



PROSPICE

poem by
Robert Browning

Musical Setting for Baritone and String Quartet
by
H. Walford Davies

FULL/VOCAL SCORE



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Cover Image: "The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog" by Casper David Friedrich, 1818



ENGLISH HERITAGE

MUSIC SERIES

The “renaissance” in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880, and was most notable for compositions by C.V. Stanford, C. Hubert H. Parry, Edward Elgar, Henry Walford Davies, Harold Darke and others. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus. Although a number of those works found their way into print and are regularly performed today, a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works either were never published or were published but are no longer available in the publishers’ catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws in the mid-1970’s played a pivotal role in creating this void, opening a significant number of musical compositions to public access. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. Performance score inventories of these works were eliminated. In addition, for many compositions, the only published material were vocal scores - full scores and orchestra parts were hand notated for the premiere of a work and then were ‘recycled’ for future performances. While full score autograph manuscripts are now accessible through the major music libraries in the UK, the hand-notated parts have long since been lost. These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of the published vocal scores are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source unpublished/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers’ autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

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Source Information

<i>Autograph Manuscript:</i>	Royal College of Music, London MS 6303
<i>Vocal Score:</i>	Unpublished
<i>Royal College of Music Library</i>	Ass’t. Librarian - library@rcm.ac.uk
<i>Oxford University, Bodleian Music Section, Weston Library</i>	Martin Holmes, Curator of Music - martin.holmes@bodleian.ox.ac.uk
<i>Royal Academy of Music Library</i>	lib.ram.ac.uk
<i>Manuscript Transcription & Score Preparation</i>	David Fielding - dhcfielding@charter.net

Reference Material and Software

Notation Software: Finale v. 26 *Audio Software:* Garritan Personal Orchestra 5 *Graphic Software:* Adobe Photoshop CS5
Document Software: Adobe In Design CS5 *Music Notation Reference:* [Behind Bars](#) by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011



Henry Walford Davies was born in the Shropshire town of Oswestry close to the border with Wales. He was the seventh of nine children of John Whitridge Davies and Susan, née Gregory, and the youngest of four surviving sons. It was a musical family: Davies senior, an accountant by profession was a keen amateur musician, who founded and conducted a choral society at Oswestry and was choirmaster of the local Congregational church. Two of his other sons, Charlie and Harold, later held the post of organist at the church; the latter was professor of music at the University of Adelaide from 1919 to 1947. In 1882 Walford was accepted as a chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor, by the organist, Sir George Elvey.

When his voice broke in 1885 Davies left the choir and later that year was appointed organist of the royal chapel of All Saints, Windsor Great Park and was secretary to Elvey's successor, Walter Parratt, and Dean (later Archbishop) Randall Davidson. At this time British universities, including Cambridge, awarded "non-collegiate" music degrees to any applicant who could pass the necessary examinations. Davies entered for the Cambridge bachelor of music examinations in 1889, but his exercise (a cantata, "*The Future*", to words by Matthew Arnold) was not accepted. With

the encouragement of Charles Villiers Stanford, professor of music at Cambridge, Davies made a second attempt; it was successful, and he graduated in 1891.

In 1890 Davies was awarded a scholarship in composition at the Royal College of Music (RCM), London, where he was a student until 1894. His teachers there were Hubert Parry and (for a single term) Stanford for composition, and W. S. Rockstro (counterpoint), Herbert Sharpe (piano) and Haydn Inwards (violin). While still at the RCM he was organist of St George's Church, Campden Hill, for three months, and St Anne's Church, Soho for a year until 1891, when he resigned for health reasons. In the following year was appointed organist of Christ Church, Hampstead; he remained there until 1897, holding the post in tandem for the last two years with an appointment from 1895 as teacher of counterpoint at the RCM in succession to Rockstro, a post that he held until 1903. He considered resigning the post in 1896, when he failed the counterpoint paper in the Cambridge examinations for the degree of Doctor of Music; he was successful at his second attempt, and the doctorate was conferred in March 1898.

In May 1898 Davies was appointed organist and director of the choir at the Temple Church in the City of London, a post he retained until 1923. With this appointment, in the view of his biographer, Jeremy Dibble, Davies began to be seen as a prominent figure in British musical life. As an organist he became well known both as a soloist and as a teacher – the most celebrated of his pupils being Leopold Stokowski. As a conductor he directed the London Church Choir Association (1901–13) and succeeded Stanford at the Bach Choir (1902–07).

As a composer Davies achieved his most substantial success in 1904, with his cantata "*Everyman*", based on the 15th century morality play of the same name. His friend and biographer H. C. Colles wrote, "[T]he music itself was not like anything he had written before or would write again. "*Everyman*" was tumultuously received, and in the next few years given by every choral society in the country which aimed at a standard of first-rate." During the First World War Davies joined the Committee for Music in War Time under Parry's chairmanship, organised concerts for the troops in France and musical events for the Fight for Right movement. In 1918 he was appointed director of music of the Royal Air Force, with the rank of major. He established the RAF School of Music and two RAF bands, and composed the "Royal Air Force March Past", to which a slow "trio" section was later added by his successor, Major George Dyson. Since 1930 Walford Davies' "*Solemn Melody*" has been one of the permanent selection of national airs and mourning music performed on Remembrance Sunday at The Cenotaph, Whitehall.

Writing about the composer's early works in *Music & Letters* vol. XXII, no. 3 in July 1941, biographer H.C. Colles observed:

"... amongst his compositions of the eighteen-nineties is a setting of a poem by Browning which is of considerable significance. 'Prospice', published as a quintet for baritone and string quartet. There are those who maintained long after that not only was it Walford's finest work, but that the man who could write it had capacity for the greatest things in music. He had steeped the poem, and its essence, a strong man facing death. "I was ever a fighter, so-one fight more, The best and the last!" drew from him a presentment in music of the thought far beyond the personal experience of his years or of what could be achieved merely by integrity of intention. The limited means employed, a voice and four strings, precluded any attempt at emotional display. The restless figure of the strings leads with growing urgency to the protest, "Fear death?"; the storm-tossed progress of the declamation is completely clarified in the final stanza. Throughout, the thematic material is concentrated. There is not a phrase which fails to speak to the point, and no point poetic or musical is laboured by reiteration.

PROSPICE

(1861)

Robert Browning

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

The speaker asks himself what it is like to “fear death” in this poem. He begins by describing the oppressive imagery of it – “fog in my throat,” “the press of the storm, [and] the post of the foe.” Despite the deterrents, “the strong man must go” and he insists he will push forward on his journey no matter the end. As he has always been a “fighter,” he refuses to “creep past” death, and is instead committed to following those who died before by facing it head-on. The second half of the poem stresses his resolve to confront death fully, until he reveals his true motivation: to reunite with a beloved who has died before him.

Written soon after his wife Elizabeth's passing in 1861, “Prospice” can easily be viewed as one of Browning's most naked declarations. Its basic message is that he (in this case perhaps not a character, but the poet himself) will not falter before death even though its imminence perverts the journey of life, but instead will march forward heroically and face it head-on. In other words, both because he considers himself a “fighter” and because his beloved awaits him, the speaker refuses to consider taking a coward's route to death and approaching it with anything less than full confidence.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43773/prospice>

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was an English poet and playwright whose dramatic monologues made him one of the foremost Victorian poets. His poems are noted for irony, characterisation, dark humour, social commentary, historical settings and challenging vocabulary and syntax. His career began well, but collapsed for a time. The long poems *Pauline* (1833) and *Paracelsus* (1835) were acclaimed, but in 1840 *Sordello* was seen as wilfully obscure. His renown took over a decade to recover, by which time he had moved from Shelleyan forms to a more personal style. In 1846 Browning married the older poet Elizabeth Barrett and went to live in Italy. By the time of her death in 1861 he had published the collection *Men and Women* (1855). His *Dramatis Personae* (1864) and book-length epic poem *The Ring and the Book* (1868-1869) made him a leading British poet. He continued to write prolifically, but his reputation today rests largely on his middle period. On his death in 1889, he was seen as a sage and philosopher-poet who had contributed to Victorian social and political discourse. Societies for studying work formed in his lifetime and subsisted in Britain and the United States into the 20th century.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Browning

Largo

Baritone

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

espress.

p

p

p

espress.

p

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

p cresc.

f

pp

p cresc.

f

pp

p cresc.

f

pp

p cresc.

f

6

11

3

3

3

16

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

dim.

A

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

26

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

ten. molto espress.

meno p

meno p

meno p

meno p

31

Vln. I *dim.* *p* *cresc.* *f*

Vln. II *dim.* *p* *cresc.* *f*

Vla. *dim.* *p* *cresc.* *f*

Vc. *dim.* *p* *cresc.* *f* *molto espress.*

35

Vln. I *con gran espressione* *mp*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *con gran espressione* *ff*

Vc. *ff* *p*

39

Vln. I *cresc.*

Vln. II *cresc.*

Vla. *cresc.* *f*

Vc. *cresc.*

B

44

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f *ff* *ff* *ff* *f*

tr *tr*

6 6 6

Più mosso (quasi Allegro)

48

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff *mp* *sff* *p* *sff* *p* *sff* *p* *sff* *p*

3

Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat, The mist in my face, When the snows be-

53

B
gin, and the blasts de-note I am near-ing the place, The pow'r of the night, the press of the

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p *f*

sf *f*

sf *f*

sf *f*

sf *f*

3 3 3 3

58

B
storm, the post of the foe; Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a vis-i-ble form,

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mp

mp

mp

3 3 3 3

62 *f* *rit.* **Tempo primo.** *p*

B Yet the strong man must go:

Vln. I *cresc.* *f* *espress.* *p* *pp*

Vln. II *cresc.* *f* *pp*

Vla. *cresc.* *f* *pp*

Vc. *cresc.* *f* *p* *pp* *espress.*

68 *p*

B For the jour - ney is done and the sum - mit at - tained, —

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *p*

73 *dim.*

B
And the bar-riers fall,

Vln. I
molto cresc. 3

Vln. II
molto cresc.

Vla.
molto cresc.

Vc.
molto cresc. 3



C

B
f 3 3 3 *ff*
Though a bat-tle's to fight ere the guer-don be gained, The re-ward of it all.

Vln. I
f *sf*

Vln. II
f *sf*

Vla.
f *sf*

Vc.
f *sf*

Allegro

83

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

f

f

f



88

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

I was ev-er a fight - er, I so one fight more, The

f

f

f

f

93 *ff*

B
best and the last!

Vln. I

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

98 **D**

B
I would hate that death ban - daged my

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

103

B

eyes, and for - bore, And bade me creep

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

108

B

past. No! Let me taste the

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

113

B

whole of it, fare like my peers The he - roes _____ of

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

f

f

f

117

B

old, Bear the brunt, in a min-ute pay glad life's _____

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff *poco a poco dim.*

poco a poco dim.

poco a poco dim.

poco a poco dim.

poco a poco dim.

121

B

ar - rears Of pain,

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

p

p

p

125

B

dark - ness and cold.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

pp

pp

pp

E

129

B

Vln. I *espress.*
p

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

133

B

Vln. I *p*
p

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p
p

p
p

p
p

p
p

137 *mp* *cresc.*

B For sud - den the worst turns the

Vln. I *p* *cresc.*

Vln. II *p* *cresc.*

Vla. *p* *cresc.*

Vc. *p* *cresc.*



F

141

B best to the brave,

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f* *mp*

145 *mp*

B The black mi-nute's at end, And the

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *mp*

149 *poco a poco ritard* *f* *dim.*

B el - e - ments' rage, the fiend voi - ces that rave, Shall

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

Vla. *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

Vc. *f*

poco a poco ritard

153

B
dwin - dle, _____ Shall

Vln. I
p

Vln. II
p

Vla.
p

Vc.
p



157

B
p
blend, _____ Shall change, _____ shall be -

Vln. I
pp

Vln. II
pp

Vla.
pp

Vc.
pp

tranquillo

161

B

come _____ first a peace _____

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.



Meno mosso

165

B

out _____ of _____ pain, _____

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p molto espress.

p

p

p

169

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.



G

173

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

dim.

177 *p* *rall.* **Largo**

B
Then a light, then thy breast,

Vln. I
177 *pp* (*molto espress. ma sempre colla voce*)

Vln. II
pp *sempre colla voce*

Vla.
pp *sempre colla voce*

Vc.
pp *sempre colla voce*

182 *molto espress.*

B
O thou soul ___ of my soul! I shall

Vln. I
182 *pp*

Vln. II
pp

Vla.
pp

Vc.
pp

187

B
clasp thee a - gain, And with God with

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tempo primo.

192

B
God be the rest!

Vln. I
pp *ppp*

Vln. II
pp *pp*

Vla.
pp *pp*

Vc.
pp *ppp*

197

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

202

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

206

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p cresc.

f

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

p cresc.

f

3

3

H

210

Vln. I *dim.* *p*

Vln. II *dim.* *p*

Vla. *dim.* *p*

Vc. *dim.* *p*

214

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

218

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *pizz.* *arco*



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