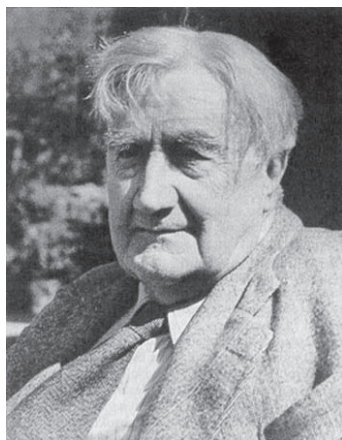


Fantasia on Greensleeves



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Ralph Vaughan Williams

Ralph Vaughan Williams
Born: October 12, 1872
Died: August 26, 1958

Ralph Vaughan Williams was one of England's leading 20th century composers. As a child, he knew he wanted to be a composer, and he followed his dream even though members of his family weren't very supportive. In the end, Vaughan Williams played a key role in reviving his country's music. He composed many, many works, including songs, operas, ballets, choral pieces, and nine symphonies.

Vaughan Williams was dedicated to collecting and studying English folksongs to preserve them for the future. A folksong is a traditional song that is passed on from person to person. They are rarely written down, so many are lost or changed from their original form. Vaughan Williams loved the songs of England, and worked hard to record them. He collected over 800 folksongs and they had such a big

influence on him that many ended up in his own compositions.

The *Fantasia on Greensleeves* is one example. This music first appeared in Vaughn Williams' opera *Sir John in Love*, in which he used not only the familiar "Greensleeves" folk tune but also another song from his collection, "Lovely Joan." When Vaughan Williams arranged the *Fantasia on Greensleeves* for the concert hall, he brought the two songs together.

The word *fantasy* or *fantasia* has several meanings. You may know a fantasy as a daydream. In music, it is sometimes used to describe a work that does not follow any set form or pattern. Or, it can be used for compositions that are based on another musical work, like the *Fantasia on Greensleeves*.

Do you know the song *Greensleeves*? It actually dates back to the 1500s, and was even used by Shakespeare. Shortly after the American Civil War, William Chatterton Dix wrote the words for his Christmas carol, *What Child is This?* using the melody to *Greensleeves*. See if you can hear the familiar carol as you listen to the *Fantasia on Greensleeves* by Vaughan Williams.

Answer these questions as you listen *Fantasia on Greensleeves*

1. Circle the first two instruments you hear.



flute



french horn



cello



harp

2. The strings on the harp are played with _____
a. fingers b. a bow c. pedals
3. The melody is first played by which family of instruments?
a. woodwind b. brass c. string
4. What well-known Christmas carol gets its tune from *Greensleeves*?



