

ANALYSIS OF FIVE WORKS BY HERBERT
HOWELLS, WITH REFERENCE TO
FEATURES OF THE COMPOSER'S STYLE

by

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Abstract

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Hitherto much research into Herbert Howells has focused on the biographical aspects of his life and works. The prime intention of this study is to reveal more about particular features of the composer's style. This is achieved through the analysis of five contrasting works; the *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra* (1917), *Blessed are the Dead* (1920), *Hymnus Paradisi* (circa 1938), *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* (1964) and *Stabat Mater* (1965). The analyses consider the construction of each work, notably the thematic material and its implementation. In addition, other intriguing points surrounding the musical content are identified, particularly musical ideas or passages which were reused in other compositions or were taken from other works.

The five pieces also serve as the starting point for the identification of important fingerprints of Howells' musical style¹ which include harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic features, as well as matters relating to orchestration. To enable a comprehensive study of the composer's style, the five works cover a substantial period of Howells' compositional life and embrace different genres and styles.²

The first chapter assumes a different format to the others as Howells' quasi-modal scale is considered, without any particular work acting as the start point. The reason for this is simply to allow more space to be devoted to this crucial subject matter. Chapters two to six focus on one specific work in turn. Each composition is analysed and every chapter discusses stylistic issues which arise and, where necessary, elucidates how the composition fits in with other works of that time.

¹ As a point of interest, the theme of death is common to these five works.

² These five works include two unaccompanied choral works (from opposing ends of Howells' life), a work for strings, and two large-scale choral works with full orchestra.

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Introduction

Introduction

Herbert Norman Howells was born in the Gloucestershire village Lydney on 17 October 1892.³ His music studies were first nurtured at home where his sister Florence taught him piano, and his father allowed him to assist him at the organ of the local Baptist Chapel in their home village. His studies continued with Herbert Brewer, organist of Gloucester Cathedral, where Howells was an articled pupil.⁴

In 1912, Howells continued his musical education at the RCM, where he studied with Stanford, Parry and Charles Wood. In 1917, Howells was briefly assistant organist to Walter Alcock at Salisbury Cathedral but resigned several months later due to ill health. In 1920 Howells returned to the RCM, this time as a teacher, providing him with at least one stable source of income. In addition to his post at the RCM, he was appointed Director of Music at St. Paul's Girls' School in 1936, and for 10 years was King Edward Professor of Music at the University of London.

In 1920 Herbert Howells married a young amateur singer by the name of Dorothy Dawe and together they had two children; Ursula Mary (b. 1922) and Michael Kendrick (b. 1926). Unfortunately on 6 September 1935, Michael, aged nine, died of polio. This was to be a key event in Howells' life. In an interview with Susan Regan for *The Gramophone* in 1971, Howells referred to the impact of Michael's death and also discussed a little of the background of *Hymnus Paradisi*;

³ *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998) by Paul Spicer, and *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978) by Christopher Palmer should be consulted for further biographical details.

⁴ Gloucester Cathedral became an important part of Howells' life because of its links to the Three Choirs Festival. The festival provided the composer with the opportunity to attend performances of both old and new music and would eventually hold performances of Howells' own works.

In 1935 my young son died of polio; I was completely frozen and all the sympathy and kindness in the world couldn't help. Friends tried, but I knew I had to get something out of me that had taken possession; I needed to write a special type of work. In the first year after he died I jotted down a few notes and put them in order during the following two years, when I was a little more sociable and sensible. It was completed in 1938 but it was a private document and I didn't want to share it with the public. It had done the service I had wanted it to do; released me from the crippling numbness of loss.⁵

Thoughts of the son he lost remained with the composer for the rest of his life. Subsequent diaries reveal that Howells regularly noted Michael's birthday (12 April) and the anniversary of his death (6 September).⁶ In spite of this tragedy, it appears never to have hindered him as a composer, in fact quite the opposite, as composing provided Howells with a way to deal with his loss.

His final teaching day at the RCM was on 12 July 1979, following 59 years on the teaching staff. The following year he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the RCM and two years later his ninetieth birthday was marked by a Gala Concert at the Royal Festival Hall. He died on the 23 February 1983 at the age of 90, drawing to a close a composing career of more than 60 years.

Howells' output includes a number of works for strings, piano, clavichord, solo songs and large scale choral works, but he is more widely known for his organ and sacred choral music. His many settings of the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis continue to enhance the

⁵ Susan Regan, 'Herbert Howells and his Hymnus Paradisi', *The Gramophone*, 48 (1971), 1445.

⁶ A diary entry for September 4 1961 (2 days before the anniversary of his death) reads: 'Rain and gloom. Morning on S.M. [Stabat Mater], [...] Evening work on 'Eia Mater' (with Mick very present),' cited in Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978), p. 444. See also appendix 6a.

music lists of churches and cathedrals all over the country and beyond. Of any composer, Vaughan Williams' music had the greatest effect on Howells. In 1910 Howells first heard the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* in Gloucester Cathedral. This work left an indelible impression on the composer.⁷

This study has one key objective: to reveal more about Howells' stylistic traits. To accomplish this, five contrasting works are analysed. These compositions cover a substantial period of Howells' compositional life and include different musical mediums; the *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra* (1917), *Blessed are the Dead* (1920), *Hymnus Paradisi* (circa 1938),⁸ *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* (1964), and *Stabat Mater* (1965). The analyses consider the construction of each work, identifying key thematic material and how it is used. Furthermore, other intriguing points surrounding the musical content are identified, notably musical ideas or passages which were reused in other compositions or taken from other works.⁹

These five pieces also allow a comprehensive examination of some of the important fingerprints of Howells' musical style. Essentially this covers four areas:

1. harmonic,
2. rhythmic,
3. melodic features, and
4. orchestration.

⁷ The influence of Vaughan Williams' music on Howells' is considered in the second chapter.

⁸ Although the quote on page two states that the work was completed in 1938, Dr. Paul Andrews believes that Howells was referring to a complete outline of the work. Certainly, the work was not orchestrated until the early months of 1950. Andrews also believes that the fifth movement was composed after the date for the first performance was set. See Paul, Andrews, 'Herbert Howells: A Documentary and Bibliographical Study' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999), p. 327.

⁹ Not necessarily works by Howells.

Each chapter considers stylistic issues which arise.¹⁰ In addressing specific traits of the composer's style, references to, and quotes from, other works are made to corroborate assertions. Where possible, the author endeavours to explain when a procedure began, how it was used and how it developed or changed.

Throughout the course of this study there are additional themes which embrace some of the topics listed above. Some of these recur throughout the study; notably the importance of the interval of a third (which covers harmonic and melodic aspects of the composer's style), and word emphasis (melodic aspects of the composer's style).

This study commences with Howells' quasi-modal scale. It is an important feature of the composer's music and an entire chapter is devoted to a comprehensive exploration of its history and uses. The subsequent chapters (two through to six) follow a chronological order; each chapter is devoted to one work and each piece is analysed where reference is made to the thematic material and its use.

There are important reasons for selecting these five pieces; they are key works in Howells' output and cover some of the important genres over a period of more than 40 years. Specifically, the first two works enable a study of two major early influences on Howells; Vaughan Williams and early English choral music. In chapter two, the impact of Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* on the *Elegy* and other works by Howells is demonstrated. The third chapter commences the discussion of Howells' choral technique, exploring the impact of early English choral music on *Blessed are the Dead* and other early choral works by Howells. The chapter also considers Howells' use of the false relation at the end of phrases.

¹⁰ The historical background is purposely kept to a minimum because in most cases this has been addressed in other studies. In the second chapter (*Elegy*), fresh information is offered and so is included.

In the fourth chapter, devoted to *Hymnus Paradisi*, Howells' approach to composing this large-scale choral work is considered, including an evaluation of musical unity as well as the composer's use of text and motifs. In addition, a recurrent melodic figure (descent of a third followed by an ascent of a fourth) is discussed. The fifth chapter, *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*, discusses Howells' later choral style and compares it with the earlier technique (a comparison with *Blessed are the Dead* and works of that time is made). This choral work also permits an evaluation of a recurrent rhythm at the end of vocal phrases.

The final chapter, *Stabat Mater*, considers the composer's musical language in the latter stages of his career (in particular quartal harmony) and reviews how musical unity is created throughout a more substantial work.¹¹ In addition, a second idiosyncratic scale is introduced and considered. The conclusion summarises the main discussions of the six chapters and highlights the key stylistic features. This journey through five works by Herbert Howells, which were written over more than forty years, will provide a greater understanding of key stylistic features.

¹¹ This study corroborates the majority of assertions made in the text with relevant supporting evidence. For the most part this takes the form of a plentiful supply of musical examples. In some instances, additional musical quotes are placed in the appendices. In all cases it is assumed that the musical quote is from a work by Herbert Howells unless otherwise stated.

Howells' Scale

‘Howells’ Scale’

This chapter will consider the uses and origins of ‘Howells’ scale’,¹² a quasi-modal sequence of pitches that developed into one of the most distinctive features of Howells’ music. Given the importance of the scale, this chapter is solely devoted to the investigation of this feature. The identification of this scale as a particular component of Howells’ music is not new; consequently its history and uses will be addressed.

The desire of a composer to create an idiosyncratic scale, or even a series of scales is not unique. In France, the organist and composer Olivier Messiaen developed his own series of ‘modes’, in which the chief interest was ‘the variety of harmonic colour which they provide’.¹³ Unlike Messiaen, however, Howells essentially formed only one, using it over a period of more than fifty years for a number of different purposes (see example 1.1 for the scale based on C). Though both composers shared an interest in early music and modes (both studied these areas in their younger years), Messiaen’s scales are more mathematical in origin; developed from his fondness for numbers. Howells’ scale, which displays modal characteristics, was most likely developed from the aesthetically pleasing sound that it produced for him.

The most distinguishable components of this scale are the augmented fourth and flattened seventh scale degrees, transforming the traditional major scale into a modal relative. It is clearly an unusual amalgam of the Lydian mode and any one of four modes that contain a gap of a tone between the leading note and final (see example 1.1). The scale is also hexatonic as Howells does not establish a pitch on the sixth note above the final (an A or

¹² This is a term used in this study to describe the scale cited in example 1.1. This term will no longer appear in inverted commas.

¹³ Robert Sherlaw Johnson, *Messiaen* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1989), p.16.

inflection, when the scale is on C).¹⁴ Though Howells' interest in the modes is the likely source of the scale, perhaps coincidentally, its earliest uses also coincide with the appearance of Blues music, the scale which similarly includes the augmented fourth (technically a flattened fifth) and flattened seventh.¹⁵

Vaughan Williams' third song from *Four Hymns* (1913/14) - *Come Love, Come Lord* - originally seemed to be the probable source of Howells' scale (see example 1.2). Howells was influenced by some of Vaughan Williams' works,¹⁶ particularly the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, consequently it was the initial area for consideration in trying to establish the birthplace of this scale. Vaughan Williams used a scale, almost identical to that in example 1.1 at the conclusion of *Come Love, Come Lord*, predating any use of the scale in Howells' music. Crucially, however, Vaughan Williams' *Four Hymns* did not receive its first performance until May 1920, casting doubt on the likelihood that the Vaughan Williams' work is the source of the scale. Consequently, it seems likely that the birthplace of Howells' scale is tied to his interest in modes.¹⁷

The earliest use of the scale in Howells' music is in the *Three Dances for Violin and Orchestra* of 1915 (see example 1.3) occurring in the final bars of the first movement.¹⁸

The key feature of this passage is a plain E flat major chord, garnished by the scale which is played in descending motion by the solo violin, high above the chord.¹⁹ As this passage is unrelated to anything preceding, or succeeding (it acts as a brief respite before the

¹⁴ See examples 1.3 and 1.8.

¹⁵ In Michael Nicholas, 'Howells: An Appreciation', *Organist's Review*, 2 (1983), 16, the author highlighted the likely influence of Blues music on *Like as the Hart* saying; 'Its long-phrased melodies contain hints of 'blues' which Howells heard in the 1920s.' Nicholas also identified 'jazzy tuba solos' in Howells' fourth Rhapsody for Organ (1958).

¹⁶ This was briefly discussed by Peter Hodgson in his PhD thesis (1970), p. 175 and in Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 23.

¹⁷ In Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978), p. 12, the author quotes Howells; 'We [Howells and Vaughan Williams] were both attracted by Tudor music, plainsong and the modes – my interest in folk music was perhaps for its modal colouring than for its human associations.'

¹⁸ It precedes the brief and final restatement of the opening melody.

¹⁹ It starts in bar 157. This one of a number of examples which confirms that the scale contains only six notes (in this example, the pitch C, or inflection, is omitted).

conclusion of the movement) the entire episode is quite prominent. In spite of this early appearance of the scale (Howells was in his early 20s and still a student at the Royal College of Music), it was approximately two decades later when it became a more prominent and characteristic feature of his music, though in the intervening period it was not totally abandoned.

The earliest of Howells' works that appear to herald a new and definitive beginning for the scale are the short solo song *Flood*, and the second *Sonata for Organ*, both written in 1933. The song was a contribution to *The Joyce Book*, a collection of works by thirteen composers. In the first of these examples (1.4), the scale transposed onto C is clearly outlined in the piano and voice part (bars 30 and 31). In the organ work the scale based on G is used in bars 45 to 47 (see example 1.5).

Another of Vaughan Williams' work that contains an almost identical scale is the F minor symphony (1934); incorporating both the major and minor inflections of the third (F and F flat respectively).²⁰ The scale appears several times throughout the *Fourth Symphony*, notably at the end of the first movement (see examples 1.6 and 1.7). Curiously, the completion of the symphony coincides with the general appearance of the scale in Howells' own music. Furthermore, in examples 1.2 and 1.6, Vaughan Williams used the scale in a similar way to that of Howells in example 1.3, from *Three Dances for Violin and Orchestra*. In example 1.6, Vaughan Williams used the flute section to decorate the final D flat major chord and like the scale in example 1.3, it is performed in descending motion. In spite of this remarkable similarity, it is immediately obvious that one of the principal sources of inspiration to pervade the three dances is the music of Vaughan Williams.

Of the works considered in this study, *Hymnus Paradisi* is the earliest in which the scale is used. Its first full appearance is in the fourth movement, four bars after rehearsal number

²⁰ A similar scale appears throughout Vaughan Williams' *Sancta Civitas* (1925).

37. It is employed immediately at the first structurally significant climax of the movement (see example 1.8). This is one of the principal applications of the scale – at, or following on from a climactic point in the work. For eight bars, Howells' music is solely based on this scale. In this example, the scale is based on C. A noticeable harmonic feature at this point is the augmented chord²¹ that is clearly derived from the two very distinct features of the scale, the flattened seventh and augmented fourth (B flat and F sharp respectively). This chord appears in both the choir and orchestra. In example 1.9 a similar use occurs in bars 121 and 122 of the final movement, during a succession of musical climaxes²² before the music settles (in bar 140) for the conclusion.

Howells reused his quasi-modal scale in a similar manner and at an almost identical point in several other works, such as the epic third movement of *Missa Sabrinensis* from 1954 (see example 1.10). In *An English Mass* which was written the following year, it appears in bars 131 to 133 of the second movement (example 1.11) and also in the early stages of *Bliss' Ballet* (1952) from *Howells' Clavichord* (example 1.12). The climactic moment from the song *Flood*, mentioned earlier, fits into this category (see example 1.4 above).

Important features shared by all these examples are Howells' decision to centre them on C and the equally prominent use of the B flat augmented chord to punctuate the music.²³

A second use of the scale is the decoration of the final chord, usually at the close of a movement or work. As previously mentioned, this application is identical to Vaughan Williams' use of a similar scale at the end of the first movement of the *Fourth Symphony* and in *Come Love, Come Lord* (see examples 1.2 and 1.6). Examples from Howells' music can be located in the final bars of both *Missa Sabrinensis* and *Hymnus Paradisi* which conclude with an E flat major chord; at the end of *Hymnus Paradisi* Howells used the

²¹ These augmented chords are marked 'x' on the musical examples.

²² A series of appoggiatura chords on the first beat usually resolving on the second beat where the text is repeated.

²³ Many years later this was also repeated in bars 25 and 26 of *Thee Will I Love* (1970). See appendix 1a for this example and one other, from the Magdalen service, again on C.

woodwind and string instruments (see example **1.13**) and at the end of *Missa Sabrinensis* just the clarinet. It is similarly employed in the concluding bars of both the fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* and the first movement of *Missa Sabrinensis* (see example **1.14**). A vital aspect of all these examples is the scale in descending motion. It is also important to mention that in example **1.3** the scale in descending motion over a static chord (like examples **1.13** and **1.14**) is unusually not the final chord of the movement.

The augmented fourth creates an aching sensation through its seemingly innate need to be resolved. In both of the examples above (as well as the end of the fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* and the final movement of *Missa Sabrinensis*) resolution of the augmented fourth is executed, bringing with it tranquillity and a feeling of finality. It seems that such examples, in part, compelled musicologists such as Christopher Palmer to suggest an affinity with some of the concluding passages of the music of Delius, particularly the final moments of *In a Summer Garden* and the *Requiem*.²⁴

Finally, Howells used the scale for one further purpose - in the approach to a musical climax, or to a fundamental moment, such as the concluding chord of a work. It is important to emphasize that 'approach' is the operative word. In all of these examples, Howells created and maintained a feeling of tension, which is finally released once the climactic goal is reached. Once again, the reason for the trepidation in the music is ultimately created by the augmented fourth. One such example appears in the fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, on the ascent to the most dramatic climax of the entire work where the augmented fourth and flattened seventh scale degrees (F sharp and B flat respectively) are particularly prominent.²⁵ The climax occurs in bar 138, signified by the chorus cry of 'Sanctus' (see example **1.15**). In several other compositions, from different genres, Howells repeated this effect. Included in this collection are the *Psalms Prelude Set Two Number*

²⁴ These works are suggested by the current author.

²⁵ In this example the scale is transposed onto C.

Three for organ (1938), bars 132 to 135; bars 150 to 160 of the Credo from *An English Mass*, bars 356 to 361 of the Gloria from *Missa Sabrinensis*, bars 86 to 90 of Sanctus from *Missa Sabrinensis*, and bars 71 to 73 and 104 to 107 of the Credo from *The Coventry Mass* of 1968 (see examples **1.16** to **1.20**).²⁶

There are three further instances which merit inclusion, two are located in the final bars of the doxology in the Canticle settings for St. Paul's Cathedral (1951) and St. John's College, Cambridge (1957) (see examples **1.21** and **1.22**). The example from the St. Paul's service is slightly different to the others as the scale on F includes the minor inflection of the third and not the major. The final occurrence to be included is from *Goff's Fireside* (a work for Clavichord), bars 29 to 31, where Howells used the scale on F to create a similar build-up, though clearly with a far more limited musical resource. In a majority of these examples, Howells successfully heightened the tension by delaying the climax via a short pause, perhaps also tempting the listener to anticipate the composer's next musical move.²⁷ However, in *Goff's Fireside*, Howells abandoned the pause allowing the climax to occur immediately after the preparation (see example **1.23**).

Another important feature of the use of the scale in the approach to a climax, shared by a majority of these examples (**1.15** to **1.23**), is a gradual ascent in pitch in the inner and upper parts of the accompaniment. This is occasionally a feature of the chorus where voices are used. Howells further dramatizes the build-up by reducing the tempo of the music (an indication of either *allargando* or *rallentando* before the climax).²⁸ Unlike the other uses of the scale up to now, this application does not rely on any particular tone centre.

²⁶ Howells similarly used the scale in preparation for the chorus cry of 'Sanctus' in the fourth movements of *Hymnus Paradisi* and *Missa Sabrinensis* (see examples **1.15** and **1.19**).

²⁷ See examples **1.16**, **1.17**, **1.18** and **1.22**.

²⁸ Interestingly, Howells never used the scale on the approach to a climactic moment and then from the climactic moment onwards, i.e. combining the first and final use.

The most important musical feature to emerge from the scale is the distinctive augmented eleventh chord. As with a majority of the musical examples cited thus far, the chord draws on the two most important and distinguishable degrees of the scale, but in a far more exuberant and exciting way than the augmented chord, discussed above.²⁹ This combination clearly illustrates that Howells discovered a way to combine the two distinctive scale degrees with a conventional major chord. Like the scale, the chord came to real prominence in the 1930s, though it existed before then. Subsequently its appearance in Howells' music increased throughout the rest of his compositional life. The resultant combination of this unique chord delivers a bitter-sweet sound, which developed into an authentic hallmark of Howells' musical style (see example **1.24**, the root of the chord is G).

The chord analysed as an isolated phenomenon is more accurately an augmented eleventh - a major chord with a minor seventh and augmented eleventh. The ninth degree is usually omitted, though on a few occasions in Howells' latter work, such as bars 125 to 127 of the fifth movement of *Stabat Mater*, it was included (see example **1.25** and also **1.26**). On examination of a number of examples of this chord, it is clear that Howells spelt the chord in various ways and used the chord in different inversions. However, it is evident in compositions from the 1950s onwards, that Howells commonly placed the chord in fifth inversion; the augmented eleventh as the root of the chord.

The more unusual inversions are root position, first and fourth, probably because the first two are not as aesthetically pleasing as some of the other inversions, such as fifth; fourth inversion because the ninth of the chord is frequently omitted.³⁰ In addition, the chord is never confined to any particular musical medium.³¹ Examples of its use can be found in many diverse works of varying genres such as bars 22 to 24 of the organ work *St. Louis*

²⁹ The augmented chord was seen in examples **1.4** and **1.8** to **1.12**.

³⁰ In example **1.3** there is a root position augmented eleventh chord in bar 157.

³¹ The chord was used in Howells' vocal, orchestral, string, and even his keyboard works.

comes to *Clifton* (1977), the third movement of *Sonatina for Piano* (1971), and in many of the latter canticle settings (see examples **1.27**, **1.28** and **1.29**).³²

One other important trait of the chord is the lack of a common progression to it. Certainly, in instances where it is not used in fifth inversion there is no common preparatory chord, in many cases there is no preparation at all. On several occasions this fifth inversion chord is void of both preparation and resolution. However, on occasions where there is resolution, the lack of a preparation and the manner in which resolution is achieved suggests that the augmented eleventh chord is an appoggiatura.

Resolution of a fifth inversion augmented eleventh chord occurs in the fourth movement of the *Stabat Mater* (marked 'R' on example **1.30**). In this instance, the chord is heard on G and resolution is achieved by retention of the C sharp as the lowest note in the subsequent chord, whilst the upper parts readjust to create a second inversion F sharp minor chord. On this occasion, the relationship of the augmented eleventh to the other notes of the chord is drastically altered because what was a dissonance in all other inversions becomes the only consonant note. This is one of a number of examples which show that the fifth inversion augmented eleventh chord is an appoggiatura (see also example **1.31** from the Collegium Regale Magnificat of 1945). Similarly, in example **1.26**, from *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* (1964), where the augmented eleventh chord with an added ninth is used, there can be no doubt that the first chord is an appoggiatura; both the ninth and augmented eleventh resolve down to the octave and tenth respectively before the end of the bar.

One of the consequences of Howells' regular use of this chord throughout his compositions, particularly in fifth inversion, is the listener's diminishing opinion of the chord as a true dissonance requiring resolution. Instead the listener gradually interprets it as a

³² In example **1.29** from the Winchester service (1967), Magnificat, the chord on G is used in second inversion.

familiar Howellsian sound³³ or merely a delectable chord. In a number of passages which include the augmented eleventh chord in fifth inversion, Howells retains the root of the chord and moves the upper parts to create a dominant seventh chord in first inversion (this can be seen in examples **1.28**, **1.31** and **1.32** where the chord is identified by the letter 'y') and then returns to the augmented eleventh chord.³⁴ This progression also becomes a feature of Howells' music.

Unlike like the scale which was employed in very specific situations, the uses of the chord are considerably less obvious. In *A Sequence for St. Michael* (1961), written whilst Howells was also composing perhaps his most grief-laden work *Stabat Mater*, Howells employed this chord for one very particular purpose - to emphasize specific words. This is its principal function in choral music. The most intriguing example occurs in bars 11 to 13, where the augmented eleventh chord aptly conveys to the listener the tortured cries of 'Michael'; a name that is particularly important as it is also the name of the young son whom he lost in 1935 (see example **1.32**). There is one further example in the same work, bars 178 and 179, in which Howells reused the same chord to emphasize the name 'Raphael.' In the *Nunc dimittis* from *The Dallas Canticles* (1975), Howells' idiosyncratic chord is combined with the word 'Israel,' and in the final bars of the *Magnificat* from *Collegium Regale* (1945), for the name 'Abraham' (see example **1.31** above).³⁵

One of its other functions seems to be to create a feeling of tension and sense of longing; an innate property of the chord. It was also a very distinct fingerprint that emerged directly from Howells' scale, so perhaps this too was sufficient reason for him to use it in a variety of different compositions. In all examples of this chord cited in this study (**1.25** to **1.32**), the listener is aware of a great sense of anguish that arose from the appearance of this chord

³³ This is more likely the case with listeners who are very familiar with Howells' output. Of course, Howells too may have eventually reached the point where he considered the chord to be more consonant than dissonant.

³⁴ See also appendix 1b.

³⁵ See appendix 1b.

at these particular points, irrespective of whether Howells used the chord for word emphasis. This is one manner of word emphasis in Howells' music (as seen in examples **1.31** and **1.32**); several other forms will be discussed throughout the course of this study.

Howells was not the only English composer to relish the sound created by the dissonant augmented fourth in combination with a major triad. Michael Short identified Holst's fondness for this chord, with the noticeable absence of the minor seventh (see examples **1.33**).³⁶ Furthermore, Short described Holst's attraction to 'the sound of this Lydian relationship, and 'in *Egdon Heath* it is made a prominent feature of the thematic material'.³⁷ As with Howells, the position of the augmented fourth was equally well considered as Holst clearly preferred it to be the lowest pitch with the result that the sound is immediately reminiscent of Howells' augmented eleventh chord. Notably, Holst often added the major seventh to the chord, which is considerably less congruent than the minor seventh preferred by Howells.

Howells' scale, in spite of initial uncertainty surrounding its origins, was derived from his interest in modes. Furthermore, it appears in very specific contexts:

- 1) at the climax of a work,
- 2) for the decoration of a chord, particularly at the end of a movement or work,
- 3) on the approach to a musical climax, or crucial moment such as the final chord.

Moreover, the augmented eleventh chord was vital to the creation of an almost unique harmonic trait of Howells' music; typically but not exclusively in fifth inversion, which was

³⁶ Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and His Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 399. Here Michael Short cited examples from the *Invocation* of 1911, the *Lyric Movement* (1933), *The Perfect Fool* (1918-22), *First Choral Symphony* (1923-4), *The Wandering Scholar* (1929-30) and *A Choral Fantasia* (1930).

³⁷ Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and His Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 398.

used to emphasize particular words and to create a temporary feeling of tension and sense of longing. Clearly the scale was an important feature of the composer's musical language and, consequently, references will be made to additional uses of the scale, both in melodic and harmonic situations, throughout this study.

- Ex. 1.1 Howells' Scale on C.
- Ex. 1.2 Vaughan Williams, Four Hymns, Come Love, Come Lord, *lento*, 5 bars before D to end of movement. Piano and voice.
- Ex. 1.3 Three Dances for Violin and Orchestra, First Movement, *poco meno mosso, e quieto (a tempo – Giocososo molto)*. Violin and Piano reduction. Bars 154 to 160.
- Ex. 1.4 Flood, *Allegro. Fortissimo*. Bars 30 to 32. Piano and Voice.
- Ex. 1.5 Sonata for Organ, number two, *Allegro assai*. Bars 44 to 47.
- Ex. 1.6 Vaughan Williams' Fourth Symphony, Rehearsal number 18.
- Ex. 1.7 Ralph Vaughan Williams, Fourth Symphony, First movement, *Largamente*. Violin I.
- Ex. 1.8 Hymnus Paradisi, Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes, *più mosso, energico*. Bars 89 to 95. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 1.9 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *meno forte, ma sempre con moto*. Bars 120 to 126. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 1.10 Missa Sabrinensis, Credo, *poco meno mosso*. Bars 359 to 363. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 1.11 An English Mass, Credo *più lento (un poco con moto)*. Bars 129 to 134. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 1.12 Howells' Clavichord, Bliss' Ballet, *Allegro vivo, ritmico*. Bars 22 to 30.
- Ex. 1.13 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *lento assai, assai tranquillo*. Bars 172 to 182. Chorus, soli and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 1.14 Missa Sabrinensis, Kyrie, *poco più adagio*. Bars 129 to 133. Chorus, soli and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 1.15 Hymnus Paradisi, Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes, *allarg. molto*. Bars 134 to 141.
- Ex. 1.16 Psalm Prelude Set Two Number Three, *un poco meno mosso: e poco rubato*. Bars 131 to 139. Organ.
- Ex. 1.17 English Mass, Credo, *lento*. Bars 154 to 161. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 1.18 Missa Sabrinensis, Gloria, *più e più elato*. Bars 354 to 362. Soli, Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 1.19 *Missa Sabrinensis*, Sanctus, *poco a poco accel.* Bars 85 to 92. Orchestral reduction.
- Ex. 1.20 *The Coventry Mass*, Credo, *spazioso*. Bars 71 to 74. Choir and organ.
- Ex. 1.21 St. Paul's Service, Nunc Dimittis, *Quasi lento, teneramente (con moto)*. Bars 85 to 94.
- Ex. 1.22 St. John's Service, Nunc Dimittis, *Largamente*. Bars 53 to 62.
- Ex. 1.23 Howells' Clavichord, Goff's Fireside, *quasi lento, teneramente*. Bars 27 to 33.
- Ex. 1.24 Howells chord in fifth inversion.

- Ex. 1.25 Stabat Mater, Sancta Mater, *assai tranquillo*. Bars 125 to 127.
- Ex. 1.26 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Quasi lento, serioso, ma con moto*. Bar 125. SATB.
- Ex. 1.27 Winchester Service, Magnificat, *con moto, teneramente, e dolce*. Bars 46 to 48.
- Ex. 1.28 Sonatina for Piano, third movement, *Agile, destro, sempre veloce*. Bars 38 and 39.
- Ex. 1.29 Winchester Service, Magnificat, *con moto, teneramente, e dolce*. Bars 97 to 99. Organ and Choir.
- Ex. 1.30 Stabat Mater, Eia, Mater, *Espressivo: alla sarabanda*. Bar 3. Piano reduction.
- Ex. 1.31 Collegium Regale, Magnificat, *placido ma con moto*. Bars 58 to 65. Organ and Choir.
- Ex. 1.32 A Sequence for St. Michael. *Poco allegro, affretando*. Bars 11 to 14. Chorus.
- Ex. 1.33 Gustav Holst, A Choral Fantasia, *Adagio*. Bars 1 to 13. Piano and voice.

**Elegy for Viola,
String Quartet
and String
Orchestra**

Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra

The *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra* was written in 1917 and exemplifies some of the earliest influences on Howells' musical language and orchestral style. This chapter will commence with a brief insight into the historical aspect of the work, followed by an analysis of the music. As part of the analysis, the melodic homogeneity (Howells' use of the opening idea) will be considered, as well as its relationship to the composer's *Suite for String Orchestra* (1917) from which the *Elegy* was derived. A recurrent theme throughout this study is Howells' use of the harmonic and melodic interval of a third. In this chapter Howells' tendency to juxtapose relative major and minor chords in his early works is considered. The influence of Vaughan Williams and Edward Elgar - the music of the former displaying the greatest impact - will be addressed. The *Elegy* exhibits the pure influence of Vaughan Williams, where Howells purposely imitated features of the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* which he heard for the first time more than six years earlier. Specifically, the chapter will discuss orchestration, harmony and melodic ideas in the *Elegy*, and other works from this time, which were influenced by Vaughan Williams.

The history of this composition begins with Howells' unpublished three-movement *Suite for String Orchestra* from 1917 which is now stored at the Royal College of Music.³⁸ The slow middle movement was subsequently revised as the single-movement *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra* and published in 1917. The first performance took place on 13 July of the same year with Charles Villiers Stanford conducting the RCM orchestra.³⁹ Following a personal consultation of the *Suite for String Orchestra* manuscript,

³⁸ The manuscript is stored in folder 2665. The key differences between these two works will be considered later in the chapter. In appendix 2a, the two works are compared in even greater detail.

³⁹ Elizabeth Bird, 'The Instrumental and Choral Music of Herbert Howells' (unpublished masters thesis: University of Wales, Bangor, 1982), p. 24.

it is possible to deduce with certainty that the *Elegy* is a later revision and not an earlier version of the second movement of the *Suite*. The second movement was clearly quite close to completion, as Howells evidently intended at that point. However, for the *Elegy*, Howells revised and added musical passages. Many of these modifications are easily identified on the manuscript of the *Suite* because they were written either above or below earlier material (see example 2.1). The vast majority of these additions and amendments were eventually incorporated into the *Elegy*, particularly passages for the solo viola.

On the original score of the second movement of the *Suite* there was a dedication to two unnamed persons, only their initials - F. P. W. and J. K. I. were given. The former refer to Francis Purcell Warren, a friend and fellow student of Howells at the RCM. The date of the second movement is 24 May 1917, a few days before what would have been Warren's 32 birthday.⁴⁰ For many years the second set of initials were shrouded in mystery, but student records at the RCM reveal that several years before the outbreak of World War I, a certain Joseph Knowles Ireland studied in the vocal department. He was born in Leeds on 16 February 1885 and was the son of a stationmaster. Ireland entered the college on 6 May 1909, graduating with the ARCM diploma on 30 March 1912. Tragically, Ireland, like Warren, was one of more than forty students and graduates of the RCM whose life was sacrificed in foreign lands during the First World War. He served as a Captain in the Royal Fusiliers and was reported missing on 7 October 1916.

Following its premiere at the RCM, one of its earliest performances was at the Mons Memorial Concert in the Royal Albert Hall, at which Hugh Allen, director of the RCM from 1918 until 1937, conducted the London Symphony Orchestra. Consequently, in 1920 when

⁴⁰ See appendix 2b.

Edwin Evans' article on Howells was printed in *The Musical Times*, he aptly described this musical homage as 'The Mons Elegy',⁴¹ the place where Warren lost his life.

Though the second movement of the *Suite* is dedicated to two persons, curiously the *Elegy* bears a sole dedication to Warren and it is extremely unlikely that the reason why Howells did not repeat the double dedication will be revealed. Furthermore, nothing is known about Howells' relationship with Ireland. Student records at the RCM prove that they were not at the college at the same time – by the time Howells was a student Ireland's studies were completed. To compound matters, there is no other reference to Ireland in any of Howells' other compositions.⁴²

The *Elegy* is alluded to in several letters of Ivor Gurney, written whilst he was engaged on military service, providing valuable insight into the initial success of the work.

Correspondence between Gurney and Howells reveals that Hugh Allen was an admirer of the *Elegy*. Gurney simply wrote, 'So an Elegy of yours has greatly taken Dr Allen? So much the better'.⁴³ In three further letters, two of which date from August of the same year, Gurney referred to the string work that he was yet to hear. In the first of these, dated 3 August and addressed to Howells, he expressed his desire for the *Elegy* to be performed alongside his own *Bierside*.⁴⁴ Howells subsequently received and showed Gurney's song to Stanford and Charles Wood, both of whom were greatly impressed, and saw to it that Gurney's composition was performed at the RCM. In the second letter, this time to Marion

⁴¹ Edwin Evans, 'Herbert Howells (Modern British Composers. No 8)', *The Musical Times*, 61 (1920), 89.

⁴² There seem to be two plausible ways in which the two men were acquainted. Firstly, that Ireland retained contact with the college after his studies and the two met, or that Howells became acquainted with Ireland through a mutual friend. With regards to both these assertions, it is important to remember that Howells joined the college within months of Ireland completing his studies.

⁴³ R. K. R Thornton, *Ivor Gurney: Collected Letter* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1991), p. 291.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 293. The full title of Gurney's work is *By a Bierside*, with words by John Masefield. Gurney composed this in 1916; one of a handful of songs written in the trenches. In spite of death being the central theme, it is certainly not a memorial work.

Scott, dated 14 August 1917,⁴⁵ he included a reference to Stanford 'greatly praising' the *Elegy*, an opinion Howells probably conveyed to Gurney in a written correspondence and undoubtedly welcome praise from the illustrious Irishman.

Several months later, in a letter to Marion Scott dated 23 December 1917, Gurney expressed the joy he experienced following the successful reception of the *Elegy*, undoubtedly after its performance at the Mons Memorial Concert.⁴⁶ In the letter he also added; 'Perhaps this is the beginning of his real promise', certainly it was an encouraging review for the young composer.⁴⁷ Gerald Finzi also admired the workmanship of the *Elegy*. It became part of the repertoire of the Newbury String Players, and on one occasion Finzi informed Howells that 'we have done it a lot and never tire of it'.⁴⁸ The early success and popularity of this work was unquestionably important for Howells, confirming that he possessed sufficient skills as a composer to attempt a living through composing.

As to the music itself, the work commences with a delicate passage for the solo viola which oscillates around G, providing the 104-bar work with almost all the melodic and motivic material (see example 2.2). This phrase is immediately imitated by the orchestra with full harmonisation where there is an obvious aroma of Vaughan Williams, particularly after the gentle emergence of the tutti. More specifically, the initial solo viola phrase cited in the musical quote above, is mournful yet simple in nature and brings to mind the initial solo passage for viola in Vaughan Williams' *Phantasy Quintet* (1912), where a similar ambiance is created at the opening (compare examples 2.2 and 2.3).

⁴⁵ R. K. R Thornton, *Ivor Gurney: Collected Letter* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1991), p. 303.

⁴⁶ It was not possible to establish who informed Gurney of this successful performance. However, it was probably Marion Scott, a mutual friend of both Gurney and Howells.

⁴⁷ R. K. R Thornton, *Ivor Gurney: Collected Letter* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1991), p. 384.

⁴⁸ Stephen Banfield, *Gerald Finzi: An English Composer* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1997), p. 65.

With the exception of brief passages in bars 25 to 28 and 56 to 60, which will be discussed separately, the work is entirely reliant on either all, or part of the opening bar-and-a-half for unity. Though the entire melodic idea is melancholic in itself, in bars 59 to 62 the solo viola performs the most despondent interpretation of the opening phrase, over a sustained *ppp* B flat major chord provided by the tutti (see example **2.4**). Here the work expresses the true feelings of loss in a very explicit way.

Returning to the opening bars, Howells included a passage which is a prime example of juxtaposed tonalities. These tonalities are separated by the interval of a third, consequently there is no discernable key. This is the first area for discussion in this study related to Howells' use of this interval. The first bar-and-a-half suggest that the work is in E flat major, but by the end of bar three it is apparent that C minor is probably the intended key (see example **2.2**). This is confirmed by an implied perfect cadence in C minor in bar six. However, the tutti's response in bars 6 to 13 briefly confuses the tonal centre. Following the implied perfect cadence one anticipates the tutti to commence in C minor. In actuality Howells amalgamates C minor and E flat major, two chords which are separated by an interval of a third, but which are also united by two common notes (see example **2.5**).

This relationship of a third is further compounded when the tutti passage (bars 6 to 13) imitates the melody of the viola solo almost exactly, but concludes with a perfect cadence in E flat major; as opposed to C minor (see example **2.6**).⁴⁹ Furthermore, following the close of the tutti phrase in bar 13, the solo viola executes a melody (bars 13 to 20) based on bars 1 to 6 and concludes on the note G in bar 20. This phrase suggests a tone centre of either C or G, but rather unexpectedly the tutti response to the second viola phrase opens in E minor, a third away from either of the implied tone centres.

⁴⁹ C minor is anticipated because of the implied cadence at the end of the initial passage for solo viola.

Equally intriguing is the similarity between the opening melodic idea of the *Fantasy String Quartet* and the initial melody of the *Elegy* (compare examples **2.2** and **2.7**), which are both tonally ambiguous. As was established, the opening phrase of the *Elegy* (example **2.2**) is based on the juxtaposed keys of C minor and E flat, though coming to rest on an implied key of C minor by bar six. In the *Fantasy String Quartet*, (see example **2.7**) the opening melody is an amalgam of both F minor and A flat major. In addition, further into the Quartet there is an instance when two chords, separated by a third, are sustained for several bars; reminiscent of the juxtaposed chords located in bar six of the *Elegy* (compare examples **2.5** and **2.8**). In the Quartet violins I and II and viola provide the juxtaposed F minor and A flat major chord, whilst the cello executes the opening melody. The juxtaposition of two chords separated by a third is heard throughout this single movement fantasy, a composition that was awarded the Cobbett prize in 1918, but these are not the only examples of this phenomenon in Howells' music. In the first movement of the *Sonata No. 1 in E major for Violin and Piano* (1918), Howells included a short passage where there are three similarly ambiguous chords in each bar (see example **2.9**).⁵⁰ What is a vital and shared feature of all these chords is the relative major and minor relationship (see examples **2.5**, **2.8** and **2.9**).⁵¹

As the material from the opening phrase is developed the element that appears incapable of dissolution is the movement from a particular note, down a tone and back to the original pitch. It recurs either as part of a restatement of the opening melody, or as a self-contained entity throughout the work (see bar one of example **2.2**). However, in bars 58 to 67 this motif is altered slightly (see example **2.10**). Though the rhythm is essentially the same (dotted note, quaver and crotchet) and the movement down one note is retained, the

⁵⁰ Another fine example is the opening bars of *Psalm Prelude Set Two Number Three*. The first chord is an amalgamation of a C major (right hand) and an A major chord (left hand). The pitch E is common to both chords. In the first full bar there is a similar amalgamation of an F major chord and a D major chord, though notably the relative major and minor relationship is absent.

⁵¹ All except the second chord of example **2.9**.

melody does not return to the starting point, instead it moves one note higher, but this alteration is only temporary because in bars 67 and 68 it returns to its original form.

One of the recurrent melodic motifs of the first movement of the unpublished *Suite for Orchestra*⁵² is similarly this brief descent and ascent, though the intervals between these notes appear as either a semitone or tone.⁵³ The tempo is considerably faster than that of the *Elegy* and this unassuming theme usually occurs as semi-quavers and therefore is not as prominent, yet it performs an integral, unifying function (see example 2.11).⁵⁴

There are, however, points in the *Elegy* where there is no link with the first bar-and-a-half, the first passage is in bars 25 to 31. Though there is no thematic connection with the rest of the work, it does rely on a short extract from an earlier composition: bars 49 to 57 of *Psalms Prelude of Set One Number One* for organ written in 1915 and based on psalm 34, verse 6.⁵⁵ The opening five crotchet beats of the *Elegy* (example 2.12) are almost identical to bars 48, 49 and the first half of bar 50 in the organ work. In fact, the similarity is so marked that in the brief anacrusis, which occurs in both of these examples, there is a similar motion in the upper parts. In the *Psalms Prelude* (see example 2.13) the top part of the right-hand ascends a tone from G to A, while at the same time the left-hand descends from G down a seventh to A (bar 48). In the *Elegy* the ascent from G to A is imitated by all the violins and violas of the tutti, and the fall of the seventh occurs in the cello part, bar 25. Any exact imitation of the *Psalms Prelude* soon peters out, yet the prevailing ambience from the *Psalms Prelude* is retained and the double bass part continues to imitate the long striding passages of the pedal organ for a further four bars. Included in this is the falling

⁵² The first movement of this unpublished suite was later used as the first movement of the *Concerto for String Orchestra* (1938).

⁵³ This melodic movement is also prominent throughout the *Rhapsodic Quintet* (1919).

⁵⁴ In spite of this shared feature in these two movements, it is worth highlighting that there is undoubtedly no melodic or motivic relationship between the *Elegy* and the *Serenade*, the final movement of the unpublished *Suite*.

⁵⁵ 'The poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.' The passage taken from the organ work was used in both the *Elegy* and the second movement of the *Suite for Orchestra*.

seventh, which occurs twice and is ultimately a device to change octave, but reminiscent of the same descending interval that was so integral to the theme of the 'Enigma' Variations and generally in the music of Elgar.

The resemblance of the *Elegy* to the organ prelude at these points is undeniable, greatly assisted by the use of the tone centre C. Furthermore both passages are ripe with anguish-laden appoggiaturas and suspensions, which are highly appropriate to the sentiment of both these passionate works. Interestingly, in their respective works these passages are used at one of only a few climactic moments. Finally, because of a lack of homogeneity with what was previous and is subsequent, this assists in the aural recognition of this moment in the *Elegy*. But before the end of the phrase, the solo viola, with first violins, recalls the opening phrase of the work (see bars 29 to 30 of example **2.12**).

Perhaps the most exciting moment of Howells' *Elegy* occurs in the latter stages. In bar 86 the solo viola, solo quartet and the tutti (where violin II, viola and cello parts are split into two) create a dense yet wonderful texture through which Howells included an inner pedal note C, retained almost continuously for four bars. It oscillates between several different instrumental parts and on at least one occasion changes octave (see example **2.14**). In the second movement of the *Suite for String Orchestra*, the prolongation of an inner pedal C at this point is not possible, simply because there are not enough instruments to execute the inner pedal as well as to maintain harmonic movement. The melody of violin I, in both the *Elegy* and the second movement of the *Suite*, is identical. However, the latter uses only the tutti and omits the solo viola and string quartet. There is an earlier example of this note retention in bars 47 to 51 of the *Elegy*, though at this point the pedal note is an F sharp (see example **2.15**). Unlike the inner pedal C located in bars 86 to 89 of the *Elegy*, the example containing F sharp is also included in the second movement of the *Suite* and it may be this earlier use that gave rise to the idea of imitating this further on in the *Elegy*.

On the topic of similarities between the *Elegy* and the second movement of the *Suite for String Orchestra* there are a number of features to consider. To begin with, it is imperative to establish that the structure, thematic basis, as well as the overall ambience in both the second movement of the *Suite* and the *Elegy* is identical. The division of instruments into either tutti or solo quartet, and the use of the solo viola are constant in both versions. However, their implementation through the course of each differs slightly.

The initial 26 bars of the *Elegy* are identical to the opening 26 bars of the second movement of the three-movement suite. The first difference occurs in bars 26 to 31 where the *Elegy* includes a short passage for solo viola that was not included in the second movement. Perhaps the most notable addition to the *Elegy*, again for solo viola, is between bars 41 and 57. Almost half of this passage for solo viola (bars 41 to 47) was sketched onto the version from the *Suite*, directly underneath the quartet part at this point. However, the remaining 10 bars of musical material do not appear on the score (see example 2.16). This alteration was certainly to the detriment of the music, particularly bars 41 to 47, as it is unsuccessful in blending with the prevailing ambience of the entire work, simply because the chromatic solo viola part does not gel successfully with the softer Dorian/minor sound of the other instruments.

Almost all of the alterations that were made to the second movement of the *Suite* were included in the *Elegy*. This includes the creation of an optional part for organ pedals, which Howells wrote beneath the low C natural of the double bass part in the final bars of the second movement of the *Suite*; 'This note also on the pedal organ, 32 ft.' Though Howells did include a part for pedal organ in the *Elegy*, which usually doubles the bass or cello, it omits the final note C where Howells' suggestion was made. Whether this was an oversight or a conscious decision to omit the organ pedal at this point is difficult to say. However, this

practice of including an optional part for organ pedal is not unique. In *Ave Regina* (1915), the score of which is lost, Howells also included an optional organ pedal part.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the *Elegy* and the second movement from the *Suite* occurs between bars 58 and 74. In both versions, this passage serves as a transition, before the recapitulation of the opening melody. In the second movement of the *Suite*, bars 59 to 63, Howells used the opening motif (seen in example 2.2) as the musical basis, but the passage in the *Elegy* initially used unrelated material.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the opening chord of bar 59 is the same in both the *Elegy* and the movement from the *Suite*. The first and final note of the viola melody (bars 59 and 62) is the same in the *Elegy* and the movement from the *Suite*, in spite of distinct differences between the two pieces. The material in the subsequent bars (63 to 74) is markedly different. Even so, Howells ensured that the recapitulation in both works was heard on the same tone centre.

In view of the obvious affinity between Howells' *Elegy* and Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* which has already been established by a number of musicologists,⁵⁸ it is important to consider the influence of the latter on the former.⁵⁹ This will lead the discussion on to the similarities between the works and will include references to a number of different compositions by Howells. The *Fantasia* was first performed on Tuesday 6 September 1910 at a concert in the Three Choirs Festival, in Gloucester. Herbert Sumsion, organist of the Cathedral from 1928 to 1967, and a life-long friend of

⁵⁶ Arthur Eaglefield Hull, 'The A Cappella Music of Herbert Howells', *Musical Opinion*, 44 (1920), 373. In *Hymnus Paradisi*, Howells included a part for organ where, on a number of occasions, it is pedals only; in the first movement bars 32 to 37, the third bars 23 to 29, the fourth bars 47 to 53, 92 to 111, 115 to 132 and in the sixth movement, bars 1 to 58 and 140 to 157 where it supports the lower parts of the orchestra.

⁵⁷ In bars 59 into 60, there is no relationship to the opening melody. However, in the second half of bar 60 (and on to bar 62) the viola imitates the second half of bar 2 to bar 4.

⁵⁸ Notably Christopher Palmer, Lionel Pike and Paul Spicer.

⁵⁹ The author readily acknowledges that this information is not revelatory. However, it is vital that the importance of Vaughan Williams' music on Howells is fully understood.

Herbert Howells and devotee of his music, recalled the young composer's description of the first performance, on a

... mellow September evening in 1910 – the evening upon which in Gloucester Cathedral I first set eyes upon the magnificent, magisterial figure of R. V. W. and first heard any sound of his music. He had brought to the Three Choirs Festival a new work – the Tallis Fantasy.⁶⁰

Howells also said of this significant moment:

I heard this wonderful work, I was thrilled, I didn't understand it, but I was moved deeply. I think if I had to isolate from the rest any one impression of a purely musical sort that mattered most to me in the whole of my life as a musician, it would be the hearing of that work...⁶¹

Vaughan Williams composed this *Fantasia* during the resurgence in the interest of Elizabethan composers. Michael Kennedy asserted that at this time there was a 'revived interest in the 'fancy' and 'fantasia' form'.⁶² The *Fantasia* tune itself was composed in 1567 and is in the Phrygian mode. It was written for a setting of 'the doggerel of [Archbishop] Parker's Psalm 2'.⁶³ Vaughan Williams previously used the Tallis melody for the hymn 'When rising from the bed of death', the words of which were written by John Addison (1672 –1719).⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Herbert Sumsion, 'Herbert Howells: Some Recollections of a Long Friendship', *RCM Magazine*, 68 (1972), p. 67.

⁶¹ Herbert Howells quoted in Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1988), p. 22.

⁶² Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Vaughan Williams*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1992), p. 123.

⁶³ Alan Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 75.

⁶⁴ This hymn was first printed in the *English Hymnal* in 1906, of which Vaughan Williams had been appointed music editor.

One of the more obvious indicators of Vaughan Williams' influence on the *Elegy* lies in the orchestration. Both compositions include a tutti orchestra (two in the *Fantasia*) and a solo quartet. In addition, both also rely on the viola as the principal soloist. As to why Vaughan Williams' opted for a solo viola in the *Fantasia* and the *Phantasy Quintet*, this is explained by the fact that it was,

an instrument which Vaughan Williams enjoyed playing, and for which he had a deep affection, not unconnected with it being at once the most ethereal and the most voluptuous of the string family.⁶⁵

Unlike Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia*, Howells used only one orchestral tutti, drastically reducing the number of players required. What was important for Vaughan Williams was the interplay between the two orchestras and the quartet. The preface to the score states that the second orchestra should be placed apart from the first,⁶⁶ enabling the composer to create an interesting aural effect for the listeners, particularly during passages of antiphony. In the *Elegy*, it was not the geographical location of the players, but the noticeable difference in timbre that was important for Howells as there are no suggestions for the location of either the solo quartet or tutti. Interestingly the second movement of the *Concerto for Strings* (1938) employs a similar kind of orchestral grouping as the *Elegy*.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ W. Mellers, *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of the Albion* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1989), p. 107. Vaughan Williams' *Phantasy Quintet* (1912) relies on the standard string quartet with an additional viola.

⁶⁶ The actual location of the orchestras for the first performance is not known. However, for the BBC series *Masterworks* (1999), the two orchestras were placed opposite one another in the nave; one in front of the organ screen (facing the West-end) and the other near to the great West door facing East, with the quartet on the North side of the cathedral.

⁶⁷ Though this movement uses similar orchestral groupings to the *Elegy*, the *Concerto* relies on a string trio consisting of a violin, viola and a cello (a quartet in the *Elegy*) the principal solo instrument is the viola. For several measures, the first movement also requires a solo viola and apart from a violin passage lasting only five bars it is the only solo instrument. Certainly, it is only in the second and third movements of the *Concerto* that Howells endeavoured to repeat some of the interplay between the tutti and soli as previously heard in the *Elegy*.

Returning to Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia*, the composer created interplay between the two orchestras, particularly between rehearsal letters E and F (see example **2.17**). In bars 35 to 37 of the *Elegy* there is a similar instance (see example **2.18**). Not only did Howells imitate Vaughan Williams' instrument groupings but also the way in which they were used. For instance, throughout Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia*, the final chord of one phrase is frequently picked up and used as the opening chord of the subsequent phrase in another musical group.⁶⁸ This is particularly common between rehearsal letters F and I. The transfer of one chord between groups of instrumentalists also occurs between one of the orchestras and the solo quartet. The simple yet effective process of chord transfer between different groups of instruments and its subsequent use in the *Elegy* ensures a kinship between the two works. Furthermore, in bar 42 the tutti emerges on the same chord as the quartet (G sharp major) creating a similar aural effect between the two contrasting timbres (see example **2.19**).

One other work of Howells which displays this particular feature is the *Fantasy String Quartet*,⁶⁹ composed in the same year as the *Elegy*. Paul Spicer remarked that Howells' *Fantasy String Quartet* contained the distinct flavour of *The Lark Ascending* (1914/1921), probably Vaughan Williams' most popular work and an observation that inevitably arose from the long solo passages for violin.⁷⁰ Though the musical medium is considerably more limited, and on a far smaller scale than any instance in the *Elegy* or *Fantasia*, a fine example occurs between second violin and viola, and first violin and cello (see example **2.20**). What makes the transfer particularly obvious is the slight, but obvious difference in timbre, which is created by the use of mutes in violin II and viola parts, and their absence in violin I and cello parts; the chord itself changes neither register nor inversion.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Though phrases are answered by another part between rehearsal letters E and F, the response is not always based on, or an imitation of, the preceding phrase (as seen in example **2.17**).

⁶⁹ This demonstrates Howells' interest in the Fantasy form.

⁷⁰ Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1988), p. 57.

⁷¹ The example cited serves to indicate the exact moment at which the transfer takes place, consequently it cannot convey the true effect of this orchestration.

In spite of several shared features, the harmonic language of *Fantasy String Quartet* is a little more progressive. Interestingly, Stanford also expressed an opinion of Howells' *String Quartet*, but was unable to confer a similar praise as he had on the *Elegy*, saying to Howells; 'I'm afraid I'm getting old, dear boy, I can't accustomise my nostrils to these modern stinks'.⁷² Certainly the principal reason why Stanford saw fit to praise the *Elegy* appears to be, by and large, the less progressive approach to harmony and its use of an increasingly abandoned musical language.

Howells previously experimented with instrumental timbre in some of his earliest works, dating from his first years at the RCM. The Kyrie, from the *Mass in the Dorian Mode* (1912) is for an SATB choir but it also includes passages for solo SATB voices, interspersed between passages for the tutti choir, and the listener is very aware of the difference in timbre between the two groups of vocalists. However, there is no example of chord transfer in the example cited in appendix 2c, similarly Howells did not specify locations for the choir or soli for the performance of the work.⁷³

At rehearsal number 4 of the *Elegy*, bar 36, the movement down and up a tone in the top voice⁷⁴ is combined with the progression from a root position chord, to a chord one semitone higher in second inversion, returning to the original root position chord.⁷⁵ This occurs in bars 36 and 37 of example **2.18** and its roots lie in the Phrygian mode.⁷⁶ This melodic movement and harmonic progression occurs several times; bars 42 and 43, and 47 and 48. In light of the similarities cited so far between the *Fantasia* and the *Elegy* and

⁷² Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 60.

⁷³ In the subsequent chapter, Howells' use of two choirs, particularly for passages of antiphony, will be discussed.

⁷⁴ This melodic idea is first heard in bar 1 of the *Elegy* (see example **2.2**).

⁷⁵ This melodic idea also appears in the first two movements of the Howells' *Suite for Strings*.

⁷⁶ The second chord is reminiscent of a Neapolitan sixth, though it is not part of a cadential progression, nor is it in first inversion. Lionel Pike first identified the 'Phrygian harmonic shifts' in the *Elegy* in footnote 7, in his article, 'Tallis – Vaughan Williams – Howells: Reflections on Mode Three', *Tempo*, 149 (1984), 13.

the fact that the melody of the *Fantasia* was centred on the Phrygian mode, it is perhaps not too surprising to hear this chord progression in Howells' work.

A similar melodic motif occurs in the bar before rehearsal letter H of Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia* (compare example **2.21** from the *Fantasia* and example **2.22** from the *Elegy*). Though the accompanying chord progression in example **2.21** is different to the one cited in the *Elegy* (example **2.18**), the fact remains that the first chord, though repeated twice, moves away to a different one (B major), before returning to the initial chord. This melodic motion occurs several times throughout the *Fantasia*.

The harmonic movement of bars 36 and 37 of the *Elegy* recurs in the *Requiem* dating from the early 1930s (bars 9 and 10 of example **2.23**). The descent of a third in the bass coincides with the progression to a chord one semitone higher, though the intermediate chord is slightly ambiguous as it is an amalgam of two chords separated by a third; again they are relative major and minor. One other contrasting element is the melodic descent (from the fifth of the chord in example **2.18** from the *Elegy*) of a tone and back up, which was substituted for an ascent from the third of the initial chord; the original melodic motion (beginning on the fifth), however, occurs in the tenor part.

Another example of this motif is in Howells' *Concerto No. 1 in C minor for Piano*, which is rarely performed. This work displays the influence of many composers, including great romantic Russian piano composers such as Rachmaninov, but also of Vaughan Williams.⁷⁷ In the first movement, the solo piano quotes the same melodic motif, but this time with a different chord progression; from G major to F major 7, and not G major to A flat major as was heard in Howells' *Elegy* (see example **2.24**).⁷⁸ In this example, the movement of the lowest part down and up a third, and of the highest part down and up a tone, is identical to

⁷⁷ The Concerto was premiered in 1914.

⁷⁸ Though the harmony and melody at this point has an affinity with Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia*, the orchestration does not.

the motion of the highest and lowest parts in bars 36 and 37 of the *Elegy* (seen in example **2.18**), though in a different key. The descent in the lowest part from G to E flat in the piano part would clearly allow a chord progression from G major, in root position, to A flat major in second inversion, in line with examples in the *Elegy*, but the melody would need to be a third higher (beginning on the fifth of the opening chord) to be truly similar.

Nevertheless, the example from the *Piano Concerto* is in fact the beginning of a longer chord progression; G major, F major 7, G major, C minor, F major 7 in third inversion, and finally back to G major. This harmonic sequence occurs several times through the course of the first movement, in both the solo piano part and orchestra. In later works, as will be evident, Howells repeatedly substituted this C minor chord (or equivalent, depending upon the key) for a chord one semitone higher than the initial chord of this sequence. In the progression written above in the text, this would be an A flat major chord. The substitution is easily executed because both C minor and A flat major share two notes the same; an A flat simply replaces the G natural.

The origins of this chord progression can be traced back to Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia*. One of the prominent features of the *Fantasia* is the chord progression centred on D major, which moves between C major, D major and E flat major, immediately after the powerful opening of the full strings. It clearly draws on the qualities inherent in the Phrygian mode (see example **2.25**). Certainly, in the hymn 'When rising from the bed of death', Vaughan Williams was more candid in the movement between chords based on the final, flattened seventh and flattened second degree.

In spite of the differences between the chord progression from Howells' *Piano Concerto* (seen in example **2.24**) and the harmonic sequence towards the beginning of the *Fantasia*, the passage from the Concerto in example **2.26**, which contains the two bars immediately after those cited in **2.24**, is greatly reminiscent of the *Fantasia*. This can be seen in the

right-hand of the piano part where the melody bares similarity to the first bar of rehearsal letter D of the *Fantasia*. Indeed, with the piano declaration of these three notes - D, E flat, F and G, the listener might anticipate a full piano imitation of the *Fantasia*, as at rehearsal letter D, also aided by the similar contrary motion between the left-hand and right-hand of the piano (compare examples **2.26** and **2.27**).

Howells isolated this distinct Phrygian chord progression and subsequently employed it in several different works. The *Elegy* (as seen in example **2.18**) employs a portion of this idea, the equivalent movement of D major to E flat major,⁷⁹ although only the first of these chords occurs in root position. In bars 22 to 25 of the carol-anthem *Sing Lullaby* (1920), written a few years after the *Elegy*, the *Fantasia* progression is quoted in full (see example **2.28**).⁸⁰ In this example too, the movement from the root position F chord to a second inversion G flat major (bar 24) creates the movement downwards of a major third in the bass part, as in example **2.18** and **2.23**. Another example, though altered slightly, can be located in the first movement of Howells' *Requiem* (1932) - *Salvator mundi*. In bars 11 to 14, Howells managed to include a progression from G major to A flat, back to G major, then to F major and back to G major (see bars 11 to 14 of example **2.23**).⁸¹

Many decades after the completion of the *Elegy*, Howells was still employing this distinctive modal progression. Examples are found in *Dyson's Delight* (1957), *Goff's Fireside* (see example **2.29**) and perhaps less surprisingly *Ralph's Pavane* (see example **2.30**) dating from 1941, dedicated to Vaughan Williams himself, for which 'Uncle Ralph' acknowledged immense gratitude. In the two examples cited above, the progression begins on G major, moves to A flat major, back to G major, then to F major, and finally back to G major. The

⁷⁹ This refers to the chords cited in example **2.25** from the *Fantasia* which is centred on D.

⁸⁰ In this work the progression is from F major to E flat major, back to F major, then up to G flat major and then finally to F major. In Lionel Pike, 'Tallis - Vaughan Williams - Howells: Reflections on Mode Three', *Tempo*, 149 (1984), 10, Pike identified this passage as containing 'Phrygian characteristics' but had not identified it as a progression which pervaded a number of Howells' works.

⁸¹ The flattened second chord and flattened seventh chords are in different places in this example.

three instances referred to above written for clavichord are short compositions included in *Herbert's Clavichord*, a collection published in 1961. These short works were written sometime between 1941 and 1961.⁸²

Probably the last work by Howells to include this progression, written in the final decade of his career as a composer, is the *Partita* (1971). It is dedicated to Edward Heath, then Prime Minister. The work was in response to a wager made between the two musicians, which stipulated that if Heath should ever become Prime Minister, then Howells would mark this event with a composition. The fourth movement of the *Partita* is titled Sarabande for the 12th Day of any October.⁸³ Within the first six bars Howells used this modal chord progression.⁸⁴ It is a little less obvious as there is a greater use of chromatic notes pervading the music at this point and generally in works from this decade (see example **2.31**).⁸⁵ What is particularly intriguing, exemplified by a number of these musical quotations, is the way in which Howells directly associated this chord progression with Vaughan Williams, in spite of the fact that these works cover a period of more than sixty years.⁸⁶ The two works dedicated to Vaughan Williams, and the *Elegy*, are testament to this. Curiously, in all but one example (from *Sing Lullaby*), Howells placed the chord progression on G. There is also one additional work which merits mention. It contains a variant of the chord progression in conjunction with the melodic descent and ascent. This appears in the *Rhapsodic Quintet* (1919) for clarinet. This one-movement work occasionally uses the same melodic motif as the *Elegy*, as seen in the bars one and two of example **2.2** where the pitch A moves to G and back to A (see examples **2.32** to **2.34**).

⁸² The exact year of *Goff's Fireside* is not known.

⁸³ Vaughan Williams' birthday.

⁸⁴ This Phrygian progression also occurs in the fourth movement of *The B's* - 'Mazurka' alias 'Minuet': Bunny. Interestingly this is dedicated to Francis Purcell Warren, the dedicatee of this *Elegy*.

⁸⁵ In the final chapters, Howells' richer harmony in his latter works is considered.

⁸⁶ Previously, musicologists discussed Vaughan Williams' influence in more general terms. In appendix 2d the current author has included musical quotations from Howells' works which are clearly imitating passages from Vaughan Williams' compositions.

Moving away from influences of Vaughan Williams on the *Elegy*, Howells achieved a feeling of continuous flow throughout the work by regularly overlapping the end of one phrase with the beginning of another.⁸⁷ The first point in the *Elegy* at which there is an interruption in the flow of the music is in bar 38; a quaver rest. In a building with a generous acoustic this pause would be filled with the fading strands of the preceding chord. In the rest of the work there are only three other breaks, in bar 58, where there is a minim rest, bars 73 and 92 where there are quaver rests. This simply demonstrates the way in which Howells created a continuous flow of music, but without the listener craving for a break between phrases.

The other important English composer whose influence is manifest in Howells' earlier compositions is Edward Elgar. The opening bars of the second movement of Howells' first organ sonata (1911) immediately recall some of the most sumptuous choral writing for female voice from the second part of *The Dream of Gerontius*.⁸⁸ More specifically in the *Elegy*, bars 54 to 57, Howells included a distinctive melodic flourish from the *Introduction and Allegro for Strings* of 1905 (for quartet and double orchestra). Howells first heard this string work days after the premiere of the Tallis Fantasia. This is one of only a small number of passages in the *Elegy* (the other in bars 25 to 28) without any direct link to the original melody of the work. This melodic flourish was not originally included in the second movement of the *Suite*, nevertheless the harmony in both the *Elegy* and the movement from the *Suite* is essentially the same (compare examples **2.35** and **2.1**). This short Elgarian turn, a distinct but brief quotation of the opening of the *Introduction and Allegro*, was written above a far plainer passage on the manuscript (see example **2.1**). An undeniable link between Elgar and the *Elegy* might not have been established had Howells decided not to revise bar 56 of the *Suite* (see example **2.36**).

⁸⁷ This is also a feature of choral works and will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

⁸⁸ Spicer also noted that in Howells' *Five Songs* (Opus 2), 'Elgar leaps from the page again and again and, like the [Howells'] *Organ Sonata*, whole progressions are 'lifted' from *Gerontius*.' Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 28.

In addition to the short melodic quote from Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro*, another important link between the two works is evident; the orchestration. Both were reliant on a solo string quartet and an additional orchestra. Michael Kennedy remarked that the orchestration of the *Introduction and Allegro* 'was the forerunner of many works of a similar kind and served as a model (string quartet and string orchestra) for another English masterpiece written five years later, Vaughan Williams' *Tallis Fantasia*'.⁸⁹ However, there is no other suggestion of the influence of Elgar in Vaughan Williams' work.⁹⁰ Relf Clark established a link between Howells' *Psalm Prelude Set One Number One* (1915) and Elgar.⁹¹ As previously discussed, bars 25 to 31 of the *Elegy* were taken from this very same organ prelude. This adds a little more weight to the suggestion of a link between Elgar and the *Elegy* (see examples **2.12** and **2.13**).

It is interesting to consider Howells' own view on the emotional impact this musical tribute to a lost friend is intended to have on the listener. The composer voiced his own opinion in a rather egocentric, but ultimately sincere way. Alan Ridout recalled a lecture shortly after the death of King George VI.

His [Herbert Howells'] subject was mourning. ... He said that he was going to play a recording of a work – what it was, and who it was by, was of no consequence – which summed up all that could be stated in music about death. His exact words were: 'If there is a better expression of mourning music, I have yet to hear it'.⁹²

⁸⁹ Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 184.

⁹⁰ As noted earlier, the orchestration of the second movement of Howells' *Concerto for String Orchestra* (1938), which bears a dedication to two people, to Edward Elgar and Michael Howells (who both died in the mid-1930s) employs similar instrumental groupings to the *Elegy*.

⁹¹ Relf Clark, 'The Organ Music of Herbert Howells: Some General Considerations', *The Royal College of Organists Journal*, 2 (1994), 43-57.

⁹² Alan Ridout, 'Herbert Howells Remembered', *RCM Magazine*, 89 (Autumn 1992), p.12.

The *Elegy* is just one of several works for strings that Howells wrote in the later part of the 1910s.⁹³ It displays an immense indebtedness to Vaughan Williams whose works exerted the greatest influence on Howells; particularly the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. This is manifest in melodic, harmonic and even aspects of orchestration of the *Elegy*, especially in the division of the instruments into two groups and solo viola. Howells' Phrygian progression (as in examples **2.28** to **2.31**) was the prime harmonic tribute to Vaughan Williams, which clearly originated from one particular chord sequence in the *Fantasia*. In an interview with the composer, Nicholas Webber discovered that even as an octogenarian, Howells was still greatly impressed and 'thrilled' by performances of the *Fantasia*. Its importance and impact remained undeniably paramount to Howells.⁹⁴

Elgar's influence on the *Elegy*, though considerably less prominent than Vaughan Williams', is also apparent in melodic aspects. Curiously, in imitating features of the orchestration of Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia*, Howells was also copying the orchestration of Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro*.

As regards to the homogeneity of the *Elegy*, it is undoubtedly united by the opening theme. There are only a few bars where there is no link to the beginning. In subsequent chapters this is quite different as homogeneity is achieved in a number of different ways.

In the *Elegy*, the use of organ pedals, without manuals, seems to be a curious feature of Howells' orchestration, but perhaps an obvious one for an organist. In the next chapter the theme of orchestration continues as the possibilities of two choirs are explored, resuming the theme of Howells' use of two groups of instrumentalists.

⁹³ Including the *Piano Quartet in A minor* (1916), *In Gloucestershire* (1916-30), *Fantasy String Quartet* (1917) and *Serenade for Strings* (1917) as well as additional works for orchestra.

⁹⁴ Nicholas Webber, 'Herbert Howells at 85', *Music and Musicians*, 26/ 2 (1977), 26.

This chapter addressed several features of Howells' music, many of which will be expanded throughout the course of this study. The *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra* introduces the recurrent theme of the interval of a third (demonstrated in this work by Howells' tendency to juxtapose chords, separated by a third, typically major and relative minor). Though subsequently this was not as common, the interval of a third was to remain vital in a number of other stylistic features to be discussed. Not only was the *Elegy* a successful work in itself, but a triumphant union of different influences and an important step in the creation and development of an increasingly individual musical style.

Ex. 2.1 Suite for String Orchestra, second movement, *poco accel: e appassionata*. Bars 56 to 57.

Ex. 2.2 Elegy for Solo viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, teneramente*. Bars 1 to 8. Viola.

Ex. 2.3 Ralph Vaughan Williams. Phantasy Quintet, *Lento ma non troppo*. Bars 1 to 7. Solo viola.

Ex. 2.4 Elegy for Solo viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, teneramente, ma un poco rubato*. Bars 59 to 62. Solo viola.

Ex.2.5 Elegy for Solo viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi lento, teneramente*. Bars 6 and 7. Tutti.

Ex. 2.6 Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra. Bars 1 to 20. Graph showing tone centres.

Ex. 2.7 Fantasy String Quartet, *moderato, assai espressivo*. Bars 2 to 8. Violin I.

Ex. 2.8 Fantasy String Quartet, *moderato, assai espressivo*.

Ex. 2.9 Sonata No.1 in E major for Violin and Piano, First Movement, *Allegretto, sempre un poco rubato*. Bars 80 to 86. Piano and violin.

Ex. 2.10 Elegy for Solo viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, teneramente, ma un poco rubato*. Bars 63 to 65. String quartet.

Ex. 2.11 Concerto for String Orchestra, first movement. *Allegro, assai vivace*. Bars 5 to 9.

Ex. 2.12 Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, teneramente*, bars 25 to 31. Solo viola and tutti.

Ex. 2.13 Psalm Prelude Set One Number One, *Maestoso e lento poco appenato (ma doppio movimento)*. Bars 48 to 56. Organ.

Ex. 2.14 Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, teneramente*. Bars 86 to 89. Solo viola, solo quartet and tutti.

Ex. 2.15 Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, teneramente*, bars 47 to 51.

Ex. 2.16 Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, ma un poco rubato*. Bars 41 to 47. Solo viola.

Ex. 2.17 Ralph Vaughan Williams, Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis, *Largamente*. Orchestras One and Two. Five bars after E to F.

Ex. 2.18 Elegy for Solo viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, ma un poco rubato*. Bars 35 to 37.

Ex. 2.19 Elegy for Solo viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, teneramente, ma un poco rubato*. Bars 38 to 43. String quartet, solo viola and tutti.

Ex. 2.20 Fantasy String Quartet, *moderato, assai espressivo, e poco a poco accel*. Rehearsal number 10.

Ex. 2.21 Ralph Vaughan Williams, Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis, *Largo sostenuto*. One bar before rehearsal letter H. Orchestra I.

- Ex. 2.22 Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *Quasi Lento, teneramente*. Bar 1. Viola.
- Ex. 2.23 Requiem, Salvator mundi, *slowly but with flexible rhythm*. Bars 9 to 14. Chorus.
- Ex. 2.24 Concerto No. 1 in C minor for Piano. Bar 4 of Page 14, to bar one of page 15. Piano.
- Ex. 2.25 Ralph Vaughan Williams, Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis. *Largo sostenuto*. Five bars before A to two bars before A. Viola and cello.
- Ex. 2.26 Concerto No. 1 in C minor for Piano. Bar 2 and 3 of page 15. Piano.
- Ex. 2.27 Ralph Vaughan Williams, Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis. *Largo sostenuto*. Rehearsal letter D to one bar after. Tutti.
- Ex. 2.28 Sing Lullaby, *un poco più mosso (Non troppo lento, e sempre tranquillo)*. Bars 21 to 25. SATB.
- Ex. 2.29 Herbert's Clavichord, Goff's Fireside, *poch meno mosso (Allegro)*. Bars 36 and 27.
- Ex. 2.30 Herbert's Clavichord, Ralph's Pavane, *Quasi lento, gravemente, ma con tenerezza*. Bars 6 to 8.
- Ex. 2.31 Partita, Sarabande for the 12th day of any October, *Serioso, assai Espressivo*. Bars 3 to 6. Organ.
- Ex. 2.32 Rhapsodic Quintet. Op. 31., *Lento ma appassionata*. Bars 1 to 7. Violin I, II, Viola and Cello.
- Ex. 2.33 Rhapsodic Quintet. Op. 31., *Lento ma appassionato, ma un poco rubato*. Bars 25 to 28. Clarinet, Violin I, II, Viola and Cello.
- Ex. 2.34 Rhapsodic Quintet. Op. 31., *Meno Mosso (Doppio movimento ritmico, e con troppo Allegro)*. Bars 1 to 11 of rehearsal number 24.
- Ex. 2.35 Elegy for Solo viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *un poco rubato (Quasi Lento)*. Bar 56. Violin I.
- Ex. 2.36 Edward Elgar, Introduction and Allegro, *moderato*. Bars 1 to 4. Solo Quartet.

Blessed are the Dead

Blessed are the Dead

This short choral work dating from 1920 for two SATB choirs and soprano soloist was written in memory of Howells' father, Oliver, who died in September 1919.⁹⁵ One key influence on Howells was early English choral music, which is apparent in this work and other choral compositions from this period. This influence pervaded the harmony, texture and orchestration of all of Howells' early choral music, and very quickly developed from influences into distinct traits of his choral style. One of the influences of early English choral music includes modal progressions which are recurrent in this work and others, and the false relation at the end of vocal phrases between inflections of the third.

As well as discussing the melodic unity of the work, this chapter will address a number of different topics associated with Howells' style. As regards orchestration, the exploitation of two choirs for different effects will be considered. Another subject addressed is Howells' unique manner of word emphasis by the interval of the third. Other points of interest are considered including the musical similarities between the use of this text in the Requiems of Howells and Walford Davies, and the realisation work by Patrick Russell.

Howells commenced work on this memorial composition in April of 1920.⁹⁶ In the late 1960s Howells revealed to Peter Hodgson that he considered *Blessed are the Dead* a 'private document',⁹⁷ a statement which suggests that the primary purpose of the work was

⁹⁵ The words of *Blessed are the Dead* are quoted in appendix 3a.

⁹⁶ The manuscript is now stored at the RCM in folder MS 4616. Located in the same folder are the opening bars of a song for voice and piano; *O My Dear Hert*. Though both were written in 1920 there are clearly no melodic or motivic similarities.

⁹⁷ Peter Hodgson, 'The Music of Herbert Howells' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Colorado, 1970), p. 87.

to commemorate his father and perhaps to deal with the loss, rather than financial gain through publication or performance.⁹⁸

A further important event in the history of this work occurred many years later. In 1974, Howells was commissioned by the widow of David Stretch, from Texas, to compose a work in memory of her late husband. Fearful that he would be unable to complete a new composition in time he suggested two other appropriate works - *Even such is Time*⁹⁹ (1913) and *Blessed are the Dead*, both of which include passages for double choir. Despite his worries about time constraints, Howells did write an entirely new composition - *The Dallas Canticles* (1975).¹⁰⁰ However, it is somewhat curious that Howells could have ever considered *Blessed are the Dead* a possible memorial work for someone he never knew, given its highly personal origins.

Howells never fully completed *Blessed are the Dead*; this was finally accomplished by Patrick Russill in 1995 more than a decade after the composer's death.¹⁰¹ In October of the same year it received its first performance in Westminster Abbey.¹⁰² The most important observation made by Russill was that the work would have required little of Howells' time to complete it. With this in mind, there are only a few passages where there was very little or no original material (in particular bars 42 to 50);¹⁰³ at most other places Russill stated that Howells' intentions were clear.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ *Hymnus Paradisi* was also described as a 'private document' and is the reason why it was not performed until 1950. Palmer, Christopher, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978), p. 47

⁹⁹ The text of which is attributed to Walter Raleigh, written on the eve of his execution.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Andrews, 'Herbert Howells: A Documentary and Bibliographical Study' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999), p. 527.

¹⁰¹ This chapter will consider some of Russill's editorial and realization work.

¹⁰² Paul Andrews, 'Herbert Howells: A Documentary and Bibliographical Study' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999), p. 196.

¹⁰³ These incomplete passages are outlined in the introduction to the published edition of the work.

¹⁰⁴ It is perhaps a little too easy to state that it would have taken a small amount of time to complete the work, because given the time Howells could have started again or drastically revised the work. In addition, one must not neglect the fact that Howells might never have wanted to complete it, or could not decide how.

The principal theme of the entire piece is the melody of the soprano part, bars 1 to 4 (see example 3.1), which acts to create musical homogeneity throughout the work. The most significant element is the triplet in bar three, which occurs a total of just four times. In two of these four instances, it is heard in an imitation of the opening melody (examples 3.2 and 3.3). In bar 60 it is not used with either the initial melody or a variant (see Choir Two of example 3.4), yet it occurs towards the end of the phrase and the subsequent melodic contour is almost identical to the closing part of examples 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. The final time Howells included this triplet (bar 66) it appears as part of a brief recapitulation of the opening melody preceding the conclusion (example 3.3).

An identical triplet turn occurs in *Here is the Little Door*¹⁰⁵ (1918). However, it is a form of melodic decoration only and not a unifying motif. It first appears in bar 17 (see example 3.5) and finally in bar 42 where on both occasions it is employed towards the end of a vocal phrase. In addition, the shape and rhythm of the melody in bar 17 is identical to the melody of bar three in *Blessed are the Dead*.¹⁰⁶ There are several melodic, harmonic and stylistic similarities between *Blessed are the Dead* and the more delicate *Here is the Little Door* (one of three carol-anthems¹⁰⁷), some of which will be considered in this chapter. On the issue of homogeneity, *Blessed are the Dead* lacks the organic unity of the *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra*, despite the fact that the opening melody is restated in a modified form towards the end of the work. Instead *Blessed are the Dead* displays the influence of sixteenth century English choral music, which was largely through composed.

¹⁰⁵ A short SATB work.

¹⁰⁶ Compare the final two bars of examples 3.1 and 3.2 with the final two bars of example 3.5. Had Howells altered concluded the phrase on the tonic of the chord (in bar 18 of *Here is the Little Door* – example 3.5) then there would have been an exact imitation of the melody from *Blessed are the Dead*.

¹⁰⁷ *Here is the Little Door*, *A Spotless Rose* and *Sing Lullaby*, written between 1918 and 1920.

Returning to bar three, other key features are the parallel fifths between the soprano and alto voices but more importantly, in terms of specific stylistic features of Howells, the false relation that occurs simultaneously with the triplet (see example **3.1**). This dissonance recurs on two further occasions, each time resulting from the juxtaposition of major and minor inflections of the third. In addition, it is accompanied by the triplet figure discussed previously. In bars 3 and 9, the false relation coincides with the word 'die.' Even so, Howells did not employ this dissonance for the sole purpose of word emphasis. It occurs twice because in bars 6 to 10 Howells repeated the opening sentence with a melody almost identical to that in bars 1 to 4. With each appearance of the false relation in *Blessed are the Dead*, Howells also included the parallel fifth motion between the soprano and tenor voices.

This dissonance is another subtle but recurrent feature in Howells' music, particularly choral, and continues the discussion of the interval of a third. Though Howells' use of this harmonic clash was not excessive, there is an identifiable procedure for its preparation and resolution. Crucially, this is only apparent when inflections of the third of the chord (major and minor) sound simultaneously. More specifically, the minor third is usually approached either by leap, or scale ascent. In either case, ascent to the minor third begins on the tonic note of the chord.¹⁰⁸ In most instances, the major third is included in the chord before ascent to the minor third begins. Perhaps Howells' most well-known example of this clash - largely because of the success of the work in the choral fraternity - is located in example **3.6** from the organ part of the Nunc dimittis from the *Collegium Regale Magnificat and Nunc dimittis* (1945), shortly before the doxology.

¹⁰⁸ In light of the reference made to *Here is the Little Door*, the triplets in bar 17, and later in bar 42 of this earlier choral work, are not combined with two inflections of the third in the supporting harmony.

As exemplified by the musical quote cited above, resolution is usually achieved by downward motion, from the minor third of the chord back to the tonic.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, the resulting clash is reminiscent of the ‘English cadence’,¹¹⁰ because of the way in which the minor inflection is prepared and resolved.¹¹¹ At the end of Williams Byrd’s *Alleluia. Ave Maria*, there is a false relation between the major and minor third of the dominant chord (part of an English cadence). However, the two inflections of the third do not sound at the same time, in fact the minor third precedes the major. Nevertheless, the minor third is approached from the tonic note of the chord (see example 3.7).¹¹² Unlike the English cadence exemplified in 3.7, in Howells’ music there is rarely any suggestion that the chord, where inflections of the third occur, is the dominant in a perfect cadence. Only in examples 3.6 and 3.8 (bar 59) does the false relation occur in a dominant chord, yet this is the final chord of the phrase creating an imperfect cadence in both.¹¹³

Howells continually used this dissonance throughout his long life as a composer in several different musical mediums and genres,¹¹⁴ providing insight into his learned approach to voice leading. *Stabat Mater* (1965) contains more than half-a-dozen examples. In the third movement, bar 12, the A sharp of the orchestra and chorus tenor clashes with the A natural of the chorus soprano on the word ‘matrem’, whilst the orchestra performs an F sharp major chord. The A natural is reached by ascent from the tonic note of the chord (see example 3.9). There are similar instances in examples 3.10 in the Gloria from *The*

¹⁰⁹ Though the false relationship in bar 3 of *Blessed are the Dead* (see example 3.1) does not occur at the same time, the minor third is approached via a leap of a third from the tonic note of the chord, and resolution is achieved by scale descent from the minor third back to the tonic note.

¹¹⁰ This is a specific false relation in which the flattened and raised 7ths are used when approaching a perfect cadence. This cadence is heard in the organ work *Saraband (In Modo Elegiaco)*, from *Six Pieces for Organ*, bars 7 into 8.

¹¹¹ The minor third follows the major third and is approached from the tonic note of the chord, resolving to the same tonic.

¹¹² Similarly, at the end of Byrd’s *Beata Viscera* (eleventh motet in *Gradualia*, I, 1605) and *Sacerdotes Domini* (also from *Gradualia*, I) there is a false relationship between major and minor inflections of the third in the dominant chord (part of an English cadence).

¹¹³ In the musical quote cited in 3.8, the key is implied in the preceding bar only. In bar 3 of *Musica Sine Nomine* (1959), there is another instance of the false relationship with the dominant chord (dominant of the opening chord).

¹¹⁴ This false relation occurs in works as diverse as *Lambert’s Clavichord (Samuel’s Air)* and the *Nunc Dimittis* from the *Winchester Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* (1967).

Coventry Mass (1968), at the word 'sins' (from 'sins of the world') and **3.11** from the final movement of *An English Mass* at the word 'men.'

One common and significant feature of all these examples is Howells' use of this dissonance at, or in the approach to, the end of a phrase (as in example **3.12** and **3.9** too).¹¹⁵ This is also true of the examples found in *Exultate Deo* (1974), bars 53 and 59.¹¹⁶ However, in two clavichord works, this false relation between inflections of the third of the chord appears several bars before the end of the phrase.¹¹⁷ One of these is quoted in example **3.13** where the anticipated progression is from D major, the chord containing the clash, to a concluding G major. Furthermore, the inner melodic line in bar 18 is archetypal for this perfect (English) cadence and the voice leading of the D major chord would suggest that the G major chord is inevitable.¹¹⁸ However, instead of moving to G major, the D major chord is retained for a further minim before moving to a B flat Major chord and the passage finally concludes a few bars later on an A major chord.

In the sixth movement of *Stabat Mater*, bar 22, the false relation occurs between the chorus C sharp and the orchestra C natural (see example **3.12**). This is one of only a small number of instances when the minor third of the chord, which ultimately creates the dissonance,¹¹⁹ is not approached from the tonic note of the chord. Nevertheless, resolution is achieved by movement back to the tonic note, though this is delayed slightly. In the fifth and final movement of *Missa Sabrinensis*, bar 35, the dissonant minor third is again

¹¹⁵ To be more specific, 'at the end' means the final chord of the phrase. In the 'approach' to the end of a phrase means that it does not appear in the final chord (example **3.10**). However, there is not usually any change of harmony following the chord containing the false relation.

¹¹⁶ Example **3.1** from *Blessed are the Dead* containing the false relation is slightly different to the subsequent examples of this dissonance because the two inflections of the third do not occur simultaneously, or in the final chord of the phrase. Example **3.1** was the starting point for the preceding examples.

¹¹⁷ The example from *Missa Sabrinensis* (example **3.14**) also falls into this category.

¹¹⁸ One would expect the final note (C) of bar 18 to descend to B. Moreover, the two inflections of the third do not occur at the same time but follow one another (the major precedes the minor). Consequently, in spite of its position in the phrase, the voice leading is reminiscent of an English cadence.

¹¹⁹ Simply because it appears after the major inflection of the third.

unprepared (see example 3.14). However, the musical material preceding this bar suggests that A flat is the more natural choice for the melody.

In bar 60 of example 3.8 from *Exultate Deo*, there is another false relation between inflections of the third (the third in the space of 8 bars). However, it is difficult to ascertain the actual dissonance as the chord occurs at the very beginning of the phrase. The final chord of the previous phrase is E major (the concluding part of an imperfect cadence) which creates a cross-phrase perfect cadence. Technically this permits either inflection of the third of the chord. However, in this example, neither is prepared. Clearly this juxtaposition of two inflections of the third at the end of a phrase is a vital component of Howells' choral style and a direct example of the influence of early English choral music, however, as his style developed it was not always prepared and resolved in the same meticulous manner of the early examples.

Continuing the theme of choral style, *Blessed are the Dead* emerged at an interesting point. A number of Howells' former choral works are settings of biblical texts in Latin, purposely imitating early English choral technique of composers such as Byrd and Tallis. This includes Howells' *Jesu Tibi Sit Gloria* (1913),¹²⁰ *Praesta, Pater, Piissimi* (1913), and the *Mass in the Dorian Mode* (1912), as exemplified in appendix 2c.¹²¹ In his early days at the Royal College of Music, Stanford recommended Howells experience the musical efforts of Richard Terry at Westminster Cathedral where the revival of early music was particularly active.¹²² Howells himself composed a Mass for Terry in the polyphonic style of the sixteenth-century,¹²³ imitating the masters of that seemingly distant era.¹²⁴ Several years

¹²⁰ Work is now lost.

¹²¹ See also appendix 3b which cites a passage from *Even such is Time* (1913).

¹²² Patrick Russill, 'Herbert Howells and Westminster Cathedral 1912-1918', *Organist's Review*, 78 (1992), 203-207, considers in more detail the influence of the music of Westminster Cathedral on Howells.

¹²³ *Mass in the Dorian Mode* (1912).

later (in 1917), following a serious illness and in need of some form of income, the Carnegie Trust found Howells employment editing Tudor and Elizabethan music under the guidance of Terry.¹²⁵

By the 1920s Howells' choral style had moved away from the direct imitation of earlier choral techniques. This departure was evident, to some extent, in the secular work *Even Such is Time* (1913), and *Regina Caeli* of 1915. In both the remnants of Howells' polyphonic Latin works are obvious. Nevertheless they anticipate the musical style of the *Three Carol Anthems* (1918 to 1920), where Howells' own musical voice is being forged. In spite of similarities to *Here is the Little Door*, *Blessed are the Dead* returns to the musical style of his early Latin works. For many decades the influence of early English music on Howells' compositions was manifest in texture, particularly choral. *Missa Aedis Christi* (1958) intentionally harks back to some of his early Latin compositions but with a more contemporary musical language (see example 3.15). Furthermore, the influence of early music, not just choral, is also apparent in the style and titles of compositions, such as the *Master Tallis's Testament* (from *Six Pieces for Organ* dating from the 1940s), *Dalby's Fancy* and *Dalby's Toccata* (1959) and any one of several works for Clavichord.

Howells' interest in earlier musical styles and conventions is also manifest in his use of modes, and modal harmony. In both *Blessed are the Dead* and *Here is the Little Door* the progression flat VII – I occurs at a number of points, particularly as a cadence.¹²⁶ The first occasion in *Blessed are the Dead* is in bars 36 and 37 of Choir One; then in bars 60 and 61 (see examples 3.16 and 3.17). In bar 46 the two concluding chords of the phrase are A flat minor 7 moving to B flat major; the latter establishing the tone centre for the climax. In

¹²⁴ Ralph Vaughan Williams once described Howells as 'the reincarnation of one of the lesser Tudor luminaries' quoted in Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978) p. 11.

¹²⁵ Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 56-7.

¹²⁶ Howells described; '... my interest in folk music was perhaps more for its modal colouring than for human associations.' Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978), p. 12.

the same bar parallel fifths reappear, this time in the soprano and alto parts eradicating any possible suggestion of an influence of sixteenth century voice leading. In *Here is the Little Door* this harmonic sequence is used in bars 14 and 15 (see example 3.5).¹²⁷ Furthermore, chords on the flattened seventh are regularly used outside of the cadential progression (see example 3.18).

Continuing the same theme, there are a number of V – I cadences in *Blessed are the Dead* where both chords are minor, such as bars 3 and 4, and 9 and 10 (see example 3.2). Such progressions aid the air of melancholy which is implied by the text and the nature of the work itself. This cadence, however, is noticeably absent from *Here is the Little Door*. With an obvious predilection for the modal sound of the flattened seventh, it is hardly surprising that Howells developed his own quasi-modal scale that should be distinguished, in part, by the flattened seventh scale degree.

Orchestration was an important topic in the previous chapter and in *Blessed are the Dead* interplay between two groups of musicians recurs. The next issue is Howells' use of two choirs, again related to early English choral music. This enabled Howells to repeat some of the processes heard in the *Elegy for Solo Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, Mass in the Dorian Mode* (1912) and *Fantasy String Quartet* (1917), including overlapping phrases which occurs almost half-a-dozen times in bars 21 to 46.¹²⁸ One additional use is the more obvious antiphony Howells was able to create which was never really exploited in the *Elegy*. Choir One expounds an idea in bars 22 to 25, where the harmonic movement is essentially D major to B flat major returning back to D major, set to the words 'For theirs is the peace of God.' Before this final chord is over, Choir Two begins an imitation of the phrase with the line 'They rest from their labours' (see example 3.19), but the B flat major

¹²⁷ Also at the end of phrases in bars 17 and 18 and bar 42. Chords based on the flattened seventh also appear in the *Nunc dimittis* (1914) and in the *Mass in the Dorian Mode*.

¹²⁸ Part of this is included in example 3.19.

chord is substituted for a G minor chord in first inversion, both chords united by two common notes.¹²⁹

Howells imitated this antiphonal passage in bars 34 to 40. Once again this is led by Choir One (bars 34 to 37), where the melodic contour is similar to the earlier exposition in bars 22 to 25, but the harmonisation is altered and is now centred on F.¹³⁰ This is imitated by Choir Two in bars 37 to 40. Again the two choirs sing the same respective words. On the occasion of the response, the chord progression is F major to B flat minor, finally returning to F major (see example **3.20** bars 37 to 40).¹³¹ The subtle contrast in dynamics between the lead and the response helps to create the impression of an echo.

In bars 19 to 21 of *Here is the Little Door*, there is an almost identical musical passage. There is a similar movement in the bass part, from D down to B flat returning back to D (see example **3.21**). The bass and soprano voices alone suggest that the harmonic progression is from D major to B flat major returning to D major (like bars 22 to 25 of example **3.19**). The bass B flat, however, is the third of a G minor chord and is similar to bars 25 to 27 of example **3.19**.¹³² Additionally, this short phrase contains the same number of bars (three) as both responses by Choir Two (seen in examples **3.19** and **3.20**). Finally, in examples **3.19** and **3.21** the principle notes of the melody are the same (A and D). Nevertheless, in *Here is the Little Door*, Howells did not use this phrase as part of an antiphonal passage as the work uses only one choir.

Interplay between two groups of instruments of the kinds discussed above, occurred in Howells' earlier choral compositions; *Even such is Time* (1913), written as 'Student

¹²⁹ This again is another instance of Howells confusing chords separated by a third, though different to the examples considered in the previous chapter.

¹³⁰ However, F is certainly not the tone centre implied by the music at the beginning of the phrase but is established by bar 37.

¹³¹ The B flat minor chord has two notes in common with a D flat major chord.

¹³² This progression is repeated in bars 43 to 46 of *Here is the Little Door*. Again, it recalls the harmonic ambiguity of relative major/minor chords discussed in the first chapter.

Homework for Dr Charles Wood',¹³³ and in example **3.22** from *Regina Caeli* (1915) where Choir Two begins on the same chord which concludes the phrase in Choir One. In bar 9 of the *Nunc dimittis* (1914) there is chord transfer between the choirs and the conclusion of Choir Two's phrase overlaps with the beginning of the phrase in Choir One (see example **3.23**).

As to Howells' interest in the possibilities of two groups of instrumentalists, Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia* was an important influence. Similarities between this choral work and the *Fantasia* can be found in chord transfers, overlapping phrases and the antiphonal transfer of passages between choirs.¹³⁴ In addition, Howells could also draw on his other experiences of vocal antiphony for inspiration, such as the *decani* and *cantoris* layout used in the services of Byrd, Gibbons, Weelkes and others from the early seventeenth century (see example **3.24**).¹³⁵

The choral works of his more immediate musical forefathers are another possible link. In the final motet of *Songs of Farewell (Lord, Let Me Know Mine End)*, Parry used two choirs for the purpose of antiphony, particularly in the first 30 bars (see example **3.25**) and the contrast between the choirs is emphasized by the distinct changes in dynamics. In a small number of Stanford's choral works, the double-choir is also used for the same purpose; such as *Coelos Ascendit Hodie* (1889) recalling 'the *decani-cantoris* opposition of [Stanford's] Service in F (see example **3.26**)'.¹³⁶ Stanford reused the double choir in the *Three Motets Op. 135* (1913) and in the *Magnificat*, Op. 164 (1917) evoking 'baroque antiphony' and '*decani-cantoris* dialogue'.¹³⁷

¹³³ From the Manuscript stored at the RCM noted by Christopher Palmer on page 7 of CD notes CHAN 9458. In the following year (1914) Howells composed the *Nunc dimittis* for two choral forces.

¹³⁴ However, there is no melodic or harmonic link between *Blessed are the Dead* and the *Fantasia*.

¹³⁵ These were the kinds of works performed by the Choir of Westminster Cathedral under the direction of Sir Richard Terry.

¹³⁶ Paul Rodmell, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002), p. 150

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 315. Dr. Rodmell suggests that such instances of antiphony in the *Three Motets* are in recognition of Parry's interest in music from this era.

Finally, the two choirs of *Blessed are the Dead* enabled Howells to increase the number of parts at any one time, particularly in bars 50 to 60. In some instances this enabled the composer to create a texture of between 6 to 8 parts. Furthermore, Howells is able to transfer the melody between the soprano parts of the two choirs (see example **3.27**). The transfer of the melody between choirs occurs in other choral works, including the second movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, bars 20 to 40 (see example **3.28**). However, as early as the 1920s Howells increasingly relied on the possibilities afforded by one unified choral body.¹³⁸

One other topic in this study is the means by which Howells emphasizes particular words. *Blessed are the Dead* includes one of the most common ways in vocal music, achieved through melodic descent of a third (see word 'triumph' in example **3.29**).¹³⁹ Howells regularly used the interval of a third in a more conventional manner which relies on natural verbal stress patterns and a descent in pitch to achieve word emphasis (similarly exploited by composers such as Beethoven and Schubert - see examples **3.30** and **3.31**). The following works by Howells, to name but a few, contain numerous examples: *Hymnus Paradisi*, *An English Mass*, *Requiem*, *Stabat Mater* and *Missa Sabrinensis* (see examples **3.32** to **3.34** and also example **4.80** from *A Kent Yeoman's Wooing Song* in chapter four).

However, the melodic movement of a third (as exemplified in examples **3.32** and **3.34**) is subsequently used in a more idiosyncratic manner in latter works (see examples **3.35** and also **3.36**, **3.37**, **3.38** and **3.39**).¹⁴⁰ In a majority of these instances, the first syllable is retained as the melody ascends to the upper note, consequently the higher note coincides with an off-beat which is more unusual. The same melodic movement appears in bar 24 of the Magnificat from the service for the Cathedral Church of Hereford (1969) where the

¹³⁸ This area will be discussed further in the fifth chapter.

¹³⁹ In this case the first syllable also falls on a weak beat; a form of anticipation helping to push the music to the next climax.

¹⁴⁰ Although it is unlikely that the musical quote from *Blessed are the Dead* was the original source, the melodic shape is similar.

lower note is retained longer than the upper (see example **3.40**) pushing the music onward.¹⁴¹ In bar 59 of example **3.8**, the first-syllable melisma is greatly extended, beginning in the preceding bar.

In example **3.39**, this melodic motion is adapted to the monosyllabic word 'men', nevertheless the shape of the melody is unaltered. In many instances the melody is similar if not identical to the melodic contour of the highest voice in some of the examples containing the false relationship cited earlier (see examples **3.8** and **3.9** to **3.11**). On re-evaluation of a number of instances containing the false relation between major and minor inflections of the third in choral works, it becomes clear that Howells usually employed this melodic idea for the final word.¹⁴² However, only in instances containing the false relation is the melodic movement from the root to the third of the chord. In all other cases, the relationship of the melody to the chord differs. Through this idiosyncrasy, Howells was able to insert his personal stamp on a musical passage.

Musical texture is another topic for consideration in this chapter. Both *Blessed are the Dead* and *Here is the Little Door* are predominantly homophonic¹⁴³ (see examples **3.41** and **3.2**) barring a few moments when Howells introduced a polyphonic texture. The denser musical texture, which precedes the musical peaks in these works, changes at the climax itself (see example **3.29**). Such climactic passages in Howells' choral music usually demand a homophonic or unison texture; both of which are combined at this point. However, in example **3.29**, Choir One was entirely absent and only the soprano part of Choir Two was completed by the composer, leaving Howells' intentions unknown. In *Here is the Little Door*, the homophonic texture alters at bar 39 and is unison at the words 'Defend with it Thy little Lord!' and the same texture is retained at the beginning of the next

¹⁴¹ In example **3.40**, the melodic movement occurs without the false relationship of the third.

¹⁴² In the Magnificat from the service for the Cathedral Church of Hereford, bar 52, the same emphasis occurs with the word 'mighty' with the false relationship between inflections of the third of the chord. See also appendix 3c for additional examples.

¹⁴³ A trait of these his early choral works.

phrase where the climax occurs (see example **3.42**). For the words 'smoke of battle red (the musical climax of the work), the texture is homophonic suggesting that Russill's choice of textures in bars 47 to 49 of *Blessed are the Dead* is an accurate interpretation of what Howells would have done had he completed this work. Furthermore, there are obvious similarities in the general shape of the melodies of examples **3.29** and **3.42** and in the way they oscillate around a particular note.

One of the other features resulting from the largely homophonic texture of Howells' choral style at this stage in its development is the predominance of either root-position, or first inversion chords (see examples **3.19** and **3.2**). Examples of this are found in *Blessed are the Dead*, *Here is the Little Door* and the *Nunc dimittis*. In addition there is a general tendency of the individual parts to be largely conjunct in movement. In the *Nunc dimittis* which was written several years earlier, this homophonic texture is interspersed with the polyphonic passages as found in Howells' other early Latin works (see example **3.43**). The texture of *Blessed are the Dead* is reminiscent of Byrd's choral works, such as *Emendemus in melius* where the chords are also largely in root position. However, in *Blessed are the Dead* all voices generally move at the same time and use the same rhythm whereas the vocal parts of some of Byrd's works (as in the Magnificat from the Great Service) have greater freedom of movement and are more independent (compare examples **3.1** and **3.44**).

Another incomplete part of *Blessed are the Dead*, this time in the text, was appropriately completed by Russill. In bar 67, the word 'light' was added to create the sentence 'light which is eternal.' Indeed the choice of word (and concept) could not be more appropriate. The reason why this was the principal choice of the editor probably relates to Howells' own declaration concerning the importance of the word 'light' in *Hymnus Paradisi*, and also because of the opening lines of the Requiem text which read: 'Rest eternal grant them ... and light perpetual forever.' As to the musical content at this point, Howells centred this

passage on A minor (the note A sustained in the bass part throughout) but allowed the inner parts to move in parallel thirds (from E and C, to F sharp and D, to D and B, before returning to E and C). This creates the impression of a chord progression from A minor to B minor, to G major finally back to A minor, again drawing on modal qualities, but subtly, yet noticeably different to the Phrygian progression of the previous chapter (see example **3.45**). At this point, the texture and interplay of the two choirs, and the interest in the word 'light', is reminiscent of the second movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* where two choirs are also employed to animate the word on its first appearance (see example **4.33**).¹⁴⁴

Certainly one of the more unusual features of this work is the soprano solo, which always appears rather unexpectedly and holds a tenuous role. It performs only the first line of the text, or slight variants.¹⁴⁵ This same fleeting use of the solo soprano in a choral work occurred several years earlier, notably in the *Nunc dimittis* (1914) and *Salve Regina* (1915) where its use is similarly curious and short. In the *Nunc dimittis*, it is used only once, for the opening, where it sings the line 'Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine.' Nevertheless in these three works the solo voice creates another contrasting timbre to the SATB choirs.¹⁴⁶

Subsequently, in *A Sequence for St. Michael* (1961) and *Now Abideth Faith, Hope and Charity* (1972) the solo soprano line is used only towards the conclusion of the work and soars above the remaining sopranos creating a decorative countermelody.¹⁴⁷

Perhaps the most striking moment in the work occurs in the final bars of *Blessed are the Dead* as the movement to the concluding E major chord is unexpected (see example **3.46**), in fact there are a number of instances in Howells' music where the final chord is equally unexpected. In order for Howells to conclude on an E major chord, the phrase was

¹⁴⁴ Though Howells used the possibilities afforded by two choirs for the word 'light,' in both *Blessed are the Dead* and *Hymnus Paradisi* the music is very different.

¹⁴⁵ The solo soprano actually sings 'Blessed are they.' 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord' and 'Blessed are they.'

¹⁴⁶ In *Salve Regina* the soprano solo sings 'O Clemens; O pia: O dulcis Virgo Maria' towards the end of the work.

¹⁴⁷ This is a topic which falls outside the scope of this study and demands further research.

extended slightly. This assertion is aided by the change of time signature (from 3/2 to 4/4). D major is the natural choice for the final chord as demonstrated in example **3.47**.¹⁴⁸ In this musical example, the D major chord falls on the strong beat of the bar, eradicating the need for a change of time signature. However, Howells actually retains the note A in the soprano voice in bar 73 (G seems more natural) and it resolves on to B. As to the cadence itself, though the notes in the second-half of bar 75 imply D major, the root suggests a decorated minor chord IV; the fifth raised to F sharp. In example **3.47**, it is clear that the cadence is almost identical to that in example **3.46** but a tone lower. The resultant cadence of *Blessed are the Dead* (decorated minor chord IV to I) is very similar, though less impressive and less ornamented, to the final cadence of one of the three carol-anthems, *A Spotless Rose*, written in October 1919 (compare examples **3.48** and **3.46**).¹⁴⁹ In both works the movement to E major brings with it a positive conclusion. One reason for extending the phrase slightly (to conclude with an E major chord) is to return to the opening tonality of the work.

The text for this choral work is principally derived from chapter 14, verse 13 of the book of Revelation.¹⁵⁰ This is a passage deemed suitable for recitation during the funeral service, preceding the committal. It is highly likely that it was recited at the funeral of Howells' father, perhaps inspiring him to employ it as a basis for a memorial work. Patrick Russill noted that additional words were combined with those from the Bible and he considered it probable that Howells wrote them himself (see appendix 3a).¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ This was created by the current author.

¹⁴⁹ The cadence at the end of the *Benedictus* (from the *Te Deum and Benedictus for Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury* of 1946) is a decorated minor chord IV (A) moving to chord I (E). Similarly in this example (as well as examples **3.46** and **3.48**) the final chord is E major. In the final bars of Howells' first *Psalm Prelude* from *Three Psalm Preludes for Organ* (Set One), the same final progression occurs in D. In the *Nunc dimittis* (from the *Magnificat and Nunc dimittis* for men's voices dedicated to Ernest Bullock) the same cadence occurs, in the key of E, but with a major chord IV.

¹⁵⁰ 'And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'

¹⁵¹ This suggestion is made in the published edition of the work.

Howells reused the same text, from Revelations, on two further occasions; in his unaccompanied *Requiem* (1932) and in the fifth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*. In both cases these movements were called 'I Heard a Voice from Heaven,' and the words were taken solely from the book of Revelation.¹⁵² *Blessed are the Dead* is extremely different, to the extent that the only real similarities between this choral work and the movements from the *Requiem* and *Hymnus Paradisi* lie in the rhythm of the opening bars of *Blessed are the Dead*, and of the words 'Blessed are the Dead' in the two other choral works. However, this is perhaps more related to the natural rhythm of the words. In addition, it is noticeable that Howells fitted the first recitation of the line 'Blessed are the Dead' into four bars, in both examples **3.49** and **3.1**.

In the movements from the *Requiem* and *Hymnus Paradisi* based on this text, Howells included two soloists however their role is considerably more significant than the solo soprano of *Blessed are the Dead*. Here it is important to add that this very same passage is reminiscent of a setting of the same words in Henry Walford Davies' *Short Requiem* of 1915. Christopher Palmer previously noted that Howells' *Requiem* was modelled on Walford Davies' work, indeed Palmer noted that in the sixth movement the similarities are 'striking, particularly in 'I heard a voice from Heaven'.¹⁵³ This is obvious in bars 6 to 9 (compare examples **3.1** and **3.50**). The rhythm in both is remarkably similar, though the harmony is very different. This simply aids the assertion that Walford Davies' setting of the same text in the *Requiem* was a possible source of inspiration for Howells.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² In the case of the *Requiem*, it forms the final movement of the entire work, and in *Hymnus Paradisi*, the penultimate movement. These two movements are almost identical to one another because the *Requiem* was the basis for *Hymnus Paradisi*.

¹⁵³ Palmer, Christopher, *Herbert Howells: A Celebration* (London: Thames Publishers, 1996), p. 61.

¹⁵⁴ Walford Davies' *Requiem* could also be the source of inspiration for Howells' decision to compose a choral work using this text. One additional point of interest is that both Howells and Walford Davies were pupils of Stanford.

Blessed are the Dead clearly exemplifies the power of the second crucial influence on Howells' style in his younger years, that of early English choral music. It was a brief return to the style of Howells' earlier Latin choral works, particularly in view of the *Three Carol-Anthems* (1918 to 1920) which had clearly demonstrated Howells' break from this style. The influence of early English choral music is manifest in the modal progressions and texture of *Blessed are the Dead*. The double choir, which was a common feature in these early choral compositions, was used for the creation of antiphony, originating again from the decani-cantoris style of Byrd, Gibbons and others, which was similarly adopted in some of the choral works by Parry and Stanford. Another possibility afforded by the double choir was the expansion of the texture, potentially permitting up to eight individual parts (more if individual voice parts were sub-divided).

Another issue surrounding *Blessed are the Dead* is the continuous flow of music, which is almost unremitting. At only two points are there rests; a minim in bar 21 and a crotchet in bar 46. In later choral works, this changes as phrases are more distinct as they are frequently delineated by written silences.

Homogeneity is created by the restatement of the opening melody throughout the work. The opening line, which recurs several times, permits unity too. However, it is not restated in its entirety after bar 17.¹⁵⁵ This work lacks the same level of melodic homogeneity as the *Elegy*, but this was the likely influence of early English choral music. Interestingly, there were clear melodic, harmonic and stylistic similarities to *Here is the Little Door* which was written only a few years earlier than *Blessed are the Dead* and other works from that period. The same texture at the climax of both works highlights the truly sensitive completion of *Blessed are the Dead* by Patrick Russill.

¹⁵⁵ Additionally, the line 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord' occurs once, in bars 11 to 17. In the fifth chapter, the use of the opening melody and opening line assist in creating homogeneity in the work.

This work continued the discussion of the interval of a third, this time in regard to two aspects of Howells' style; the false relation between the major and minor inflections of a chord at the end of a phrase and secondly, the idiosyncratic melodic ascent and descent of a third which was used to emphasize words. Both were clearly employed in specific situations and were largely utilized in the same way each time.

In spite of an early interest in sacred choral music, Howells' seemingly unequivocal devotion to choral writing emerged many decades later, in the 1940s, where a succession of works, largely in English, begins. This study will discuss one other unaccompanied choral work; *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* (1964), where the two choral styles (that of *Blessed are the Dead* and *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*) will be considered.

- Ex. 3.1 Blessed are the Dead, *Tempo tranquillo ma flessibile*. Bars 1 to 4. Choir One.
- Ex. 3.2 Blessed are the Dead, *Tempo tranquillo ma flessibile*. Bars 7 to 10. Choir Two.
- Ex. 3.3 Blessed are the Dead, *meno mosso: tempo primo*. Bars 64 to 67. Choir Two.
- Ex. 3.4 Blessed are the Dead, *animato*. Bars 60 to 63.
- Ex. 3.5 Here is the Little Door, *moderato espressivo*. Bars 16 to 18. SATB.
- Ex. 3.6 Collegium Regale, Nunc Dimittis, *Quasi lento, tranquillo*. Bars 20 and 23. Organ and SATB.
- Ex. 3.7 William Byrd, *Post Septuagesima, Alleluia. Ave Maria*. Bars 37 to 40.
- Ex. 3.8 Exultate Deo, *espressivo, sempre piu animato*. Bars 53 to 60. SATB and Organ.
- Ex. 3.9 Stabat Mater, Quis est Homo? *Allegro, inquieto*. Bars 9 to 13. Chorus.
- Ex. 3.10 Coventry Mass, Gloria in Excelsis Deo, *un poco meno mosso, appenato*. Bars 52 to 56. Chorus and Organ.
- Ex. 3.11 An English Mass, Gloria, *Allegro vivo*. Bars 12 to 15. SATB and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 3.12 Stabat Mater, Fac ut Portem, *lento, dolente*. Bars 20 to 23. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 3.13 Lambert's Clavichord, De La Mare's Pavane, *Slow and grave*. Bars 18 and 19.
- Ex. 3.14 Missa Sabrinensis, Agnus Dei, *poco inquieto, con moto*. Bars 34 and 35. Contralto solos and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 3.15 Missa Aedis Christi, Three-fold Kyrie Eleison, *lento serioso*. Bars 1 to 8. SATB.
- Ex. 3.16 Blessed are the Dead, *piu mosso (tempo tranquillo ma flessibile)*. Bars 36 and 37. Choir One.
- Ex. 3.17 Blessed are the Dead, *animato*. Bars 60 to 62. Choirs One and Two.
- Ex. 3.18 Here is the Little Door, *Moderato espressivo*. Bars 13 to 15. SATB.
- Ex. 3.19 Blessed are the Dead, *più mosso*. Bars 22 to 28. Choir One and Two.
- Ex. 3.20 Blessed are the Dead, *più mosso (tempo tranquillo ma flessibile)*. Bars 37 to 39. Choir Two.
- Ex. 3.21 Here is the Little Door, *Moderato espressivo*. Bars 19 to 21. SATB.
- Ex. 3.22 Regina Caeli, *assai lento*. Bars 76 to 87. Choirs One and Two.
- Ex. 3.23 Nunc dimittis, *poco lento*. Bars 6 to 10. Choir One and Two.
- Ex. 3.24 William Byrd, Here my prayer, O God. Bars 1 to 18. SAATB.
- Ex. 3.25 Hubert Parry, Songs of Farewell, Lord, let me know mine end, *slow*. Bars 5 to 11. Two SATB choirs.
- Ex. 3.26 Charles V. Stanford, Coelos Ascendit Hodie, *Allegro*. Bars 1 to 4. Choirs One and Two.

- Ex. 3.27 Blessed are the Dead, *animato*. Bars 50 to 59. Choirs One and Two.
- Ex. 3.28 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *Lento teneramente*. Bars 23 to 31. Chorus and Piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 3.29 Blessed are the Dead, *animato*. Bars 46 and 49. Choir One (and Two).
- Ex. 3.30 Beethoven, Mass in C, Benedictus, *Allegro ma non troppo*. Bars 1 to 4. Treble solo.
- Ex. 3.31 F. Schubert, Gloria, Gloria, *Allegro vivace*. Bars 1 to 4. Soprano.
- Ex. 3.32 Missa Sabrinensis, Credo, *Maestoso, ma con moto*. Bar 26 to 29. Soprano.
- Ex. 3.33 An English Mass, Gloria, Bars 1 to 4. SATB and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 3.34 The Coventry Mass, Gloria, *animato, subito*. Bars 88 to 90. Soprano.
- Ex. 3.35 An English Mass, Agnus Dei, *Adagio, doloroso*. Bar 13. Solo Soprano.
- Ex. 3.36 The Coventry Mass, Kyrie, *un poch più mosso (Quasi lento)*. Bars 24 and 25. Soprano II and III.
- Ex. 3.37 The Coventry Mass, Gloria in Excelsis Deo, *un poch meno mosso, appenato (Vivo, brioso)*. Bars 40 to 42. Alto.
- Ex. 3.38 Exultate Deo, *spazioso*. Bars 62 and 63. Soprano.
- Ex. 3.39 An English Mass, Gloria, *Allegro vivo*. Bars 13 to 15. Soprano.
- Ex. 3.40 Hereford Service, Magnificat, *Corrente, e dolce*. Bars 23 to 26. SATB and organ.
- Ex. 3.41 Here is the Little Door, *moderato espressivo*. Bars 1 to 5. SATB.
- Ex. 3.42 Here is the Little Door, *un poco piu mosso*. Bars 39 to 42. Choir.
- Ex. 3.43 Nunc dimittis, *poco lento (e più vivo)*. Bars 41 to 50. Choir One and Two.
- Ex. 3.44 William Byrd, Magnificat from the *Great Service*. Bars 56 to 65.
- Ex. 3.45 Blessed are the Dead, *meno mosso: tempo primo*. Bars 67 to 70. Choir One and Two.
- Ex. 3.46 Blessed are the Dead, *meno mosso: tempo primo*. Bars 70 to 76. Piano reduction.
- Ex. 3.47 Blessed are the Dead. Revision of bars 70 to 76.
- Ex. 3.48 A Spotless Rose, *rit. (With easeful movement)*. Bars 43 and 44. Piano reduction.
- Ex. 3.49 Hymnus Paradisi, I Heard a Voice from Heaven, *Lento, assai tranquillo*. Bars 10 to 13. Soprano.
- Ex. 3.50 Henry Walford Davies, Short Requiem, *Audivi Vocem*. Bars 6 to 9. Choir.

Hymnus Paradisi

Hymnus Paradisi

Hymnus Paradisi (1938?) is Howells' most successful choral/orchestral composition, which is reason enough to devote an entire chapter to its analysis. This will include an investigation into the melodic material and the relationship of the motifs to the text in each movement. Furthermore this work provides another opportunity to delve into a number of Howells' compositional devices, one of which is another variant of word emphasis by the interval of a third. This chapter will also deal with the appoggiatura form of word emphasis. Regarding melodic features, Howells drew on a short introductory figure (descent of a third followed by an ascent of a fourth) which occurs in this work and others. Continuing the theme of characteristics of the composer's style, *Hymnus Paradisi* highlights Howells' tendency to repeat certain musical processes on particular tone centres. More specifically, the importance of the pitch C sharp and its associations with the Sanctus text is considered as well as the harmonic pull to F sharp it possesses. Finally an additional feature of Howells' harmonic vocabulary (a minor augmented 11th chord) is introduced in the final stages of the chapter.¹⁵⁶

This large-scale work for chorus, orchestra, solo soprano and tenor contains six movements and is divided into two equal parts:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| I | Preludio |
| II | Requiem Aeternam |
| III | The Lord is My Shepherd (Psalm 23) |
| IV | Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes (Psalm 121) |
| V | I Heard a Voice from Heaven (From the Burial Service) |
| VI | Holy is the True Light (From the Salisbury Diurnal) |

¹⁵⁶The history of the work is discussed in great depth by Christopher Palmer therefore it is intentionally kept to a minimum (see Christopher Palmer *Herbert Howells: A Celebration* (London: Thames Publishers, 1996), pp. 91-127).

Christopher Palmer previously identified the close relationship between the structure of Walford Davies' *Short Requiem* (1915), and Howells' *Requiem* (1932).¹⁵⁷ In turn, *Hymnus Paradisi* evolved from the *Requiem*.¹⁵⁸ Although *Hymnus Paradisi* was first performed at the 1950 Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester¹⁵⁹, with the composer himself conducting the festival chorus and the London Symphony Orchestra, it started life more than a decade earlier because parts of the *Requiem* were adapted for use in *Hymnus Paradisi*,¹⁶⁰ including the first two principal motifs of the latter work.¹⁶¹ This means that the dedicatee, the composer's son Michael Kendrick Howells, was still alive when parts of this choral masterpiece were composed.¹⁶²

In line with a tradition established in this and other subsequent large-scale choral works, the opening of the Preludio emerges unobtrusively into existence.¹⁶³ The opening movement serves its purpose in establishing the prevailing sentiments of the work and supplying the three most vital motifs of the composition, which are particularly important for the unification of the first part. The slow 45-bar prelude embraces a wide dynamic range (from *ppp* to *ff*) and includes passages for small groups of instruments and tutti orchestra. Howells announces the first motif with clarinets I and II, bassoon I and violas (see example 4.1) where immediately there is an inherent melancholy resulting from the laboured tempo and sombre timbre of this combination of instruments. After the initial exposition of this

¹⁵⁷ Mentioned briefly at the end of the last chapter.

¹⁵⁸ See appendix 4a for the layout of Davies' and Howells' works. The *Requiem* was written for unaccompanied SATB. Appendix 4b identifies passages from the *Requiem* used in *Hymnus Paradisi*.

¹⁵⁹ The soloists were William Herbert and Isobel Baillie. It was Gerald Finzi and Herbert Sumsion (organist of Gloucester cathedral from 1928 to 1967) who were instrumental in ensuring that *Hymnus Paradisi* was performed and never left to rot in obscurity.

¹⁶⁰ See appendix 4c for Howells' own description of the background to the work.

¹⁶¹ The first motif is heard in the third movement (*Requiem Aeternam* 1), and the second motif in the second movement (*Psalm 23*). In addition, each movement of the *Requiem* contains its own melodic theme.

¹⁶² In Paul Andrews, *Herbert Howells: A Documentary and Bibliographical Study* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999), p. 326, Andrews suggested the likely date of the work as 1938.

¹⁶³ For example *Missa Sabrinensis* (1954), *An English Mass* (1955), *Stabat Mater* (1965) and *The Coventry Mass* (1968).

nine-note melody, the second motif is presented for the first time by violins I and II and bassoons I and II (example 4.2).

The initial 24 bars of the Preludio acquaint the listener with these two melodies¹⁶⁴ as they weave in and out of the music, occasionally, though only very slightly, overlapping. Howells' insistence on these two closely related motifs throughout this opening prelude ensures that they become etched into the listener's memory. This aids the listener in distinguishing between the two when they recur further on in the work and enables an understanding of the work as a whole, particularly of the first part. The real point of interest regarding these two melodies is the great sense of homogeneity that exists between them. They are undeniably related; indeed, they are derived from the same scale degrees, more specifically the second motif is essentially a reorganization of the first.¹⁶⁵ The only real differences lie in the order of the pitches and the accompanying rhythm (see example 4.3).

These two motifs provide an opportunity to consider Howells' approach to composing unifying themes. An important and prominent feature of both these motifs is the interval of a third; a vital constituent of a number of motifs from other works.¹⁶⁶ A second characteristic is Howells' practice of centring these themes/ motifs on a particular note.¹⁶⁷ These traits are evident in the main melodic idea for the final movement of Howells' *Three Dances for Violin and Orchestra* (1915). This tendency to centre melodies (melodies in general and not necessarily themes) on a particular note is a common trait of Howells. Finally, all these motifs are based on the flattened seventh, first, second and minor third scale degrees; consequently, on re-evaluation the only true differences between them

¹⁶⁴ The text is introduced in the second movement.

¹⁶⁵ In the *Requiem* the first of these two motifs to appear is the second, as seen in example 4.2.

¹⁶⁶ Included in this list are the principal themes of *Missa Sabrinensis* and *Stabat Mater*.

¹⁶⁷ In the case of the theme in the Kyrie from *Missa Sabrinensis*, it appears to dominate the opening and closing of the first movement then disappears until the final movement. In spite of its limited use, it remains the only truly identifiable theme in the work. Christopher Palmer suggested in his book *Herbert Howells: A Celebration* page 105, that the 'independent score' of the Kyrie which was eventually used in *Missa Sabrinensis* was originally intended for *Hymnus Paradisi* because it used two solo voices (tenor and soprano) like *Hymnus Paradisi*.

occur in the rhythm and the sequence in which the pitches occur.¹⁶⁸ Examples **4.4** to **4.8** illustrate the points made above.¹⁶⁹ As early as 1920, Marion Scott, the musicologist and close acquaintance of Howells noted such a propensity in the third movement of *In Gloucestershire* (1916-23), stating: ‘the interval of the rising third and the flattened leading note are prominent in the theme’.¹⁷⁰ Remarkably, this formulaic approach to unifying melodies continued in the works cited above which cover more than a forty-year period. James Day similarly noted Vaughan Williams’ use of the interval of a third, describing how this interval is one of a number of motifs that ‘are blended together to form a tune’.¹⁷¹

The text for the second movement is taken directly from the Requiem Mass¹⁷² and is dominated by the first motif, though Howells did not solely rely on this idea for all 135 bars.¹⁷³ One of the other important features of the first motif in its initial exposition is the sense of direction it possesses, due in large to the dynamics which Howells used (see example **4.1**). The brief crescendo mid-way establishes the E of bar 3 as the peak of the phrase, before a shorter decrescendo between the final two notes tapers the phrase into nothingness. It so finely matches the nature of the motif that Howells initially retained the same dynamic indication with the first performance of the same motif in the opening of the second movement (see example **4.9**).

This is Howells’ ‘Latin’ motif, as it is first used in a movement which draws solely on a Latin text. Furthermore, when it is sung in its original melodic form, it always accompanies the words ‘Requiem aeternam;’ though the motif is also performed by the orchestra and

¹⁶⁸ The example from *Missa Sabrinensis* uses all of these scale degrees except the second.

¹⁶⁹ In examples **4.4** to **4.8** the themes are all on the tone centre of E to aid this assertion.

¹⁷⁰ Marion Scott, ‘Herbert Howells: His *In Gloucestershire*’, *The Christian Science Monitor*, (December 25 1920), 12.

¹⁷¹ James Day, *Vaughan Williams*, The Master Musicians Series (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1961), p. 73.

¹⁷² ‘Requiem Aeternam dona eis, Et lux perpetua luceat eis.’ In the *Requiem*, Howells included ‘Domine’ at the end.

¹⁷³ The second motif is never used in this movement.

variants are sung to other parts of this text (see example **4.10**).¹⁷⁴ The second part of *Hymnus Paradisi* rarely includes this melody, yet when it is used it occurs only at a point where the chorus is singing in Latin (see examples **4.11** and **4.12**).¹⁷⁵

In the opening bars of the second movement of Vaughan Williams' *Fourth Symphony* (1934), the solo flute utters a short yet distinctive melody, which is almost identical to the first motif cited in example **4.1**. However, Vaughan Williams used it only once in the symphony and emphasis is given to different parts of the melody altering the effect (compare examples **4.13** and **4.1**); nevertheless, the symphony also includes the very distinct quasi-modal scale favoured by Howells.¹⁷⁶ Any resemblance between the two motifs is interesting to note, but purely coincidental. With this point in mind, Howells' remark relating to himself and Vaughan Williams is appropriate:

Ralph and I felt and reacted to things musically in a very similar manner, and if some of our works are alike in any respect, it's not, I think, merely a question of influence but also of intuitive affinity.¹⁷⁷

This is certainly true with regards to examples **4.1** and **4.13**, but in the second chapter of this study it was clearly more than merely a matter of 'intuitive affinity' between the composers that created a great feeling of homogeneity between the *Elegy* and *Fantasia*, simply because the former work so obviously relied on passages first heard in the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

¹⁷⁴ 'Latin motif' is a term coined by the author for the description of the first motif in this chapter. In Howells' *Requiem* this motif is also solely used for the words 'Requiem aeternam.'

¹⁷⁵ This occurs in the fourth movement (bars 175 to 180) in between parts of the Sanctus text, and in the final movement (bars 162 to 165) as the final syllable of 'aeternam' is sung (from 'Requiem aeternam').

¹⁷⁶ This was discussed in chapter one.

¹⁷⁷ Palmer, Christopher, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978), pp. 11-12.

The second movement also includes one of Howells' more generic melodic motifs, particularly between bars 70 and 94 as illustrated in examples **4.14** and **4.15**. Paul Spicer identified this trademark figure in Howells' *Sonata for Organ* number two from 1933 (see example **4.16**).¹⁷⁸ It makes an obvious appearance in the final movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, in bars 53, and shortly after, between bars 76 and 79 (see examples **4.17** and **4.18**). The chorus phrase beginning in bar 103 includes a slight variation on this motif which is echoed by the orchestra in bars 107 to 108 (see example **4.19**). In the final movement, the original version is used as the introductory figure of one of the vocal parts, and in both examples above (from the final and second movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*) it is used in a contrapuntal and imitative choral texture, again usually as the initial figure of a vocal entry.¹⁷⁹ A variant of this motif is used at the beginning of the final movement (see example **4.62**).

The earliest traced example of this motif is in the final movement of Howells' *Organ Sonata No. 1 in C minor* (1911) where it is part of the opening figure of the fugue subject (see example **4.20**).¹⁸⁰ It is slightly different from the motif cited in examples **4.14** to **4.16** because it includes an additional leap of a third (from C to E flat) before the recognisable descent of a third followed by an ascent of a fourth. Several decades pass before the three-note motif (as seen in examples **4.14** to **4.18**) becomes a notable part of Howells' style as a result of its widespread use in many different compositions throughout the rest of Howells' life. One of the final examples of its use is in bar 44 of *Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity* (1972) where the falling third and rising fourth figure is used in its original form and is one of a number of examples from works written in the late 1960s and early 1970s to include this motif (see examples **4.21** and **4.22**).

¹⁷⁸ Paul Spicer, 'Herbert Howells's Organ Sonata', *The Musical Times*, 118 (1977), 857 to 858. It is the very first melodic idea to be announced in Howells' fanfare arrangement of his most famous hymn All My Hope on God is Founded.

¹⁷⁹ There are also examples in bars 77, 81 and 85 of *Psalms Prelude Set Two Number Three* (1939).

¹⁸⁰ As a point of interest, the opening three notes of Elgar's 'Enigma' theme contain the descent of a third followed by the ascent of a fourth, but all similarity ends here.

Variants of this melodic figure are equally widespread. In examples **4.19**, **4.23**, **4.24**, **4.25** and **4.26** there is additional musical material before the descent of the third, nevertheless, the motif is still very clear and occurs early in the phrase. In the Magnificat from the *Collegium Magdalenae Oxonienses* service (1970) the ascent of a fourth is decorated with a double appoggiatura which resolves by descending a tone (see example **4.27**).¹⁸¹ In example **4.28** taken from the *St. Augustine's Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* (1967), the motif occurs at the end of the musical phrase and Howells included an appoggiatura D natural which resolves to C.

Though there are clear variations of the descent of third and ascent of a fourth, there are still common features. Whether in the original form or as a variant, the figure typically occurs in the early stages of a phrase, if not at the very beginning. When the motif is used in its three pitch form, the highest of the three pitches usually falls on a strong beat (the pitch D in example **4.21**). Finally, the note which is reached by an ascent of a fourth is typically the root of the chord¹⁸² (as in examples **4.21** to **4.26**, **4.27** - following the resolution of the appoggiatura - and **4.28**), although, there is one example where this is not the case. In the doxology of the service for St. Paul's Cathedral (1951) the pitch B flat is an appoggiatura which resolves on to A flat (see example **4.29**).

Paul Spicer questioned the composer over the importance of this figure in his works, in view of its prominence in many works. Howells claimed that there was no significance given to the figure and he had been unaware of it.¹⁸³

In bars 47 to 94, Howells introduced another short idea for the second movement. It is the downward motion of a third by step (see examples **4.30**, **4.31** and **4.32**). It first occurs in

¹⁸¹ To achieve this double appoggiatura, Howells splits the soprano part in to two so that one group sings a third higher (F and E). Before the end of the bar the sopranos reunite.

¹⁸² More specifically, the motif usually falls on flat 7 – 5 – 1.

¹⁸³ Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 90.

the solo soprano part of bar 48 and then in several other parts before bar 94. As to its origins, there is a clear link to the first motif (see example 4.1) where there is a similar descent in notes 3, 4 and 5. This association is supported by the similarities in the rhythm of both the first motif (notes 3 to 5) and example 4.30, particularly as the first note is longer than the two subsequent notes.

One of the most marvellous moments for the chorus occurs in the early stages of the Requiem Aeternam in bars 14 to 17. It proves how truly sensitive Howells was to the text and is a testament to his ability as a choral composer. This takes place at the point at which Howells first introduces the words that he acknowledged to be of the utmost importance to *Hymnus Paradisi*; 'et lux perpetua.'

I used only two sentences from the Latin Requiem Mass, knowing that one of them – 'et lux perpetua eis' – would govern the entire work: especially that one word 'lux' – light.¹⁸⁴

Up until this point Howells seemingly used one massed choir, consequently the listener is most likely unaware of there being a division in the chorus, but as Choir One enters in bar 14, singing 'et lux,' the second choir suddenly emerges on the same chord. The two then separate where there is a wonderfully rich resultant harmony (see example 4.33) spread across the two vocal forces.¹⁸⁵ It is clear from this example and from instances in the final movement that Howells placed great significance on the word 'light' (more specifically 'true light' in the final movement) because he never passed the opportunity to emphasize it in the music (see examples 4.34 and 4.35).¹⁸⁶ In John Foulds' *World Requiem* Op. 60, written

¹⁸⁴ Herbert Howells quoted in Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978), p. 47.

¹⁸⁵ This passage was taken from the *Requiem*.

¹⁸⁶ This was the passage referred to in the discussion of *Blessed are the Dead* (in regards to Russill adding the word 'light' to complete the line 'light which is eternal' in *Blessed are the Dead*).

between 1919 and 1921, the line 'lux perpetua' was central to his work.¹⁸⁷ Malcolm MacDonald, the author of a study on Foulds' music also noted a synonymy between Howells' and Foulds' great works, 'both in general outline and in the special quality of the vocal writing'.¹⁸⁸

After the Preludio, the second motif receives no attention until the very opening of the final movement of part one. The 104-bar movement opens with a soprano recitative.¹⁸⁹ The only other occasion Howells granted the soprano soloist such liberty in this work is in bars 72 to 74 of the same movement. At both of these points Howells omitted a time signature compelling the soprano to shape these phrases herself. The first melody of this movement is the second motif, combined with the words 'The Lord is My Shepherd.' This is Howells' 'English' motif as it is only ever used with the English language and is quickly associated with the opening lines of Psalm 23 as this happens three times throughout the movement.¹⁹⁰ Again variants of this motif are used throughout, recalling the original idea (see examples **4.36** and **4.37**). In much the same way the second movement was not solely derived from the first motif, so the third movement is not solely derived from the second motif, yet there are few passages that are independent of this second idea.

In spite of the fact that Howells created a prelude that is, for more than half of its bars, an exposition of two homogenous motifs, they are never combined at the same time. In bars 4 to 10 of the Preludio, they overlap, but nothing more. They are finally combined in bars 162 to 165 of the final movement of work (see example **4.38**). Perhaps of greater significance is the fact that this is the first time the second motif appears in the second part of the work,

¹⁸⁷ Certainly, until the publication of MacDonald's book in 1975, the work's last performance was in 1926. This Requiem enjoyed a certain amount of success in its earliest years commemorating those who fell during the Great War.

¹⁸⁸ Malcolm MacDonald, *John Foulds: His Life in Music*, Triad Press Bibliographical Series (Hertfordshire: Rickmansworth, 1975), p. 28.

¹⁸⁹ Indicated RECIT at the top of the score.

¹⁹⁰ It is also combined with additional words. In bars 11 and 12 of the third movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, the tenor solo sings 'He shall convert my soul' to the second motif. Similarly, in Howells' *Requiem*, this second motif is used with different parts of Psalm 23 in English.

particularly in view of how dependant the initial part of *Hymnus Paradisi* was on both motifs. The first motif makes two appearances towards the end of the fourth movement (bars 165 to 171 and 175 to 180). Up until this point, there is a far more positive feeling in the fourth movement, but the appearance of the melody from example 4.1 seemingly acts as a reminder of the less optimistic first part. Though the employment of these two motifs in the second part of the work is minimal, Howells more than prepared the listener to recognize them.

In the previous chapter, Howells' use of the interval of a third as a form of melodic word emphasis was considered. In this third movement, Howells included a very distinct variation.¹⁹¹ It occurs in bars 27 to 31 (see example 4.39) and was reused on at least three subsequent occasions. The first of these is in the Credo, from *An English Mass*, bars 72 to 73, the second in *Stabat Mater*, bar 43 and 44 of the first movement, and finally in the Magnificat from the *Chichester Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* (1967), bars 30 to 32 (see example 4.40).¹⁹² In each of these four instances the purpose of these passages is word emphasis. This is primarily achieved by the melodic ascent of a minor third. However, in conjunction with this melodic motion there is the additional movement down a semitone, from the same note in a lower part, creating the interval of a diminished fourth (enharmonic major third).¹⁹³ The two parts then return to the same starting note.¹⁹⁴ The motion in the lower part assists in elevating the importance of the word to the listener by changing the harmony (see example 4.41).

In the third movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, this form of word emphasis happens in conjunction with the word 'valley', from the more ominous passage of psalm 23; 'Yea

¹⁹¹ This is the generic type of word emphasis which places the higher note on the stronger beat.

¹⁹² The *Stabat Mater* example can be seen in example 6.6; bars 43 and 44 of the soprano and alto parts.

¹⁹³ In example 4.41 the interval created is a major third.

¹⁹⁴ In example 4.40, the lower parts (alto and bass) do not start on the same note as the soprano and tenor.

though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.’ The unsteady pedal A, which fluctuates between A and B flat, further conveys the change in sentiment at this point in the psalm. These examples illustrate how Howells was able to transform a common form of word emphasis into something a little more idiosyncratic.

Before moving on to part two of *Hymnus Paradisi* it is necessary to consider the third motif, seen in example **4.42**, which is introduced to the listener in the latter stages of the prelude. This musical idea was not used in Howells’ *Requiem* and was created specifically for *Hymnus Paradisi*. Unlike the two preceding motifs, Howells does not continually expose the listener to this idea as it is heard only once in the Preludio. The first important feature is its distinctive 7/8 (and 7/4) time signature; the bar divided into two groups of two quavers followed by a group of three.¹⁹⁵ The most obvious effect is disruption of the pulse, yet the slow tempo which accompanies it helps to do this in rather a subtle manner. Secondly, the first note of the upper part is an appoggiatura resolving on the third beat of the bar; the appoggiatura forming an integral constituent.¹⁹⁶ Finally, the location of each example is significant too, it is reserved for use only at the end of an important section, for example bars 64 to 68 of the third movement, or at the conclusion of a movement; bars 130 to 132 of the second movement, bars 98 to 104 of the third, and bars 154 to 157 of the sixth (see examples **4.43**, **4.44**, **4.45** and **4.46**).¹⁹⁷ It is for this reason that Howells only ever used this motif five times.

The four examples above are actually based on an extension of example **4.42** (one bar now developed into two) which is repeated a different number of times on each occasion. In all examples, there is an obvious descent in pitch throughout the phrase in the upper

¹⁹⁵ Alternatively, two groups of two crotchets followed by three crotchets.

¹⁹⁶ Though actually a suspension in example **4.42**, on all other occasions it is an appoggiatura.

¹⁹⁷ In the case of the conclusion of the second movement, this is not the last material to be performed. In bars 134 and 135 (the last bars of the movement), Howells included the introduction to the third movement. The likely reason for this is to create a continuous flow between the movements, something which will be considered in more detail further into the chapter.

part; typically the first two bars are performed either a fourth or fifth lower the second time, then an octave lower for the third (see examples **4.43**, **4.44**, **4.45** and **4.46**).¹⁹⁸ In addition it is largely an orchestral phenomenon and only at the end of the third movement, and in the final exposition does the chorus occur simultaneously, only because phrases overlap, consequently it is without any association to the text.¹⁹⁹

The function of this motif is not immediately clear. However, by the fourth rendition of this motif, in the third movement, bars 154 to 157, it is apparent that its purpose in all cases is to signify the conclusion of a section or movement, bringing with it a positive feeling and a sense of security, usually proceeding passages where this is absent. Like the two other motifs, it helps to create a sense of homogeneity amongst the first three movements and is less commonly used in the second part of *Hymnus Paradisi*. In fact it is heard again only once, several bars before the amalgamation of the first two motifs in the final stages of the last movement (see example **4.46** above).

It is clear how these three motifs are employed to unite the first three movements of the work, but it is important to reiterate that they are sparingly used in the final part of the work. Howells used them only to remind the listener of the first part, perhaps in an attempt to create some sense of unity between the two rather disparate parts. One could argue that this is a fundamental flaw of the work, but in reality it does not detract from its brilliance as each movement in the second part is its own entity. Every movement of the second part relies on its own unique idea, contrasting greatly to the three motifs of the first part, yet the final three movements complement one another through their own individuality. In spite of the distinct lack of organic unity, the second part of *Hymnus Paradisi* includes some of the most exciting and thrilling music Howells ever penned.

¹⁹⁸ At the end of the third movement the upper part of the orchestra descend two octaves in 5 bars.

¹⁹⁹ In its final exposition (bars 154 to 157), the final word of the chorus phrase is 'evermore' supported by an E flat major chord.

Furthermore, the division of *Hymnus Paradisi* into two sections is also made clear not just by the dominance of three motifs in the first part, but also in the way Howells ensured that the first three movements are heard without a break. In the case of the second and third movements, the actual introduction is located in the final bars of the preceding movement, but without the score the listener would be oblivious to this. Consequently, Howells ensured that the end of the first part is well-defined; indeed this proves to be the first true break in the work and the only movement in the first part to conclude on a chord built from thirds, in this case F major.

As stated above, the second part of *Hymnus Paradisi* contains movements that have their own unifying material. However, unlike the first two motifs of the first part, cited in examples **4.1** and **4.2**, they do not always truly dominate their corresponding movement. In the fourth movement, Howells introduces this idea in the solo soprano part (see example **4.47**), clearly depicting the jagged contour of the 'hills' through the undulations of the melody.²⁰⁰ Howells wrote the solo soprano part with one particular performer in mind; Isobel Baillie. After the performance he wrote her describing; 'From first to last, in writing the soprano part, yours was the only voice I heard in my mind's ear. And to have you *actually* singing in the work was sheer bliss'.²⁰¹

This short idea in the soprano part (example **4.47**) possesses a powerful drive which pushes the music onward. Interspersed between the recurrences of this motif (bars 1 to 80), the chorus soprano and alto voices sing 'Sanctus,' each occurrence depicting a breeze across the profile of the 'hills' (see example **4.48**). This form of parallelism actually commences the movement. The purpose of this section is to prepare for the initial climax in bar 89.

²⁰⁰ With reference already made to Walford Davies' *Requiem*, it is worth noting that the opening melody of Howells' chant for Psalm 121 (I Will Lift up Mine Eyes), is reminiscent of Henry Walford Davies' chant for the same psalm, which appears in his own *Requiem*.

²⁰¹ Isobel Baillie, *Never Sing Louder than Lovely* (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1987), p. 83.

On reaching this climax, Howells used his scale.²⁰² The subsequent 40-or-so bars build up to the second and most important climax of the movement in bar 138 (see example **1.15**). From bar 89 right up to bar 138, the music continues to gain pace and intensity as it draws ever closer to its ultimate goal. During this dynamic and emotional escalation there is no obvious musical motif and only in bars 115 to 118 (see example **4.49**) is the earlier melodic idea suggested. Once the music reaches the peak in bar 138 (with the chorus cry of ‘Sanctus’) the music gradually works towards the delicate conclusion as both the dynamics and tempo are reduced. At bar 138 the opening tone centre of C sharp is re-established. In bars 188 to 222, opening on F sharp, Howells re-establishes the melodic idea (see example **4.50**). However, the music is far more tranquil (a moment of calm following the storm) and the intensity of this earlier passage subsides as the music heads towards the coda in bars 233 to 242. One great admirer of *Hymnus Paradisi* was Vaughan Williams and, when asked about his fondest memories of the great 1951 Festival of Britain, at which *Hymnus Paradisi* was performed, he ‘cited the sound of the trumpets in [the] “Sanctus” ’.²⁰³

Another prominent feature of Howells’ compositional style is his fondness for delaying a climax to heighten tension. This is typically achieved when Howells places the climax on the second beat and makes the first beat silent. A fine example is located in the fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, where a silent first beat creates a feeling of great anticipation before the music reaches its peak (see example **1.15** above and also examples **1.16** and **1.18**). In example **1.15**, the silence precedes the chorus cry of ‘Sanctus.’ In example **1.16**, Howells used the pause before the climax in another musical medium, just before the recapitulation of the opening bars of the work. However, as some of these examples from choral works confirm, it does not mean that the accompaniment also observes a silence. In examples **1.15** and **4.51**, the one beat silence is only slightly interrupted. This is a practice found early on in Howells’ music. One of the earliest

²⁰² This climax was discussed in the first chapter (see example **1.8**).

²⁰³ Joan Chissell, ‘Herbert Howells and his Music’, *The Listener*, September 4 (1952), 397.

examples of this is in the *Nunc dimittis*, first performed on Easter day 1914 in Westminster Cathedral (example 4.52), at the point preceding the climax of the composition ('Lumen ad revelationem').

In example 1.15 above, the chorus observes a crotchet pause on the first beat, before a fortissimo cry of 'Sanctus.' Howells repeated this with the word 'Glory' on a number of occasions in many different works. This word is an obvious choice for an emphatic climax as it possesses innate exulting properties. In the initial 40 bars of the Gloria from the *Missa Sabrinensis*, Howells repeatedly placed the chorus cry of 'Gloria' on the second beat (see examples 4.53 and 4.54) and similarly on the first declaration of this word in the Gloria from the seventh movement of *An English Mass* (see example 4.55). In this instance, however, (like examples 1.15, 4.51 and 4.53), the orchestra is heard on the first beat, but the desired musical effect is still attained. There are several examples to be found in a number of Canticle settings, such as the Magnificats from the Magdalen and Chichester services (see examples 4.56 and 4.57), and the Nunc Dimittises from the Collegium Regale, Sarum and York services.²⁰⁴

This fourth movement also establishes another precedent for subsequent works. In the opening 25 bars Howells firmly established C sharp, a pitch for which he displayed a particular fondness.²⁰⁵ Other examples from large-scale choral works where Howells opted to use C sharp at the beginning include:²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ See appendix 4d for these examples. These are not the only words to receive this treatment. In *Exultate Deo* (1974) Howells achieved a similar feat with the word 'Praise' (see the final bars of example 3.8). One other obvious tendency in Howells' choral music at the climax is the homophonic texture.

²⁰⁵ In footnote 11 of Christopher Palmer's *Herbert Howells: A Celebration* (pages 100 to 101), Joan Littlejohn suggested that the 25-bar long pedal C sharp at the opening of the fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* might be in remembrance of the pitch C sharp Michael Howells wrote in to a setting of Psalm 121, though not used in either the *Requiem* or *Hymnus Paradisi*.

²⁰⁶ Though these six examples begin on C Sharp, the actual scale in the opening bars of these movements vary slightly. The differences occur in the designation of a pitch to third and sixth scale degrees. *Sancta Mater* and *Quis est Homo?* from *Stabat Mater* are also centred on C sharp. However, the subsequent scale is related more closely to another of Howells' scales to be introduced in the final chapter.

(Sanctus from *Hymnus Paradisi* (bars 1 to 25). Dorian mode on C#).

Sanctus from *Missa Sabrinensis* (bars 1 to 37). Dorian mode on C#.

Sanctus from *The Coventry Mass* (bars 1 to 11). Mixolydian mode on C#.

Gloria from *An English Mass* (bars 1 to 8). Aeolian Mode on C#.

Sancta Mater from *Stabat Mater* (bars 1 to 43). Based on C#.

Quis est Homo? from *Stabat Mater* (bars 1 to 10). Based on C#.

One interesting observation is the fact that there are three settings of the Sanctus text which open on a tone centre of C sharp.²⁰⁷ With the exception of the two examples from the *Stabat Mater*, the most obvious link between the movements listed above lies in the text;²⁰⁸ the Gloria and Sanctus are very positive and celebratory, perhaps the most joyful of all the Mass movements.

A further important feature relating to C sharp, of which this fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* is once again a fine illustration, is the tendency of a work, or movement from a larger composition subsequently to conclude on an F sharp major chord:

Third movement of *Sonata for Organ* (1933)

Sanctus, from *Hymnus Paradisi* (1938?)

Preludio 'Sine Nomine, from *Six Pieces for Organ* (1940)

Sanctus, from *Missa Sabrinensis* (1954)

Gloria, from *An English Mass* (1955)

A Sequence for St. Michael (1961)

Gloria in Excelsis Deo, from *The Coventry Mass* (1968)

²⁰⁷ There is, however, one setting of the Sanctus text (in *An English Mass*) that does not start on C sharp.

²⁰⁸ The movements Sancta Mater and Quis est Homo? are filled with an overpowering feeling of grief, the latter asking how can one not be unaffected by the death of Jesus?

In addition, there are the two movements from the *Stabat Mater* ('Quis est Homo?' and 'Sancta Mater') which commence on a tone centre of C sharp, but because neither movement closes completely the F sharp conclusion is only implied.²⁰⁹

There is an obvious close relationship (implied dominant/ tonic) between these two tonalities. However, there is often little suggestion that the opening C sharp tone centre is ultimately the dominant. Indeed the movement to F sharp major is rarely direct, or via closely related tonalities. A fine example of this is the Sanctus (from the fourth movement of the *Missa Sabrinensis*; see examples **4.58** and **4.59** which chart the movement from C sharp to F sharp major). Again a clear example of where Howells tended to use, or repeat, certain processes on particular tone centres.

The fifth and shortest part of the work provides a momentary contrast with the two surrounding movements. Christopher Palmer interpreted its function as 'a tranquil preparation for the final section'.²¹⁰ The closest thing to a motif is the melodic descent in bars 6 and 7 (see example **4.60**). This, together with Howells' scale which occurs several times, assist in unifying the movement, but as it is relatively short (64 bars) and slow, it did not require too much repetition to produce a sense of unity. Within the initial five bars, Howells included his quasi-modal scale, this time occurring on F sharp (see example **4.61**). This scale makes two additional appearances in this slow movement. The first is in bars 24 to 26 and again in bars 33 to 37. On both occasions Howells centred the scale on B flat.²¹¹

The final movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* opens with a dramatic pedal B flat, which acts as a basis for a slow and progressive build-up in the orchestra; a crescendo that was

²⁰⁹ In the first of these (from *Stabat Mater*) the coda begins in F sharp minor, and in the latter, the concluding notes are C sharp and A sharp. One would predict the same movement in the Sanctus from *The Coventry Mass*. However, after opening on C sharp, the work actually concludes on a C major chord. Nevertheless, in bar 12 of the same movement, approximately halfway through, the music reaches a chord of F sharp minor, but this is only temporary.

²¹⁰ Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978), p. 48.

²¹¹ This movement was briefly discussed in the third chapter.

previously compared to the opening of *Das Rheingold*.²¹² The most prominent motif of this sixth movement is the succession of rising fourths that are first announced in the trumpet parts (see example **4.62**). It immediately reminds one of the dramatic opening bars of Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1895-6), which commences with a low pedal C over which four trumpets 'announce the dawn of a new spirit'.²¹³ Certainly, in *Hymnus Paradisi* one detects a similarly new beginning in this analogous combination.

It seems likely that in one of Vaughan Williams' later works, the opening trumpet passage of this movement from Howells' work (see example **4.62**) was the source of inspiration. Vaughan Williams acknowledged that he used a passage from *Hymnus Paradisi* in *Hodie* (1953-4).²¹⁴ In Vaughan Williams' obituary, printed in *The Times*, Howells described the composer as a 'great original [who] liked to be thought a simple kleptomaniac let loose harmlessly among his creative peers – or inferiors'.²¹⁵ Vaughan Williams admitted that the sound of the trumpets in the Sanctus of *Hymnus Paradisi* was, for him, one of the most memorable moments of the Festival of Britain. These instances suggest that Vaughan Williams could quite possibly have used other musical ideas from Howells' compositions.

The opening motif of both the first movement of Vaughan Williams' *Eighth Symphony*²¹⁶ (1953-55), and the final movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* (see examples **4.62** and **4.63**), heard on both occasions in the trumpet part, is two rising fourths, the second a tone higher than the first. In the same way that Howells permitted the two trumpets to pass the motif between one another, so in the very early stages of the Symphony, Vaughan Williams

²¹² Anonymous, 'Hymnus Paradisi', *The Musical Times*, 91 (1950), 352.

²¹³ 'Richard Strauss', in *The Great Composers and their Music*, ed. David Buxton, 52 vols (London: Marshall Cavendish Ltd, 1984), XLIV, p. 1075.

²¹⁴ The dedication on the front of the score reads; 'I find in this cantata I have inadvertently cribbed a phrase from your beautiful "Hymnus Paradisi." Your passage seems so germane to my context that I have decided to keep it.'

²¹⁵ The Times obituary by Herbert Howells., quoted in James Day, *Vaughan Williams*, The Master Musicians Series (London: J M Dent & Sons Ltd, 1961), p. 73. Perhaps Howells knew that Vaughan Williams had cribbed other musical ideas from him.

²¹⁶ First performed in 1956 in Manchester by the Hallé orchestra.

transfers the motif from the trumpet to the horn. This short, four-note motif recurs throughout the entire first movement, described by Vaughan Williams as ‘Seven Variations in search of a Theme’,²¹⁷ but the rising fourths are prominent only at the very beginning and end of the movement.²¹⁸ It is audibly clear that Vaughan Williams, the former source of inspiration and musical mentor, is again paying homage to his junior. After the orchestral opening of the sixth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, the rising fourth idea is almost entirely abandoned, though it remains a recurrent feature of the accompaniment until bar 45 (see examples **4.64** and **4.65**).²¹⁹ It reappears for the last time in the solo soprano part with the word ‘Alleluia’ in bars 142 to 143 (see example **4.66**).²²⁰

Throughout this last movement, Howells repeatedly used perhaps his most common device for word emphasis; the appoggiatura.²²¹ Here it is important to state that the techniques of word emphasis via the third and the appoggiatura are in evidence throughout Howells’ compositions.²²² Examples of both these forms of emphasis are extremely numerous and are certainly not solely confined to Howells’ larger choral works but are equally prominent in the smaller choral works (see example **4.67**).

In this final movement, Howells purposely increased the frequency of word accentuation following the climax in bar 102. It occurs about every 3 bars, until the music begins to settle and approach the end of the work. The overall effect is to keep the intensity of the climactic moment firmly in our mind and to maintain a feeling of tension throughout. Consequently, they are like brief but frequent aftershocks, in the wake of the earthquake-like climactic moment of bar 61.

²¹⁷ James Day, *Vaughan Williams The Master Musician Series* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1961), p. 162.

²¹⁸ Vaughan Williams completed *Hodie* whilst working on his *Eighth Symphony*.

²¹⁹ This opening idea is a variant of the motif cited in examples **4.14** to **4.19**.

²²⁰ Howells briefly included the rising fourths, a tone apart, in the soprano part of *Sancta Mater* from the *Stabat Mater*, bars 99 and 100, but this is a one-off occurrence (see appendix 4e).

²²¹ In the discussion of *Stabat Mater*, the reader will also discover that Howells used the appoggiatura to emphasize grievous words, such as ‘dolorosa’ and ‘dolentem.’

²²² These two methods are seen in all the choral works under discussion in this study.

The appoggiatura is not necessarily confined solely to the top voice. In several instances the first note of the appoggiatura proves to be the top note of an appoggiatura chord, which resolves together with the melody (see examples **4.68** and **4.69**). As with most of Howells' appoggiaturas, they are supplemented with either a tenuto marking or more usually one of the following indications >/^, to add more prominence. Greater emphasis is also achieved in some of these examples by a short but sharp crescendo to the dissonant note, in the preceding beats, but certainly commencing no more than a bar before (see example **4.70**). Howells used the appoggiatura for the same effect in bars 125 to 137 of the fourth movement. The climax in bar 138 is heard with the chorus cry of 'Sanctus'.²²³

This chapter has already addressed Howells' tendency to commence movements on a tone centre of C sharp and its subsequent move to F sharp. Now it is necessary to discuss tonality in general in this work. *Hymnus Paradisi*, like *Missa Sabrinensis* and *Stabat Mater*, can be described as progressive in tonality, in the sense that the composition concludes on a different tone centre to the opening, creating a true feeling of a voyage. As regards *Hymnus Paradisi* and *Stabat Mater* (the other large-scale choral work in this study), one can understand a real reason for this. These works deal with feelings of despair, consequently by finishing in a different key to the opening, this can help to create the impression that the listener was guided along a spiritual and emotional journey, which began with anguish, but concluded in a more hopeful and positive state. This could be the real reason why the three motifs of the first part of *Hymnus Paradisi* are absent from the second part. Howells decision subsequently to include the three original motifs at the end of the sixth movement serves to prove to the listener how far they have traversed in forty-five minutes of music.

The final area for discussion is the penultimate chord of the rather intense closing cadence. Howells' augmented eleventh chord received attention in the initial chapter, but here in the

²²³ This climax was discussed in the first chapter (see example **1.15**).

final movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, Howells included another important harmonic combination, recurrent in a number of different works. The bass line alone at the end of the work suggests a plagal cadence, moving from A flat to E flat. However, the first of these chords is far more complicated than it first appears. What is actually heard is a minor augmented 11th chord on A flat, with a major seventh and augmented ninth.²²⁴ With so many additional notes on top of the A flat triad, it is seemingly a juxtaposition of two chords separated by a semitone (A flat minor and G major); the B natural acting as both the major third of the 'G major chord,' and the enharmonic minor third of an 'A flat minor chord'.²²⁵ This is sustained for several bars, from 159 to 171, where it is slightly altered, before the E flat major chord of bars 172 to 182 (see example 4.71).²²⁶

The sound is extremely distinct, partially resulting from the two intervals of a major seventh; the interval between the root (A flat) and G and between the fifth of the chord (E flat), and the augmented eleventh (D), but particularly the augmented 11th between the root and the note D all of which unite to forge a very mystical ambiance. It brings with it an inherent feeling of immense tension, which, when held for over ten bars, clearly requires some kind of relief. This is another example of a sound for which Howells clearly developed a taste, because he employed it on a number of occasions in several different works and almost exclusively on the same tone centre (or enharmonic equivalent).²²⁷ It appears in the final bars of the *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra*, suggesting that it is a sound created early in Howells' career. In the *Elegy*, it includes the

²²⁴ This chord is very difficult to label. One of the problems associated with describing it as a minor augmented eleventh chord is the fact that the augmented ninth acts as the enharmonic minor third of the chord. The reason for selecting A flat as the root is largely because of its function at the end of *Hymnus Paradisi* – a decorated minor IV moving to I. Ultimately, it is not the name of the chord which is important, but the sound it creates.

²²⁵ Peter John Hodgson, 'The Music of Herbert Howells' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Colorado, 1970), p. 203; Hodgson identified the chord at the end of *Hymnus Paradisi* as a 'G major triad superimposed upon an A flat-E flat pedal', but did not categorize it as a chord from Howells' harmonic vocabulary.

²²⁶ Howells used this very chord on a number of occasions, some of which will be discussed here.

²²⁷ Though undoubtedly a coincidence yet rather intriguing, of the five works analysed in this study, only *Blessed are the Dead* does not use this chord, or a variant.

13th of the chord (F).²²⁸ Unlike the musical quote from *Hymnus Paradisi*, it is not part of the cadential progression, and certainly does not move to an E flat major chord (see example 4.72).

In most cases, the only difference between examples of this chord lies in Howells' decision to spell the A flat chord as its enharmonic equivalent; G sharp. A similar alteration was made in bar 23 of *Agnus Dei*, from *Missa Sabrinensis*.²²⁹ In the *Concerto for String Orchestra* (1938), Howells used the same chord towards the end of a movement, this time the third and final (see example 4.73).²³⁰ In the examples cited above which include strings, Howells purposefully orchestrated the chord in the lower range, creating a wonderful timbre and a rather tense moment in the music; in most instances of this chord it tends to sound in the lower orchestral register.²³¹

In bars 153 to 155 of the *Gloria* from *Missa Sabrinensis*, Howells included a slight variation of the chord. The chord incorporates two notes flattened by a semitone; F sharp and A sharp, instead of G natural and B natural (see example 4.74). In these few bars Howells immediately cast the listener back to the final stages of *Hymnus Paradisi*. Not only is this chord similar to the penultimate chord of *Hymnus Paradisi*, but Howells juxtaposed a short melodic idea that bears similarities to the second motif (see example 4.75). This is announced by the cor anglais and bass clarinet. Howells used the same melodic idea in the preceding bars (bars 148 to 150) of the *Gloria* (example 4.76). In the final bars of *Hymnus Paradisi*, Howells used a flute and cello for the final rendition of the second motif. However, it is in bars 165 to 169 of the solo contralto part in the *Gloria* from *Missa*

²²⁸ This is a minor 13th chord on A flat.

²²⁹ There are other examples to be found in *Missa Sabrinensis*. The chord occurs in the third movement, bars 217 to 222. In addition to these two examples from the *Missa Sabrinensis*, there is one further example in the opening bars of *The Three Cherry Trees* (1969), from *A Garland for De la Mare* and also in *Psalm Prelude Set Two Number Three*. These examples can be found in appendix 4f.

²³⁰ Technically, this makes the chord a minor diminished 12th chord with a diminished octave.

²³¹ This was not a feature of Howells' major augmented eleventh chord of the first chapter.

Sabrinensis that Howells edges even closer to an exact imitation of the second motif (compare examples **4.77** and **4.2**).²³²

This chord also makes two appearances in the last movement of the *Stabat Mater* (bar 5 and 126). All the examples above demonstrate one other feature of the chord: a lack of association with any particular word. However, it is heard with the word 'Paradisi' in bar 162 (see example **4.78**). In the final cadence of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* Howells achieved an almost identical sound. This time the penultimate chord moves to the final yet comforting sound of a B major chord (see example **4.79**). This first chord of the final progression is similar to the examples above. However there is a slight alteration: the root of the chord is G and not G sharp.

These examples prove that Howells developed a fondness for the resultant sound of this chord (minor augmented 11th chord), to the extent that he used it in several works. Only in the final bars of *A Kent Yeoman's Wooing Song* (1933) did Howells base it on a different tone.²³³ Nevertheless the chord is easily recognized and again it appears at the end of a movement (fourth and final), just before the solo soprano makes her final melodic ascent (see example **4.80**). In this example it is written as a minor augmented 11th chord on B flat with a major seventh.

Apart from the obvious tendency of Howells to root the chord on the same (or enharmonic) note, perhaps one additional element that connects most of these examples is the tendency for the chord to appear towards the end of a section or movement.²³⁴ Thus far a number of Howells' compositional features have been discussed, some of which are repeated on certain tone centres. As this chord is another distinct, yet subtle part of

²³² In the fifth movement of *An English Mass* (Benedictus), there is a similar sounding variation of the second motif (see appendix 4g).

²³³ It acts as a decorated minor chord IV for the concluding cadence of the work in F.

²³⁴ With the obvious exception of *The Three Cherry Trees* from *A Garland for De la Mare*, seen in appendix 4f.

Howells' harmonic vocabulary, it is important to compare it to the original chord (discussed in the first chapter). The most striking feature of both these chords is the sound of the augmented eleventh between the root of the chord and the fourth degree. The most obvious difference is the fact that this second chord is actually minor, whereas the earlier one discussed in the first chapter was major. Furthermore, the seventh of the former chord was also minor but in this chord it is major. Finally this second chord is confined to root position, whereas the first appeared in a number of different inversions.

Returning to the final cadence of *Hymnus Paradisi*, on the arrival of the closing chord, the listener can appreciate the great feeling of emotional release which it brings. The minor augmented 11th chord on A flat can perhaps be interpreted as representing the entire feeling of anguish that is inherent in the work which finally vanishes when it moves to the E flat major chord. Interestingly, the last true melody which is heard is the first melodic idea of the entire work - the first motif. However, it was altered slightly for its final exposition. Howells removed the final note (what would have been an F natural) to blend in with the context (see example 4.81). Consequently, Howells was able to eradicate a small part of the despondency inherent in this motif. On reaching the final E flat major chord, he embellished it with the Howells scale, and the sensitive orchestration at this point turns the final chord into an ethereal and emotional experience.

Hymnus Paradisi provides insight into Howells' use of motifs in a large-scale work. One trait is the relationship with specific words of the text and clear language associations; one Latin, the other English,²³⁵ although they are not entirely dominant throughout the work. The composition is largely through composed and though the first three motifs presented in the opening prelude are restated, musical passages from one movement are never reused in another. This same trend is discussed in the final work from this study; *Stabat Mater*.

²³⁵ The 'Latin' motif is associated with the line 'Requiem aeternam and the 'English' (though only temporally) with 'The Lord is my Shepherd.'

In terms of specific stylistic features of the composer, one such practice was Howells' tendency, discussed in the first chapter, to repeat certain harmonic processes at particular points, or on certain tone centres. These tendencies help establish his partiality for certain sounds.²³⁶ This topic was continued in this chapter; the minor augmented 11th chord on A flat (or G sharp), the clear association of the Sanctus text with C sharp, and the C sharp to F sharp relationship which exists. Again, the minor augmented eleventh chord was a sound that was frequently exploited at or towards the end of a work or movement and is particularly Howellsian.

Word emphasis was also a recurrent topic, in the form of Howells' idiosyncratic use of the interval of the third; the melodic ascent and descent in the top voice combined with the descent then ascent of a semitone in the lower part. In addition, there is the composer's use of the appoggiatura for word emphasis which helps to maintain the intensity of a musical climax.

The chapter also briefly considered the construction of several key melodic themes which shared identical features; based on the flattened seventh, tonic, and minor third scale degrees. Continuing the examination of melodic lines, the melodic motion as demonstrated in examples **4.14** and **4.15** was an occasional feature of part entries, particularly in a contrapuntal texture.

Hymnus Paradisi was Howells' most successful orchestral work. After its premiere in 1950, it received numerous performances over the subsequent years and was greatly revered by many (including fellow composers Gerald Finzi, Edmund Rubbra

²³⁶ Up until this chapter, the only instances of Howells repeating certain processes on particular tone centres or in similar ways was in relation to the use of Howells' scale in the first chapter; at the climax (in C), where the B flat augmented chord was common, the tendency of the augmented eleventh chord to appear in fifth inversion (in the first chapter) and the Phrygian chord progression on G (in the second chapter).

and Vaughan Williams).²³⁷ With all this in mind, it is easy to forget that ultimately the work is a father's tribute to a dead son taken in tragic circumstances at a young age; surely one of the greatest ways to commemorate a loved-one.

²³⁷ Christopher Palmer *Herbert Howells: A Celebration* (London: Thames Publishers, 1996), pp. 106 to 112.

- Ex. 4.1 Hymnus Paradisi, Preludio, *Lento, molto espressivo*. Bars 1 to 4. First motif.
- Ex. 4.2 Hymnus Paradisi, Preludio, *Lento, molto espressivo*. Bars 5 to 8. Second motif.
- Ex. 4.3 First and Second motif of Hymnus Paradisi without rhythm.
- Ex. 4.4 Hymnus Paradisi. First motif.
- Ex. 4.5 Hymnus Paradisi. Second motif.
- Ex. 4.6 Missa Sabrinensis, Kyrie Eleison, *lento*. Bars 1 and 2.
- Ex. 4.7 Stabat Mater. Principal motif transposed on to E.
- Ex. 4.8 Three Dances for Violin and Orchestra, Third movement. *Molto allegro*. Bars 4 to 11. Violin solo.
- Ex. 4.9 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *lento, teneramente*. Bars 1 to 3. Soprano.
- Ex. 4.10 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *lento teneramente*. Bars 4 to 6. Chorus
- Ex. 4.11 Hymnus Paradisi, Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes, *più deliberato, ma elato*. Bars 154 to 187. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.12 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, Holy is the True Light, *Adagio*. Bars 158 to 166. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.13 Ralph Vaughan Williams, Fourth (F minor) Symphony, Second movement, *Andante moderato*. Bars 3 to 6.
- Ex. 4.14 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *poco a poco più con moto*. Alto (choir I). Bar 71.
- Ex. 4.15 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *un poco mosso, e rubato*. Bars 33 to 35. ATB.
- Ex. 4.16 Sonata for Organ, Number Two, First Movement, *meno mosso: assai sostenuto*. Bars 282 to 292.
- Ex. 4.17 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *sempre più con moto ed accel.* Bars 53 and 54. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.18 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *più espressivo (ma tempo giusto)*. Bars 76 to 78. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.19 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *più mosso*. Bars 103 to 110. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.20 Organ Sonata No. 1 in C minor, Third Movement, *poco Allegro*. Bars 19 to 30.
- Ex. 4.21 Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity, *risvegliato, ma sempre con anima*. Bars 42 to 44. Choir and Organ.
- Ex. 4.22 Epilogue (from The Hovingham Sketches), *a tempo, ma più mosso ed accel. (Allegro, gaiamente)*. Bars 52 to 59.
- Ex. 4.23 Flourish for a Bidding, *Allegro energico*. Bars 1 to 4. Organ.
- Ex. 4.24 Flourish for a Bidding, *Allegro energico*. Bars 9 to 12. Organ.

- Ex. 4.25 Sonata No. 1 in E Major for Violin and Piano, Third Movement, *Allegro molto*. Bars 4 to 9. Violin and Piano.
- Ex. 4.26 Thee Will I Love, *Con ricchezza, ma con moto*. Bars 3 to 5. Choir and Organ.
- Ex. 4.27 Magdalen Service, *Poco allegro, sempre con moto*. Bars 53 to 56. Choir and Organ.
- Ex. 4.28 St. Augustine's Service, *poco a poco più animato*. Bars 115 to 125. Choir and Organ.
- Ex. 4.29 St. Paul's Service, Nunc dimittis, *Quasi lento, teneramente (con moto)*. Bars 85 to 94. Choir and Organ.
- Ex. 4.30 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *placido, teneramente (ma più mosso)*. Bar 48 and 49. Soprano solo.
- Ex. 4.31 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *placido, teneramente (ma più mosso)*. Bars 64 and 65. Choir I, Soprano.
- Ex. 4.32 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *placido, teneramente (ma più mosso)*. Bar 65 and 66. Soprano solo.
- Ex. 4.33 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *lento, teneramente*. Choir I and II. Bars 12 to 22.
- Ex. 4.34 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *più espressivo (ma tempo giusto)*. Bars 64 to 66. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.35 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *più mosso*. Bars 103 to 106. Chorus.
- Ex. 4.36 Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is My Shepherd, *più animato*. Bars 42 to 44. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.37 Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is My Shepherd, *In tempo*. Bars 84 to 85. Chorus.
- Ex. 4.38 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *Adagio*. Bars 162 to 165. Orchestra reduction.
- Ex. 4.39 Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is my Shepherd, *un poch. più movimento*. Bars 27 to 31. Chorus.
- Ex. 4.40 Chichester Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, Magnificat, *sempre teneramente, ma con moto*. Bars 28 to 32. SATB and Organ.
- Ex. 4.41 An English Mass, Credo, *Allegro, risvegliato*. Bars 72 to 73. SATB.
- Ex. 4.42 Hymnus Paradisi, Preludio, *Lento, molto espressivo*. Bar 29.
- Ex. 4.43 Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is My Shepherd, *più lento, assai tranquillo*. Bars 64 to 67. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.44 Hymnus Paradisi, Requiem Aeternam, *Adagio molto*. Bars 130 to 133. Piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.45 Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is My Shepherd, *lento assai*. Bars 98 to 104. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.46 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *Lento calmato*. Bars 154 to 157. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.47 Hymnus Paradisi, Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes, *Allegro volante*. Bars 26 to 32. Soprano solo.

Ex. 4.48 Hymnus Paradisi, Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes, *Allegro volante*. Bars 43 to 45.SSAA.

Ex. 4.49 Hymnus Paradisi, Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes, *ancora un poch. più allegro*. Bars 115 to 118. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.50 Hymnus Paradisi, Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes, *assai tranquillo, teneramente, ma con moto*. Bars 200 to 217. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.51 The Coventry Mass, Sanctus, *largando, fervido*. Bars 26 to 35. Chorus and Organ.

Ex. 4.52 Nunc dimittis, *maestoso poco lento*. Bars 21 to 25. Two SATB choirs.

Ex. 4.53 Missa Sabrinensis, Gloria, *Allegro vivo*. Bars 1 to 9. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.54 Missa Sabrinensis, Gloria, *Allegro vivo*. Bars 28 to 34. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.55 An English Mass, Gloria, *Allegro vivo*. Bars 1 to 7. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.56 Magdalen Service, Magnificat, *poco allegro, sempre con moto*. Bars 94 to 100. Choir and Organ.

Ex. 4.57 Chichester Service, Magnificat, *sempre teneramente, ma con moto*. Bars 136 to 146. Choir and Organ.

Ex. 4.58 Missa Sabrinensis, Sanctus. Graph charting tone centres throughout this movement.

Sanctus	
Bars	Tone centre
1 to 18	C#
19 to 25	F#
26 to 28	B
29 to 38	C#
39 to 42	A
43 to 51	B flat/ A#
52 to 71	D
72 to 79	F sharp
80 to 88	Indeterminate
89 to 99	C#
100 to 10	A
107 to 115	E flat
115 to	G / E
123 to 145	E
146 to 154 (end)	F#

Ex. 4.59 An English Mass, Gloria. Graph charting tone centres throughout this movement.

Gloria	
Bars	Tone centre
1 to 32	C#
32 to 37	A/ C#
38 to 43	F#
44 to 47	E flat
48 to 50	D
51 to 58	E flat/ D
59 to 76	A
77 to 80	F#
81 to 88	B flat?
89 to 91	E/ G sharp
92 to 95	F sharp
96 to 99	A
100 to 109	F#
109 to 126	C#
127 to 128	E
129 to 134	C#
135 to 155	E/ D
156 to 179 (End)	F#

Ex. 4.60 Hymnus Paradisi, I Heard a Voice from Heaven, *Lento, assai tranquillo*. Bars 6 and 7. Tenor solo.

Ex. 4.61 Hymnus Paradisi, I Heard a Voice from Heaven, *Lento, assai tranquillo*. Bars 3 and 4. Orchestra.

Ex. 4.62 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *Con moto, ma assai sostenuto*. Bars 1 to 10. Trumpets and B flat pedal.

Ex. 4.63 Ralph Vaughan Williams, Symphony Number 8, First movement, *moderato*. Bars 1 to 6. Trumpet in B flat, and Horn in F.

Ex. 4.64 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *con moto, ma assai sostenuto*. Bars 23 to 28. Piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.65 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *con moto, ma assai sostenuto*. Bars 35 to 37. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.66 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *elato ma poco meno mosso*. Bars 140 to 143. Solo soprano, chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.67 An English Mass, Sanctus, *moderato, espressivo*. Bars 26 to 28.

Ex. 4.68 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *più mosso*. Bars 121 and 122. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Ex. 4.69 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *elato ma poco meno mosso*. Bars 131 to 133. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

- Ex. 4.70 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light, *più mosso*. Bars 120 to 126. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.71 Hymnus Paradisi, Holy is the True Light. The chord from bars 159 to 171, heard in orchestra and chorus.
- Ex. 4.72 Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, *più lento*. Solo viola, quartet and tutti. Bar 99.
- Ex. 4.73 Concerto for String Orchestra, movement III, nine bars after rehearsal number 27, to 10 bars after 27. *Lento, dolente ma dolce*.
- Ex. 4.74 Missa Sabrinensis, Gloria, *poco lento, dolente*. Chord from Bars 151 to 155.
- Ex. 4.75 Missa Sabrinensis, Gloria, *poco lento, dolente*. Bars 150 to 154.
- Ex. 4.76 Missa Sabrinensis, Gloria, *poco lento, dolente*. Bars 148 to 149.
- Ex. 4.77 Missa Sabrinensis, Gloria, *un poco lento, appenato*. Contralto solo. Bars 166 to 169.
- Ex. 4.78 Stabat Mater, Christe cum sit hinc exire, *sempre lento*. Bar 126.
- Ex. 4.79 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, SSAATTBB, *dim. e rit. molto (Quasi lento, Serioso, ma con moto)*. Bars 126 to 129.
- Ex. 4.80 A Kent Yeoman's Wooing Song. Sixth bar from the end. Piano reduction of orchestra.
- Ex. 4.81 Hymnus Paradisi. Holy is the True Light, *rall (assai tranquillo)*. Orchestra (piano reduction). Bars 176 to 182.

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing

This is certainly one of the finest of Howells' unaccompanied choral compositions and a valued contribution to the English choral tradition of the twentieth-century. It was the result of a commission for a work to be performed at the memorial service of the assassinated American president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy. As to its inclusion, it serves to highlight a number of stylistic points. It demonstrates many of the changes in his choral style and musical language after *Blessed are the Dead* (1920) as a richer harmony is now more prevalent. The more elaborate harmony of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* enables a discussion of the ways in which Howells animated particular words or sentiments.²³⁸ In addition there are a number of Howells' more generic compositional features to be considered, notably the syncopated rhythm at the end of a phrase and the chord progression of a third.

The work is dated 6 June 1964 and the first performance took place in Washington DC on 22 November 1964,²³⁹ exactly one year after Kennedy's death. As Howells' diary clarifies, it was written in a relatively short period of time. The entry for Sunday 10 May reads: 'Search for the text for Washington work',²⁴⁰ and with great brevity, it was fully completed by the 18 May. The text was taken from Prudentius' poem *Hymnus Circa Exsequias Defuncti*, lines 125 to 148, and lines 161 to 172.²⁴¹ The translation was made by the Irish scholar Helen Waddell and was included in her book *The Wandering Scholar*,²⁴² which contains only a translation of these two parts of the text, omitting a greater portion of the poem. Howells admired Waddell's work and had turned to her translations for inspiration

²³⁸ Some of these instances will demonstrate how Howells used his augmented eleventh chord (major), introduced in the first chapter.

²³⁹ Paul Andrews, 'Herbert Howells: A Documentary and Bibliographical Study' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999), p. 470.

²⁴⁰ Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1988), p. 172.

²⁴¹ See appendix 5a. The title of the work is derived from line 125 of the poem.

²⁴² Used by Holst in a one-act opera called *The Tale of the Wandering Scholar*.

on a previous occasion; *A Sequence for St. Michael* (1961). In the same book, Waddell elaborated on the life of Prudentius (348-413), who enjoyed a successful career in law until the age of 57, after which he 'renounced the world: entered the cloisters, and with it the kingdom of heaven'.²⁴³

This 129-bar work is largely through composed but the chant-like melody that is expounded in the opening bars by the alto, tenor and bass parts (see example 5.1) and again in bars 10 to 13 is recapitulated in the final section of the work (bars 102 to 109).²⁴⁴ This melody falls into two clear parts, the first concluding with the word 'cherishing' then the second, a clear imitation of the first, finishing with 'him.' This is the closest Howells came to creating a unifying melodic motif for the composition.²⁴⁵ The sombre character which pervades the work is evident before the conclusion of the opening phrase. One key component of the melody, indeed the entire work is the dotted rhythm²⁴⁶ which creates the impression of a stately funeral procession and brings to mind a number of well-known funeral marches.²⁴⁷ An additional feature of the melody at this point is the rising triplets (bars 1 and 3). When the opening melody returns in bar 102 the triplet is omitted for the first part of the phrase and then occurs in the space of one beat in the second, changing the effect (see example 5.2).

Initially the opening melody of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* appears to be based on a pentatonic scale. However, after only one-and-three-quarter bars, with the first appearance of the note C sharp, it becomes evident that in fact it is based on six notes.²⁴⁸ The missing note, which would complete the scale, is the sixth degree. On

²⁴³ Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholar*, (London: Constable, 1968), p.19.

²⁴⁴ The unison texture at the opening of the work (example 5.1) is retained until bar 9.

²⁴⁵ Like *Blessed are the Dead* and *Hymnus Paradisi*, this work lacks the homogeneity of the *Elegy*.

²⁴⁶ The role of the dotted rhythm in this work will be considered.

²⁴⁷ In particular the opening of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata in A flat major* No. 12 op. 26 and Chopin's *Piano Sonata in B flat minor*, op. 35.

²⁴⁸ One-and-three-quarter bars appears to be a very short period but the tempo of the work is slow. The note C sharp recurs in bar 5.

the tone centre of B, it is G, or an inflection thereof. Similarly, in Howells' scale there is no designated pitch for note 6 (see example 1.1).²⁴⁹ As discussed, in the second chapter the sixth scale degree was the cause of much harmonic ambiguity, particularly as Howells enjoyed combining chords separated by a third in some of his earlier works.²⁵⁰

These six pitches are the only notes Howells used in the initial 18 bars of the work. In bars 10 to 18, the melody of bars 1 to 9 is heard in counterpoint to a new idea. This new melody which is also centred on B, is sung by the soprano and tenor parts, and is almost entirely pentatonic; again with the sole exception of C sharp in bar 14. In spite of the fact that this second melodic pattern is entirely different to that of bars 1 to 9, it is distinctly reliant on the rhythmic essence of the opening four bars (see example 5.3), in particular the triplet and the dotted rhythm.

The origin of the opening idea is intriguing as it is not entirely unique. Returning to bars 1 and 2, there is a great feeling of kinship between this and the initial phrases of *Long, Long Ago* (1940), the Sanctus from *The Office of Holy Communion: Collegium Regale* (1956) and *The Scribe* (1957). The melodic contours seen in all four examples (examples 5.1, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 – marked 'x', 'y' and 'z') are remarkably similar even though they are centred on different tones. The passage from *The Scribe* is the closest to example 5.1. The melody concludes on the fifth and displays a similar rhythm at the end of the phrase.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ See also examples 1.3 and 1.8.

²⁵⁰ Musical quotes from the *Elegy*, *Fantasy for String Quartet*, *Rhapsodic Quintet* and *Sonata No. 1 in E major for Violin and Piano* were cited in the second chapter.

²⁵¹ *Long, Long Ago*, *The Scribe* and *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* are unaccompanied choral works for a single choir. The opening melody of the *Scribe* (as seen in example 5.4) is certainly employed as the unifying idea for the work, occurring several times throughout. However, in *Long, Long Ago* it appears only once in its original form, though varied slightly on two subsequent occasions. In the Office of Holy Communion, the movement is too short for it to contain a convincing unifying melody or idea. In many ways *Long, Long Ago* and *The Scribe* are direct precursors to *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* as discussed later in the chapter.

As concerns the use of the opening melody, it serves to initiate both the first and second sections of the work.²⁵² This four-bar passage is heard one final time, in bars 102 to 108, and is set to the very same opening words of the first section, linking the beginning and ending of the work.²⁵³ However, for this final exposition the phrase was drawn out slightly; the rhythm subtly, but noticeably adjusted to fit an alternating time signature of 3/4 and 2/4. In addition, Howells removed the triplet and prolonged the words 'cherishing' and 'breast.' It is at this very same point when the basses introduce an almost uninterrupted 15-bar pedal B natural, which acts as a harmonic stabiliser, underpinning the harmony above.²⁵⁴

The component of the opening melody which provides the greatest unifying function throughout the work is the dotted rhythm (usually dotted quaver and semi-quaver, or dotted crotchet and quaver). This is employed at the beginning of a number of different phrases and sections and helps to punctuate the melody (see examples **5.7**, **5.8**, and **5.9**). In itself the rhythm is not particularly intriguing, but Howells' persistent use of the dotted rhythm establishes it as vital to the unification of the work. Furthermore it continues the suggestion of a funeral march throughout.

Another important way in which Howells created a sense of unity in this piece is derived from the repetition of the sentence 'Take him, earth, for cherishing', which occurs on five separate occasions,²⁵⁵ although the accompanying melody is not always the same. On the conclusion of sections in bars 34 to 36 and bars 48 to 49 (examples **5.10** and **5.11**), one vocal part²⁵⁶ continues to provide a melody which oscillates around A sharp, as the

²⁵² The second section begins in bar 10.

²⁵³ Howells described the work as 'roughly A-B-A' in *Argo RG 507: Herbert Howells Church Music*, cited in Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Celebration* (London: Thames Publishers, 1996), p. 448.

²⁵⁴ Pedal notes are a device frequently used by Howells as a way to build up tension. For example, the opening of both the fourth and sixth movements of *Hymnus Paradisi*, and the opening too of the fifth movement of *Stabat Mater*.

²⁵⁵ This sentence is used in bars 1 to 2, 34 to 36, 48 to 50, 102 to 105 and 124 to 129 and creates a simple yet effective text ritornello. To add a spiritual dimension, the repetition of the opening line throughout the work might also be a reminder to God of the desires of the bereaved.

²⁵⁶ The altos in example **5.10** and the tenors in example **5.11**.

remaining voices merge to form an F sharp major chord.²⁵⁷ On both these occasions, the vocal part which sings the opening line of the work uses part of Howells' quasi-modal scale, relying particularly on the distinct sound of the augmented fourth.²⁵⁸ This assists in creating a feeling of homogeneity between sections which are otherwise entirely different.²⁵⁹ In addition, there is something rather magical about the sound of the F sharp major chord, as in both cases movement to this chord is unexpected (see example **5.11**). Finally the closing tone centre (B) is vital in creating the feeling of unity throughout the work as it is both the opening and concluding tone centre, in spite of several tonal digressions to other distantly related tone centres (such as A minor in bars 51 to 56 and C sharp minor in bars 67 to 75).

As well as being important for the sense of unity in the work, the opening bars contain an important feature of Howells' style. In bar 4, he embellished the end of the second short phrase with subtle rhythmic syncopation. The disruption of the rhythm at the close of a vocal part is particularly common in his choral works (see example **5.12** for the typical version). It is difficult to pinpoint the first occasion on which Howells included this little rhythmic decoration in his music. However, it is largely confined to vocal music and it is included in his earlier choral works, but certainly after the Latin pieces of the early and mid 1910s. Two of the earliest examples of this phenomenon are located in *Sing Lullaby* (see example **5.13**), one of three carol-anthems of 1920, and in *Goddess of the Night*, which was written the same year.

²⁵⁷ There are similar instances of one part (or solo voice) continuing as the other parts execute the final chord of the phrase; in *Come, my Soul* (1972) and in *Antiphon* (1977) cited in appendix 5b. In one of these (from *Antiphon*), Howells' scale is used.

²⁵⁸ Howells scale on F sharp is; F#, G#, A#, B#, C#, E, F#.

²⁵⁹ At these points also, the dotted rhythm is important.

This syncopated rhythm, at the end of a vocal phrase, may appear to be insignificant and its function minimal, yet there are clearly some basic criteria for its use.²⁶⁰ Firstly, as was stated earlier, it is usually confined to the vocal parts of a particular composition. Secondly, it is frequently though not exclusively heard in a bar containing three beats.²⁶¹ Finally, it is principally employed at the end of a phrase. Nevertheless, its impact is nowhere near as great as that of Howells' scale or chord.

The rhythm of the word²⁶² at the end of the phrase is crucial to the overall effect of this syncopated rhythm because the final part is typically trochaic;²⁶³ Howells placed the stronger syllable on the first beat of the bar, the weaker falling half-way through.²⁶⁴ In cases where the final word contains more than one syllable, he still adhered to the strong followed by a weak syllable principle. Furthermore this same pattern is applied when two words are used, but because this creates additional difficulties Howells tended to use the rhythm with only one.²⁶⁵ In bar 4 of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* Howells used two syllables from two different words ('ceive' from 'receive', and 'him'). The word 'receive' is iambic (unstressed followed by stressed syllable) and so the stronger syllable of this word falls on the strong beat of the bar, and 'him,' being the weaker of the two in this context, falls on the half-beat.

Howells' positioning of the two syllables show that the first is extended slightly longer than one would usually expect, thereby adding a little more rhythmic interest at the end of the phrase. One melodic characteristic of this syncopated rhythm is that the pitch is usually the same throughout (see example **5.13**). In the few examples in which the note is altered, it is

²⁶⁰ As with many things that initially appear to conform to a strict formula, exceptions are never particularly rare. Some of these will be considered.

²⁶¹ 3/4 is a time signature frequently used by Howells.

²⁶² Meaning the pattern of strong and weak syllables.

²⁶³ A stressed syllable followed by an unstressed, as in examples **5.13**, **5.15**, **5.16** and **5.17**.

²⁶⁴ See examples 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11 from appendix 5c.

²⁶⁵ There are two possibilities with two words. Firstly, with two monosyllabic words and secondly, with one word of two-or-more syllables, followed by a monosyllable word. In this variant, the first word would require the final syllable to fall on the strong beat (as in bar 4 of this choral work).

rarely more than a tone and where there is a change, it usually involves a descent in pitch (see example 5.14). There is one example in the *Stabat Mater*, which involves the movement down a fourth (see example 5.15). Of course, Howells could have quite easily converted the rhythms found in examples 5.16 and 5.17 (and others) into crotchet and minim (see examples 5.18 and 5.19) but he would have lost the true essence of this idea at a point in a phrase which can occasionally flag.

In spite of the tendency of this rhythm to be mainly confined to choral music, there are at least two noteworthy examples in Howells' instrumental works. One example can be found in Julian's Dream (1959) bar 16, from *Howells' Clavichord* and another in the *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* (1942). On both occasions Howells used this syncopated rhythm at the very end of a phrase (see example 5.20). In this example, a change of pitch helps to bring out the articulation because there is no rhythmic impetus of a syllable change to do this when the note is repeated.

There are instances where the rhythm occurs just before the conclusion of a phrase, such as bars 58 to 60 of the fourth movement of *Stabat Mater*, where the syncopation is still capable of adding rhythmic interest to a particular phrase (see example 5.21). There are also slightly different variants of this motif which appear to be adapted to other circumstances. In the final bar of example 5.1, from *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*, Howells concluded the vocal phrase (in a bar of four) with this rhythmic idea; the final note occurring half-way between beats two and three, similarly in bars 9 and 18.

The recurrent use of this syncopated rhythm and its positioning in the same place suggest that it developed into an easy yet effective way of drawing a vocal phrase to a close. Nevertheless, its purpose, in whatever guise it assumes, remains the same - to disrupt the pulse and thereby to add rhythmic interest at the conclusion of the phrase.²⁶⁶ It is important

²⁶⁶ See appendix 5c for additional examples.

to emphasize that this device is an integral part of Howells' fascination with pulse disruption at the end of phrases which is evident throughout his compositions and one way in which Howells created a feeling of movement in his music. The examples quoted are slight but obvious variants of the initial rhythm given in example **5.12**. However, Howells clearly relished rhythmic interest at the end of phrases as a vital and noticeable part of his choral music (see examples **5.22** and **6.6**).

The importance of the interval of a third in Howells' music, in many different forms is perhaps already quite obvious.²⁶⁷ In this chapter there are additional applications, related directly to the harmonic shift of a third. The following section will investigate three variants of this application; firstly to alter the mood, to add tension to a musical build-up, and finally to denote the peak of the climax. The first application occurs twice at the end of two sections in *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*. The initial example is in bars 49 to 51; an F sharp major chord concludes one section, which is followed by a new phrase which opens in A minor in bar 51 (see example **5.23**). This progression is completely unexpected.²⁶⁸ Then in bars 75 and 76, the music moves from C sharp minor to a brief section in A minor.²⁶⁹ Both passages change from moments of optimism to pessimism, a direct result of the chord progression, emphasized by false relations.

In the first of these shifts, the F sharp major chord brings the fourth paragraph (see appendix 5a for the text) to a positive and comforting conclusion. The text of bars 37 to 47 brought with it a slightly more positive feel ('to fulfil the hope of men') as the resurrection of the dead is first mentioned. This progression to F sharp major was mentioned previously as it is rather unexpected: preceded by a D minor chord. The harmonic shift from F sharp

²⁶⁷ It is important to reconsider what was previously discussed about the third. In the *Elegy* and other works of that time, Howells combined chords separated by a third (relative major/ minor) and in *Blessed are the Dead* the third was used for word emphasis. In the fourth chapter, it was noted how the interval of a third was important to a number of motifs, as well as the interval for one form of word emphasis.

²⁶⁸ Additionally, the move to F sharp is unanticipated.

²⁶⁹ See appendix 5d.

major to A minor coincides with the poem's return to the physical reality of death; the inevitable corruption of the mortal body. In the second instance, the move to A minor (bar 76) happens with the second recitation of the line 'open are the woods again;' first sung in C sharp minor.²⁷⁰ This tone centre was also used for the line 'Once again the shining road leads to ample paradise' (bars 67 to 75) where there is a positive feel in the music (the music gradually ascending). However, the move to A minor brings with it greater gloom, suggesting that the desire to attain the promises of 'Paradise' is, as yet, beyond reach. Specifically in the music, this despondency is achieved because of false relations and largely because the move to A minor (in both instances) is so unexpected.

Howells' fascination with the progression of a third began early in his musical career. The two examples above demonstrate how this progression can be used to emphasize a change of mood. The two subsequent musical quotes are different from those cited from *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* because the harmonic shift of the third is repeated several times (between two chords) and is part of the approach to the climax. In these instances, this mediant progression suggests insecurity and uncertainty rather than despondency. When sensitively combined with a gradual crescendo and an accelerando it can incorporate tension into the music. In the first example, from the *Rhapsodic Quintet* (1919), the progression first occurs at rehearsal number 11 and is repeated numerous times before concluding at number 21, coinciding with the climax. There are two dominating chord progressions between rehearsal numbers 11 and 21. The first is F major to D major (rehearsal number 11, to 1 bar after 15), before a progression from A flat major to F major (see example 5.24), from rehearsal number 16 to 20.²⁷¹ Again the feeling of uncertainty in

²⁷⁰ This line is not repeated twice in the original poem.

²⁷¹ Example 5.24 displays the transfer from the first chord progression to the second.

this passage is aided by the conflict between the false relations (F and F sharp in the first progression and A flat and A natural in the second).²⁷²

Similarly, in 1938 Howells composed a psalm-prelude for organ²⁷³ based on the opening lines of psalm 130 in which the harmonic shift of a third occurs several times between bars 27 and 42. Initially this is from A major to C major back to A major (twice), followed by a progression from C major to E flat minor and back. This latter chord progression occurs three times (see example 5.25). The false relations convey the feeling of insecurity and despair, implied by the word 'deep' from the line 'Out of the deep have I called onto you O Lord', and maintain a feeling of uncertainty.²⁷⁴ In both examples 5.24 and 5.25, the music moves to a climax where the peak brings with it a more positive feeling. Furthermore, there is a sense of agitation and urgency resulting from this harmonic shift, largely again because of the false relation.²⁷⁵

This same kind of harmonic shift is used in briefer variants creating fanfare-like moments in two examples from Howells' organ music, where again false relations occur. Unlike the previous two examples, these passages are not part of the build up, but in fact denote the climax. The first of these occurs in the *Paeon*, from *Six Pieces for Organ* of 1940 (see example 5.26). There is also a similar effect created at the end of *Psalm Prelude Set Two Number Three* but the progression is not up a third but down, from C major to A flat minor

²⁷² On a far smaller scale and without any obvious function, there are a number of harmonic shifts of a third cited in examples from previous chapters. In example 2.20, from the *Fantasy String Quartet* (1917), there is a progression from A major to C minor, returning to A major and in example 3.19 from *Blessed are the Dead*, from D major to B flat major returning to D major. In *Blessed are the Dead* it occurs several times. Though not cited in this study, in bars 23 to 27 of the sixth work in *Six Short Pieces for Organ* when there is a progression from A minor to C sharp minor returning to A minor; all demonstrating Howells' fondness for this progression.

²⁷³ *Psalm Prelude Set Two Number One* (1938).

²⁷⁴ The section of the work beginning in bar 26 to the climax (bar 64) depicts the movement 'out of the deep' (*pp* to *fff* for the climax). The dynamic at the beginning represents a distant/ quiet plea unto the Lord, gradually increasing in volume each time.

²⁷⁵ In the *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis for the Collegiate Church of Saint Peter in Westminster* (1957) the progression of third is a recurrent and unifying harmonic progression for the work. It is used at the opening of both the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis, preceding the doxology and sporadically throughout the work where it adds a feeling of insecurity (see appendix 5e).

and back (example 5.27).²⁷⁶ Likewise, at the climax in the fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, the brass section alone (all trumpets, trombones and tuba) punctuate the peak of the climax, with a short fanfare-like moment with a progression (bars 140 and 141) from E major to G major back to E major (see example 5.28 where the brass part is bracketed).²⁷⁷ Clearly, this progression, with the resultant false relationship was one way in which Howells marked the climax.

It is unrealistic to ascertain precisely where this fascination for the third was first nurtured, largely because mediant relationships have fascinated composers for centuries.²⁷⁸

Evidently for Howells they serve three identifiable purposes: to change the mood of the music, to add tension as the music drives towards a climax and finally to denote the peak of the climax. It must be reiterated that Howells' use of such a progression is not excessive but sufficient to assert convincingly that he was clearly partial to this harmonic progression for its particular effects, and for the resultant sound.

The remaining part of this chapter will be principally devoted to Howells' choral writing technique and style. *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* contains several superb moments where Howells' attention to detail combined with his sensitivity to vocal writing is manifest. He demonstrated this in earlier works, including *Blessed are the Dead* (see example 3.45), but it is taken to new heights in choral works from the 1950s onwards, largely because of his developing use of a richer harmonic language. In bars 97 to 100, there is an exquisite amalgam of words with music where the bitter coldness of the poem at 'upon the icy stone'

²⁷⁶ Howells indicated the tuba stop for the right-hand at this point.

²⁷⁷ There is no harmony in the other orchestral parts when the progression of a third in the brass division occurs. There is, however, one addition to the progression from E major to G major and back, that of the pitch C sharp which is sustained throughout, recalling the juxtaposed relative major and minor chords of the second chapter.

²⁷⁸ The interval of a third, in different forms, was important too for Vaughan Williams' compositions. Vaughan Williams frequently used the harmonic shift of a third in his works, but with no obvious common effect. Perhaps some of Howells' interest in this progression could possibly be placed at the feet of Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams' use of this chord progression can be seen in appendix 5f from the Tallis Fantasia and the *Phantasy Quintet*. In both these examples there are resultant false relations.

is vividly conveyed in the music. The deliberately laboured pulse of the music, together with the chord that is heard on the word 'stone', create this amazing effect. Another fine detail in this exemplary union is the way in which Howells purposefully staggered the final part of the word 'icy' - 'cy' - allowing the sopranos first to complete the word, followed by the altos and finally the tenors (see example **5.29**). Consequently, the piercing 's' sound is heard on three consecutive quaver beats (see bar 98 of example **5.29**).²⁷⁹ On reaching the final word of the sentence, 'stone' (bar 99), Howells created an overwhelming feeling of nothingness (and coldness) with the accompanying chord, which is void of any relation to chords built on thirds.

In bars 124 to 127, there is another notable complement of words and music where Howells' augmented eleventh chord (major) is a key feature.²⁸⁰ Before discussing this union, it is important to emphasize that Prudentius' poem is principally considering the Christian doctrines associated with death and resurrection. One of the fundamental requests made during the poem is the protection of the mortal body. Up to this point in the poem each occurrence of the line 'Take him, earth, for cherishing' is accompanied by rather gentle and unassuming music (see examples **5.1**, **5.2**, **5.10** and **5.11**). However, with the final recitation of this part of the text, Howells successfully created the sense of a final desperate plea. The repetition, thrice, of the word 'take', and the torturous melody of the first soprano, heard in conjunction with the anguished appoggiatura on the first beat of bar 125 (the familiar sound of Howells' chord) create this wonderful moment. Rather unusually the augmented eleventh chord appears in third inversion and contains the elusive ninth degree.²⁸¹ There is also a short crescendo preceding the word 'take', in bar 125, and the word itself is slightly stressed by the tenuto indication. These elements all combine to ensure that the desired feeling of desperation is achieved (see example **5.30**).

²⁷⁹ A fine attempt at a musical interpretation of chattering teeth.

²⁸⁰ This is one of a number of instances to be considered in the following paragraphs where the augmented eleventh chord is used.

²⁸¹ This is the example discussed in the first chapter that helped to prove the point that Howells' chord was more accurately an appoggiatura.

Early in the final return to the tone centre of B, Howells used the augmented eleventh chord in fifth inversion to the words 'Grave his name' (bars 92 and 93), in a musical passage that is strikingly similar to bars 11 to 14 of *A Sequence for St. Michael*, and bars 58 to 65 of the Magnificat from *Collegium Regale Magnificat and Nunc dimittis* (see example **5.31**).²⁸² However, in example **5.31**, there is one subtle difference; Howells omitted the seventh from the augmented eleventh chord (G natural), nevertheless the integrity of the chord is not totally lost. As highlighted in the first chapter, the two works referred to above include the first inversion dominant seventh chord in between two augmented eleventh chords. This is similarly replicated in example **5.31**²⁸³ where the chord marked 'x' is in first inversion, but with the omission of the minor seventh. It is through the inclusion of such a passage, largely because of the augmented eleventh chord (and the movement to a first inversion chord), that Howells ensured that his mark was firmly imprinted into the music.

The next few examples from *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* contain chords similar to the augmented eleventh. In the first, Howells exquisitely employed a similar sounding chord, this time in second inversion and with the ninth included, for the final two crotchet beats of bar 21, to the word 'dead' (see example **5.32**). This intense chord is more than capable of emphasising the word dramatically, stunning the listener with its potency. The soprano leap of a fifth from B natural to F sharp is also an integral component in the dramatisation of this word. This produces the same sound as the augmented eleventh chord but is spelt differently. What sounds like the minor seventh of the chord is actually an augmented sixth. Consequently, Howells used a chord with properties similar to a Neapolitan sixth.²⁸⁴ This chord appears twice in example **5.32**. On an additional occasion, again in bar 22, the B flat replaces the A sharp (chord marked 'y' on example **5.32**).

²⁸² See example **1.31** and **1.32**.

²⁸³ In examples **1.31** and **1.32**, the chord marked 'y' is a dominant seventh in first inversion.

²⁸⁴ A chord built on the flattened second degree in first inversion.

A chord with features similar to the augmented eleventh also makes an appearance in bars 84 and 85 (see example **5.33**). On the first beat of bar 84, the chord does not exhibit any obvious connection with the augmented eleventh, but the alto move from D to E changes this. The root is F sharp which appears in the bass part, the B flat acts as the enharmonic equivalent of A sharp and the augmented eleventh (actually a diminished twelfth in this example) and minor seventh are included (C and E respectively).²⁸⁵ In addition, the chord contains the minor third in the top voice (A natural), creating an aural false relationship between what sounds like the major third and the minor third. The chord occurs with the sentence 'That the serpent lost for men,' where it immediately suggests a feeling of despair and also isolation which is assisted by the reduction of both the dynamics and tempo. The clash between the A natural of the soprano part and the B flat of the bass part recalls the false relations of the third chapter.²⁸⁶ As discussed, it occurs at the end of a phrase and the same melodic movement is used in the soprano part (bar 83). Unlike examples **3.8** to **3.10**, the ascent of a third starts on the note which clashes (marked 'x'), where more usually it is approached by ascent of the third from the root of the chord.²⁸⁷

In a slow paced unaccompanied choral work such as *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*, the kinds of harmonies discussed above certainly test and exploit the abilities of the most accomplished choirs. The texture ranges from three parts in unison (the opening of the work), to the eight-part texture of the final twenty-one bars of the work. The dynamic range of the work is also great, ranging from *pianissimo* to *forte*. In addition the refined intonation required of the performing choir, to ensure the luscious chords are executed correctly, create performance challenges.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ As highlighted in the first chapter, Howells rarely used the augmented chord in first inversion.

²⁸⁶ See examples **3.8** to **3.10**.

²⁸⁷ This would have been F sharp.

²⁸⁸ These chords are not always as effective on instruments where intonation is less of a problem but when placed in the choral medium there is something very magical about the sound.

As this study contains two unaccompanied choral works (*Take Him, Earth, for cherishing* and *Blessed are the Dead*) from opposing ends of Howells' compositional life a comparison between the two is possible and necessary. It is immediately evident that Howells' unaccompanied choral style drastically evolved with time. Perhaps the most obvious change concerning orchestration, is the substitution of two choirs for only one. The double choir was a vital constituent of some of the earlier works, such as *Blessed are the Dead* and *Regina Caeli* (1915) where Howells used the two forces for antiphonal moments in the music. Though occasionally passages for various voices require a particular part to subdivide; in *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* there is no antiphonal interplay between different parts. Howells created slight differences in timbre where he identified passages for a semi-chorus, such as bar 51.²⁸⁹

Secondly, the diatonic/modal language of the earlier works (such as *Blessed are the Dead*) is now superseded by a considerably richer harmony (compare examples **3.1**, **3.18** with **5.29**, **5.30**, **5.33** and **5.34**) that includes a greater and freer use of dissonance. This use of dissonance would be distinctly incompatible with the prevailing harmony of *Blessed are the Dead*, or with any work from that earlier period.²⁹⁰ Furthermore, in works from this later period chords appear in different inversions, and are not largely confined to root position or first inversion, as was the case in *Blessed are the Dead*, indeed not all chords are based on the centuries-old tradition of accumulated thirds. This richer harmonic language is in line with other choral works from the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Winchester and Chichester Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis from 1967 and the 'Dallas Canticles' from 1975 (see example **5.35**).²⁹¹ With this increased use of richer harmony, Howells was able to animate words, phrases and emotions with greater success (see example **5.29**). Certainly there is nothing

²⁸⁹ Similarly, in *Antiphon, Come, My Soul, One Thing Have I Desired* and *Sweetest of Sweets* Howells subdivided vocal parts.

²⁹⁰ This would largely include works from the 1940s and early 1950s.

²⁹¹ The topic of Howells' musical language in the 1960s onward will be considered further in the subsequent chapter.

in *Blessed are the Dead* or any other work from that time which contains passages as passionate as examples **5.30** or **5.31**.

An additional difference between the two choral styles is manifest in the delineation of phrases. Whereas *Blessed are the Dead* (as well as *Nunc dimittis* (1913), *O salutaris Hostia* (1913) and *Regina Caeli* (1915) and others) was largely continuous, with phrases frequently overlapping, this was totally abandoned in Howells' later choral works.²⁹² Phrases and sections are now quite distinct, usually delineated by indicated rests. These silences are quite important to the overall make up of the work. Additional examples include *The Scribe*, *A Sequence for St. Michael* (1961), *Antiphon* (1977) and *Sweetest of Sweets* (1978) (see examples **5.36**, **5.37** and **5.38**).

These changes (in the unaccompanied choral works) were emerging more than 20 years earlier, in *Long, Long Ago* from 1940, a precursor to the musical style of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*. In addition, the opening unison texture (see example **5.1**), is also seen in *Long, Long Ago*, *The Scribe*, *Antiphon*, *One Thing Have I Desired* (1968) and *Sweetest of Sweets*. This opening is reminiscent of the opening textures of Howells' early Latin works (such as *Nunc dimittis* (1914), *Regina Caeli* (1915) and *Haec dies* (1918?)), but absent in works such as *Blessed are the Dead* (1920) and the *Three Carol Anthems* (1918-1920) which were moving away from the style of Howells' earlier choral works.²⁹³ The distinctly defined phrases begin to appear in *Long, Long Ago* but the richer language, evident in *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*, is not fully reached by 1940 (see example **5.39**).

²⁹² This was largely the influence of early English choral music. This was also a feature of the *Elegy*.

²⁹³ Several of the later Morning and Evening canticles, though with organ accompaniment which usually commences the work, have the choir singing in unison for their first entry. This includes the *West Riding Cathedrals Festival Te Deum* (1974), *Te Deum Laudamus* for Washington Cathedral (1977?) as well as *The Fear of the Lord* (1976). See also appendix 5g for the opening bars of *The Scribe*, *Antiphon*, *One Thing have I Desired* and *Sweetest of Sweet*.

Returning to the topic of Howells' richer harmonic vocabulary, the greater freedom of expression of dissonance in the unaccompanied choral works and settings of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis from the 1960s and 1970s (to some degree seen and heard in *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*), is the reason why they never became a more stable part of the English cathedral choir repertoire.²⁹⁴ The failure of the later canticles to achieve the success of the earlier ones disappointed Howells. Nevertheless, *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* stands as a testament to Howells' ability to compose new and demanding choral works that stretch even the world's finest choirs to new heights, with a musical language that was greatly more varied and colourful than that of the early choral works of the 1910s.

The section of the text that Howells used for *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* begins at line 125 of the *Hymnus Circa Exsequias Defuncti*. The manuscript of the work reveals that *Hymnus Circa Exsequias Defuncti*, the opening line of the poem,²⁹⁵ was originally designated as title of the work.²⁹⁶ As Paul Spicer quoted in his book *Herbert Howells*, Hilary Macnamara noted his use of the Prudentius text, linking the composer's son and J. F. Kennedy, pointing out that the death of Kennedy 'brought again to the surface some of the same feelings of loss'.²⁹⁷ Howells' choice of text suffices to forge a link between Michael and this choral work, as Paul Andrews observed 'this text became associated with the death of his son in 1935 and that he originally intended it to form part of *Hymnus Paradisi*'.²⁹⁸ Through this choral work, Howells' son is also remembered. It is a work in memory of a young man whose life was tragically cut short; just as *Hymnus Paradisi* was dedicated to Michael Howells, whose life was also abruptly ended.

²⁹⁴ The success of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* is beyond doubt.

²⁹⁵ This literally means 'A hymn on the burial of the dead.'

²⁹⁶ In Paul Andrews' doctoral thesis, he states that this Latin line (*Hymnus Circa Exequias Defuncti*) is actually the sub-title, but either is seemingly possible.

²⁹⁷ Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 173.

²⁹⁸ Paul Andrews, 'Herbert Howells: A Documentary and Bibliographical Study' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999), p. 470.

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing expressed grief for his own loss, as well as that of an entire nation for Kennedy. The opening lines of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* were included under Michael's dedication on the score of *Hymnus Paradisi*. Therefore, as to who precisely 'him' is, perhaps 'them' would have been a more appropriate pronoun, including both Michael Howells and President Kennedy, and perhaps all those close to Howells who died. Michael, a persistent influence in many of Howells' works, must have been in the composer's mind. Related to this point it is also important to remember that *A Sequence for St. Michael* was written in 1961, with its more obvious link to the name Michael, and finally that Howells had been working on his *Stabat Mater*.²⁹⁹

The final B major chord provides a comforting sound suggesting that the 'servant's soul' and body is in secure hands. The disparate sections of this choral work assist in generating a sense of journey (moving onwards), similar to some extent to the effect created by the disparate sections of the second part of *Hymnus Paradisi*. This ends in bar 102 when the work returns from whence it came, recapitulating the opening melody. The conclusion of the work in the major assists the assertion that Howells' emotional journey is fully completed. The line 'upon the icy stone', discussed earlier, is the final line of Waddell's translation. However, Howells returns to the opening two paragraphs (see appendix 5a) to conclude the work, where the text is more comforting, confirmed by the reassuring sound of the B tone centre and B major chord at the end of the work.

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing is an interesting study of melodic unity in one of Howells' later choral works. With the lack of a frequently recurring melodic idea for homogeneity throughout, unity is achieved in a number of other ways; the repetition of the opening sentence, the restatement of the opening melody at the end of the work, and the return of the opening tone centre. The motif of greatest importance is the dotted rhythm which pervades the work from start to finish, recalling the funeral marches of Beethoven and

²⁹⁹ See appendix 5h.

Chopin. It illustrates the ways in which seemingly unimportant features of the work can create some sense of unity. Of great interest is the fact that the seemingly unique opening melody is similar to melodies from earlier works, where the overall shape and outline of the melodic line is largely unaltered.

The choral style of this work, in comparison with *Blessed are the Dead*, exhibits many distinct changes, notably the use of only one choir, richer harmony and a change from uninterrupted musical lines to distinct phrases which are delineated by rests. An additional feature of these later choral works is the opening unison texture, recalling a similar texture in Howells' Latin works from the 1910s; including *Nunc dimittis* (1914), *Regina Caeli* (1915) and *Haec dies* (1918?).

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing is an interesting study of how the composer animates particular words, phrases and sentiments with a richer harmony. It illustrates an important stylistic feature of Howells' choral works; that of the syncopated rhythm at the close of a phrase, where there are a number of consistent features each time. In addition, the harmonic shift of a third was used by Howells for three reasons; to denote a change in the mood of the music, to create tension in a musical build-up and finally to mark the climax. Howells' major augmented eleventh chord, one element of the composer's richer vocabulary, was a recurrent feature where its unique properties brought out tension in the music and guaranteed that Howells left an identifiable mark on the music. Whereas chords were largely compilations of notes separated by a third in the first half of Howells' composing life, this starts to change (see example 5.29 bar 99). The topic of Howells' harmony in the latter stages of his career will be continued in the next chapter.

Ex. 5.1 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Quasi lento, Serioso, ma con moto*. Bars 1 to 4. Alto.

Ex. 5.2 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *quasi alla Marcia*. Bars 102 to 108. SSATB

Ex. 5.3 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Quasi lento, Serioso, ma con moto*. Bars 10 to 13. Soprano.

Ex. 5.4 The Scribe, *moving slowly, but freely*. Bars 1 to 3. SATB.

Ex. 5.5 The Office of Holy Communion (Collegium Regale), Sanctus, *quasi lento*. Bars 1 to 5. SATB

Ex. 5.6 Long, Long Ago, *Moderato con moto*. Bars 1 to 3. SATB.

Ex. 5.7 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Quasi lento, Serioso, ma con moto*. Bars 5 and 6. ATB.

Ex. 5.8 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *poco a poco più animato (un poco rubato, con moto)*. Bars 51 to 54.

Ex. 5.9 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *un poco rubato, con moto*. Bars 67 to 71. SATB.

Ex. 5.10 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Quasi lento, Serioso, ma con moto*. Bars 34 to 36. SSATB.

Ex. 5.11 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *intenso*. Bars 46 to 50. SATB.

Ex. 5.12

Ex. 5.13 Sing Lullaby, *Non troppo lento, e sempre tranquillo*. Bars 37 to 40. Soprano and Alto.

Ex. 5.14 Long, Long Ago, *moderato con moto*. Bars 18 to 21.

Ex. 5.15 Stabat Mater, Quis est Homo?, *urgente (Allegro, inquieto)*. Bars 45 to 47. Soprano.

Ex. 5.16 Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is my Shepherd, *dim. Molto, e rit. (Quasi lento)*. Bars 25 to 26. Chorus Soprano.

Ex. 5.17 Missa Sabrinensis, Credo, *Quasi lento*. Bars 276 to 280. Solo soprano.

Ex. 5.18 Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is my Shepherd, *dim. Molto, e rit. (Quasi lento)*. Bars 25 to 26. Chorus Soprano. Amended.

Ex. 5.19 Missa Sabrinensis, Credo, *Quasi lento*. Bars 276 to 280. Solo soprano. Amended.

Ex. 5.20 Sonata for Oboe and Piano, *placido, teneramente, ma con moto*. Bar 37. Oboe solo.

Ex. 5.21 Stabat Mater, Eia, Mater, *Espressivo: alla sarabanda*. Bars 58 to 63. Tenor solo.

Ex. 5.22 Stabat Mater, Stabat Mater Dolorosa, *Quasi leno, passionato ma tristamente*. Bars 42 to 49. Soprano.

Ex. 5.23 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *intenso*. Bars 49 to 54. SATB.

Ex. 5.24 Rhapsodic Quintet, *Doppio movimento ritmico, e non troppo Allegro*. Clarinet, Violin I and II, Viola and Cello. First bar of 15 to 3/4 bar of 16.

Ex. 5.25 Psalm Prelude Set Two, Number One, *un poco piu mosso, (lento, dolente)*. Bars 25 to 48.

- Ex. 5.26 Paeon, *più moderato, deciso*. Bars 110 to 111. Manual part.
- Ex. 5.27 Psalm Prelude Set Two Number Three, *meno mosso e allarg.* Bars 216 to 228.
- Ex. 5.28 Hymnus Paradisi, Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes, *piu deliberato, ma elato*. Bars 138 to 141.
- Ex. 5.29 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Ampio, ma espressivo*. Bars 97 to 101. SSATB.
- Ex. 5.30 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Quasi lento, quasi alla marcia*. Bars 124 to 129. Piano reduction (SSAATTBB).
- Ex. 5.31 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Ampio, ma espressivo*. Bars 92 and 93. SSATB.
- Ex. 5.32 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *con anima e movimento*. Bars 19 to 23. Piano reduction (SSATB).
- Ex. 5.33 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Sonore*. Bars 83 to 85. SATB.
- Ex. 5.34 Come, My Soul, *Quasi lento, ma sempre con moto*. Bars 1 to 4. SATB.
- Ex. 5.35 One Thing Have I Desired, *Serioso, ardente*. Bars 8 to 15. SATB.
- Ex. 5.36 A Sequence for St. Michael, *Poco allegro, affretando*. Bars 13 to 29. SATB and organ.
- Ex. 5.37 Antiphon, *poco quietamente, poch. meno mosso*. Bars 44 to 51. SATB.
- Ex. 5.38 Sweetest of Sweets, *flessibile e dolce*. Bars 4 to 10. SSAATB.
- Ex. 5.39. Long, Long Ago, *un poco meno mosso (moderato con moto)*. Bars 53 to 57. SATB.

Stabat Mater

Stabat Mater

'The 'Stabat Mater' seems to be one of those works in which the subject has chosen the composer rather than the composer choosing the subject'.³⁰⁰

The *Stabat Mater* (1965) was the last large-scale work by Howells. It is the culmination of a number of different musical influences and exemplifies the changes in Howells' style, particularly his harmonic vocabulary, since the time of the *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet, and String Orchestra* (1917) and *Blessed are the Dead* (1920). This chapter will address several features of Howells' large-scale choral style, notably how musical unity is attempted in a seemingly through-composed choral work. This will include a discussion of the motifs in the work and their association with the text, as well as the emotions in the poem. Secondly, Howells' approach to orchestration is briefly discussed, particularly his use of brass instruments at musical climaxes which is an idiosyncrasy of his style. Finally, there are two important features of Howells' musical language to be introduced and reviewed; a second quasi-modal scale, and the interval of the fourth, which developed into an important basis for Howells' harmony in his later compositional life.

The period of gestation for this epic choral work was more than a decade.³⁰¹ David Willcocks asked Howells to compose a work for the Bach Choir as early as 1954, but it took the composer a long time to select a text. Howells commenced writing the *Stabat Mater* in 1959, but it was not fully prepared for performance until 1965. On St. Cecilia's day of the same year, David Willcocks, with The Bach Choir (to whom it was dedicated), and the London Symphony Orchestra gave the first performance in the Royal Festival Hall. The

³⁰⁰ Hugo Cole in *The Guardian*, 23rd November 1965, p. 9, quoted in Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 171.

³⁰¹ See appendix 6a for a chronology of this work.

text is, of course, the description of the Holy Mother's vigil by the cross of her son.³⁰² The primary source of inspiration for Howells was Michelangelo's *Pietà* which resides in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City.³⁰³ However, it is impossible to ignore the tragic loss of his young son which must have had some bearing on the composer's choice of text.³⁰⁴ The poem itself is attributed to Jacopone da Todi, who died in 1306. Following the loss of his wife, da Todi substituted the secular life for the sacred when he became a Franciscan friar.³⁰⁵ While listening to Howells' musical interpretation of the *Stabat Mater* poem, it is important to acknowledge that 'in this work [Howells] ... attempted to portray the reactions of an onlooker, an impartial observer, to the crucifixion'.³⁰⁶

Howells divided the *Stabat Mater* poem³⁰⁷ into seven sections:

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| I | Stabat Mater |
| II | Cujus animam gementem |
| III | Quis est homo? |
| IV | Eia, Mater |
| V | Sancta Mater |
| VI | Fac ut portem |
| VII | Christe cum sit hinc exire |

Indeed, of any of the well-known versions of the *Stabat Mater*, Howells' setting is most similar, certainly regarding the division of the text, to that by Karol Szymanowski, completed in 1928. Szymanowski opted for the poem in Polish, his native tongue. In spite of this, the opening bars of both Howells' and Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* are curiously similar in their delicacy, orchestration and to some extent in the initial melodic ideas (see examples **6.1** and **6.2**). Nevertheless, we are left with a small dilemma; did Howells ever hear Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* or are the similarities at the beginning of these works

³⁰² See appendix 6b.

³⁰³ Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Celebration* (London: Thames Publishers, 1996), p. 445.

³⁰⁴ This was implied in the opening quote.

³⁰⁵ The earliest existing musical setting of this poem was by the French-Flemish composer Josquin des Près (c. 1445 - c. 1521).

³⁰⁶ Christopher Palmer, *A Study* (London: Novello, 1992), p. 59.

³⁰⁷ See appendix 6c for the division of the text in versions of the *Stabat Mater* poem by other composers. Note that Verdi and Palestrina used the *Stabat Mater* poem but did not split the text into separate movements.

purely coincidental? Szymanowski's work was performed at the Three Choirs Festival on three occasions; in 1932, 1948 and 1965 and it is known that Howells was a regular visitor to this annual event, where a number of his works were premiered and performed.

As to the principal motifs of the *Stabat Mater*, it relies on two contrasting and distinct ideas (see examples **6.3** and **6.4**). The opening movement commences with a forty-bar instrumental prelude, in which the first of these ideas is repeatedly expounded (example **6.3**); the descent of a second (both major, but especially minor) at the opening of a phrase or melody. This usually begins with an unprepared dissonance which resolves to the subsequent note. Though Howells frequently used this melodic descent as one form of word emphasis throughout his choral music it assumed a far more crucial role to the homogeneity of the *Stabat Mater*.³⁰⁸

This first movement serves a dual purpose. Not only does it provide the entire work with an opening orchestral prelude, in which this key motif is expounded (see example **6.5**), but it also includes and introduces the first lines of the *Stabat Mater* text.³⁰⁹ The first movement, particularly the instrumental passage at the beginning, is reliant on the melodic descent of a minor second; indeed the orchestral introduction to the chorus entry, bar 42, is a *sff* unison B flat appoggiatura resolving onto an A natural. The chorus entry itself (bar 42 also) contains a triple dissonance in the soprano, alto and tenor parts (example **6.6**), which resolves down a semitone in the next bar.³¹⁰ On the three occasions in the first movement where the phrase 'Stabat Mater dolorosa' occurs, of which example **6.6** is the first, Howells employed the chorus and orchestra to depict tortuous cries of grief. Furthermore, for the third and final exclamation of 'Stabat Mater dolorosa' in this movement, Howells created a

³⁰⁸ This form of word emphasis (via an appoggiatura) was discussed in chapter four. In some instances in the *Stabat Mater* this is actually an appoggiatura. However, in most cases the dissonance is not an accented passing note.

³⁰⁹ Lines 1 to 3.

³¹⁰ The bass part also starts on a dissonance (G), but ascends to a consonant note A.

distinctly more frenzied and prolonged cry of despair (see example **6.7** and compare with example **6.6**).

Similarly, in most instances the first motif is used to convey anguish arising from the sentiments of the poem (see bar 42 of the orchestra in example **6.6**). However, there are occasions where the descent of a second is considerably less dramatic, though it can still convey a suggestion of melancholy implicit in a particular word (example **6.8**). In vocal parts particularly, Howells often extended this motif by adding a further descent in the melody.³¹¹ This occurs in the soprano part of bar 42 in the first movement where there is a descent of a fifth from the E (the resolution note for F). Though the actual interval of descent is not particularly vital (see soprano part of example **6.6**, bars 42 and 43), an increased sense of despair is made more vivid when the interval between the second and third notes is great (see example **6.9**).³¹²

On many occasions, Howells appropriately matched the text with the extended version of the initial motif, particularly for words such as 'dolorosa', and 'dolentem', which both mean pain (physical or mental), and 'passionis', which refers to Christ's suffering. The principal purpose of this variant of the motif appears to be the dramatisation of such words. Where Howells developed this variant into longer phrases, consisting of more than three notes, he was able to prolong the inherent emotions and associations of the word. This is partially achieved through the overriding descent throughout the phrase (in example **6.10** as with many others).³¹³

³¹¹ Because this does not really alter the overall effect, it is more appropriate to consider it an extension of the first motif rather than an entirely new one.

³¹² Reference here is being made to the interval between the resolution note and the note immediately after.

³¹³ In example **6.10**, the melody descends a minor ninth from the initial F to the E at 'tem.' A similar descent occurs in examples **6.6** (bars 45 to 49) and **6.12**.

As a result of the recurrent use of this motif throughout the work, Howells was able to create the same musical effect with words that neither express nor convey any sentiment (see example **6.11** where the words 'Per te Virgo' are used) because the listener associates such passages with previous experiences of anguish, or grief, like those found in examples **6.10** and **6.12**.³¹⁴ In addition there are instances where the melodic contour is similar to that found in example **6.10** and **6.11**, but they begin on a consonant pitch, not a dissonance (example **6.13**). Again, the desired effect on the listener is essentially the same as all such melodic patterns are associated with feelings of despair and uncertainty in spite of the text or whether or not the initial note is dissonant.³¹⁵

There are a number of reasons why the descent of a second, from a dissonant pitch to a consonant, was made an integral feature throughout this work. Firstly, by its very nature, an unprepared dissonance can intimate musical anguish that requires resolution; secondly, as was established previously, it is a very common form of word emphasis throughout Howells' choral and vocal music. Finally, it might originate from Stanford's *Stabat Mater* which is reliant on this dissonance throughout the prelude (see example **6.14**).³¹⁶ With this in mind, Howells owned a copy of Charles Villiers Stanford's *Stabat Mater*,³¹⁷ a work which he certainly admired and perhaps the first motif of his *Stabat Mater* is a small musical homage to an influential and admired teacher.³¹⁸

³¹⁴ In example **6.11**, the shape of the melody is identical to that found in bars 42 and 43 of the soprano part in example **6.6**.

³¹⁵ In another variation of this motif, Howells delayed the resolution of the dissonant note via a short turn-like figure (marked 'x'), which serves to decorate the melody at that point and to prolong the dissonance by a fraction (see example **6.15**).

³¹⁶ As in example **6.14**, this is usually an appoggiatura.

³¹⁷ The score was annotated by Howells.

³¹⁸ Dr Paul Rodmell, an authority on Stanford, acknowledged the appoggiatura to be a very characteristic part of Stanford's style. Furthermore, Stanford's influence is manifest in the subtleties of the *Stabat Mater* poem, as both Howells and Stanford used the line 'Piam Matrem' in the sixth stanza, line two; Berkeley, Dvořák, Palestrina, Poulenc and Verdi used 'Christi Matrem.' Similarly, in the ninth stanza, second line, both Stanford and Howells used 'Morientem desolatum', whereas 'Moriendo desolatum' is used in versions by Berkeley, Dvořák, Palestrina, Poulenc, Rossini and Verdi.

The extent of the emotional range in the work is established in the first chorus entry. In bar 42 of the first movement, Howells used almost the full force of the orchestra; the only instrument that is left silent is the harp. It is particularly appropriate for the chorus to commence the poem so as to convey the anguished cries of the saviour's mother, also depicting sharp throbbing pain of loss.³¹⁹ The choral outburst is so unexpected that only those who have previously heard the first movement can be prepared for the overwhelming power and intensity of this passage. This rather abrupt, grief-ridden *forte* passage over a pedal A, heard in bars 42 to 44 of the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* movement introduces the text for the first time. It recurs at several points throughout the *Stabat Mater* and is one of the ways Howells establishes a feeling of musical unity throughout the work. There are differences in the music each time, but they do not hinder the listener's ability to associate them, as on each occasion the integrity of the first is retained.

The second recurrence is located in bars 83 to 91 of the first movement, part of which is included in example 6.7. The next occasion is in the second movement, bar 68, to the first two syllables of the word 'Pertransivit,' then in the sixth movement, bars 59 to 66. The fifth and final return is in the seventh movement, bars 73 to 91.³²⁰ On this occasion the chorus is abandoned at the beginning, in its place the solo tenor cries out 'Quando,' however, in bar 78 the chorus finally enters. The key features in each of these passages are the pedal A in the lower parts and the B flat to A melodic descent in the orchestra (though omitted in bars 83 to 91 of the first movement) (see examples 6.6 and 6.7).

³¹⁹ The Poulenc, Dvořák, Stanford, Szymanowski and Rossini versions of the *Stabat Mater* poem are not as grief-filled when the text is first introduced, indeed the chorus entry is rather delicate. In the versions by Berkeley and Verdi, the opening part of the text is *forte*, but the musical language is not as dramatic or passionate as Howells' first chorus passage.

³²⁰ See appendix 6d.

In spite of musical similarities at these five points, the text is not always the same.³²¹ As there is no common association in the text, it suggests that Howells was not using the *forte* passage, over a pedal note A, for any specific word or emotion at these points, but perhaps as a stark reminder of the pain and suffering of Christ and the grief of his devoted mother as conveyed by the initial chorus entry in the first movement (example 6.6).³²² As well as recalling this emotion throughout the work, these passages are always the main musical climax in the movement and have structural importance. Together with the melodic descent of a second and the second melodic motif, which will be discussed subsequently, this is one of only a few passages used later in the work.

Unlike other large choral works of Herbert Howells (notably *Hymnus Paradisi* and *Missa Sabrinensis*) the listener is compelled to wait for the opening of the second movement before hearing and gradually developing an acquaintance with the second motif of the *Stabat Mater* (see example 6.4). As identified by Elizabeth Bird, this melodic motif bears more than a passing resemblance to the 'plainsong version of the *Stabat Mater* as found in the *Graduale*'.³²³ However, within the first ten bars, Howells exposes the listener to the original, and a variant.³²⁴

This motif is used in five of the seven movements,³²⁵ which helps to create and maintain some feeling of unity throughout this long and arduous composition. Its first exposition, in its original melodic form, is with the words 'Cujus, animam gementem.' In the Gradual a similar melody is set to the words 'Stabat Mater dolorosa' and then with 'Cujus, animam gementem.' Perhaps this direct link with the line 'Cujus animam gementem' is the reason

³²¹ The first two occurrences of this passage (as seen in examples 6.6 and 6.7) have the same text.

³²² Perhaps Howells used this passage each time with the word 'dolorosa' in mind, as it is used in the first line of the text where this is first heard and conveys despair on each occasion.

³²³ Elizabeth Ann Bird, 'The Instrumental and Choral Music of Herbert Howells' (unpublished masters thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 1982), p. 186.

³²⁴ The variant (bars 1 to 4) actually precedes the original melodic motif of bars 8 to 10 in the bass part.

³²⁵ The motif is absent in the first and fifth movements.

why it is repeatedly used throughout the second movement³²⁶ and a likely explanation why it is introduced in the second movement. Crucially, this melody is not always accompanied by the same words. Nevertheless, this fails to explain why it was not used in the first movement. Perhaps Howells felt that this melodic idea was not sufficiently dramatic for the opening movement where the initial stanza of the poem is utilized.

As to why Howells did not include it in the fifth movement, it is impossible to offer any convincing explanation. However, this is not the first time the composer omitted a vital motif in a movement from a large-scale choral work. *Hymnus Paradisi* is similarly through-composed, yet there is some feeling of homogeneity even though the three motifs are entirely absent from the fifth movement and are rarely used in the fourth and sixth. One aim of the opening movement (Preludio) of *Hymnus Paradisi* is to introduce the three principal motifs in order for the listener to appreciate how all the seemingly disparate sections and movements, particularly of the second part, are united.³²⁷ Like the motifs of *Hymnus Paradisi*, the second motif in the *Stabat Mater*, though initially linked to the opening words of the second movement, is not associated with any particular word or concept. With each appearance of the second motif in the *Stabat Mater*, however, it brings with it a tentative feeling of tranquillity.

One of the significant features of the second motif is its capacity to be combined with several different pedal notes. Of course, it can be set to a pedal note based on the first note of the motif, as seen in example **6.16**, or to a pitch a third lower than the opening note, as in example **6.17**. More surprisingly it seems to be harmonious even when the pedal note is actually the second note of the motif; the first note functioning like an unprepared dissonance, resolving on to the subsequent note (see example **6.18**). Finally, a similar effect is created when the second note is a third above the pedal note (see example **6.19**),

³²⁶ The second movement opens with the line 'Cujus animam gementem.'

³²⁷ The Preludio also establishes the mood and atmosphere of the work.

where the initial pitch still resolves onto the second.³²⁸ The nature of the motif means that any of these variants are possible. To enable this, Howells permitted the principal theme to undergo minor adjustment in order to blend in with the tonality at that particular point (as seen in example **6.17**) yet its integrity is unblemished.

On reviewing the two motifs it is now clear that they complement one another through their differences. Generally, the first represents the more extreme sentiments of despair and grief, as exemplified in **6.6**, **6.9**, **6.10** and **6.12**; the second suggesting greater tenderness in places where the music is more delicate and often more settled (see examples **6.16** to **6.19**). Underlying this ostensibly optimistic melodic idea is the sense that feelings of raw grief have still not departed, that they may resurface as in fact they do.³²⁹ This is true until the second motif is heard for the last time, in bars 134 to 139 of the final movement, where there are no subsequent outbursts of grief and the work ends rather more positively, in bar 163.

As discussed previously, Howells also created a sense of unity through the work by the repetition of certain musical phrases. The first and most important of these was in bars 42 to 49 of the opening movement which was considered earlier. In addition to this phrase there are only two other passages of music in the *Stabat Mater* that are repeated again later in the composition. The first of these occurs in bars 33 to 36 of *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, which is imitated in bars 71 to 75 of the same movement (see examples **6.20** and **6.21**). In both of these passages, the first motif, in the form of a descent of a semitone in the top voice, is particularly important. Finally, the last passage to be reused, which is

³²⁸ In this example, the G natural (in the lowest part) and the initial note of the melody create the interval of an augmented fourth.

³²⁹ An excellent example occurs in bars 92 to 101 of the second movement, where this melody is performed in all four vocal parts and where the feelings of grief have abated, but the final chord of the movement in bar 105 to 108 suggests that feelings of despair and uncertainty continue to linger. In addition, in bars 57 and 58 of the same movement, the second motif is heard only a few bars before the chorus cry of 'Pertransivit gladius;' one of four passages based on example **6.6** from the first movement where grief and pain is rife.

first employed in the fourth movement (bars 9 to 20) is revitalized to form the final section of movement six.³³⁰ In the sixth movement, the text is different but the tenor remains the soloist and the orchestration is similar.³³¹

Howells continued the feeling of anguish, established in the first chorus cry of 'Stabat Mater dolorosa', throughout the work, usually at the other principal climactic moments of the work where the text is particularly passionate, and/ or grief-laden.³³² At many of these points, Howells heightened the tension through dissonance which, combined with a *forte* or *fortissimo* orchestra, further dramatizes the moment. Part of the success of these passages lies in the dissonant close-harmony chords in the chorus which often require no more than an interval of a tenth, and are an effective way of conveying the idea of despair and pain (see example **6.22**).

The rather abrupt and/or unexpected appearance of a climactic point in the *Stabat Mater* helps to further dramatize the particular passage of text at that point. In the first movement, the listener is certainly not led to anticipate an explosive chorus entry in bar 42. Even where there is a definite build up to a climax this can sometimes be rather brief, and the listener is still a little surprised by the brevity of the entire event. In the *Stabat Mater*, Howells seemingly opted for shorter, more frequent and more sudden climactic passages, rather than one earth-shattering moment that is preceded by a very obvious and considered approach.³³³

³³⁰ In the fourth movement bars 9 to 20, the words are 'Eia, Mater, fons amoris, Me sentire vim doloris.'

³³¹ 'Let me be guarded by the cross, defended by the death of Christ, fostered by grace.'

³³² These examples include 'Pertransivit gladius', bars 83 to 88 of movement II; 'O quam tristis', bars 92 to 96 of movement II; 'vidit Jesum in tormentis, subditum, et flagellis subditum,' bars 53 to 77 of movement III; 'Inflamatus et accensus,' bars 43 to 50 of movement VI. The texts at these climactic moments represent a majority, if not all, the most profound passages of the entire *Stabat Mater* poem.

³³³ For instance, the climactic moment in bar 138 (see example **1.15**) of the fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* is preceded by a rather impressive approach of approximately forty bars.

One particularly intriguing aspect of some of these climaxes is Howells' application of brass instruments. They are also an integral feature of musical climaxes in both *Hymnus Paradisi*, *Missa Sabrinensis* (1954), and in the second and fourth movements of *A Kent Yeoman's Wooing Song* (1933). In several of the *Stabat Mater* climaxes, the brass leads the chorus into the moment and then subsequently doubles the chorus parts. An archetypal example can be found in the third movement, *Quis est Homo?* of the *Stabat Mater* (see example 6.23). Another instance occurs in bars 76 to 100 of the fifth movement where the two forces are heard together for almost thirty bars. In the *Missa Sabrinensis*, the same doubling process was heard in bars 28 to 34 of the second movement (see example 6.24).

Perhaps the most interesting feature of these particular moments is the interplay between the chorus and brass. In both examples 6.23 and 6.24 Howells ensured that the harmony is the same, in fact the chord inversions are identical. However, there are subtle, yet noticeable, differences in the rhythm: the brass section typically anticipates chord changes in the chorus. These slight variations in rhythm serve to punctuate the phrase and provide the overall passage with a little more rhythmic interest and vitality.

Continuing the theme of orchestration, the opening of the second movement of the *Stabat Mater* employs a tried and tested arrangement of instruments, previously heard in the opening of the *Sanctus* from the fourth movement of *Missa Sabrinensis*. Over Howells' entire compositional life his technique of orchestration changed little.³³⁴ The more unusual instruments that Howells employed, particularly in the *Stabat Mater* and *Hymnus Paradisi*, are the organ, celesta and piano. Though Howells does not use these instruments in any unusual way in the *Stabat Mater*, Howells did use the piano and harp (as well as low strings) to create an unusual orchestral colour that was exploited on at least one other

³³⁴ Essentially Howells' orchestra is similar to that used by Brahms. Note that the orchestration of the *Stabat Mater* is not very different to that of his *Concerto No. 1 in C minor for Piano and Orchestra* (1914). See appendix 6e.

occasion in the *Missa Sabrinensis*.³³⁵ In both examples (from the *Stabat Mater* and the *Missa Sabrinensis*), the movement commences with a quasi-ostinato lower part, which is executed by the cello, double bass, and, rather unusually, the harp and piano, creating a subdued passage (compare examples **6.25** and **6.26**). However, the identical use of this orchestral combination is confined to the opening bars of both of these movements (twenty-four bars in *Stabat Mater* and thirteen in *Missa Sabrinensis*).

At both of these places, Howells used this combination of instruments for a similar purpose. Both of these movements are akin to a funeral procession where there is no sense of urgency.³³⁶ In addition, the detached notes in the string parts (marked pizzicato), the short timpani rolls and the slow tempo assist in the creation of a sense of a stately funeral. This is particularly noticeable in the second movement of the *Stabat Mater* when the bass part of the chorus enters, singing the words 'Cujus animam gementem' to the plainchant-based second motif, set in almost regular measures.³³⁷ In addition, both movements commence *pp* and very gradually build up to *ff* over a number of bars and there is either an actual or implied pedal (C sharp in the Mass and B in *Stabat Mater*) which roots the passage at the beginning of the movement. The opening of the *Stabat Mater* movement itself, partly because of the orchestration but also because of the opening material, sounds like a slower version of the opening of the fourth movement of *Missa Sabrinensis*.³³⁸

³³⁵ The piano was an important part in these passages and is a common feature of Howells' orchestral works. The most audible use of the piano in the *Stabat Mater* is in the opening bars of the second movement (example **6.26**). The final movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* contains a piano part, but was clearly superfluous as Howells added to the opening page of the final movement that '... the piano should be used here whenever available.' Other works with orchestral piano include *Missa Sabrinensis*, *Kent Yeoman's Wooing Song*, *In Green Ways* and *The B's* from 1914. Christopher Palmer declared that Howells' use of the orchestral piano in three of the five movements of *The B's* (the first, third and fifth) can 'be laid at Stravinsky's door [Petrushka of 1911].' Christopher Palmer in *Howells: Orchestral Works Vol. 2*. CD notes CHAN 9557, p. 4.

³³⁶ Typically, the Sanctus is one of the livelier movements in Howells' settings of the Mass.

³³⁷ For the opening bars of the second movement of the *Stabat Mater*, Howells instructed the cello to tune down so that the low B could be played.

³³⁸ A similar combination of instruments is used in bars 114 to 124 of the final movement (seventh). However, Howells omitted the piano consequently there is a very different sound. Yet there is an implied pedal note E flat and the deep staccato string parts perform pizzicato and the tempo is slow.

Anguish, grief and suffering are at the heart of this work. Still, Howells was able to locate and isolate perhaps the most tender and beautiful passage of the entire poem using, at one point, harmonies from an earlier work to animate them. In the fourth movement, the sense of raw anguish temporarily abates and Howells forms a movement from verses nine and ten that form a short break from the seemingly unremitting anguish and torment of the other verses. The ninth verse commences with the lines:

‘Alas, mother, fountain of love,
let me feel the force of your grief,
so that I may bemoan with you’.³³⁹

This movement is principally an opportunity for the solo tenor to take centre stage. The *Eia Mater* movement reaches its real peak in bars 44 to 54; a passage that is introduced by the organ, solo violin and solo tenor. Interesting too is the fact that this example is the first and last time the organ assumes an important lead role. With this in mind, the opening of this passage instantly reminds one of the delicate opening bars of *In Paradisum*, the final and most sensuous movement of Duruflé’s *Requiem*.³⁴⁰ In both examples **6.27** and **6.28**, there is a similarity in the descending parallel harmony. There are features common to both the *Stabat Mater* and Duruflé examples, notably a double pedal in the lower part, a tone apart (compare **6.27** and **6.28**). There is a similar use of parallelism in the first movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*, bars 18 to 21, in which Howells created an interval of an augmented fourth between the two lower parts, with an additional parallel descent in a higher voice. This passage is repeated towards the end of the second movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* (see example **6.29**).

³³⁹ This translation is not the most poetic but it is certainly the most literal and best suited for the purposes here (see appendix 6b for full translation). The Latin version reads: ‘*Eia Mater, fons amoris, Me sentire vim doloris, Fac, ut tecum lugeam.*’

³⁴⁰ Dating from 1947, but revised in 1961.

Howells managed to convey the overall more optimistic and positive mood of the following stanza in his music. The tenth verse in the fourth movement reads:

‘Let my heart burn
with love of Christ our Lord
so that I may please him’.³⁴¹

One can truly feel the sentiments expressed in the music of bars 44 to 54 where this passage is first sung. Howells was particularly sensitive to the emotions of the words in the first two lines of this, the tenth stanza, which the music so luxuriously conveys to the listener.

The harmonies of bars 45 to 50 are almost identical to the sensitive and delicate opening bars of the final section of *Preludio ‘Sine Nomine’*, marked ‘*placido ma espressivo*’, the first work in the collection *Six Pieces for Organ*. This work is dated 1940, and consequently suggests that any resemblance of the passage from *Stabat Mater* to Duruflé’s *Requiem* is purely coincidental.³⁴² However, in all three works at this point, one detects a real feeling of pure celestial beauty (example **6.30**). However, the lack of real closure at the end of the movement suggests that peace and tranquillity is not yet to be found in the fourth movement of the *Stabat Mater*.

One other important feature of the *Stabat Mater* concerns the conclusion of movements. There are a number of occasions where movements lack a feeling of closure (three to six inclusive). This creates the feeling that the only true sense of finality can occur at the end of the work, which proves to be the case. It also conveys to the listener the sense of despondency that pervades the poem. A perfect cadence or any suggestion of closure to these movements would certainly destroy the effect that Howells strove to achieve. In

³⁴¹ The same stanza in Latin read; ‘Fac ut ardeat cor meum, In amando Christum Deum, Ut sibi complaceam.’

³⁴² In example **6.30**, there is only one pedal note, not two.

Hymnus Paradisi, when movements had no feeling of conclusion, Howells overlapped the ending of one movement with the beginning of the next. Consequently this created greater unity between the movements, and one movement could then quite unobtrusively roll into the next. However, this is not the case in the *Stabat Mater*, where the final chord is often unrelated to the opening tonality of the following movement.³⁴³

The first movement of the *Stabat Mater* is important as it establishes one of two motifs and also the prevailing emotion of the work, but it also contains another important feature of Howells' style; a second scale. In *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* and *Hymnus Paradisi*, Howells' original scale was used in several different ways; in the *Stabat Mater* it is noticeably absent, but in its place there appears to be a new series of pitches which forge a new scale. The first indication of this occurs in bars 15 and 16 of the first movement of the work, centred on C sharp. On re-examination of this movement, it becomes clear that within the first four bars of the work Howells included an extract of this scale, centred on A (see example **6.31**).

Howells ultimately confirmed the existence of a new scale with the inclusion of several melodic passages throughout the entire composition. The three most important features of this new scale are:

- 1) the semitone gap between the final and second scale degree,
- 2) the interval of a diminished fifth between the first scale degree and the fifth,
- 3) and the tone gap between the seventh degree and the final of the scale, which was also an important characteristic of the original scale.

³⁴³ The word 'chord' at this point is used in its very broadest sense; meaning three or more notes played at the same time.

At first glance, it appears to be an entirely unrelated, quasi-modal scale, yet it is directly related to Howells' original scale (see example **6.32**). Firstly, if the original scale is placed onto G, and C sharp is taken as the final (note that this is not transposing the scale), the similarities of the scale used in *Stabat Mater* begin to emerge. The other interesting feature of this second scale is the obvious intervallic similarities to the Locrian mode, which is distinguished, in part, by a semitone gap between the final and second degree and a tone gap between the seventh degree and the final (example **6.33**). The only difference between the two is on the fourth degree, which is one semitone higher in the Locrian mode.³⁴⁴

It was noted how the origins of this second scale are tied to the first. More specifically the roots of this second scale are likely in the augmented eleventh chord (major), discussed in the first chapter, with its own links to the original scale. Howells often placed the augmented eleventh chord in fifth inversion; on G it will have the pitch C sharp as its bass note. If the notes of the chord are then written in alphabetical order the following is achieved C#, D, F, G, B, C#, where already the second scale is almost complete and the three key features, discussed previously, are certainly evident (see examples **6.34** and **6.35**).³⁴⁵

Throughout the *Stabat Mater* Howells peppered the work with short snippets of melody that are derived from this scale. They are usually based on the first, second, third and fourth scale degrees, occasionally with the seventh degree too. Extracts from this scale, usually based on the degrees listed above, occur in every movement without exception. However, in the fifth movement (Sancta Mater) there is an enharmonic notation of the scale (scale is

³⁴⁴ The Phrygian mode possesses a similar interval between the final and second degree and the leading note and the final. However, it does not contain an interval of a diminished fifth between the first scale degree and the fifth.

³⁴⁵ See the musical quote from *The Coventry Mass* in appendix 1b where Howells' chord in fifth inversion is heard (in bars 7 to 9), followed by Howells' second scale in bar 9.

on C sharp in example **6.36**).³⁴⁶ Perhaps the reason why this scale is particularly appropriate in the *Stabat Mater* is because of the semitone gap between the final and the second degree, particularly in view of the discussion of the first motif in this work which is the descent of a second, usually minor (see example **6.3**).³⁴⁷

This second scale principally flourished in works from the 1960s and 1970s. *A Sequence for St. Michael*, written for the 450th anniversary of the founding of St. John's College, Cambridge, clearly hints at this new scale (on C sharp) in the opening pages, though fails to use it in its entirety (see example **6.37**). Subsequent compositions, such as the *Partita for Organ* (example **6.38**) and *Sonatina for Piano* (example **6.39**), both from 1971, also contain brief but distinct examples.³⁴⁸ In the *Nunc dimittis* from the *York* setting of the Magnificat and *Nunc dimittis* (1973) the scale is suggested, this time on a tone centre of A (example **6.40**). In the final organ work by Howells, *St. Louis Comes to Clifton* (example **6.41**), which dates from 1977, the pedal part descends more than two octaves in two bars with the appropriate properties of the scale centred on C sharp present.³⁴⁹ In several substantially earlier works, Howells centred melodic passages on what can now be identified as the first four notes of the second scale, but there was never enough material in evidence to suggest that they were based on a Howellsian scale (such as the second Organ Sonata of 1933 seen in example **6.42**).

The second scale lacks the many diverse applications of the original, discussed in chapter one. Perhaps the obvious relationship between the two is the main reason why this second scale lacks any special uses (other than for melodic passages). However, in the final bars

³⁴⁶ All other examples are included in appendix 6f.

³⁴⁷ During the period spent composing the *Stabat Mater*, Howells completed *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* one would expect to see the second scale. However, Howells refrained from using it freely. Only in bars 37 to 40 is the second scale suggested and then only briefly. In appendix 6g, the scale is based on C sharp but there is one anomaly; that of the G sharp in bar 37 of the alto, but this is naturalized before the close of bar 37.

³⁴⁸ The *Partita* also employs the original scale.

³⁴⁹ It is dedicated to Douglas Fox, a friend from the RCM and fellow organist, who lost an arm in France in 1917.

of the first movement of the *Stabat Mater*, Howells clearly used the second scale for a similar purpose as the first scale at the end of *Hymnus Paradisi* and *Missa Sabrinensis* (see example 6.43).³⁵⁰ This is sufficient proof that the scale is not simply the original with the focus on the sub-dominant, but an entirely independent scale. Essentially, Howells used the second scale as a basis for melodic passages or as a base for passages in movements, such as the opening of the third movement, *Quis est Homo?*, or at the opening of the fifth. In the fourth chapter the importance of the pitch C sharp was discussed and different movements which opened with C sharp were cited. Two of these did not state the scale used; however the scale on which both of these movements open is closely linked to Howells' second scale.

The scale raises one point of interest - is the second motif in the *Stabat Mater* based on the second scale? The motif in its original format (see example 6.4) contains only the flattened seventh, final and minor third, making it impossible to establish with any certainty that the motif was based on the second scale. However, at the very opening of the second movement, in the lower range (cello, bass, harp and piano), Howells created a variant of the motif (see example 6.44) which suggests that it could be derived from the second scale as it contains the minor second (C) and the enharmonic equivalent of the diminished fourth (D sharp).³⁵¹

One of the important characteristics of the original, and second scale, is the diminished fifth/augmented fourth. This interval is prominent in the final pages of the work, executed by the tubular bells³⁵² and sounding an augmented fourth (B natural) above an F major chord. It is interesting that the augmented fourth should be so prominent at the end of the *Stabat Mater* because it recalls Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* (the great choral

³⁵⁰ Here the scale is based on D (D, E flat, F, G flat, A flat, C, D), notably G flat and A flat are represented by their enharmonic equivalents and A natural and G natural are included.

³⁵¹ See also example 6.45.

³⁵² The bells are first introduced in the sixth movement and reused in the seventh.

masterpiece of May 1962), which relies on the same interval announced several times by the bells throughout and which also concludes on an F major chord.³⁵³

Howells' musical language is a continuous thread throughout this study. Comparing *Stabat Mater* with *Hymnus Paradisi* and *Missa Sabrinensis* one is fully aware of the marked change in Howells' harmonic language. There is now a greater level of chromaticism (as seen in examples **6.22**, **6.46** and **6.47**). The freer use of dissonance sets the *Stabat Mater* apart from the two previously mentioned large-scale choral works.³⁵⁴ This greater freedom of expression with dissonance is not confined to this composition, but certainly from the 1960s to the end of his life his works became increasingly less reliant on diatonic harmony.

With this freer use of dissonance came an important change in the basis of some of Howells' harmony. In his earlier compositions, particularly those written before the 1950s, the interval of a third was the basis for practically all of his chords. This was in line with the musical tradition he inherited and continued. However, certainly by the late 1950s and early 1960s, there is another contender for the basis of his harmony. It was during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century when the third began to lose its dominance in terms of its role in harmony. One of the new contenders for dominance was the interval of a fourth. A fine example is the harmonization of the principal theme for *Missa Sabrinensis*, which predates its regular presence in Howells' music by half a decade. Gradually the fourth became slightly more integral to Howells' harmony, but certainly not to the extent that the third was usurped. In the case of the first harmonization of the theme from *Missa Sabrinensis*, bars 6 to 9, there is a flavour of French Impressionism (see example **6.48**).

³⁵³ The augmented fourth is not uncommon at the end of such grand works as the *Hymnus Paradisi*, and *Missa Sabrinensis* because it is an important feature of the original Howells' scale (see examples **1.13** and **1.14**) and also the second scale. Nevertheless, Howells never before used bells to toll the augmented fourth. The extract from Howells' diary (appendix 6a) proves that he was working on the final movement in mid-June 1963 (a year after the premiere of the *War Requiem*) and in late September 1965, only a few months before the first performance.

³⁵⁴ *Hymnus Paradisi* and *Missa Sabrinensis*.

The interval of a fourth became more widely adopted at the turn of the last century. Composers such as Bartók and Scriabin, who were influenced by the chromaticism of Liszt, moved ever closer to atonality, turning to the possibilities afforded by the fourth. Scriabin himself developed his 'mystic chord' which is a series of juxtaposed fourths – C, F#, B flat, E, A and D.³⁵⁵ In England, the move toward atonality was not as immediate, particularly for composers such as Vaughan Williams and those in this line of succession, such as Howells.

In the 1920s Howells composed *Sine Nomine* for wordless soloists, chorus, organ and orchestra in which there are many occasions where the composer used parallel fourths in the chorus and solo voices (see example **6.49** and **6.50**). Christopher Palmer suggested that there are moments in the *Sine Nomine* which 'could easily be by Duruflé'.³⁵⁶ The influence of music by the Impressionist composers is ultimately the reason for quartal harmony in Howells' work at this point. At the same time he was not adopting quartal harmony as a substitute for chords built on thirds.

The advancement to a greater use of quartal harmony demonstrates that Howells was extending his harmonic vocabulary but retaining his tradition of composing 'out of sheer love of trying to make nice sounds'.³⁵⁷ By the second half of the twentieth century there were a number of English composers who increasingly turned to the fourth (influenced by composers such as Bartók and Hindemith), in 'biblical texts, particularly the psalms and canticles of praise'.³⁵⁸ These include Benjamin Britten, William Mathias, John Rutter and Francis Jackson. Stephen Banfield identified the beginning of quartal harmonies in English

³⁵⁵ Michael Kennedy, 'Scriabin' in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 1 vol (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 793.

³⁵⁶ Christopher Palmer, 'Herbert Howells at 80', *The Musical Times*, 120 (1979), 968

³⁵⁷ Howells in 'Echoes of a Lifetime,' Radio 3 programme presented by Robert Prizeman (1981), quoted in Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 184.

³⁵⁸ Stephen Banfield, ed., *The Twentieth Century*, The Blackwell History of Music in Britain (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1995), p. 459.

sacred choral works with their appearance in Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* (1943).³⁵⁹ It is only in the 1960s when it came to prominence in Howells' music and although there is a slight suggestion of Duruflé in the fourth movement of the *Stabat Mater* discussed above, Howells' use of the fourth throughout these later works is certainly no attempt to imitate the French composers of the early twentieth century.

In England, almost half-a-century before the *Stabat Mater*, Gustav Holst utilized quartal harmonies in a number of works, treating the interval as consonant, as it was a thousand years earlier in organum (examples of this include the opening of *The Evening Watch* (1924) and *Egdon Heath* of 1927) (example **6.51**). For Holst, his fascination with the interval of a fourth developed because of the tonal ambiguity it creates, but also because of its 'primitive evocation, as in the Vedic Hymn *Varuna I*'.³⁶⁰

In the *Stabat Mater*, certain choral and instrumental passages are entirely reliant on harmony built upon fourths. The first of these occurs in bars 34 to 38 of the first movement, just before the first entry of the chorus. The first notable example of fourths in the chorus is in the second movement, bars 30 to 35 (see example **6.52**) and also bars 84 to 88 of movement six (example **6.53**). By the time the *Partita* was written in 1971, Howells was using the fourth more freely, nevertheless the third was still not totally abandoned (see example **6.54**). In the later settings of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, such as the setting for York Minster (1973), Howells continually relied on the fourth. In the Magnificat, he created a passage based on the interval of a fourth between the soprano and alto and between the tenor and bass (see example **6.55**). As exemplified by **6.54** and **6.55**, the fourth is used in both homophonic and in more contrapuntal textures. In addition, the number of fourths used also varies greatly. In example **6.53**, Howells used F#, B and E

³⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 460.

³⁶⁰ Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 401.

(two intervals of a fourth) and in example **6.54** the first chord of the bar is F#, B, E, A and D.

In some of Howells' later works, such as *Thee Will I Love*, harmony based on the fourth is not used at all, and in only one or two chords in the *St. Augustine's Magnificat and Nunc dimittis* (1967) and *Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense Magnificat and Nunc dimittis* (1970). In *Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity* (1972) and the Sanctus from *The Coventry Mass* (1968),³⁶¹ quartal harmony is used in the homophonic texture at a climactic point in the work where it is very effective in animating the musical peak. Equally, however, quartal harmony is used in calmer and less emphatic passages (examples **6.52** and **6.53**).

The use of quartal harmony in Howells' music from the 1960s highlights one of the changes in his musical style since the time of the *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra*. The five works in this study traverse a great portion of Howells' life and cover different genres and styles. There are features of the *Elegy* and *Blessed are the Dead* (and of other early works), which were recurrent throughout Howells' compositions; notably the false relationship of the third at or towards the end of a phrase and the emphasis of words via a third and appoggiatura, as well as the vocal syncopation at the close of the phrase discussed in the previous chapter. Certain facets of the composer's musical language remained recurrent, such as Howells' scale and the chord which, if anything, became increasingly more common in his works.

The *Stabat Mater* serves as an excellent representation of some of the features of Howells' style at this point in his career. The richer musical language continued to pervade his music in his final composing decades (see example **6.56**). Quartal harmony and the second scale were important additions to Howells' music language in the later part of his life, the first developing quite naturally from Howells' musical language of the late

³⁶¹ This can be seen in example **4.51**.

1950s/early 1960s. After the completion of the *Stabat Mater*, little changed in terms of the kind of works Howells wrote. However, he never again composed a work on such a grand scale.³⁶²

The *Stabat Mater* enabled an important discussion of Howells' use of brass instruments in his orchestral music, particularly at climactic moments. His orchestration of the opening bars of the second movement provided insight into a musical texture (of low strings, piano and harp) which he also used in *Missa Sabrinensis*. The importance of a new scale in Howells' music was also considered, as well as its history. The use of motifs was an interesting study as there are no clear associations with the text and the work is largely, though not entirely, through-composed.³⁶³ Finally, the quartal harmony of these later works brings this study of Howells' style to an end.

The opening movement highlights the point that the entire *Stabat Mater* is an excellent example of extremes, not only of dynamics and of dissonance, but also of emotion. The piece guides the listener on an expansive journey through human emotion, during which one is constantly stunned by the brevity of change that occurs. Without any warning, a musical passage moves to the opposite end of the scale of human emotion. Nevertheless, the purpose is clear; it conveys the abruptness and pain of grief following personal loss. With this in mind, the feeling of bewilderment that the listener might experience, because of a lack of real structure, is the response Howells wanted. Such extreme human emotion, its

³⁶² Howells continued to write Magnificat and Nunc dimittis services, works for organ and sacred choral works.

³⁶³ The limited musical unity and the freer use of dissonance make it a complex and difficult work to understand. Hugo Cole was able to sum up the reason for the distinct lack of structure and homogeneity in the work when he wrote; 'Herbert Howells's *Stabat Mater* ... is a work that achieves homogeneity through concentration of a single emotional mood. For once, thematic content, processes of development and extension, rhetoric and drama, are all of secondary importance.' (Hugo Cole in *The Guardian*, 23rd November 1965, p. 9, quoted in Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 171). This quote touches on another feature of his music; the 'complex mood'. It describes the way in which an atmosphere is created within the confines of a movement, or in this case through the course of the entire work. Howells described his 'complex mood' in an article by Katherine E. Eggar called 'Herbert Howells on Modern Composition', *The Music Teacher and Piano Student*, 16 (1923), 214.

consequences and its manifestations which pervade this work, are often difficult or impossible to comprehend fully; Howells successfully conveyed this feeling of bewilderment in the *Stabat Mater*.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to reveal more about Howells' style, in particular idiosyncratic traits. This was achieved through the analysis of five works (which span a period of more than 40 years) where the construction and motifs of each work were discussed and the important stylistic fingerprints of the composer identified.³⁶⁴

To facilitate the final discussion of these crucial stylistic traits, they are divided into seven categories:

- 1) Howells' scales
- 2) Harmonic features
- 3) The interval of a third
- 4) Word emphasis
- 5) Rhythm
- 6) Melody/ melodic features
- 7) Orchestration

Howells' first scale was an important part of the melodic and harmonic style of his composition and was introduced in chapter one. This quasi-modal scale is not a new concept, but several key applications of its use are identified; firstly for the decoration of a final chord (see example **1.13**), secondly for its use at a climax (see example **1.8**). Finally, it was also observed that Howells tended to use the scale for the build-up to a climactic moment (such as example **1.15** from the fourth movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*) or in the approach to the final chord (as examples **1.21** and **1.22**).

³⁶⁴ In addition, the first two chapters provide insight into two important early influences on Howells - Vaughan Williams and early English church music.

One important development from this first scale is the augmented eleventh chord (see example **1.24**); a combination of the scale's chief features (the augmented fourth and flattened seventh) with a major triad. This same chord (in fifth inversion) was the original source of Howells' second scale, a significant feature of his later works. This second scale shares some characteristics with the original; the flattened seventh and the interval of a diminished fifth above the final.³⁶⁵ However, it lacks the same clear applications of the first, though it was apparent in the *Stabat Mater* and other works of this time that Howells employed it for melodic passages (see example **6.31**).

As concerns Howells' harmonic features, the augmented eleventh chord is one vital constituent and adds an important and sensuous stamp to his music. The chord is used in one of a number of different inversions (second, third and fifth) particularly the fifth, especially in works from the 1950s onward. The second chord was the minor augmented eleventh on A flat, which largely appears at the end of a movement or work (see example **4.71**). Certainly, the most intriguing and unusual feature of this minor augmented eleventh is the combined sound created by two chords separated by a semitone (A flat minor and G major, or the enharmonic G sharp minor and G major). Unlike the first chord, there were specific guidelines for its implementation. Firstly, Howells generally used the chord at or towards the end of a movement, or in the final movement of work. Secondly, the chord was only ever used on A flat or its enharmonic equivalent.³⁶⁶ Finally, it was also only used in root position and usually orchestrated in the lower range.

Continuing the topic of Howells' harmonic language, the gradual integration of quartal harmony (see example **6.53**) into his musical vocabulary was an important appendage in the 1960s when passages of chords built on juxtaposed fourths became more prominent in his compositions (some including up to five notes). Quartal harmony was not introduced to

³⁶⁵ In the original scale this was an augmented fourth.

³⁶⁶ There was one noted exception at the end of *A Kent Yeoman's Wooing Song* (1933) where the root was B flat.

usurp harmony built on thirds, but as a supplement, in line with a national trend which emerged in the second-half of the twentieth century.

The interval of a third in different forms is a continuous thread throughout this study. In the second chapter, Howells juxtaposed chords a third apart (relative major and minor) to create harmonic ambiguity (see example **2.5**).³⁶⁷ In the third chapter the same interval assumed another form, as false relations between major and minor inflections of the third of a chord were discussed (see example **3.8**).³⁶⁸ An additional feature of this use was its location at the end of a vocal phrase, typically the final chord.

Emerging from this discussion was the idiosyncratic word emphasis, achieved with an ascent and descent of a minor third where the higher pitch was on an off-beat (see example **3.8**). The melodic ascent and descent of a third (where the higher pitch falls on the strong beat) was a widespread form of word emphasis, but Howells developed his own variant (see example **4.39**).³⁶⁹ The augmented eleventh chord (major) was also able to convey anguish or tension in a particular word. Howells often used the appoggiatura for word emphasis, but of greater significance was his tendency to regularly employ the appoggiatura to retain the intensity of a climax (see example **4.70**).

As with many other composers from different eras, Howells was partial to the harmonic progression of a third. In his music there are three very distinct purposes for its inclusion; to change the mood at a particular point in a work (a single harmonic shift of a third as demonstrated in appendix 5d), to add tension to a musical build-up on the approach to a climax (example **5.24**) and finally to denote the climax itself (example **5.26**).

³⁶⁷ A common feature in a number of Howells' works of this time.

³⁶⁸ One influence of early English music.

³⁶⁹ Typically, two parts start on the same pitch (on the last beat of a bar) then on the first beat of the subsequent bar the upper part ascends a minor third as the lower descends a semitone. The two parts then return to the original starting pitch.

Howells' rhythmic syncopation at the end of a phrase is a major feature of his choral compositions from as early as 1920, but entirely absent from his early Latin choral works. Typically, the time signature is 3/4 and the final bar of the phrase is divided into two equal segments (see example **5.12**). Primarily, its function is to ornament the end of a phrase and to create rhythmic interest at a point that may otherwise flag.

Howells also developed a fondness for delaying, and consequently heightening, the peak of a climax by placing the climax on the second beat; the first beat being silent. Typically, where there is a choir (or chorus), exultant words like 'Glory' are common (see example **1.35**).

As concerns features of some of Howells' melodies, one intriguing aspect was the shared characteristics of a number of different themes (see examples **4.4** to **4.8**) from large-scale works; notably *Hymnus Paradisi*, *Stabat Mater* and *Missa Sabrinensis* (the flattened seventh, tonic and minor third being vital constituents). One additional melodic idiosyncrasy at the beginning of a number of individual instrumental or vocal entries (particular in a contrapuntal texture) was the melodic descent and ascent seen in examples **4.14** and **4.15**. This feature was first used in 1911 and appeared in Howells' works throughout the subsequent 60 years.

In the *Elegy for Solo Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra, Blessed are the Dead and Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* the opening melodies are integral for the creation of homogeneity. In the *Elegy*, the opening idea provides almost all musical material for the entire work. Additionally, in the other two compositions, homogeneity is created through the repetition of the opening line.³⁷⁰ In *Hymnus Paradisi* and *Stabat Mater*, the two initial motifs (in both) are important for homogeneity. However, these compositions lack the musical

³⁷⁰ In *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*, the dotted rhythm was important also.

unity of the other three works in this study.³⁷¹ The 'complex mood' is one way in which Howells created unity in some of his works.³⁷²

In terms of orchestration, one clear feature of Howells' early choral works (including *Blessed are the Dead*) is the use of two choirs. This is likely a result of the influences of the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and the decani and cantoris services of Byrd, Gibbons and others.³⁷³ In the later choral works (notably from the 1940s onward), Howells typically employed one choir.

Howells' use of brass instruments at some of the major climaxes in his large-scale choral works was a notable aspect of his orchestration. He adds a personal mark to a passage which might otherwise be of no great significance when the brass section anticipates chord changes in the chorus creating an interesting aural effect.

Concerning orchestration, there is seemingly only one distinctly Howellsian arrangement of instruments at the opening of the fourth movement of *Missa Sabrinensis*, imitated in the initial bars of the second movement of *Stabat Mater* (see examples **6.25** and **6.26**). The combination of piano, harp, and low strings create this solemn timbre, and the slow tempo in both creates the impression of a funeral march.

After revisiting these seven crucial areas, there is a definite theme throughout; Howells' tendency to use certain devices at particular points in the music or on specific tone centres. The minor augmented eleventh chord was rarely used on any tone centre other than A flat (excluding its enharmonic equivalent), suggesting that Howells was partial to its sound. Though never restricted to any particular tone centre, the augmented eleventh chord

³⁷¹ This is also the case in *Missa Sabrinensis*.

³⁷² Briefly considered in the final chapter.

³⁷³ Possibly too the works of Stanford and Parry which were also influenced by early English composers.

(major) was confined to a small number of inversions; fifth being the most common, notably in *Stabat Mater*. An additional Howellsian feature that only ever occurs on one particular tone centre is the use of the first scale to denote a climactic moment (such as bars 89 to 95 of the Sanctus: I Will Lift up Mine Eyes from *Hymnus Paradisi* – see example **1.8** and **1.10**). For these moments, Howells established the tone centre of C, where the B flat augmented chord is recurrent. The Phrygian progression, discussed in the second chapter was a feature in a small number of works (see example **2.29**).³⁷⁴ One vital characteristic of its use was Howells' tendency to confine it to the key of G.³⁷⁵

In the Sanctus from *Hymnus Paradisi*, Howells established a trend for subsequent versions of the Sanctus, in different settings of the Mass, by commencing the movement on the tone centre of C sharp. In addition, it was noted how a number of these settings, which open on C sharp, often move to a concluding F sharp major chord.³⁷⁶

A final point concerning Howells' stylistic features is the large possibility that over time some of these features may have developed into unconscious actions of the composer's hand; notably the syncopated rhythm at the end of the phrase and the placement of climaxes (especially with words such as 'Glory') on the second beat.

As demonstrated in this study, Howells was a composer with very distinct musical features and processes. The five works discussed were an ideal way of discovering more about these features and enabled a greater understanding of his compositional style. Spanning a forty year period, these works demonstrate crucial changes in Howells' musical voice and also serve to illustrate how many of these processes never changed.

³⁷⁴ The link shared by most compositions where it arises is Vaughan Williams; notably Ralph's Pavane from *Herbert's Clavichord*, and Sarabande for the 12th day of any October from the *Partita*.

³⁷⁵ With the noted exception in *Sing Lullaby* which was based on F

³⁷⁶ In addition *A Sequence for St. Michael* opens on the tone centre of C sharp and concludes with an F sharp major chord.

Appendices

Appendix 1a.

Thee Will I Love (1970), *Con ricchezza, ma con moto*. Bars 24 to 29. Choir and Organ.

Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, Magnificat, *poco allegro, sempre con moto*. Bars 53 to 62.

Appendix 1b.

The Coventry Mass (1968), Kyrie Eleison, *Quasi Lento, penitento*. Bars 6 to 9. Choir and Organ.

An English Mass (1955), Gloria, *poco lento*. Bars 71 to 75. Choir and Orchestra reduction.

Appendix 2a.

Comparison of *Elegy* and the Second Movement of the *Suite for String Orchestra*

The following is an outline of some of the differences between the *Elegy* and the second movement of the *Suite for String Orchestra*.³⁷⁷

In bars 26 to 31, a passage for solo viola was added. In addition, the inner parts of the tutti section were slightly altered, but the harmony is essentially the same.

In bar 31, a semi-quaver rest was included in violin parts I and II. It occurs in between the second and third crotchet beats.

In bar 35, the chord progression is altered slightly. In the second movement of the suite, Howells held an F minor chord for two crotchet beats, moving to E flat seventh for the final two crotchets. In the *Elegy*, the E flat seventh chord was replaced by a chord based on E flat (without the third) and with a minor seventh and diminished 12th. In both the *Elegy* and the *Suite* the subsequent chord (in the next bar) is A flat major.

In bars 36 to 38, a passage that was written in A flat major for the second movement of the *Suite* was changed to G sharp for the *Elegy*.

In bars 41 to 56, Howells added a passage for the solo viola. In the suite, Howells sketched (in pencil) some of this material but not all of it.

In bar 47 Howells suggested a dynamic level of *f*, however the manuscript of the *Suite* cites *pp* for the beginning of the tutti phrase.

³⁷⁷ Bars numbers refer to the *Elegy* unless otherwise stated.

In the same bar (47), the cello and bass parts were altered from Howells' original intentions (as shown on the manuscript of the second movement of the *Suite*). Howells sketched the new material under the old.

In bars 50 to 55 of the second movement of the *Suite*, the cello part of the solo quartet is entirely missing.

In bars 54 to 57 the harmony is principally the same in both the *Elegy* and the movement from the *Suite*, however the distinct Elgarian turn was included in the *Elegy*. There are slight differences in the individual parts at this point.

In bars 55 and 56 of the *Elegy*, Howells added the solo quartet which essentially doubles the tutti.

In bars 58 to 74, the most noticeable differences between the *Elegy* and the second movement of the *Suite* are apparent. In both works, these bars serve as a transition before the recapitulation of the opening melody. The harmony in bars 58 to 63 in both works is unaltered. However in the *Suite*, the melody of the solo viola (bars 59 to 60) is reliant on the opening melody of the work. In the *Elegy*, the solo viola material is initially very different, but returns to the opening idea at the end of bar 60.

In bars 64 to 74 of both works, the two differ quite dramatically. In the *Suite*, the material for this passage is largely derived from the opening bar, whereas the *Elegy* employs a variant of the first bar.

In bars 75 and 76, there are subtle differences in the inner parts (particularly violin II and viola of the tutti) in comparison with the same passage in the second movement of the

Suite. Nevertheless, the outer parts are the same. In bars 75 also, a passage for solo viola was added which largely doubles violins I of the tutti (bars 75 to 92).

In bars 86 to 89 of the *Elegy*, Howells included a passage for the solo quartet which was not used in the *Suite*; indeed, there is no suggestion that Howells was intending to use the quartet here.

After bar 89 of the *Suite*, there were originally three additional bars, however these were deleted from the manuscript of the second movement of the *Suite* (a line crossed through these bars) and were not included in the *Elegy*.

In bar 90 to 93 of the *Elegy*, Howells added a passage for the solo viola.

In bars 99 to 104 (end), Howells added the solo quartet and solo viola to a passage was previously for the tutti alone. Consequently, the chord in bar 99 that will be discussed in the fourth chapter was originally very different.

Appendix 2b.

Francis Purcell Warren

Francis Purcell Warren, a close friend of Howells at the RCM, was one of many who volunteered for war duty in Midsummer 1914, preceding the time when conscription was compulsory. His scholarship form for the RCM simply and succinctly states 'at the war'.³⁷⁸ He joined the 10th South Lancashires and was a Second Lieutenant. Warren, like so many other artists, poets, and musicians was never to return to England.³⁷⁹ In 1917, at Mons, in Belgium, close to the border with France, Warren was killed.

Warren was originally from Leamington Spa. He was born on 29 May 1895, to Walter Warren, a musician. Warren entered the RCM in February of 1910, to study violin, with piano as second study. In May 1913, a year before the war, he was awarded the 'Morley' scholarship. The loss of such a close friend of Howells was clear to Alan Ridout, who recalls:

There is no doubt in my mind that he loved Francis Purcell Warren. He had a snapshot of him on his mantelpiece, standing together with Leon Goossens... Once he stood before the picture gradually becoming inarticulate with grief. After a long silence he said, "He was everything to me" and sobbed, then swiftly pulled himself together.³⁸⁰

Purcell Warren was remembered in Howells's *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and Strings*. He also received a dedication in *The B's* (1914), fourth movement.

³⁷⁸ Francis Purcell Warren's Scholarship form.

³⁷⁹ More than two hundred RCM students went to war, of which thirty two lost their lives.

³⁸⁰ Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd, 1998), p. 63., from Alan Ridout, *A Composer's Life* (London: Thames Publishing, 1995), p. 55.

Appendix 2c.

Mass in the Dorian Mode, *Lento ma non troppo*. Bars 16 to 37.

Appendix 2d.

The following pages will highlight a few passages of Howells' music which imitate music by Vaughan Williams. The first of these is *Old Meg*, a solo song from 1923. The composition commences with a gentle, undulating chord progression reminiscent of a recurrent chord progression in Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*.

Ex. 1 *Old Meg*, *Quasi lento*. Bars 1 to 4. Piano and voice.

Ex. 2 *Lark Ascending*, *Andante sostenuto*. Bars 1 to 3. Orchestra.

Another work by Howells which includes a feature from *The Lark Ascending* is the *Fantasia for Cello and Orchestra* (1936), which opens with a sustained E minor 7th chord and a soaring cello melody that instantly bring to mind Vaughan Williams' work.

Ex. 3 *Fantasia for Cello and Orchestra*, *tranquillo, quasi Andante*. Bars 1 to 5. Cello and piano reduction of orchestra.

The third work by Howells is the *Intrata No 2* for organ composed in 1941, shortly after his appointment at St. John's College, Cambridge. What is of particular interest is the opening chord progression, which is extremely similar to the opening of Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia*.

Ex. 4 Opening chords from Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia* on a theme by Thomas Tallis.

Ex. 5 Opening chords from Herbert Howells' *Intrata No. 2*.

The chord progression in the *Fantasia* begins on G Major, in root position, finally arriving on a G Flat major chord in second inversion within the space of two bars. In the *Intrata* this is matched by the progression from E minor in first inversion finally arriving at G major in

second inversion (a semitone higher than the final chord in the brief opening of the Fantasia). The pedal part in Howells' work imitates the bass line of the Tallis Fantasia. Finally *Master Tallis's Testament*, from *Six Pieces for Organ* dates from 1940. The opening four bars of the right-hand melody bears much resemblance to the Viola solo, located at rehearsal letter I, of the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

Ex. 6 Vaughan Williams, *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, *poco più animato*. Rehearsal letter I to 3 bars after rehearsal letter I. Solo Viola.

Ex. 7 *Six Pieces for Organ*. *Master Tallis's Testament*, *quasi lento teneramente*. Organ, right-hand.

Appendix 3a.

Text of *Blessed are the Dead*.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord.
 For theirs is the peace of God,
 They rest from their labours.
 Their joy is of the Holy Spirit and shall not be broken
For they shall come even unto Heaven.
 For them was achieved the triumph of the Resurrection of the Son of God, that unto
 them it should be *assured not death* but to rest awhile from their labours
 And to inherit *celestial light* which is eternal *For them that die in the Lord.*

Words in italic are those added to the gaps in the text by Patrick Russill.

Appendix 3b.

Even such is Time (1913), Bars 22 to 26. Choir I. SATB.

Appendix 3c.

Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, Magnificat, *poco allegro, sempre con moto*. Bars 35 to 38. Choir and organ.

Winchester service, Nunc dimittis, *non troppo lento, assai espressivo*. Bars 17 to 20. Choir and organ.

York service, Magnificat, *spritoso, ma flessibile*. Bars 73 to 81. Choir and organ.

York service, Magnificat, *meno mosso*. Bars 108 to 115. Choir and organ.

Appendix 4a.

Walford Davies' Requiem (1915)	Howells' Requiem (1932)	Hymnus Paradisi (1938?)
Salvator Mundi	Salvator Mundi	Preludio
De Profundis Clamavi	Psalm 23	Requiem Aeternam
Requiem Aeternam (i)	Requiem Aeternam (i)	Psalm 23
I Will Lift up Mine Eyes Up Mine Eyes)	(Psalm 121: I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes	Sanctus: I Will Lift
Requiem Aeternam (ii)	Requiem Aeternam (ii)	I Heard a Voice From Heaven
I Heard a Voice from Heaven Heaven	I Heard a Voice from Heaven	Holy is the True Light

Taken from page 60 of Christopher Palmer's *Herbert Howells : A Celebration* (London: Thames Publishing, 1996)

Appendix 4b.**Passages from Howells' Requiem reused in Hymnus Paradisi**

The opening melody of Psalm 23 from the *Requiem* (bars 1 and 2) which recurs throughout this movement (bars 5, 16 to 19 and bar 20) is used as the main melodic idea in the third movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*.

Bars 9 to 12 of Psalm 23 (*Requiem*) is reused in bars 35 to 41 of the third movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* with the same words 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: thy rod and thy staff comfort me.' In the same movement from the *Requiem*, bars 17 to 20 of Psalm 23 are similar to bars 81 to 85 of the third movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*.

Requiem Aeternam 1 (*Requiem*) - bars 1 to 31 are reused in the second movement of *Hymnus Paradisi* (bars 1 to 33), and bars 33 to 38 are reused in bars 106 to 112 of the second movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*.

Bars 23 to 33 of Requiem Aeternam 2 (*Requiem*) are reused in bars 84 to 92 of the second movement of *Hymnus Paradisi*.

I Heard a Voice (bars 3 to 58) is almost entirely identical to bars 8 to 64 of the same movement in *Hymnus Paradisi*. The key differences are in the opening tenor solo of both movements which is entirely different. Furthermore, the melody sung by the baritone solo of bars 15 to 22 (*Requiem*) is different to the corresponding tenor solo part of bars 20 to 27 of *Hymnus Paradisi*.

Appendix 4c.

Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1978), p. 46 to 48.

Appendix 4d.

Collegium Regale Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, Nunc Dimittis, *quasi lento, tranquillo*. Bars 35 to 42. Choir and Organ.

Sarum Service, Nunc Dimittis, *un poco piu mosso*. Bars 47 to 62. Choir and Organ.

York Service, Magnificat, *spiritoso, ma flessibile*. Bars 116 to 126. Choir and Organ.

Missa Aedis Christi, Sanctus, *Calmato*. Bars 14 to 22. Choir.

Appendix 4e.

Stabat Mater, Sancta mater, *assai fervido (piu mosso)*. Bars 98 to 101. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Appendix 4f.

Missa Sabrinensis, Credo, *Più lento, assai espressivo*. Bars 214 to 222. Piano reduction of orchestra.

A Garland for De La Mare. The Cherry Trees (1969), *Come una Siciliana; teneramente, ma con moto*. Bars 1 and 2. Piano and voice.

Psalm Prelude Set Two Number Three, *un poco meno mosso: e poco rubato*. Bars 84 to 95. Organ.

Appendix 4g.

Herbert Howells. An English Mass. Benedictus. *Lento, piacevole*. Bars 1 to 6.

Appendix 5a.

Part of Helen Waddell's translation of *Hymnus Circa Exsequias Defuncti*

Take him, earth, for cherishing,
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
Noble even in its ruin.

Once was this a spirit's dwelling,
By the breath of God created.
High the heart that here was beating,
Christ the prince of all its living.

Guard him well, the dead I give thee.
Not unmindful of his creature
Shall he ask it: he who made it
Symbol of his mystery.

Comes the hour God hath appointed
To fulfil the hope of men.
Then must thou, in very fashion
What I give return again.

Not though ancient time decaying
Wear away those bones to sand.
Ashes that a man might measure
In the hollow of his hand.

Not though wandering winds and idle
Drifting through the empty sky,
Scatter dust to nerve and sinew,
Is it given to man to die.

Once again the shining road
Leads to ample paradise;
Open are the woods again
That the serpent lost for men.

Take, O take him, mighty leader,
Take again thy servant's soul.
Grave his name, and pour the fragrant
Balm upon the icy stone.

Appendix 5b.

Come, My Soul, *Un poco animato, ma sempre amando*. Bars 43 to 46. SATTB.

Antiphon, *Assai ritmico, con urgenza*. Bars 21 to 27. SATB.

Appendix 5c.

1) The Office of Holy Communion, Collegium Regale, Gloria in Excelsis, *Più espressivo, un poco meno mosso (moderato)*. Bar 74. Soprano.

2) The Office of Holy Communion, Collegium Regale, Credo, *meno mosso (con moto, ma espressivo)*. Bars 54 and 55. Soprano.

3) Coventry Mass, Gloria in Excelsis Deo, *vivo brioso*. Bars 31 and 32. Soprano.

4) Long, Long Ago, *moderato con moto*. Bars 18 to 21. Soprano.

5) Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is my Shepherd, *quasi lento, non troppo rubato*. Bars 9 and 10. Solo soprano.

6) Stabat Mater, Fac ut Portem, *meno mosso, spazioso ma appassionata*. Bars 71-3. Solo tenor.

7) Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Quasi lento, Serioso, ma con moto*. Bar 18. Soprano.

8) The Fear of the Lord, *Incalzando, sempre (Sempre urgente)*. Bars 39 to 42. Soprano.

9) Stabat Mater, Fac ut Portem, *Lento, dolente*. Bars 5 to 9. Alto.

10) Hymnus Paradisi, The Lord is my Shepherd, *In tempo*. Bars 76 to 80. Soprano solo.

11) Missa Sabrinensis, Gloria, *Allegro vivo*. Bars 4 to 6. Soprano.

12) Exultate Deo, *poco meno mosso*. Bar 92. Organ.

Appendix 5d.

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *poco meno mosso*. Bars 72 to 79. SATB

Appendix 5e.

Examples of the progression of the third in the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis for the Collegiate Church of Saint Peter in Westminster.

- 1) Magnificat, *Moving easily and lightly*. Bars 1 to 3. SATB and organ.
- 2) Magnificat, *Moving easily and lightly*. Bars 9 to 12. SATB and organ.
- 3) Magnificat, *Poco a poco cresc. (Moving easily and lightly)*. Bars 54 to 56. SATB and organ.
- 4) Magnificat, *risvegliato*. Bars 88 to 91. SATB and organ.

Appendix 5f.

Vaughan Williams. Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis, *molto adagio*. Orchestra I and II. 6 bars before U, to 2 bars before U. **23**

Vaughan Williams. Phantasy Quintet. Prelude, *lento ma non troppo*. Violin I, II, Viola I, II, Cello. Bars 37 to 43.

Appendix 5g.

The Scribe, *Moving slowly, but freely*. Bars 1 to 4. SATB.

Antiphon, *assai ritmico, con urgenza*. Bars 1 to 4. SATB.

Sweetest of Sweets, *flessibile e dolce*. Bars 1 to 3. SSAATB.

One Thing Have I Desired, *Serioso, ardente*. Bars 1 to 3. SATB.

Appendix 5h.

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing was composed in the later stages of the six-year period Howells was composing and orchestrating *Stabat Mater*.³⁸¹ Though the *Stabat Mater* was not fully completed until 1965, parts of the work were completed considerably earlier.³⁸² Consequently there are similar melodies and harmonies in these works. In bar 45 of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* (see example 1), the listener is thrown one of the principal motifs of the *Stabat Mater* (see example 2); the appoggiatura with resolution followed by a descent of a fifth to an A natural.³⁸³

Ex.1 *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*, *Quasi lento, Serioso, largando*. SATB. Bar 45.

Ex. 2 *Stabat Mater, Stabat Mater*, *Quasi lento, passionato ma tristamente*. Bars 42 and 43. SATB and orchestra.

Furthermore, the harmony of the unaccompanied choral work at this point is almost identical to the harmony of bars 42 to 43 of the first movement of *Stabat Mater*, the movement in which the listener is first exposed to this vital motif. Indeed the only differences between these two examples appear in the bass part of *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing* where it essentially doubles the tenor part.

In the *Stabat Mater* the appoggiatura (from F to E in the example 2 above) was principally used to accentuate grievous words.³⁸⁴ This is certainly not the case in *Take, Him Earth, for Cherishing*. Preceding this, Howells included two precursors of this *Stabat Mater* motif in the unaccompanied choral work. The first occurs in bars 29 and 30 (see example 3) and the second in bars 41 and 42 (see example 4).

³⁸¹ The fact that both works are bound up with death and mourning is an obvious link too.

³⁸² Howells' diary refers to copying 1st movement of *Stabat Mater* in August 1959 (see appendix 6a)

³⁸³ This will be discussed in the following chapter.

³⁸⁴ The use of the appoggiatura in the *Stabat Mater* for word emphasis will be made clear in the discussion of this work.

Ex. 3 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *con anima e movimento*. Bars 29 and 30. Soprano.

Ex. 4 Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *Quasi lento, Serioso, largando appassionato*. Bars 41 to 42. Soprano.

Appendix 6a.

Extracts from Howells' diary, identifying exactly when Howells composed the various movements of the *Stabat Mater*, quoted in Christopher Palmer, *A Celebration* (London: Thames Publishing, 1996), pp. 443 to 445.

Appendix 6b.

Stabat Mater

Stabat Mater dolorosa Juxta crucem lacrimosa, Dum pendebat filius.	A mother stood grief-stricken, by the cross, weeping, while her son was hanging there.
Cujus animam gementem, Contristatam, et dolentem, Per transivit gladius.	As she shared in his sorrow and grieved, a sword pierced he groaning heart.
O quam tristis et afflicta, Fuit illa benedicta, Mater unigeniti	O how sorrowful and afflicted was that blessed woman, the mother of the only-begotten one.
Quae moerebat, et dolebat, <i>Pia Mater, dum videbat</i> Et tremebat cum videbat Nati poenas inclyti.	Devoted mother, who mourned and grieved while she saw, who trembled, seeing the punishment of her glorious son.
Quis est homo, qui non fleret, Matrem Christi si videret, In tanto supplicio?	Who is the man who would not weep if he saw the mother of Christ in such torment?
Quis non posset contristari, Christi Matrem contemplari, Dolentem cum filio?	Who could not share in the sorrow, were he to contemplate the mother of Christ grieving for her son.
Pro peccatis suae gentis, Vidit Jesum in tormentis, Et flagellis subditum.	She saw Jesus in agony and subjected to whips for the sins of the nation.
Vidit suum dulcem natum, <i>Moriendo</i> desolatum, Dum emisit spiritum.	She saw her sweet child desolate in his dying moments, as his spirit slipped away.
Eia Mater, fons amoris, Me sentire vim doloris, Fac, ut tecum lugeam.	Alas, mother, fountain of love, let me feel the force of your grief, so that I may bemoan with you.
Fac ut ardeat cor meum, In amando Christum Deum, Ut sibi complaceam.	Let my heart burn with love of Christ our Lord so that I may please him.
Sancta Mater, istud agas, Crucifixi fige plagas, Cordi meo valide.	Holy mother, do just that, let the blows of the crucified one drive strongly into my heart.

Tui nati vulnerati,
 Tam dignati pro me pati,
 Poenas mecum divide.

Share with me the punishment
 of your wounded son
 who suffered so worthily for me.

Fac me vere tecum flere,
 Crucifixi condolere,
 Donec ego vixero.

Let me truly weep with you,
 grieve with you for him, crucified,
 for as long as I live.

Juxta Crucem tecum stare,
 Et me tibi sociare,
 In planctu desidero.

I long to stand by the cross with you,
 gladly keeping company
 with you in your lamentation.

Virgo virginum praeclara,
 Mihi jam non sis amara,
 Fac me tecum plangere.

Virgin, most noble of virgins,
 do not now be bitter towards me,
 let me lament with you.

Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
 Passionis fac consortem,
 Et plagas recolere.

Let me bear Christ's death,
 let me share in his sufferings
 and receive the blows.

Fac me plagis vulnerati,
 Cruce hac inebriari,
 Ob amorem filii.

Let me be wounded by the lashes,
 intoxicated by that cross,
 through love for your son.

Inflamatus et accensus,
 Per te, Virgo, sim defensus.
 In die iudicii

Blazing and scorched,
 May I be protected by you Virgin,
 on the day of judgement.

Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
 Da per Matrem me venire,
 Ad palmam victoriae.

Christ when Thee shall call me hence,
 be my mother, my defence,
 be thy Cross of victory.

Fac me cruce cusodiri,
 Morte Christi praemuniri,
 Confoveri gratia.

Let me be guarded by the cross,
 defended by the death of Christ,
 fostered by grace.

Quando corpus morietur,
 Fac ut animae donetur,
 Paradisi gloria.
 Amen.

When my body has died,
 let it be that the glory of paradise
 is granted to my soul.

Italic indicates a word or line not used by Howells.

Based on translations by Alec Robertson from *Requiem: Music of Mourning and Consolation* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1976), p. 133-135, and by Emma Marshall cited in the piano reduction and chorus score of Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, published by Novello.

Appendix 6c.**Settings of the Stabat Mater Poem**

	Poulenc 1949	Berkeley 1947	Rossini 1842
I	Stabat Mater Dolorosa	Stabat Mater Dolorosa	Stabat Mater Dolorosa
II	Cujus animam Gementem	O Quam tristis	Cujus animam Gementem
III	O Quam tristis	Quis est homo	Quis est homo
IV	Quae moerebat	Pro Peccatis suae	Pro Peccatis suae
V	Quis est homo	Eia Mater	Eja Mater
VI	Vidit suum	Sancta Mater	Sancta Mater
VII	Eja Mater	Fac me tecum	Fac ut portem
VIII	Fact ut ardeat	Virgo virginum	Inflammatum et accensum
IX	Sancta Mater	Fac me plagis	Quando corpus morietur
X	Fac ut portem	Christe cum sit hinc	In sempiternam saecula
XI	Inflammatum et accensum		
XII	Quando corpus		
	Stanford 1906	Szymanowski 1928	Verdi 1898
I	Prelude	Stabat Mater	One movement
II	Stabat Mater Dolorosa	Quis est homo	
III	intermezzo	Eja Mater	
IV	Eia Mater	Fac me tecum	
V	Virgo virginum praeclara	Virgo virginum ...	
VI		Christe cum sit	
	Dvořák 1877	Howells 1964	
I	Stabat Mater Dolorosa	Stabat Mater	
II	Quis est homo	Cujus animam Gementem	
III	Eia Mater	Quis est homo?	
IV	Fac ut ardeat cor meum	Eia, Mater	
V	Tui nati vulnerati	Sancta Mater	
VI	Fac me vere tecum flere	Fac ut portem	
VII	Virgo virginum praeclara	Christe cum sit hinc exire	
VIII	Fac ut portem Christi mortem		
IX	Inflammatum et accensum		
X	Quando corpus morietur		

Appendix 6d.

Stabat Mater, Cujus animam gementem, *l'istesso tempo, ma appassionato*. Bars 68 to 73. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Stabat Mater, Fac ut portem, *meno mosso, spazioso ma appassionata*. Bars 59 to 66. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Stabat Mater, Christe cum sit hinc exire, *Lento, appenato*. Bars 73 to 81. Chorus and piano reduction of orchestra.

Appendix 6e.**Hymnus Paradisi**

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
1 Cor Anglais
2 Clarinets
1 Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoons
Double Bassoon

4 Horns
3 Trumpets
2 Tenor Trombones
1 Bass Trombone
1 Tuba

Timpani

Bass Drums and Cymbals

Harp
Piano
Celesta
Organ

SATB Chorus

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Stabat Mater

2 Flutes
1 Piccolo
2 Oboes
Cor Anglais
1 Clarinet (B flat)
1 Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoons

4 Horns
3 Trumpets
3 Trombones
1 Tuba

Timpani
G. C.

Harp
Piano
Celesta
Organ

SATB Chorus

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Concerto in C Minor for Piano and Orchestra

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets (B flat)
2 Bassoons
4 Horns (F)
2 Trumpets (F)
3 Trombones

Timpani G-C-D

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

The B's

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
1 Cor Anglais
2 Clarinets
2 Bassoons
1 Contra Bassoon
4 Horns
2 Trumpets
3 Trombones
1 Tuba

Harp
kettle Drum
Side Drum
Bass Drum
Glockenspiel
Celesta
Piano
Triangle
Cymbals

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Missa Sabrinensis

2 Flute
 1 Piccolo
 2 Oboes
 1 Cor Anglais
 2 Clarinets (B flat)
 2 Bassoons

4 Horns (F)
 3 Trumpets
 3 Trombones
 1 Tuba

Timpani

Harp
 Organ

SATB Chorus

Violin I
 Violin II
 Viola
 Cello
 Double Bass

Appendix 6f.

A passage from the first movement containing the second scale was included in the sixth chapter. In addition, a variant from the fifth movement was also cited, however an example from several of the other movements will now be quoted.

In the second movement, Howells used the following melody in the soprano part. In the orchestra there is a pedal A.

Ex. 1. Cujus Animam Gementem, *Con ansietà, ma con moto*. Bars 71 to 73. Soprano.

In the third movement bars 1 to 2, Howells has written the following. With the exception of the G sharp (which is used more for decoration than for any other purpose) the scale is evident.

Ex. 2. Quis est Homo? *Allegro, inquieto*. Bars 1 to 3. SATB and piano reduction of orchestra.

In the sixth movement, one is immediately reminded of the example above from the second movement, as it occurs in the soprano melody and there is a supporting pedal A in the orchestra.

Ex. 3. *Fac ut Portem, Lento, dolente*. Bars 22 to 24. SATB and piano reduction of orchestra.

In the final movement the second scale is heard in the early stages.

Ex. 4. *Christe cum sit hinc exire, più mosso, giusto, quasi una Marcia. (lento: tranquillo, remote)*. Bars 17 to 25. Piano reduction of orchestra.

Appendix 6g.

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, *intenso*. Bars 37 to 39. SATB.

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