

*Vaughan Williams's
Ninth Symphony*

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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	xiv
<i>List of Figures</i>	xv
<i>List of Tables</i>	xvi
<i>List of Musical Examples</i>	xvii
<i>Notes to the Sketch Transcriptions</i>	xx
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xxiii
1. Introduction	I
2. The Ninth Symphony: Context, Sources, and Working Methods	14
3. The First Movement	54
4. The Second Movement	112
5. The Third Movement	148
6. The Fourth Movement	191
7. Salisbury, Hardy, and Bunyan: The Programmatic Origins of the Symphony	256
8. Conclusions	295
Appendix: Details of Structure and Other Physical Features of the Manuscripts	301
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	305
<i>Index</i>	311

I. *Introduction*

My own feeling is that we ought only to show MS. of the new one, 9,—but who ever does that I should like them to show the whole of the scaffolding, so to speak . . . with regard to this no. 9 its a case of all or nothing: I usually destroy my rough copies but I have kept these as I thought it might be useful to show the scaffolding.

Thus wrote Vaughan Williams in the last year of his life, in response to a proposal to exhibit manuscripts of his symphonies at the première of the Ninth.¹ A major composer normally tight-lipped on such matters invites us into his workshop, perhaps even his creative processes. More than forty years on, after structuralism, deconstruction, post-modernism, and the ‘death of the author’, are we inclined to accept? And if so, on what conditions? Before reading a long and dense study of the kind which follows, we are certainly justified in asking at least two major questions of our would-be scholarly guide. What is there about the work in question that justifies such a study? And, given the daunting problems involved in explicating sketches and other compositional documents, what of importance can we learn from them that cannot be learnt from other sources?

Such questions are all the more pressing in the light of recent seismic upheavals in the musicological terrain. It is some fifteen years since this series of studies in musical genesis and structure was launched, and just over a decade since the doctoral dissertation on which the present volume is based was completed.² During that time an array of new musicological approaches, often inspired by other disciplines such as literary criticism, sociology, and cultural studies, has challenged traditional musicological emphases on areas such as manuscript studies and structural analysis. Most radically, recent approaches typically call into question the hegemony of both ‘work’ and ‘composer’ as concepts underpinning critical interpretation, instead dissolving the identity of both into the unstable interactions of

¹ The quotation is from a letter (OUPA, TLS, 15 Feb. [1958]) to Alan Frank, head of the Music Department at Oxford University Press, who had suggested the idea; the symphony was to be premièred on 2 April. Vaughan Williams’s rough enumeration of sources elsewhere in the letter falls far short of the actual tally of sketchbooks; possible reasons for this will be discussed in Chapter 7, but it may caution against a straightforwardly literal reading of his commitment to show ‘the whole of the scaffolding’. It has unfortunately proved impossible to discover exactly which manuscripts were eventually put on display, or any other details of the exhibition, either from reviews of the first performance or from archival material at the Festival Hall or OUP.

² GVWNS.

diverse networks of signification, from which performers, listeners, and critics, not primarily composers, construct musical meaning. At one level, strategies of this kind appear hostile to the premisses of a study such as the present one, and of the series to which it belongs. Indeed, reviewing a recent addition to the roster, theorist Patrick McCreless observes pointedly that the idea of the series now seems dated, and that to advocates of ‘new musicology’ its marriage of manuscript studies and musical analysis can be seen ‘to embody the worst of both worlds, rolling into a single enterprise the two favorite targets of postmodernist criticism—“positivistic” musicology and “formalist” theory’.³

This is not the place to debate the issues at length. Nevertheless, such an analysis seems to me to misunderstand the nature of sketch studies—as the field of studying compositional genesis has come to be (loosely) called—and their fundamentally progressive role in recent musicological history. One cannot help but note the irony of McCreless’s pejorative use of the word ‘positivistic’. Such an application of this term in recent disciplinary critiques derives from Joseph Kerman, of course, and in particular his influential 1985 book *Musicology*.⁴ Kerman, however, was a pioneer in the field of modern sketch studies, and discusses their potential at length in his book;⁵ he has also been an advocate, albeit with less direct involvement, for the new more critical, interdisciplinary orientation in musicological study described above. For Kerman, the progressive element in sketch studies lay precisely in combining the ‘hard’ musicology of manuscript studies (the use of watermarks to reconstruct the compositional chronology of dismembered Beethoven sketch-books, for instance) with the ramified structural insights afforded by musical analysis: individually either approach easily lapses into arid data-gathering, but brought into dialogue—analysis restoring the ‘music itself’ to source study, manuscripts injecting history and human agency back into hermetic theory—they can create a powerful site for the kind of humanistic, interpretative criticism which is at the heart of Kerman’s agenda.⁶

By neglecting the crucial element of dialogue between the two domains, McCreless distorts the aims of most sketch studies undertaken since the early 1970s, including those published in this series, and ignores many impressive demonstrations of how analysis and history can fruitfully interact in such work, in ways which make blanket accusations of ‘positivism’ or ‘formalism’

³ Review of Warren Darcy, *Wagner: Das Rheingold* (Oxford, 1993), in *19th-Century Music*, 18 (1994–5), 277–90 at 277.

⁴ London, 1985; published in the United States as *Contemplating Music*.

⁵ See in particular ch. 4. Kerman also addressed this topic several years earlier in ‘Sketch Studies’, in D. Kern Holoman and Claude V. Palisca (eds.), *Musicology in the 1980s* (New York, 1982), 53–66.

⁶ It is also worth observing in this context that the second volume to appear in the present series, William Kinderman’s *The Genesis of Beethoven’s Diabelli Variations* (Oxford, 1983), began life as a doctoral dissertation under Kerman’s supervision.

untenable.⁷ One can go further, however, and argue that sketch studies have paralleled and in certain cases anticipated aspects of more recent and explicitly radical approaches. To take only the most obvious example, investigations of compositional process were among the first studies significantly to challenge the reification of major musical works as immutable art-objects, positing instead a relatively fluid creative and interpretative scenario in which a work is understood in relation to multiple different versions of itself, and as part of a dynamic historical process rather than a fixed and apparently inevitable text outside time.⁸ One may add that the fact that this process often turns out to involve suppression as much as creation, a struggle (or at least negotiation) with 'givens' of one kind or another—general stylistic features of the time, formal archetypes, the composer's own previous works, the influences of other composers, etc.—is also suggestive in relation to current musicological concerns, not least because it concretizes in part the composer's own interactions with the webs of musical and cultural signification through which his or her work can have meaning.⁹ If we are interested in parallel interactions in the domain of a work's reception, it seems perverse to ignore their role in the compositional process, where the signs that invite interpretation are chosen—even if we hold back from granting the composer's apparent intentions privileged status in interpretations of their work.

We shall return often to concerns of the kind just outlined, albeit from different angles, in the study that follows: issues of how meaning is constructed in a mid-twentieth-century tonal symphony, of shifting compositional agendas, and of negotiations with the past, both personal and communal, turn out to be almost thematic for the work in question. But whatever arguments might be made for aligning sketch studies with aspects of the so-called 'new musicology', the wider philosophical divide within the discipline as a whole is not about to be resolved in favour of one viewpoint or the other; we seem instead to be settling to a condition of uneasy pluralism. What is certain is that within this climate, musicologists (and the wider musical public) show no sign of losing interest in individual works and their

⁷ In fairness to McClelland, the tenor of his broader critique is undoubtedly influenced by the particular emphasis of the volume he is reviewing, which was the first thorough-going application of Schenkerian techniques to appear in the series. It is also true that sketch studies have not always fulfilled their critical and revisionist potential, partly through a tendency to leave certain assumptions unexamined, as I shall suggest below.

⁸ See e.g. Nicholas Marston, 'Beethoven's Sketches and the Interpretative Process', *Beethoven Forum*, 1 (Lincoln, Neb., 1992), 225–42 at 241–2, reviewing Barry Cooper's *Beethoven and the Creative Process* (Oxford, 1990), which advances these ideas forcefully; also by Cooper see 'Beethoven's Revisions to his Fourth Piano Concerto', in Robin Stowell (ed.), *Performing Beethoven* (Cambridge Studies in Performance Practice, 4; Cambridge, 1994), 33. On the implications for analytical method in general, see Peter McCallum, 'Classic Preoccupations: Instruments for the Obliteration of Analysis?', *Music Analysis*, 9 (1990), 201–18 at 216.

⁹ This is especially important in 20th-c. music, where the possible range of reference for such interactions is so vastly expanded, and it becomes harder and harder to make reasoned assumptions about what criteria—formal, stylistic, or even linguistic—have shaped a composer's approach to any given work.

composers, even if the underlying concepts of identity must now be heavily qualified. If we are still concerned with human agency in the creation of art, with choice, whether conscious or unconscious, and even if culturally mediated, then sketches and other compositional documents continue to offer what is perhaps the most fascinating and direct window we have onto the historical context of such agency; a window, furthermore, whose vivid and often unpredictable vistas counter temptations towards essentialization or theoretical abstraction of the past. Assuming that we remain committed to a historical method based on concrete evidence rather than pure theory and supposition, the study of such documents, especially their chronology, must proceed from a thorough understanding of their physical characteristics—traditional manuscript study, in other words; and if we are to make meaningful statements about their musical contents, we need a coherent set of analytical premisses, whether or not this is based explicitly on ‘formalist theory’ in the sense that McCreless uses the term, that is Schenkerian analysis, pitch-class set theory, or any other established method of this kind.

If we accept that the approach adopted is rich in potential, it nevertheless remains true that, for the most part, the results yielded can only be as interesting as the material to which the methodology is applied. And so we must return to the questions with which we began. What is there about the work under examination and the details of its genesis that justifies a full-scale monograph on the subject? Truly convincing answers can emerge only as the study unfolds, of course, but it will be useful to touch on several points briefly at the outset. First, the choice of work may appear somewhat surprising. Although the tide has slowly begun to turn in recent years, Vaughan Williams’s Ninth Symphony has not, on the whole, been viewed as a pinnacle of his oeuvre. As the last symphony by one of the few twentieth-century masters in this genre, it should inevitably have commanded a substantial degree of historical attention. Instead it has been largely slighted, by critics and performers alike, the prevailing orthodoxy since its first performance judging it as inferior to the middle trilogy of symphonies from the Fourth to the Sixth, and as having little new to say. (We shall return to this reception tradition in due course.) Whatever the interest of its manuscript sources, one of my primary objectives here will be to argue that the finished symphony is in fact one of the composer’s most challenging works, and that, far from wearily rehearsing ideas realized more successfully earlier in Vaughan Williams’s career, it represents a significant new departure. It is a departure, furthermore, which constitutes one of the most subtle, profound, and timely meditations of its age on tonality, the symphonic tradition, and, metaphorically, the social and spiritual questions underlying the evolution of that tradition.

The basis of such a reappraisal must, of course, be detailed analytical and critical engagement with the finished work. I shall also argue, however, that

in this case sketches and other autograph manuscripts can play a unique and unusually significant role in reaching a fresh understanding of the work. Sceptics may contend that superseded compositional materials are by definition inadmissible evidence in the court of critical judgement: a work must stand or fall by what the composer kept in the final product, not by what was taken out. While in a narrow sense this stricture is incontrovertible, at a broader level it can be sustained only in an ideal world of critical omniscience, impartiality, and boundless sensibilities: in reality matters are much less clear-cut. Consciously and unconsciously, our critical reactions are filtered by a host of historical, biographical, social, and other factors which are often far less directly relevant to the work in question than is its own compositional genesis. More crucially, such filters often harden to prejudices, and sketch studies can provide valuable tools with which to interrogate these. The history of criticism in all the arts is, of course, full of blind spots, and of reappraisals and reversals: artists outstrip their contemporaries, become prisoners of their own reputations, or are damned by changes in fashion or broader cultural forces. Modern critical rehabilitation typically draws on historical contexts of many different kinds to show how meanings have been lost or distorted, to sensitize or resensitize audiences to an artist's work, and genetic studies, responsibly handled, may surely play a central role in such a process.

I shall suggest in this study a number of reasons why the manuscripts for Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony should be considered remarkable. Their greatest significance, however, is almost certainly to be found in the way in which they prompt, even force, a profound reappraisal of the work to which they relate. They do this not primarily because so many of their revelations about the compositional process are surprising, but because the most significant surprises directly confront two fundamental stumbling blocks in the critical tradition. First, as was noted above, it has frequently been suggested that the symphony recycles worn gestures from Vaughan Williams's earlier works, and often with the implication that he lacked self-criticism, composing more out of habit than focused creative purpose.¹⁰ In fact, the autograph manuscripts make it clear that the composer worked on the symphony with great tenacity and self-awareness, casting and recasting it in ways which often rejected or critically modified material reminiscent of his earlier works, and which suggest an extraordinary consistency of expressive purpose. Even if one is still minded to find the final product deficient, its perceived failings can no longer be laid at the door of a casual and unreflective approach to composition. Second, even when not belittled as simply derivative or 'under-composed', the symphony has often been

¹⁰ For a digest of such reactions to the first performance see KW, 343; 'composing for the sake of composing' and 'chatting to the converted' were two of the harsher judgements handed down at that time.

considered frustratingly difficult to grasp, even inscrutable, in terms of expressive ethos and trajectory, at least in comparison with the composer's other symphonies. The manuscripts, I shall argue, reveal that the programmatic origins of the work, only dimly hinted at by the composer at the time of the première, profoundly affected its evolution and remain firmly embedded in the finished work; while this raises perennially thorny issues about the aesthetic difficulties of programme music, and challenges the wisdom of the composer's reticence in this case, it does offer crucial illumination that is available from no other source.

In a sense, then, the choice of this particular work as a subject for study is almost inextricably intertwined with the nature of the story its manuscripts have to tell. Yet a study of these manuscripts has much to offer that is independent of the light they shed on the finished work, as I hope to demonstrate in a variety of different contexts as this study proceeds. For the moment one point will bear stressing. The intrinsic usefulness of the book—though not its quality, of course—is virtually guaranteed by its novelty: there have been only a handful of studies dealing with Vaughan Williams manuscripts and this is by far the most extensive to appear to date.¹¹ Indeed, it is the most detailed study of any kind examining a single Vaughan Williams work, and the first modern scholarly monograph on the composer. This reflects a general dearth of Vaughan Williams research from around the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, itself a symptom of the wider slump in the composer's reputation that followed his death, and which has only recently begun to be reversed.¹² The seeds of decline were sown precisely in critical reaction to the composer's late music, the Ninth Symphony included; it is thus fitting, perhaps, that this study should go back to confront some of the issues that would go on to characterize a long period of neglect of his oeuvre as a whole. (It might also be noted that this is the most detailed sketch study of any single British work to appear in print, and that it represents a new departure for this series, which, with the exception of Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, has so far been dominated by canonic works from the Austro-German domain.)

The almost complete scholarly neglect of the Vaughan Williams manuscripts is all the more remarkable in view of the extraordinary abundance of material which has been lying untapped, and here we may begin to focus on the more specific background to the present study. In 1960 Ursula Vaughan

¹¹ Apart from a few exceptions to be discussed presently, sustained work on the manuscripts was not undertaken until the 1980s. In terms of published writings, this wave of interest began with Alain Frogley, 'Vaughan Williams and Thomas Hardy: "Tess" and the Slow Movement of the Ninth Symphony', *Music and Letters*, 68 (1987), 42–59, and Byron Adams, 'The Stages of Revision of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony', *Musical Quarterly*, 73 (1989), 382–400. Two recent volumes on the composer, VWS and Lewis Foreman (ed.), *Vaughan Williams in Perspective* (Ilminster, 1998), contain frequent references to the manuscripts and a number of essays devoted primarily to such concerns; in the realm of compositional process see in particular Anthony Pople, 'Vaughan Williams, Tallis, and the Phantasy Principle', in VWS, 47–80, and Andrew Herbert, 'Unfinished Business: The Evolution of the "Solent" Theme', in *Vaughan Williams in Perspective*, 69–90.

¹² For a discussion of the composer's changing critical fortunes see my Preface to VWS, pp. ix–xvii.

Williams donated to the British Museum approximately 200 manuscript and printed sources of her late husband's music, and this generous gift now forms the core of the British Library's Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection.¹³ Mrs Vaughan Williams has donated all but a few of her own manuscripts, and encourages others who have items of interest to follow her example. In consequence, over eighty-five volumes have been added to the collection since its inception, and important items continue to appear. Only a few manuscripts remain in private possession, and apart from these, and a relatively small number of sources in other libraries in Britain and abroad, it seems that all the important extant material is now in the British Library collection.¹⁴

The collection is remarkable by any standards. To begin with, it is one of the largest collections in existence of manuscripts of a single major composer. Moreover, it covers a tremendous range within the composer's output. There are items from all periods of Vaughan Williams's life, sources for music both published and unpublished, and for the majority of the most important works; all stages of composition are represented, from earliest sketches to printed full scores with autograph corrections. Finally, by dint of the wide variety of genres in which Vaughan Williams worked, it offers material of unusual general interest, such as extensive documentation of a composer's involvement with film music.

But in spite of its scope, the collection has received little attention. Pamela Willetts introduced the acquisition in the *British Museum Quarterly* of 1961.¹⁵ In the *Music Review* of the following year A. E. F. Dickinson attempted a more ambitious introduction, which set out to examine the process of composition as revealed in the manuscripts, concentrating on the symphony sources.¹⁶ Dickinson makes some interesting observations, and this is to date the most searching published commentary on the collection as a whole; nevertheless, it is too brief for the complexity of the subject, and is marred by sweeping generalizations and rash assumptions.¹⁷ Michael Kennedy's milestone study

¹³ The original bequest is catalogued as 50361–50482, and is described in Pamela J. Willetts, 'The Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection', *British Museum Quarterly*, 24 (1961), 3–11. For a summary list of Vaughan Williams acquisitions up to the mid-1960s see Pamela J. Willetts, *Handlist of Music Manuscripts Acquired [by the British Museum] 1908–67* (London, 1970). Subsequent acquisitions, along with more detailed information on all manuscripts, are listed in the typescript and card catalogues in the Rare Books Room and also in the online catalogue of manuscripts.

¹⁴ The most comprehensive published information on Vaughan Williams manuscripts can be found in KC. See also Alain Frogley, 'Vaughan Williams and the New World: Manuscript Sources in North American Libraries', *Notes*, 48 (1992), 1175–92.

¹⁵ See Willetts, 'The Ralph Vaughan Williams Collection'.

¹⁶ 'The Vaughan Williams Manuscripts', *Music Review*, 23 (1962), 177–94; a similar account appears in the same author's *Vaughan Williams* (London, 1963), 496–511.

¹⁷ Dickinson's approach is bold and unusual for its time, that is, before the current wave of systematic work on sketches and compositional process in general. He treats the symphony manuscripts as documents of the composer's self-criticism, on the assumption that 'Behind a good symphony there are, perhaps, two or three not so good' (p. 179 of article), and goes on to trace this self-criticism through the ways in which the manuscripts differ from the published scores. By attempting to deal with all nine symphonies

of the composer,¹⁸ first published in 1964, includes a catalogue of works which lists the manuscript sources for each piece, but any commentary is brief. Apart from featuring in a supporting role in work on Vaughan Williams's folk-song collecting,¹⁹ after Kennedy's book the British Library collection lay fallow for two decades.

The collection is rich in material for any of the different concerns that have driven the mining of sketches and other autograph manuscripts over the years: documentation of unfinished projects, evidence for dating works, illumination of general features of Vaughan Williams's approach to composition, or, as in the present case, information on the genesis of individual pieces. When it comes to the latter, the written records of composition are most valuable where they have survived in a complete or near-complete form. Even a casual glance at the list of Vaughan Williams sources in the British Library shows that the nine symphonies form the most richly documented group of works: in general they furnish more sources per work, and more kinds of sources—sketches, drafts, autograph full scores, copyist scores, etc.—than any other genre. Given the central importance of these works within Vaughan Williams's output, the richness of their documentation is exciting. But it is extremely uneven: two works, *A Sea Symphony* and the Ninth Symphony, stand out clearly as the most fully documented, and they are also the only symphonies for which a significant amount of material from the early stages of composition has survived (here the composer's statement 'I usually destroy my rough copies', quoted earlier, is borne out). And even here there is a clear disparity. Although over twenty notebooks of sketches and short-score drafts have survived for each work, those for the choral *Sea Symphony* contain less material than those for the purely instrumental Ninth, with the former often using a six-stave format, while the latter is laid out on two or three staves; in addition, it is obvious from various features that the record of composition is less continuous in the earlier work. The Ninth Symphony is, in fact, the best documented of any of Vaughan Williams's works; indeed, going beyond Vaughan Williams, it is difficult to think of a major symphonist since Beethoven whose processes of composition in a single work have been so fully documented.²⁰

in a single relatively short discussion, however, he inevitably lapses into superficial citations of striking features out of context. More seriously, the investigation is marred by the lack of any overall view of the means by which the relative chronology of different sources can be determined.

¹⁸ This is the original, one-volume edition of KW and KC.

¹⁹ See Rosamund Strode, 'The Folksong Manuscripts', in 'Ralph Vaughan Williams—the Centenary of his Birth', *Folk Music Journal*, 2 (1972), 168–9; and Roy Palmer (ed.), *Folksongs Collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London, 1983).

²⁰ This generalization may seem sweeping; it should be noted, however, that although Schumann, Bruckner, Mahler, Elgar, and other post-Beethoven symphonists have left behind substantial amounts of sketches and other working manuscripts, none to my knowledge has left a comparable quantity and range of material for a single work.

This brings us back full circle to the composer's letter with which we began: Vaughan Williams himself made sure that this extraordinarily rich compositional history survived, going against his normal practice and preserving the sketches for the work. I hope that I have offered a number of convincing reasons for which we should be ready to accept the composer's implied invitation to enter into his workshop. But looking beyond whatever philosophical and methodological justification one might marshal for the journey, there is also an unusually compelling personal dimension to this story. The defensively casual hint that someone might find these manuscripts of profound interest—'I thought it might be useful to show the scaffolding'—represents an uncharacteristic admission by the composer of his own stature. At the age of 85, it seems, Vaughan Williams wanted to leave some record of his compositional practice to posterity, and in so doing bestowed a unique significance upon the manuscripts for the Ninth Symphony.

The methodological issues raised by sketch studies are not confined to the highest realms of critical theory: they inform many more basic questions of categorization and interpretation, and it will be helpful to clarify a number of these early on in the present study. All such investigations inevitably involve a variety of assumptions about the significance of the sources on which they draw, but these sometimes go unacknowledged and untested, and there has been little published discussion of the philosophy of sketch studies.²¹ A number of common assumptions will be explored in Chapter 3; certain premisses affecting terminology, however, must be established at the outset. A distinction will be drawn here between three aspects of composition: creative process, compositional process, and working methods. As in Robert Marshall's pioneering study of the manuscripts of J. S. Bach,²² creative process will be seen as the domain of inspiration and imagination, faculties impelled by largely unconscious processes whose mechanisms are hidden from 'any reasonably objective analysis',²³ even though their fruits—fully-fledged thematic ideas, for instance—will appear in the written records of composition. Any discussion of creative process thus defined must be almost purely speculative, and there will be little of it here. Attention will centre

²¹ Notable exceptions to this are Philip Gossett, 'Beethoven's Sixth Symphony: Sketches for the First Movement', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 27 (1974), 248–84, and Douglas Johnson, 'Beethoven Scholars and Beethoven's Sketches', *19th-Century Music*, 2 (1978–9), 3–17 (see also the responses to this article, in the same volume, 270–9). The items cited in nn. 4 and 8 above are also important in this context. For a polemical view of genetic studies from the standpoint of a literary scholar, see J. M. Ellis, *The Theory of Literary Criticism: A Logical Analysis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), 114–23.

²² Robert Marshall, *The Compositional Process of J. S. Bach: A Study of the Autograph Sources of the Vocal Works*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1968). It may be argued that in many cases it would be more accurate to refer to 'processes' rather than 'process'. The use of the singular is now customary, however, and in most instances it will be adopted in the present study.

²³ *Ibid.*, i, p. viii.

instead on compositional process, which will be seen as the more consciously directed activity of sketching and drafting, of trying and sifting various alternatives, embodied in the written records of composition. Working methods will be understood as the more mechanical aspects of the composer's practice, such as his use of different writing implements, characteristic abbreviations etc. Although the focus of the present study is the genesis of a single work, as it is the first extended investigation of this kind concerning Vaughan Williams it has been necessary to devote a substantial part of Chapter 2 to a broadly based description of his working methods.

Musical creativity is a forbiddingly complex matter,²⁴ and such distinctions must be drawn tentatively. There is no intention here to suggest that compositional process is a routine working-out of an inspirational conception which has left no trace. Far from it: the status of written work varies from composer to composer and from era to era, but in a case such as Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony, where the composer has left over 600 pages of sketches and drafts for a piece lasting less than forty minutes, we may reasonably assume that writing was of central importance. Nevertheless, along with most composers, Vaughan Williams attached a high value to non-written inspiration, particularly at the outset of a work, and such processes must be borne in mind when assessing the written records of all stages of composition.²⁵ It must also be remembered that unnotated mental activity of a more directed and conscious kind, and improvisation and working-out at the keyboard, have been important to many composers, and they were certainly part of Vaughan Williams's approach. Furthermore, we must also beware of assuming that every written notation is intended fully to represent a precisely formulated musical idea. Particularly in the early stages of composition, sketches may often represent no more than a rough memorandum of a mental conception which the composer was at that stage unwilling or unable to notate more fully.²⁶ Some of these matters will be considered in greater depth as the study proceeds. They will be discussed not in order to throw doubt on the value of sketch studies, but to define that value more precisely, to clarify what can and cannot be revealed by written records of composition.

²⁴ The psychology of musical creativity has until recently received relatively little attention, either in the musical or psychological literature. One early exception to this neglect in the musical literature, albeit popular in style and treatment, is Max Graf, *From Beethoven to Shostakovich* (New York, 1947); for more recent contributions see John A. Sloboda, *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music* (Oxford, 1985), Nicholas Cook, *Music, Imagination, and Culture* (Oxford, 1990), and Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity Seen through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi* (New York, 1993), all of which make significant reference to sketches and other compositional documents.

²⁵ Vaughan Williams's attitudes to 'inspiration', the use of the piano, and other such aspects of composition are considered in Chapter 2. A useful survey of a number of other composers' attitudes to such matters is found in Colin Matthews, 'Mahler at Work: Aspects of the Creative Process' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Sussex, 1977), 177–205.

²⁶ See e.g. Robert Bailey, 'The Genesis of "Tristan und Isolde" and a Study of Wagner's Sketches and Drafts for the First Act' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1969), 17.

At the heart of the present study is the detailed reconstruction of the genesis of the Ninth Symphony presented in Chapters 3 to 6. A chapter is devoted to each of the four movements, and each chapter is divided into three sections: an analytical discussion of the finished movement; an attempt to reconstruct its genesis, paying special attention to points raised in the first section (here a good deal of description is inevitable, in the absence of a published facsimile of any of these sources); and a summary and conclusion. This procedure reflects the motivation and premisses of the study. In order accurately to identify and explore the compositional priorities that shaped the genesis of a work, it is essential to have a detailed understanding of the finished piece, and so the analytical work on the finished symphony was carried out before a detailed examination of the manuscripts. The placing of the analysis at the beginning of each chapter also helps to reveal which aspects of the finished piece are illuminated by the manuscripts and which are not. The benefits and dangers inherent in this approach are discussed in Chapter 3; suffice it here to say that intimate knowledge of the finished piece must be counterbalanced by acute sensitivity to compositional possibilities that may have been considered and then rejected on the way to the final product. As is common in sketch studies, many aspects of the manuscripts are interpreted in terms of Vaughan Williams's conscious or unconscious striving after particular goals or effects: his 'intentions', in other words, as this writer infers them from the sources. I do not propose to engage here with wider debates over intentionality in music or art in general. Controversy most often arises, however, either when intentionality is allowed to play a covert role within a critical argument, or when genetic evidence is put forward as the ultimate and binding authority in interpreting a work. Neither approach is adopted here. Invocations of intention are made explicitly, and with the clear understanding that my inferences are for the most part neither self-evident nor exclusive: they represent more or less speculative interpretation of the composer's documents, which seeks to enrich and broaden critical approaches to the finished symphony, not dictate a single and authoritative understanding of the work. Furthermore, inferences of intention will always be based as far as possible on explicit standards of evidence and plausibility, such as the statistical frequency of certain kinds of alteration (i.e. many similar revisions may suggest an underlying purpose), for instance, or goals inferred from other related works by the composer.

The analytical discussions are wide-ranging, and have been influenced by a variety of established approaches. They do not proceed from a highly developed theoretical basis: such a basis appropriate to Vaughan Williams's music has yet to be developed,²⁷ and to attempt to do so here would have resulted

²⁷ An appropriate theoretical basis for rigorous analysis of Vaughan Williams's music would need to be able to take into account its chromatic and modal complexities, yet still do justice to its centric tonal properties. Linear techniques derived from Schenkerian analysis may prove useful in this context, and

in a quite different kind of study; in any case, as I shall argue in Chapter 3, we can still learn a great deal about Vaughan Williams's music from more empirical approaches. Having used analytical perceptions to focus a study of compositional process, it might seem a natural step to go on to consider how these initial perceptions may be modified by what the sketches reveal of the composer's concerns and priorities, and questions of this kind will be touched on at a number of points. But it must be said that such issues have in the past generated considerable controversy.²⁸ Some musicologists, particularly from amongst the ranks of those who specialize in analysis, have argued strongly against the idea that information about the genesis of a piece should be allowed to influence an analysis of the final product.²⁹ Aspects of these arguments have already been countered and will be engaged again later. It will also be maintained, however, that although the concept of a 'final' or 'definitive' version of a piece of music is often complex and problematic, it is nevertheless essential to maintain where possible a clear distinction between sketches and finished work.

An investigation of the genesis of Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony has not significantly altered my basic analytical understanding of the finished symphony, in terms, say, of identifying its salient tonal relationships, or an overarching nexus of melodic connections—nor should it, no doubt. I do hope to demonstrate a variety of ways in which an analysis of the finished work is enriched and clarified by the sketches. More importantly, however, the manuscripts have undoubtedly suggested new strategies and new metaphors by which to address questions both broader and subtler than those which can typically be represented in graphs or diagrams, questions about the nature and quality of the developing interrelationships between structural elements, in particular their unfolding through time and the ways in which one feature may come to predominate over another. The manuscripts, furthermore, make resonant and eloquent the silence of roads not

have been applied already by a few writers, though not in any extended or systematic fashion; they pose certain conceptual difficulties, as Arnold Whittall has pointed out in a penetrating discussion of tonal processes in the Fifth Symphony: see 'Symphony in D Major: Models and Mutations', in *VWS*, 187–212, in particular 193–7. The most extended application so far of voice-leading graphs to Vaughan Williams's music, albeit in only a loose theoretical framework, is John S. Heighway, 'Vaughan Williams: Symphony no. 4 in F Minor: An Analytical Study' (M.Mus. thesis, University of London, 1983). A general difficulty is that, regardless of perspective or method adopted, there has been little detailed analysis of Vaughan Williams's music of any kind, and even less that is persuasive.

²⁸ See e.g. Johnson, 'Beethoven Scholars and Beethoven's Sketches', along with the responses to the article.

²⁹ Although some who originally pursued these arguments, such as Jean-Jacques Nattiez, have since shifted their position. Allen Forte's first book (*The Compositional Matrix* (New York, 1961)) used sketches in conjunction with analysis, but Forte has been criticized for discussing only those features of the sketches that can be used to justify certain rigid analytical preconceptions (see Kerman, *Musicology*, 136–7, and Nicholas Marston, 'The Sketches for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E, Opus 109' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1985)). The debate has turned to a considerable degree on the legitimate limits of musical analysis, and how it differs from a more broadly based notion of musical criticism.

taken. And, most dramatically, in the special case of the programmatic origins of the symphony, considered in Chapter 7, there is a clear argument to be made for perceiving the symphony significantly differently in the light of the sketches. Yet the most important contribution such an investigation might hope to make is not necessarily to offer a better, or even a different, analysis of the finished work. The wider goals of this study are at one level simple: to give a fuller context in which to view this symphony, from both analytical and other kinds of perspectives; to deepen our understanding of Vaughan Williams's approach to his art; and, by extension, to make a contribution to our knowledge of how great music is composed.