

## **Description by Stephen Kingsbury**

Dating from around 1920, *O, Clap Your Hands* is a setting of Psalm 47. Vaughan Williams arranged the text for SATB chorus. Although originally orchestrated for organ, brass, and percussion, the work can also be heard in arrangements for organ alone and for full orchestra.

The piece is typical of Vaughan Williams' ceremonial works for the church. The joyous mood of the text is capitalized upon in a setting of extroverted jubilation. The brass and organ parts work fanfare-like counterpoints around the vocal lines. After reaching an anticipated climax on "Sing praises unto our King," the music reaches a moment of quiet introspection. Here the vocal lines take on an almost speech-like quality that seems to pay homage to the tradition of Anglican chant.

The moment, however, is quickly interrupted by the brass, and the energy of the music returns to the same joyous mood as the opening. This is a piece clearly designed to fill the cathedral with a grand noise in praise of God.