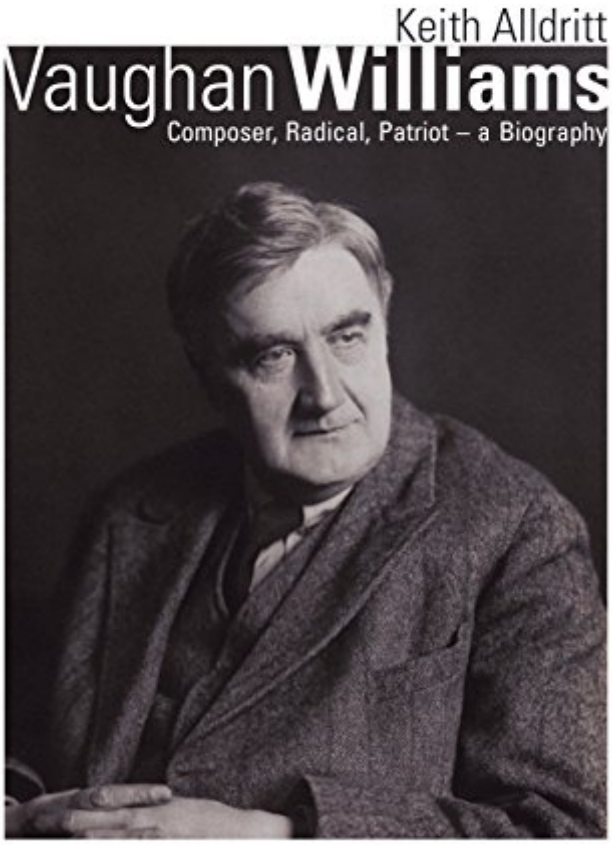
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Vaughan Williams: Composer, Radical, Patriot - A Biography



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Synopsis

The ground-breaking biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams reveals more than any other the man behind the music. The author examines the considerable range of Vaughan Williams's work, from the English pastoral tradition to Modernism, and shows how Vaughan Williams was influenced by the Boer War, the economic depression after the First World War, the deprivations of the Blitz, and the austerity of the Cold War. He also reveals how the greatest influence on Vaughan Williams's music and creative development was his personal life, involving his seemingly secure marriage and an equally enduring love affair. The author shows how these reflected both the stability and cutting-edge aspects of his music. Like a great symphony, this book ranges from doubt to inspiration. It is the most complete biography of one of Britain's greatest composers and will be of interest to historians, students of music and Vaughan Williams enthusiasts.

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Customer Reviews

I find that a lot of bio/historical books written by academics fit into one of a few different categories: (1) to check the box indicating that they know the subject and have written something for an academic audience or to get published; (2) to fit pieces of info into a narrative that the author

already formulated and is now trying to promote; or (3) to just hit the highlights and sell something to an audience that may not necessarily care to know very deeply. This book fits into none of these categories. It reads like a great story begging to be put to screenplay so you could actually see it on film. All of the characters come to life in sympathetic ways. And you walk away picking up so much incidental information about the close of the 19th century, WWI, and WW2, etc., and not only from a British point of view. I have long enjoyed RVW's music. Alldritt does a superb job of explaining the thought process into many of RVW's pieces, their early reception, RVW's frequent penchant for continuing to work on his music even after publication, and his humility to the point of always asking fellow composers for help and insight into his process. RVW was a confident composer and yet suffered from self-doubt for most of his career. I particularly enjoyed the materials dealing with RVW's friendship with Holst; his learning from Ravel; and how different times of his life inspired different pieces of music. I've read other books about RVW's technique; I bought this to learn more about the man. What I found was a book that effortlessly and engagingly revealed both.

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