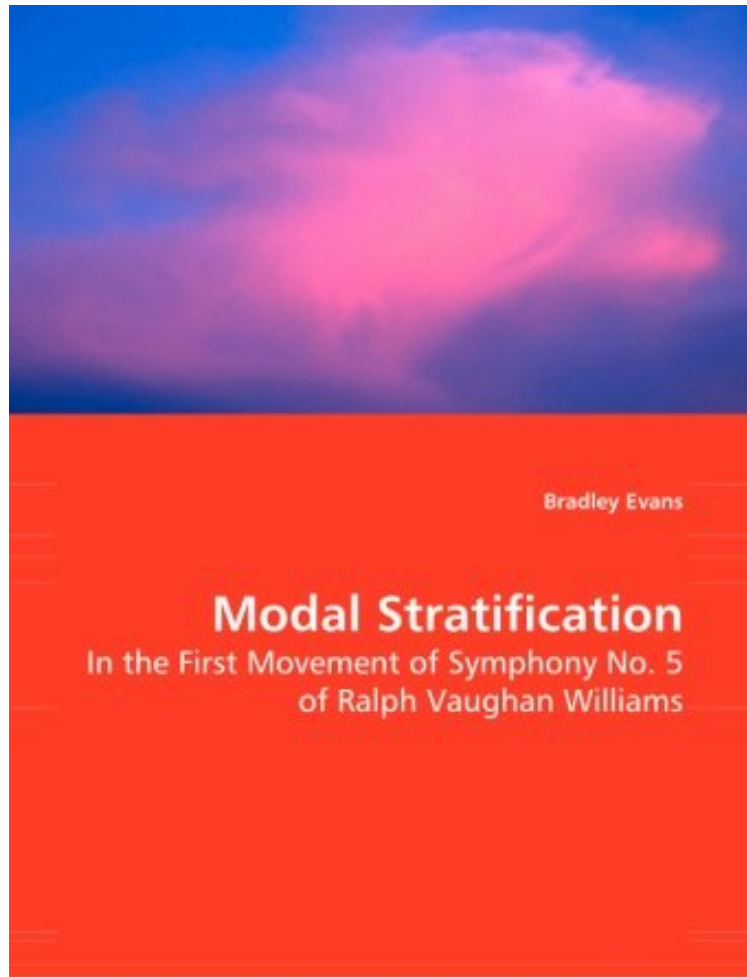


Modal Stratification: In the First Movement of Symphony No. 5 of Ralph Vaughan Williams

Bradley Evans

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Modal Stratification: In the First Movement of Symphony No. 5 of Ralph Vaughan Williams:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. (Pretty Close to . . .) The Best Book Ever!By Bradley EvansAll right, I will write my own review. This was my Master's degree thesis while I was a graduate student at the California State University, Fullerton, done for "partial fulfillment of the degree" while I was there from 2002-2005. It is a music

theory text rather than a historical anthology of the Fifth Symphony, and I treat it as such. There have been analyses of this work as performed by others, as listed in the table of contents to whom they may be. I take a different look at the first movement and follow the ideas of Lionel Pike and Phillip Rupprecht: Is there a case for modal stratification among various layers (symphonic parts) of the first movement? VW initially gives the first movement a single sharp. Does this indicate G major or e minor? I state neither. It is D mixolydian, and VW is off and running with his familiar modal vocabulary. But, why the persistent c pedal in the bass? With one sharp, does this indicate C lydian? What's going on here? The fact of the matter is, however, that the first movement is stated in classic "sonata" form, but with most of the first movement subject to VW's modal vocabulary, and not subject to tonal keys. This idea evolves through the remainder of the symphony, with the fourth movement concluding with two sharps. What does that indicate? D major, of course, and VW has finally arrived at the "home key" of D major, in accordance with the Pilgrim's journey to the Celestial City. Did I give something away? More to come in a doctoral dissertation! This isn't too bad for a first, and may I say, occasionally a rather crude attempt at analysis. (i.e., a single large-scale Schenkerian diagram is only cited - and not of my own making) But, for the most part it is a rather good attempt at an analysis of mid-twentieth-century symphonic music. Indeed, what was to become of symphonic form after that? Onward to the doctoral dissertation degree, and more to write about VW's Fifth and his opera, "The Pilgrim's Progress." Stay tuned for more to come!

The First Movement of Symphony No. 5 of Ralph Vaughan Williams is examined with respect to modal stratification or layers of modal strata defined in each of the principal orchestral parts. When examined with this perspective, this movement can be viewed in light of the concept of extended modal harmonies. Structural and functional pillars of modality lend cohesion to the overall textural fabric of the piece. This music can be described as a departure or, more accurately, another evolutionary branch from the extended tonal techniques of the time of Vaughan Williams, espoused by Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School. This work can therefore be classified as using a modal extended technique in the tradition of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Post-Romantics. Stratification of modal layers is found in five sections of the piece, and structural pillars, or hinges of modal coherence are found. These are graphically illustrated to reveal the formal structure of the piece. Hypotheses regarding the examined data (the notes) are made, from which conclusions about the compositional technique of Vaughan Williams and the structural cohesion and integrity of the piece are formed.

About the Author Bradley David Evans is a graduate doctoral student in Music Theory at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. He wrote "Modal Stratification in the First Movement of Symphony No. 5 of Ralph Vaughan Williams" as a thesis in partial fulfillment of the Master's degree in Music Theory/Composition at the California State University, Fullerton.