



KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: ENGLISH COMPOSER 2

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

1872—1958



- Vaughan Williams was a VICTORIAN and lived during both World War 1 and World War 2
- Vaughan Williams' first name was Ralph, pronounced 'Raif'
- Vaughan Williams was great friends with Gustav Holst (see English Composer 1)
- Vaughan Williams lived for a long time only 30 miles away from Worthing at Leith Hill Place in Surrey
- Vaughan Williams' mum was the niece of the naturalist, Charles Darwin
- Vaughan Williams collected English Folk Songs
- Vaughan Williams was a stretcher-bearer in World War 1

Ralph Vaughan Williams' most **SIGNIFICANT WORK** is **THE LARK ASCENDING** written in 1914 just before World War 1 for piano and violin. It was then reworked for solo violin and orchestra after the war. It is a single movement work.

THE LARK ASCENDING

*Ralph was writing ideas for the melody while on holiday just before the war started. He was spotted making jottings in a book and was arrested. He was mistaken for a spy.

*The music was inspired by a poem also called The Lark Ascending

*The violin solo represents the sound and flight of the Lark

*The music is taken as a symbol of England's spirit during the war

*The Lark in the morning would have been a symbol of hope for the soldiers in the trenches.

*It was first performed in London in June 1921.

*Ralph subtitled the work 'A Romance.'

Orchestra	A large group of musicians playing instruments with brass, woodwind, strings and percussion sections
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Movement	Orchestral music can be divided up into sections like chapters in a book. Movements can be played separately. A single movement
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Folk Song	A folk song is passed down through generations and often the composer is unknown. Folk music originates from the beliefs, culture
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Violin solo	A piece of music for one performer to play on a violin
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Romance	Music with a tender, gentle, thoughtful quality often slow in
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Ralph spent most of his childhood at Leith Hill Place.

