  F# G B] includes perfect fifths between B and F#, and G and D. Therefore the root of the chord in Hindemith's theory is dependent on voicing: either G or B may be the root, whichever is closest to the bass. The change in configuration of the harmony between b.1 and b.12 plays on this aspect of the sonority's structure, with the latter having some properties that make it like a dominant to the opening (with a G major triad in the lower parts), but with pitch content comprising that of the opening transposed down a semitone.

In fact, the rooted quality of the tonic sonority is challenged in the music right from its first presentation. (The rootedness, or otherwise, of the sonority is also significant in the analysis of the end of the movement and of the concerto, as we shall see.) The apparent root, C, appears in the timpani and *pizzicato* bass and cellos at the bottom of the texture on the first beat of the first bar, but then disappears (Example 6.3 above, p.139); instead, the note G becomes a focus. G is the top note of the rocking chord figure and is emphasised a number of times in the first four bars of the cello melody, through metric, agogic and tonic accentuation (Example 6.4 above, p.141).<sup>20</sup> Where the tonic sonority returns at b.73, in its original configuration but transposed down a tritone, the root note F# is played by one desk of double basses marked *pp*, whilst the cello solo, harps, and French horn instead emphasise a low C# (analogous to the emphasised Gs at the opening of the movement). The articulation of the harmony in this way serves to destabilise to some extent what could otherwise be a strongly rooted quality of the tonic

<sup>20</sup> For comments on a similar feature in Britten's *Donne Sonnets* see Arnold Whittall, *The Music of Britten and Tippett: Studies in Themes and Techniques*, Second ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.105.

sonority. (The axes of symmetry in 6-20\* are *between* pitch-classes, and thus the cannot establish tonal ‘centres’ in the way Antokoletz suggests is important in the music of Bartók; nonetheless the suggestion that the focus is taken away from the ‘root’ C to a more central G has something in common with this view of Bartók’s music.)<sup>21</sup>

The notion of ‘tonic’ is defined partly by what is not tonic – keys or chords built on other scale degrees, for example, in diatonic harmony. In this movement, scale degrees may still have some significance (we have already used the term ‘dominant’), and yet there is a sense in which the scale degree on which a harmony is built is substituted in importance to some extent by contrasts in the particular quality and sound of the harmony. Reconsider the opening of the movement: here, the tonic sonority is established through repetition in the opening bars, followed by a shift away into more obviously diatonic chords. Although these chords still include occasional ‘added’ notes, they can be classified as ‘added’ in a way that the chromatic notes of the opening harmony cannot, since they resolve conventionally. In the melody too, the characteristic collection of class 5-21A gives way after two bars to an almost complete diatonic collection in the next two bars, in G major / D major (Example 6.4 above; the C<sub>♭</sub> and C<sub>♯</sub> that makes the difference between these two collections appear in the accompanying parts). The same pattern recurs at b.12, with a modified tonic sonority giving way to further diatonic progressions. These represent a two-fold move away from the tonic sonority, since both the diatonic construction and the G/D root contrast with the characteristic 5-21 collection at the opening and its (albeit not very strongly asserted) C root.

Occasional outbursts of diatonicism, accompanying lyrical melodies, also occur later in the movement. The passage from b.58, in which all pitches can be referred to diatonic collections, is the clearest example. Although mediant shifts between collections imbue the music with some sense of chromaticism here, the passage can be rewritten with diatonic key signatures (Example 6.6); although this would make no sense for performance, it reveals much analytically.

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<sup>21</sup> Elliott Antokoletz, *The Music of Béla Bartók: A Study of Tonality and Progression in Twentieth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.138ff.

**Example 6.6:** Outline of bb.58-62 of the opening movement of the Cello Concerto, rewritten with diatonic key signatures.

[a tempo tranquillo]

58

Writing about his twelve-tone music, Schoenberg commented on ‘the surprising appearance of some consonant harmonies—surprising even to me’.<sup>22</sup> In a prevailing context of dissonance, a triad can be just as surprising (and disturbing) as dissonance can be in a diatonic context. In Walton’s Cello Concerto, a similar situation arises: the stability and referentiality of the tonic sonority, having been established at the opening of the movement and at reprises of the opening material, in a sense destabilises the purely diatonic passages. These diatonic passages may be heard as ‘other’ to the tonic, not only because they are built on nontonic scale degrees, but because their diatonic construction contrasts with the characteristically nondiatonic structures of the opening of the movement.

This passage reveals a further element of the harmonic identity of the concerto: the frequent use of mediant shifts. These adjacent harmonies with roots a third apart have no common tones, but are related by semitone voice leading. Semitone relationships are hence important in this movement between harmonies as well as within them. These mediant shifts create the impression of a switch in harmonic territory, but the abruptness of the change is mitigated by smooth voice-leading characteristics. These types of harmonic progression occur with some frequency in this movement, such that they become a characteristic part of the harmonic identity of the concerto.

<sup>22</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, ‘My Evolution [1949]’, in Leonard Stein (ed.), *Style and Idea: The Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p.92.

Major key diatonicism is not the only nontonic harmonic construction in this movement. In the passage from bb.23-26, there is little sense of tonality at all. Two independent melodic lines are supported by a pedal bass note, but there is no sense of a harmonic underpinning in this passage. Later, in b.30ff, the solo cello plays descending scalar figures in which the combination of scale passages over 'shifted' bass notes (for example, an A major scale over a B $\sharp$  bass note in b.43), creates a modal (Ionian) harmonic feel. Overall, major key diatonicism, modal construction, and passages with no obvious harmonic underpinning can each be seen as other to the tonic, regardless of which scale degree (if any) may be regarded as a root.

### **Sonata Form**

Having discussed the tonic sonority in the opening movement of this work, the question arises as to what defines or determines this sonority as 'tonic'. Some obvious basic criteria apply: the sonority occurs at the beginning and the end of the movement. But more than this, the sonority is a construction that articulates and reflects the form of the movement, and is in a sense the background against which other parts of the music are heard. Writing an analytical narrative demands order and structure, and to this end the discussion of harmony and form have been separated; in reality, the form is articulated by the tonic sonority, and at the same time the sonority gains its status as 'tonic' through the movement's form; the relationship is symbiotic. In discussing the movement's form, the question of the way in which the tonic sonority articulates that form remains of central importance.

Robert Meikle describes the structure of this movement as a 'subtle exploitation of sonata form – so subtle, in fact, that in the first movement it almost dissolves'.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, an attempt to impose a sonata reading yields problematic results. For example, consider the passage that Meikle calls the 'second subject'<sup>24</sup> (b.30ff. in the first movement): it is not particularly striking thematically; it never recurs in the tonic; and where it is repeated, once only (b.41ff.), it takes the form of rhapsodic decoration of a quite different idea (the thematic motif of the first subject). One might expect a true second subject to be prominently restated towards the end of the movement. In fact, this

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', in Stewart R. Craggs (ed.), *William Walton: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p.84.

<sup>24</sup> Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.84.

passage is framed on either side by much more striking thematic material (at bb.23-29 and 38-41) for which there is no place in Meikle's reading. When this 'second subject' reappears in the finale of the concerto (b.215ff.), it pops up as a decoration in the middle of a phrase from another theme; it is not as structurally significant there as Meikle suggests.<sup>25</sup> In fact this thematic material is best considered a continuation of material at b.23ff., a decorative episode which becomes integrated with other more significant thematic material as the work progresses.

A sonata interpretation also requires an explanation for the reprise of opening material at b.49 in the tonic, apparently in the middle of the development. Meikle views this as the recapitulation,<sup>26</sup> but the melody continues developmentally (b.54ff.) and leads to a new new lyrical theme (b.58ff.) developed from the characteristic rhythmic and harmonic character of an earlier passage (the strings at bb.45-47). There are three points in this movement where the opening theme and its characteristic sonority are heard: at the beginning; at b.49 (in the middle of the development); and again at b.73, just prior to the coda.

Trying to assimilate these features into a sonata form reading, the reprise at b.49 might be considered a 'false recapitulation' ('a seemingly misleading statement of the main theme in the tonic as if the return were at hand, followed by further development and, eventually, the true return'),<sup>27</sup> a feature that is known from the music of Haydn. In the harmonic sequence from bb.41-51 – prior to this false recapitulation – a sequence of triads underlies the harmony (Example 6.7). The initial D – Bm7 pattern outlined in bb.41-43 is repeated in sequence, at an interval of a perfect fifth, five times, with a contraction in harmonic rhythm at b.45 (where each chord becomes two beats rather than four beats long). This increases the momentum of the passage, as it returns to the initial D chord in b.46 and the sequence continues. In b.48, the sequence is broken up by a mediant shift (from E<sub>b</sub>m to C) and the return – with little preparation – of the opening motif and theme. This is an example of a pattern which Neo-Riemannian Theory captures especially well. The chord progression can be mapped onto a *Tonnetz* to reveal the cyclic pattern (Figure 6.1); the pattern is interrupted in b.49, although the move is

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<sup>25</sup> Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.84.

<sup>26</sup> Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.84.

<sup>27</sup> James Webster, 'Sonata Form', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 23 (London: Macmillan, 2001), p.693.

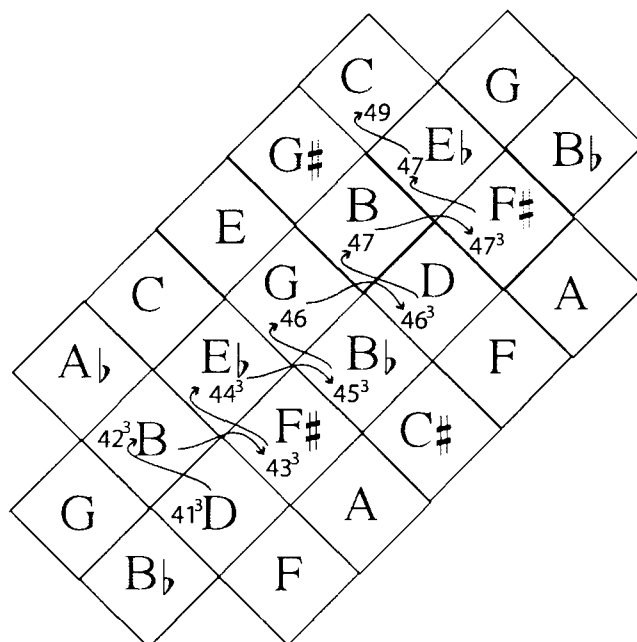
still a closely-related one as far as NRT is concerned. The cyclic pattern creates the sense that the C chord in b.49 interrupts, rather than fulfils, the build-up that occurs over this passage of the development. Although the reprise of the opening material at this point could be heard as a false recapitulation, this reading is not especially convincing since the reprise is unprepared.

**Example 6.7: Harmonic outline of bb.41-49.**



**Figure 6.1: The harmonic outline of bb41-49 of the opening movement of the Cello Concerto, mapped onto an equal-temperament *Tonnetz***

The annotations refer to the relevant bar numbers.





When the opening passage recurs for a second time, however, the thematic, harmonic and quaver-motion characteristics of the opening of the movement all return together (b.73). Indeed, this occurs only at this point in the movement. Furthermore, the passage preceding this final reprise features a thinning texture, slowing speed, and a rising and falling gesture in the cello which all suggest preparation for a formal recapitulation. Instrumentation is important here: the tonic sonority is not just harmonic, but is also characterised by its instrumentation and presentation. Walton frequently used extra orchestral instruments – harp, celeste, and vibraphone are amongst the favourites – in his later works, combining their distinctive sounds with his distinctive harmonic flavours to create an identifiable sonic reference point. The return of the movement's opening material here makes clear reference to the opening not just in terms of thematic material and harmony, but in the use of harp and vibraphone with their distinctive sonic qualities.

However, in this passage, the root of the harmony is F#, a tritone away from the C which is the root of the opening and closing harmonies of the movement. Indeed, the six-note sets formed by harmony and melody at bb.1-3 and here at bb.73-76 are complementary hexachords: there are no shared pitch-classes (Example 6.8). The extent to which such a relation of opposites comprises a relationship of identity remains an open question. Certainly two keys or chords with a tritone relationship may be considered equivalent in some contexts: such tritone substitution is a foundational principle of Ernő Lendvai's axis system, an attempt to describe a general principle of tonality in the music of Bartók.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, there are occasional examples in much earlier music: Beethoven's Violin Concerto, for example, brings back the rondo theme after the cadenza in A $\flat$ , a tritone away from the tonic D (bb.293ff).<sup>29</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy explain a number of strategies whereby Classical sonata movements begin the recapitulation in the 'wrong' key, and cite numerous examples; they argue that 'an

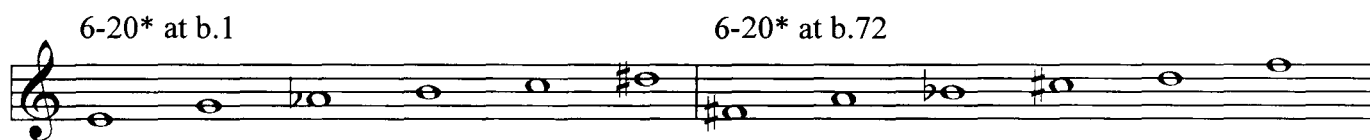
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<sup>28</sup> Ernő Lendvai, *Béla Bartók: An Analysis of His Music* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1971), pp.1-16.

<sup>29</sup> Malcolm S. Cole, 'Rondo', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 21 (London: Macmillan, 2001), p.652.

exclusive reliance on tonality alone to determine recapitulatory onsets can lead to conclusions that are counterintuitive and countergeneric'.<sup>30</sup>

**Example 6.8: Complementary hexachords at b.1 and b.73**



The harmony, rhythm and instrumentation presented at b.73 – characteristic as they are of this movement’s tonic sonority and opening theme – are salient characteristics to the ear, and clearly delineate the onset of the recapitulatory space in the movement. But even if it is harmonic types rather than the scale degree of roots that underlies tonal identity in this movement, the change in pitch level does have an effect: we are not fully ‘home’ at this point. Instead, the original pitch-level returns a few bars later (b.89ff.), with the chromatic notes A $\flat$  and B $\sharp$  picked out by the final recurrence of the movement’s main motif at b.92 in the harps, vibraphone and solo cello. The ‘tonic’ status of the close of the movement – both in terms of harmonic structure and perceived root – is a topic to which we will return shortly.

Howes describes the structure of the movement in terms of seven ‘paragraphs’ in the form ABCADA Coda.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately the lack of detail in his account makes it hard to reconcile it with the music itself (where does each ‘paragraph’ start and end?) and his reading must be questioned on grounds that it is illogical.<sup>32</sup> In general, there seems to be a confusion over whether the movement is a rondo (as implied by Howes’s reading), or a sonata (as Miekle argues; Howes hints at a sonata-form framework by describing

<sup>30</sup> James A. Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.271.

<sup>31</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.103.

<sup>32</sup> If there are two new themes (B and C) before the first reprise of the opening material. Howes must surely be referring to b.23 and b.30; but each of these is repeated before the first refrain (at b.38 and b.42 respectively) so that the opening would have to be labelled ABCBCA...

paragraph 3 as ‘development’ and paragraph 5 as ‘recapitulation’).<sup>33</sup> (I do not mean to imply that the movement is a Sonata-Rondo.) Whilst Howes does not point out or resolve this conflict, his confusion highlights the essence of the analytical problem posed here.

Hepokoski has argued that the works of modern composers (especially Sibelius and Strauss) often maintain a relationship or ‘dialogue’ with textbook formal structures, whilst distorting them so that they no longer fulfil the expectations of the form.<sup>34</sup> Regarding the first movement of Sibelius’s Fifth Symphony, for example, he suggests that attempts to understand the movement in terms of ‘Formenlehre’ types results in ‘analytical traps’;<sup>35</sup> as a result commentators struggle with different textbook interpretations, each of which has some merit but is ultimately unsatisfactory.<sup>36</sup> As an alternative, Hepokoski proposes readings which acknowledge the individuality of each movement alongside the dialogue with recognisable types. He uses the labels ‘expositional space’, ‘developmental space’ and ‘recapitulatory space’ to refer to sonata-like functions of formal sections without the interpretative rigidity associated with the terms exposition, development and recapitulation.

This provides an excellent framework for understanding form in the first movement of Walton’s Cello Concerto.<sup>37</sup> Leaving behind for a moment the expectation that the first movement of a concerto would have some relationship with sonata form, and considering instead just the thematic material as presented, a reasonably simple rondo structure is revealed (Table 6.1).

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<sup>33</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, pp.102-103. De Zeeuw adopts Howes’ analysis without explanation, except for noting that any relationship with classical rondo form is ‘illusory’. De Zeeuw, *Tonality and the Concertos of William Walton*, p.244.

<sup>34</sup> See James Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); James Hepokoski, ‘Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?: Strauss’s *Don Juan* Reinvestigated’, in Bryan Gilliam (ed.), *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992).

<sup>35</sup> Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5*, pp.60-61.

<sup>36</sup> For further examples see Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5*, pp.78-79; Hepokoski, ‘Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?’ pp.142-152.

<sup>37</sup> Further aspects of Sonata Deformation Theory as formulated by Hepokoski in relation to the music of Sibelius are notable for their *inapplicability* to later Walton; some of these are discussed with reference to Walton’s First Symphony and Viola Concerto below (p.177ff).

**Table 6.1: Rondo structure of the first movement of the Cello Concerto**

Bar Nos.	Length	Description
1-11	9	A Refrain (with introduction)
12-22	11	A' Repeat of refrain
23-37	15	B First Episode
38-48	11	B' First Episode (developing)
49-57	9	A Refrain
58-72	15	C Second Episode
73-84	9	A Refrain (with introduction)
85-98	14	Coda

Nevertheless, this movement does maintain a dialogue with sonata form. Meikle has argued that the ‘true recapitulation’ of the first movement’s sonata form occurs in the finale of the concerto, with the first and second subjects reversed.<sup>38</sup> Meikle relies on too rigid an imposition of a sonata form reading, leading to a somewhat convoluted justification of his argument; nonetheless, the essence of his case is useful. The last movement of this work features a substantial amount of material derived from the opening movement. This is a feature of both of Walton’s previous string concertos: the finale of the Violin Concerto includes a lengthy recollection of the first theme of the first movement, with its original tranquillity transformed into the nervous character of the rest of the finale, whilst in the Viola Concerto, the characteristic false-related sixths figure of the opening is used to conclude the final movement. The same pattern occurs in Walton’s *Sinfonia Concertante* (C21, 1927). In the Cello Concerto, the third movement is structured in the form of a number of flexible ‘improvisations’, alternating between those for solo cello and those for orchestra alone. These are based on a ‘cantilena’ theme<sup>39</sup> which is (at least on the surface) independent of the first movement. As the variations progress, there are brief snatches of material (for example, bb.30, 40-41, and 50ff.), that include major and minor thirds and a framing major seventh interval, and hence relate to the distinctive harmonies of the tonic sonority, a kind of signal that the first movement has not been forgotten. At b.211 in the third movement, marked explicitly ‘*a tempo di No* 6 *I<sup>o</sup> Mov.*’ (referring to the second episode of the first

<sup>38</sup> Meikle, ‘The Symphonies and Concertos’, p.84.

<sup>39</sup> The description is from Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.107.

movement), the alternating pattern of improvisations is broken, and the cello plays phrases from the first episode (of the first movement), accompanied by the orchestra outlining the harmonic framework of the second episode (from the first movement). The tonality here is not a stable tonic, as would be required by Edward T. Cone's 'sonata principle' that 'important statements made in a key other than the tonic must be re-stated in the tonic, or brought into closer relation with the tonic, before the movement ends'.<sup>40</sup> However, the return of familiar thematic material here is more salient than conventional tonal relationship, especially given the considerable expanse of time (including the whole second movement) between this passage and the themes' initial presentations. A reprise of various other elements from the first movement follows, including further material from the first episode, and the refrain, now complete with the characteristic instrumental figuration *and* back at its original transposition, with a root of C. There is one modification: the opening motif is now heard in triplets.

In order to reconcile competing interpretations of the form, the reading of the opening movement as a rondo can be retained, whilst ascribing sonata-like behaviours to the relevant passages and including (as Meikle suggests) the closing passages of the finale. The rondo and sonata interpretations intersect (Table 6.2). Bb.1-37 form the expositional space in the movement, where the tonic sonority is established, and the main theme (first subject) is stated twice (A, bb. 3-11; and A', bb.12-22). Contrasting thematic material is also found in this expositional space (B; bb.23-37). The developmental space is found in bb.38-72. The tonality is much less stable here, and one of Walton's favourite developmental techniques is employed: the superimposition of themes originally heard separately, at bb.42-48. New thematic material is also found here – the destabilised diatonicism discussed earlier (C, bb.58-72). The recapitulatory space starts at b.73 with a return of the refrain which – as discussed – is recapitulation in all respects other than that it is transposed a tritone away from its presentation at the start of the movement. It begins *a tempo* with the introductory material with which the movement began, giving a space in which the tonic sonority is re-established, creating the expectation of the return of the first subject melody, fulfilled one bar later than expected, in b.76.

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<sup>40</sup> Edward T. Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York; London: Norton, 1968), p.77.

Table 6.2: Sonata-like interpretation of form in the Cello Concerto

<b>Sonata</b>	<b>Rondo</b>	<b>Bar Nos.</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Label</b>
				Expositional Space
		1-2	2	Introduction
		3-11	9	A Refrain (First Subject)
		12-22	11	A' Repeat of refrain
		23-37	15	B First Episode (Second Subject)
				Developmental Space
		38-48	11	B' First Episode (developing)
		49-57	9	A Refrain (false recapitulation)
		58-72	15	C Second Episode
				Recapitulatory Space
		73-75	3	Reprise of Introduction
		76-84	9	A Refrain
		85-98	14	Coda
		<b>Second Movement</b>		
<b>Third Movement</b>				
211	17	C, B	Second episode, decoration by first episode melody	
227	9	A		
236	5	C, A	Second episode, decoration by refrain melody	
241	6		Reminiscence of Third Movement Theme	
247	25	A	Coda	

In considering the completion of the sonata structure in the finale of the concerto, the ‘rooted’ quality of the tonic sonority (or lack of it) becomes especially important. In the opening movement, the final C pedal – arrived at in b.89 via a mediant shift from E<sub>b</sub> minor – is accompanied by a complete C major chord free from any of the chromatic inflection that had previously characterised ‘tonic’ in this movement. The result is

indeed somewhat climactic, but (and of course this must be a subjective judgement) the impression is not one of completeness or finality; the tonic sonority has destabilised the pure triad. Instead the sense of return home is achieved from b.92, where harp, vibraphone and cello melodies, intriguingly out of synchronisation with each other, pick out the lost chromatic notes, A $\flat$  and B $\sharp$  this time. However, this is precisely the point where the sense of rootedness on C begins to disperse. The resting point of the solo cello line becomes G, which is repeated in four descending octaves at the end of the movement (Example 6.9). Woodwind gestures recall the original configuration of the tonic sonority, reverting to A $\flat$  and D $\sharp$  as the chromatic inflections and recalling the paired quaver articulation of the opening of the movement. The bottom C, entrusted to the basses, finishes at the beginning of b.97, whereas the other strings, emphasising G, and the solo cello, playing G, continue. A closing pizzicato gesture in the solo cello recalls the C root, but the note G – as is clearly notated – lingers after the C has finished sounding (Example 6.9). The tonic sonority has bought us home, but a final and unequivocal affirmation of C as the root of the tonic is missing. This instead occurs at the end of the third and final movement (Example 6.10). At that point, woodwind phrases again recall the harmonic makeup and quaver gestures of the tonic sonority, but it is now the note C that is the resting point of the solo line and that lingers after the other instruments have stopped playing. Indeed, the dramatic gesture in the cello that introduces the final C – *poco rit.*, with anticipation before the strong beat and a glissando descending fifth from G (reminiscent of a similar effect in the introduction to Elgar's Cello Concerto) – serves to especially emphasise the difference between the closing of this final movement and that of the first.

Writing of the return of a first movement theme in the finale of Britten's String Quartet in D major (1931), Arnold Whittall comments,

Such a device, placed as the coda to both the finale and the whole work, can serve more of a rhetorical than a genuinely organic function unless, as here, it is effectively prepared and presented [...] such thematic 'framing' is most effective when, as here, it provides long-delayed tonal closure as well as clinching thematic reminiscence.<sup>41</sup>

Whittall implies that a 'genuinely organic' reminiscence is to be valued above a merely 'rhetorical' one. Whether or not one agrees with this implication, it is salient to note that

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<sup>41</sup> Whittall, *The Music of Britten and Tippett*, p.16.

in Walton's Cello Concerto the reprise of the first movement theme is not just 'reminiscence' (as the similar features of the previous concertos could be considered); rather, the conclusion and resolution of the first movement is displaced into the finale. The return of the first-movement material is not an 'allusion' to the beginning, as Frank Howes maintains,<sup>42</sup> but the completion of the symphonic argument that had been suspended at the end of the first movement.

**Example 6.9: The closing bars of the first movement**

94 [a tempo Imo]

*mf* Vc. solo armonici

*pp* Arpa, Vib.

WW., Cel.

*ppp* Str. sul tasto

*pizz.*

8<sup>va</sup>

8<sup>vb</sup>

**Example 6.10: The closing bars of the finale**

256 [Adagio ♩=50c., *movendo*]

*f* Vc. Solo

Fl., Ob., VII. *pizz.*

Arpa, Cel.

*ppp*

Str. *pp*

Forio d'Ischia Feb.-Oct. 1956

<sup>42</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.108.



That Walton agonised over how the work should end is evident from the several discarded revisions already noted. Certainly Walton viewed the coda of the last movement as the ‘solution’ to the concerto; in a letter to Piatigorsky, he wrote:

I hope you will like the rest of the variations, but I am fearing that the Coda may not be what you want or expect. To me, musically speaking, it rounds off the work in a satisfying and logical way and should sound beautiful, noble dignified etc. though it ends on a whisper. Sometimes (and I hope this is one of them) an ending such as this one, is in every way just as impressive and evocative as a more spectacular and loud one, especially in this case, as I feel there is no other solution.<sup>43</sup>

Returning to the critical reception of Walton’s later works, Peter Evans, echoing the general trend of much of the reception literature, commented specifically about the Cello Concerto:

What one may regret is Walton’s failure to develop within his idiom, a tendency for the manner to be so consciously cultivated as to become mannerism [...] It is in the more demanding contexts of the later concertos [...] that he is most prone to fall back on earlier solutions.<sup>44</sup>

In point of fact, however, the outworking of sonata relations in the Cello Concerto discussed above cannot be described as an ‘earlier solution’. The first movement, for example, evidences a conflict on the one hand between rondo and sonata interpretations, and on the other hand between traditional tonal relationships and an alternative kind of tonal tension and resolution based on contrasting methods of harmonic construction and a play on the ‘rooted’ quality of an extratriadic sonority. Far from ‘relaxing’ into outworn patterns, Walton brings new life to such patterns, playing with the expectations of conventional tonality and traditional forms and creating a unique resolution to the problems posed.

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<sup>43</sup> Walton, letter to Piatigorsky, 28 October 1956. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.282.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Evans, ‘Sir William Walton’s Manner and Mannerism’, *The Listener*, 20 August 1959, p.297.

## Second Symphony (1961; C68), First Movement

Many of the features and concerns identified in the opening movement of the Cello Concerto are also pertinent to that of the Second Symphony.<sup>45</sup> Walton's reputation for composing slowly, and failing to complete works in time for planned performances, would seem to be justified in this case. The work was commissioned by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society in November 1955, in celebration of the founding charter of the borough of Liverpool given by King John in 1207; the work was to mark the charter's 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in 1957,<sup>46</sup> but in November of that year Walton had still not begun composing the symphony.<sup>47</sup> In February 1958, Walton reported that 'it is going so badly, that I fear I must start all over again [and] it might be wise to ask Liverpool to put off the date';<sup>48</sup> indeed, Walton completely rewrote a first version of the opening movement after showing it to George Szell some time in 1959.<sup>49</sup> The symphony was eventually completed in July 1960,<sup>50</sup> and was first performed not in Liverpool, but at the Edinburgh Festival on 2 September 1960, with John Pritchard conducting the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.<sup>51</sup> The work comprises three movements, following (in general terms) a traditional fast – slow – fast pattern.

Prominent criticisms of the Second Symphony in its early history, unflattering comparisons made with the First Symphony, and the particular esteem accorded to the genre, have already been noted.<sup>52</sup> Although performance standards may have been a

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<sup>45</sup> My comments on Walton's Second Symphony are revised and extended from those found in Michael Byde, 'Re-Evaluating William Walton's Second Symphony', MMus Dissertation, University of Leeds, 2004.

<sup>46</sup> In *The Times* of November 1955, it was suggested that 'plans are already in hand to hold civic celebrations to honour the occasion in 1957, and although no time limit has been imposed on Sir William it has been suggested that it would be appropriate if the first performance of the work could be given then'. [Anon.], 'Sir William Walton's New Symphony', *The Times*, 15 November 1955, p.12.

<sup>47</sup> Walton, letter to David Webster, 10 November 1957. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.301.

<sup>48</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 12 February 1958. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.310.

<sup>49</sup> Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.133.

<sup>50</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.211.

<sup>51</sup> Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.133.

<sup>52</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 4, p.74ff.

factor in the lukewarm reaction afforded to the work at its première,<sup>53</sup> it may also be the case that the work is somewhat enigmatic; as Kennedy puts it:

The truth is that the Second Symphony is curiously reluctant to yield its secrets and inner meaning through a few hearings [...] it does need concentrated and frequent listening before, suddenly, the veils part and one is admitted to the inner circle of its highly distinctive sound-world.<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, a number of critics gave more positive evaluation of the work after some time had elapsed, and especially given the opportunity to hear George Szell's 1962 recording with the Cleveland Orchestra.<sup>55</sup> The work certainly rewards repeated hearings and analytical exploration, and the opening movement – like that of the Cello Concerto – provides an illuminating case study of Walton's symphonic argument through interaction with (and transgression of) established harmonic and formal conventions.

### **Sonata Form I**

The formal organisation of the movement bears some similarities with that of the Cello Concerto: it is broadly a modified sonata form, with two returns of the opening material, at bb.217 and 338 respectively (Table 6.3). The interpretation of these returns – in terms of their formal function and effect – deserves further comment, but since this is determined to a significant extent by harmonic considerations, this discussion is left until after a consideration of harmony and tonality in the movement.

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<sup>53</sup> See the comments on performance standards in this thesis, Chapter 4, p.79ff.

<sup>54</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.211-212. Frank Howes makes similar comments in *The Music of William Walton*, p.41.

<sup>55</sup> See for example Edward Greenfield, '[Review of Szell's Recording of] Symphony No 2, Partita for Orchestra: Walton', *The Musical Times*, 103(1436) (October 1962), p.698; Peter Heyworth, 'Music of the Sixties', *The Observer*, 11 January 1970, p.27; Robert Angles, 'Dispiriting Walton', *Music and Musicians*, 11 (11 January 1963), p.44.

**Table 6.3: Basic formal plan of the first movement of the Second Symphony**

Bar	Description
	<b>Exposition</b>
1	First Subject
70	Second Subject
92	Codetta
	<b>Development</b>
133	Development
	<b>Recapitulation</b>
217	First Subject
254	Second Subject
276	Codetta
338	First Subject

A number of sources have confused the boundaries of the second subject in this movement. Both Meikle and Howes posit b.71 for the start of second subject,<sup>56</sup> a suggestion which does not bear up under close scrutiny, since the viola melody that starts there (and is quoted by both authors) is added as a *pp* doubling to a melody that begins in the cor anglais and clarinet in the previous bar (see Example 6.11). Indeed, b.70 marks a clear boundary in a number of other significant ways: there is a change in harmonic language; a shift in texture; a change in melodic contour from descending to ascending; changes in instrumentation with woodwinds rather than strings taking the melody; and new expression markings (*grazioso*).

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<sup>56</sup> See Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.45; Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.86. Also see Meikle's quotation of the return of the second subject in b.255, p.87.

**Example 6.11: Melodic lines at the start of the second subject of the opening movement of the Second Symphony, b.70**

[Second Subject]  
70 *Grazioso*

Cl., C.i. Cl., C.i. Cl. Solo  
Vle. *pp cant.*

### The Tonic Sonority

Like that of the Cello Concerto, the opening movement has a distinctive tonic sonority to which other harmonic languages provide a contrast. The sonority – a complex, many-faceted structure – forms the basis of the tonality and tonal argument in the movement through a novel process of composing-out, albeit one with quite different principles to those of much tonal music.

Commentary on the tonality of this movement has sometimes been simplistic, ascribing traditional key labels to the tonic sonority that reduce out its most characteristic features. Neil Tierney, for example, suggests that the first subject is ‘announced over a background of strings and celesta in G minor’,<sup>57</sup> whilst Francis Routh goes a little further: ‘the G minor tonality of the first movement is coloured with C sharp’.<sup>58</sup> Howes comes closest to a full explanation, describing the ‘acidulated’ tonality as ‘G, a tart G with an F sharp, C sharp and B flat in its final chord’.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the tonic sonority is imbued with sharp sevenths and semitone clashes that are the source of the ‘pungent, astringent, acidulated flavour’ which Howes suggests characterises the movement.<sup>60</sup> However, whilst ‘G minor’ is certainly a relevant label (the dominant-tonic bass progression at the end of the first paragraph, bb.31-33, is enough to confirm this), it is also an insufficient one, since the triadic potential of the sonority is only one of several possible focuses available within its structure.

<sup>57</sup> Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Hale, 1984), p.185.

<sup>58</sup> Francis Routh, *Contemporary British Music: The Twenty-Five Years from 1945 to 1970* (London: Macdonald, 1972), p.34.

<sup>59</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.45.

<sup>60</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.43.

The tonic sonority is built up over the opening bars of the work from a core of four notes to a complete set of eight notes (for a reduction of this passage, see Example 6.13). The initiating gesture of the movement (bb.1-2) contains 6 pitch-classes [C# D, F#, G, A, Bb] (class 6-Z19A; Example 6.12A), and does indeed seem like a version of a G minor chord, since the G occurs in the bass. Following this gesture, the ongoing accompanimental figure in the celesta, violin two and viola (bb.2-9) creates an oscillating and yet static tonic sonority with the set [C# D A Bb] (class 4-7\*; Example 6.12B). This is coloured further by an occasional F# in the melodic phrases of the woodwind instruments, which soon becomes integrated into the harmony (class 5-21B, Example 6.12C; the bassoon plays a long F# as the culmination of a descending melodic phrase in clarinet and harp at bb.6-9). At b.10, further pitches – D#, E and G – appear in the melody, completing the eight-note pitch-class set [C# D D# E F# G A Bb] (class 8-18A; Example 6.12D). The complexity of the sonority here – its various guises from the movement’s opening gesture to its full eight-note expression at b.10 – mean it cannot be reduced to a single pitch-class set. Rather, it is best considered in terms of a group of similar-sounding sets that form a subset relationship (Example 6.12;  $A \supset B \subset C \subset D$ ).

**Example 6.12: Sets and set-classes in the tonic sonority**

1 **A**  
6-Z19A

2 **B**  
4-7\*

6 **C**  
5-21B

10 **D**  
8-18A

Example 6.13: Bb.1-12 of the first movement, showing pc sets and set classes

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the first movement, measures 1-12. Each system includes a melodic line and a harmonic accompaniment. The first system (measures 1-5) features a melodic line with a five-measure phrase and a harmonic line with a five-measure phrase. The second system (measures 5-9) features a melodic line with a five-measure phrase and a harmonic line with a five-measure phrase. The third system (measures 9-12) features a melodic line with a five-measure phrase and a harmonic line with a five-measure phrase. The pc sets and set classes are indicated above the melodic lines: [C# D F# G A Bb] 6-Z19A, [C# D A Bb] 4-7\*, [C# D F# A Bb] 5-21B, and [C# D D# E F# G A Bb] 8-18A. The tempo is marked 'Allegro Molto' with a metronome marking of 138-144. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various instrument parts: Cl., Fl., +Cor A., VII., Vlc., Cel., Tr., Vl2., Vle., Vlc., Cb.pizz., Pno., Cl., Arpa1, Fl., Ob., Cor A., +8va, +VII., WW., +Picc., +VII., Cor., Tr., and (Fg.). Dynamics include mf, f, fp, f, p, ff, fz, and p.

The supposed 'root' of the tonic G dissolves in a similar manner to the disappearing root C of the opening movement of the Cello Concerto. Here, the root G appears only momentarily in the bass instruments on the first beat of the first full bar; it then disappears completely until snatching recurrences in melodic figures from b.9. A similar situation pertains at the end of the movement, where the reappearance of the bass-note G in b.369 precipitates the closing chord, but is not held-over into it (see Example 6.14;

a G does appear in a higher register). And, as in the Cello Concerto, the focus is moved away from that which could have been a stable root to a pitch a fifth above: here, from the root G of ‘G minor’ to the fifth D, the highest note of the harmonic configurations in second violins and celesta, and the final pitch of the two melodic phrases that open the movement.

**Example 6.14: The tonic sonority in the final bars of the first movement**

Although theories that attribute the stability of the triad or the diatonic scale to the ‘natural’ overtone series rather than to historical factors have been called into question,<sup>61</sup> the overtone series remains of significant importance in traditional music theory (including, for example, in Rameau and Riemann) and in modern psychoacoustics.<sup>62</sup> Bearing this in mind, consider the overtone series in relation to the structure of the two tonic sonorities discussed here. In both, the voicing of the chords on their initial presentation includes root, fifth and tenth in the lower parts, with dissonances attributable to higher overtones reserved for the higher registers. It is possible that the stable quality of Walton’s tonic sonorities is due partly to this similarity with the overtone series.

<sup>61</sup> See for example Norman Cazden, ‘Hindemith and Nature’, *Music Review*, 15 (1954), p.290.

<sup>62</sup> An overview of the music theories of Rameau and Riemann, including their derivation of theoretical principles from the overtone series, is found in the *New Grove* entries. Graham Sadler, ‘Rameau, Jean-Philippe’, in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 20 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp.795-797; Brian Hyer and Alexander Rehding, ‘Riemann, Hugo’, in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 21 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp.362-366. A contemporary discussion of psychoacoustics and the overtone series is found in David M. Howard and J. A. S. Angus, *Acoustics and Psychoacoustics*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Focal, 2006), pp.110-152.



The referential character of the tonic sonority is confirmed not only by its distinctiveness and memorability, but also its return at structurally important points in the movement, including at the beginning of the development (b.133ff.), at the return of the first subject (b.338), and in the final bars of the movement (bb.366-310; Example 6.14 above). The return of the first subject at b.217 is an interesting case to which we will return in due course.

Of course, the tonic sonority does have triadic potential, although not only for G minor. Four triads are possible from within its pitch-class content: G minor and D major (tonic and dominant in G minor), F# minor, and F# major. However, Walton keeps this potential beneath the surface. Consider, for example, the oscillating celesta and string parts which form the core of the sonority: triads are available in the pitch content of these parts (F# minor and D major in bb.2-9), but the triads are never voiced. Where triads are presented as the sonority develops (C# minor and G minor in bb.10-11), they are obscured by several factors: additional notes in close voicings (B $\flat$  and C# respectively), the speed of motion of the chords, the sustained non-triadic E in the bassoon, and accented non-triad notes in the melodic parts. This avoidance of triads, along with similar voicing techniques as were noted in the Cello Concerto (with oscillation around fixed points), are the means by which this historically discordant structure becomes stable: dissonances are not heard against any single prevailing triad and so no longer create the expectation of resolution.

Aside from triadic potential, the sonority has quartal properties, and is closely related to Skryabin's so-called 'mystic chord'. These are left as largely unrealised potentials, whilst the sonority's proximity to the octatonic collection, and the saturation within it of the subset class 3-3, prove to be more significant. The tonic sonority shares seven out of eight pitch-classes with octatonic collection III,<sup>63</sup> and includes the five-note octatonic segment from E to B $\flat$  (see Example 6.15); the presence of octatonic scales and passages in other parts of the symphony can thus be related to the tonic sonority. The sonority can further be viewed in terms of multiple subsets of the class 3-3; in fact, it can be seen as being entirely comprised of overlaid instances of this set (Figure 6.2, p.166). Further, an affinity may be noted between the collections Walton employs here and the 'gypsy

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<sup>63</sup> See the brief discussion of naming conventions for octatonic collections in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.120f.

scale' used in Hungarian folk music and considered an influence on Bartók amongst others (Example 6.15).<sup>64</sup> Overall, the tonic sonority is best regarded as a self-sufficient discordant structure that has triadic as well as octatonic potential that is explored as the movement progresses.

**Example 6.15: Similarity between the tonic sonority and octatonic collection III**

The image displays three musical staves in treble clef, each showing a sequence of notes. The first staff, titled 'The tonic sonority', contains the notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and F#4. The second staff, titled 'Octatonic collection III', contains the notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and F#4. The third staff, titled 'Hungarian gypsy scale on G', contains the notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and F#4. The notes are represented by half notes on a five-line staff.

Noting relationships between the first and second subjects in this movement, Meikle suggests:

Some features of the first movement anticipate the serial proclivities of the finale; principal among these is the relationship between first subject and the first element of the second subject, both of which, if we examine them in the same key [...] consist of the same prominent intervals, that is, major seventh, augmented second/minor third and semitone.<sup>65</sup>

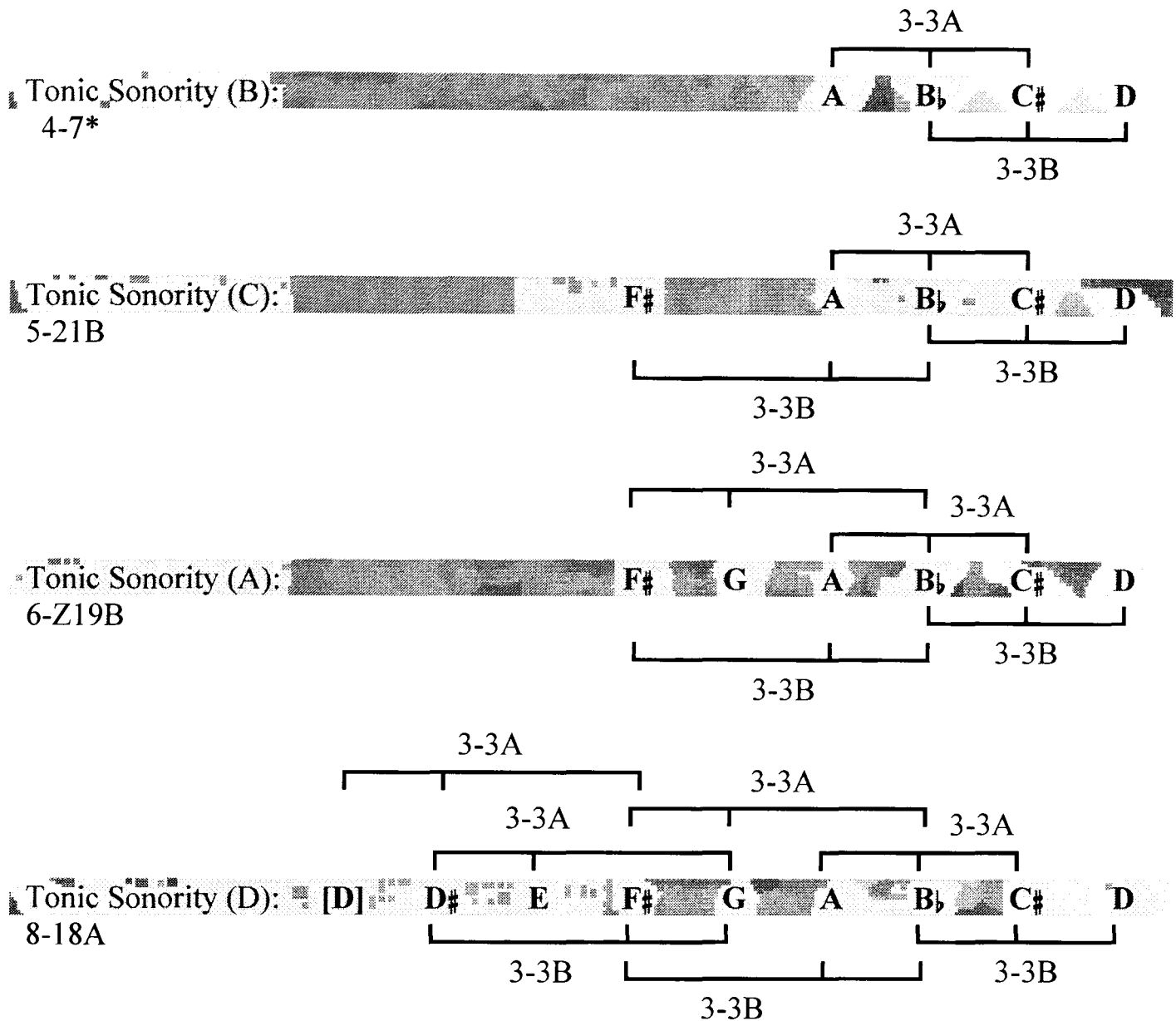
The 'serial proclivities of the finale' are important in their own right. This is a topic to be considered in more detail in the next chapter, although it is pertinent to note for the moment that the set-class relations used here to explore relationships between and within Walton's characteristic harmonic structures are, at heart, various combinations of transposition and inversion, a kind of permutational thinking not far-removed from Schoenberg's twelve-note method. Here, set-class relationships again help to reveal the similarity between first and second subjects that Meikle attempts to describe.

<sup>64</sup> David Cooper, *Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.8-9.

<sup>65</sup> Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.86. See also Howes's motivic analysis in *The Music of William Walton*, p.43, and comments on p.45.

**Figure 6.2: The tonic sonority as overlaid instances of set-class 3-3**

The forms A – D of the tonic sonority are taken from the earlier discussion (see Example 6.12, p.161).



**Example 6.16: Comparison of phrases in the first and second subjects**

Example 6.16 compares phrases in the first and second subjects. The notation shows:

- First Subject:** Flute (Fl.). Melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B $\flat$ 4, C $\sharp$ 4, D4. A bracket labeled '5' spans G4 to C $\sharp$ 4. A bracket labeled 'Major 7th' spans C $\sharp$ 4 to B $\flat$ 4. Above the staff, '[C $\sharp$  D B $\flat$ ] 3-3B' is indicated.
- Second Subject:** Clarinet in C (Cl., C.i.) and Violin (Vle.). Melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B $\flat$ 4, C $\sharp$ 4, D4. A bracket labeled 'Major 7th' spans C $\sharp$ 4 to B $\flat$ 4. Above the staff, '[A B $\flat$  F $\sharp$ ] 3-3B' is indicated.

The major seventh is indeed a prominent interval in phrases from both first and second subject (Example 6.16); but further, the harmonic affinity between the two subjects can be described in terms of the prevalence of the set-class 3-3 (Meikle's 'augmented second/minor third and semitone'). This is a prominent melodic cell in both the first and

second subjects (see Example 6.17 and Example 6.18), and becomes particularly pronounced in the development section of the movement. The development (b.133ff.) begins with alternation between motifs from the first and second subjects, with harmonic support from variously modified versions of the tonic sonority. From this emerges a descending three-note motif, also of set-class 3-3 (see Example 6.19), that dominates the work until the return of the first subject at the beginning of the recapitulation. In this way the motivic cell 3-3 – that which can be seen as the generative source of the tonic sonority and which is so prevalent in the melodies of two most important themes – is presented conspicuously, as if to reveal its germinating properties.

**Example 6.17: Set-class 3-3 in the first subject**

[Allegro Molto  $\text{♩} = 138-144c.$ ]

The musical score for Example 6.17 consists of three staves of music in 3/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as Allegro Molto with a quarter note equal to 138-144 c. The first staff (measures 2-5) is for Clarinet (Cl.) and Flute (Fl.). It features a descending three-note motif (C#-D-Bb) with dynamics *fp*, *f*, and *p*. Annotations include "+C.i.", "Vll., Vlc.", "+8va", and "Cl., Arpa". A bracket below the staff labels the set class as [C# D Bb] 3-3B. The second staff (measures 6-9) is for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), and Cor Anglais (Cor A.). It features a descending three-note motif (F#-A-Bb) with dynamics *f*, *mf*, and *ff*. Annotations include "+8va", "+Vll.", "WW.", and "Fl., Ob., +8va". A bracket below the staff labels the set class as [F# A Bb] 3-3B. The third staff (measures 10-13) is for Flute (Fl.) and Oboe (Ob.). It features a descending three-note motif (D#-E-G) with dynamics *fz*, *p*, *f*, and *f*. Annotations include "+Picc.", "+Vll.", and "Fl., Ob.". A bracket below the staff labels the set class as [D# E G] 3-3A.

**Example 6.18: Set-class 3-3 in the second subject**

**Example 6.19: Three-note motif from the start of the development**

Two further segmentations of the second subject reveal harmonic relationships to the tonic sonority. The five-note set found in the first two bars (bb.70-71; Example 6.20),  $[D F_b F\# A B]$ , is in class 5-21B, whilst the opening melodic statement is confined to the set  $[D E_b G F\# A B_b]$ , class 6-Z19B. Both of these set-classes feature in the tonic sonority. If these set-class relationships seem somewhat abstract, remember that they reveal, in essence, affinities in harmonic properties between different note groupings. The relationships evidence the fact that despite the more traditional tonal construction of the second subject, harmonic and melodic content is still saturated with the motivic unit 3-3 (recall that  $5-21B \supset 3-3 \subset 6-Z19$ ; Figure 6.2, p.166).

Thus far the emphasis has been on similarities (especially set-class relationships) between different parts of the opening movement – those relationships that indicate a ‘composing out’ of the tonic sonority, not through elaboration of a Schenkerian background, but through motivic exploration of the sonority’s internal structural potential. That Walton was self-aware about such harmonic procedures is evident from his comment, in a letter to Alan Frank, that one of the main weaknesses of the movement was ‘a certain harmonic monotony as the whole piece turns on the [first] bar almost throughout’.<sup>66</sup> This need not be viewed as a weakness, however, as there are indeed significant contrasts (including harmonic contrasts) in the movement, especially between first and second subjects.

Whereas the first subject is underpinned by a dissonant extra-triadic non-diatonic harmonic structure, the melody of the second subject is accompanied by triadic harmonies underlined by a conventional bass line (see Example 6.20). That a figured-bass reduction (such as that found in Example 6.21) is plausible is indicative of the very different kind of harmonic procedure employed here. A conventional key-label (B $\flat$  major) is much more appropriate here than was ‘G minor’ for the first subject. Even the more chromatic harmonies in bb.76-77 are entirely constructed of thirds and resolve to a tonic chord. Of course Walton’s preferred harmonic flavours are still present: the melody’s circling around the note A creates the characteristic major seventh against the ever-present B $\flat$  in accompanying parts. This harmonic differentiation between the two subjects is complemented by other aspects of the music, with sustained chords in open voicings and a melody-dominated texture in the second subject contrasting with the closely-voiced quaver chords of the opening of the work.

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<sup>66</sup> Walton perhaps meant the second bar. Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 17 January 1959. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.314.

Example 6.20: The second subject, bb.70-78

70 [Second Subject]  
Grazioso

Cl., C.i. # +Vle.  
VI2. *p*  
Arpa., Cor.  
Vlc. *pizz*  
Cb. *pizz.*

74

VI2.  
Fag., Vlc.  
Arpa.  
Fl., Cl.B., Cel.  
Cel., Arpa. Fl.

Example 6.21: Harmonic reduction of bb.70-78

70 [Second Subject]  
Grazioso

6  
3  
6  
3  
5  
3b  
5  
3q  
6  
4  
5  
3  
6  
4  
3

Donald Street has suggested that Walton made frequent use of octatonic collections, citing Nos. 2 and 5 of the original version of *Façade* and noting 'it is present in all three movements of the Second Symphony'.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, in this movement, we have already noted the close affinity of the tonic sonority to octatonic collection III; fully octatonic passages also occur, marking passages of transition in the movement. The pitch content of the transition between first and second subjects, bb.42-69, is almost entirely derived from octatonic collection III, although occasional passing-note decorations do contain additional notes (such as the D $\sharp$  in the double bass, bassoon and cor anglais in b.51). The use of this collection is temporarily suspended in bb.54-55 but quickly returns at b.56. The octatonic character of the passage is most apparent at the end of the transition: the single descending lyrical melodic line (bb.61-69) is essentially a decorated descending octatonic scale. The pizzicato B $\flat$  major chord at b.70 announces new harmonic territory and the beginning of the second subject. The octatonic passage here acts as a bridge between the contrasting harmonic languages of the first subject (the tonic sonority) and the second subject (B $\flat$  major). Octatonic modality thus complements the presence of the tonic sonority and of diatonic passages.

Having described different harmonic constructions found within the movement, a clearer picture of the operation of tonality emerges. Some vestiges of hierarchical relationships remain: if G minor is at least partly appropriate as a designation of the opening key, then the second subject in B $\flat$  major represents the relative major. However, as with the Cello Concerto, the aural focus on (and hence analytical significance of) scale degrees is substantially dissolved, with the composing-out of the initial extra-diatonic tonic sonority taking the form of explorations of its content through alternative expressions in diatonic and octatonic modalities, and through motivic development of its principal interval relationships. Thus the principal contrast to the tonic is not with similar harmonic structures built on different scale degrees, but with different kinds of harmonic structure, regardless of the root (if any) on which they are built.

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<sup>67</sup> Donald Street, 'The Modes of Limited Transposition', *The Musical Times*, 117 (1604) (October 1976), pp.821-822.



## Sonata Form II

In an interview prior to the première of the Second Symphony, Walton suggested that ‘the first movement is not quite in ordinary first-movement form, but people will be able to see that it is a first movement.’<sup>68</sup> Later – referring to revisions he made to the opening movement before its première and publication – Walton wrote to Alan Frank:

The first scored version was a bit too truncated [and] gave me the feeling of being so. However I stuck to the foreshortened recapitulation which I feel, works, as well as making it more interesting formally speaking.<sup>69</sup>

Having described some of the harmonic and tonal properties of the movement, we are in a better position to reconsider the sonata structure, especially the two returns of the opening material at bb.217 and b.338 respectively. The structure here leaves room for competing interpretations (Figure 6.3). Meikle, for example, argues that the recapitulation begins with the transition at b.227, with the themes recapitulated in reverse.<sup>70</sup> The return of the first subject before this (at b.217) must be considered, Meikle argues, as a continuation of the development (Figure 6.3A), as it is not in the tonic. Instead, it is the brief statement at b.338 that he views as the recapitulation of the first subject. This would fit well with Walton’s own description, since the ‘foreshortened’ first subject at b.338 is only allowed four bars of restatement before its motifs are fashioned into the work’s coda.

**Figure 6.3: Competing interpretations of the sequence of events at the end of the development**

	Climax of development	<i>Molto Marcato</i>	<i>A tempo</i>	First Subject	Transition	Second Subject	<i>Agitato</i>	First Subject
Bar No.	201	213	215	217	227	254	276	338
A	Development				Recapitulation			
B	Development			Recapitulation				

<sup>68</sup> Walton, quoted in [Anon.], ‘Sir William Walton on the Musical Schisms of Today’, p.12.

<sup>69</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 16 April 1960. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.319.

<sup>70</sup> Meikle, ‘The Symphonies and Concertos’, pp.85-86. Whilst Meikle states this return of the first subject is ‘not in the tonic’ (p.86), he does not offer a suggestion as to what key it is in.

Indeed, the first return of the first subject (b.217; Example 6.22) could – even by the alternative construction of tonality presented here – be considered to be in a different ‘key’, since it is presented not only at a different pitch-level but is also distinctly more triadic (and hence structured differently to the tonic sonority). The distinctive oscillating figures in violin two and celesta begin with alternation between half-diminished sevenths on F# and F major seventh chords, and move through successive chromatic changes to chords that closely resemble vii7 and i in E minor (Example 6.22; the limitations of roman numeral labelling are apparent here, since the chromatic inflections of these chords are nearly impossible to incorporate). A descending chromatic bass line, added from b.220, affirms the more traditionally rooted tonality of this return of the first subject, since it arrives, at b.226, on a strong dominant B (although its resolution to the tonic is not realised).

Example 6.22: The return of the first subject at b.217

[a tempo]  
217 Fl., Ob., Cl. VII. Pno. Cl.  
Cel. Arpa. Vlc. pizz.  
221 Cor., Fg. VII. >Cl., Fl.  
Vlc. pizz. Descending chromatic bassline E minor: vii7? i?  
225 VII. >Cl., Fl. VII. WW. Str. 3  
Descending chromatic bassline E minor: V?----- Interrupted Cadence

Despite this, Meikle's formal plan can be adjusted in favour of an alternative that is more sensitive to the particular musical processes in this movement. The return of the first subject at b.217 represents the return of every important aspect of the first subject (including the characteristic violin and celesta figuration which have not been present for the entire development section) *except* its pitch level and harmonic construction. Whilst tonality is of course central to structural considerations in sonata forms, we have noted the weakened status of traditional tonal relationships in the movement, and in this context the passage from bb.217-226, rather than being a 'false' recapitulation or part of the development, could instead be considered as the start of the recapitulation. In other words, the *process* of recapitulation begins at b.217 (Figure 6.3B); the second return of the first subject as a coda is a familiar enough feature of classical sonata forms,<sup>71</sup> and in this case it finalises the process of recapitulation since the first subject appears there in its original configuration and at the original pitch level. Indeed, this second reprise of first movement material provides a particularly effective resolution to the movement since it not only completes the process of recapitulation which had seemed incomplete at b.217, but also provides a sense of finality after the various Beethovenian diversions (e.g. b.305ff.) taken in the course of the recapitulation. Overall, the movement can be profitably considered as a kind of enhanced arch form in which the recapitulation takes the form of a round trip where the return to the point of origin is effected by stages in which different aspects of 'home' return at different times (see Table 6.4). In the spirit of Hepokoski's Sonata Deformation Theory, there is no need to make a definitive analytical choice between these competing interpretations; rather, the tension between interpretative possibilities is the essence of the form.

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<sup>71</sup> As, for example, in the first movement of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, in which the coda begins with a clarinet version of the first phrase of the opening theme (b.305ff.), or the last movement of the same symphony in which both of the main themes of the movement return for a second time in an exceptionally long coda (b.267ff.).

**Table 6.4: Sonata form structure of the first movement**

Bar Nos.	'Tonality'	Description
		<b>Exposition</b>
1	Tonic Sonority	First Subject
42	Octatonic III	Transition
70	B $\flat$ major	Second Subject
92	Octatonic I	<i>Agitato</i> (Codetta)
		<b>Development</b>
133	Tonic Sonority	
146	Tonic Sonority (transposed)	Phrases from both subjects
172	Various	<i>Brioso</i>
215	Octatonic II	Retransition
		<b>Recapitulation</b>
217	E minor	First Subject
227	Octatonic III	Transition
254	G major	Second Subject
		<b>Coda</b>
276	Octatonic I	<i>Agitato</i>
305	Tonic Sonority (transposed)	Motifs from start of development
330	Octatonic II	'Dominant' preparation
338	Tonic Sonority	First Subject

Arguments concerning listener's or critic's 'expectations' of symphonies or first movement forms can seem somewhat jaded in relation to twentieth-century works in which deviations (or 'deformations') are themselves expected; nonetheless, as recent genre theory reminds us, such categories as the 'symphony' (and the associated 'sonata form') are indeed relevant to the way in which works are perceived and received.<sup>72</sup> The

<sup>72</sup> For an introduction to the relevant issues here, see Heather Dubrow, *Genre* (London: Methuen, 1982). Genre theory is certainly an important backdrop to sonata deformation theory, as is evident from reading James Hepokoski, 'Back and Forth From "Egmont": Beethoven, Mozart, and the Nonresolving Recapitulation', *19th-Century Music*, 25(2/3) *The Long Century, 1780-1920* (Autumn, 2001 - Spring, 2002), pp.127-154.

protracted geneses of the Cello Concerto and the Second Symphony – which provide the clearest examples of symphonic argument through a dialogue with sonata form – suggest that the weight of expectation bore heavily on the composer’s shoulders. It is perhaps significant in this respect that Walton played *up* the ‘lightness’ of others of his later works, most notably the *Partita*, about which he wrote (in response to a request for a programme note): ‘It is meant to be enjoyed straight off & there is no attempt to ponder over the imponderables’.<sup>73</sup> Walton’s almost dismissive comments were perhaps intended to dissuade expectations associated with the symphonic; indeed, a number of his other works of this period (including the *Partita*) display more fragmentary and less integrated formal designs to those considered here (some of these will be explored in the next chapter).

Nonetheless, there was one further work from which ‘symphonic argument’ would certainly have been high on the agenda: the projected Third Symphony, which Walton had wanted to write for André Previn. The work was suggested as early as 1972, and was ‘getting under way’ in January 1973;<sup>74</sup> in January 1974, Walton sent the first page to Previn, but progress was slow. In April, he had worked out an overall plan: ‘allegretto—scherzo diabolico—slow finale. Bound to be a flop with the slow mov. at the end’.<sup>75</sup> Various smaller projects proved to be distracting, and Walton’s age was beginning to get the better of him; by April 1980 the work had still not progressed significantly,<sup>76</sup> and on Walton’s death in 1981, Previn still had only the first page of the work. Little of depth can be gleaned from a work so far from completion, but at least from Walton’s basic movement plan we can note his concern with overall structure and effect; and, in the light of the discussion of tonic sonorities in the Cello Concerto and Second Symphony, it is intriguing to note the sonority with which the symphony was to have commenced (Example 6.23).

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<sup>73</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 13 November 1957. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.302-303.

<sup>74</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.257-258.

<sup>75</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 17 April 1974. Quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.271-272.

<sup>76</sup> Walton, letter to Previn, 30 April 1980. Quoted in Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.275.

Example 6.23: The opening of the projected Third Symphony<sup>77</sup>

The musical score is for the opening of the projected Third Symphony, marked with a tempo of ♩=112c. The score is in 4/4 time and features the following parts:

- Ob. (Oboe):** Solo *p* *express.* (piano, expressive). The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic phrase starting on G4.
- Cor. (Cor Anglais):** *Con sord.* (con sordina), *pp* (pianissimo). The part consists of sustained chords, primarily G4 and D5.
- Pnfe. (Percussion):** *pp* (pianissimo). The part consists of a steady eighth-note rhythmic pattern.
- VI.II (Violins II):** *pp con sord.* (pianissimo con sordina). The part consists of a steady eighth-note rhythmic pattern.
- VI.II (Violas):** *div con sord. sul pont* (divisi con sordina sul ponticello). The part consists of a steady eighth-note rhythmic pattern.
- Vle. (Violins):** *pp* (pianissimo). The part consists of sustained chords, primarily G4 and D5.
- Vle. (Violas):** *ppp con sord.* (pianississimo con sordina). The part consists of a steady eighth-note rhythmic pattern.
- C's (Cello):** *pizz.* (pizzicato), *pp* (pianissimo). The part consists of a steady eighth-note rhythmic pattern.

Sonata Forms and Tonic Sonorities in Earlier Walton

The two principal case studies in this chapter – from a concerto and a symphony – can be usefully compared to Walton’s earlier works in the same genres. As has been suggested, Walton’s First Symphony was written in a climate in which the music of Sibelius was popular with both audiences and critics, and the symphony has a number of Sibelian features. Hepokoski’s Sonata Deformation Theory, much of it developed with Sibelius in mind, provides a number of relevant concepts, including those of rotational forms; teleological genesis; and the concept of the *Klang*. Rotational forms, in Hepokoski’s formulation, are similar to Classical strophic variations, although they are conceived on a larger scale, and each rotation typically comprises multiple contrasting thematic groups (hence Hepokoski’s subtitle, ‘varied multisectional strophes’).<sup>78</sup> Themes are presented in an initial rotation, and are then re-presented in varied cyclic

<sup>77</sup> This reduction is based on the page Walton sent to Previn, reproduced in Humphrey Burton and Maureen Murray, *William Walton, the Romantic Loner: A Centenary Portrait Album* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.160.

<sup>78</sup> Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5*, pp.23-26.

rotations.<sup>79</sup> The reiterative process involved in rotational forms contributes towards a teleological framework in which a thematic goal (or *telos*) is generated through successive rotations of thematic material. A related concept is the *Klang*, a referential ‘sound sheet’ (not dissimilar to Walton’s tonic sonorities) in which harmony and orchestration are both important factors; the *Klang* may provide particular focus to teleological rotational forms.<sup>80</sup>

J. P. E. Harper-Scott has employed all of these concepts, alongside Schenkerian methodology, in an informative analysis of Walton’s First Symphony. Here, the first movement is considered as three-and-a-half rotations of thematic material, corresponding to exposition, development, recapitulation and a short coda (bb.1-247, 247-482, 483-626 and 627-670 respectively). Rather than a tonic triad, the movement employs a tonic sonority, a Sibelian *Klang*, an ‘enriched’ B $\flat$  minor triad with an added flattened seventh. Harper-Scott comments, ‘this movement is composed of essentially static melodic material which circles around a sonority that the opening bars sear into our aural memory.’<sup>81</sup> Tension is built up especially through the use of extended pedal-points, and ultimately through a vastly-prolonged I-V-I motion that resolves an extended dominant pedal (bb.433-482) at the beginning of the recapitulation (b.483). Harper-Scott views the principal thematic process in the entire four-movement symphony as the teleological evolution of the initial motif (the rising third that established the *Klang* of the opening bars) into the triumphant theme (characterised by a rising fourth) that accompanies the finale’s final arrival on a structural dominant (at b.478; Example 6.24).

**Example 6.24: The thematic *telos* of the First Symphony according to Harper-Scott**

[Maestoso (♩=c.56)]

478 Str.

*ff* molto marc. e ten.

<sup>79</sup> Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5*, p.25.

<sup>80</sup> Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5*, pp.27-29.

<sup>81</sup> J. P. E. Harper-Scott, ‘“Our True North”: Walton’s First Symphony and Sibelianism’ (paper presented at British Music and Modernism 1901-1939, Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-Upon-Avon, 6 May 2006). My thanks to Harper-Scott for providing a typescript version of this presentation.

Similar arguments pertain to Walton's earlier Viola Concerto (1929). The work is dominated by a false-related sixths figure – what Tovey calls 'the initial and final motto of the whole work'<sup>82</sup> – the most memorable thematic material in the opening movement, reprised at the end of the finale (Example 6.25). This characteristic dissonance occurs in the opening viola melody, where a C $\sharp$  sounds against an A major harmony, and is developed into a figure comprising interlocking sixths with a characteristic false relation (see Example 6.25). Here it is noteworthy that they are indeed (as Howes suggests) 'falsely related' sixths:<sup>83</sup> the false relation can only be heard as such against the background of a strong root note or tonic, however temporary. In other words, this figure introduces some major-minor ambiguity (the tonality is often referred to as 'A major/minor'),<sup>84</sup> but one which seems to require resolution, and there is no ambiguity as to which root is implied. As such, the false relations are unstable with respect to the foundational triad, unlike the tonic sonorities identified in the Cello Concerto and Second Symphony which become stable, and in fact destabilise pure triads to some extent.

**Example 6.25: The false-related sixths figure at the end of the first movement of the Viola Concerto**

[Meno mosso (♩=72c.)  
rall 165 a tempo  
Vla. Solo  
Cb. pizz.]

In terms of form, the opening movement of the Viola Concerto displays similar Sibelian features to the First Symphony. Consider Meikle's formal plan (based largely on Tovey;<sup>85</sup> represented in Table 6.5A). As Meikle points out, the development is around twice as long as the exposition, and the movement's climax occurs in the development so that the recapitulation is not the structural goal of the movement, having instead the

<sup>82</sup> Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis (III): Concertos*, vol. II (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p.222.

<sup>83</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.81.

<sup>84</sup> See for example Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.85; Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.81; Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.51; De Zeeuw, *Tonality and the Concertos of William Walton*, p.178.

<sup>85</sup> Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis III*, pp.220-226.



character of a reflective postlude: ‘an epilogue, a reminiscence, rather than the triumphant consummation of the development’s tonal conflicts’.<sup>86</sup> Meikle’s formal plan could be taken further (in the spirit of Harper-Scott’s analysis of the First Symphony): there are five rotations, each comprising material from both first and second subjects; rotation 1 forms the exposition; rotations 2-4 form the development with rotation 5 – which might loosely be termed the recapitulation – briefly restating the two primary themes in the tonic. The dynamic climax of the movement occurs over a dominant pedal in rotation 4, rather than at its resolution at the beginning of rotation 5.

**Table 6.5: (A) Meikle’s formal plan for the first movement of the Viola Concerto;<sup>87</sup> (B) reinterpretation of the formal plan in terms of Sibelian rotations**

A		B	
Exposition		Rotation 1 (Exposition)	
1	Introduction	1	Introduction
4	First subject	4	First subject
33	Second subject	33	Second subject
Development		Rotation 2 (Development)	
47	Development	47	First subject
		62	Second subject
		Rotation 3	
		70	First subject
		82	Second subject
		Rotation 4	
		109	First subject
		117	Second subject
Recapitulation		Rotation 5 (Recapitulation)	
144	First Subject	144	Introduction
		150	First Subject
159	Second Subject	159	Second Subject

<sup>86</sup> Meikle, ‘The Symphonies and Concertos’, p.79.

<sup>87</sup> Table 6.5A is based on Meikle’s comments, which are in turn based on Tovey’s analysis. Meikle’s structural plan has been edited for visual clarity and by the addition of bar numbers. Meikle, ‘The Symphonies and Concertos’, p.79; Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis III*, pp.220-226.

Pedal points in the Viola Concerto are not as pronounced as those in the First Symphony, but they are indeed used to support a tonic-dominant relationship. In the opening movement, tonic pedals establish the tonality (bb.1-10 and 19-24), whilst a long dominant pedal – effectively a retransition (bb.117-149) – resolves to the tonic at the beginning of the final rotation (at b.150). The finale of this work also employs a long dominant pedal (bb.266-286) which resolves onto the final tonic (bb.287-312).

There are several important points to make in reference to the two earlier works explored here. First, the ‘A major-minor’ tonality of the Viola Concerto and the *Klang* identified by Harper-Scott in the First Symphony are precedents that were developed in the later works. In the First Symphony, the tonic sonority – whilst being enriched by the addition of the flattened seventh – is nevertheless firmly triadic and with a strong and well-planted root emphasised on each occasion of its return by a bass pedal note. In the Viola Concerto, the characteristic falsely-related sixths are heard against a solid A-rooted tonality. The notion of a referential tonic sonority – an enriched triadic structure, ‘seared’ into aural memory, and reprised at structurally significant points – is one that, as we have seen, is of significant interest in Walton’s later scores, but in the Cello Concerto and the Second Symphony, the structuring of the sonority is more complex, and the sense of ‘rootedness’ somewhat dissolved.

Second, the role of functional harmony based on scale degrees is considerably less significant in these later works. In the First Symphony and the Viola Concerto, strong tonic-dominant relationships, clarified by extended pedal points, anchor the tonality (indeed, Harper-Scott argues that in the First Symphony it is the pedal points that allow ‘aural focus’ on the *Klang* to be maintained).<sup>88</sup> Such emphatic pedal points do not occur with any prominence in Walton’s later orchestral works. Instead, the role of scale degrees in determining harmonic function is considerably dissolved, with alternative harmonic languages rather than alternative root notes serving as ‘other’ to the tonic. As such, the projection of single goal tones over long periods that are prerequisites for making sense of Schenkerian graphs are considerably less viable in these later works.

Finally, whilst the sonata frameworks of these earlier scores bear some similarities to the later movements, they are executed rather differently (Meikle’s suggestion that most

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<sup>88</sup> Harper-Scott, “‘Our True North’: Walton’s First Symphony and Sibelianism’.

of Walton's sonata forms were 'basically the same' is not supported even by his own analyses).<sup>89</sup> As Harper-Scott points out, one of the main features of the symphonic music of Sibelius, and of that music's English reception, was that the 'exposition – development – recapitulation' model was sidelined in favour of a more 'organic' model in which initial thematic fragments evolve through successive rotations into a fully-fledged thematic goal (the *telos*).<sup>90</sup> This is reflected especially in First Symphony, for which Harper-Scott uses a multi-movement thematic graph alongside rotational models to demonstrate the teleological evolution. The rotational principle that is much in evidence in these earlier works is also reflected to some extent in the later works, for example in the double return of the opening material (or the 'false recapitulation') in both of the movements considered here, and in the frequent use of variation structures discussed in the following chapter. However, the sense of teleology is replaced by a more reflective formal scheme and emotional manner, and a return (although to a limited extent) to the more circumscribed 'exposition – development – recapitulation' model. Even in the Cello Concerto, in which the reprise of the opening movement's opening material at the end of the finale completes a process that spans the three movements, the sense of teleology – the striving towards a goal – is dissolved: there is no long retransition building tension on the dominant before a triumphant return of the theme, only a side-stepping onto the tonic with the Cello beginning the statement of the theme half-way through its opening phrase, as if the soloist hadn't realised this was the moment of return. In respect of the lack of pedal points and teleology in these later works, it is pertinent to note Neville Cardus's comment about the Second Symphony: 'the sincerest forms of flattery to Sibelius have completely gone.'<sup>91</sup>

It may be speculative, but nonetheless revealing, to suggest that Walton's improving finances, marriage, and move to Ischia (as described in Chapter 3) can be linked with these change of style. The romantic ups-and-downs associated with the genesis of both the Viola Concerto and the First Symphony might be reflected in the sense of striving towards a goal (with various setbacks along the way), and also in the emotional turbulence that can be read into dynamic surges, 'malicious' movements,<sup>92</sup> and the

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<sup>89</sup> Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.80.

<sup>90</sup> Harper-Scott, "'Our True North": Walton's First Symphony and Sibelianism'.

<sup>91</sup> Neville Cardus, 'Walton's Second Symphony', *The Guardian*, 3 September 1960, p.9.

<sup>92</sup> The second movement of the First Symphony is entitled 'Scherzo: Presto, Con Malizia'.

patterns of tension and release that are possible with such features as I-V-I backgrounds and extended dominant pedals. In comparison, the Cello Concerto and Second Symphony are reflective, perhaps even introspective; expressive, but not turbulent. The dissolution of the hierarchy of scale-degrees diminishes the potential for extremes of tension and resolution; this is complemented by less pronounced dynamic and tempo surges and more circumscribed formal patterns. Perhaps this reflects the stability of marriage and the tranquillity of life on Ischia.

Having discussed the sense in which Walton's musical style may be said to have developed between the earlier Viola Concerto and First Symphony and the later Cello Concerto and Second Symphony, it must nevertheless be admitted that these developments were subtle, and certainly a long way from the radical overhaul of traditions that was occurring elsewhere in British symphonic music. Discussion of triad-infused sonorities and harmonic modes (however 'modern') may indeed seem – in comparison to the avoidance of any triadic conception (and indeed any rhythmic, formal or other concerns of the common-practice period) advocated by serial composers – somewhat conservative. Similarly, Walton's dialogue with sonata form finds its most obvious precedents in early-modern composers and the study of those composers – for example Hepokoski's Sonata Deformation Theory as applied to the music of Sibelius – rather than in any of the activities of the younger generation. Indeed, we have been discussing a 'symphony', a genre which in itself was considered by several younger composers and critics to be no longer viable.<sup>93</sup> Whilst it is pertinent to describe the ways in which such elements as extradiatonic harmonic constructions and novel formal schemes can be identified in Walton's later works, it is also appropriate to note that this was itself the continuation of an established tradition, a tradition which some contemporary commentators viewed as outmoded.

Speaking of the Second Symphony, Walton stated: 'of course orchestral form is still valid [...] any form is still valid if you can put life into it'.<sup>94</sup> In the two opening movements examined here, Walton 'breathes life' into the forms through a

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<sup>93</sup> Humphrey Searle's two published defences of the symphony outline this 'avant-garde' reaction against the symphony, and offer a defence of the genre. Humphrey Searle, 'Are Twelve-Note Symphonies Possible?' *The Listener* (29 November 1962), p.941; Humphrey Searle, 'Is the Symphony Viable Today?' in Peter Dickinson (ed.), *Twenty British Composers* (London: Chester Music, 1975), pp.14-16.

<sup>94</sup> Walton, quoted in [Anon.], 'Sir William Walton on the Musical Schisms of Today', p.12.

reinterpretation of the two elements most associated with the symphonic tradition: form and tonality. Indeed, Walton's ability to integrate symmetrical constructions (including the hexatonic and octatonic modes) and dissolve hierarchical tonality whilst maintaining a sense of tradition and coherence can be viewed, if not as a radical reinterpretation of symphonic tradition, then as distinctively inventive within that continuing tradition.

## Chapter 7:

### Variation Forms and Twelve-Note Structures: *Hindemith*

#### *Variations* and the finale of the Second Symphony

This chapter considers two further important aspects of Walton's musical style in the post-war orchestral works side-by-side: a predilection for highly sectionalised variation forms, and the presence of twelve-note melodic structures. These have been noted before: Howes wrote in 1974, 'variation writing and a very much diluted form of serialism are the chief developments in Walton's more recent works'.<sup>1</sup> Howes' analyses, however, barely scratch the surface of these important features of the post-war orchestral scores.

We have noted that one of the tendencies of Walton's later sonata forms is a move away from the focused teleology of earlier symphonic works towards the use of more partitioned structures, with thematic and harmonic differentiation between sections.<sup>2</sup> The potentially fragmentary direction that such characteristics suggest is especially evident in the movements that employ variation forms. There are several substantial variation-form movements in the later works, including (in chronological order) the finale of the Cello Concerto; the finale of the Second Symphony; the *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith*; and the *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*. It is the *Hindemith Variations* and the finale of the Second Symphony that are the principal case studies in this chapter (*Improvisations* is considered in greater detail in Chapter 8).

It has been noted that in Walton's sonata-form movements, form is articulated less by key-relationships in the traditional sense, and more by the use of contrast and association between different harmonic vocabularies. Walton's later variation forms similarly display a plurality of musical languages. This chapter particularly focuses on twelve-note structures, a further addition to Walton's musical vocabulary. Given its rising importance after the war, it is hardly surprising that Walton would be influenced at least to some extent by twelve-note thinking, although the conventional view of Walton as a regressive and firmly tonal composer would perhaps suggest otherwise.

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, Second ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.53.

<sup>2</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 6, p.135ff.

In the previous chapter, the conjunction of two complementary considerations, sonata form, and harmony and tonality, arose from clear historical and analytical links between the two topics. In this chapter, an examination of twelve-note structures and a consideration of sectionalisation and variation forms are perhaps less clearly reconciled. The question of the extent to which twelve-note thinking penetrates the variation structure itself is an important link between these two topics. But even where the twelve-note tendency is more superficial than structural, the decision to examine these two aspects of the music together is justified by the simple empirical consideration that two of the significant variation movements from Walton's later years – the two case studies in this chapter – employ forms of twelve-note thinking.

## **Second Symphony (1961; C68); Finale**

### **Variation Structure and the Twelve-Note Theme**

Some aspects of the genesis and reception of the Second Symphony have already been considered.<sup>3</sup> The finale is a passacaglia; subtitles in the score clearly delineate the theme, ten variations, a fugato, and a scherzando coda. Walton's letters reveal that he had originally planned a short scherzo as a third movement, with a fourth-movement passacaglia.<sup>4</sup> Later Walton reconsidered, taking advice from Hans Werner Henze that a 'short "scherzo" might upset the balance';<sup>5</sup> the work ended up with three movements, approximately equal in length. Francis Routh has suggested that the structure of the finale admits a scherzando element in place of the 'missing' scherzo movement.<sup>6</sup>

The combination of passacaglia and fugue may have been influenced by the same combination in the finale of Edmund Rubbra's three-movement Seventh Symphony (1957); Walton had requested a score for study in 1960 although once it arrived he

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<sup>3</sup> For a consideration of the genesis of the Second Symphony, see this thesis, Chapter 6, p.157ff; for details on the reception of the work, see this thesis, Chapter 4, p.74ff.

<sup>4</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 7 March 1960. Malcolm Hayes (ed.). *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p.317.

<sup>5</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 31 March 1960. Hayes (ed.). *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.318.

<sup>6</sup> Francis Routh. *Contemporary British Music: The Twenty-Five Years from 1945 to 1970* (London: Macdonald, 1972), p.36.

dismissed it as ‘boring’.<sup>7</sup> With regard to the fugato section, Walton commented on ‘a slight prejudice about fugues in symphonies’,<sup>8</sup> and lamented that ‘I am conscious that there is more than a slight likeness (rhythmically speaking) between them [the fugato and coda in the Second Symphony] and the 2<sup>nd</sup> fugal episode of the 1st mov[ement] of Symph[ony] I’.<sup>9</sup> Certainly the fact that both symphonies have fugal sections in their finales left Walton open to the charge of lapsing into stereotyped solutions.<sup>10</sup> However, in the Second Symphony, both the fugato and coda are further elaborations of the opening theme; despite the implied disconnection between these sections in some of the literature, they may thus be considered to constitute part of the same basic variation structure.

The historical heritage of the Baroque passacaglia (Walton had previously referred to the movement as a ‘chaconne’)<sup>11</sup> is present in a number of features in the work’s initial theme (Example 7.1): the slow tempo; the opening triple meter (although hardly apparent aurally until the first variation); the serious character; the feeling of circularity, with the closing gesture of the theme leading back into its opening; and the tendency, apparent in a number of the variations, for the theme to have more the character of a ground bass than of a melody line. The theme of the movement – except the trills, and the decorative semiquaver and scale in bb.12 and 14 respectively – comprises a complete twelve-note row (Example 7.2).<sup>12</sup> The interpretative significance of this fact will be explored in more detail below; for now, it will suffice to trace the use of the theme as the movement progresses. The twelve-note idea is present as a thematic feature

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<sup>7</sup> Walton, letters to Alan Frank, 7 March 1960 and 27 March 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.317-318. Walton also described his own finale as ‘boring’ in a letter to Alan Frank, 19 May 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.320.

<sup>8</sup> *Sir William Walton: His First Symphony*, radio broadcast, transmitted 24 September 1965 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP34332).

<sup>9</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 28 July 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.321.

<sup>10</sup> Consider, for example, the comments made in A[rthur] H[utchings], ‘Reviews of Music’, *Music and Letters*, 42(2) (1961), p.183; Donald Mitchell, ‘Walton’s 2nd Symphony Looks Back: Scots Premiere’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 September 1960, p.8; Peter Heyworth, ‘Walton’s New Symphony’, *The Observer*, 4 September 1960, p.26.

<sup>11</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 31 March 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.318.

<sup>12</sup> The analysis of the finale of the Second Symphony that follows is based partly on work included in Michael Byde, ‘Re-Evaluating William Walton’s Second Symphony’, MMus Dissertation, University of Leeds, 2004, pp.34-49.



throughout, sometimes in its original form, especially towards the beginning of the movement, and sometimes in inversion and retrograde forms, particularly in the fugato and coda sections.

**Example 7.1: The twelve-note Passacaglia theme in the finale of the Second Symphony**



**Example 7.2: The twelve-note row in the finale of the Second Symphony**



During the composition of the finale, Walton offered the following somewhat colourful description of the movement's variation structure in a letter to Alan Frank:

The 3<sup>rd</sup> mov[ement] moves on [in] it's [sic] plodding [and] more than boring way. You know the kind of thing – Roast beef on Sunday – cold on Mon – hashed on Tues. stewed on Weds rissoles on Thurs [and] Fish on Fri – fish salad Sat. Boiled beef Sun with a carrot thrown in etc [...]<sup>13</sup>

The 'roast beef' is presumably the theme, which recurs in various contexts in each of the variations (see Table 7.1). Although the theme is an ingredient throughout, it is more extrusive in some variations than in others, is set against new counterthemes as the movement progresses, and gradually loses some of its prominence until – in Variation 10 – it is reprised with many of its original features in fact. The variations (except

<sup>13</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 19 May 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.320.

numbers 7 and 10) can be grouped loosely into related pairs with similar characteristics (as suggested in the layout of Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1: The use of the twelve-note passacaglia theme in the Variations in the finale of the Second Symphony**

Variation	How the twelve-note passacaglia theme is used in each pair of variations	How the twelve-note passacaglia theme is used in each separate variation
Variation 1 bb.15-28	The theme is prominent in the texture. A countertheme is added.	The theme appears in a high register in the woodwind instruments with a countertheme, mostly in quavers, below (see Example 7.7, p.194).
Variation 2 bb.29-45		The theme is transferred to the middle of the texture, and is punctuated by the developing quaver countertheme (see Example 7.8, p.194).
Variation 3 bb.46-59	The theme takes the form of a ground bass, with a new countertheme in parallel thirds set above it.	The countertheme is played by oboes.
Variation 4 bb.60-73		This variation is much slower, with the countertheme developed more lyrically by bassoons.
Variation 5 bb.74-87	The theme continues as a ground bass, with the counterpoints to the theme becoming more fragmented and less pronounced in melodic outline.	The theme provides a launching-off point for brief melodic injections from the orchestra (see Example 7.10, p.196).
Variation 6 bb.80-101		Staccato chords and flourishing scales punctuate the theme (see Example 7.9, p.194).
Variation 7 bb.102-111	This is the shortest variation, and has a connective rather than thematic character. An inverted form of the twelve-note melody is presented as a single melodic line that descends over a pedal G (the row-form is I0R; see Table 7.2 for a complete list of the row forms).	
Variation 8 bb.112-134	In this pair of variations, the harmonic rather than linear potential of the theme is explored. Chords that include triads are played by strings with a full texture; these contrast with the 'theme and countertheme' quality of the earlier variations.	The harmonic patterns here relate to the theme; consider especially the opening gestures, which employ notes 1-3 and 5-7 of the twelve-note row (Example 7.3).
Variation 9 bb.135-144		The rich harmonic vocabulary is continued. The theme is presented by solo horn, with rhythmic syncopation and octave displacement of some notes giving the theme a new contour.
Variation 10 bb.145-165	The final variation is similar in character to the opening statement of the theme at the beginning of the movement, and pushes the music forward into the fugato.	

**Example 7.3: The use of the opening of the twelve-note row in the opening of Variation 8**

Tranquillo ♩=126-132

Fl., Cel.  
Fl., Vib.  
Tr., Ob.  
Ob.  
Cl., Vle.

G B $\flat$  D notes 1-3  
plus F $\sharp$  A C $\sharp$  notes 4-6

**Table 7.2: Reference table of mirror-forms of the twelve-note row**

Pitch-class integers are absolute with C = 0 (P7 is the prime form beginning on G). To avoid potential confusion, the letters X and E signify integers 10 (A $\sharp$ /B $\flat$ ) and 11 (B $\natural$ ).

	11	14	18	19	13	10	17	16	IX	IE	15	12	
P1	1	4	8	9	3	0	7	6	X	E	5	2	P1R
PXR	X	1	5	6	0	9	4	3	7	8	2	E	PXR
P6	6	9	1	2	8	5	0	E	3	4	X	7	P6R
P5	5	8	0	1	7	4	E	X	2	3	9	6	P5R
PE	E	2	6	7	1	X	5	4	8	9	3	0	PER
P2	2	5	9	X	4	1	8	7	E	0	6	3	P2R
P7	7	X	2	3	9	6	1	0	4	5	E	8	P7R
P8	8	E	3	4	X	7	2	1	5	6	0	9	P8R
P4	4	7	E	0	6	3	X	9	1	2	8	5	P4R
P3	3	6	X	E	5	2	9	8	0	1	7	4	P3R
P9	9	0	4	5	E	8	3	2	6	7	1	X	P9R
P0	0	3	7	8	2	E	6	5	9	X	4	1	P0R
	I1R	I4R	I8R	I9R	I3R	I0R	I7R	I6R	IXR	IER	I5R	I2R	

**Example 7.4: The fugato subject and the twelve-note mirror forms from which it derives**

Refer to Table 7.1 (p.190) for an explanation of integer notation and a reference table of mirror forms.

**SUBJECT**  
 166 P7: 7 X 2 3 9 6 1 0 4 5 E 8

7 X 2 3 9 6 1 0 4 5 E 8

171 I7: 7 4 0 E 5 8 1 2 X 9 3 6

7 4 0 E 5 8 1(E 0)1 1 8 7 4 0 E 5 8 1(E E 0 0)1 1 2 X 9 3 6

176 P6R: (7 X 4) 3 E 0 5 8 2 1 9 6

(0)3 E 0 5 8 2 1 (2 1) 9 6

In the fugato that follows the variations, the twelve-note theme continues to be prominent, but the rhythmic outline of the original is not maintained, and various mirror forms are frequently employed instead of the original. The fugato subject (b.174ff; Example 7.4) is thus based on the twelve-note theme, but has a rather different melodic and rhythmic profile. Howes's suggestion that the twelve-note series here is 'slightly deranged' is evocative if not precise.<sup>14</sup> In fact, almost all of the pitches derive from mirror forms of the row, although various alterations – such as repeated sections, sequences and the addition of extra pitches (annotated in Example 7.4) – disrupt the continuous flow of the series. The initial unison texture of the fugato is clouded only by the doubling of the subject in the second violins a semiquaver behind the main melodic line. This use of close canon continues as the fugato progresses: the fugal countersubject is in fact a canon of the answer, following a dotted-crotchet behind. At b.209, a further canon to the subject is introduced, running two quavers after the subject and one quaver before the countersubject (Example 7.5). The effect, which Howes likens to 'a sort of stretto',<sup>15</sup> is a culmination of tension as the movement progresses towards the coda. As the fugato continues, woodwind instruments begin to fill melodic

<sup>14</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.52. Meikle gives a sketchy account of the use of inversion forms here in Robert Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', in Stewart R. Craggs (ed.), *William Walton: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p.101.

<sup>15</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.52.

leaps with semiquaver and sextuplet scales which thus contribute a further form of heterophony. Overall, the textbook model of a fugue is apparent enough here, although since the countersubject is a close variation of the subject the fugue evolves more heterophonically than polyphonically.

**Example 7.5 Close canon and 'stretto' effect at b.209ff.**

[Fugato ♩=88-92c.]  
209

Vl. I  
Cor. b  
Vlc.

The coda is interesting for its continuation of the variation structure of the movement, and for the freer use of melodic structures derived from the twelve-note row. It is unfortunate that Howes, Meikle and Routh all abandon their brief analyses at the fugato, making room only for perfunctory remarks about the coda.<sup>16</sup> Meikle's comment that 'any residual respect for serialism finally disappears at bar 227' (the start of the coda)<sup>17</sup> is puzzling, since the use of twelve-note structures continues in the coda in much the same manner as in the previous music. It is true, however, that as the coda progresses, the derivation from the twelve-note row becomes increasingly distorted, with the omission of between one and five pitches of the series and the addition of between one and eleven extra pitches.

In the coda, the beginnings of new mirror forms and the beginnings of thematic phrases are not consistently aligned. For example, compare the distribution of the twelve-note row in bb.242-244 with that in bb.245-249, which are thematically speaking broadly comparable (Example 7.6); the series is articulated differently in each case. Here, the

<sup>16</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, pp.52-53; Routh, *Contemporary British Music*, p.37; Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.101.

<sup>17</sup> Meikle, 'The Symphonies and Concertos', p.101.

twelve-note row serves as a flexible pre-compositional resource rather than as a pitch outline wedded to a particular theme.

**Example 7.6: Derivations from the series of melodic pitches in the coda**

Dynamics and expression marks have not been reproduced to aid clarity.

[Scherzando Più mosso ♩=104 c.]

P1:8 E 3 4 X 7 2 1 5 6 0 9

I3:3 0 8 7 1 4 9 X 6 5 E 2

**Harmonic Languages**

The division of the movement into variation sections is apparent enough from the score and from the contrasts in thematic treatment of the twelve-note theme described above. Equally salient is the contrast in harmonic language between particular variations, for a number of perhaps contradictory approaches are found here. In this respect, a parallel can be drawn with Walton’s use of alternative harmonic vocabularies in the sonata-form movements. In this finale, he employs triads and chromatic chords from tonal tradition, often divorced from a functional context, and uses symmetrical melodic and harmonic constructions, especially octatonic collections.

Several of the variations employ chords recognisable from common practice tonality, although the use to which they are put often frustrates any functional quality of the harmony. Several of the prominent harmonic relationships in Variation 1 relate to the diminished seventh chord [E $\flat$  F $\sharp$  A C] (see Example 7.7). The chord is symmetrical; and without surrounding chords to give a functional context, the collection becomes harmonically static rather than forming part of a goal-directed progression, despite the fact the pitches are those of a ‘functional’ vii<sup>7</sup> in G minor. Variation 2 prominently features augmented chords: the opening phrase can be considered as a series of various major, minor and augmented triads occurring over a dissonant F pedal, followed by arpeggiation of an augmented triad (Example 7.8). In Variation 6, the theme is

punctuated by staccato chords including half-diminished sevenths, French sixths and diminished sevenths (see Example 7.9). These appear in a very low register and do not resolve; in fact, several of the chords move up and down by semitone in parallel motion. Thus although triads and chromatic chords feature prominently on the surface of much of the music, these do not always create or imply any sense of tonal motion.

**Example 7.7: The opening of Variation 1**

Var I Con slancio (♩ = 132c.)

15 Eb F# A Eb F# A A C Eb Eb F# A  
[Countertheme]  
8 Fl., Ob., Cl., Cel.  
[Passacaglia Theme]

**Example 7.8: The opening of Variation 2**

Var 2 Scherzando (♩ = 138c.)

29 Fl., Ob. Fl., Cl. Cl.  
Cl. Fg. Cor.

**Example 7.9: Non-resolving 'tonal' chords in Variation 6**

[Var 6, ♩ = 138-142c.]

90 WW. Str. ff Half-diminished 7th chords Octatonic scale French 6th chords  
Tbn. Cor. [Theme] f

A superficial resemblance to the principles of common-practice harmony is also found in Variations 3 and 4, in which the counterthemes, played by two oboes and two bassoons respectively, are harmonised in thirds. However, the parts are not harmonised diatonically, but in parallel (with major thirds only in bb.46-49 and 60-69 excepting b.64, and minor thirds only in bb.50-59 and 70-73). Although thirds are the foundation of triadic harmony, their use in such parallel constructions prevents any chord (or implied chord) from taking on an explicit harmonic function, since the diatonic system relies on asymmetry for the identification of scale degree relationships. Despite the voicing in thirds, the countermelodies here are densely chromatic. Indeed, doubling in thirds was permitted by Schoenberg even in the twelve-note *Orchestral Variations* (Op. 31), for example in the first variation (b.58ff.), in which the unfolding series is harmonised in parallel minor thirds and tenths.

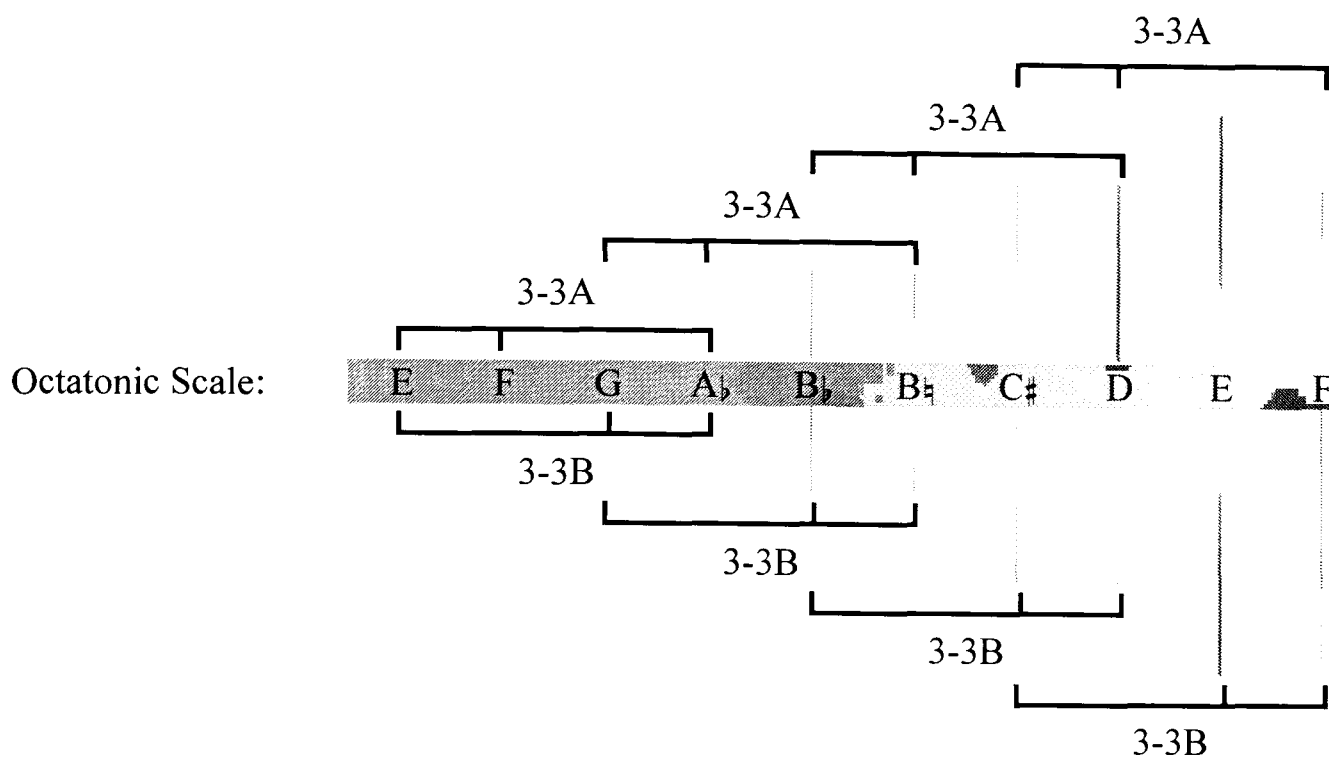
Pitch symmetry, albeit of a different kind, is also present in the use of octatonic collections in a number of places in this movement. In Variation 1, the diminished seventh chords of the opening develop into the use of octatonic collection I; this can also be considered to have a diminished character, since the octatonic scale can be viewed as two superimposed diminished seventh chords (and indeed it is sometimes known as the ‘diminished scale’, particularly in Jazz theory).<sup>18</sup> Octatonic collections recur at a number of points in this movement, either as scales forming decorative attachments to principal pitches (for example in Variation 6, b.91, Example 7.9 above), or as an underlying pitch collection. Octatonic collections include triads but (again because they are symmetrical) prevent functional relationships from forming. Thus thirds can predominate on the surface without suggesting tonal tension or resolution, as in Variation 5 (bb.86-87, Example 7.10). This example features long chains of minor thirds, similar to those in Variations 3 and 4, but now with an underlying octatonic collection (a C $\sharp$  that is not in the octatonic set occurs in the second violin at the end of b.85, marked with a \* in Example 7.10; this could be a ‘mistake’). The octatonic scale can be viewed as being formed of repeating cycles of set class of 3-3 (Figure 7.1); the use of octatonic collections here can thus be linked to the opening movement, in which 3-3 had melodic, harmonic, and motivic importance.

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<sup>18</sup> Steven Strunk, ‘Harmony (I)’, in Barry Kernfeld (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, Second ed., vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 2002), p.168. A diminished seventh chord can be formed on any degree of an octatonic scale.



Figure 7.1: Saturation of set-class 3-3 in the octatonic scale



Example 7.10: The use of an octatonic collection in Variation 5

84 [Var 5. ♩ = 112-116c.] *Agitato*

[D E F G A<sub>b</sub> B<sub>b</sub> B<sub>♯</sub> C<sub>♯</sub>], 8-28\*  
(octatonic collection I)

Although the competing harmonic schemes of the variations prevent cohesion of the work through conventional tonal relationships, motivic connections may instead have a unifying role. Several such connections can be noted between the work's opening movement and the twelve-note theme of the finale. The twelve-note row begins with an arpeggiated G-minor triad, a complement to the G-minor character of the beginning of the symphony. However, the relationship is more intricate and subtle than just this. In set-class terms, the first six pitch-classes of the twelve-note series form a set in the class 6-Z19B, whilst the first eight notes form a set in the class 8-18B; both of these set

classes were significant in the tonic sonority of the opening movement.<sup>19</sup> This potential for a harmonic affinity is played out, to some extent, in Variation 1, in which the opening eight bars (bb.15-22) employ the initial eight pitches of the twelve-note theme, with the accompanying countertheme limited to the same eight notes.<sup>20</sup> However, it is in Variation 8 that the connections are most clearly articulated. Here, there is a harmonic as well as gestural resemblance to the opening of the symphony. A G minor chord is sounded in flutes and vibraphone (b.112), to which is added an F# minor chord in oboes and trumpet (b.113; see Example 7.3, p.190 above). The superimposed F# minor chord is taken up by woodwinds and strings which alternate between F# minor and G minor chords. Against the G minor background provided by flutes and vibraphone, this creates a rocking motion with semitone clashes that is reminiscent of the symphony's opening bars. In set-class terms, the pitch class content of the superimposed chords is [A B<sub>b</sub> C# D F# G], set class 6-Z19A, part of the tonic sonority; the chord is identical to that which opens and closes the first movement. The variation progresses through transpositions of this initial texture which introduce the other pitch-classes of the twelve-note theme (not in strict order).

As the movement progresses, traditional functionality rises closer to the surface. The harmonic aspects of the fugato have increasingly triadic implications, despite the linear exploration of twelve-note mirror forms. We have previously noted the increasing presence of heterophonic decoration of the fugato theme, with woodwind instruments filling in leaps in the theme with scale figures. As the fugato nears the coda, this thickening of texture continues, with the beginning and ending notes of the scale figures altered so as to harmonise the principal thematic notes in thirds and sixths. Further filling out of triads occurs as a result of the conjunction of different lines (see Example 7.11). The resulting chords are distinctly triadic, and hence emphasise the triad formations found within the twelve-note series.

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<sup>19</sup> Routh goes some way to pointing out this connection, although he does not employ set-class analysis. Routh, *Contemporary British Music*, p.35. For discussion of the tonic sonority in the opening movement, see this thesis, Chapter 6, p.160ff.

<sup>20</sup> The F<sub>3</sub> in b.21 is the only exception.

**Example 7.11: Thirds, sixths and triads formed by the conjunction of various polyphonic and heterophonic lines within the fugato, bb.195-198**

195 [Fugato  $\text{♩} = 88-92c.$ ]

Ob. *tr.*  
Cl. Picc. *6*  
Vl.2 Vlc.  
Fl. *6*

Thirds, sixths and triads within the texture

These tonal implications culminate in a series of diminished triads in bb.220-224 followed by a succession of chords that can be analysed in relatively traditional terms as a cadential progression leading to a dominant pedal on D (Example 7.12). Within the scheme of the fugato, Walton could have arrived at the same end-point via a permutation of the twelve-note series ending on D (P1, I3 or I2R; or P2R, which concludes with a descending D-major triad); instead, he chooses to emphasise the functional, ‘dominant’ quality of this pedal note through tonal key- and chord-relationships that are not ostensibly derived from the twelve-note theme. The functional character of individual chords is not audibly discernable at the speed they occur here ( $\text{♩} = 88-21c.$  and *accel.*), but their overall effect is clear: there is no doubt as to the dominant character of the D pedal note, which persists for nineteen bars into the coda of the movement.

**Example 7.12: Analysis of chord progressions at the end of the fugato, bb.222-226**

222 [Fugato  $\text{♩} = 88-92c.$ ]

Vls., Fl.  
Vle., Vlc., Cor., Tr.  
Vlc., Cb., Fg. CFg.

Diminished Chords      C minor: II VII<sup>7</sup> I  
G minor: IV      IV<sup>7</sup>      I      Dominant Pedal V

Cadential Progression

The triadic allusions at the conclusion of the fugato are carried forward into the coda, in which the final statement of the movement's principal theme is harmonised with chords built in thirds, principally major seventh and ninth chords (bb.305-326; Example 7.13). These chords can be seen as the harmonic fulfilment of triadic potential within the twelve-note theme, whose opening is suggestive of major seventh and ninth chords (Example 7.14). At b.326, this theme reaches its destination: the final E $\flat$  of the theme resolves down a semitone to D; the D is emphasised by an *ff* tuned bell, and the 'tonic' G major chord is reiterated by the full orchestra no fewer than 34 times. This initial resolution is, however, given a typically Waltonian twist before the movement is allowed to end: the addition of woodwind trills in b.335 results in superimposed G major and A $\flat$  major triads, and a final flourish (bb.336-337) adds chromatic colouring, descending through F $\sharp$  and D $\sharp$  to the tonic G (Example 7.15). Thus despite the apparently unequivocal G 'major' ending, the symphony concludes with the same chromatically coloured harmonic constructions as form the tonic sonority of the opening movement (set-classes 6-Z19B and 3-3B). The cadential feel is clear here, perhaps partly because the final bars can be heard as vii<sup>7</sup>-I with the vii<sup>7</sup> chromatically altered (the expected A $\sharp$  appearing as an A $\flat$ ).

**Example 7.13: Seventh and ninth chords in the brass parts of the concluding statement of the Passacaglia theme, bb.305-327**

305 *Maestoso* ♩ = 112c.

Tr., Tbn. *ff* *ten.* +Cor. Tr., Tbn., WW

Tuba

Gm<sup>7</sup> E $\flat$ ma<sup>7</sup> 9 Gm ma<sup>7</sup>ma<sup>9</sup> D $\flat$ ma<sup>7</sup>

316 *piu allar.* *a tempo*

Bma<sup>7</sup> E $\flat$ m<sup>7</sup> G

Example 7.14: Tertian chord formations in the twelve-note series

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff is a single line of music with a treble clef, containing a sequence of twelve notes. A bracket above the notes is labeled 'Eb maj7'. The second staff is also a single line of music with a treble clef, containing the same sequence of twelve notes. Brackets below the notes group them into three sets of four notes each, labeled 'Gm', 'F#m', and 'Fm'. A larger bracket above the first two groups is labeled 'Gm maj7 maj9'.

Example 7.15: The ending of the finale

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 6/8 time. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. The tempo is marked '[Presto, ♩ = 184c.]'. The music starts with a fortissimo ('ff') dynamic and is marked 'Str, WW.'. The first section consists of 'Pure G major triads'. The second section is marked 'fp' and 'WW. tr.', with a chord set '[G Ab B C D Eb] 6-Z19B'. The final section is marked 'ff tutti' and has a chord set '[F# D# G] 3-3B'.

Overall, the arrival on the final G major ‘tonic’ does not resolve tonal tension resulting from hierarchical key relationships; instead, it asserts itself over the several alternative ways of structuring melodic and harmonic content that are employed quite seriously (that is, without any sense of satire) in the earlier parts of the movement. The conclusion of the work with an almost Beethovenian reiteration of G-major chords thus invites interpretation as irony: the tonic triad mockingly asserts its ascendancy over the twelve-note theme. This ending seems to undercut the compositional logic of the rest of the movement and thus creates an entirely unsatisfactory effect; and yet this unsatisfactory conclusion is itself undercut by the true goal of the work, the chromatically coloured constructions in the final three bars. The unsatisfactory nature of the ‘tonal’ ending serves to mock tonality as traditionally conceived, for it is not until the restatement of the ‘tonic’ in the form of the harmonic sets 6-Z19 and 3-3 that true closure is achieved. In this way the finale, and the symphony that it concludes, can be viewed as a work which problematises tonality through tonality’s own conventions and expectations.

The foregoing discussion serves to inform a number of general points. First, this movement is divisible, in terms of both thematic and harmonic structure, into several clearly-defined sections, each of which has some degree of autonomy. Second, overall unity is achieved through the use of the twelve-note row at some level – usually although not exclusively the melody – throughout the movement. Third, the multiplicity of approaches to harmonic structure noted in Walton's later sonata-form movements is again present here, with alternative harmonic regimes controlling different sections of the variation structure. Fourth, Walton's use of parallel and symmetrical constructions allows the musical surface to be saturated with thirds, triads, and chords associated with tonal tradition, without necessarily realising any potential for functional tonal behaviour. Fifth, functional implications are allowed to develop to some extent towards the end of the movement, so that the structure as a whole moves from a multiplicity of harmonic languages towards a quasi-tonal resolution to G major. Sixth, rather than a pure G major, it is one which recalls and unites the distinctive harmonic structures of the opening movement with the harmonic structure of the twelve-note theme.

Finally, one way of reading the harmonic structure of the entire symphony is as a motivic network focused on set class 3-3. This set class permeates both first and second subjects in the first movement and becomes a prominent melodic motif in its own right. The tonic sonority of the opening movement is saturated with this structure, and this sonority is itself embedded (as the superset 6-Z19) in the opening of the twelve-note theme in the finale. Octatonic collections, which occur prominently in the work and especially in the finale, are also saturated with the subset 3-3. The superset 6-Z19 and subset 3-3 form the final harmonic destination of the work, undercutting the satirically reiterated G major triads at the end of the finale. Set class 3-3 – rather than 'G minor' and/or 'G major' – can thus be seen as the unifying harmonic kernel and the principal tonal goal of the work. If this 'motivic' (as opposed to 'tonal') reading is accepted, the symphony can be seen as more characteristic of post-tonal than of tonal music.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Joseph N. Straus emphasises the importance of motivic construction in post-tonal music in 'Recompositions by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Webern', *The Musical Quarterly*, 72(3) (1986), p.303.

### ***Variations on a Theme of Hindemith* (1963; C76)**

The sectionalisation and presence of twelve-note structures noted in the Second Symphony are also relevant to the set of orchestral variations Walton completed three years later. He had intended to write a piece dedicated to Hindemith from as early as 1955,<sup>22</sup> and by November 1956 had settled on the title: *Variations on a Theme by Hindemith*.<sup>23</sup> The piece was written to fulfil a commission from the Royal Philharmonic Society for their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>24</sup> Unusually for Walton, the work was completed on time, and was first performed on 8 March 1963, at the Royal Festival Hall, with the composer himself conducting.<sup>25</sup> The concert was broadcast by the BBC.

The genesis of the work in the relationship between the two composers is pertinent because the music can be considered as a dialogue between two compositional styles; this dialogue is an important theme in the analytical comments that follow, and its success (or not) has been a prominent topic in critical writing on this work. The two first met at the inaugural ISCM festival in Salzburg in 1929, but it was the events surrounding Walton's Viola Concerto that solidified their friendship. When Lionel Tertis refused the work,<sup>26</sup> the BBC's Edward Clark sent the score to Hindemith – at that time an up and coming viola player – who agreed to play for the première performance.<sup>27</sup> Even before Hindemith became directly involved, his influence can be noted; Walton's concerto contains a near-quotation from Hindemith's own viola concerto *Kammermusik No. 5*.<sup>28</sup> (Walton commented, 'I was surprised he played it. One

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<sup>22</sup> Walton, letter to Gertrude Hindemith, 10 May 1955. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.266.

<sup>23</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 9 November 1956. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.286.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.219.

<sup>25</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.55.

<sup>26</sup> Lionel Tertis, *My Viola and I: A Complete Autobiography* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), p.36.

<sup>27</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.68.

<sup>28</sup> Walton, quoted in Geoffrey Skelton, *Paul Hindemith: The Man Behind the Music* (New York: Crescendo, 1975), p.98.

or two bars are almost identical.')<sup>29</sup> Walton and Hindemith stayed in touch and remained friends, corresponding with each other and meeting occasionally.<sup>30</sup> Several commentators suggest that writing the *Variations* was Walton's way of repaying the favour that Hindemith had done him so many years before.<sup>31</sup>

On completing the *Variations* in February 1963, Walton displayed a customary lack of confidence in the piece, writing to Alan Frank that 'I'm feeling ever so slightly gloomy about the work'.<sup>32</sup> He seemed especially concerned to hear Hindemith's own reaction, writing to him 'I need hardly say how much I hope that you will approve of it',<sup>33</sup> and writing again after receiving no reply: 'It would be good to have a word from you about it [...] I certainly tried my best to make it a worthy tribute to you both'.<sup>34</sup> When Hindemith finally wrote back, he was indeed appreciative:

You wrote a beautiful score and we're extremely honoured to find the red carpet rolled out, even on the steps of the back door of fame. I'm particularly fond of the honest solidarity of workmanship in this score, something that seems completely lost nowadays. Let us thank you for your kindness and for the wonderfully touching and artistically convincing manifestation of this kindness.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Walton, quoted in Skelton, *Paul Hindemith: The Man Behind the Music*, p.98. The connection is with the prominent false-related sixths figure of the Viola Concerto, and is most apparent in the solo viola part of the final bars of *Kammermusik No. 5*, although this figure is present earlier in the finale (e.g. bb.18-21) and is developed form passagework in the first movement.

<sup>30</sup> See Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.70; Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 9 February 1963; letter to Hindemith, 23 May 1963; in Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.333-334 and 336.

<sup>31</sup> For example Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.219; Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), p.239.

<sup>32</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 9 February 1963. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, pp.333-4.

<sup>33</sup> Walton, letter to Hindemith, 21 February 1963. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.335.

<sup>34</sup> Walton, letter to Hindemith, 23 May 1963. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.336.

<sup>35</sup> Hindemith, letter to Walton, 29 July 1963. Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, pp.54-55.



In typical Waltonian fashion the composer's reservations about the *Hindemith Variations* were reversed not long afterward, and he suggested in January 1964, in a letter to Benjamin Britten, that the work was 'one of my best'.<sup>36</sup>

Walton later reflected on the work's emotional content, stating that 'the *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith* [...] express my admiration for him, and sadness when he died really. That comes in about the seventh variation, eighth variation.'<sup>37</sup> This cannot be accurate since Hindemith in fact died some nine months *after* the first performance of the work; nevertheless, Walton's comments indicate that the dedication of the work to Hindemith and the choice of the Hindemith theme had more than merely practical significance.

### **The Hindemith Theme**

In 1956, Walton had written to Alan Frank, 'I've long promised him a piece – the trouble of course is find the theme – in the end I shall probably have to think of one of my own'.<sup>38</sup> In fact, Walton did not write his own theme, but – after five months of searching through Hindemith scores<sup>39</sup> – settled on a 36-bar theme from the middle movement of Hindemith's Cello Concerto (1940). In Hindemith's concerto, the slow lyrical theme (*Ruhig bewegt*, moving calmly) is followed by a contrasting middle section in a baroque-influenced gigue style (*Sehr lebhaft*, very lively), and the two themes are then combined to round off the movement. Walton uses a transcription of the whole 36 bars of the *Ruhig bewegt* theme, with melody, harmony and instrumentation intact (Howes describes it as 'not a tune, nor even a theme, but a paragraph').<sup>40</sup> Hindemith's solo cello line is distributed amongst the woodwind instruments and violins, and there are some minor changes in orchestration.

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<sup>36</sup> Walton, letter to Benjamin Britten, 2 January 1964. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.347.

<sup>37</sup> *A Conversation between William Walton and Hans Keller*, radio broadcast, recorded 21 March 1972, transmitted 28 March 1972 (BBC: BBC Archive, LP34404; British Library Sound Archive, 1LP0196064).

<sup>38</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 9 November 1956. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.286.

<sup>39</sup> *William Walton Interviewed by Dilys Powell and Anthony Hopkins for the Series Frankly Speaking*, radio broadcast, recorded 2 April 1962, transmitted 20 June 1962 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP27281).

<sup>40</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.55.

An examination of the Hindemith theme reveals a number of features whose subsequent application in Walton's variations may be investigated. The theme can be divided into eight distinct sections of similar length (roughly following a pattern A B C A' B' D E F), each with distinct musical characteristics (Table 7.3).

**Table 7.3: Groundplan of the theme for Walton's *Hindemith Variations***

Section	Bar Nos.	Comments
A	1-4	The opening melody (Example 7.24) and harmony establish E as a tonal centre. The melody, accompanied by pizzicato strings moving mostly in parallel perfect fourths, starts and ends on E, an E pedal note occurs in the flutes for the first three bars, and a descending bass line moves from E to A.
B	5-9	The melody circles around the note E for three bars over a pedal A in the bass. In b.8, the harmonic stability is disrupted: there is a descending chromatic bass line and a chromatic sequence in the melody. The pizzicato string accompaniment from the first section continues. Walton's transcription of the Hindemith theme includes one subtle but perhaps significant change here: the addition of a harp part playing open fifths in bb5-7.
C	10-15	There is a change in texture and rhythmic profile. Pizzicato lines in octaves in 9/8 in the strings are answered by lyrical legato phrases in the woodwinds in 6/8.
A'	16-19	A reprise of A, with the pizzicato accompaniment developed into a flowing countermelody. The fourth bar is chromatically altered to effect a move to a tonal centre of C.
B'	20-23	A reprise of B, now with a tonal centre of C, again with a flowing countermelody.
D	24-29	Solo instruments take the melody line. There is a change in texture: the smooth string accompaniments and flowing counterthemes of the previous two sections are replaced by marcato accompanying chords in the clarinets, flutes, and bassoons.
E	30-32	A phrase in the melody of the previous section is taken up and repeated in a sequence of descending thirds (this is later developed by Walton into a quotation from <i>Mathis der Maler</i> ; see Example 7.17 below).
F	33-36	This section brings a sense of closure to the theme. There is no cadence in the traditional sense, but the repeated emphasis on E on strong beats, in melody and bass, interlocked with closely related pitches (B, D, G), creates a definite sense of closure and harmonic resolution. Although the closing chord has no third, the feel is of E minor because of several G's in the preceding bars.

Walton retains a sectionalised structure, largely based on the groundplan of the theme, throughout the *Hindemith Variations*. The subtitles in the score identify the theme, nine variations, a finale and a coda; but all of these can be seen in terms of a total of thirteen rotations, a situation not dissimilar to that in the final movement of the Second Symphony described above, in which the fugato and coda continue the same basic pattern established by the preceding variations. (As in the previous chapter, I use the term ‘rotation’ in Hepokoski’s sense of ‘varied multisectional strophes’,<sup>41</sup> as opposed to any mathematical or set-theoretic meaning.) Five of these rotations (rotations 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8) contain eight distinct subdivisions deriving from those in the Hindemith theme. The other rotations have more varied designs, but are still grounded in the theme’s subdivided structure: rotations 4, 5, 7 and 9 omit sections B’ and D of the theme but retain the others; rotation 13 omits sections C, A’ and B’; and rotations 10 and 12 are highly abbreviated, featuring only material from section A. All of this is represented in Table 7.4.

**Table 7.4: Sectionalised structure of the *Hindemith Variations***

The numbers indicate the bar in which each section begins.

Rotation	Subtitle	A	B	C	A’	B’	D	E	F
1	Theme	1	5	10	16	20	24	30	33
2	Variation 1	37	42	51	63	73	87	94	101
3	Variation 2	105	115	123	140	154	161	171	180
4	Variation 3	184	193	200	207			214	221
5	Variation 4	225	232	246	254			259	266
6	Variation 5	269	273	280	286	290	295	305	308
7	Variation 6	309	318	325	334			343	353
8	Variation 7	358	363	369	376	380	385	394	401
9	Variation 8	405	412	421	427			432	439
10	Variation 9	444							
11	Finale	455	482	493	508	512	518	532	
12		543							
13	Coda	589	593				597	612	619

<sup>41</sup> James Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.23-26.

Rotation 10 – the section that Walton labels Variation 9 (bb.444-454) – is not a substantial variation in the manner of the preceding material; rather, it adopts notes 3 to 6 of the Hindemith melody, using varied rising sequences of this pattern to create a climactic fanfare which leads into the finale. The finale (rotations 11-13) has a different character to the preceding variations, especially in the use of fugato, but the themes that are given fugal treatment derive from and appear in the same order as in the Hindemith theme: it is a further, more elaborate variation. The coda similarly recounts the themes in order, now much closer to the Hindemith original, although without the reprise of A and B that have been present elsewhere. Overall, then, the piece can be viewed in terms of thirteen rotations that correspond reasonably closely to the subtitles given in the score, with each rotation subdivided into several sections along similar lines as the theme.

This consideration of the sectionalised structure of the work, and its high level of dependence on the form of the Hindemith theme, makes sense of Walton's comment on the *Variations* – made in a letter to Alan Frank – that 'I must confess I find it a trifle dull. I don't think I've got far enough away from the Theme especially the form'.<sup>42</sup> Thus significant questions can be raised as to whether the work's reliance on short sections derived from the Hindemith material was an active creative choice or a necessary creative crutch. In this respect, note that Walton found writing film music – which by its nature is organised into brief, related but self-contained chunks – considerably easier than writing symphonic music. (This topic – the creative implications of highly sectionalised structures and the potential relationship with film scoring – is taken up in the next chapter in relation to Walton's *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*.)

The variations' high degree of dependence on the opening bars – at least structurally speaking – provided ammunition to those critics who felt Walton had failed to match up to the standard set by Hindemith in the theme. The critical response to the work traces

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<sup>42</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 15 February 1963. Quoted in Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.239.

familiar topics, with – for example – Frank Howes praising the work,<sup>43</sup> and Noël Goodwin criticising the composer for having ‘turned his gaze steadfastly backwards’.<sup>44</sup>

Unique to this work was a focus on the success (or not) of the ‘mixture’ of Walton and Hindemith. Goodwin argued that the work was an ‘overt demonstration’ of Walton’s sympathy with Hindemith,<sup>45</sup> which is undercut by the quality of the theme which is ‘superior in itself that anything Walton was able to do with it’.<sup>46</sup> Arthur Hutchings similarly noted his disappointment that after multiple hearings the *Variations* did not seem ‘profound’, perhaps because of the profound artistry of the theme itself.<sup>47</sup> Continuing with this topic, a number of authors commented on the sense of dialogue between the two composers that is captured in the music. Howes describes the work as ‘interlocutory’,<sup>48</sup> whilst Peter J. Pirie noted that the Variations ‘ring the changes on Walton and Hindemith until the two figures seem to be chasing each other; the Walton that obtrudes is the true one, more forcefully projected than for a long time’.<sup>49</sup>

One aspect of the ‘mixture’ of the two composers in this work is Walton’s use of a quotation from Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler* (Example 7.16; Walton confirmed ‘this quotation from *Mathis* was taken from the opera and not the symphony’).<sup>50</sup> He later commented about the dedication of the work to Hindemith, ‘In fact I go as far as quotation – *Mathis der Maler* – but the quotation is in the theme. I mean, note for note actually.’<sup>51</sup> Here Walton is referring to bb.30-32 of the Hindemith theme, which contains a descending figure outlining triads a major third apart (A $\flat$  major and E major; Example 7.17). In Variation 7, this allusion is expanded into a full quotation, four bars

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<sup>43</sup> [Anon.], ‘Walton’s New Music for a Birthday’, *The Times*, 9 March 1963, p.4. See also Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, pp.55 and 61-62.

<sup>44</sup> Noel Goodwin, ‘First Performances: Walton’s *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith*’, *Tempo*, [New Series] 64 (Spring 1963), p.33.

<sup>45</sup> Goodwin, ‘First Performances’, p.33.

<sup>46</sup> Goodwin, ‘First Performances’, p.33.

<sup>47</sup> A[rthus] H[utchings], ‘Reviews of Music’, *Music and Letters*, 45(4) (1964), p.411.

<sup>48</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.56.

<sup>49</sup> Peter J. Pirie, ‘Scapino: The Development of William Walton’, *The Musical Times*, 105 (April 1964), p.259.

<sup>50</sup> Walton, quoted in Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.60.

<sup>51</sup> *A Conversation between William Walton and Hans Keller*, radio broadcast, recorded 21 March 1972, transmitted 28 March 1972 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP34404; British Library Sound Archive, 1LP0196064).

in length, using Hindemith's original harmonisation (bb.394-397; Example 7.18).<sup>52</sup> The violin part is marked with quotation marks and a footnote stating the source; Walton was obviously familiar with the vocal score, as he was able to tell Frank Howes the page number from which the quotation was taken.<sup>53</sup> Hindemith later wrote about the use of the quotation, 'Even old Mathis is allowed to peep through the fence, which for a spectre seems to be some kind of resurrection after artificial respiration!'<sup>54</sup>

**Example 7.16: Extract from the sixth tableau of Hindemith's opera *Mathis der Maler***

The transcription is from the vocal score.<sup>55</sup> The German text here translates approximately to 'give to bursting point that which boils inside'.

[(♩ 66)]; **Breit**  
Ursula (As prostitute)

*f* Gibber - - stend, was im In - nern sie - det. Nimm, daß Ge

Pno. *ff*

<sup>52</sup> Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Hale, 1984), p.199.

<sup>53</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.60.

<sup>54</sup> Hindemith, letter to Walton, 29 July 1963. Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, pp.54-55.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Hindemith, *Mathis Der Maler: Oper in Sieben Bildern* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1939), p.221.

Example 7.17: Allusion to *Mathis der Maler* in the theme of *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith*, bb.29-32

[Andante con moto (♩ = c.56)]

Example 7.18: Quotation from *Mathis der Maler* in *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith*, bb.394-397

[Con moto (♩ = c.54)]

Example 7.19: The violin melody following the tenor line 'We made it not in vain' in 'Glory to God' from *Christopher Columbus*

In fact, this was not the first occasion on which Walton had used a quotation from *Mathis der Maler*. The finale of Walton's music for the radio play *Christopher Columbus* (C46, 1942), the chorus 'Glory to God', makes use of the same quotation from the Hindemith score, in the violin parts following the tenor's line 'We made it not in vain' (Example 7.19).<sup>56</sup> Zelda Lawrence-Curran suggests that quotation from *Mathis*

<sup>56</sup> Since the score is not currently available, the example is transcribed from the recording on Chandos CHSA 5034. Zelda Lawrence-Curran suggests that the chorus's final phrase in the same movement ('the world that we have found shall ne'er be lost again') is also a quotation from *Mathis der Maler*, although she does not give a reference. Lawrence-Curran does not point out the quotation noted here. Zelda Lawrence-Curran, "'All the Things That Might Have Been': *Christopher Columbus*", in Stewart R. Craggs (ed.), *William Walton: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p.171.

*der Maler* in this case has more than musical meaning; there are similarities between the heroes of *Christopher Columbus* and *Mathis der Maler*, and the works have shared themes of social responsibility.<sup>57</sup> Interpretation in music without a text is inevitably more speculative, but aside from deep conclusions on the heroic nature of the artist, or the shared sympathies of two composers facing similar critical pressures, an equally likely suggestion is that Walton was drawn to this quotation because of the themes of sexual energy and erotic temptation that this music accompanies in the original opera. Walton was renowned for what Kennedy described as an ‘inoffensively grubby sense of humour’,<sup>58</sup> and referred to the music accompanying the off-stage consummation of the lovers in Act I of *Troilus and Cressida* as the ‘pornographic interlude’.<sup>59</sup> Regardless of the motivations, Walton’s use of a Hindemith quotation in a work that is already based on a Hindemith theme introduces an extra intertextual dimension, and acts as a further invitation to view the work as a dialogue between the music of the two composers.

A closer examination of the sixth section of the theme (D; bb.24-29), and the adaptations of this material that Walton employs in the variations, serves as an example of this dialogue, revealing a contrast in the harmonic languages of the two composers. The chord progressions here can be analysed according to Hindemith’s own method. With the exception of the opening B $\flat$  major triads, the five- and six-note chords in this passage alternate between those of group III and group IV (in terms of interval content, this means all of the chords includes seconds and/or sevenths, but only some – those in group IV – contain tritones). According to Hindemith’s theory, the different chord groups represent varying degrees of tension: the nervous patterns of tension present in the music are codified surprisingly well in this case by Hindemith’s system. All except the second chord have the root (as identified according to Hindemith’s theory) in the bass.

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<sup>57</sup> Lawrence-Curran, ‘“All the Things That Might Have Been”: *Christopher Columbus*’, p.171.

<sup>58</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.4.

<sup>59</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.149.



**Example 7.20: Chords in bb.24-29 of the Hindemith theme, showing their chord group according to Hindemith's theory**

Coincident notes in the melodies have been considered as chord-tones.

[Andante con moto ♩=c.56]

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 24-26) includes a melody staff (VII.), a flute staff (Fl.), a clarinet staff (Cl.), and a bass staff. The second system (measures 27-29) includes a melody staff (VI.), a violin staff (Vle.), and a bass staff. Chord group labels are placed below the bass staff: I.1, IV.2, III.1, IV.1, IV.1, III.1 for measures 24-26, and III.1, IV.1, III.1, IV.1 for measures 27-29.

Compare this with sections of the Walton variations that derive from this passage and which are similarly conceived (that is, where harmonies appear as distinct chords in vertical formations). In the section deriving from this passage in Variation 1 (b.88ff.), the analysis again reveals chords of groups III and IV, with all of the chord roots appearing in the bass (Example 7.21). There is a slight thinning of the harmonic texture, with Walton introducing four-note chords (as well as those of five and six notes, as found in Hindemith's original). Walton uses more octave doublings than Hindemith; these serve to emphasise the triad and seventh chords embedded in the harmonies, since it is the notes of the triads and sevenths which are doubled. Walton's orchestration with harp, pizzicato strings and glockenspiel amplifies the glassy feel of the harmonic dissonances. The emphasis on the embedded triad formations, and the orchestration, serve to make the passage sound more like Walton than like Hindemith.

**Example 7.21 Chords in bb.88-93 of the *Hindemith Variations*, showing their chord group according to Hindemith's theory**

Coincident notes in the melodies have been considered as chord-tones. For clarity, not all expression marks have been reproduced and some accidentals have been respelled.

[Vivace ( $\text{♩}=\text{c.126}$ )  
C.i., Fl., Fg. 88 VII., Vle. C.i., Fl., Fg.

Arpa. Str. Pizz.

91 VII., Vle. Ob., C.i. Cl. Str. Ob., C.i. Cl. Str.

IV.1 III.1 III.1 IV.1 IV.1  
III.1 IV.1 III.1 IV.1

**Example 7.22 Chords in bb.295-310, showing their chord group according to Hindemith's theory**

[Andante con moto ( $\text{♩}=\text{c.76}$ )  
Fl., Tr., VII. trem. 296 WW. Tr., Fg.

Arpa., Str. Pizz.

298 WW., Str. trem.

II.a III.1 III.1 III.1  
I.2 I.2 I.2 I.2

The tendency towards emphasising component triads of these complex chords is continued in the corresponding passage in Variation 5 (b.295ff; Example 7.22). The opening five chords here are triads or seventh chords that are augmented by the addition of a single note a semitone away from the triad notes. This creates the characteristic semitone (or seventh) clash that we have already noted several times as being a particular feature of Walton's harmonic language. The contrast with the Hindemith passage with which this section is connected can be noted partly in the shift to chords in Hindemith's groups I and II, although at this point Hindemith's chord classifications become less relevant, since the triadic properties of the harmonies become more evident and hence triadic descriptions more useful. The complexity of Hindemith's harmony has here given way to a much more familiarly Waltonian harmonic language. Whilst this results in less harmonic tension, the nervous character of the passage is again retained to some extent through instrumentation, with tremolo strings, sharp accents and surging dynamics.

In respect of this passage, it seems that the move from Hindemith's theme to Walton's variations is accompanied by a tendency to clarify more complex aspects of the harmonic language, reflected (in terms of Hindemith's own analytic system) in a shift from higher- to lower-numbered chord groups. Indeed, elsewhere in Walton's variations, there are passages of near-Classical chord progressions. Consider, for example, bb.385-393. The chords here are not pure triads; they have several non-resolving semitone clashes, similar to those noted elsewhere in Walton's later works. Nonetheless these harmonies have, both on paper and in audition, a clear sense of being tonic and dominant in E minor, and are alternated over several bars of music, accompanying a melody which rests on chord tones in several places (Example 7.23).

**Example 7.23: Tonic and dominant chords in E minor, bb.385-388**

[Var 7] Con Moto (♩ = c.54)

The musical score for Example 7.23 consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Oboe (Ob.), the middle for Arpa and Stradivarius (Str.) playing *pizzicato*, and the bottom for Violoncello (Vc.) and Contrabass (Cb.) playing *pizzicato*. The music is in 3/4 time and E minor. The tempo is marked 'Con Moto' with a quarter note equal to approximately 54 beats per minute. The score begins at measure 385. The Oboe part features a melodic line with several triplets and a dynamic marking of *8va* (octave up). The Arpa and Stradivarius part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords that alternate between tonic and dominant functions in E minor. The Violoncello and Contrabass part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets.

This, however, is only a part of the story; for if some aspects of Walton's harmonic vocabulary are more triadic than those of the Hindemith theme, others are more varied and more complex. Consider, for example, the passage in bb.201-205 (see Example 7.24). The parallel fourths between the upper two parts pay homage to those in Hindemith's theme (and in his music more generally); but the dense interlocking chromatic lines here introduce considerably greater harmonic instability than was the case in the work's opening theme.

**Example 7.24: Dense chromatic harmonic language, bb.201-202**

[Var 3, Larghetto (♩. = c.54)]

The musical score for Example 7.24 consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes the first two staves: Violin 1 (Vl.1. Solo), Violin 2 (Vl.2 Solo), and Violin 1 (Vl.1. altri). The second system includes the Viola (Vle. Solo) and Violoncello (Vlc. Solo) staves, with the Violin 2 (Vl.2. altri) staff also present. The music is characterized by dense, chromatic lines and parallel fourths between the upper parts, creating a sense of harmonic instability.

Indeed, although passages containing triadic constructions with identifiable roots that create a sense of key centre do appear as the variations progress, such harmonic stability is usually short-lived, with fluid movement between distantly related harmonies. As such, single tonal centres are temporary: their influence does not stretch over extended passages of music. This fluidity makes analysis along traditional tonal lines fruitless. In contrast, in the Hindemith theme, the frequent emphasis on E – as the centre of melodic patterns, as the starting point of melody and bass lines, and as the root of stable harmonic constructions – results in E being prominent in aural memory; although Hindemith's tonality is not traditionally diatonic, E is established as a tonal centre strongly and frequently enough to argue that its presence is felt even in transitional passages which are more unstable. Thus it makes much greater sense to speak of a key centre in the Hindemith theme than in many of Walton's variations, despite the appearance of relatively simple triadic constructions in some parts of the latter.

Overall, then, a curious paradox emerges: the move from the Hindemith theme to the Walton variations encompasses some clarification of harmonic language, with the introduction of characteristically modified triadic harmonies; at the same time, the variations effect a splintering of harmonic language, with the appearance of contrasting passages that have no harmonic centre to speak of, and a fluidity – even in passages with triads and roots – that liquidates tonality more broadly conceived. Thus this work, despite its dependence on the material and subdivided structure of the Hindemith theme, highlights one of the distinctive and original aspects of Walton’s harmonic style: the tendency – as we have noted in relation to several works – to obviate long-range hierarchical tonal relationships in favour of tonal contrast based on the association and distinction between different kinds of harmonic vocabulary.

**Example 7.25: The opening melody of *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith***



**Example 7.26: Ten-note series derived from the Hindemith theme**



Having suggested that tonal centres in the variations are only temporary resting points, it is all the more intriguing to note that Walton planned in advance a key scheme for the entire work. From the opening melody of Hindemith’s theme, which employs ten out of the twelve chromatic notes (Example 7.25),<sup>60</sup> Walton derives a ten-note series which excludes the first of the repeated A’s from the theme (Example 7.26). Alan Frank’s programme note for the first performance noted that the ‘tonal lay-out’ of the whole structure derives from this series: the ‘key-scheme’ of the theme, variations and coda is

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<sup>60</sup> Not eleven out of twelve, as Howes implies. Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.56.

based on the notes of the 'series'.<sup>61</sup> These comments in the programme note prompted reaction from critics.<sup>62</sup> Noël Goodwin was not impressed:

It seems to me a factitious scheme for which musical justification remains obscure. The sequence of keys do not [sic] in themselves provide a formal balance, or even sufficient contrast, to bolster the declining interest of harmony and subject-matter within the variations.<sup>63</sup>

But judging from the composer's letters the key-scheme was chosen in all sincerity, and certainly not as a gimmick.<sup>64</sup>

Since I have argued that local harmonic centres do not rise to the status of controlling tonalities, how can the 'key-scheme' or 'tonal layout' mentioned in the programme note be understood? Each variation closes on the relevant note of the series, with each closure involving intervals of fourths or fifths, thus giving a cadential feel with a tonicising effect on the relevant note of the series. (Three examples from the opening three variations are shown in Example 7.27. Hindemith viewed fourths and fifths, the intervals closest to the progenitor tone in his Series 1, as those intervals which create the strongest sense of tonic.)<sup>65</sup> However the sense in which the respective notes of the series represent *tonalities* sustained over each variation is limited. In fact, the closing point of each variation forms the starting-off point for the next variation in most cases, so that each variation represents a journey from one resting point to another. The ending of Variation 5 is a particularly poignant example (Example 7.28). The appropriate note of the series is D. There is a sense of Neapolitan resolution, with a B $\flat$  in the flute (bb.305-306) resolving to A (b.306), but the arrival of the variation on open fifths with D in the bass (b.307) comes as a surprise. The closure on D is a resting point in an ongoing journey: it is not prepared by the previous music, and is projected only briefly into the next variation.

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<sup>61</sup> [Alan Frank], programme note for *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith*, Royal Festival Hall, 8 March 1963. Thanks to Rosemary Johnson, archivist for the Royal Philharmonic Society, for providing a copy of this programme note.

<sup>62</sup> For example in Goodwin, 'First Performances', p.34; Andrew Porter, 'Royal Phil 150: Walton's *Variations*', *The Musical Times*, 104 (April 1963), p.265.

<sup>63</sup> Goodwin, 'First Performances', p.34.

<sup>64</sup> See Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 12 December 1961, in Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.142.

<sup>65</sup> Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition Book 1: Theoretical Part* (London: Schott, 1945), pp.132-133.

**Example 7.27: The closing bars of the first three variations**

[Var 1, Vivace (♩ = c.126)] [Var 2, Allegramente (♩ = c.138)]

8<sup>va</sup> Fl. 104 Arpa. 182 Fl. Ob. Arpa., Vls. Timp. Cb., Vlc.

[Var 3, Larghetto (♩ = c.54)]

222 Vl.1 C.i. Ob. Fl. 8<sup>va</sup> Str., pizz WW Str. arco

**Example 7.28: The closing bars of Variation 5**

[Var 5, Andante con moto (♩ = c.76)]

304 WW Cl. Fl. (b) Str.

The fact that the key scheme derives from the ending points of each variation and not from any overarching sense of controlling tonality through each variation reflects the status of harmony and tonality in Walton's later music. These pitch centres are not *hierarchically* arranged structures that control passages of music; rather, they are stable resting points arranged *sequentially*. In this sense, each is a stable harmony, but arguably not a 'tonality', since the pitch-centre is only loosely and temporarily referential for the surrounding music. This makes sense of the underlying principle here, 'a series of key-centres', an idea which otherwise seems to unite two mutually exclusive concepts.

The ten-note series of course falls short of being a twelve-note row, but it is a note-row nonetheless. Indeed, the key-scheme is not the only place in which this note-row is exploited: mirror forms are employed in melodic lines in various parts of the work. Consider, for example, the beginning of Variation 5: the rhythm of the work's opening melody is retained, but the pitches are derived from a transposed retrograde of the series (Example 7.29A; the repeated F $\flat$ s result from the repeated A $\flat$ s of the work's opening theme). This is followed by an inversion of the melody from bb.5-7 (Example 7.29B).

**Example 7.29: Mirror forms in the opening melody of Variation 5**

In addition, compare the melodic lines in bb.478-480 and 508-511 (Example 7.30). The rhythms are similar and the thematic outline is broadly the same, but the pitch content derives from different permutations of the series (P5 in bb.478-480 and IER in bb.508-511). An important point here is that row orderings have become a resource somewhat distinct from thematic context: phrases with similar thematic content may use different mirror forms of the row.

**Example 7.30: Mirror forms in the finale, bb.478-480 and bb.508-511**



Overall, the *Hindemith Variations* make an interesting case study in a number of respects. The work plays on an interaction between Walton and Hindemith which seems curiously imbalanced: Walton never breaks free from the structural layout of the theme, and yet, in contrast with the Hindemith theme, the variations demonstrate some of the more personal aspects of Walton's own musical language. Especially of interest is the concept of a series of key-centres, which – both in theory, and in practice in this work – bears a relation with traditionally-conceived tonality whilst at the same time undercutting that conception. This work is, then, is a further demonstration of the fascinating tension with tradition that brings Walton's later works to life.

### **A note on Walton and Twelve-Note Method**

Having pointed out the employment in some of Walton's later works of twelve-note structures it is important – partly to avoid overstating the case – to place Walton's use of this method in context. Of course, it was Walton's *lack* of dialogue with new serial thinking that was a particular reason for the complaints of some critics that the composer had failed to keep up with the times. Writing on Walton's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1982, Bayan Northcott commented that Walton's 'imperviousness to the implications of the Second Viennese School, let alone Darmstadt, was axiomatic amongst younger commentators'.<sup>66</sup> The analyses presented here certainly refute any suggestion that Walton was *impervious* to the twelve-note thinking of the Second Viennese School, and on this basis alone some reassessment of received opinion seems in order. Nevertheless, it is not true to suggest that Walton's music evidences *serial* thinking.

The use of the terms 'twelve-note' and 'serial' almost interchangeably by some commentators is apt to cause confusion. The use of the term 'serial' originated in Stockhausen's use of the word, *serielle Musik*, to *distinguish* his music – in which serial principles are extended to aspects of structure beyond just pitch – from that of the Second Viennese School.<sup>67</sup> In English, various terms (including integral serialism, total serialism and general serialism) have been used to clarify this distinction. For this reason, in the present thesis, I have preferred the terms 'twelve-note' and 'note-row' in

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<sup>66</sup> Bayan Northcott, 'In Search of Walton', *The Musical Times*, 123 (March 1982), p.179.

<sup>67</sup> M. J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.5.

describing Walton's twelve-note structures, reserving the term 'serial' for music in which ordering principles are extended to elements of music besides pitch,<sup>68</sup> although the terms are used less rigidly in several quotations and sources. The distinction is historically important and interpretatively significant, not least because it was serial thinking (rather than just twelve-note structures) that was a defining influence amongst the youngest generation of continental and British composers against which Walton was unfavourably compared. In the works under discussion here, Walton adopts some twelve-note structures but he does not adopt serial thinking.

In interpreting Walton's use of twelve-note structures, the coda of the finale of the Second Symphony provides particularly interesting difficulties. Here the harmonisations of the twelve-note melodies in thirds and sixths seem to affirm their status as melody within a harmonically tonal structure. But at the same time, the link between the twelve-note row and the thematic material is dissolved, so that the row becomes a compositional resource independent of the movement's principal theme. This paradox is further evident in the Hindemith Variations, in which a note-row, whose mirror forms are employed as a melodic resource, is in addition used to organise a sequence of key centres. In both case studies, mirror forms of the row are employed more-or-less independently of their thematic associations. Both works thus evidence a tension between the atonal associations and possibilities of twelve-note structures, and the link that Walton's music maintains with forms of tonal thinking. Whilst the complexity and importance of twelve-note rows here is no match to that found in the music of Schoenberg or subsequent serial composers, there is certainly a greater and more sincere engagement with twelve-note structures – as precompositional resources as well as themes – than previous analytical writing on Walton has acknowledged.

Certainly there is plenty of evidence that Walton was self-conscious about his use of twelve-note techniques. In a discussion between Walton and Hans Keller of 'atonal' and 'serial' techniques, Walton suggested he had engaged with such techniques in the Second Symphony 'for experimental reasons, seeing if I could get something out of it'. Walton commented, 'I began to get the hang of it really. [...] And it works in a way.

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<sup>68</sup> In this respect I have taken a lead from Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics*, pp.5-6.

But of course I cheated by making it end tonally the whole time.’<sup>69</sup> Keller and Walton go on to discuss the tonal implications of some of Schoenberg’s twelve-note works, including the final E<sub>b</sub> major chord of the *Ode to Napoleon* (1942, Op. 41); the implication of the discussion is that Walton’s tonal endings to works which include twelve-note structures may not be considered ‘cheating’ after all.

Before starting work on the *Hindemith Variations*, Walton had considered the twelve-note potential of the theme, writing to Alan Frank, ‘I believe it has possibilities—even a tone-row if one puts in a D $\sharp$  in the 4<sup>th</sup> bar!’<sup>70</sup> Walton thus appears to have been thinking in terms of twelve-note structures before beginning work on the composition, a possibility that seems all the more pertinent when it is considered that Walton spent five months (from November 1962 to February 1963) searching through Hindemith scores for an appropriate theme.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, there is evidence of a concern with note-rows from an early stage of the composition of the finale of the Second Symphony. Before commencing work on the movement, Walton wrote to Alan Frank that ‘the last mov[ement] I think will be a Passacaglia. I may have a “cereal” [sic] in it, because up to now there’s not a cereal in the sc[ore]’.<sup>72</sup> Walton included a sketch of the twelve-note theme in a letter to Frank of 12 April 1960;<sup>73</sup> the voicing, rhythm and articulation in this sketch differ from the final version, but the pitch series is the same. Walton accompanied the sketch with a note: ‘This is the Passacaglia theme. All 12 notes – but we don’t mention it!’<sup>74</sup> Later, during the composition of the movement, Walton wrote that ‘I’m not being too pedantic with working it out serially! But I’m beginning to see

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<sup>69</sup> *Walton Talks with Hans Keller About Contemporary Music*, radio broadcast, transmitted 12 March 1968 (BBC: BBC Sound Archive, LP31959; British Library Sound Archive, M4597W).

<sup>70</sup> Letter to Alan Frank, 12 December 1961. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.142.

<sup>71</sup> Walton discuss this in the radio broadcast *William Walton Interviewed by Dilys Powell and Anthony Hopkins for the Series Frankly Speaking*.

<sup>72</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 7 March 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.317.

<sup>73</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 12 April 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.319.

<sup>74</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 12 April 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.319.

that there is something after all to be said for that method, even if in the end it works back to old tonic [and] dominant!’<sup>75</sup>

Considering this, it is somewhat surprising that Walton later played down the significance of twelve-note structures in the movement, suggesting in fact that it ‘happened quite fortuitously, and if it had not been mentioned in the programme note, quite possibly no one would have noticed, or bothered about it’.<sup>76</sup> This response may well have been a reaction to the intimations of several critics that Walton’s interaction with twelve-note structures was a ‘gimmick’, or that he was ‘taking the Mickey’. J. H. Elliot, writing in *The Guardian* about the ordering of key centres in the *Hindemith Variations*, suggests that ‘it seems astonishing that, in a musical age constantly incurring suspicion by its apparent reliance on cerebration and mathematical computation, a composer whose style is already settled should be attracted by arbitrary gimmicks.’<sup>77</sup> The Second Symphony prompted a number of similar comments. Robert Elkin, writing in *The Musical Times*, felt that the work, especially its finale, was ‘largely an example of high jinks, even of snook-cocking’,<sup>78</sup> whilst Felix Aprahamian suggested that ‘Walton smiles wryly in his passacaglia finale’, arguing that the implications of the twelve-note theme were ‘not serious’.<sup>79</sup> Francis Routh similarly comments about the opening of the finale that ‘the composer has his tongue resolutely in his cheek as the full orchestra struts its way, in a solemn and pompous unison, through the twelve-note theme’.<sup>80</sup> Walton rather took exception to such views; in an interview with the *New York Times*, he suggested:

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<sup>75</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 16 April 1960. Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.320.

<sup>76</sup> Walton, in Murray Schafer, *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber, 1963), p.79.

<sup>77</sup> J. H. Elliot, ‘Review: Philharmonic Anniversary Concert’, *The Guardian*, 9 March 1963, p.5.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Elkin, ‘Walton’s Second Symphony’, *The Musical Times*, 102 (January 1961), p.38.

<sup>79</sup> Felix Aprahamian, ‘Walton and His New Symphony’, *The Listener*, 25 August 1960, p.321.

<sup>80</sup> Routh, *Contemporary British Music*, p.36.

You know the passacaglia of my Second Symphony has a theme of twelve notes. The critics jumped on that. They thought I was making fun. They forgot that my first big work was an atonal string quartet performed at Salzburg in 1923 by the International Society of Contemporary Music. If I produced it now, they would think I've gone off my head.<sup>81</sup>

If Walton was 'flirting' with serialism, as Hans Keller has suggested,<sup>82</sup> then it should be noted that flirting may be borne out of a genuine and serious concern with the subject. Indeed, the evidence presented previously that Walton had discussed twelve-note techniques with Henze, and had had lessons with Searle in which twelve-note music was discussed,<sup>83</sup> would suggest a genuine engagement with the relevant technical and aesthetic issues, rather than adoption of those techniques as a mere gimmick. This does not discount the potential for reading Walton's twelve-note structures as satirical in nature: one can be both satirical with and genuinely interested in a subject. The composer himself hinted at the potential for such a reading; speaking prior to the writing of the projected Second Symphony, he suggested: 'I mean it's a sort of complaint that I don't do whatever the others are doing. And it may be that I can't do what the others are doing, except as a sort of, it might be a parody or something, you know.'<sup>84</sup>

This discussion serves to clarify interpretation of Walton's use of twelve-note structures. The reality is that the music charts a middle course somewhere between the views of critics who could see no influence of the Second Viennese School and those who have held up the mere presence of twelve-note structures as sufficient evidence to refute the suggestion that Walton's technical means were out-of-date.<sup>85</sup> Neither position is entirely accurate: Walton's engagement with twelve-note structures goes beyond the superficial (since they control the entire melodic progression of the finale of the Second Symphony, and control key structure in the *Hindemith Variations*); but does not go

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<sup>81</sup> Walton, quoted in Eric Salzman, 'View from Ischia: Italian Island Helps Walton Stand Aloof', *New York Times*, 12 February 1961, §2, p.X11.

<sup>82</sup> In the radio broadcast *Walton Talks with Hans Keller About Contemporary Music*.

<sup>83</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 2, p.26ff.

<sup>84</sup> In the radio broadcast *Sir William Walton: His First Symphony*.

<sup>85</sup> Neil Tierney, for example, writes that 'certainly no one could justly upbraid him [Walton] for being unadventurous, since he uses a twelve-note structure in the finale'. Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music*, p.185.

nearly as far even as the works of the ‘Manchester School’ that were beginning to come to prominence in Britain at this time.

Whether regarded as serious or ironic, Walton’s engagement with twelve-note structures speaks further to a central argument of this thesis: that Walton’s music engages in a vital tension between the traditional and the modern. One way in which this is played out is in the friction between tonal structures on the one hand, and symmetrical structures – which work against the essential asymmetry of diatonic key relationships – on the other. Walton employed twelve-note structures not dogmatically as an antithesis to tonal construction, but rather as one of many available technical resources for organising pitch. On paper, then, in engaging with twelve-note structures in themes and as a precompositional resource, in the use of parallel and symmetrical pitch structures including the octatonic collections, and in divorcing triadic chords from their functional contexts, Walton was, through his post-war orchestral music, investigating similar concerns to some of the ‘ultra-modern’ composers. The musical results were not, however, what we might regard as ‘progressive’ – and indeed, many of these modern influences are associated with the early twentieth century rather than with the 1950s and 60s during which these works were written.

We will return in due course to Walton’s status as a conservative (or ‘regressive’) composer (or otherwise) and to the interpretative significance of these various engagements with modern musical concerns. There remains, however, a significant part of Walton’s oeuvre that has not yet been considered: his film scores, of which three were composed in the post-war period. The next chapter will consider two of these film scores – those for *Battle of Britain* and *Three Sisters* – alongside a contemporaneous work, *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*. This gives the opportunity to discuss Walton’s work on films and reflect on the relationship between the film scores and the rest of the composer’s output.

## Chapter 8:

### **Walton, Music, and Film: The 1969 Film Scores and the *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten***

Having outlined some of the technical features of Walton's later orchestral scores, work that is firmly rooted in the musical text, it is time to place this music in a more interpretative context, and thus return, to some extent, to issues in Walton's biography and the reception history of his music. This is not a pursuit of potential connections between individual pieces and biographical narrative (although these may have their place, especially in some of the pre-war scores where Walton's muse seems to have resided firmly in the outworking of particular relationships). Rather, the search is for interpretative frameworks that are informed, but not constrained, by both Walton's creative milieu and our present-day critical context.

The potential for intersection between readings of music and readings of film is a topic of considerable interest. Anecdotal examples of interpretative links are not hard to come by: for example, the French film director Denis Dercourt has recently commented that Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre* is the best scriptwriting textbook available.<sup>1</sup> David Cooper, whilst acknowledging that the 'symphonic' must be constructed differently in film music than in concert music, nonetheless finds symphonic models useful in the discussion of film scores, using the sonata-form labels 'exposition', 'development' and 'recapitulation' in a discussion of Bernard Herrmann's score for *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*.<sup>2</sup> Both music and film are artworks that are distinct because of their operation in chronological time and their ability to structure and distort temporality; hence several issues (the structuring of time through form, for example) are common to both genres.

Several factors suggest that examination of the intersection between Walton's film and concert works might produce a promising interpretative perspective, and one that usefully connects biography with analysis and interpretation. Walton had an appreciable involvement in film music, with films occupying a substantial part of his output in the

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<sup>1</sup> These comments arose in a discussion about relationships between film and music led by Ian McDonald at the third Annual Film Music Conference, National Media Museum, Bradford, 16 March 2007.

<sup>2</sup> David Cooper, *Bernard Herrmann's 'The Ghost and Mrs. Muir': A Film Score Guide* (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow, 2005), pp.28-31 and 77-79.

years 1934-1947.<sup>3</sup> Walton's introduction to film scoring, at the age of 32 (*Escape Me Never*; 1934), occurred during a period of considerable growth in the popularity and importance of sound films. In addition, the income from film music was important in financing Walton's changing lifestyle.<sup>4</sup> A number of the salient features of Walton's music (including issues such as interaction with existing themes, sectionalised structures, and the prominence of thematic variation) resonate with widely-perceived characteristics of film scores.

In this chapter, Walton's three major orchestral scores of 1969 – two film scores, for *Battle of Britain* and *Three Sisters*, and one concert score, *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten* – are taken as case studies. I articulate a number of ways in which film music scholarship in general, and a study of Walton's score for *Battle of Britain* in particular, can illuminate our understanding of the concert works. Moving beyond this, I propose a reading of the *Improvisations* that challenges the prevailing tone of the work's contemporary reception history by offering an alternative perspective, one that is informed by musicological writings on narrative as well as on film music.

### **The Three Scores of 1969**

Walton's music for *Battle of Britain* followed a fourteen-year gap in his film scoring career. Unfortunately this was not a happy return to the medium, since the score was beset by studio politics. Walton's music was rejected at a late stage and replaced with a new score by Ron Goodwin,<sup>5</sup> but Walton was not informed of the decision, and only heard about it several weeks later from a *Daily Express* reporter seeking his comments.<sup>6</sup> In response, Laurence Olivier – Walton's friend and collaborator on several earlier

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<sup>3</sup> This is easily ascertainable from a brief survey of Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.56-109. *Escape Me Never* (C28; 1934) was Walton's first film; *Hamlet* (C54; 1947) was the last film in this productive period before *Troilus and Cressida* took over Walton's time and attention. *Richard III* (C63) was written outside this period, in 1955.

<sup>4</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 3, especially p.37ff.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Richard Hasan, 'The Restoration of William Walton's *The Battle of Britain*', *Music from the Movies*, 43 (2004), pp.64-66.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.238.



films, who played Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding in *Battle of Britain* – threatened to withdraw his name from the film’s credits.<sup>7</sup> In the end, a single Walton cue – ‘Battle in the Air’ – was retained in the film, much to the irritation of Goodwin, who had stipulated that only one or the other of the composers’ scores should be used.<sup>8</sup>

Malcolm Arnold was engaged to assist Walton with orchestration. However, his role may have surpassed that of mere orchestrator: on one occasion Walton sent just ‘the top lines (perhaps a little more)’ of two cues, leaving Arnold to complete the rest,<sup>9</sup> and in addition, it has been suggested that Arnold was asked by the producers to rescore and expand sections of Walton’s original.<sup>10</sup> Parts of the manuscript score are in Arnold’s hand,<sup>11</sup> and one section of the famous cue ‘Battle in the Air’ is virtually a quotation from Arnold’s *Tam O’Shanter* overture.<sup>12</sup>

The ramifications of these various situations affect the film as we are able to study it, since a DVD re-release of the film with Walton’s ‘restored’ soundtrack has only recently become available.<sup>13</sup> This reconstruction has been made by several of the original staff on the film, and is based on recordings of the Walton score made by the studio prior to the switch in composers. However, the placement of the music in the DVD version does not always match the precise specifications of Walton’s original cue sheet. The collaborative nature of film-making makes authorial intention difficult to pin down even in straightforward cases, but authorship of the score for this film – with the studio politics necessitating later reconstruction, and the considerable contribution from

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<sup>7</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.239.

<sup>8</sup> Goodwin’s perspective is found in the unpublished manuscript by Kees Blokker, ‘Ron Goodwin: My Kind of Music’, a collection of numerous transcripts of interviews with the composer. My thanks to Blokker for providing copies of this material.

<sup>9</sup> Walton, letter to Malcolm Arnold, January 1969. Malcolm Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p.385.

<sup>10</sup> Alan Poulton, *The Music of Malcolm Arnold: A Catalogue* (London: Faber Music, 1986), p.156.

<sup>11</sup> The full autograph score is available in the Beinecke library, Yale University. See <http://webtext.library.yale.edu/xml2html/beinecke.KOCH2.con.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Michael McLennan, *Battle of Britain Soundtrack*, 2004, Available: <http://www.soundtrack.net/soundtracks/database/?id=3687>, Accessed 20 January 2005. See Rehearsal Figure X in Malcolm Arnold, *Overture Tam O’shanter*, Op. 51 (London: Paterson, 1955).

<sup>13</sup> The story of this reconstruction is told in Hasan, ‘The Restoration of William Walton’s *The Battle of Britain*’. The DVD is MGM: 10001024 MZ1 (2004).

Arnold's pen – is immersed in particularly murky waters. However, whilst this must be borne in mind, it need not undercut research into Walton's music, since both the autograph score and re-released DVD are available for study as a 'text that is offered to us'.<sup>14</sup> The score includes a number of features which can augment our understanding of Walton's creative makeup, including the extensive use of pastiche and quotation, considerable reliance on the variation of small thematic units, and the use of different methods of harmonic organisation – from the purely diatonic to the highly chromatic – in different cues.

Walton's second film score of 1969, and the last of his career, was for *Three Sisters*. The music comprises only three cues using borrowed musical themes: 'not much music, but very difficult to do', he commented.<sup>15</sup> Although the music is short and unremarkable, the score – like that for *Battle of Britain* – uses existing materials to interesting effect. The contribution of the music to the narrative during the film's 'dream sequence' is of particular interest.

The major concert score of 1969, *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*, was commissioned by Dr Ralph Dorfman, an American biochemical researcher, in memory of his wife, Adeline Smith Dorfman, an accomplished amateur pianist and dancer. Walton was chosen on the advice of Josef Kripps, the musical director of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, who gave the work's première in San Francisco on 14 January the following year. The enigmatic title thinly veils the underlying theme-and-variations form; a previous title was *Elegiac Variations on a Theme of Benjamin Britten*,<sup>16</sup> and Walton refers to the work as 'variations' in some private letters.<sup>17</sup> Like the film scores, the *Improvisations* makes use of pre-existing musical materials, and the

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<sup>14</sup> This phrase is from Subotnik's account of the authorship problem in musicology, discussed to some extent below. Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p.57.

<sup>15</sup> Walton, letter to Walter Legge, 21 December 1969. In Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton*, p.387.

<sup>16</sup> Ralph Dorfman, who commissioned the work, mentions this alternative title in a letter to Stewart Craggs, 11 January 1976. My thanks to Stewart Craggs for providing me with a copy of this letter from his private archive.

<sup>17</sup> For example Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 29 August 1969; Walton, letter to Benjamin Britten, 9 September 1968. Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.241 and 243.

work has a number of other features which can be profitably explored through the lens of the criticism and scholarship of film music.

The *Improvisations* – in common with other later Walton works – received a somewhat cool reception. Points of focus included familiar topics, including, for example, the lack of any ‘advance’ in Walton’s musical language.<sup>18</sup> The question of ‘lightness’ surfaces again here: Noël Goodwin commented that the work’s British première at Aldeburgh ‘provided some lighter relief from the exigencies of Shostakovich and Henze’,<sup>19</sup> whilst Edward Greenfield described the *Improvisations* as ‘an enjoyable work, refreshing without having anything in it to trouble the timid listener’.<sup>20</sup> In *The Daily Telegraph*, the article’s title ‘Walton’s leisurely air in *Improvisations*’ is followed up by comments on the work’s ‘leisurely unfolding of incidents’ and ‘apparent inconsequentiality’.<sup>21</sup> These views, ideologically rooted in their 1960s context, are amongst those that can be profitably re-evaluated.

### Quotation and Intertextuality

One feature that unites all three of the works under discussion here is the use of quotation that sets up a multi-layered relationship between the Walton score and other, pre-existing music. This might be tentatively called ‘intertextuality’, although some qualification of this term is necessary. One consequence of the recent engagement of musicology with literary theory has been a shift of emphasis from analysis of musical works to consideration of how those works are received and interpreted. In literary terms, this reflects a change in emphasis from ‘author’ and ‘work’ to ‘reader’ and ‘text’.<sup>22</sup> Roland Barthes, an influential author in this regard, writes: ‘a text is made of

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<sup>18</sup> R. T. B[eck], ‘Reviews: Orchestra: *Triptych*, Alan Rawsthorne; *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*, William Walton.’ *Music and Letters*, 52(4) (October 1971), pp.463-464.

<sup>19</sup> Noël Goodwin, ‘Rebuilding of the House’, *Music and Musicians*, 18(12) (August 1970), p.19.

<sup>20</sup> Edward Greenfield, ‘Festivals: Aldeburgh’, *The Musical Times*, 111(1530) (August 1970), pp.819-826..

<sup>21</sup> A. E. P., ‘Walton’s Leisurely Air in *Improvisations*’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 June 1970, p.12.

<sup>22</sup> See Roland Barthes, ‘From Work to Text’, trans. Stephen Heath, *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp.155-164.

multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author.’<sup>23</sup> The fixed object of the *work* (replete with its author) is hence contrasted with the open process of reading a *text*.<sup>24</sup> Intertextuality, construed from this angle, is reader-focused and is concerned with the network of relationships to multiple other texts from which a text derives its meaning.<sup>25</sup> The term ‘intertextuality’, however, has – in some musicology (and indeed in other disciplines) – perhaps been rather unsubtly reinterpreted with reference to individual works. Consider, for example, a comparative study of two fifteenth-century motets whose very title (‘Intertextuality and Compositional Process’) betrays a clear focus on the composer; nowhere in that article are listener’s perceptions considered.<sup>26</sup> There is, of course, a reason for this: the ‘text’ concept, open and subjective, eludes criticism. Barthes writes, ‘once the author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile’.<sup>27</sup> Rose Rosengard Subotnik characterises the problem as a ‘dialectics of text’: ‘On the one hand we acknowledge the inconceivability of acquiring an exhaustive knowledge of the factors that initially created a text. On the other hand we accept a continuing moral obligation to engage as directly as possible with the configuration of the texts that are offered to us.’<sup>28</sup> Subotnik presents an attractive argument that honestly confronts the problem of the author whilst providing a way to proceed. Following this line, the present study involves examination of references or allusions to existing musics where the focus is on the music itself (‘the text that is offered to us’). If this redoubles the unsubtle rendering of the term ‘intertextuality’ in some musicology, I can only contend that I offer suggestions of ways in which the 1969 works *could* be read rather than attempting to define how they *are* read, or indeed how they were written.

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<sup>23</sup> Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, trans. Stephen Heath, *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p.148.

<sup>24</sup> See Barthes, ‘From Work to Text’. For an detailed study of the ‘work concept’ in music, see Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> Barthes, ‘From Work to Text’, pp.160-161.

<sup>26</sup> J. Michael Allsen, ‘Intertextuality and Compositional Process in Two Cantilena Motets by Hugo De Latins’, *The Journal of Musicology*, 11(2) (Spring 1993), pp.174-202.

<sup>27</sup> Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’. p.147.

<sup>28</sup> Subotnik, *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society*. p.57.

An approach that identifies meaning in extratextual references has been especially relevant in the study of film and its music. This is perhaps because film typically co-opts cultural signs in a more explicit way than other art forms, such as concert music, which may feign autonomy from external reference. In addition, the time pressures involved in film scoring mean that borrowing (from other composers' music and from within a composer's own oeuvre) is commonplace. Quotation, pastiche, and the use of musical stereotypes acting as cultural signs are well documented in the literature of film music.<sup>29</sup>

A number of examples of this occur in the score for *Battle of Britain*. Several cues in the film are based around a quotation of Siegfried's horn call, a leitmotif from Wagner's *Ring* cycle (Example 8.1; Example 8.2). The leitmotif represents the great blonde-haired blue-eyed Aryan hero of Wagner's epic tetralogy; he is a strong and brave warrior-hero, but one who cannot understand fear, and whose power is wielded at the behest of others.<sup>30</sup> The use of this motif hence seems to invite political, perhaps even subversive interpretations. Goodwin's replacement score for the film makes a clear distinction in the music between Luftwaffe and RAF forces (in the form of two contrasting leitmotivic marches, 'Aces High' and 'Battle of Britain Theme'), whereas Walton's score employs Siegfried's horn call to accompany forces from both sides. (A summary of the cues found in the autograph score, including titles and reel numbers, is presented in Table 8.1, p.242.) There are, of course, multiple possible readings of the political message here, and these rely on knowledge of the music and plot of the *Ring* cycle. Nonetheless, at least some level of meaning was attributed to the quotation by the composer himself; Walton's wife later remembered, 'It also amused him to discover that the German armies had marched into battle to the accompaniment of music by Wagner; William felt he could make good use of this.'<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Kathryn Kalinak gives a concise explanation in *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), pp.12-14.

<sup>30</sup> Including Mime, who raised Siegfried as a warrior for his own purposes, Brünnhilde, and then Gunther. Siegfried's stubborn refusal to heed the warnings of others leads to his death.

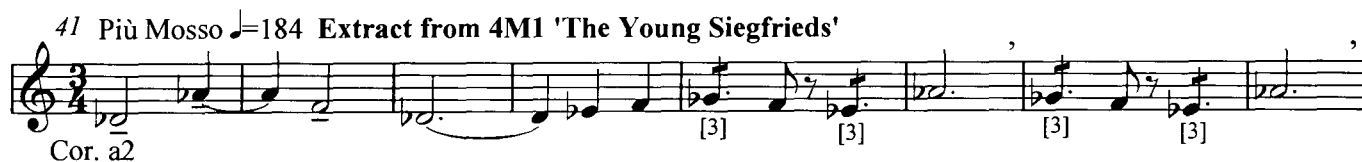
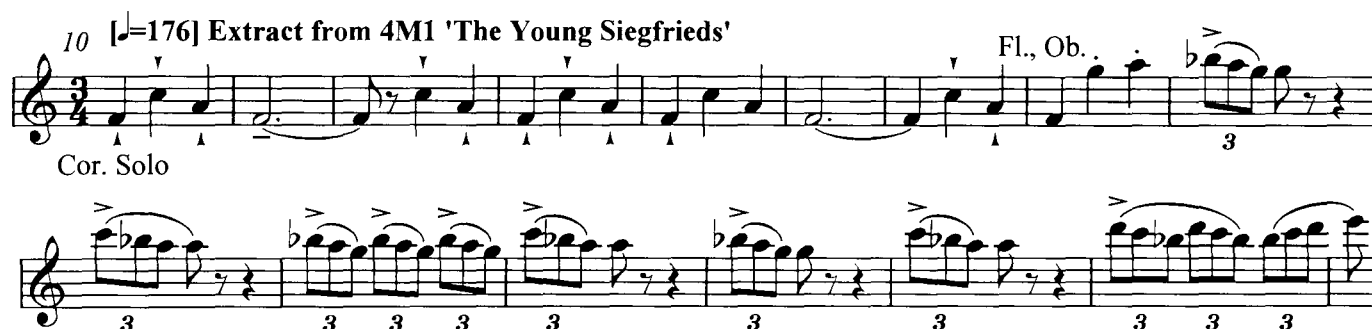
<sup>31</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.97.

**Example 8.1: Siegfried's Horn Call**



**Example 8.2: Walton's use of Siegfried's Horn Call in the score for *Battle of Britain***

These extracts from 4M1 are transcribed from the autograph score. Walton uses accidentals rather than key signatures here, as reproduced below.



Other cues in *Battle of Britain* employ clear cultural references to musical styles. Two short cues in the film, 2M2 and 6M2, are settings of an extract from the Horst Wessel Song, the anthem of the Nazi party from 1930 to 1945. The scherzo 'Gay Berlin' is a Waltz, a lively dance of Austro-German origin, which accompanies two German pilots on their drive around a city busy with young adults enjoying the night life. The cheerful nature of the dance music underlines Luftwaffe commander Hermann Göring's confidence, as reported by one of the pilots, that Berlin would not be bombed; the end of the cue signals the start of the RAF air raid that would defy his confidence. Perhaps more intriguing, but less obvious, is the presence on two occasions of diegetic radio music, a dance band arrangement of 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square', identified by a radio announcer on the soundtrack as the Savoy Orpheans led by Carroll Gibbons.<sup>32</sup> (Although the history of bands with this name is complex, Gibbons was

<sup>32</sup> In the soundtrack on the restored DVD, the cues are (potentially mistakenly) omitted from the music in the Walton version.

certainly leading a band at the Savoy during the Battle of Britain, and recorded 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square' around this time.)<sup>33</sup> This cue contrasts with 'Gay Berlin', having a lighter but more serene mood, and an American jazz-influenced sound quite distinctive from the Germanic waltz. Although it is not clear to what extent Walton was involved in selecting or arranging these dance band cues, some involvement on his part can be conjectured. Although these cues appear in the soundtrack credited to Goodwin, the scores for three separate versions are held alongside Walton's non-diegetic cues at the Beinecke Library, Yale University, and one of these – 3M2, an orchestral arrangement of the song – is included on Walton's list of cues and timings. During the early 1920s Walton had spent time making arrangements of foxtrots for the Savoy Orpheans, and had completed a jazz band concerto for them, although it was abruptly abandoned after completion.<sup>34</sup>

Quotation is also a feature of Walton's music for *Three Sisters*. This score has aroused little interest, perhaps because the film is little more than a video of Olivier's 1967 stage production of the Chekhov play.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore Walton's short contribution largely comprises borrowed or recycled material, and in addition, Olivier's slow-moving interpretation of Chekhov arouses little enthusiasm amongst today's action-hungry film audiences. In one of the few snatches of criticism devoted to this score, Stephen Lloyd describes the film as 'musically disappointing.'<sup>36</sup> Notwithstanding this understandable disappointment, the score includes further examples of Walton's use of quotation, and these contribute significantly to the narrative development of the film.

The opening and closing titles employ arrangements of Felix Mendelssohn's 'Song Without Words' Op. 18 No. 1 in E major. The reason for this choice of source material is unclear. The only other cue in the film, the 'dream sequence', employs a musical

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<sup>33</sup> Albert McCarthy, *The Dance Band Era: The Dancing Decades from Ragtime to Swing: 1910-1950* (London: Spring Books, 1974), p.106. The earlier history of the band is given on pp.38-44.

<sup>34</sup> See Constant Lambert, 'Fresh Hand; New Talent; Vital Touch', *Boston Evening Transcript*, 27 November 1926. Reproduced in Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), pp.267-270. The reference to the Savoy Orpheans appears on p.268.

<sup>35</sup> This production, at the Old Vic Theatre, was for the National Theatre.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Lloyd, 'Film Music', in Stewart R. Craggs (ed.), *William Walton: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p.127. Lloyd repeats his comments on the film, almost word-for-word, in Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.247.

montage to underscore a dream in which Irina (one of the sisters) has a vision of a better life in Moscow. In the play, Moscow is a symbol of the sisters' hope for the future: during the dream, Irina is shown enjoying a theatre production with one of her sisters, being rowed across a river with a well-dressed husband and children, and dancing with the husband at a ball. The music comprises a montage of pre-existing musical sources, beginning with an arrangement of part of the National Anthem of the Soviet Union, followed by a Waltz, originally from Walton's short ballet *The First Shoot*, played initially in the film by the diegetic theatre orchestra. (This was not the first 'recycling' of this material originally written for a scene in C. B. Cochran's 1935 revue *Follow the Sun*; it also appears as diegetic radio music in Walton's score for *Went the Day Well*, 1942).<sup>37</sup> In this sequence, the music serves two functions: it mediates between the reality of a quiet provincial town and the imaginary Moscow, and it marks the passage of time over the night during which the dream takes place. The music also performs a more subtle dramatic function: in emphasising the rift between Irina's dream and reality, the music shows up the emptiness of the dream, even for the most optimistic of the three sisters. As Irina wakes, the music returns to the National Anthem, which now represents not the dream of Moscow, but the fading of hope, since the sound of the anthem drifting in through the window now reminds Irina of the imminent departure of a group of local soldiers which had been the sisters' only source of companionship.

Intertextual montage in the manner of *Three Sisters* does not occur in such a striking form in Walton's concert works. Nonetheless, the use of existing materials, and the sense in which they create an intertextual interpretative web, can indeed be seen in his concert scores, including in the *Improvisations*. This work is, by its very nature, an intertextual play between the music of Britten and Walton. The chosen theme is highly characterised and (as *The Times*'s reviewer put it) 'no-one deserves a prize for identifying it'.<sup>38</sup> Walton had written to Britten:

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<sup>37</sup> According to Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Hale, 1984), p.80.

<sup>38</sup> Joan Chissell, 'LPO: Festival Hall', *The Times*, 21 October 1970, p.15.



I hope that you will not think that I am making a too strange request—namely that you will allow me to attempt to write Variations (orchestral) on the theme of the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of your Piano Concerto. I realize that you have used it as a passacaglia, but not strictly speaking as a theme and variations—I hope very much you will let me have a try. It is not a new idea of mine but one which I’ve been thinking about for some time.<sup>39</sup>

Howes notes that Walton ‘seized the opportunity to associate Britten with it [the commission for the *Improvisations*] in this graceful way’,<sup>40</sup> whilst Kennedy describes the work as an ‘elegant and graceful homage to Britten’.<sup>41</sup> These rather effusive comments are perhaps rather overstated, for the relationship was one of rivalry as well as respect. Nevertheless, the score can certainly be read in terms of the interaction between Britten and Walton. This topic will be followed up in due course; for now, it suffices to note that each variation ‘relights’ the theme, bringing some elements into focus and altering or adding features in Walton’s characteristic style.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to this, some parts of the score have strong affinities with other musical works. The passage beginning at b.101 in Improvisation 2 (see Example 8.3) is similar in a number of ways to the same thematic gesture occurring in the development section of the Second Symphony’s opening movement (bb.133-136; Example 8.4). The character of this similarity is surely more that of a quotation than of mere stylistic congruency. Indeed, where the motif recurs in the respective movements (bb.247-255 and 313-321 of the *Improvisations*, and bb.173-188 of the Second Symphony), the character of the motifs’ development is similar, with the rests between the rhythmic punctuating chords being contracted.

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<sup>39</sup> Walton, letter to Benjamin Britten, 9 September 1968. Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.241.

<sup>40</sup> Frank Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, Second ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.224.

<sup>41</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.243.

<sup>42</sup> The term ‘relight’ is used in David Cooper, ‘Film Form and Musical Form in Bernard Herrmann’s Score to *Vertigo*’, *The Journal of Film Music*, 1(2-3) Hermann Studies (Fall-Winter 2003), p.240.

**Example 8.3: Bb.101-105 of Walton's *Improvisations***

[Vivo (♩=138c.)]  $\text{tr}^{\flat}$

101

*ff* WW.  $\text{tr}^{\flat}$   $\text{p cresc.}$   $\text{ff}$

Str.  $\text{ff}$

Cor., Fg. Cl.b.  $\text{ff}$

**Example 8.4: Bb.133-136 of Walton's *Second Symphony***

133 Vivace ♩=144+

$\text{tr}^{\flat}$

133 Vivace ♩=144+

$\text{ff}$  WW. 5

Tr.  $\text{ff}$

Cor., Fg.  $\text{ff}$

**Walton and Britten**

In addition, the emphasis on an F-E resolution in high strings that characterises Walton's added prelude to the Britten theme (Example 8.5) is reminiscent of the first 'sea interlude' in Britten's *Peter Grimes*.<sup>43</sup> That Walton was familiar with this work is clear, since he was a consultant to the British Council panel that declined to provide funding for a recording the opera;<sup>44</sup> indeed, it was partly the success of *Peter Grimes* that spurred Walton to write *Troilus and Cressida*.<sup>45</sup> Walton's rivalry with Britten is an intriguing topic: he nicknamed Britten's opera 'Grimy Peter',<sup>46</sup> and Lady Walton tells

<sup>43</sup> Thanks to Dan Grimley for pointing this out.

<sup>44</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.125.

<sup>45</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.133.

<sup>46</sup> See Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.128.

the apocryphal story of his 1947 visit to a music shop in Lucerne which was heavily promoting Britten scores because of the first performance of *Peter Grimes* in the city that year; on seeing a large photograph of Britten, Walton is said to have ‘reached into the window of the shop, picked up the photograph, and put it neatly on the chair seat, face down.’<sup>47</sup>

**Example 8.5: The opening bars of the *Improvisations***

If these affinities between passages in the *Improvisations* and other Walton and Britten works are accepted, then this augments the network of Walton-Britten relationships that characterises this work. Others of Walton’s later orchestral scores raise similar issues; we have already commented on the mix of Walton and Hindemith in the *Hindemith Variations*, which results not only from the theme of the title, but also from the subsequent quotation from *Mathis der Maler*.<sup>48</sup> Another much smaller work deserves mention in this context: in 1953, at Britten’s invitation, seven composers (including Walton) contributed one variation each to *Variations on an Elizabethan Theme (Sellinger’s Round)*; it was Walton’s suggestion that each composer should include a quotation of his own work.<sup>49</sup>

An intertextual element is not a new feature in the later works. Pastiche had been part of Walton’s makeup since his London debut with *Façade* in 1923. Nonetheless, the importance of quotation and musical reference in film scores in general, and the abundance of examples in Walton’s film scores in particular, support the suggestion that Walton’s involvement in film music in the ‘middle’ period may have increased or emphasised this element of his creative make-up. Sidonie Goossens recalled that Walton and Hyam Greenbaum (who orchestrated several of the composer’s earlier film scores) would search through scores for ideas looking for ideas for the latest project.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade*, p.122.

<sup>48</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 7, p.202ff.

<sup>49</sup> Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.116.

<sup>50</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, p.149.

Instances of quotation abound in Walton's film music; alongside the examples given above, the use of fifteenth- and seventeenth-century musical sources in *Henry V* and use of the *Marseillaise* in *The Next of Kin* furnish just two out of numerous examples.<sup>51</sup>

### Thematic Variation

Intertextuality, with its fashionable link to literary theory and with precedents in the study of film music, provides one interesting point of contact between the *Improvisations* and film scores. In addition, elements of this work's technical construction and sound-world display a 'filmic' quality.

One such quality is the importance of thematic variation. In the score for *Battle of Britain*, there are only a few pieces of distinctive thematic material, from which Walton moulds several cues (see Table 8.1, p.242). In a similar way, Walton's *Improvisations* are essentially monothematic, working exclusively with the Britten theme (see Table 8.2, p.243). This theme is taken from the revised version (1946) of Britten's Piano Concerto (Op. 13; 1938). The melody consists, with the sole exception of a climactic B $\flat$ , of descent and ascent over the symmetrical hexatonic scale (Example 8.6). The theme's potentially simplistic character lead one reviewer to label it 'undistinguished',<sup>52</sup> even Walton himself, in a private letter to Alan Frank, stated: 'I could hardly have chosen a more infantile theme, no need for a pill with this one!'<sup>53</sup> The monothematicism of the *Improvisations* is therefore particularly noticeable, since the theme is highly characterised and easily recognisable.

#### Example 8.6: The melody of the Britten theme



<sup>51</sup> Lloyd's overview of Walton's film music in *William Walton: Music and Literature* includes discussion of a number of quotations and references.

<sup>52</sup> Arthur Custer, 'William Walton: *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*', *Notes*, 28(2) [Second Series] (December 1971), p.309.

<sup>53</sup> Walton, letter to Alan Frank, 22 November 1967. Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.241.

The monothematicism of the *Improvisations* is not unique in Walton's output of this period. A similar quality is found in the *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith*, although in that work, the chosen theme, 36 bars in length, contains within itself some measure of thematic contrast; this can hardly be said of the Britten theme used in the *Improvisations*. Howes describes the *Improvisations* as 'motivic rather than thematic',<sup>54</sup> whilst Jürgen Schaarwächter, speaking of Walton's late style more generally, argues that the composer 'concentrated much more on little material to get impressive results.'<sup>55</sup> The 'motivic' quality that Howes identifies is most apparent in *Improvisations* 2 and 3. Here, particular intervallic characteristics of the theme are explored rather than developed, so that the music contains successive similar melodic fragments rather than expansive thematic statements.

If we reach the conclusion that, in the *Improvisations*, the principal interest of the work lies in the 'relighting' of the Britten theme in different melodic and harmonic guises, rather than in thematic or tonal contrasts, might this not be considered a filmic quality? A number of writings in film music studies support this view. Cooper comments about Bernard Herrmann that his 'approach to form is less reliant on a symphonic model that establishes and resolves tonal conflict, than on the subtle reworking and varying of a relatively small pool of material'.<sup>56</sup> Cooper highlights what he calls such 'micro-variation' technique in *The Ghost and Mrs Muir* (1947), in which ten out of fourteen cues (eight of these in the opening part of the film) give prominence to one musical motif.<sup>57</sup> Cooper finds the same technique in *Vertigo* (1958), arguing that the score 'involves a subtle process of variation and transformation of a small group of related ideas, which gives the impression of their being constantly relit or reframed rather than being thematically developed in a rigorous manner.'<sup>58</sup> In a study of an earlier score, and one more aligned to the Hollywood mainstream, Charles Leinberger identifies seven leitmotivic themes in Max Steiner's music for *Now Voyager* (1942), with Charlotte's

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<sup>54</sup> Howes, *The Music of William Walton*, p.224.

<sup>55</sup> Jürgen Schaarwächter, 'On Walton's Late Music', *British Music: Journal of the British Music Society*, 20 (1998), p.54. Howes makes similar comments in *The Music of William Walton*, p.53.

<sup>56</sup> Cooper, *Bernard Herrmann's 'The Ghost and Mrs. Muir'*, pp.30-31.

<sup>57</sup> Cooper, *Bernard Herrmann's 'The Ghost and Mrs. Muir'*, pp.28, 31, and 107-8.

<sup>58</sup> Cooper, 'Film Form and Musical Form in Bernard Herrmann's Score to *Vertigo*', p.240.

theme being ‘the most important’;<sup>59</sup> Leinberger identifies the variations of Charlotte’s Theme in a substantial number of cues, identifying changes in key and mode (major or minor), harmonic language (diatonic vs. chromatic), meter, addition of pedal notes, changes in harmonic rhythm, and approaches to closure.<sup>60</sup> Walton’s extended use of limited thematic material can, then, be seen as related to film music, not least his own music for *Battle of Britain*.

## Sectionalisation

The sectionalised quality of several of Walton’s later scores, and in particular the *Improvisations*, also bears a relationship to film music, since film scores are by their very nature comprised of discrete but co-dependent sections that come together (alongside the other elements of the film) to form the final work. Unlike the *Hindemith Variations* and the finale of the Second Symphony, the distinction between main sections of the *Improvisations* is not made explicit by numbered subheadings in the score. However, double barlines and tempo markings give a fair indication of the intended boundaries. As with other Walton works, these larger sections can be subdivided (according to textural and thematic criteria) into a number of shorter sections (Table 8.2). The lengths of cues in *Battle of Britain* (Table 8.1) are, broadly speaking, comparable with the length of subsections in the *Improvisations* (Table 8.2).

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<sup>59</sup> Charles Leinberger, ‘Thematic Variation and Key Relationships: Charlotte’s Theme in Max Steiner’s Score for *Now Voyager*’, *The Journal of Film Music*, 1(1) (Summer 2002), p.75.

<sup>60</sup> Leinberger, ‘Thematic Variation and Key Relationships: Charlotte’s Theme in Max Steiner’s Score for *Now Voyager*’.

**Table 8.1: The length and ordering of cues in Walton's score for *Battle of Britain***

Cue	Handwriting	Title / Notes	Timing
2M2	Walton	Extract from <b>Horst Wessel Song</b> (1)	00:13
3M1		Walton specifies 'bagpipe music only'	00:19
3M2	Copyist	Orchestral Waltz arrangement of <b>'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square'</b>	02:14
4M1	Walton	<b>'Young Siegfrieds'</b>	01:22
5M1	Arnold*	Variation on <b>Young Siegfrieds</b>	01:03
6M1	Walton		01:22
6M2	Walton	Extract from <b>Horst Wessel Song</b> (2)	00:15
6M3	Walton		00:29
7M1	Walton	Variation on 6M3	00:38
8M1	These two cues and their timings are identified in Walton's list but are missing from the autograph score.		02:18
9M1			00:54
9M2	Walton	<b>'Gay Berlin'</b>	01:15
10M1	Walton	Variation on 6M1	01:02
12M1	Arnold*	Variation on <b>Young Siegfrieds</b>	01:21
13M1	Walton / Arnold†	<b>'Battle in the Air'</b>	
14M3	Arnold‡	<b>'Battle of Britain March'</b>	

The table is based on a list of cues and timings in Walton's hand together with the autographs of the cues themselves.

\*These two pieces contain material similar to that in 4M1, 'Young Siegfrieds', and so are presumably the cues referred to in Walton's letter to Arnold of January 1969: 'Have sent you the top lines (perhaps a little more) of two pieces almost identical with 4M1. So you must try to make them sound quite different!' See Hayes (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p.385.

†The autograph of this cue is not held with the others at the Beinecke library, but was retained by United Artists (presumably because the cue was used on the commercial release of the film). According to Craggs, the first fifteen pages are in Walton's hand, with the remaining eight pages in Arnold's hand. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.148.

‡14M3, the march intended for the end titles, is clearly attributed as 'composed by William Walton' in a reduction in the hand of a copyist, although the full orchestral arrangement is in Arnold's hand.

A number of other cues with later reel numbers also appear in the autograph in Arnold's hand (14M1 and 14M2, and a much longer setting of the Horst Wessel Song with no reel number). Since these do not appear on the cue sheet summary in Walton's hand, these have been excluded from the above list, on the basis that they are likely later additions composed and arranged by Arnold at the studio's request. See Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue*, p.148; Alan Poulton, *The Music of Malcolm Arnold: A Catalogue* (London: Faber Music, 1986), p.156.

**Table 8.2: Tabulation of thematic material and its derivation in Walton's *Improvisations***

'A1' and 'A2' refer to material that derives from the two halves of the Britten theme (bb.5-8 and 9-13 respectively), whilst 'r' (for 'resolution') refers to material derived from Walton's added introduction (bb.1-4). Timings are taken from the recording on CHAN8959.

	<b>Bar No.</b>	<b>Thematic Material</b>	<b>Length</b>
<b>Preface</b>	1	r	0:22
<b>Theme</b>	5	A1	0:19
	9	A2	0:26
<b>Improvisation 1</b>	13	Introduction	0:43
	22	A1	1:36
	40	A2	0:48
	55	Codetta - r	0:32
<b>Improvisation 2</b>	62	Introduction - r	0:14
	72	A1	0:32
	94	A2	0:41
	122	Codetta - r	0:16
<b>Improvisation 3</b>	133	Introduction	0:04
	137	A1	0:38
	175	A2	0:29
	202	Codetta	0:10
<b>Improvisation 4</b>	211	Introduction	0:12
	213	A1	1:00
	223	A2	1:01
	233	Codetta - r	1:29
<b>Improvisation 5</b>	247	Introduction	0:43
	276	A1	0:34
	296	A2	0:30
	314	Codetta	0:38
<b>Coda</b>	338	A1	1:06
	373	r	0:07



The points of connection (or disconnection) between these subsections often have recognisable affinities with much of the music of Stravinsky. Edward T. Cone identifies these ‘discontinuities that so often interrupt the musical flow’ as one of the persistent characteristics of Stravinsky’s music.<sup>61</sup> In the *Improvisations*, several such points of disjuncture can be found. For example, between b.100 and b.101 (Example 8.7), abrupt changes in instrumentation, texture, rhythmic profile and harmonic construction contribute to the Stravinskian effect.

Example 8.7: Sense of interruption (marked \*) in bb.99-109 of the *Improvisations*

The musical score consists of three staves in 3/4 time. The top staff is for Flute, Piccolo, and Clarinet (Fl., Picc., Cl.), with dynamics *f* and *WW. ff*. The middle staff is for Violins (Vls.), with dynamics *p* and *cresc*. The bottom staff is for Violas (Vle., Vlc.), with dynamics *p* and *cresc*. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, triplets, and dynamic markings. An asterisk (\*) marks a point of interruption between measures 99 and 100.

This interrupted conjoining of two contrasting passages of music can be heard as distinctively filmic. Such a sense of interruption is common in film music, occurring for example in conjunction with a change of scene or camera angle, or to signify a change in emotional mood that may not be apparent in the visuals. In Walton’s cue 6M1 for *Battle of Britain*, two contrasting and apparently unrelated passages are abruptly joined in the middle (Example 8.8). The change from one musical landscape to another at this point was clearly intended to reinforce a camera cut and an important shift in narrative perspective and mood. The cover sheet for the cue clearly indicates ‘cut to line of W.R.A.F corpses covered with blankets’ after 44 seconds, and at this point in the autograph Walton has written ‘44”, corpses’. More generally, the splicing of two contrasting musical passages might be seen as analogous to ‘cross cutting’ in film

<sup>61</sup> Edward T. Cone, ‘Stravinsky: The Progress of a Method’, in Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (eds.), *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p.156.

editing, in which one scene is abruptly replaced with another. Overall, the temptation to label the interruptions that occur in Walton's concert music as 'cuts' is indicative of the filmic quality of such features.

Example 8.8: Extract from 6M1 of Walton's score for *Battle of Britain*

16 [♩=126] Ob., Vls.  
Tr., Tbn.  
Cb., Arpa.

19  
VI2.  
p  
VI1.  
p dim.

22 meno mosso *mf* *express* 44" corpses  
Vle. Solo  
WW.  
pp  
Pf. Cb. pizz. *pp*

## Multiple Harmonic Frameworks

In terms of long-range key relationships, the *Improvisations* are not too difficult to assimilate. The majority of the work inherits E as a tonal centre from the Britten theme, with the theme itself, Variations 1 and 2, and the closing ‘risoluto’ coda all showing clear harmonic closes onto E or chords rooted on E. In particular, the descending semitone F-E – a prominent feature of the Britten melody that is emphasised by Walton’s preface to the theme (see Example 8.5 above, p.233) – frequently recurs throughout the work, becoming a referential motif. The central improvisations show more variation in tonal centres. Improvisations 3 and 4 prepare resolutions (by reference to the descending semitone motif) onto C and E respectively, and both ‘side-step’ the expected resolution to finish on closes a fifth away (F and A respectively). However, each of these local centres exerts no lasting influence, being only temporary in nature.

The harmonic reference of the work is the hexatonic scale on E (6-21\*). Although the framework provided by the hexatonic scale is adjusted and augmented as the work progresses, the characteristic sound of the constituent intervals – the semitone and minor third – is present throughout. This background derives most obviously from the Britten theme, but the influence of Bartók may also be detected here. Ernő Lendvai notes the frequency with which this ‘model 1:3’ structure (named after the recurring pattern of intervals) occurs in Bartók’s music, alongside similar symmetrical structures (models 1:2, the octatonic scale, and 1:5, possibly folk-derived).<sup>62</sup> Although it is reasonable to speak of ‘tonal centres’ in this work, the symmetry of this elemental structure prevents the development of functional harmonic relationships in the traditional sense.

Since the architectonic tonal structure provides only a minimum in the way of contrast, what can be said about the harmonic vocabulary that articulates the basic framework? The harmonic contrast in the movement does not derive from relationships between competing tonalities built on different root pitches, but rather from the different ways in which the tonic ‘E’ can be articulated. A few examples demonstrate this. In Improvisation 1, the two possible forms of the augmented scale ending on E (Example

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<sup>62</sup> Ernő Lendvai, *Béla Bartók: An Analysis of His Music* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1971), pp.51 and 53. Lendvai relates these structures to the Golden Section principle.

8.9) are employed in alternation (Example 8.10). In this way, the pitch content of the scales is altered from that in the Britten theme, but the harmonic feel of the hexatonic scale is retained. In all of these scale constructions, E is retained as the final of the mode, and is consistently presented in strong metric positions.

Example 8.9: Two forms of the augmented scale ending on E

Example 8.10: Walton's use of the two forms of the augmented scale in Improvisation 1

The lyrical passage from b.276ff. in Improvisation 5 has a different harmonic feel, although it is related to the hexatonic scale. Here, the local pitch centre has moved away from E, with a persistent G# pedal (bb.276-305) supporting a statement of the theme on F (a middleground echo of the prominent F-E motif in the foreground). The climactic C $\sharp$  (corresponding to the B $\sharp$  of the theme's original transposition) is emphasised in this passage through repetition of the melodic phrase in which it is contained (bb.289-302). It therefore becomes more integrated into the background pitch collection, rather than appearing as an isolated addition to an otherwise purely hexatonic passage. The combination of the hexatonic scale on F with the G $\sharp$  pedal and later the melodic B $\sharp$  results in a group of subset relationships in which the hexatonic scale is expanded into

two overlaid instances of 7-21 (Table 8.3). 7-21B is the ‘gypsy hexatonic’ mode (despite the fact that it has *seven* pitches),<sup>63</sup> and indeed the ‘giocoso’ passage here (b.295ff.) gestures towards a folk idiom, not only in its pitch material, but in the syncopated rhythms and the use of bongos and tambourines.

**Table 8.3: Subset structures in bb.276-305 of the *Improvisations***

Harmony	Total	Melody
Hexatonic scale on F plus pedal G# [F F# G# A B $\flat$ C# D] 7-21B	Hexatonic scale on F plus pedal G# and melodic B $\natural$ [F F# G# A B $\flat$ B $\natural$ C# D] 8-17*	Hexatonic scale on F plus melodic B $\natural$ [F F# A B $\flat$ B $\natural$ C# D] 7-21A

A further example of the reinterpretation of the E tonic is found in Improvisation 4, in which the pitch content of the theme is vertically presented in a sonority that – in both its harmonic construction and its gestural characteristics – is reminiscent of the tonic sonorities previously noted in several of Walton’s post-war scores.<sup>64</sup> This passage is discussed in greater detail below.

Finally, consider the ending of the work. Walton presents a cadence here (Example 8.11) that seems to dispel any sense of harmonic ambiguity. The final chord is approached melodically by the G#-F-E resolution of the theme: the G# is supported by five ascending notes of a diatonic scale (bb.373-4, perhaps implying a C# minor harmony); the F is accompanied by arpeggiation over a B $\flat$  minor ninth chord, akin to an augmented sixth chord, whilst the E is punctuated by the closing E major chord. The passage thus gestures towards a tonal cadential progression, although Walton’s harmony in bb.375-6 is not spelled as an augmented sixth, and resolves directly to the tonic (not the dominant as is usual in Classical harmony).

<sup>63</sup> The name of this mode is included in Solomon’s list. Larry Solomon, ‘The Table of Pitch Class Sets’, available: <http://solomonsmusic.net/pcsets.htm>, accessed 05 February 2008.

<sup>64</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 6, p.137ff and p.160ff.

Example 8.11: Outline of the closing bars of the *Improvisations*

In the *Improvisations*, then, we can note harmonic influences that range from Britten to Bartók to traditional tonality. Whilst E remains a consistent harmonic centre throughout much of the work, the particular harmonic construction (or mode) varies. This kind of eclecticism of harmonic language finds a particular expression in this work in the coexistence of several alternative modes, recalling Bartók's so-called polymodality,<sup>65</sup> but more generally the coexistence of different kinds of harmonic structures within the same work is – as has already been noted – a feature of several of Walton's later works.

This coexistence of different kinds of harmonic structure also occurs – and in a much less subtle way – in the score for *Battle of Britain*. Here the diatonic 9M2 'Gay Berlin' lies quite happily alongside the highly dissonant and chromatic 6M1 and its variations. This dissonant harmonic language also occurs in 4M1 'Young Siegfrieds' and its variations, although there it is mitigated by the triadic and often satirically jolly presentation of the horn call. In contrast – and contradiction – with the prevailing chromaticism of these examples, the score's final cue, 14M3, is an Elgarian march concluding with a perfect cadence. These cues and their contrasting musical languages lie quite comfortably under the same rubric 'music for the film *Battle of Britain*'.

Indeed, such a contrast in musical languages is not only common, but also typically valued, in film music and its criticism. Phillip Tagg asserts in relation to Ennio Moricone, that 'like any professional composer working in the media, [he] had to be completely and competently eclectic.'<sup>66</sup> Returning again to Bernard Herrmann, Cooper

<sup>65</sup> Bela Bartók, 'Harvard Lectures [1943]', in Benjamin Suchoff (ed.), *Bela Bartók, Essays* (New York: St. Martin's, 1976), pp.354-392, especially pp.364-371 and 376-383. The term 'polymodal chromaticism' is now widely employed in Bartók studies.

<sup>66</sup> Philip Tagg and Bob Clarida, *Ten Little Title Tunes: Towards a Musicology of the Mass Media* (New York: The Mass Media Music Scholars' Press, 2003), p.370.

has identified tonal, atonal, bitonal, and hexatonic materials within a single score.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, film composers tend to view the potential for use of multiple musical languages as part of the very skill of film scoring.<sup>68</sup> Such a positive perspective on eclecticism of musical language – and especially harmonic language – is, however, not reflected in the contemporary reception of Walton's works. Consider a particularly polemical example: a letter published by the *Musical Times* in 1964, in which the author, a J. Parsons (perhaps Jeremy Parsons, a critic who championed Finnish twelve-note composers),<sup>69</sup> chastised Walton for his 'little Pandora boxes full of notes labelled *Russia, Finland, Germany* and *Italy* (in italics of course) which, when opened, let out a lot of horrible little influences all over your staves'.<sup>70</sup> More generally, an eclectic assembly of existing styles was not well received in an aesthetic context in which 'change is preferable to stability, and novelty guarantees value'.<sup>71</sup> Whilst from the perspective of film music and its scholarship the command and application of multiple musical languages may be positively valued, in Walton's post-war concert works the same quality provided a reason for disparagement.

### **A Narrative Reading of Walton's *Improvisations***

A body of work drawing on narrative metaphors may suggest a fresh critical perspective for the *Improvisations*, one which complements the assertion that the score has filmic qualities. Narrative is, of course, important in the study of film music, but the concept has also been employed as an interpretative metaphor for some concert music. Fred Maus, in reviewing four studies that compare instrumental music with narrative, argues

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<sup>67</sup> Cooper, *Bernard Herrmann's 'The Ghost and Mrs. Muir'*, p.35.

<sup>68</sup> I base this comment on the keynote lecture given by film composer Adrian Sutton at the RMA Research Students Conference, Leeds, 4 January 2006.

<sup>69</sup> See Jeremy Parsons, 'Paavo Heinenen', *The Musical Times*, 119(1628) (October 1978), pp.850-853; Jeremy Parsons, 'Aulis Sallinen', *The Musical Times*, 121(1653) (November 1980), pp.693-695; Jeremy Parsons, 'Eric Bergman at 70', *The Musical Times*, 122(1665) (November 1981), pp.741-743.

<sup>70</sup> J. Parsons, 'An Open Letter to Sir William Walton', *The Musical Times*, 105(1455) (May 1964), p.362.

<sup>71</sup> This is Edmunds' description of the prevailing aesthetic under William Glock's directorship of music broadcasting. Neil Edmunds, 'William Glock and the British Broadcasting Corporation's Music Policy 1959-1973', *Contemporary British History*, 20(2) (June 2006), p.233.

that whilst the specific philosophical or technical thesis posed by each study may be more or less successful, a common accomplishment emerges in the ‘memorable, insightful descriptions of individual compositions’.<sup>72</sup> In the present study, rather than offering a hypothesis about music’s narrative status, I am concerned only with using a narrative metaphor to write a more cogent, contextually informed criticism of Walton’s music. (There are implications for claiming that music *is* narrative, and there is a case for distinguishing between ‘narrative’ and ‘drama’, but these are less important here where the aim is to accomplish better music criticism rather than to reflect on the philosophy of art.)<sup>73</sup>

Discussion of purely instrumental music through analogy with narrative has found a focus in the study of nineteenth-century music. Two starting points have been used in such analogies. Firstly, tonal masses or centres can be seen as subjects in a narrative plot development. Edward T. Cone characterises C, A, and E as potential tonics in Brahms’s Intermezzo Op. 118 No. 1; he describes these as ‘suspects’ in a plot which variously favours different choices until the A-minor conclusion of the work reveals the true tonic.<sup>74</sup> Alternatively, thematic material might be considered as a narrative subject. Anthony Newcomb describes the opening theme of Schumann’s Second Symphony as the work’s ‘thematic protagonist’, and suggests,

We do well to think of the thematic units partly as characters in a narrative, transformed by the requirements of various different contexts, while remaining recognizably related to their previous selves. They interact with each other, with the plot archetypes, with their own past guises, and with the conventions of musical grammar and formal schemes analogously to the way the characters in a novel interact with each other and with the moral and legal conventions that shape the situations.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Fred Everett Maus, ‘Narrative, Drama, and Emotion in Instrumental Music’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55(3) (Summer 1997), p.293.

<sup>73</sup> See Jean-Jacques Nattiez, ‘Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?’ *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 115(2) (1990), pp.240-257; Maus, ‘Narrative, Drama, and Emotion in Instrumental Music’, pp.293-303.

<sup>74</sup> Edward T. Cone, ‘Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story—or a Brahms Intermezzo’, in Robert P. Morgan (ed.), *Music: A View from Delft* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp.77-93, especially p.87ff.

<sup>75</sup> Anthony Newcomb, ‘Once More “Between Absolute and Program Music”: Schumann’s Second Symphony’, *19th-Century Music*, 7(3) Essays for Joseph Kerman (April 1984), p.237.



Newcomb's project here is a search for new critical tools that allow reassessment of the Schumann symphony; he argues that in-vogue analytical methodologies fail to do the work justice, since they focus on only limited aspects of the work (the opposition and contrast between tonal areas and themes) and neglect other equally important elements (the growth and development of themes and relationships between them).<sup>76</sup> Newcomb's study seems especially resonant with the present analysis of the *Improvisations*, since the main point of interest here is the characterisation and evolution of the thematic material, rather than formal or tonal contrast.

Formal and tonal contrasts, and their integration or logical outworking, are the basic materials of sonata forms and attendant analyses. Further, as the discursive norm of symphonic form, sonata form is strongly associated with the 'weight' of symphonic argument, that which seemed to some critics to be lacking in the *Improvisations* amongst others of Walton's later scores.<sup>77</sup> In this respect, a particularly revealing critical stance is Arthur Custer's attempt to interpret the *Improvisations* in a three-movement symphonic mould, replete with slow movement (Improvisation 4) and a concluding scherzo (Improvisation 5) and trio (presumably from bb.276).<sup>78</sup> Perhaps Custer's search for formal opposition and integration focuses on one element to the neglect of other more interesting aspects, leading him to an unfavourable conclusion: 'There is a *dèjà vu* squareness about it, and one senses a certain poverty of purpose [...] the piece comes off ultimately as a set of quite ordinary variations on an undistinguished theme'.<sup>79</sup> Instead, it is the continual development and integration of thematic material that is of interest in the *Improvisations*. (This echoes Newcomb's concerns about analyses of the Schumann symphony and his proposed reassessment on the basis of different analytical emphases.)

Although the tonal architecture of the *Improvisations* is modest, the recasting of the basic harmonic material in different contexts fits well with Newcomb's summary of a narrative reading (the hexatonic scale on E 'interacts... with the plot archetypes, with [its] own past guises, and with the conventions of musical grammar and formal

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<sup>76</sup> Newcomb, 'Once More "Between Absolute and Program Music": Schumann's Second Symphony', pp.233 and 236-237.

<sup>77</sup> See this thesis, Chapter 4, p.75ff.

<sup>78</sup> Custer, 'William Walton: *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*', p.309.

<sup>79</sup> Custer, 'William Walton: *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*', p.309.

schemes’).<sup>80</sup> However, it is the thematic material that is the obvious candidate as protagonist; the work’s very title emphasises the centrality of Britten’s theme. As has already been noted, Walton opens the work with a brief preface that emphasises the descending semitone interval in the theme, a brief glimpse of one important element of the protagonist before its full form comes into view. The opening improvisations see the protagonist in different contexts, firstly in calm and familiar territory (Improvisation 1), then encountering other characters (the spikier accented rhythms in Improvisation 2, where Britten meets Walton, confirmed by the quotation from the Second Symphony in bb.101-105). In Improvisation 3, the theme is immersed in quite a different situation; the nervous energy here is reminiscent of ‘Battle in the Air’ from *Battle of Britain*.

Improvisation 4 is especially interesting, since it represents, in a number of inventive yet simple ways, the assimilation of Britten’s theme into Walton’s own harmonic and melodic language. This recasting of the theme can be described in terms of two technical elements: first, the verticalisation of Britten’s melodic material into a dissonant yet stable referential harmony; and second, the application of octave shifts to particular notes of the theme creating an angular melodic outline which emphasises major sevenths.

#### **Improvisation 4**

The distinctive sonority that opens Improvisation 4 is in essence an alternation between two chords (Example 8.12A and B). Overall there are seven distinct pitches, the complete set of six from the hexatonic scale on E, plus one extra (D#; Example 8.12C). Although this ‘extra’ D# differs from the extra B $\flat$  of the theme, the resulting pitch collection has the same structure (7-21B). The sonority can thus be seen as a kind of verticalisation of the Britten theme. The harmonic structure and configuration here is similar to the tonic sonorities of the Cello Concerto and Second Symphony – it is no coincidence that the set-classes – 4-17\* and 7-21B – are familiar from previous

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<sup>80</sup> Newcomb, ‘Once More “Between Absolute and Program Music”’: Schumann’s Second Symphony’, p.237.

discussions.<sup>81</sup> The voice leading patterns are also characteristic, with the dissonant D<sub>b</sub> of first chord resolving in the second, which concurrently introduces new dissonances, the G<sub>#</sub> and D<sub>#</sub>, which in turn resolve back into the first chord (Example 8.12D). The result is a characteristically Waltonian sonority built from the harmonic materials of the Britten theme.

Example 8.12: The sonority at the opening of Improvisation 4 (bb.211-218)

The image contains three musical diagrams labeled A, B, C, and D. Diagram A shows a chord with notes G<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, and D<sub>3</sub> (labeled 4-17\*). Diagram B shows a chord with notes G<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, and D<sub>3</sub> (labeled 5-Z37\*). Diagram C shows a melodic line with notes G<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, D<sub>3</sub>, G<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, D<sub>3</sub>, G<sub>2</sub> (labeled 7-21B). Diagram D shows voice leading between A and B, with notes G<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, and D<sub>3</sub> in A, and G<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, and D<sub>3</sub> in B, with a dashed line connecting the D<sub>3</sub> in A to the D<sub>3</sub> in B.

The melody in Improvisation 4 makes a number of adjustments to the Britten theme. The most obvious of these is the judicious disposition of octave transfers that invert Britten's minor seconds into Walton's major sevenths. Compare Walton's melody with the phrases of the Britten theme from which it is derived (Example 8.13). The angular outline that results from the octave shifts is more characteristic of Walton than the gentle undulation of the Britten theme. More subtle changes reinforce this: in b.225 onwards, the Britten theme is extended such that the phrases themselves (and not just melodic intervals within) outline a major seventh. In addition, from b.219, Walton transposes the material from the original theme through four cycles of a minor third (each marked \* in Example 8.13). This results in a closed process in which the return to the original transposition precipitates the climax of the Improvisation (derived from the climax of the Britten theme) at bb.231-232.

Overall, adopting a narrative metaphor and focusing on the theme as protagonist rather than on formal scheme or technical innovation brings out the most interesting aspects of this score. This is a corollary to considering the filmic quality of the music: film,

<sup>81</sup> This connection is noted by one reviewer who suggested 'a string melody emerges from pulsing chords, rather in the manner of those opening Walton's cello concerto'. Felix Arahamian, 'Captivating Walton', *The Sunday Times*, 5 July 1970, p.25. My discussion of the characteristic set classes in Walton's tonic sonorities in the Second Symphony and Cello Concerto appear in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.137ff. and p.160ff.



## A Critical Re-Evaluation?

It would be unfair to the critics to suggest that the perspective I have presented on the *Improvisations* is absent from earlier criticism. Edward Greenfield described Improvisation 4 as having a ‘superb Waltonian twist’, calling it ‘the emotional core of the work’,<sup>83</sup> whilst Denis McCaldin noted that ‘the stylistic interaction between composer and theme produces some memorable moments, especially in the lyrical fourth section’.<sup>84</sup> However, it is perhaps not a coincidence that these critics sound at their most positive when writing in this vein, whilst giving the work overall a less enthusiastic reception. (McCaldin, for example, begins his comments on the *Improvisations* with the rather less flattering ‘It seemed a pity that Walton should choose such familiar territory for what is his first orchestral work for seven years’.)<sup>85</sup>

I have offered a critical interpretation of the *Improvisations* that acknowledges the ‘filmic’ qualities of the score, and describes the work at least partly in terms of analogy with narrative. To what extent does this interpretation address critical concerns about the work, and invite re-evaluation? This must remain a subjective matter, for any critical framework, and its application to any work of art, can be variously seen as successful or unsuccessful, and, according to the particular values of author and reader, as compliment or criticism. However, proposing this additional interpretative framework for the work serves to highlight some of the implicit values of contemporary criticism and provide an alternative.

In particular, the question of the ‘lightness’ or ‘seriousness’ of Walton’s music benefits from being reconsidered in the context of film music and its study. The rising currency of the academic study of film music – alongside other less ‘serious’ musics including jazz, popular and world music repertoire – is suggestive: attributing ‘lightness’ to Walton’s *Improvisations* need no longer be a criticism. This is especially true since the willingness of many film musicologists to foreground alternatives to traditional analytical emphases can shift the focus away from the search for technical innovation in

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<sup>83</sup> Greenfield, ‘Festivals: Aldeburgh’.

<sup>84</sup> Denis McCaldin, ‘Reports: Liverpool’, *The Musical Times*, 111(1533) (November 1970), p.1127.

<sup>85</sup> McCaldin, ‘Reports: Liverpool’, p.1127.

familiar territories such as form and tonality. This is not to say that Walton's later works do not contain interesting constructions of form and tonality (they certainly do – as I have argued in Chapters 6 and 7), but rather to suggest that the application of predetermined analytical values has unfairly prejudiced much contemporary criticism of this repertoire.

Some of those features of the *Improvisations* that provoked concern from critics are potentially sources of praise in the filmic context. Consider Cooper's invention of the implicitly complimentary term 'micro-variation' in reference to the music of Bernard Herrman,<sup>86</sup> in contrast to the *Daily Telegraph* reviewer's concern about the 'inconsequentiality' of the 'leisurely unfolding of incidents' in the *Improvisations*.<sup>87</sup> Or consider Leinberger's praise for Ennio Morricone's 'chameleon-like' command of historical, classical and popular musical styles without concern for technical progress,<sup>88</sup> contrasted against Parsons' disparaging remarks on the 'horrible little influences' appearing in Walton's later scores<sup>89</sup> and Heyworth's persistent criticisms of Walton's lack of stylistic development. The interrelationships between Walton's concert and film music can thus invite contemplation not only on the influence of film scoring on the composer's outlook and style, but more generally on the critical status of the concert scores, since this perspective highlights the value system associated with the different outlooks. The 'filmic' features of the *Improvisations* are common to several of Walton's post-war works, and so this critical framework and the questions it provokes have currency for Walton's later orchestral works more generally.

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<sup>86</sup> Cooper, *Bernard Herrmann's 'The Ghost and Mrs. Muir'*, pp.28, 31 and 107-8.

<sup>87</sup> A. E. P., 'Walton's Leisurely Air in *Improvisations*', p.12.

<sup>88</sup> Charles Leinberger, *Ennio Morricone's 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly': A Film Score Guide* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow, 2004), pp.15-38.

<sup>89</sup> Parsons, 'An Open Letter to Sir William Walton', p.362.

## Chapter 9: Conclusions

### Walton at 60: Rather a Promising Composer?

A familiar musicologists' refrain, bemoaning the undeserved neglect of a particular repertoire, may seem vacuous in application to Walton: he cannot really be regarded as a neglected composer, since many of his works remain in the international canon. And yet it remains true that Walton has attracted a relatively small amount of scholarly attention: he has not been immune to the peripheral status generally afforded to British music in the musicological canon. This thesis aims to begin the task of filling one particularly significant lacuna, the lack of in-depth analytical and critical study of the post-war orchestral scores, whose prominence and reputation seem to have particularly suffered from the progressivist aesthetic prominent amongst many younger composers and critics contemporary with the works in question.

In 1962, Walton optimistically assessed the future of his music:

The pendulum swings so fast these days that—who knows?—any minute we may well find ourselves in for a real neo-romantic revival. In which case I may find myself in the unlikely position of being abreast of the times for a change. So 60 seems to me just the beginning. In fact, I like to regard myself as rather a promising composer.<sup>1</sup>

There was indeed a 'neo-romantic revival' during the 1970s – at least according to some commentators – with a resurgence of interest in nineteenth-century music, especially that of Berlioz and Mahler, on the one hand,<sup>2</sup> and the success of a number of living composers engaged in some way with romanticism, amongst them Wolfgang Rihm and George Rochberg, on the other.<sup>3</sup> By this time, however, Walton was no longer producing orchestral works of any significance, and following his death in 1983 his music suffered the period of neglect traditionally afforded to recently-deceased composers. Now that the works themselves, and the hot-tempered aesthetics of the post-war era in which they had to make their first impressions, can be judged from a distance

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<sup>1</sup> William Walton, 'My Life in Music', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 25 March 1962. p.8.

<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Pirie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Gollancz. 1979), p.233.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Fox, 'British Music at Darmstadt 1982-92', *Tempo*, 186 (September 1993). p.22.

we are in a better position to evaluate the contribution made by Walton in his later pieces, and to give them the credit they deserve.

In appropriating the critical trope of ‘late style’ in relation to Walton’s post-war orchestral works, it should perhaps be noted that in 1961, the year of the première of the Second Symphony, Walton was aged only 59 and was relatively healthy. It was not until lung cancer was diagnosed in December 1965,<sup>4</sup> and recurred the following year,<sup>5</sup> that Walton developed long-term problems with his health that seriously affected his creativity. (Malcolm Hayes points out that there was a change of tone in Walton’s letters around this time, from familiar worrying to near-panic about his failing creative powers.)<sup>6</sup> If ‘late style’ is characterised by increasing awareness of one’s own mortality in the face of ill-health and death,<sup>7</sup> then it would be the post-1965 works alone that might be considered ‘late’. Nevertheless, the construction of a ‘later’ phase in Walton’s creative output that begins earlier than this – with the completion of *Troilus and Cressida* – is justified by a range of biographical, cultural, and musical factors. The biographical circumstances include the writing of *Troilus and Cressida* itself, as well as Walton’s marriage and move to Ischia. This was the time when – not least because of the social and cultural impact of the war – the influence of new technical and aesthetic trends from the continent began to be felt in Britain which particularly affected Walton’s critical reception. His later scores exhibit a number of shared characteristics – the use of traditional forms, highly sectionalised structures, associational rather than prolongational tonality, and the use of symmetrical pitch structures – that distinguish them to some extent from the pre-war compositions. Considered together, these various factors support constructing the post-*Troilus and Cressida* works as a distinctive group.<sup>8</sup> (This conclusion is not intended to invalidate other ways of grouping of Walton’s works, which might be valuable for other critical purposes.)

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.229.

<sup>5</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, pp.230-231.

<sup>6</sup> Malcolm Hayes (ed.), *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p.345.

<sup>7</sup> As Edward W. Said suggests in *On Late Style* (New York: Pantheon, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Combining biographical, stylistic and interpretative factors in this way is characteristic of discussions of late style. See this thesis, Chapter 1, p.6ff.



Walton's post-war orchestral works maintain clear links with the symphonic tradition, employing sonata form structures, and earlier forms characteristic of the Baroque period, including passacaglia, variations, and canonic and fugal textures. The works also maintain a link with tonality, although it is significantly reconceived. This use of established traditions fuelled criticism of Walton as 'conservative' and sometimes 'regressive'; yet turning for inspiration to the music of the past is a characteristic of much twentieth-century music, including that of many 'progressive' figures (consider Schoenberg and Webern's 'recompositions' of Monn and Bach, respectively;<sup>9</sup> Stravinsky's influential 'neo-classical' music; Webern's persistent interest in canon;<sup>10</sup> and his *Passacaglia*, Op. 1). Although composers have always looked to earlier music for inspiration to some extent, the tendency can be seen as especially characteristic of the twentieth century, because the increasing availability of information in the form of scores, and later of affordable recordings, made the past considerably more accessible than in previous periods.<sup>11</sup> If Walton's music looks to the past, then this is part of a broad trend that characterises many of the century's greatest composers, and should not of itself be grounds for criticism.

More importantly, the conservatism of Walton's later musical style cannot be attributed to a lack of understanding of, or indeed ability to assimilate, contemporary trends. Walton maintained an interest in the developments of the avant garde throughout his career, but chose a different path for himself. In a 1939 interview, he offered an unusually frank defence of his own musical idiom. He rejected the 'obscurantism' that led to 'outward complexity or innovation', and in contrast suggested that a rediscovery of the 'ancient V-I chord progression' was a revitalising agent for composers and performers alike. The reporter summarised Walton's outlook: 'real human conviction, in whatsoever artistic form, seeks not originality of expression but clarity and forcefulness'.<sup>12</sup> This stands in clear contrast to the prevailing aesthetic in much of British musical life in the 1960s, to which Alistair Williams's characterisation of the

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<sup>9</sup> These are discussed in Joseph N. Straus, 'Recompositions by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Webern', *The Musical Quarterly*, 72(3) (1986), pp.301-328.

<sup>10</sup> Webern's use of canon is explored in detail in Kathryn Bailey, *The Twelve-Note Music of Anton Webern: Old Forms in a New Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.94-146.

<sup>11</sup> Straus, 'Recompositions by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Webern', pp.301-302.

<sup>12</sup> G. Gilbert, 'Walton on Trends in Composition', *The New York Times*, 4 June 1939, p.X5.

twentieth century – ‘music theory and modernist aesthetics have sometimes worked together to generate a view of musical material that prizes innovation and technical development above all else’<sup>13</sup> – aptly applies. Walton’s music was not progressive, but this does not make it uninteresting.

### **Walton: A ‘Twentieth-Century Composer’**

Arguments about the ‘regressive’ tendency of Walton’s music seem jaded in a context where modernism itself has become out of date. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to expect a composer to engage with the contemporary world and its concerns. Arnold Whittall suggests that one way of understanding twentieth-century art music as a whole is as a dichotomy between modernism (‘the embrace of discontinuity as something more than a means of diversifying unity’), and modern classicism (‘the resistance to this strategy’).<sup>14</sup> If Walton’s music resides at the ‘modern classicist’ end of this spectrum, this classicism is nonetheless engaged, through resistance, with modernism and its concerns. It is this dialogue with and resistance to modernism that brings Walton’s later music to life.

This tension is played out in Walton’s assimilation of a number of techniques of modernism within his own personal style. This can be understood via another dichotomy of twentieth-century music: symmetry vs. asymmetry, or the ‘dialogue between hierarchic and symmetric tendencies’ as Arnold Whittall puts it in relation to Bartók.<sup>15</sup> Walton employs various symmetrical pitch structures – octatonic and augmented scales, twelve-note melodies and mirror forms, and parallel rather than in-key harmonisations – that work against the instinct to label his music as ‘tonal’. On closer examination, we discover that Walton’s tonality – in which harmonic sonorities gain an identity through association with similar-sounding passages and contrast against others – undercuts the dichotomy, since it is not amenable to geometrical analogies, symmetrical or otherwise. (It does not make sense to describe Walton’s associational tonality as hierarchical, symmetrical, or asymmetrical.) In terms of form, many of Walton’s orchestral movements maintain strong links with formal conventions, but

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<sup>13</sup> Alistair Williams, *Constructing Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p.54.

<sup>14</sup> Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.3.

<sup>15</sup> Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century*, p.110.

there is a dialogue between these and the individual tendencies of each movement. The resulting 'deformations' of generic forms are not avant garde, but are certainly characteristic of the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> Walton's variation movements are structurally straightforward, but their often highly sectionalised structures provide a framework for the exploration of an eclectic range of musical languages, some more 'modern' than others.

Of course, there are several twentieth-century musical trends with which Walton shows no engagement. He showed no inclination towards the aleatoric; indeed, his scores are very tightly controlled, with an extraordinary quantity of articulation and dynamic markings. He never experimented with the use of new electronic instruments or electro-acoustic technologies. And despite some integration of twelve-note structures within his music, he showed no disposition towards applying serial thinking to musical parameters apart from pitch. The most influential composers of the post-war generation, whatever their differences, were united by an interest not only in twelve-note pitch structures, but in the extension of serial principles to other parameters: rhythm, dynamics, duration, register, and so on. No evidence of this kind of thinking can be found in Walton's post-war orchestral scores.

There has been an attempt in recent music scholarship to recapture the prestige of modernism for composers not normally admitted to that category, notably in J. P. E. Harper-Scott's *Edward Elgar, Modernist*.<sup>17</sup> The analyses presented in this thesis would provide some evidence with which to sustain a similar argument in relation to Walton, and certainly his engagement with some of the technical resources of modernism needs to be asserted to counteract the underreporting of these features that has fuelled negative critical assessments. However the temptation to brand Walton as a modernist should perhaps be avoided, since to argue that he was more progressive than has hitherto been acknowledged would reinforce the very aesthetic that his music stands against. Instead, it is the progressive-regressive axis itself which should be freshly evaluated.

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<sup>16</sup> James Hepokoski's work on sonata deformations is concerned with a number of twentieth-century composers, especially Straus and Sibelius. For references, see footnote 10, p.99.

<sup>17</sup> J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar, Modernist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Indeed, the dominant influences in these later works – Schoenberg, Bartók, Stravinsky – are certainly from an earlier generation than Walton himself. This is perhaps reflective of the slow take-up of trends of continental origin within the UK more broadly. Nevertheless, from a wider European perspective, Walton's post-war works might be viewed as several decades 'late', in the sense of 'delayed'. It is not necessary, however, to view this conservatism with disdain: instead, we can ascribe a different kind of 'lateness' to Walton's post-war music, a lateness that is to be valued, rather than criticised.

### Post-War Walton and Late Style

Whilst Edward Said links late Beethoven – the paradigmatic case of late style as a concept in music criticism – with 'difficulty' and 'intransigence', a competing critical idea of late style encompasses the serenity of later life as reflected in a new directness. Consider the case of Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, written after a prolonged period of ill-health and just a year prior to the composer's death. David Cooper argues that this work is the culmination of a process of simplification in musical style,<sup>18</sup> or what Malcolm Gillies calls a 'new accessibility'.<sup>19</sup> Rejecting the modernist view that Bartók 'capitulated to convention, and accepted the route of compromise',<sup>20</sup> Cooper instead suggests that the new directness of the Concerto for Orchestra can be considered a purposeful and authentic creative choice.<sup>21</sup> The idea of a new directness associated with late style can be found in writings about several other composers. Three out of numerous possible examples illustrate the point: late Mozart has been associated with serenity and with freedom from difficulty for the listener;<sup>22</sup> Humphrey Searle comments that 'there is a strong tendency in Webern's later works to return from the rarefied to a

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<sup>18</sup> David Cooper, *Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.80.

<sup>19</sup> Malcolm Gillies, 'Bartók, Bela', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 2001), p.806.

<sup>20</sup> Cooper, *Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra*, p.80.

<sup>21</sup> Cooper, *Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra*, pp.83-84.

<sup>22</sup> Julian Rushton, *Mozart* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.216 and 221. Since Mozart died at the age of 35, the meaning of the term 'late' here is open to debate, as Rushton implies.

more accessible idiom’;<sup>23</sup> and publicity material for Elliott Carter comments that his later style is ‘marked by transparency and clarity of texture, with a new directness of formal design’.<sup>24</sup> In these cases, aural accessibility, formal simplicity, and a conscious residing within tradition are seen as positive qualities, qualities that reflect the serenity of old age and the wisdom of a lifetime’s experience, qualities that are to be celebrated rather than vilified.

With Walton, too, the directness of the later scores – the clarity of formal types, lucidity of musical textures and contrasts, and the retention of audible tonality – can be valued rather than criticised. Gillian Widdicombe suggests that Walton wrote in traditional forms as a deliberate choice, and argues that his isolation in Ischia might have been deliberately designed to enable him ‘to stick fast to his own musical language and not to be subject to whim or fashion.’<sup>25</sup> In a radio tribute for Walton on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, Richard Rodney Bennett spoke out against fashion, stating:

Certain composers for me are like beacons, in that they write what they truly believe, and not what the critics or fashion tell them to believe about what they should be writing. [...] It’s considerably harder to follow one’s own ear and heart and mind; to risk the jibes which inevitably follow; and to write music which is beautiful, and honest, and true. And this for me is what Walton’s music is all about.<sup>26</sup>

The exploitation of convention can be just as aesthetically valid and aurally pleasing as innovation that rejects convention, but the voices of post-war musical fashions were loud enough to effectively drown out positive assessments of Walton’s orchestral music. Now that these voices have died down, we are in a better position to propose an alternative assessment. If ‘new directness’ can be valued in Mozart and Bartók, and even Webern, why should it not also be valued in Walton? A sunset may be just as

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<sup>23</sup> Murray Schafer. *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber, 1963), p.128.

<sup>24</sup> See [http://www.boosey.com/pages/cr/composer/composer\\_main.asp?composerid=2790](http://www.boosey.com/pages/cr/composer/composer_main.asp?composerid=2790), accessed 3 March 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Gillian Widdicombe, in *William Walton’s 80th Birthday Concert*, television broadcast, transmitted 29 March 1982 (BBC: British Film Institute, VB43441).

<sup>26</sup> Richard Rodney Bennett, in *Walton at 70*, television broadcast, transmitted 29 March 1972 (BBC: British Film Institute, VB53502).

beautiful as a sunrise,<sup>27</sup> and indeed the very meaning of the motion of the sun and the passing of time may vary depending on one's perspective.

Re-evaluating Walton's later orchestral works in this more positive light is not to deny the imperfections of some of the works in question. Questions remain, for example, about the highly sectionalised structures of the *Hindemith Variations* and *Britten Improvisations*: was this a deliberate creative choice, or a symptom of failing creative powers that could envision only small connected chunks rather than longer-range structures? (Such questions come to a head with *Capriccio Burlesco* – not considered in depth here – in which Walton resorts to almost exact repetition of most of the work, doubling the length of the music without adding any new musical material.) However, while these post-war works are not beyond criticism, they certainly didn't deserve the tepid reaction afforded by many critics at their first appearances.

### **Walton, Modernism, and Postmodernism**

If Walton was not a modernist, but engaged to some extent with modernist thinking, could he instead be viewed as a postmodernist? Walton's biography would seem to fit well with the emphasis of today's 'postmodern' society on cultural diversity and equality of opportunity. He was from a working class background (and was deeply aware of it), but counted prime ministers amongst his friends; he was knighted and appointed to the exclusive Order of Merit. He was renowned for his 'inoffensively grubby' sense of humour,<sup>28</sup> and his flirtatiousness bordered on womanising; nonetheless he counted several openly homosexual men amongst his friends. He had a long-term affair with a countess and married an unknown foreigner. He represented Britishness at the highest level (in coronation anthems for George VI and Elizabeth II), but lived most of the later stages of his life in Italy, and in later life received more commissions from America than Britain. He was not very successful academically, and was sent down from Oxford for repeatedly failing exams, but later received honorary doctorates from at

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<sup>27</sup> Debussy famously commented that 'Richard Wagner is a beautiful sunset that has been mistaken for a sunrise.' François Lesure and Richard Langham Smith (eds.). *Debussy on Music: The Critical Writings of the Great French Composer Claude Debussy* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977), p.83.

<sup>28</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.4.

least three British universities. (This crossing of class boundaries and musical boundaries, acceptance of alternative lifestyle choices, and European domicile can hardly seem as unusual today as they must have been during Walton's lifetime, precisely because these are more a feature of our own age than of his.) In biographical terms, it is easy to conceive of a multicultural, postmodern Walton.

Walton's post-war music rejects the dogmatic application of modernist compositional systems, but at the same time integrates aspects of those very same systems within the musical style. These scores might be considered postmodern in the sense that they reject modernism – and especially reject modernism's emphasis on stylistic progression – but still retain (sometimes ironically) aspects of modernist style. Definitions of postmodern style are broad and contested, but these scores exhibit a number of features associated with this term. Jonathan Kramer lists sixteen characteristics of postmodern music,<sup>29</sup> and although he warns against using these as a checklist, they do provide a useful framework for discussion.

Kramer comments that postmodern music 'does not respect boundaries between sonorities and procedures of the past and of the present'.<sup>30</sup> Walton's use of many musical languages concurrently, including the language of tonality and to some extent the languages of atonality and twelve-note music, seems to provide a perfect example. Similarly, Walton's associational tonality, in which different musical languages prevail in different sections of works, echoes Kramer's comment that postmodern music 'avoids totalizing forms (e.g., does not want entire pieces to be tonal or serial or cast in a prescribed formal mold)'. Walton's use of sonata and variation forms does not fit so well with this point.

Whilst quotation occurs in music from many historical periods, including that of modernism, it is a particular feature of postmodern music; Kramer includes the presence of 'quotations of or references to music of many traditions and cultures'<sup>31</sup> in his list of traits. There are a broad range of quotations and references in Walton's later works,

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<sup>29</sup> Jonathan D. Kramer, 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism', in Judy Lochhead and Joseph Henry Auner (eds.), *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp.16-17.

<sup>30</sup> Kramer, 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism', p.16.

<sup>31</sup> Kramer, 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism', p.16.

especially in the score for *Battle of Britain*, in which Savoy jazz, Nazi anthems and quotations from Wagner lie side-by-side. More generally, Kramer notes that postmodern music ‘encompasses pluralism and eclecticism’.<sup>32</sup> In Walton’s music, this is reflected in the long list of potential influences that can be compiled. Byron Adams explains:

Walton possessed a hardy musical digestion that allowed him to assimilate a wide variety of influences, including the music of such seemingly incompatible figures as Ravel, Igor Stravinsky, Edward Elgar, Sergei Prokofiev, George Gershwin, and Jean Sibelius. He relished both music hall tunes and Savoy jazz.<sup>33</sup>

Peter Pirie makes similar observations. He lists the ‘disparate’ influences of Stravinsky, Sibelius, Hindemith, Van Dieren and Elgar, and goes on to note: ‘It is the incompatibility of these strange bed-fellows that alarms. Yet all these seemingly irreconcilable influences have been absorbed in a basic personal idiom of striking originality.’<sup>34</sup> On the basis of the analyses presented in this thesis, we could comfortably add Bartók and Schoenberg to Adams’ and Pirie’s lists. Future research, investigating Walton’s use of South African sources in the *Johannesburg Festival Overture* and the integration of popular themes in the *Partita*, might seek to illuminate this point further, and could relate to Kramer’s arguments that postmodern music ‘challenges barriers between “high” and “low” styles’ and ‘questions the mutual exclusivity of elitist and populist values’.<sup>35</sup>

Jann Pasler notes the trend towards conservatism or ‘neo-conservatism’ in postmodern music, and especially a return to (reconceptualised) tonality.<sup>36</sup> The serial rather than hierarchical arrangement of tonality in the *Hindemith Variations* might be viewed in this light, whilst the Second Symphony can be read as a commentary on tonality itself. Ultimately, Walton’s rejection of modernist compositional systems and assimilation of those systems into an eclectic range of musical languages is captured well by Kramer’s

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<sup>32</sup> Kramer, ‘The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism’, p.16.

<sup>33</sup> Byron Adams, ‘Music Reviews: Shorter Choral Works without Orchestra, William Walton; Symphony No. 1, William Walton’, *Notes*, [Second Series] 58(1) (September 2001), p.165.

<sup>34</sup> Peter J. Pirie, ‘Walton at 70’, *Music and Musicians*, 20(7) (March 1972), p.18.

<sup>35</sup> Kramer, ‘The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism’, p.16.

<sup>36</sup> Jann Pasler, ‘Postmodernism’, in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second ed., vol. 20 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp.213-214.



opening idea and foundational point, that postmodern music is ‘not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension’.<sup>37</sup>

To claim the terrain of postmodernism for Walton’s later music in this way may be overstating the case. Walton’s use of quotation in the music for *Battle of Britain*, or the dialogue with the musical styles of Hindemith and Britten in the *Variations* and *Improvisations* respectively, does not compare, for example, with the radical integration of quotation within Luciano Berio’s *Sinfonia* of 1968 (Walton owned a copy of the score).<sup>38</sup> His links with musical tradition are hardly comparable with the iconoclastic reinterpretation of the music of the past that is characteristic of the music of Wolfgang Rihm. And his integration of twelve-note techniques and other symmetrical pitch constructions alongside tonal references seems tame compared with the juxtaposition of pastiche styles ranging from Beethoven to Bartók in George Rochberg’s Third String Quartet (1965). Indeed, Kramer distinguishes between the postmodern and the antimodern, and argues that ‘postmodernist music is not conservative’ but instead effects a radical reinterpretation of the past.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, Kramer permits himself to describe Mahler’s Seventh Symphony and Nielson’s *Sinfonia Semplice* as postmodern on the basis that they ‘not only exhibit postmodern compositional practices but also that they are conducive to being understood in accordance with today’s postmodern musical values and listening strategies’.<sup>40</sup>

There would be a curious irony in rejecting postmodernism as a hermeneutic framework on the basis that Walton’s music is insufficiently modern, and I propose that Walton’s later orchestral works do exhibit some characteristics of postmodern compositional practice, and certainly are more conducive to being understood from today’s perspective than that of the 1960s. Although ‘postmodern’ is rather an uncomfortable label for these works, it serves a purpose in prompting a re-contextualisation with a frame of reference outside the modernist regressive-progressive axis. Regardless of whether we think of Walton’s music as ‘modern’ or ‘not modern’ or ‘postmodern’, it does engage with many of the most interesting developments of the music of his age. Taken on its own terms –

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<sup>37</sup> Kramer, ‘The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism’, p.16.

<sup>38</sup> Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, p.284.

<sup>39</sup> Kramer, ‘The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism’, p.16.

<sup>40</sup> Kramer, ‘The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism’, p.16.

rather than on the terms of the suffocating but relatively short-lived progressivist aesthetic prevalent in the late 1950s and 1960s – the music is of considerable interest. It engages both the emotions and the intellect and exudes energy and vitality.

There is much of interest about Walton's post-war music that remains to be studied in depth. Promising areas of future research include the vocal and chamber music of this period; an in-depth consideration of rhythm, phrasing and meter, and of orchestration; and an investigation of his use of ethnic and popular materials. More generally, although the pre-war works have not endured quite the same exiguousness of critical debate as these later scores, there remains a relative paucity of scholarly study across the whole range of the composer's oeuvre. But as scholarly interest in Walton begins to grow, competing investigatory frameworks, favoured repertoires, interpretative strategies and critical evaluations will add depth to the scholarly study of this engaging figure. My aim in this thesis has been to make a contribution towards developing this depth. Walton's music was not progressive in relation to its time, but this certainly does not make it uninteresting or his creativity unworthy of greater attention. Walton is a fascinating figure and the potential avenues of research have been nowhere near exhausted. His music offers a unique distillation and integration of traditional and modernist tendencies that represents a uniquely twentieth-century art, a unique product of the unique circumstances of its unique creator.

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The Bibliography is intended as a reference list of sources cited and consulted rather than a guide to further reading. Entries are therefore listed in alphabetical order of author without distinction according to the type of material, with the exception that broadcast material (for which there is no clear author) is listed in a separate section at the head of the list.

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