



Listening Guide- “Echoes of the English Soul”

Composer: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Title: Overture to *The Wasps*

Recording: English String Orchestra, conductor William Boughton

Form: Introduction, A, B, Transition, A, B, Transition, C, Transition, A', B', Transition, C'

Time	Musical Elements	Instrument or Family
<i>Moderato maestoso</i>		
0:00	The overture opens with an introduction that mimics the sounds of wasps buzzing in a hive.	Flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, strings
0:46	The A section begins with a jaunty theme that is reminiscent of an English folk song, first introduced in the clarinet and bassoon.	Clarinet, bassoon
0:53	The strings and woodwinds gradually join the theme as it is stated a second and elaborated slightly	Woodwinds, strings
1:05	Brass and strings introduce the B section. This new theme is a more <i>legato</i> (smooth, connected) melody that contrasts the opening theme by employing more skips and jumps.	Brass, strings
1:37	A brief transition references the sounds used in the introduction, bringing back the sense of a buzzing hive	Strings, woodwinds
1:48	The A section returns with the jaunty theme more densely scored	Woodwinds, brass, strings
2:01	The B section returns with a rich texture as Vaughan Williams adds more brass to the melody line while the strings and woodwinds continue playing the jaunty theme.	Woodwinds, brass, strings
2:11	A new transition brings a new key and references to motives from the A and B sections. This transition features the harp.	Harp, strings
2:28	The horn plays echoes of fragments of a melody that never develops while the other instruments continue to interject motives from the A and B sections	Horn, strings, woodwinds
2:51	The key transitions to Eb major and a new, pastoral theme is introduced.	Strings, woodwinds, horn, harp



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4:57	A cymbal crash and long trills in the upper woodwinds and strings signify a transition out of the pastoral theme. During this transition the strings and horns play new melodic motives that does not develop further.	Woodwinds, brass, strings
6:16	The A section returns with its jaunty folksong-like melody in the woodwinds and strings.	Woodwinds, strings
6:29	The B section returns, following the A section.	Brass, woodwinds, strings
7:01	A new transition brings references to the pastoral theme, foreshadowing its return.	Brass, woodwinds, strings, harp
7:53	Parts of each theme are juxtaposed against one another as the piece races to a close.	Full orchestra