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The Songs of Michael Head: The Georgian Settings (And Song Catalogue).

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The songs of Michael Head: The Georgian settings (and song catalogue)

Frey, Loryn Elizabeth, D.M.A.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1990

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**300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

The Songs of Michael Head:
The Georgian Settings
(and Song Catalogue)

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by
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M.M., University of Cincinnati, 1975
August, 1990

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Abstract

An investigation of the Georgian poetry settings of Michael Head (1900-1976) constitutes the central purpose of this study. To that purpose the Georgian settings are documented, and the stylistic procedures explored. In addition, Head's complete solo song output has been catalogued.

This study is divided into five chapters and one appendix. Chapter I furnishes introductory information about the study. Chapter II defines Georgian poetry. Chapter III explores the stylistic features apparent in the works of two influential predecessors in the field of the English solo art song, Roger Quilter and Peter Warlock. Chapter IV examines the Georgian solo art song settings of some of Michael Head's contemporaries. Chapter V furnishes introductory information about Michael Head and explores stylistic features apparent in the Georgian poetry settings of this composer.

The appendix constitutes a Catalogue of the 122 solo art songs by Michael Head. Comprising a chronological conspectus, with listings of poets, available keys, and range and tessitura of the songs, the catalogue supplies a systematic guide to this composer's complete solo song output.

The solo art song comprises the major portion of the total output by British composer Michael Head. These 122 songs were written over a span of some 58 years, from 1918 until his death in 1976. As Head referred to work within traditional systems, his style is eclectic. He used a wide variety of styles in the composition of his songs, never developing an individual style. Modal inflection, Impressionistic devices, chordal and contrapuntal techniques, Romantic tendencies in range and doublings, and descriptive writing result in an approach to art song often lacking in definition and depth. Because of the variety of styles and because Head's approach was much like that of Georgian poets: simple and descriptive, Georgian poetry is used as the delineating feature for this overview of Head's songs.

Chapter I

Introduction

From 1917 until his death, British composer Michael Head (1900-1976) composed 122 art songs for the solo voice. Although Head composed works in other genres, including four choral songs, music for wind instruments, and five unpublished one-act operas, the songs comprise the major portion of his output. Of these 122 songs, all have been published with the exceptions of "The carol of the field mice," written in 1971, the manuscript of which is in the possession of Stephen Banfield, and the two song cycles Songs of Reminiscence and Nine Cornish Songs, which are soon to be published by Roberton Press.

Most of his songs were published soon after they were composed, and many have stayed in print. Head's song cycle Over the Rim of the Moon has never been out of print, and neither have many of his songs which are still available singly or are included in miscellaneous

song collections. In 1985 Boosey and Hawkes reissued thirty of Michael Head's songs in a new collection, the three-volume Song Album. Much of his music is currently performed by professional singers in recital and taught in the vocal studio both in higher education and in the private sector. Several English competitive music festivals have a Michael Head Class for the performance of his songs.⁽¹⁾ Because much of Head's music is so widely performed and available, a critical study of his songs could be a valuable tool for teachers and singers alike.

While much has been written about his contemporaries, including Peter Warlock, Roger Quilter, Benjamin Britten, Gerald Finzi, and William Walton, little has been written about Head or his music. Stephen Banfield, in his two-volume book Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, devotes four pages to Michael Head in the chapter "The uses and abuses of technique." His critical emphasis is on the poetry and its reflection or lack of reflection in the musical setting, comparing Head to Britten, Ireland, and Vaughan Williams. Arthur Jacobs, author of the chapter "The British Isles" from

1. Stephen Banfield, Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1:307.

A History of Song edited by Denis Stevens, says that the influence of Quilter or Warlock on other composers was more powerful than that of Vaughan Williams, and that Quilter, Warlock, and others exercised an apparent influence on Michael Head.

The essay "The Vocal Compositions of Michael Head," by composer Dr. Alan Bush, Michael Head's brother-in-law, discusses briefly some of the general characteristics of Michael Head's solo-song and choral style. In this essay Dr. Bush comments on some of Head's songs according to style, and on others by voice type and range or by poet and mood. However, many of Head's best known and most often performed songs are not mentioned.

Most of what has been written about Michael Head's life is in the short biography Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist: A Memoir written by his sister, Nancy Bush. In this volume she presents a personal account of the life of Michael Head and summarizes what she sees as the most important events in his musical career. There is a sample program of a recital given by Michael Head on January 9, 1930, which included some of his own songs sung to his own accompaniment at the piano. Nancy Bush briefly discusses the circumstances under which a few of his songs were written and the individuals for whom they were written. She includes almost no information about

his fifty-year career as professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music.

The sixty-five pages of narrative cite several passages from Michael Head's diaries. In these entries Head comments on the music of various contemporaries, such as this remark on Wozzeck, by Alban Berg, written in 1934:

A thrilling experience. Listened to a concert version of Wozzeck. It was the real thing, modern music absolutely justified, satisfying and most exciting. What variety and orchestration.(2)

Similar entries follow. When the International Society for Contemporary Music held its festival in London in 1938 Head went to a great number of concerts and "found only a few real works of value but much musical stimulation." (3) Benjamin Britten's music was to him always brilliant but seldom touched his feelings, with the exception of the War Requiem. (4)

Besides his impressions of works by contemporary composers, the diaries include entries on his travels as an examiner and adjudicator for the Associated Board of the Royal Music Schools:

2. Michael Head, "Diaries" in Nancy Bush, Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist, A Memoir (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982), 19.

3. Nancy Bush, Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist, A Memoir, 19.

4. Ibid.

A wonderful flight and magic scenery, floating on a sea of sparkly cloud with glimpses of valleys and mountains below . . . so farewell to a full ten days, twelve concerts and a thousand miles of traveling.(5)

Another entry comments on the singing of his songs by Kathleen Ferrier:

Kathleen Ferrier liked several of my songs and we did them over and over again. Such a beautiful voice and so musical.(6)

Diaries of this kind could give valuable insight into processes which went into the composition of each song. Several letters were mailed to Dr. and Mrs. Alan Bush in an attempt to locate the diaries. Michael Head's publisher, Kenneth Robertson of Robertson Press, was helpful but not optimistic. The inquiries were unsuccessful. Dr. Bush's final letter to this author, dated August 27, 1988, states that Michael Head's diaries are not in their possession. This letter, and the entries in Nancy Bush's book are the only known documentation that such diaries exist.

Another interesting possibility briefly mentioned by Nancy Bush were Head's compositional procedures:

[Evidently] he composed at the piano, singing and playing his work through repeatedly as soon as it began to take shape. He had a facility for hitting off a melody, sometimes striking upon it

5. Ibid., 34.

6. Ibid., 39.

almost at once as he sat at the keyboard with the words propped up in front of him. . . . When the tape-recorder had been invented he sometimes made use of it, singing through the various versions as they developed and prefacing each with the time and date and occasionally a comment.(7)

To an inquiry about these tapes in a letter dated July 9, 1988, Dr. Bush replied, "I regret that I have no knowledge of the whereabouts of any sketches which Michael Head left in the form of tapes."

While examining the songs of Head's predecessors and contemporaries it became evident that Michael Head was not typical in choosing Georgian poetry for solo song settings. He is one of only five English composers (Head, Cecil Armstrong Gibbs [1889-1960], Ivor Gurney [1890-1937], Herbert Howells [1892-1983], Lennox Berkeley [1903-1989]) known to have published more than ten art song settings of Georgian poetry.(8) In addition, his style of composition appears to be similar to that of the Georgian poets: simple, often delicate or sentimental, excelling in the descriptive, and generally unambitious and lacking in depth.

7. Ibid., 30.

8. This accounting is based primarily on the "Song Lists" in Banfield, Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, 2:407-430, and individual entries in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Stanley Sadie, ed. (London: Macmillan, 1980). See also Banfield 1:210. For the limitations of the "Song Lists" in Banfield, see pages xv-xvi, and 4.

Because he chose Georgian poetry, and because of the affinity of styles, a study of these settings is appropriate.

Michael Head is almost impossible to categorize, since over the years there appears to be no real development in individual style. He continued to use many different approaches, styles, and techniques. This is another reason why Head can best be examined through a category of settings which provide an organizing principle.

Georgian poetry is defined and discussed in Chapter II. In Chapter III the stylistic characteristics of Michael Head's immediate predecessors Roger Quilter (1877-1953) and Peter Warlock (1894-1930), in the field of the composition of the English solo art song, are discussed. Chapter IV surveys the stylistic characteristics of influential contemporaries of Head in the field of the English solo art song and specifically some of their settings of Georgian poetry. These contemporaries include Peter Warlock, Cecil Armstrong Gibbs, Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells, Lennox Berkeley, Arthur Bliss (1891-1975), Rutland Boughton (1878-1960), Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), Gerald Finzi (1901-1956), and John Ireland (1879-1962). The final chapter examines the stylistic characteristics of the nineteen Georgian poetry settings by Michael Head. This analysis of style

includes scanning rhythmic, thematic, and harmonic implications, the text, the debt to other composers or trends, groupings, and word painting and other musical devices. The nineteen Georgian settings studied are the songs from the cycles Over the Rim of the Moon, Songs of the Countryside, and Three Cotswold Songs, as well as the individual songs: "Tewkesbury Road," "Why have you stolen my delight?" "Elizabeth's Song," "Had I a golden pound," "Dear delight," and "The homecoming of the sheep."

Chapter II

Georgian Poetry and Georgian Poets

For this study Georgian poetry will be defined as English pictorial poetry produced from 1910 to 1922 that is unambitious and characterized by smooth rhythms and strict forms, resulting in a simple, static lyric. Georgian poetry subjects are traditionally pastoral but can also be patriotic, foreign, or magical, reflecting an earlier 19th century Victorian interest in the exotic. The differences in subject and in attitude will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

There are several different sources that define, describe, and discuss Georgian poetry. The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics describes the Georgian poetic style as "presenting delicate emotions in meters and forms for the most part traditional." (1)

1. Preminger, Alex, ed., Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 311.

In other words, it represents a return to that poetry typical of the style, meter, and form of the English nature poets of the 19th century. Vivian de Sola Pinto in his book Crisis in English Poetry: 1880-1940 devotes an entire chapter to the "Edwardians and the Georgians." In it he describes Georgian poetry as having "smooth rhythms and pleasant homely landscapes. . . . Innovation is discouraged. Georgian Poetry is . . . full of imitations of Romantic nature poetry." (2)

Another source for the study of Georgian poetry is Poetry and the Modern World by David Daiches. Daiches describes Georgian poetry as traditional:

These [Georgian] poets had nothing very new to say; neither their subject material nor their technique was in any degree original. They took traditional pastoral motives, romantic accounts of the East, nature subjects, meditative descriptions of English scenery, or accounts in a subdued lyrical strain of personal experiences in listening to birds or watching sunsets, and produced what was on the whole a quiet, unambitious verse, restrained in mood and low in temperature. The prevailing form was a somewhat undisciplined blank verse, although lyrical stanzas of various kinds were also common. It was a simple poetry, easy to understand, written on a single level, posing no problems and solving none. (3)

2. Vivian de Sola Pinto, Crisis in English Poetry, 1880-1940, 5th ed. (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1967), 115-118.

3. David Daiches, Poetry and the Modern World: A Study of Poetry in England Between 1900 and 1939 (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1969), 38-39.

Lawrence Durrell, in A Key to Modern British Poetry, says that Georgian poetry generally will have a "slightly archaic vocabulary - 'thou' and 'bosom', . . . strict forms, and the music of vowel sounds." (4)

In spite of books by Durrell, Pinto, Daiches, and others, some confusion exists today over the definition of Georgian poetry and Georgian poetic style. The primary reason for this confusion is that different scholars have taken slightly different approaches in their definitions. Some authors take a stylistic approach; others, such as Frank Swinnerton in his book The Georgian Literary Scene, 1910-1935 (5), define "Georgian" as anything produced during the reign of King George V, 1910-1936.

Stephen Banfield, in his two-volume work Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, (6) takes the general view that Georgian poetry is all English poetry written from 1911 until 1922, and includes all of the poetry in five anthologies edited by Edward Marsh titled Georgian

4. Durrell, Lawrence. A Key to Modern British Poetry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 121.

5. Frank Swinnerton, The Georgian Literary Scene, 1910-1935, 6th ed. (London: J. M. Dent, 1969).

6. Steven Banfield, Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Poetry, which were published successively from 1911-1922. Edward Marsh was a patron of the arts who worked as Winston Churchill's private secretary off and on for twenty-five years until 1930.

Banfield's use of the term "Georgian," however, does not address the differences in style presented in these volumes. Volume I, while including poetry of the Georgian style, also includes selections by D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), who has sometimes been labeled Georgian and at other times Imagist, but who really had no connection with either group. The poetry of D. H. Lawrence, with its intense individual mythmaking, has an un-Georgian vigor and originality springing from the psychological and sociological events of the period. Lawrence abandons tradition, contrary to Georgianism, and seeks a purely psychological and physical, human interpretation of all phenomena.(7)

Other unexpected choices for inclusion in these Georgian Poetry volumes are works by Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) and Wilfred Wilson Gibson (1878-1962). Sassoon was the first English poet to rebel against the older tradition of war poetry full of patriotism and lauding the glories of war. He and Gibson (who because of his wartime experiences developed into a realist)

7. Daiches, Poetry and the Modern World, 51.

described war graphically for the first time in the 1916-17 volume of Georgian Poetry. Gibson's verse utilizes an irony that is very controlled:

I felt a sudden wrench-
A trickle of warm blood
And found that I was sprawling in the mud
Among the dead men in the trench.

The irony emerges in the following verse:

This bloody steel
Has killed a man.
I heard him squeal
As on I ran.

The ironic note in Sassoon's verse (after the war he turns to satire) is not so subtle as that of Gibson. It is an unrefined type of poetry, but it makes its point with vigor and passion:

Does it matter?-losing your sight?....
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

There are many poems of this type, commonly referred to as "war poetry" or "trench poetry," contained in the fourth (1918-1919) and fifth (1920-1922) volumes of Marsh's Georgian Poetry. Other poets writing "war" verse included Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, and Edward Thomas, all of whom were killed in the war. Much of their best and earliest work, however, had been published in the first three volumes

of Georgian Poetry and other anthologies, and had little to do with the subject of war, fitting quite nicely into the traditional mode of Georgian poetry. It was their attitude towards the war, and the bitterness and the sharpness of their attack, that finally distinguished them from other English poets. It is not the object of this paper to discuss their works here.

Other poets included in Marsh's Georgian Poetry attempted to reshape the poetic medium of English poetry by limitation and represent the Imagist movement. The Imagist poet did not write poetry in the Georgian style. Although a contemporary of the Georgian poet, the Imagist poet strove consciously to write poetry in accordance with a strict and carefully elaborated theory in an effort to improve the craft of writing. The style was a reaction against what the Imagist poet perceived as flabby in the language of such 19th-century authors as Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symons, and Ernest Dowson. Imagists made an effort to reproduce the language of common speech, always employing the exact word with clarity, concreteness, and exactness in every detail.(8) The poetry of Peter

8. Preminger, Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, 236.

Quennell (b.1905), found in volume five of the Marsh anthologies, fits into the Imagist genre.

According to David Daiches there are two types of attitude in Georgian poetry: a meditative observation usually on nature subjects, and fables designed to illustrate a point of view, often set in exotic or magical locales.⁽⁹⁾ Both have a static lyric with either no movement (progression of events, relationships, or ideas), or only repetitive (rather than illuminating) movement. In other words, the entire poem is a statement all on one level. The attitude is adequate to the situation and no more. The reverse of this can be found in the poetry of Wordsworth, where an attitude to a tree is also an attitude to life. However, for a Georgian poet all implications are confined to that single initial situation, meditation on a tree. David Daiches discusses this point using this W. H. Davies verse as an illustration:

The Moon

Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,
 Oh thou fair Moon, so close and bright;
 Thy beauty makes me like the child
 That cries aloud to own thy light;
 The little child that lifts each arm
 To press thee to her bosom warm.

9. Daiches, Poetry and the Modern World, 51.

Daiches says that

there is a peculiarly simple set of relationships here. The relation of the poet to the moon's beauty is identified with that of a child to the moon - not to the child's relationship to some quite different object. The introduction of the child in this stanza has no real meaning, no further point is made, no richness added. The poet is inclosed in a tiny little world where everyone is looking at the moon and every relationship must be a relationship to the moon.(10)

There is only one descriptive idea, only one poetic idea.

There are two types of subject matter in Georgian poetry, usually corresponding to the two types of attitude mentioned in the previous paragraphs. The first and most prevalent subject is that of the English countryside, or "England conceived as the past manifesting itself in the present." (11) This is poetry saturated with the very spirit of England. Here it is not only a national flavor, but also the lure of a particular locality within England which gives a common source of inspiration. The poets who settled at Boar's Hill, Edmund Blunden, Robert Graves, John Masefield, and Robert Nichols, shared a common locality as did Lascelles Abercrombie, W. W. Gibson, Edward Thomas, and

10. Ibid., 53

11. Ibid., 51

Francis Brett Young, who before World War I were all living in Gloucestershire. The poets from Boars Hill, Gloucestershire, and other parts of the British Isles talk in their poetry of simple day-to-day events of countryside life with careful and precise observations. These poets avoided anything that might remind them of change, particularly the rumors of war and the growth of technology. In fact, the England of machines, factories, and suburbs is wholly absent from the poetry of this type and period.

There is an exaggerated virtue in these poems. They are pietistic and are either sentimental, providing a leisure pastime for the governing class, or patriotic in an imperial sort of way, such as in "The Soldier" by Rupert Brooke (1887-1915). This bucolic and delicate poetry has a sociological parallel in the efforts of a ruling class who futilely try to maintain a style and attitude of living amidst the rapidly changing twentieth century of the inheritance tax, a new wealthy working class, the suffragette movement, and the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland.

The fables, specifically those of Walter de la Mare (1873-1956), are exotic and magical, often on childhood subjects with an unusual point of view. In his early works de la Mare provides a refuge from the contemporary situation. These fables are often lush and excessively romantic, as in de la Mare's "Arabia":

Far are the shades of Arabia,
 Where the Princes ride at noon,
 'Mid the verdurous vales and thickets,
 Under the ghost of the moon;
 And so dark is that vaulted purple
 Flowers in the forest rise
 And toss into blossom 'gainst the phantom
 stars
 Pale in the noonday skies.

.

One part of de la Mare's work was the poetry of
 an idealized childhood, like "The horseman" from
Peacock Pie.

I heard a horseman
 Ride over the hill;
 The moon shone clear,
 The night was still;

In such poems, with classic English meters and with a
 touch of the "folk" revival in them, de la Mare is
 providing "an opiate for bored suburbans." (12)

American poet, author, and literary critic Conrad
 Aiken, in his book Scepticisms: Notes on Contemporary
 Poetry, admired particularly the children's verse
Peacock Pie. Of it and the "Song of the Mad Prince" he
 says "Mr. de la Mare is not an innovator, and his scope
 is not great; but within his scope he has no

12. Pinto, Crisis in English Poetry, 110.

superior."(13)

A more mature Walter de la Mare used the world of childhood to provide symbols for his spiritual experience, and in this sense he is non-Georgian, or as Vivian Pinto calls him, "a philosophic symbolist."(14) De la Mare is often compared with Thomas Hardy and William Blake for their themes of mortality and visionary illumination.(15)

Many of the poets writing fables or pastoral poetry in the simple, descriptive Georgian style exhibit tendencies that can be called non-Georgian. John Masefield (1878-1967) revived Chaucerian meters in his long narrative poems The Everlasting Mercy (1911), The Widow in the Bye Street (1912), Dauber (1913) and Reynard the Fox (1919). In these poems Masefield uses the everyday language of pubs, cottages, and English streets. However, according to David Daiches, this touch of realism for Masefield is an incidental technique, not a philosophical and technical goal.(16) Masefield was in many ways Georgian in his approach.

13. Conrad Aiken, Scepticisms: Notes on Contemporary Poetry (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1919), 213-214.

14. Pinto, Crisis in English Poetry, 1880-1940, 124.

15. Sharon K. Hall, ed., Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 4, (Detroit: Gale, 1980), 70.

16. Daiches, Poetry and the Modern World, 49.

The ugly side of the social scene was for him picturesque because of its ugliness, and to him toughness was romantic. Like de la Mare he is an idealist, and also sentimental sometimes to the point of being maudlin in his attitudes towards a masculine 19th century tradition. He is fundamentally a traditionalist. He is implicated in the Georgian retrenchment to the extent that he conceived of the function and medium of poetry in the traditional way.

Lascelles Abercrombie's (1881-1938) "Epitaph" is a short ironic piece of verse in the Imagist style. Generally, however, Abercrombie's poetry is about an attitude of mind, rather than poetry rising out of an attitude of mind.⁽¹⁷⁾ The language, like so much of the Georgian poetry of his peers, is antiquated and Victorian. Although he possessed intellectual vigor and a powerful imagination (he admired the long narrative poetry of the 17th century and showed some attempts in his own work to be realistic), Victorian traditions maintained too strong an influence on him.

Francis Brett Young (1884-1954) was of the younger generation of Georgian poets. He was born and raised in the Midlands of England and his works include admirable studies of Midland life. His writing, like

17. Pinto, Crisis in English Poetry: 1880-1941, 111-112.

that of his fellow Georgians, is mellow, graceful, and delicate. Strict realism is not his style. Rather, he tries to present in tranquillity and with beauty, daily lives of imaginary lovers or country squires, "so that they compose into a country painting, a long leisurely panorama of England." (18)

William Henry Davies (1871-1940), generally known as W. H. Davies, was wholly entrenched in the Georgian style. Bernard Shaw called his poetry "not in the least strenuous or modern: there was no sign in it that he had read anything later than Cowper or Crabbe, . . . there was indeed no sign of his having read anything other than as a child reads. The result was a freedom from literary vulgarity which was like a draught of clear water in a desert. Here . . . was a genuine innocent writing odds and ends of verse about odds and ends of things." (19) This Anglo-Welsh poet was also a novelist, essayist, and autobiographer. Not ambitious, the poetry of W.H. Davies is simple, virginal, melancholic, sometimes exquisite and sincere, and often banal and insipid. It demonstrates typical anachronistic smooth rhythms and pleasant rural

18. Swinnerton, The Georgian Literary Scene: 1910-1935, 254.

19. Bernard Shaw, "Preface" (1907), in The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp by William H. Davies repr. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), vii-xvii.

landscapes:

Yes, I will spend the livelong day
 With Nature in this month of May;
 And sit beneath the trees, and share
 My bread with birds whose homes are there;
 While cows lie down to eat, and sheep
 Stand to their necks in grass so deep;

.

Another Georgian poet, Edward Thomas (1878-1917) (killed in action in France) became his mentor. Thomas gave Davies financial support and provided him with a house in the country where he wrote the prose work Autobiography of a Super-Tramp (1908). Following this Davies wrote poetry profusely. His lyric poems are reminiscent of the delicate verse of the Elizabethans, his nature poems reminiscent of the style of Robert Herrick (1591-1634). (20)

Edmund Blunden (1896-1974) was one of the youngest contributors to Georgian Poetry. Although his later works reflect the violence and terror to be found in the trenches of the First World War (21), his early works are notable for their purity, quiet manner, and close observation of the English country scene. (22)

20. Hall, Sharon K. ed., Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, Vol 5. (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1981), 197.

21. Keith, W.J., The Poetry of Nature (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1981), 171.

22. Pinto, Crisis in English Poetry: 1880-1940, 119.

This poetry embodies the spirit of the English countryside as expressed by one who has lived in it and knows its people, their speech and ways of thinking:

When on the green the rag-tag game had stopt
 And red the lights through alehouse curtains
 glowed.
 The clambering brake drove out and took the
 road
 Then on the stern moors all the babble dropt
 Among our merry men, who felt the dew
 Sweet to the soul and saw the southern blue
 Thronged with heat lightning miles and miles
 abroad
 Working and whickering, snakish, winged and
 clawed,
 Or like old carp lazily rising and
 shouldering.
 Long the slate cloud flame shook with the
 death-white smouldering:
 Yet not a voice....

The main body of poetry written in the Georgian style, typical of these and other poets who will be discussed in the following chapters, was produced between the years 1911-1914, before the onset of the First World War. It represents that last phase of assurance and stability before the old order throughout Europe broke up in violence. According to Edward Marsh the poetry was conceived to be the product of a craftsman working on traditional lines.(23) Innovation

23. The Georgian movement was begun in the summer of 1912 in the home of Edward Marsh. Among the poets present were Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, W.W. Gibson and Harold Monro. See Christopher Hassell, Edward Marsh, Patron of the Arts: A Biography (London, 1959); Durrell, A Key to Modern British Poetry, 119;

was discouraged because it interfered with the ease with which the reader could obtain pleasant sensations from the volume which he had purchased. The Georgian poetic style is thus full of imitations of Romantic nature poetry in the tradition of the great English nature poets of the nineteenth century, but using patriotism, fantasy or the unspoiled English countryside as an anodyne. Only a few individuals continued in this style after World War I. The failure of the patriotic poems to reflect contemporary sensibility became an anachronism in the face of the realities of trench warfare and caused the movement's final decline in the 1920's.

Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 208; and Swinnerton, The Georgian Literary Scene: 1910-1935, 222-227.

Chapter III

Roger Quilter and Peter Warlock as Michael Head's Predecessors in the Composition of English Solo Art Song

In order to set the stage more fully for an examination of the Georgian poetry song settings by Michael Head, certain observations should be made on the state of contemporary English song at the time Michael Head was beginning his career as an art song composer. Starting in the late nineteenth century and gathering momentum into the twentieth century, there was improvement in the quality of musical composition, particularly the art song, in England. English composers who had been dominated so long by continental trends began to discard these in favor of influences which were decidedly "English" in nature.

There were many imaginative young song composers of the early twentieth century who matured at about the same time, including Peter Warlock (1894-1930), John Ireland (1879-1962), Ivor Gurney (1890-1937), and Roger

Quilter (1877-1953). Many songs were composed during this early period. A revival of interest in things traditionally considered English was gaining great impetus during this period. Composers collected and arranged English folk songs and they began to rediscover and transcribe the music of early Jacobean and Elizabethan masters such as Dowland and Morley. This nationalistic turn was especially important for the young composer in England. It served as a link from composer to audience, since a folk tune or a folk-like art song could be appreciated by the public in much the same way as the older drawing room ballads of the Victorian period.

Until the turn of the century most English composers had been influenced by the Europeans and their obsession relating to the problems of pitch inflection, meter and prosody unique to German verse. It is understandable that chosen texts influence music and that national poetry exerts its own peculiar effect. Much of the finest English lyrical poetry from any historical period, from that of the Elizabethans to twentieth-century contemporaries, is that which arises originally from the colloquial. A large body of English lyrical poetry, that which was derived from colloquial speech and therefore different from German poetry, could not be considered idiomatic to a musical setting based on foreign forms, and specifically the

German lied. The folk song revival in England was an indirect influence in enlarging the number of texts which might be chosen by a composer to be set to music. The greatest usage of this very English poetry was made by composers like Warlock, Quilter, and Vaughan Williams.(1)

Free rhythmic declamation, shifting bar lengths, modal melodies and consecutive triads evolved as some of the compositional procedures of this new nationalistic trend. In fact, none of these are taken directly from the monodic folk song. Rather, Arthur Jacobs says that the folk song was "less a direct influence than . . . a catalyst."(2)

Around the year 1930 there was a surge of public interest in radio and this reduced greatly the number of live performances of song. By this time the folk song revival was fading. The year 1930 was also important because it marked the death of one of the most prolific composers of the preceding decade, Peter Warlock.

According to Arthur Jacobs, Peter Warlock and

1. Vernon Yenne, "Three Twentieth Century English Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran and John Ireland," (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois, 1969), 13.

2. Arthur Jacobs, "The British Isles," in A History of Song, ed. Denis Stevens (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), 163.

Roger Quilter were apparent influences on many composers of the following generation, including the subject of this study, Michael Head.⁽³⁾ In addition to the trends already mentioned, Quilter, Warlock, and others were influenced to a great degree by Frederick Delius (1862-1934). The direct line from Delius to Head is an important consideration when discussing influences on the style inherent in the songs of Michael Head.

Frederick Delius was preeminently a folklorist who pursued an untiring search for the native and characteristic wherever it was to be found.

Is it mere accident that his masterpiece, A Village Romeo and Juliet, is based on a folk-tale; or that the Appalachian Variations are derived from an old plantation melody; or that Brigg Fair is founded on an old English folk-song; or that On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring embodies the Norwegian folk-melody; and that Koango is inspired by the singing of the Negroes in the Solano Grove? (4)

Less English and more cosmopolitan than other contemporary English composers, Delius began as an imitator of Grieg and a strong disciple of Chopin. It was primarily Delius's "modern harmony" (he considered

3. Jacobs, "The British Isles," 174.

4. A. K. Holland, The Songs of Delius (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), quoted in Vernon Yenne, "Three Twentieth Century English Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran and John Ireland," 18.

himself a follower of Wagner) that attracted composers such as Warlock. Delius's orchestral tone poems and songs exhibit the characteristic Delian falling chromatic harmonies.(5) His mature style was based to a large extent on Wagner, whose endless flow and harmonic character Delius tried to emulate, and on Grieg, whose airy texture showed him how to lighten the heaviness of the Wagnerian sound. Delius thought in terms of chords and colors. Delius's chordal vocabulary never strays beyond late Romantic practice, relying on triads, secondary sevenths, and non-harmonic tones, and uses a narrow range of chromatic alterations and diatonic discords. The arrangements of these elements is entirely individual to Delius. For example, the rate of harmonic rhythm is extremely flexible and sometimes so fast as to approximate atonality.(6) His voice parts are often inseparable from their harmonic accompaniment, simple, yet seemingly complex within this kind of harmonic texture. The influence of Delius in England is easy to trace after about 1910.

5. Yenne, "Three Twentieth Century English Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran and John Ireland," 19.

6. Anthony Payne, "Frederick Delius," in The New Grove Twentieth Century English Masters: Elgar, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Walton, Tippett, Britten (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986), 83.

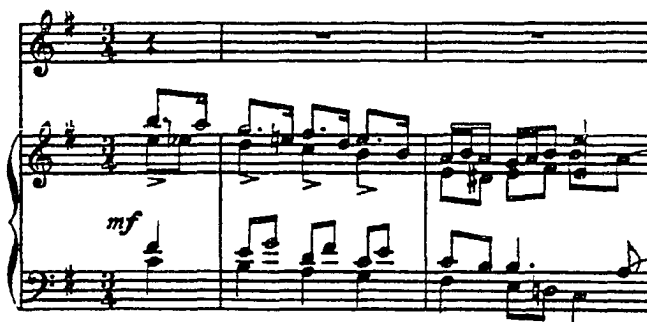
Roger Quilter

Roger Quilter knew almost nothing about Delius's music until about 1908 and became fully aware of its beauties much later, after the war.(7) The Delian streams of chords are best reflected in Quilter's strings of parallel fourths, often appearing as a string of secondary sevenths used as a dual line of consecutive fourths, as in the introduction to "O mistress mine".

Ex. 1

"O mistress mine"

Measures 1-2



In contrast to Delius, Quilter's harmonies are seldom obtrusive. They function traditionally and take no notice of any advancement of musical vocabulary. Quilter's harmonies are romantic with a strong modal

7. Steven Banfield, Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1:107.

tendency.

General traits in Roger Quilter's songs include a gently articulated, often syncopated accompaniment that helps to launch the characteristic vocal shapes and word settings of three subordinate syllables moving to a stressed one, as in "O mistress mine" (Ex. 2).

Ex. 2

"O mistress mine"

Measures 4-6

mf

O mis-tress mine, where are you roa - ming? O - stay and hear, your true love's co-ming.

mp

Quilter wrote this song in 1905 and was probably indebted for the three-note upbeat pattern to the popular music of his time, where it occurs in a variety of instrumental and vocal simple meter contexts.⁽⁸⁾ Warlock set this same poem in 1924 in a similar manner also using a three note upbeat. According to I.A. Copley the poem is notoriously difficult to set with

8. Ibid., 108-109.

any true approach to "just note and accent." (9) By using the three note arsis in setting the first four words of each line of text both Quilter and Warlock demonstrate a sensitivity to the accentuation of words. The primary accent in the first phrase is on "mine" and is placed on the first beat of the first full measure of the song in both settings. The secondary accent of the three note arsis occurs on the fourth beat of the previous measure, "mistress." Words and enunciation are well matched to the music.

A significant trait, and one which links Quilter with Fauré, whom Quilter admired particularly for the strength of his bass lines, is the frequent use of modal scale degrees, particularly flat 7ths and sharp 4ths. (10) The flat 7th is used repeatedly by Quilter, perhaps to the point of being a cliché.

From Fauré, Quilter learned control over texture. The interior melodies in the piano, in the alto and tenor lines, often emerge for a while, then continue in another part. There are few doubled octaves, Brahmsian heaviness is nonexistent except in the earliest songs, and the accompaniment, unlike Delius's, is easy for the

9. I. A. Copley, The Music of Peter Warlock, A Critical Survey (London: Dennis Dobson, 1979), 111.

10. Banfield, Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, 1:111.

pianist, though it never sounds trite.(11)

Roger Quilter's response to poetry was immediate.(12) He was often inspired instantly upon reading something new; however, because he worked long over each setting there is a marked loss of freshness as he resorts to old mannerisms and idioms. Some of his songs, particularly the Shakespeare settings with their final repeated lines and the "juicy" concluding chords, will sound maudlin to some listeners. Perhaps this is because the composer misinterpreted the poem's meaning. For example, in Tennyson's "Now sleeps the crimson petal" the suggestive lines "So fold thyself, my dearest thou, and slip Into my bosom and be lost in me" are set in an excessively sentimental manner (Ex. 3).

Unlike the younger generation of song composers who reached maturity during or after the First World War, Quilter did not set contemporary poetry of the Georgian variety except for his folk-like setting of James Stephens's "In the bud of the morning O" and the Three Pastoral Songs, op. 22, to words by Joseph Campbell. According to Stephen Banfield, Quilter was

11. Ibid., 112, 123.

12. Ibid., 122-123.

Ex. 3

"Now sleeps the crimson petal"

Measures 19-27

So fold thy-self, my dear-est, thou, and slip, slip In-to my bo-som and be
lost,..... be lost in me.

by nature an "indoor composer"(13) which is perhaps why Trevor Hold used the phrase "the walled-in garden" to title his study of Quilter's songs.(14)

Peter Warlock

Peter Warlock wrote almost all of his surviving music in the eleven years immediately preceding his

13. Ibid., 125.

14. Trevor Hold, The Walled-In Garden: A Study of the Songs of Roger Quilter (Rickmansworth: Triad Press, 1978).

death in 1930. As mentioned earlier, one of the strongest features of Warlock was his early and continuing interest in Delius. This interest began in the latter part of the year 1910 when he met the older composer, and continued throughout his lifetime, although with diminishing intensity. There is a long, revealing correspondence between the two men that shows Delius playing an important role in the life of Peter Warlock. Delius took the multiple roles of master, father, confidant, and mentor in influencing Warlock's outlook on his career, religion, art, and music.⁽¹⁵⁾ Most of Warlock's early songs (until about 1917) show, as do Delius's songs, an attentiveness to harmonic structure, resulting in typically thick and langourous chords, and an overwhelming mood, almost a brooding atmosphere. In fact Warlock's youthful preoccupation with mood and harmony containing rich chordal progressions resulted in a technique of composition in which the interest was almost exclusively harmonic. This technique of composition is described in a letter sent to Colin Taylor, dated January 24, 1912:

My [technique of] "composition" is rather ludicrous: the only way I can produce anything at all is to strum chords on the piano until I light on

15. Yenne, "Three Twentieth Century English Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran and John Ireland," 24.

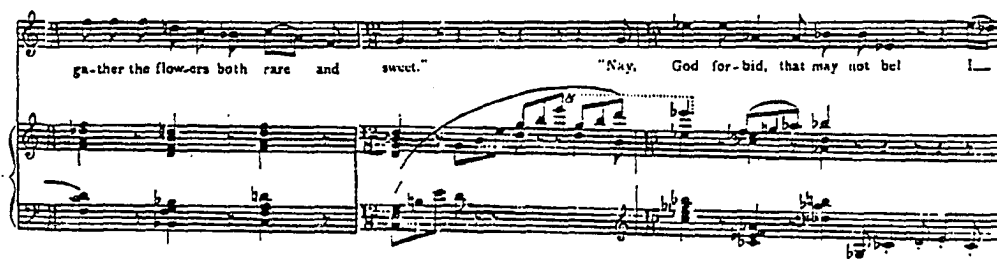
one which pleases me. Whereupon it is imprisoned in a notebook. When a sufficient number of chords and progressions are congregated, I look for a short, and, if possible, appropriate poem to hang them on to. This found, more strumming has to ensue, until there is about the same quantity of music as of poem. Then the voice part is added and the whole passes for a "composition"! I should call it a compilation.(16)

Delius's influence on Peter Warlock can be observed in Warlock's "Hey, Troly Loly Lo" (Ex. 4), particularly in the piano with the complete seventh chords, or in the complete ninth chords in his "The Droll Lover" (Ex. 5).

Ex. 4

"Hey, Troly Loly Lo"

Measures 6-8



16. Cecil Gray, Peter Warlock: A Memoir of Philip Heseltine (London: Jonathan Cape Limited, 1934), quoted in Yenne, 39.

Ex. 5

"The Droll Lover"

Measures 32-34

love thee for thy ug - li - ness, And for thy fool - er -

very crisply

Another Delian characteristic used by Warlock is the chromatic motion in the upper voices of the piano over a low pedal. A striking example is from Warlock's song cycle for tenor, strings, flute and English horn, The Curlew, where Warlock has the upper voices moving in chromatic fashion over a c# pedal. Warlock often links together a series of parallel thirds or sixths in the inner parts over a pedal in the bass. (Roger Quilter also uses the pedal in a similar fashion but without the chromatic motion.) In Warlock's accompaniment there is a rich, fluid harmonic foundation. Warlock consistently uses chords built on fourths as well as chords with added notes. From the influence of Delius and Bernard van Dieren (1887-1936) evolved also Warlock's use of chordal streams

or his "melody of chords." (17)

Probably the most famous Warlock songs from 1916-17 are in the cycle Saudades. This cycle demonstrates stylistic characteristics similar to those found in the subject of this study, the Georgian settings by Michael Head. According to Vernon Yenne, throughout Saudades there are attempts at word painting (18) such as in the third song "Heracleitus," where the vocal line descends to the text "and send him down the sky." Another characteristic is the organization of musical material around a recurring motive such as in "Along the stream" in which a chromatic six note motive appears throughout the song, in its original form, in inversion, and fragmented. Perhaps the likeness in the mood of the Georgian poetry and that of the Saudades text is responsible. The text for Saudades is translated from the Chinese of Li-Po by L. Cranmer-Byng. Its mood is melancholy and wistful and, like so much of Georgian poetry, is presented in a descriptive nature setting. Warlock set six poems that can be called Georgian. "Late Summer," Warlock's setting of Edward Shanks's poem "The Fields are full," is in an overtly Delius-like chromatic style,

17. Yenne, "Three Twentieth Century English Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran and John Ireland," 135.

18. Ibid., 52.

appropriate to the vibrant sense of the beauty of nature which remains uppermost, so characteristic in a Georgian poem. Warlock also set another Shanks poem, "The Singer," two Robert Nichols poems, "The grey wind" and "The water lily," and "Mr. Belloc's fancy," a poem by J.C. Squire. These songs will be mentioned again during the discussion of musical settings of Georgian poetry.

Melodically Warlock absorbed a great deal from folk song, particularly the old Gaelic folk tunes. Many of his songs demonstrate how well he understood the characteristic melodic contours associated with the English variety of folk song. Most of his melodies are direct and straightforward. There are some songs that might be taken for arrangements of genuine folk tunes such as "Little Trotty Wagtail," "Away to Twiver," and "Candlelight," but in reality they are all original and spring from Warlock's own creativity. His well known song cycle Lillygay shows the folk song influence. In this cycle Warlock succeeded in creating melodies resembling folk songs, yet which were wholly original.(19)

Warlock's compositional style was strikingly different from that of Roger Quilter, particularly in

19. Ibid., 59-60.

the absence of key signatures and bar lines in some of his songs, his contrapuntal techniques, and his abhorrence of excess or padding in the music. In Warlock's songs there is almost a total lack of florid writing. Rarely is the singer required to sing more than one or two notes to a syllable. This may account to some extent for the relative shortness of Warlock's songs. Some are only one page in length.

An interest in the performance and study of old music is something of an English tradition. Warlock studied the English lute song of the 16th and 17th centuries and the English madrigal of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, which especially influenced him. Jacobean song writers were fond of using melodic sequences, often in combination with harmonic sequences.(20) Warlock made frequent use of this device in songs such as "Whenas the Rye," "Sigh no more, Ladies," and "Rest, Sweet Nymphs."

He often used the "Elizabethan cadence" with its juxtaposition of subtonic and leading tone sevenths (Ex. 6).(21)

20. Copley, The Music of Peter Warlock, A Critical Study, 41.

21. Ibid.

Ex. 6

"Sleep"

Measures 1-2



The subtonic seventh is perhaps found more frequently than the sharpened seventh.

As one examines closely the many folk tunes of the British isles it is not uncommon to find the use of the lowered seventh. Part of this is due to the fact that a number of folk songs are modal in structure. By tampering with the seventh some confusion is created as to the nature of the scale, such as major and mixolydian, or minor and dorian. The majority of chromatic alterations in Warlock's songs are in the piano part. In most of Warlock's vocal melodies there are few altered notes except where the purpose is to characterize or point out an important part of the text.

Chapter IV

Michael Head's Contemporaries in the Song Settings of Georgian Poetry

Georgian poetry texts (as defined in Chapter II) were given solo song settings by only a few composers. According to Steven Banfield it is not known if the Marsh Georgian Poetry anthologies were widely used by composers. Few of the poems in them were set to music.(1) Other Georgian poetry not published in the Marsh anthologies was available to composers in anthologies or private publications, such as the John Drinkwater anthology The Way of Poetry. Much of the poetry in this book is Georgian and is by such contemporary authors as Rupert Brooke, W.W. Gibson, and John Drinkwater himself. The book also contains

1. Steven Banfield, Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1:209-210.

selections from earlier poets like Sydney Dobell (1824-1874), William Blake (1757-1827), and Thomas Campion (1567-1619).

Before 1950 nearly half of the known song settings (an accounting which includes both published and unpublished settings and fragments) of these Georgian poets are by five composers: Herbert Howells (1892-1983), Benjamin Burrows (1891-1966), Michael Head, Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (1889-1960), and Ivor Gurney (1890-1937).⁽²⁾ Benjamin Burrows's entire contribution of Georgian song settings remains unpublished. Of Herbert Howells's forty three Georgian settings, eleven were subsequently published. Gibbs, Head, Howells, Gurney and Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989) remain the only English song composers to publish individually more than ten solo song settings of Georgian poetry. Their contemporaries who published five to ten settings include Peter Warlock, Arthur Bliss (1891-1975), Rutland Boughton (1878-1960), Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), Gerald Finzi (1901-1956), and John Ireland (1879-1962).

Ivor Gurney

Ivor Gurney lived at Boars Hill near Oxford. His

2. Ibid.

neighbors before the First World War included the poets Blunden, Graves, Bridges, Masfield and Nichols. Gurney and these other poets share an identity of locale. In the poetry of this era poets focused on this region in poems like F. W. Harvey's "In Flanders," an anguished expression of homesickness.⁽³⁾ After World War I, during the inter-war period, Gurney continued to include images of the English countryside, particularly the hills of the West Midlands. Ivor Gurney's output of Georgian poetry song settings is discussed thoroughly by Banfield.

The Georgian song settings by Gurney represent about half of his total output. Gurney published thirty-three Georgian song settings to poetry by John Masfield, W.W. Gibson, Francis Ledwidge (1891-1917), Walter de la Mare, W. H. Davies, John Freeman (1880-1929), Edward Shanks, Edward Thomas, J. C. Squire, W. F. Harvey, Rupert Brooke, and one poem by the composer. The last completed piece, "Bread and Cherries," was written to a poem by de la Mare in 1921. With insanity manifesting itself in 1922 his songs become less compelling and after 1926 there were no more songs.

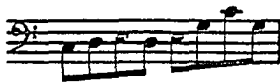
The first Georgian setting by Gurney is to the

3. Ibid., 190.

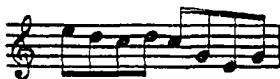
well known Masfield poem "Captain Stratton's fancy" (1914, final version July, 1917). The poem first appeared in the 1910 Masfield collection Ballads and Poems and extols the virtues of drink. This song is similar to Warlock's setting of the same poem, but simpler. Gurney sets verses 1, 3 and 7 of Masfield's original seven stanza poem. Warlock omits stanzas five and seven.

The second Georgian setting to another Masfield poem "By a bierside," was begun in 1915, completed in 1916, and orchestrated by Herbert Howells in 1917. According to Stephen Banfield, the song has a loose arioso construction and, unlike "Captain Stratton's fancy," is built around a series of musical figures (Ex. 1). These figures repeat bar after bar, making the piano version monotonous. An orchestral arrangement, with its possibilities for variety in timbre and octave, could be more interesting.

Ex. 1a



Ex. 1b



A powerful visual image is conveyed by the first few lines of poetry. Gurney wrote of this song in a letter of November 1916:

It is not always necessary to read a poem through to start setting it. . . . I had only the first two lines in my mind, or perhaps three, when I began to write, and did not finish till my idea was complete. I did not trouble about balance or anything else much. (4)

The poem is most patriotic and the final line, "It is most grand to die," was probably inspirational to the young composers actively serving in France.

Like "By a bierside," a majority of Gurney's songs composed shortly before or after his release from the hospital in 1918 deal with self and nature. They have a light flexible quality and are overwhelmingly lyrical. (5) "The Scribe," to a poem by de la Mare, is of this type.

Francis Ledwidge's poem "Twilight song" was set by Ivor Gurney in 1918 and titled "Desire in Spring." The poem, from Ledwidge's Songs of the Fields (1915), is a classic example of Georgian observation of nature with a catalogue of favorite things.

4. Ivor Gurney, quoted in Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 1:200.

5. Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 1:195.

I love the cradle songs the mothers sings
 In lonely places when the twilight drops,
 The slow endearing melodies that bring
 Sleep to the weeping lids; and, when she stops,
 I love the roadside birds upon the tops
 Of dusty hedges in a world of Spring.

.

Gurney's scene painting is limited: an e pedal
 for the "roadside birds" (Ex. 2), a chromatic slow
 descent for "midday winds" (Ex. 3), a broadening to 4/4
 for "long whisper" (Ex. 4), and another chromatic slow
 descent over a pedal for "silent changes" (Ex. 5).

Ex. 2

"Desire in Spring"

Measures 14-15

The musical score for "Desire in Spring" (Measures 14-15) is presented in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "and, when she stops, I love the road-side birds up - on the". Both the vocal and piano parts feature a crescendo (cresc.) marking over measures 14 and 15. The piano accompaniment includes a chromatic slow descent in the right hand and a more active bass line.

Ex. 3

Measures 23-24

Of mid - day wind, and mead-ows lean one way,

Ex. 4

Measures 26-27

long whis - per pass - es thro' the sedge,

Ex. 5

Measure 34

And si - lent chan - ges

Gurney's song "Heart's pain," composed in 1920 to Brooke's "All suddenly the wind comes soft," appears in print for the first time in Banfield's book Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century. The poet constructs a series of images out of his observation of nature, and likens the emergence of spring to the reawakening of sorrow in the heart. He makes it clear that it is spring which is the cause of the reawakened sorrow.

All suddenly the wind comes soft,
 And Spring is here again;
 And the hawthorne quickens with buds of green,
 And my heart with buds of pain,

.

But Winter's broken and earth has woken,
 And the small birds cry again;
 And the hawthorne hedge puts forth its buds,
 And my heart puts forth its pain.

The flow of the accompaniment in eighth-notes reproduces from the very beginning a strolling background reminiscent of countryside walks. We know that Gurney sometimes composed on these occasions.(6) According to Banfield the basic cell (X to X and Y to Y in the voice part) "appears twice in the first two bars

6. Ibid., 196.

of the [vocal] melody . . . arising from the three statements of it in the piano introduction . . . [first one indicated by arrows (Ex. 6)]. All this occurs over similar harmony, but with a metric displacement."

Ex. 6

"Heart's pain"

Measures 1-6

Folk song influence is evident in the flat seventh scale degree in the melody and by the fact that Gurney does not modulate to the dominant but rather to C Major and then C Minor at the lines "My heart all Winter lay so numb" before returning to E major for the final stanza.

Edward Shanks's poem "The fields are full" presents the reader with interplay between the observed

and its simile, rather than between the observer and the observed:

The fields are full of summer still
And breathe again upon the air
From brown dry side of hedge and hill
More sweetness than the sense can bear.

So some old couple who in youth
With love were filled and overfull,
And loved with strength and loved with truth,
In heavy age are beautiful.

Gurney, Warlock and Gibbs all set this poem.

Gurney sets up his typical "walking" figurations for the first stanza, establishing a strong physical presence in the landscape. He begins the second stanza strophically, then pulls up as though realizing youthful passion cannot last: the sixteenth-note figure ceases and he brings the song back to E major, the accompaniment figure returning after the final word. (7)

Cecil Armstrong Gibbs

Armstrong Gibbs (1889-1960) was born in Great Baddow, Essex and spent nearly all his life in nearby Danbury. He belonged to the sizeable group of English composers for whom composition was somewhere between a bread-winning occupation and a leisured pursuit. He

7. Ibid., 217-218.

enjoyed a private income from the family toothpaste business, but it was not large enough to save him from having to teach at the Royal College of Music and adjudicate at endless festivals. In this respect his career closely parallels that of Howells and Head. All three wrote songs for the school and festival markets.

Gibbs published forty-two songs to texts of Georgian poetry. All of them were produced before 1926 with the exception of two songs to poems by de la Mare written in 1932 and Five Children's Songs from "Peacock Pie" (de la Mare) from 1933. Thirty-seven of the forty-two Georgian settings are to poems by Walter de la Mare.

Walter de la Mare's "Silver," from Peacock Pie inspired no less than 23 settings by English composers, though only those by Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (1920), Benjamin Britten (1928), Lennox Berkeley (1946) and American composer John Duke are at all well known. According to Banfield, the poem is a counterpoint of movement and stillness. "Normally active creatures are quite still - the kenneled dog 'like a log,' the sleeping doves, and the 'moveless fish'. . . . The dog and doves are framed in archways . . . frozen halfway in and halfway out . . . and the fish are suspended against the implied movement of the stream. . . . The moon, normally passive, moves 'slowly', peering 'this

way and that.'"(8)

Armstrong Gibbs's setting of "Silver" expresses these contrasts in musical terms. Chords normally suggestive of strong harmonic movement, for example the D major triad in second inversion, are kept poised without resolution. The depiction of the moon's slow pacing is restricted to one stationary note, an F# pedal. The scene's transience is conveyed by the avoidance of comfortable metric patterns in the ostinato. In the poem the moon is perceived as an intruder into the realm of sleep. The word "peer" indicates furtiveness. The dog may pounce if it awakens, and the sudden scampering of the mouse underlines this. Gibbs's setting does the same. The stillness is broken with the "poco agitato" recitative at "A harvest mouse goes scampering by," and the F# pedal misses a beat in the accompaniment (Ex. 7).

8. Ibid., 214-215.

Ex. 7

Gibbs's "Silver"

Measures 24-28

doves in a sil-ver - feath-er'd sleep;—

poco agitato

A har-vest mouse goes scampering by,—With sil-ver

De la Mare appreciated musical settings of his work. According to Herbert Howells, "He was one of the few poets I've known who really understood music - one always felt he was on one's own wavelength, that . . . his concept of rhythm was identical with one's own." (9) The poet seems to have accepted the accomplishment of two of the finest settings, Howells's

9. Herbert Howells, quoted in Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 1:222.

"King David" and Gibbs's "Silver," in that of each, according to Howells, "he said he didn't want anyone else to set it." (10)

Gibbs's association with de la Mare went back to his early days as a teacher at the preparatory school The Wick. Gibbs wanted a children's play for which he could provide music for the headmaster's retirement in July 1919. Late in 1918 he asked de la Mare for a libretto and within two months the poet had supplied the text of Crossings, a musical for children, which includes the four solo songs "Araby," "Ann's cradle song," "Beggar's song," and "Candlestick-maker's song." Edward Dent stage-managed the production and Adrian Boult conducted.

De la Mare liked this music for children, yet in his poetry there is often a more ghostlike shadow. Stephen Banfield says that the ghosts in de la Mare's poetry seem to represent the idea of secret self-knowledge, with such knowledge entailing the recognition of loss and separation. (11) For this effect Gibbs's setting of "The stranger" (originally from Two Songs, 1919, both of which were eventually published as nos. 2 and 1 respectively of Five Songs)

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., 226.

has strong, heavily laden chromatic language reminiscent of Delius. "The exile" (published singly in 1923) puts this idea into unaccompanied monody punctuated by short, modal chord progressions.(12)

One element of de la Mare's poetry missing from Gibbs's solo song settings is the strong suggestion of the sinister, often identifiable as death. It is easy to miss the subtle undertones if one dwells on the surface effects, but frightening visions can be read into some of the poems. In "The mocking fairy" from Peacock Pie there is the suspicion that Mrs. McGill is lying dead in her cottage, making the fairy a dancing angel of death. Gibbs, however, generally chose de la Mare poems with little or no suggestion of death. From Five Children's Songs, "Then" has only a hint of impending tragedy. The musical setting of this group reflects only the children's innocence.

Gibbs set Edward Shanks's poem "The fields are full" in 1920. (See page 51 for text.) Of the three settings of this poem discussed in this chapter, only Gibbs keeps the simile subservient to the pictured landscape. To do this he he adopts a new texture of high pairs of triplets for the second stanza which negates the 3/4 time signature (Ex. 8).

12. Ibid.

Ex. 8a

"The fields are full"

Measures 1-4



Ex. 8b

Measures 19-22

So some old cou - ple, who in youth With

Gibbs's de la Mare settings are most memorable for their tunefulness, careful construction, and their "performability."

Lennox Berkeley

Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989) also was attracted to the poetry of Walter de la Mare. His Five Songs (1946) were written for Pierre Bernac and Francis Poulenc. They are the first five of thirteen settings of the poetry of Walter de la Mare. The group includes "The Horseman," "Mistletoe," "Poor Henry," "The Song of the

Soldiers," and his own fairly well known setting of "Silver." All of the poems appeared in de la Mare's collection Peacock Pie. According to Stephen Banfield, Berkeley's setting of "Silver" fails in its attempt to portray the magic of the poem.(13)

Partly due to the influence of Nadia Boulanger with whom he studied, Berkeley's style is much like Fauré's in its refined texture and quality of restraint. Like Fauré, his songs demonstrate a natural feeling for melody. He set Georgian poetry throughout his career. Later settings to poetry by Walter de la Mare are the Songs of the Half Light for high voice and guitar from 1964 and Another Spring written in 1977. In his notes for the premier performance of Another Spring, Berkeley wrote:

These songs, commissioned by the Chichester Festival for the concert in honor of Dean Walter Husey's retirement, are dedicated to Dame Janet Baker. The three poems are by Walter de la Mare with whom I have long felt a certain affinity. They come from a volume called The Inward Companion in which most of the poems were written late in his life and are a good example of his gift for saying a great deal in very few words.(14)

13. Ibid., 232.

14. Lennox Berkeley, quoted in Robert Hansen, "Lennox Berkeley: His Life and His Songs," The NATS Journal (March/April 1990): 10.

Peter Warlock

As discussed in Chapter III, Peter Warlock was apparently, along with Roger Quilter, an influence on Michael Head. Warlock set six Georgian poems: "Late Summer" ("The fields are full," Edmund Blunden), "Captain Stratton's Fancy" (Masefield), "The Singer" (Edward Shanks), "The grey wind" (Robert Nichols), "The Water Lily" (Nichols), and "Mr Belloc's fancy" (J.C. Squire). All were published with the exception of the setting of "The grey wind," which is lost.

As mentioned earlier, "Late Summer" is in Warlock's most overtly Delius-like chromatic style. He distinguishes the simile from the description by a modulation to the mediant for the second stanza, treating it as a strophic repeat of the first stanza, but with metrical variation. The melodic climax is on the word "strength," after which the melody gradually slips back into the tonic E major in the 19th measure on the word "beautiful." Like Gurney's setting, the song is organized over a motive (Ex. 9, bracketed) which reoccurs in the accompaniment, and is particularly effective under the words "overfull," "strength," "truth," and "heavy age." A postlude brings back music from the song's opening.

Ex. 9

"Late Summer"

Measures 20-23



Warlock's "Captain Stratton's fancy" is a rowdy, extroverted setting. It employs a continuous dotted march rhythm, octaves in the piano, and an occasional seventh or ninth chord. The accompaniment is awkward for anyone not having large hands (Ex. 10).

Ex. 10

"Captain Stratton's fancy"

Measures 10-12

There are some variations in the treatment of the accompaniment between successive verses in this

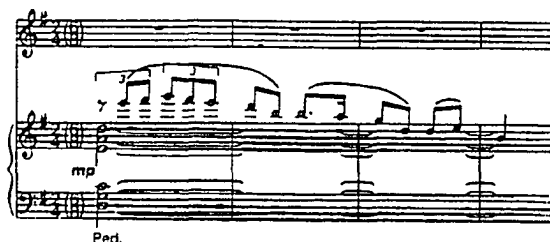
strophic setting. Warlock varies the instrumental tessitura, and there is a modulation to the relative minor for the opening of the last verse.

"The Singer," to a poem by Edward Shanks from his The Queen of China and Other Poems, is discussed by Stephen Banfield and A. E. Copley. The song is dominated by the uneasy three against two relationship implicit in the time signature (Ex.11). The poem is about the pleasure of listening to music. The song opens with a flute like phrase above a sustained chord of superimposed fourths.

Ex.11

"The Singer"

Measures 1-3



This phrase becomes central to the vocal part, which is almost entirely pentatonic.

Herbert Howells

Herbert Howells (1892-1983) sketched seventy-six songs for solo voice. Of these, sixty-six were completed and thirty-four songs were subsequently

published. There are a total of forty-three Georgian poetry settings. Considering his total song output, including sketches and fragments, Georgian poetry comprises more than half of the poetry sources selected by Howells. Eleven of the Georgian settings were published. Six of these comprise Peacock Pie [Set I], composed in 1919 to poems from de la Mare's Peacock Pie and published in 1923. Between 1919 and 1925 Howells worked further on other poems by de la Mare for a projected second set of Peacock Pie, but only one of these 13 pieces, "King David," was published. With the exception of "Poor Jim Jay," "Someone came knocking" and "Old Shellover" the other songs in this set exist only as sketches or are missing. The other four published Georgian settings are to poems by W. W. Gibson: "Girl's Song" (1916), "Old Skinflint" (1918), "The mugger's song" (1919), and "Old Meg" (1923). Including Howells's unpublished works there are seventeen total settings to texts by de la Mare, and nine settings for the poetry of Gibson, five of these completed.

According to Peter Hodgson, Howells's best Georgian settings are those in which a "penetrating

humor" or a "searching pathos" is apparent.⁽¹⁵⁾ Howells has consistent success in matching the mood to the verse, quite easy with such simple poetry as Georgian poetry. Howells's song settings do not demonstrate the harmonic complexities of some of his larger works, although he carefully avoids the obvious. There is little, in fact, to indicate that this is the same Howells of the Hymnus Paradisi or of the Missa Sabrinensis. The songs mostly represent Howells's early years, that period prior to 1925 when his idiom was still very English, utilizing folksong modality, a chromaticism tempered with lyricism, directness, and brevity.

"Girl's Song," composed in 1916 and published in 1919 as part of the set Four Songs, op. 22, is an early setting of a Gibson poem. The piano accompaniment sets the scene with an interesting rocking figure corresponding to the rocking of a little cart described in the first line of the text. The rocking motion gradually is altered to a clipped staccato at the mention of "the old grey dappled mare" pulling the cart. The composer halts the motion on the line "the flutter in my heart." A musical parallel is

15. Peter John Hodgson, "The Music of Herbert Howells" (Ph.D diss., University of Colorado, 1970), 109.

drawn between the rocking of the cart, the clopping of the hooves of the horse, the fluttering of the observer's heart, and finally, with the accompaniment figure moving to the voice for the last line of the second stanza, the "throbbing, throbbing, throbbing, thro' my heart."

W.W. Gibson wrote, around 1917, a book of verse entitled Whin, from which Howells selected several items for a projected song set, Whin. Only two songs were completed and they were published separately, "Old Skinflint" in 1920, and "The Mugger's song" in 1924. In the poems the poet's manner is that of a vagabond folk poet and Howells's response is to combine folklike tunes with economical accompaniment. "Old Skinflint" is a devilish dance which accelerates continuously.(16)

"King David" was written in 1919 for the projected set Peacock Pie II. It was published separately in 1923. The text uses archaic syntax and phrasing that give the poem a sense of grandeur. Howells paces the narrative poem masterfully. Of this setting Banfield states that "Howells knew exactly how to realise the pregnant passages in the narrative mode: the beginning of the third stanza, 'He rose,' uses silence, gesture and the adoption of a new tone of

16. Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 1:218.

voice as evocatively as any accomplished narrator
(Ex. 12).(17)

Ex. 12

"King David"

Measures 28-39

But the sor-row that haunt-ed the heart of King

Da-vid They could not charm a-way. He

Placido

rose;

Howells's self-disciplined romanticism is evident
in this work and is characteristic of Howells's early
work.(18) This quality tended to disappear after the

17. Ibid., 227.

18. Hodgson, "The Music of Herbert Howells," 118.

early years, and the volume of solo songs diminished as well, all but ceasing after 1935.

Arthur Bliss

Arthur Bliss (1891-1975) set nine Georgian poems and, like the composers already discussed, most of these songs appeared early in his career. Around 1915 he wrote the unpublished "The hammers" to a poem by Ralph Hodgson (1871-1962). In 1921 Bliss composed the set Three Romantic Songs to poems by Walter de la Mare. The remaining Georgian settings are "Three jolly gentlemen" (de la Mare, 1923), Three Songs (W. H. Davies, 1923), and another Davies poem, "Rich or poor" (1925-26).

Bliss was greatly affected by the horrors of the First World War, and while the predominant English musical reaction to the war was to forget it as quickly as possible, Bliss could not. Throughout the war Bliss had served actively and actually experienced trench warfare. He was released from active duty early in 1919. But as late as 1930 he wrote the choral symphony Morning Heroes to a variety of war poems. "The hammers" is an early war song, an essay in dissonance that has "shape," "nightmare and violence," but no

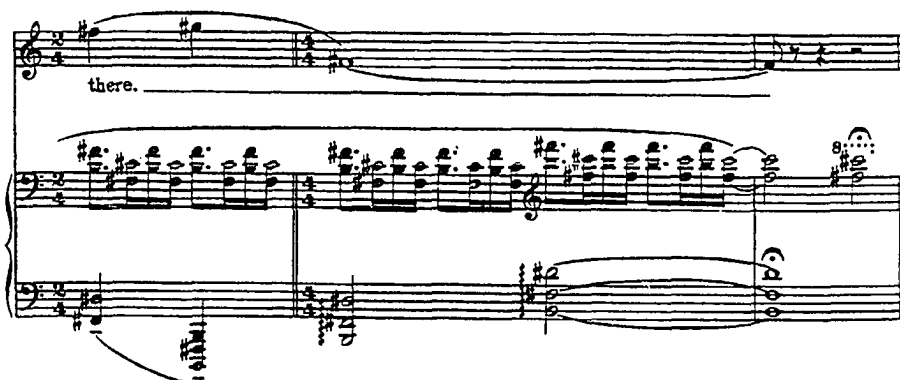
"compulsion." (19)

Three Romantic Songs were conceived for mezzo-soprano Anne Thursfield. These settings of de la Mare's poems, though dedicated to children, are too sophisticated to be classified as children's songs. In "The Hare" one can sense Bliss's inclination towards instrumental texture in the concluding "horn fifths" (Ex. 13).

Ex. 13

"The Hare"

Measures 18-20



19. Banfield, Sensibility and English Song,
1:365.

Ex. 14

"Lovelocks"

Measures 1-3



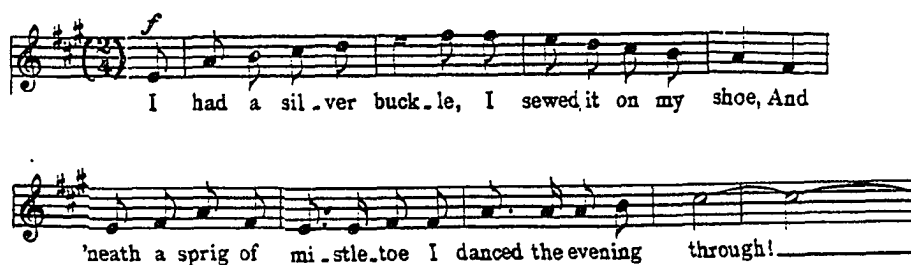
"Lovelock's" contrasts a world of human warmth with the cold outside world.

With his inclination for taking apart the English song and reassembling it in different ways, Bliss was decidedly not of the folk-song school. The vocal line of the third song, "The buckle," however, approaches that of the folk song (Ex. 15).

Ex. 15

"The buckle"

Measures 9-17



The accompaniment, which is bitonal, consists mostly of piano interjections between the verses and is full of semitonal clashes (Ex. 16). This ritornello depicts the protagonist's secret laughter and is the composer's response to the sinister undertones of the verse.

Ex. 16

"The buckle"

Measures 70-74



All of the songs in this set avoid the expansive use of the solo voice prevalent in romantic music. There is in all of Bliss's Georgian settings a disinclination to use the voice for rhetorical or lyrical self-expression.

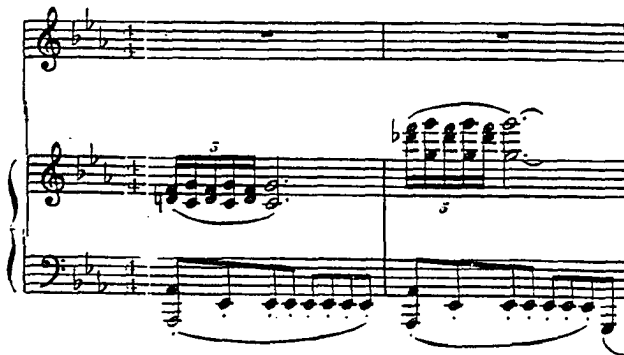
For the Three Songs of 1923 Bliss draws upon the poetry of W.H. Davies. Neither this work nor the de la Mare settings constitute a song cycle in the traditional sense. There is no unifying theme in the poetry and there is no interrelation in the musical material. Common to all of the Davies group, however, is their lyrical and introspective content and the

heightened sense of drama which the composer achieves by repeating certain words and lines. Bliss uses musical imagery for the setting of certain words. In "This night" the owl's cry is foreshadowed by the sixteenth note quintuplet figure of the introduction (Ex. 17a, measures 11 and 12) with the interval of a minor third on d natural alternating with a perfect fifth on c. The semitonal clash between the a flat and g natural from the piano introduction is heard in the owl's cry itself with the same semitonal clash between the voice and the bass (Ex. 17b).

Ex. 17a

"This night"

Measures 11-12



Ex. 17b

Measures 51-53

Oh-o-o! the owl doth cry, Oh-o-o! the

In "Thunderstorms" Bliss uses the simple and traditional descending vocal line at "drooping flowers." The third song, "Leisure," is the most brilliant and swiftly moving of the three and is like a vocal scherzo. Much of the piano writing shows the influence of Bliss's French contemporaries. During the postwar years, Bliss followed closely the careers of "Les Six" and established a close friendship with Darius Milhaud.

Rutland Boughton

Rutland Boughton (1878-1960), who is probably best remembered for his opera The Immortal Hour (1912-13), published five settings of Georgian poetry. Two of these are the 1928 duets for soprano and contralto "Clouds" and "The green tent," both to poems by W. H. Davies. The remaining three Georgian settings

are to poems by John Drinkwater. The first two songs, "At Grafton" and "The Feckenham men," were written in 1913, the last, "Holiness," in 1928.

Much of Boughton's music was inspired by his involvement in the social concerns of the period. His support of the General Strike and his membership in the Communist Party set him apart from other composers in this group. Boughton continually attempted to express his Marxist philosophies in song, examples of which include the settings of the non-Georgian socialist poet Edward Carpenter (Four Songs 1906-07, and Three Songs, 1914). In this sense he also differs from the other composers in this study.

Stephen Banfield considers the Boughton of this period one of "the lunatic fringe." (20) Boughton had many ideas but no technique. Even his teacher, Stanford, despaired of this when Boughton was still a student at the Royal College of Music. Boughton was considered by Stanford to be "a wretched composition pupil." Of Boughton's Imperial Elegy Stanford indicated that "it was the ugliest thing he had heard, apart from Richard Strauss." (21)

Boughton's early style, as in Four Songs, is

20. Ibid., 102.

21. Ibid., 40.

Wagnerian. Later, after 1914, he merged a melody strongly influenced by folk song to an orchestral style. His harmonic vocabulary remained conservative.

Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten set five Georgian texts to poems by Walter de la Mare. Together these songs make up the set Tit for Tat (1928-31, rev. 1968). These settings are products of Britten's adolescence, and are only mentioned by Peter Evans in his study The Music of Benjamin Britten (22), although they afford a glimpse into Britten's musical boyhood. In these songs the fifteen-year-old Britten does not attempt to enter the phantasmal world of a child's imagination observed in the poems "A Song of Enchantment," "Autumn" and "Vigil." Perhaps he was too close to childhood himself. They do offer a simplicity and clarity that seems to work well with the characteristic Georgian texts. "A Song of Enchantment" and "Autumn" are the most successful of the five pieces with their warm response to romance and nostalgia. "Vigil" is less successful, and is not very convincing in its attempt to express romantic loss. These settings are very naive, and "when the fumblings were too obvious,

22. Peter Evans, The Music of Benjamin Britten, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979).

the experienced middle-aged composer has come to the aid of the beginner. Oddly enough, the inadequacies seemed to be more striking in the later songs - new musical styles had appeared on the composer's horizon too recently to be assimilated."(23)

With the exception of "Silver" the songs all begin with a simple piano introduction to set up the atmosphere. The introduction to "A song of enchantment" is monodic and chromatic with the meter immediately distorted by the duplets in the third measure. The voice part shows a strong influence of the folk song style (Ex. 18).

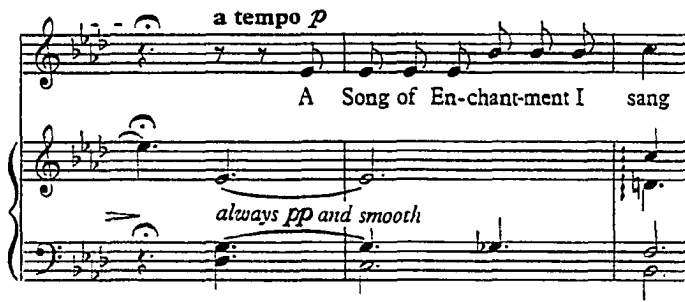
Ex. 18

"A song of enchantment"

Measures 1-6

Moderately slow rall. . . .

23. Benjamin Britten in the "Prefatory Note" to Tit for Tat, (London: Faber Music, 1969).



The accompaniment for "Autumn" was originally for string quartet. The eighth-note movement, which suggests a breezy fall day, is arrested for the second verse when the idea of nostalgia is introduced. In the third stanza the original pattern returns. At the final line "silence where hope was," the pattern is interrupted for the final six bars by rests on the downbeat, the meter changing from 3/2 back to the original 2/2 for the last three bars.

The piano part for "Vigil," a restless three against two pattern with shifting meters, sets an atmosphere of restless vigil which is unaltered until the second verse (Ex. 19). Here the interruption is dramatic. With no warning the accompaniment suddenly changes to bars of half notes (Ex. 20) and the dynamic marking is altered from "piano" to "forte" on the line "o ghost, draw nearer." The original three against two movement returns abruptly for the remainder of the song.

Ex. 19

"Vigil"

Measures 1-3

Restlessly moving

pp
very smooth

Ex. 20

"Vigil"

Measures 32-35

passionate

f
f marked

-al. O ghost, draw near - er;

In the song "Tit for tat" the menacing idea of an ogre eating up the little boy who has been hunting and eating helpless wild rabbits is obliterated in the musical translation.

It is interesting to note that in Britten's approximately fifty boyhood songs, he chose more poems by Walter de la Mare than the verse of any other poet. Britten did possess several of de la Mare volumes, but

a few of the poems were copied from inaccurate reprints in anthologies and the differences can be noted in the music. Britten claims that he wrote many of these fifty songs without much forethought and in some cases the "songs were written so hurriedly that there was no time to write the words in, or even to note the name of the poem or poet." (24)

Gerald Finzi

Finzi (1901-1956), with Gurney and Howells, made his home in the lower Severn landscape (the beginning of the Cotswolds). Gerald Finzi's settings of Georgian literature appeared intermittently throughout his life, not grouped in the early years like that of so many of his contemporaries. Finzi published seven settings of Georgian poetry, and five others were completed, though not published. Nine Georgian fragments also exist (unpublished) from 1920 through the 1940's and are mostly to poems by Edmund Blunden.

Two of the seven Georgian settings come from the Finzi song set To a Poet, for baritone, published posthumously in 1965. Because these poems were not conceived as a song cycle by the composer, the usual recurring figurations within a cycle, common in Finzi's

24. Ibid.

work and functional as fingerprints of motivic significance, do not occur here. The first song, "To a poet a thousand years hence," to a poem by James Elroy Flecker (1884-1915), was written in the early 1920's and revised by the composer in the 1940's. It hardly seems surprising that Finzi set this poem to music, and did so most successfully, because setting this song should have been a natural response by a composer who, even at a young age, was preoccupied with the ideas of time and destiny and the transience of life. The song was written with an unusually wide range for the baritone voice, G- f#1, and it appears in publication transposed down a whole step to accomodate the singer. There seems to be no real poetic justification for the wide range. The other songs in the set were written much later, at varying intervals from 1935 for the second song, until 1956, for the Walter de la Mare setting, "The Birthnight," which appears fourth in the set of six.

Some of Finzi's songs are curiously unbalanced in sectional and tonal structure, beginning in one key and ending in another, and with a sense of anticlimax at the end. "The Birthnight" is one of these. The song begins in D flat major, but the key signature is eliminated in the middle of the eighth measure and the song moves for an instant into the remote key of D major. At "No sound save rushing air," D flat

reappears momentarily and then dissolves again. The song settles on F# major for the final three chords of the last two bars. This de la Mare poem is very short and is treated by Finzi economically, resulting in a song totalling only 23 measures. As with Warlock there is no excess, no padding. The piano introduction of one measure sets the scene unpretentiously:

Dearest, it was a night
That in its darkness racked Orion's stars;
A sighing wind ran faintly white
Along the willows; and the cedar boughs
Laid their widehands in stealthy peace across
The starry silence of their antique moss:

.

The poem is a father's simple remembrance of the night of a child's birth to loving parents.

According to Stephen Banfield, the contours of hymn tunes lend considerable influence to Finzi's melodic thought.(25) This influence can be observed in "The Birthnight" (Ex. 21) as well as other songs. He may disguise it with irregular phrase lengths and adjustments to the rhythm to conform with that of speech, but one is always aware of the fundamental plan of a neatly organized and structurally balanced tune. The purity of Finzi's word setting has often been

25. Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 1:280.

remarked upon. In addition to shaping the melodic contours to the rise and fall of the text, he is consistent with his own "for every syllable a note" dictum. In English song, from Parry onwards, one can observe an aversion to melismatic or virtuoso vocal writing which was at its severest in Finzi.

Ex. 21

"The birthnight"

Measures 1-23

Dear-est, it was a night That in its dark-ness

racked O-ri-on's stars; A sigh-ing wind ran faint-ly

white A-long the wil-lows; and the ce-dar boughs Laid their wide

hands in steal-ty peace a-cross The star-ry si-lence of their an-tique

moss: No sound save rush-ing air Cold, yet all sweet with

Spring. And in thy mother's arms,

couched weep-ing there, Thou, love-ly thing.

A later song (1956) which indicates a Georgian frame of mind is Finzi's setting in the cycle Oh Fair to See (published in 1965) of Blunden's poem "Harvest." As in Shanks's "The fields are full" the poet is viewing a harvest scene, although this time in the first person singular:

So there's my year, the twelvemonth duly told
 Since last I climbed this brow and gloated round
 Upon the lands heaped with their wheaten gold,
 And now again they spread with wealth imbrowned-
 And thriftless I meanwhile,
 What honey combs have I to take, what sheaves to
 pile?

I see some shrivelled fruits upon my tree,
 And gladly would self-kindness feign them sweet;
 The bloom smelled heavenly, can these stragglers be
 The fruit of that bright birth? and this wry wheat,
 Can this be from those spires?
 Which I, or fancy, saw leap to the spring sun's
 fires?

Unlike Shanks, Edmund Blunden looks for a simile within himself, where he finds only a negative one: the creative harvest has not matured, but withered. Most of the second stanza deals with an image from nature of an unfulfilled harvest which is then projected onto the self. In Finzi's setting he makes little reference to concrete images of nature. Instead, Finzi uses rhetorical and expressive devices to illuminate the mood of a word, rather than by projecting its visual

appearance or its movement.(26) One example is the musical false relations on the adjective at "wry wheat." The song ends with the same subdued and questioning motto (Ex. 22) that both began it and articulated the question after the end of the first stanza.

Ex. 22

"Harvest"

Measures 1-2



Finzi and many other English composers of this period were content with certain traditional technical aspects of composition. Finzi in particular did not find his best voice for a long time because his early songs were extremely simple. Jacob Avery speaks of Finzi as an offshoot of Vaughan Williams.(27) Finzi's technique is in many ways traditional. Modality is

26. Ibid., 221.

27. Arthur Jacobs, "The British Isles," in A History of Song edited by Denis Stevens (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961), 174.

never entirely absent, though in the later 1920's it had more direction. When melodic folksong influence is apparent in Finzi it is of the sort of folksong closest to the hymn tune. The rhythmic element is an important contributory factor. This quality of homeliness makes Finzi's lines quite unforced, natural, and often emotionally low-pitched and conversational and this is a major strength of Finzi's songs.

John Ireland

John Ireland (1879-1962) was continually surrounded and influenced by a succession of fine poets and authors as a young boy. His father was a newspaper editor, and his mother was a literary critic and author of a scholarly book on Jane Welsh Carlyle. The poets who frequented his parents' home included Carlyle, Emerson and Leigh Hunt. This may account for the composer's later sense of selectivity when it came to choosing the texts for many of his songs. Ireland is particularly known for his many excellent songs, of which seven of the published works were set to Georgian texts.

Ireland shares with Delius a tendency to seek inspiration in a kind of pantheistic mysticism of nature. There is a sympathy with primitive man and his

communion with nature in the pagan ritual.(28) In spite of this, folk song is not a conscious influencing factor in Ireland, although certain elements of this style were absorbed. Although sometimes altered by modal inflections, his music is diatonic in origin. He elaborates the conventional triads and chromatic chords by stacking on seconds, fourths, and especially sixths.(29)

All of the Georgian poems were set before 1923. "Sea Fever," to a poem by Masfield, was the first of these, written in 1913. For many years it remained one of the more popular songs in England. "The Soldier" (1917), "Blow out, you bugles" (1918), and "Spring Sorrow" (1918) are all settings of poems by Rupert Brooke. "Earth's call: a silvan rhapsody" (1918) is a setting of a poem by Harold Monro. "The bells of San Marie" (1918) and "Vagabond" (1922) are more settings of poems by Masfield. One aspect of Ireland's style is his unusual approach to melody. Much of Ireland's vocal music is very restrained, much more so than the Georgian settings. This restrained style of writing for the voice approaches accompanied recitative, and

28. Yenne, "Three Twentieth Century English Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran and John Ireland," 219-220.

29. Ibid., 243.

occurs more frequently after 1925 when he attempted to continually "refine" his music from the obvious and tuneful vocal lines of the Georgian settings. The result of this refining was not always a happy one, and the bulk of his most successful songs were written before 1918.(30)

Like the other composers in this study, there is an almost complete lack of vocal melisma in the songs. Ireland's vocal music, like Finzi's and Warlock's, is faithful to the one note per syllable concept. As a result his songs, like Warlock's, are not especially lengthy, particularly since he generally does not repeat any portions of the text. The resultant speech-like setting of the text is in direct response to the poetry and the composer's intent to follow as accurately as possible the natural rhythms, intonations, and meters of speech.

Ireland honored the spirit of patriotism during his career as a song writer. However, the songs "The soldier," "Blow out, you bugles," and "Spring sorrow," are among his least successful Georgian settings due to the over-blown and maudlin poems of Rupert Brooke and to a throwback to a style more readily associated with the nineteenth century ballad. Generally, in these

30. Ibid., 223-224.

songs with a quick tempo, the chordal movement is broad and diatonic, and often falls into clichéd patterns, as in "Blow out, you bugles," a setting of Brooke's poem from 1914 and Other Poems.

Ex. 23

"Blow out, you bugles"

Measures 1-3

Con moto (♩ = 80)

Blow out, you bugles, o-ver the rich Dead! There's

mf *p*

Later the bugles of war sound through the singer's part.

Ex. 24

Measures 27-29

Blow, bu - - - gles, blow!

"The Soldier" exhibits a similar reference in the piano.

Ex. 25

"The Soldier"

Measures 6-8

is for ev - er Eng - land. There shall be In that rich

The poem "Blow out, you bugles" is a tribute to the dead who have enriched the lives of those still living through their deeds and the highest qualities of their character. In the first measure the song contains an excellent example of the flattened seventh in consecutive triads (Ex. 23, page 86). Here it is used more as a harmonic device than as a natural melodic one. The tune from this song (Ex. 23) occurs in the major mode in Ireland's "The Soldier" (Ex. 26).

Ex. 26

"The Soldier"

Measure 2

If I should die,

Another feature in Ireland's songs is the chromatic line in both the voice and the piano consisting of motives and chords sliding up and down by half and whole steps. Variety is often achieved in subsequent verses with the appearance of newly created chromatic lines, as in "Sea Fever," and through subtle changes in rhythm as in "Spring Sorrow." In "The Soldier" the direction of the melody is altered in the second stanza so that its climax contrasts with the first.

"Earth's Call" shows the influence of Claude Debussy in the repetition of two separate piano figurations and the use of parallel intervals, including octaves and fifths. Ireland often exploited the dynamic resources of the piano. The text for this song is taken from Strange Meeting by Harold Monro. The song is one of Ireland's longest, running a full 103 bars, and cast in a very broad ABA format. The accompaniment is extensive and so important that the voice part could be considered unnecessary at some points in the score. The piano part is very well conceived, even if the voice part is not. According to Vernon Yenne, in his dissertation Three Twentieth Century English Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran and John Ireland, the French influence is dominant in the accompaniment. There is a reference to the whole tone scale, a rippling in the piano, to

suggest "the fresh air" and "the white clouds." The static chords could refer to the great trees. A rocking effect is achieved and sustained with a brief chordal motif which is varied and repeated twenty-nine times.(31)

Conclusions

It appears that all of these composers, Gurney, Gibbs, Berkeley, Warlock, Howells, Bliss, Boughton, Britten, Finzi, and Ireland, with minor exceptions, chose Georgian poetry only during the early years of their careers as composers, after which the settings of Georgian poems diminished or disappeared altogether with the onset of new ideas and directions. Of the 131 songs set to Georgian poetry written and published by these composers, ninety-eight were written between the years 1913 and 1923. Beyond that of a descriptive nature, Georgian poetry makes few demands of a composer, and in that sense, utilized an approach to composition which relied on traditional techniques. For example, as far back as Elgar English composers have frequently substituted modal or pseudo-modal procedures for traditional dominant-based tonality. This is not necessarily linked to the use of folksong.

31. Ibid., 261.

These modal procedures can be attributed to a throwback to the Elizabethans. The adoption of similar modes of expression by younger composers curbed their own originality. (We shall see that the music of Michael Head is another example of a Georgian-like tendency towards complacency.) There is no striving to grasp the new and as yet unexpressed. As they matured, most of these composers became more critical in choosing vehicles more appropriate to the changing style and language of music.

Thematic and pictorial devices are used to depict the elements in a poem, but for the most part harmony was the expressive core. Warlock's fondness for chords built on fourths or added fourths is an expressive device. The use of pedal is also common, as is the use of parallel intervals. There is a common tendency among those composers owing a debt to Delius to use intense chromaticism. Atonality does not occur in this music, although there are some isolated instances of bitonality. Modality is more common, and mirrors the English folk song. For some, folk song is a more important element than for others. For others, the interest in the music of the Elizabethans and Jacobeans with the false relations and flattened sevenths caused a similar approach.

Dramatic writing, with ostentatious displays of technical skill in the vocal and the piano parts is

rare. Most of these composers were more at ease with lyrical expression.

The voice line, with few exceptions, has a narrow range and adheres strictly to the one note per syllable approach. There is a singular lack of padding and little development of the text through repetitions. Because of this many of the songs are quite short.

Chapter V

The Georgian Settings by Michael Head

Most of what has been written about Michael Head's life is in the short biography Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist: A Memoir, written by his sister, Nancy Bush. Michael Dewar Head was born in Eastbourne on January 28, 1900. In his youth, the family lived in King's Langley, a rural village in Hertfordshire which borders Gloucestershire (mentioned so often in Georgian poetry) to the north. Head used to spend many days cycling about the countryside of Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. According to Nancy Bush, Head loved the country and was never content until he had found a really good viewpoint on a hill where a splendid panorama of woods and fields was spread below. (1)

1. Nancy Bush, Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist: A Memoir (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982), 15.

Head had a strong background in both piano and voice. Before enrolling as a student of composition and piano in 1919 at one of England's leading music schools, the Royal Academy of Music, Head studied piano with Mrs. Jean Adair, a pupil of Clara Schumann, who carried on the Schumann tradition, and voice with Fritz Marston, who used the Italian vocal school method of Manuel Garcia. His work with these two individuals influenced the character of his earliest songs, in Over the Rim of the Moon, in both the shape and range of the voice line and the romantic, expressive piano setting. This was an approach to song Head never deserted.

In 1919, Head entered the Royal Academy of Music as the Sir Michael Costa scholar for composition. He studied composition under Frederic Corder (1852-1932), a prominent teacher and a contemporary of Sir Charles Stanford (1852-1924), composition teacher at the Royal College of Music. T. B. Knott was Head's piano teacher and he studied organ with Reginald Steggall. Although he continued to study voice privately with Fritz Marston, singing was never a part of his course at the academy. Head won nine awards at the Royal Academy of Music. Among these was the Charles Lucas Medal for composition. Thus he had a broad and lengthy experience of study in three fields in which he became proficient, singing, accompanying, and composition.

While a student, Head became acquainted with Alan Bush, who also studied composition with Corder. Bush eventually was to marry Head's only sister, Nancy. Bush and Head spent hours together studying and playing symphonies and other music arranged as piano duets.

In 1924 Head was elected Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and in the mid-twenties was appointed professor of piano. In 1945 he was elected Fellow, and he continued to teach piano at the Royal Academy of Music in this capacity until his retirement in 1975.

Prior to World War Two, Head began adjudicating at competition festivals and examining for the Associated Board of the Royal Music Schools. For this he had been recommended by Sir John McEwan, at that time principal of the Royal Academy of Music. Head's first tour as an examiner was in 1934 and included the West Indies, Canada and British Guiana. He continued as an examiner until his sudden death in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1976.

Michael Head was associated with the British Broadcasting Company from its founding in 1922. Head gave his first broadcast in September of 1924, a program consisting of three songs at the piano, two early ones of his own, "A Blackbird Singing" and "A Piper" and the traditional "Lass of Richmond Hill." A later program included Irish folk song arrangements and another group of his own songs. According to Nancy

Bush, this set the pattern for his future programs of English folk and traditional songs and always including a group of his own.

In 1944 Head gave a series of talks for the BBC called Make Your Own Music, speaking and performing himself with the help of other artists. The final broadcast of this series was on May 23 and on this occasion the singer was Kathleen Ferrier. This was the beginning of Michael Head's acquaintance with Ferrier, for whom he wrote "October Valley" (1951, text by Nancy Bush). According to Nancy Bush, this kind of relationship was unusual since Head was by nature rather shy and retiring. In January 1927 the British Broadcasting Corporation replaced the old British Broadcasting Company, and Head continued to broadcast recitals under its auspices until 1964.

It is especially appropriate to examine the song writing style of Michael Head through his nineteen Georgian settings. Michael Head is not typical in choosing Georgian poetry for solo song settings. As mentioned earlier, Head is one of only five English composers (Head, Cecil Armstrong Gibbs, Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells, and Lennox Berkeley) to have published more than ten art song settings of Georgian poetry. For these Georgian settings Head used poetry by seven of the poets represented in the Edward Marsh anthologies Georgian Poetry, and all of these songs

were subsequently published. He used six poems by Francis Ledwidge, one poem by John Masefield, six by W. H. Davies, one by Francis Brett Young, three by John Drinkwater, one by Walter de la Mare, and one by Lascelles Abercrombie. These settings span almost the entire length of his career, beginning with "Ships of Arcady," composed in 1918 to a poem by Ledwidge, and ending in 1966 with a setting of Ledwidge's poem "The homecoming of the sheep." Michael Head's style of composition is similar to that of the Georgian poets: simple, often delicate and sentimental, excelling in the descriptive, and generally unambitious and often remarkable in its lack of depth.

In the solo song settings of Georgian poetry by Head's contemporaries there are several common traits which will be observed in the Georgian settings by Michael Head. As described in Chapters III and IV these traits include syllabic word setting, free rhythmic declamation, Romantic treatment of the poetry, the use of melodic modal scale degrees, modulations to the mediant or submediant keys, chromatic harmonies, and the building of songs around series of musical gestures. The influence of French impressionism is also evident in some of these settings.

In Head's Georgian song settings there is an obvious tendency towards the dramatic in both the voice part and the piano part. Head is a pianistic composer,

with a great responsibility placed on the piano for interpretation and setting the scene. The use in the piano of lush, sometimes chromatic chords which may move over a wide range in descending, or more frequently, ascending scales, as in "Vagabond Song" or "Nature's Friend," is very common. In addition, the vocal line often spans an octave or more within short phrases as can be found in "Beloved," "A blackbird singing," and "Nocturne."

Michael Head, along with Gibbs, Howells, and Quilter,(2) wrote songs on commission, most often for the audition and festival market, singing lessons, and broadcast recitals (for which Head became quite well known).(3) Michael Head was not particularly admired by at least one of his song writing contemporaries, Charles Wilfred Orr (1893-1976), for his commercial frame of mind:

I often think that there are only two sorts of creative workers to be envied; the supreme geniuses and the "popular" artists in words, painting or music. . . . How nice to be a contented writer of garbage like Michael Head . . . without any desire to do better, and to rake in the shekels comfortably year after year. But the inbetweeners, like me and hundreds of others, who are not content with anything save that which is just out of their reach - we are the ones who suffer without any hope of relief. One almost wonders if it were not better to be

2. Steven Banfield, Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 321.

3. N. Bush, Michael Head, 55.

self-deluded, and cherish the illusion that one is one of the elect, rather than to be sufficiently clear-sighted to realise that one is not.(4)

There has even been conjecture that Michael Head was influenced by the prospective market value of a particular musical style in his compositional approach.(5)

Michael Head was one of the few English performer-composers of this century who was also a singer, along with George Henschel and Liza Lehmann. In the twenties Sir George Henschel encouraged him to appear as a recitalist to his own accompaniment at the piano, which he did for the first time in 1930, at the Wigmore Hall in London. He eventually specialized in one-man performances in which he accompanied himself at the piano, and his repertoire included some of his own songs. He was an accomplished performer in both areas, and this enabled him to react quickly, like Gurney, to poetry.(6) Unlike Gurney, he responded in a wide variety of styles to his chosen poetry. Head is almost impossible to categorize, since over the years there

4. Charles Wilfred Orr, Letters (1961-76) to Eric Sams, in the possession of Eric Sams, quoted in Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 1:307.

5. Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 321.

6. N. Bush, Michael Head, 30.

appears to be no real development of an individual style. Rather, he continued to use many different approaches, styles and techniques.(7) This is another reason why Head can best be examined through a category of settings which provide an organizing principle.

Michael Head's first song, "Claribel," to a text by Tennyson, was written in 1917, and published singly in 1920. Head used descriptive musical techniques from the beginning of his career as a composer and "was consistently able to find an apt musical procedure" for a poetic image.(8) He was most capable when writing a simple sea shanty, a lullaby, or some other obvious type of song rather than a song in the style of a Romantic Lied. He generally failed at any attempt to combine music with a poem of depth. As Banfield put it, "there was little difference in quality and potential between the Georgian poetry set by Michael Head and that set by Ivor Gurney, yet Gurney [in his settings] often gave it depth whereas [in] Head's [settings the poem was] often trivialised . . ."(9) In the following paragraphs the nineteen Georgian settings by Michael Head will be discussed in chronological order by date of composition.

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- 7. Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 1:307.
 - 8. Ibid., 308.
 - 9. Ibid.

Over the Rim of the Moon

"Ships of Arcady"

"Ships of Arcady" was written in 1918 and published singly by Boosey and Hawkes in 1919. It was reissued a year later as the first of a set of four song settings to Georgian poems by Francis Ledwidge (1891-1917) entitled Over the Rim of the Moon.⁽¹⁰⁾ The other four songs in this set are "Beloved," "A blackbird singing," and "Nocturne." All four songs were written between 1918 and 1919, when Head was employed in war work at a munitions factory in Acton. He afterwards said that these songs were a means of escape from uncongenial factory work.⁽¹¹⁾ In each of these songs the eighteen-year-old composer sacrifices poetic form by repeating some portions of the text. In "Ships of Arcady" the poem is rounded out by the composer with a repeat of the first verse, to virtually the same music, making the song form roughly ABACA. In "A blackbird singing" the first line of the poem is repeated at the end of the song. There is text repetition in the third song as well. The entire first stanza of the last song of the set, "Nocturne," ("The

10. The copyright date for the entire cycle is 1919, but the cycle was not published until 1920. See Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 2:474, and N. Bush, Michael Head, 17 and 85.

11. N. Bush, Michael Head, 17.

rim of the moon is over the corn . . .") is repeated.

The poem "Ships of Arcady" was written during Ledwidge's tour of duty in World War I, and is the same type of poem as "In Flanders" by F. W. Harvey (set by Ivor Gurney).⁽¹²⁾ Ledwidge is best known for his poems about the Irish countryside.⁽¹³⁾ His first volume of verse, Songs of the Fields, which includes poems written through 1914, was published in 1916, one year after he enlisted. Although all of the poems in his Songs of Peace, from which the poems for Head's Over the Rim of the Moon were taken, were written by a soldier, none takes the war as its subject. Ledwidge does not belong to that group of soldier-poets⁽¹⁴⁾ among whom he is often placed because he never wrote conventional war poetry.⁽¹⁵⁾ However, while he did subsequently continue to write of the woods and the rivers, he did so not with the optimism of Songs of the Fields, but with nostalgia. Ledwidge's poems are quiet in mood, and seem to "induce calm within his soul

12. See Chapter IV, page 44.

13. Dennis Poupard, ed., "Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917)," in Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 23 (Detroit: Gale Research Co, 1987), 106.

14. This type of poetry has previously been referred to as "war poetry" or "trench poetry."

15. Poupard, ed., "Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917)," 106.

by deliberately turning his eyes away from the actualities of war; turning to Nature as an antidote for the poison of conflict."(16)

According to an article in a 1916 issue of the New York Times Book Review, Ledwidge was typically Georgian in his purpose, a traditionalist and a nature poet. "Ledwidge is not . . . an eager experimenter in poetic forms, nor is he a student of his own emotions. His best verse is objective, and his lyrics are as simple in scheme as they are direct in thought."(17) Conrad Aiken, in 1920, called Ledwidge an "'emerging' traditionalist."(18)

Ledwidge wrote the poem "Ships of Arcady" after being stationed in Greece and uses the Greek image, "Arcady." Speaking about another Ledwidge poem with a Greek locale, "A Dream of Artemis," the first poem in Songs of Peace, an article in the Times Literary Supplement, August 16, 1917 says:

. . . when Ledwidge writes of Greece he gives us no stale classical fancies. It is an eternal Greece to him not the Greece of a literary past. . . . He might be writing of his own

16. A. C. Ward, Twentieth-Century Literature: The Age of Interrogation 1901-25, rev. ed. (London: Methuen & Co., 1931), 154.

17. "A Peasant Soldier's Gift of Poetry," in The New York Times Book Review (January 23, 1916), 25. In Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 23, 108.

18. Conrad Aiken, "Idiosyncrasy and Tradition," in The Dial, (March 1920), 376-80. In Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol 23, 114.

Ireland; all countries under the moon are the same country to him. (19)

The influence of French Impressionism, specifically the music of Claude Debussy, can be seen in the half-note sequences of chords Head uses to establish an atmosphere of water and of floating ships. This music is reminiscent of Debussy's "Cathédral Engloutie."

(Ex. 1 Head)

"Ships of Arcady"

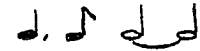
Measures 9-16



The harmonic progression in the first measure of Ex. 1 is recurring and binds the song together. For the third stanza of the text Head embellishes this


19. "Lost Music," in The Times Literary Supplement, (August 16, 1917), 391. In Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 23, 109.

half-note motive with eighth-note figures in the right hand which could illustrate ripples of waves. Head uses the voice dramatically here, bringing the voice up over an octave to climax on e flat 2 in measure 40.(20) On the line "I looked across the waves, alone," the motion stops with a fermata on "waves." Afterwards the piano drops out for one beat, then reenters to complete the denouement of the climax.

There are repetitive melodic cells in the voice part which lend a sense of cohesiveness to the melody. Head sets the word "Arcady" to the same rhythmic figure () each time it appears, using it also for the word "filigree" with one exception.

A basic feature of the vocal melody for "Ships of Arcady" is its arch shape. Except for stanza three where it is not used, the arch shape occurs every two measures, each successive occurrence slightly greater or smaller in amplitude from the base to the top of the

20. Throughout the rest of this chapter the following standard octave designation will be used:



The diagram shows a musical staff with a treble clef. Below the staff, seven groups of notes are shown, each corresponding to an octave designation. From left to right: 'contra' (C1, CC) with a note on the first line below the staff; 'great' (C) with a note on the first line of the staff; 'small' (c) with a note on the first space of the staff; 'one-line' (cⁱ) with a note on the first line of the staff; 'two-line' (cⁱⁱ) with a note on the second line of the staff; 'three-line' (cⁱⁱⁱ) with a note on the third line of the staff; and 'four-line' (cⁱⁱⁱⁱ) with a note on the fourth line of the staff.

contra	great	small	one-line	two-line	three-line	four-line
C ₁	C	c	c ⁱ	c ⁱⁱ	c ⁱⁱⁱ	c ⁱⁱⁱⁱ
CC						

arch. The arch shape of the melody reinforces the image of waves on the water.

In the final measures of "Ships of Arcady" there is a pattern in the piano in which the final chord is repeated in several different octaves, occurring in such a manner that the range of the piano is exploited. In Head's subsequent Georgian settings the use of this pattern is a common device. Here, in "Ships of Arcady," the effect is somewhat subdued. Instead of a large leap the chords in the penultimate measure gradually move up by octaves to the final chord which is marked "ppp."

Ex. 2

"Ships of Arcady"

Measures 56-59



"Beloved"

The second song of this set, "Beloved," was also copyrighted in 1918. The dramatic effect of this piece is achieved with a wide range and spacing of the chords in the piano, and the use of octave doubling. In

addition, each phrase of the voice spans more than an octave, often opening with a descending drop, then immediately ascending diatonically and by intervals of no more than a third returning to the upper octave or higher. This emphasis on range and octave is built into the larger structure of the song as well.

Ex. 3

"Beloved"

Measures 5-7



Head sets the first two stanzas of the poem as one unit, the first and third lines of each stanza beginning a new phrase resulting in a musical a a' b a phrase structure for the first half of the song.

Ex. 4

- a Nothing but sweet music wakes
My beloved, my Beloved.
- a' Sleeping by the blue lakes,
My own Beloved!
- b Song of lark and song of thrush,
My Beloved, my Beloved!
- a Sing in the morning's rosy blush,
My own Beloved!

A four measure piano interlude (repeating the same melodic material as that of the piano introduction, only a third lower) separates this from the final stanza. The voice enters to the text of the last stanza in roughly a a' c and the text is repeated (in the example the text repetition is bracketed) to expand the section musically, and is finished off with a piano postlude, again of the same musical material as the introduction.

Ex. 4b.

- a When your eyes dawn blue and clear,
My Beloved, my Beloved!
- a' You will find me waiting here,
My own Beloved!
- c [You will find me waiting here,
My own Beloved!]

The highest notes in the song occur in the c section, measures 24-28. The piano material and the voice material are related by range, octave emphasis, and rhythm (short - long). The song has the effect of a dramatic tour de force.

"A blackbird singing"

This song, copyrighted in 1919, is the third of the cycle Over the Rim of the Moon. Francis Ledwidge was called the "poet of the blackbird" by his mentor Lord Dunsany because of the descriptive simplicity of his verse and because the blackbird is a common

presence in his poetry.(21) Here, as in the previous song, in both the piano and the voice entrance the octave is emphasized .

Ex. 5

"A blackbird singing"

Measures 1-6



This emphasis on the range of the voice, well over an octave, shows not the folk influence which flavored Warlock and others, but a more dramatic approach to the solo song. The voice part requires dynamics ranging from pianissimo to forte, and uses the fermata cadentially and climactically. There are also numerous well marked ritards and accelerandos.

The heavy use of octave doubling in the piano sounds like Johannes Brahms. Additionally, all of the

21. Lord Dunsany, in an introduction to Songs of the Fields by Francis Ledwidge, (Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1916). In Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 23, 107.

interest in the piano is in the top or the bottom lines and unlike Brahms there seems to be little interior melodic development in the piano part. This song, particularly, takes a chordal approach to the text setting.

In measure 15 a motive appears which could depict the rocking of the ship on the sea, which is referred to in the first stanza of the poem. This motive is derived rhythmically and melodically from the material in the piano in measure 3 (Ex. 5) which also appears in the voice in measure 7.

Head uses it again in the bass line of the piano several times beginning in measure 22, and again, quite effectively, in measures 34-35. Head, in the last two measures of the song, exploits the range and dynamics of the piano yet again with a low to high "finish."

Ex. 6

"A blackbird singing"

Measures 46-50.

The musical score for 'A blackbird singing' (Measures 46-50) is presented in two systems. The top system shows the voice part with the lyrics 'black - bird singing' and the piano part. The piano part begins with a forte (f) dynamic and ends with a pianissimo (ppp) dynamic. The tempo is marked 'pp meno mosso'. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. The piano part features a prominent bass line that moves from a low register to a higher register in the final measures.

"Nocturne"

The Irish endearments "Aroon" and Asthore" tend to suggest that this poem, set as the last song in this cycle, is an expression of yearning by the poet for his homeland. Death is a part of this poem, and as an active soldier in the First World War, death was part of Ledwidge's daily experience. Whatever the true inspiration for this verse, it is apparent that the young composer was trying to portray intense grief from the very outset.

The song starts in the Locrian mode on F (Ex. 7, page 111), a rare usage for any composer because of the diminished quality of the tonic triad and with it the characteristic tonic-dominant melodic tritone.(22) By beginning the song in this manner it sounds totally unsettled in any key until A flat Minor appears on the words "Grey days come soon And I am alone" in measure 6. The composer alternates between A flat Minor and A flat Major until the introduction of C Major on the lines "In night's deep pall our love kissed merry" in measures 21-22 (Ex. 8, page 111).

22. Leon Dallin, Techniques of Twentieth Century Composition (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1957), 95.

Ex. 7

"Nocturne

Measures 1-3

The rim of the moon is o-ver the corn. The

Ex. 8

"Nocturne

Measures 6-21

Grey days come

soon And I am a - lone; Can you hear my moan Where you rest, A-

- roon? Can you hear my moan Where you rest, A - roon?

ritard. *pp* *p* *rit. pp*

accel. *mp* *mf* *ritard.* *a tempo* *Piu mosso. Con moto* When the

piu f *ten.* wild tree bore The deep blue cherry, In night's deep pall Our love kissed

The chordal parallelisms used here are typical of the Georgian songs by Head. The use of chromatic alterations continues through several other keys. There is a repeated chromatic line in the piano beginning in measure 31 (b flat, b , c1, d flat 1) against a drone on g1. The voice enters in measure 34, droning on the same pitch the text "The rim of the moon Is over the corn. The beetle's drone Is above the thorn." The "drone," g1, is pitched "above" the chromatic line. The final plagal cadence (Ex. 10, page 115) in G Major is prolonged in measures 44-47. The final two G Major chords, measures 46-47, occur with an added sixth, which destroys the stability of the tonic. The last line of the voice (measures 42-44) is in the Phrygian mode on D, with its characteristic flat second degree of the scale, over a C Minor triad. This strangely unsettled approach to tonality appears to find its justification in the text. A cursory survey of Head's subsequent output shows this kind of approach in other settings. According to Alan Bush the "wandering tonality" used in this song can be attributed to the influence of Richard Wagner, whose music Michael Head particularly admired.(23)

23. Alan Bush, "The Vocal Compositions of Michael Head," in Nancy Bush, Michael Head, 68.

The text setting in "Nocturne" is syllabic and the melodic line is angular from the very beginning, as in "A blackbird singing." In "Nocturne" the voice opens with an upward interval of a minor seventh, immediately drops a perfect fifth, ascends stepwise then drops again an interval of a sixth. (See example 7, page 111.) The angular motion subsides after an octave glissando on the last two words of the poem "Grief, Asthore," as the dynamics soften from "forte" to "pianissimo." For the final section of the song the text of the first stanza (Ex. 9) is intoned on the single pitch, g1, with pitch inflections on "is above" and "I am alone."

Ex. 9.
First verse

The rim of the moon
Is over the corn.
The beetle's drone
Is above the thorn.
Grey days come soon
And I am alone;
Can you hear my moan
Where you rest, Aroon?

.

A repetition of the text "Can you hear my moan while you rest, Aroon" descends in conjunct motion almost an octave from e flat 2 to d1, and then leaps up an octave to d2 on "Aroon."

Ex. 10

"Nocturne"

Measures 42-47

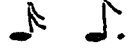
Can you hear my moan Where you rest A - roon?

In "Ships of Arcady" and "Nocturne" Michael Head repeats entire first stanzas of the poems at the end of the songs, bringing both songs back to their beginnings. He does something similar in "Beloved" and "A blackbird singing," using the thematic material from the piano introduction as a postlude to the song in "Beloved" and splitting the opening vocal theme from measures 5-8 between the voice and the piano in the final measures of "A blackbird singing" (Ex. 6, page 109).

Each of the four Ledwidge songs that comprise this cycle Over the Rim of the Moon end with some kind of romantic "concert hall finish." In this respect, collectively, they do not provide contrast in a recital setting.

"Tewkesbury Road"

"Tewkesbury Road" was written by Michael Head in 1924 to a poem by John Masefield. The song is long, 89 measures, to accommodate the length of the text. Even so the first stanza of the poem is repeated in its entirety at the end, bringing the song back to its text and musical beginning as in "Ships of Arcady," and "Nocturne."

The rhythm of the Scotch snap () occurs in the voice part of "Tewkesbury Road" on the words "meadow," "village," and "whither" in the first stanza and in the repeat of the first stanza on "meadow" and "village." (He does not use this rhythm on "whither" in the repeat, instead making an alteration in the direction of the melody on this word.) This rhythm is a fingerprint in some of the song settings of Peter Warlock, as in "Johnnie wi' the tie" which resembles a Lowland Scottish folk song.(24) In Warlock's song the rhythm is a part of the fibre of the melody.

In the piano part Head uses a "tramping" triplet rhythm in almost every measure throughout the song as a

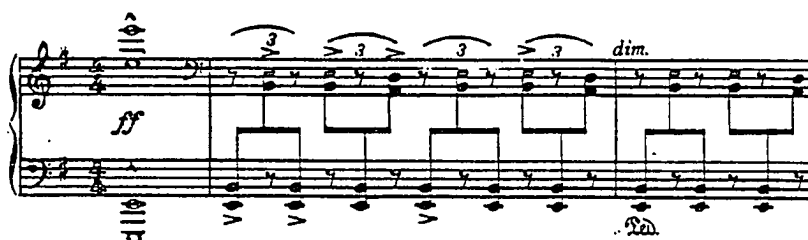
24. Vernon Yenne, "Three Twentieth Century Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran, and John Ireland" (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois, 1969), 67.

binding figure. It first appears as an open fifth tonic - dominant ostinato in the great and small octaves (Ex. 11a).

Ex. 11a

"Tewkesbury Road"

Measures 1-3



This ostinato figure is dropped for the final three measures of the piano introduction and is reintroduced in the fourth measure after the voice entrance, and then repeated nine times with slight variations in spacing throughout the song. Its harmonic emphasis and low registration is altered in measure 20 at the words "Through the grey light drift of the dust." Here the ostinato is dropped but the basic triplet figuration is retained, becoming more melodic, changing its harmonic orientation, and becoming less percussive.

Ex. 11b

"Tewkesbury Road"

Measures 20-21



At the lines "At the broad blue lift of the sky" the tramping figure is dropped for a chordal quarter note passage with a strong descending bass line.

The original triplet figure returns for the second stanza of the poem, but does not remain long enough to be called an an ostinato. In measure 29 there is another variation with a strong emphasis on registration in the contra, great, and small octaves by the use of open octaves in the piano in bars 30 through 32.

Ex. 11c

"Tewkesbury Road"

Measures 30-31

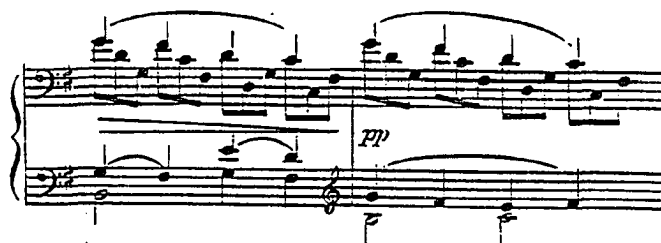


The complete triad in triplet figures returns in yet another variation in measure 33, the emphasis remaining on the octave.

Ex. 11d

"Tewkesbury Road"

Measures 33-34



The triplet figuration begins to dissolve in measure 39 on the line "Where the shy-eyed delicate deer come down in a troupe to drink." Head uses a sixteenth-note arpeggio at "When the stars" and moves the left hand of the piano into the treble clef momentarily, before the

triplet figure reemerges, only to be abandoned again for a reprise of the strong quarter note passage at "Feel the beat of the rain, and the homely smell of the earth."

Head uses the triplet figuration in its original energetic and percussive form for "it is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy past power or words." For "the blessed green meadows" (measure 53, Ex. 12) he changes to the more melodic figuration. Finally in measure 61, at "the dear wild cry of the birds," Michael Head introduces new material in the left hand of the piano consisting of eight eighth notes which rise for two beats then fall for two. (See Ex. 12). In this same measure a triplet occurs in the right hand on the last beat. In measure 62 the same triplet occurs on the third beat.

Ex. 12

"Tewkesbury Road"

Measures 53 - 61

bles-sed green mea-dows are all a-rip-ple with mirth At the noise of the

mp *legato* *pp* *p*

con sord

lambs at play— And the dear—

wild— cry of the birds—

poco rit.

mf rit *p a tempo*

There is considerable harmonic activity in measures 55 through 61 (Ex. 12). After a measure of first-inversion chords moving to a dominant-seventh chord on G, the melody in both the piano and the voice in measures 55 and 56 moves by whole steps (whole-tone scale) against a harmonic background consisting entirely of augmented triads which resolve to a dominant-seventh chord on C in measures 58 and 59 (Ex. 12).

Some of the most interesting harmonic and melodic material is heard again in the last nine measures of the song, where a four-note whole-tone passage in the piano in measure 81 is followed by a passage moving by half steps in measure 82. The showy piano ending is a flourish of alternating major six-four chords on F sharp and E in measures 85 through 87, while the voice holds its final high e2, followed by the standard pianistic finish (Ex. 13).

Ex. 13

"Tewkesbury Road"

Measures 86-89



Songs of the Countryside

The six songs in Michael Head's first set of W. H. Davies poems were written in 1928 and 1929 and are grouped under the title Songs of the Countryside. A survey of the "Song Lists" in Stephen Banfield's book shows that prior to 1950 not one of these Davies poems

was known to be set and published by any other English composer.

"When I came forth this morn"

The first setting is to Davies's poem "The Likeness," titled by Head "When I came forth this morn." It is the first of Head's Georgian settings which does not end with a dramatic piano flourish. The treatment of the piano in this song is less showy than in any of the previous songs discussed so far. The chordal spacing in the piano part is closer, and there is less doubling of the octave.

The song begins with a figure in the right hand of the piano (Ex. 14).

Ex. 14

"When I came forth this morn"

Measures 1-3



This figure returns during the piano interludes in measures 6 and 7, 10 and 11, 16, and in measure 23 through the end of the song to measure 26. Head's

methods here are more linear than chordal. The setting uses simple note-against-note counterpoint. Most of the movement in each line is from one pitch to another in similar or parallel motion with the majority of the resultant chords being in first inversion. However, Head uses contrary motion at the end of the first stanza on the lines "Which told me how those clouds came there." There is a G pedal in the voice and piano in measures 6 through 8. There are no unusual departures in key, and the song begins and ends in G major. This simple, straightforward setting is appropriate to the Georgian poem.

"The temper of a maid"

The Swallow dives on yonder air,
 The Robin sings with sweetest ease,
 The Apple shines among the leaves
 The Leaf is dancing in the breeze;
 The Butterfly's on a warm stone,
 The Bee is suckled by a flower;
 The Wasp inside a red plum,
 The Ant has found his load this hour;
 The Squirrel counts and hides his nuts,
 The Stoat is on a scent that burns;
 The Mouse is nibbling a young shoot,
 The Rabbit sits beside his ferns;
 The Snake has found a sunny spot,
 The Frog and Snail a slimy shade;
 But I can find no joy on earth,
 All through the temper of a maid.

While the subject material of this poem would be appropriate and is similar to W. H. Davies's poems "The Bird of Paradise" and "To a Lady Friend," this poem

cannot be located in Davies's Collected Poems.

According to Davies, Collected Poems contains "all the poems I care to remember, and a number of others that I would like to forget, written from the beginning of my career in 1905, right up to the present year of 1928." (25) It cannot be found in the 1935 edition The Poems of W.H. Davies, published by Oxford University Press. A scanning of the 1935 edition, a complete collection of his poetry up to the time of publication, does not show it to be an excerpt of any poem written by Davies. As a result, there is some question in this author's mind as to whether or not this is a poem by W. H. Davies. This poem is, however, typical of Georgian poetry. It is simple, obvious, and unambitious with its smooth rhythms.

Michael Head's 1928 setting of this poem is in a style similar to Head's 1928 setting of "When I came forth this morn" (see page 123). Less dramatic than anything Georgian before 1928, it is built around a melody in the piano. The melody has an interesting rhythmic character, beginning with a dotted figure followed by syncopation into the next measure of repeated notes (Ex. 15).

25. W. H. Davies, "Introduction," Collected Poems, 1928, in The Poems of W. H. Davies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1935), 5.

Ex. 15

"The temper of a maid"

Measures 1-3



In the piano introduction this figure first appears on beat two, then reappears beginning on beat one of measure three and again on beat one in measure five. The melody occurs in the piano 21 times throughout the song and 11 of the 21 quotations begin on the first beat, with the other 10 beginning on either the second or the third beat. There are only thirty-eight measures altogether and some of these measures repeat not just the opening motive but the complete opening two measure phrase. The motive, whether in its original form or melodically ornamented, always appears on the same pitches, f, d, c, and b. It retains its original rhythm in each statement.

The gapped-scale melody of the voice (there is no seventh scale degree) is simple, built on repeated

notes, and therefore carries very little melodic interest.

Ex. 16

"The temper of a maid"

Measures 6-18

p

The Swallow

dives in yonder air, The Robin sings with sweetest ease, The

Apple shines among the leaves, The Leaf is dancing in the

breeze, The Butterfly's on a warm

stone, The Bee is suck-led by a flower, The Wasp in

Until measure 31 it is limited to a range of f#1 to e2, and every phrase is so similar in shape and pitch content that each has an effect of sounding derived from the first vocal statement.

The first statement of the voice retains the syncopation of the opening piano phrase but there are no syncopated phrases after "The Butterfly's on a warm nest." Instead, Head uses the Scotch snap in the voice. Natural rhythmic declamation results in the Scotch snap rhythm (see page 116) on the words "Robin," "Squirrel," and "Rabbit" and seems to characterize the

motions of these creatures in the same way "nibbling a young shoot" to an triplet figure does for the mouse.

"Nature's friend"

This song is the third in the 1929 W. H. Davies set. The setting of the seven-stanza poem, "Nature's friend," is a throwback to the dramatic Ledwidge settings of a decade earlier. The song opens with an open-fifth sonority, *sforzando*. Then, with a high open fifth pedal trilled in the right hand, it moves in parallel open fifths in the left hand in D dorian, *allegro vivace*, until the voice enters on the fourth beat of the fourth measure. The interval of a perfect fifth is germane to the voice melody in the opening section. The first three phrases each begin with the voice moving from the tonic note to the dominant note. Except for the chromatic inflections in the fourth measure, the song stays in D dorian until measure eight, "I pick no flowers. . ." In that measure the mode changes to D aeolian. In measures 11 through 14 the voice sings the second stanza of the poem over ninth chords built on B flat, F, and G.

At the third stanza of the poem, in measure 15, momentum increases with the introduction in the piano of a steady movement of eighth notes, continuing to the end of the song. This is another "walking figuration"

and it occurs in three slightly different forms (Ex. 17).

Ex. 17a

"Nature's friend"

Measures 15-16



Ex. 17b

Measures 27-28



Ex. 17c

Measures 31-32



Beginning with the third stanza of poetic text in measure 15, the vocal melody moves from the tonic note up to the dominant and back down to the tonic note in each phrase, with few exceptions, until the seventh and final verse of the poem. Here the interval of the melody changes, the voice moving from the dominant note up to the tonic. "Nature's Friend" ends with a piano flourish (with a change in registration, low to high in the final two tonic chords). However, Head offers an alternate ending to be used if the song is performed as part of the complete cycle. In that case the flourish is retained but its direction is high to low. With the alternate ending the song does not really move any more smoothly into the next song in Songs of the Countryside, "Robin Redbreast," but it appears Head originally saw this piece as one which could easily stand alone. The low - high flourish makes a better finish and could certainly inspire more applause.

"Robin Redbreast"

This W.H. Davies setting, the fourth song in this set, exhibits certain oriental traits. There is no documented evidence of Head's exposure to the exploration of orientalism, but his contemporaries, during the first two decades of the century, were known to be attracted to eastern idioms. This was partly because of a post-Romantic interest in exoticism, but

also because of the opportunities oriental music offered them in their efforts to break away from the style of the past.(26) In the voice part Head uses the hexatonic scale, A, B, C, D, E, G, creating an oriental flavor which is most pervasive in the melody (except in measure 14).

Ex. 18

"Robin Redbreast"

Measures 3-18

Rob-in on a leaf-less bough, Lord in Heav'n, how he sings!

a tempo *p* *poco cresc.*
Now cold Win-ter's cru-el wind

poco rubato.
Makes play-mates of poor dead things. How he sings for joy this morn!

cresc. e accel.
How his breast doth pant and glow! Look you how he stands and sings,

mf *rit.* *a tempo*
Half-way up his legs in snow! If these crumbs of bread were pearls,

meno p *cresc.* *poco largamente.*
And I had no bread at home, He should have them for that song;.....

pp
Pret-ty Rob-in Red-breast, Come.....

26. Arthur Jacobs, "The British Isles," in *A History of Song*, edited by Denis Stevens (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961), 429.

The melody has a hopping effect with its repeated notes and recurring jumps of a perfect fourth. It is static, using the same basic material over and over in a manner similar to Head's second song in this Davies set, "The temper of a maid" (see page 125).

Head does not reject conventional western harmonies in the accompaniment. The song begins and ends in A minor, with the first F in the harmony appearing in measure 4. The line "He should have them for that song" is in A major.

As with all of his songs up to this date, Head is very careful with his dynamic markings. This one is unusual in its restraint with the marked absence of anything above a "mezzo forte."

"Robin Redbreast" could have been a lovely delicate impressionistic setting, but the widely spaced chords from measure 16 to the end (with its now expected piano flourish, although marked piano) spoils the effect, as does the departure from the hexatonic scale into diatonic minor in the voice at the lines "He should have them for his song."

"Sweet chance that led my steps abroad"

Stephen Banfield calls this setting of the W.H. Davies poem "A great time" "stylistically insipid, . . . expressing the obvious physical implications of a poem, but not in the manner later

given currency by Britten, where the vividness or subtlety of musical imagery determined the level of creative imagination of the whole." (27) There is emotional intensity in Davies's verse although there is disagreement by the critics whether it is passionate or merely charming. (28) Davies's greatest gift is in his powers of observation, his gift of writing down what he saw and heard, not as a narrative or dramatic poet. (29) "He was in the great tradition of poetry and was never tempted to make experiments away from the discipline of meter and rhyme. . . ." (30) Conrad Aiken calls Davies's lyrics "delightful." However, according to another critic, Louis Untermeyer, "he wrote too much. His birdlike simplicities and almost mindless fluency made it difficult for critics to separate what was good, indifferent, and just plain bad. Davies sang ingenuously rather than ingeniously of happy mornings

27. Banfield, Sensibility and English Song, 308.

28. Louis Untermeyer, "New Trends in England," in his Lives of the Poets: The Story of One Thousand Years of English and American Poetry (Louis Untermeyer, 1959) . In "W. H. Davies," in Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 5, edited by Sharon K. Hall (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1981), 205

29. Brian Waters, "W. H. Davies, Man and Poet," in The Essential W. H. Davies by W. H. Davies, edited by Brian Waters. In Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 5, 205.

30. Ibid.

and evenings sweet with pleasant reveries. He regarded with an air of discovery things that everyone else took for granted." (31)

The song, the fifth in the set Songs of the Countryside, was written in 1928, ten years after the first Georgian settings, but shows little change in style from those earlier romantic Ledwidge settings. The clichéd piano ending is still there. The range of the initial vocal phrase, like the earlier Ledwidge songs, spans an octave. In the first period (which includes both the first and second phrases) the range of the voice spans an octave and a fourth. Octave doubling in the piano is present although toned down somewhat from the earlier songs. There is also some text repetition. "How rich and great the times are now" is repeated as is "A rainbow, and a cuckoo's song May never come together again" which finishes the song.

There is, however, due to the contrapuntal approach to the piano part, more interest in the interior lines than in the Ledwidge settings. The piano introduction starts with a motive that is repeated twice in the upper line and echoed in the middle voices. This is the first time in a Georgian poetry setting by Michael Head in which melodic

31. Untermeyer, "New Trends in England," in Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 5, 205.

interest can be observed in the inner voices of the piano. With the entrance of the vocal line the initial motive is repeated and expanded. The characteristic feature of this motive is the opening descending minor third. The motive appears throughout the 32 measure song in all but seven measures.

Ex. 19

"Sweet chance, that led my steps abroad"

Measures 1-4

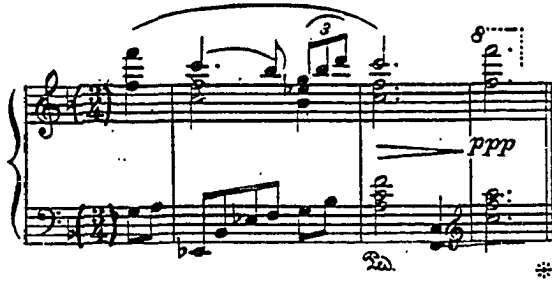
Musical score for measures 1-4 of "Sweet chance, that led my steps abroad". The score is in 3/4 time, marked "Moderato." The vocal line (soprano) begins with a descending minor third (G4-F#4) and is marked "ten." and "mp". The piano accompaniment (piano) features a descending minor third (G4-F#4) in the right hand, marked "p" and "peacefully". The left hand has a descending minor third (G3-F#3) marked "con Qd". The piano part includes dynamics "p", "mp", and "poco cresc". The vocal line continues with "Sweet Chance, that led my steps" and is marked "ten." and "mp".

In the final statement of the motive, in measures 29 and 30, it is altered. The descending minor third becomes a descending perfect fourth, the tonic note dropping down to the fifth scale degree over an altered dominant chord with a flatted seventh scale degree. This is the first appearance of the subtonic in a Georgian setting by Michael Head.

Ex. 20

"Sweet chance..."

Measure 30-32



Another interesting feature of "Sweet chance . . ." is the changing time signature, possibly an incidental influence from Peter Warlock. With one exception (measure 32 in the 1918 Ledwidge setting "Nocturne" from Over the Rim of the Moon) Head first uses changing time signatures in Georgian music in the first song of this Davies group, "When I came forth this morn." He continues to do so in all of the remaining five songs in Songs of the Countryside.

"Money, O!"

When I had money, money, O!
 I knew no joy till I went poor;
 For many a false man as a friend
 Came knocking all day at my door.

.

When I had money, money, O!
 My many friends proved all untrue;
 But now I have no money, O!
 My friends are real, though very few.

The first and last verses of the five-stanza Davies poem are quoted above. Michael Head omitted the last verse in his setting, choosing to repeat the first verse in its stead. This works since the last verse says very little more than the first.

This is a popular piece in recitals by male voices, and it is also frequently heard in student auditions and festivals. It is an effective and animated ballad. The aeolian vocal melody is accompanied by wide-spaced chords in the piano and the typical Michael Head piano finish. Head exploits the dynamics in both the piano and the voice, using forte and piano with well marked crescendos and decrescendos.

The song is built around an initial five-note motive that is heard again in the voice upon its entrance. This motive includes the three-note rhythmic upbeat which Roger Quilter used in "O mistress mine."

Ex. 21

"Money, O"

Measures 1-3

The musical score for measures 1-3 of "Money, O" is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the piano. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked "Allegro". The piano part begins with a "ten. ten. ten." marking and a "con" marking. The vocal line has a "ritard" marking and a "mf" dynamic. The piano part has a "ritard" marking and a "mf" dynamic. The vocal line ends with the lyrics "When I had mo-ney,—" and the piano part ends with a "a tempo" marking.

Descriptive word painting can be observed at "how their wives do hum like bees About their work from morn till night" where the song's repetative eighth-note rhythm is embellished in the right-hand of the piano by alternating a sixteenth-rest and three sixteenth-notes with two eighth-notes. Its effectiveness is partially because of its contrast with the material that immediately precedes and follows it (Ex. 22).

Ex. 22

"Money, O"

Measures 16-19

seen How poor men's hearts are ev - er light; And

mp how their wives do hum like bees A - bout their work from morn till night.

mp

The piano accompaniment in measures 18-19 features a rhythmic pattern of alternating a sixteenth-rest and three sixteenth-notes with two eighth-notes, creating a humming effect.

"Why have you stolen my delight"

The poem used for this Michael Head setting, titled "Song" by Francis Brett Young, was first published in the Marsh anthology Georgian Poetry 1918-1919. Head's song setting was published in 1933 as the fourth in a set of four songs titled More Songs of the Countryside. Unlike the earlier set Songs of the Countryside which includes poems by only one author, W. H. Davies, this set also contains one poem by Mary Webb, and two by Thomas Hardy.

This is a very lovely song. Short, as so many English songs are in this period including those by Warlock and Ireland, it is only 30 measures in length. There is no musical excess and no padding, and there are no repeated lines or stanzas. For the first time in a Georgian setting Head takes the poem entirely as written by the poet.

The musical approach is linear, and there are several examples of contrary motion. There are no instances of imitation of the motivic material, nor of its augmentation nor diminution. However, there is melodic interest in the interior lines of the piano part and a sense that these are independent lines, as in measures 9 and 10.

Ex. 23

"Why have you stolen my delight"

Measures 9-10

Here is another example of a three note arsis (see "Money O!," p. 137) such as can also be found in some of the settings of John Ireland (see p. 87).⁽³²⁾ This arsis serves as one of the binding figures in the song and is a tonic - leading tone - tonic melody that recurs throughout the song in the voice and in several different parts of the piano accompaniment (Ex. 24).

32. Vernon Yenne, "Three Twentieth Century English Song Composers: Peter Warlock, E. J. Moeran and John Ireland," (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois, 1969), 236.

Ex. 24

"Why have you stolen my delight"

Measures 1-2

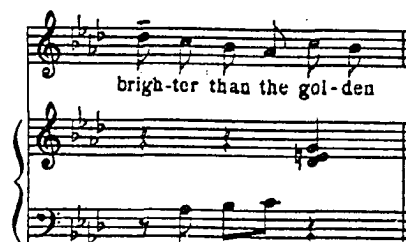


These three notes do not always serve as an upbeat. In measure 9 the three note melody appears on beat one in the alto line of the piano. Frequently the rhythm of this motive occurs with a different melody, as in measure 17, or in the piano in measure 14 where it is isolated before and after by rests (Ex. 25).

Ex. 25

"Why have you stolen my delight"

Measure 14



The song is more demanding vocally even than the more dramatic settings of Georgian poetry written earlier by Head. Particularly difficult is the pianissimo a flat 2 in the 26th measure followed by a drop through the passaggio down to g1. The dynamics here are confusing. There is a steady crescendo from a mezzo piano in measures 23 through 25, but there is no subito in measure 26 to explain the sudden appearance of the pp which is in parentheses in the published edition. Having observed Michael Head's alternate endings, it is possible to assume that these are his wishes if the performer is capable of it technically.

Three Cotswold Songs

John Drinkwater (1882-1937) was a typical man of letters of the Georgian era of the 1910's and 1920's. He is primarily known for his more than twenty volumes of poetry, biographies, and critical studies. His output of lyrical poetry in the Georgian style begins in 1908 with Lyrical and Other Poems, and this style matured with the edition of Poems of Love and the Earth in 1912. Drinkwater's friendship with Lascelles Abercrombie brought him into association with other Georgian poets and he was a contributor to Georgian Poetry as well as a member of the group. Cotswold Characters, a separate volume of poems, was published in 1921.

The Cotswolds lie mainly in Gloucestershire and extend in the south to Avon and Wiltshire. In the north they include a small corner of Warwickshire and small parts of Hereford and Worcester. It is an area of unexcelled beauty: rolling hills, wooded valleys, swiftly flowing streams, picturesque hamlets and farmsteads, ancient sites, stately homes, and quaint cottages. Gloucestershire is a country of colorful orchards, stone cottages, and precipitous hills with breathtaking views, particularly from the Cotswold escarpment, and it is often specifically mentioned in the poetry of various writers of the Georgian period.

The Times Literary Supplement of March 27, 1937 says of Drinkwater's poetry that "he was touched to song by his rural Midlands [but] he stopped short of the point where skill achieves magic." Swinnerton describes Drinkwater's poetry as "always polished and musical, but unmarked by any force of thought or feeling." (33) The three Drinkwater poems that Michael Head set ("Cotswold love," "Mamble," and "A vagabond song") are of this type, simple, nondramatic, descriptive Georgian verse.

33. Frank Swinnerton, The Georgian Literary Scene: 1910-1935, 6th ed. (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Co.), 205.

"Cotswold love"

"Cotswold love" is the first of the three songs in this set. The poem is in a traditional meter, in lines of iambic trimeter with the addition of an extra unaccented syllable at the end on the odd lines.

The piano part to "Cotswold love" is remarkable for its sliding Delian chromatic harmonies in measures 31 - 38 (Ex. 26).

Ex. 26

"Cotswold love"

Measures 31-38

The musical score for measures 31-38 of "Cotswold love" is presented in three systems. The first system shows measures 31-32 with a *cresc.* marking. The second system shows measures 33-34 with *mf* and *cresc.* markings, and measures 35-36 with a *poco allargando* marking. The third system shows measures 37-38 with *p a tempo* and *pp* markings. The score is written for piano and features complex chromatic harmonies and a modulation in measures 11-13 to the relative major of the parallel minor, D flat major to F flat major, then.

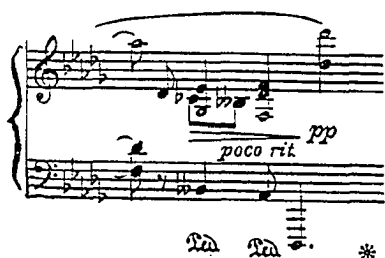
An example of possible folk song influence is the modulation in measures 11 - 13 to the relative major of the parallel minor, D flat major to F flat major, then

back to D flat major. Another example of folk song influence is the sharp fourth scale degree in the lowest line of the piano in measure 11. The major bVII-I (in this case bVII7-I) cadence in measures 16 and 38 which becomes more typical in subsequent songs in Michael Head's total output, including non-Georgian settings, is a result of the flatting of the seventh scale degree. In measure 16 the flatted seventh sinks via the doubly flatted sixth scale degree to the fifth. This device was also used by Quilter.

Ex. 27

"Cotswold love"

Measure 16



In "Cotswold love" there is only an echo of the traditional final leaping octave piano finish.

The vocal melody relies on an initial three-note melodic and rhythmic pattern (Ex. 28), which is used in slightly altered forms to begin the phrases "Blue skies," "lasses turn," and "April is" in the first

stanza; "knows men's," the last phrase in the second stanza; and "little that it," and "April comes to" in the final stanza.

Ex. 28

"Cotswold love"

Measures 6-7



Unfortunately, the chatty rhythmic pattern Head uses for the lines "From Rodboro to Campden," "An ankle is a marvel," and "And Cotswold girls are bridging With slyly tilted shoe," which is the final line of the song, almost cancels the lovely effect of melody and harmony in the rest of the song.

"Mamble"

The second song of the set Three Cotswold Songs uses a poem of the "vagabond" type. The final stanza of this three-stanza poem is given below:

.

So leave the road to Mamble
And take another road
To as good a place as Mamble
Be it lazy as a toad;
Who travels Worcester county
Takes any place that comes
When April tosses bounty
To the cherries and the plums.

Michael Head gives this "walking" song a lilt by using a dotted-eighth-sixteenth note rhythmic figuration in the voice:

Ex. 29

"Mamble"

Measures 7-8



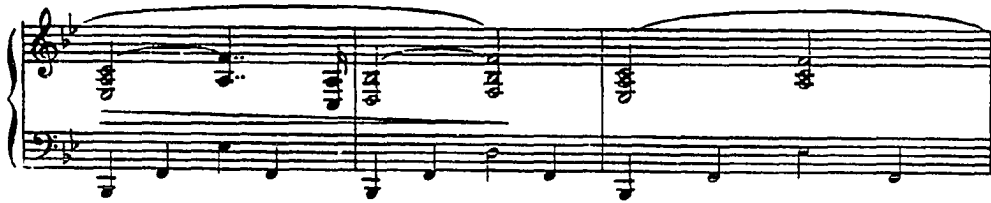
Although the only interesting characteristic in what is otherwise an unmemorable melody, the rhythm is tiresome by the end of the song. The addition of a "Tra la la . . ." epilogue further bogs down this tripping word setting. Fortunately Head indicates in his footnotes in the published edition that all or part of the epilogue may be omitted. The piano accompaniment,

an unrelenting "walking" pattern of quarter notes in the left hand for the first 20 measures, adds to the monotonous effect of the setting (Ex. 30).

Ex. 30

"Mamble"

Measures 5-7



Interesting chromatic harmonies in measures 29 through 30 are not enough to redeem the song. On the lines "Be it lazy as a toad; Who travels Worcester county," the harmonic progression (in F Major) is vii⁷/III, +V⁷, vi, (V), G⁶/III, I (Ex. 31).

Ex. 31

"Mamble"

Measures 29-30

Be it la - zy as a toad; Who trav - els Worces - ter coun - ty

"A Vagabond song"

This is the last song of the set Three Cotswold Songs. The meter in this poem is different from the two previous poems. The lines are in iambic feet, but each line includes an insertion of other kinds of metrical feet, (for example an anapestic foot in each line of the first stanza) varying the regular pattern.

I know the pools where the grayling rise,
 I know the trees where the filbert's fall,
 I know the woods where the red fox lies,
 The twisted elms where the brown owls call.

.

Head's robust and lively setting of this text is a successful characterization of an extroverted poem. The accompaniment is energetic, percussive and rhythmic. The initial two and a half beat pattern is used as a binding figure, appearing again later in the song.

Ex. 32

"A Vagabond song"

Measure 1



The dotted rhythmic pattern of the piano part is imitated in the voice on a rising gapped scalar melody in the key of C sharp minor. There is an attempt at word painting in measure six to the lines "The twisted elms" (Ex. 33).

Ex. 33

"A Vagabond song"

Measures 5-6

The musical score for measures 5-6 of "A Vagabond song" is written in C# minor (three sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line features a dotted rhythmic pattern, which is imitated by the piano part. The piano part has a dotted rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more complex pattern in the left hand. The lyrics are: "I know the woods where the red fox lies. The twist-ed elms where the brown owls". The tempo/mood is marked "poco cresc."

Here, in measure 5, there is also an example of the subtonic chord built on the flatted seventh scale degree (VII) in the third beat.

The loud and percussive piano introduction is used in slightly altered form as an interlude between the second and third verses of the text. It reappears in C# major in the penultimate measure of the song.

Because of the disparate character of each song and the weaknesses of the settings of the first two,

Three Cotswold Songs does not function well as a group. In addition, the songs have no musical features in common. The only things they share are the poet, John Drinkwater, and the locale, the Cotswolds. It would be sixteen years before Michael Head set another Georgian poem.

"Elizabeth's song"

Lascelles Abercrombie's poetry appears in all volumes of Georgian Poetry and is distinguished from other examples of Georgian poetry by its free verse form. Although usually in traditional classical forms, as discussed in Chapter II, Georgian poetry can also be free verse. Abercrombie's poetry is typically Georgian in its subject matter. All of his poems published in Georgian Poetry are on nature subjects and many specifically name places in the West Midlands, like the Malvern Hills, "Glostershire," Reynard, and Kempley. The first stanza of the poem "Elizabeth's song" follows:

Shining white clouds in the cherry trees
 tangled,
 And over the orchard snowing;
 Silver white cherries on the hillside
 spangled,
 And bright among bronze oaks blowing:
 So white, so bright, so fragrantly
 Heart's delight blossoms in me.

.

Although Michael Head composed the song in 1954 it remained unpublished until 1970. It is a lyrical setting and is very different from all other Georgian settings because of its melismatic orientation. Also, this is one of only two songs by Michael Head (the second being "The Singer," a non-Georgian setting) which, according to Head, may be sung unaccompanied. With or without piano accompaniment, the entire opening of the song is essentially a lyrical nondramatic vocalise sung on "ah." The spontaneous effect of the song, particularly in the unaccompanied version, is achieved by the alternating meters of 12/8, 6/8 and 9/8 and the mostly pentatonic melody.

Even with the first statement of the text the melismatic approach is not abandoned for a totally syllabic setting. Instead, the two approaches are combined. A syllabic setting of the text is used until "snowing," the first syllable of which is set to eight notes. The setting of the next line, measures 16-17, is syllabic. The text setting in measures 18-20, "And bright among bronze oaks," is a combination of the syllabic and melismatic.

As with other Head songs there are few pictorial devices. Although on "high in the golden weather" the voice leaps up a fourth d2 to g2, the effect of this is negated by the previous line where, in measure 40,

"Swerving down, close to the cowslips nearing" is set to a melodic line which "swerves" up (Ex. 34).

Ex. 34

"Elizabeth's song"

Measures 40-44

Swerv-ing down, close to the cow - slips near - ing, Then

high in the gol - den wea-ther:

The B natural in measure 41 resolves in a different voice to the C# in measure 42.

When the optional piano accompaniment is used the song begins with a lyrical melody in the right hand of the piano, thinly accompanied by slowly moving chords in open position in the left hand. This melody is then repeated and developed by the voice. The initial piano

vocal duet is the introduction for the song. Although with some variations, such as repetition of the melody and doubling in the chordal piano accompaniment, the interlude which begins in measure 30 is essentially the same music as measures 5 through 10 of the piano vocal introduction.

Even when accompanied, there are no unusual harmonies in this setting and few chromatic inflections. However, a colorful harmonic progression occurs in measure 16. Here, a G major chord in first inversion slides to a B flat major chord and then returns to G major (Ex. 35).

Ex. 35

"Elizabeth's song"

Measure 16

Sil-ver white cher-ries on the hill-side

The melodic flattened seventh scale degree occurs once as a passing tone in the alto of the piano in measure 55 (Ex. 36).

Ex. 36

Measure 55



There is a series of seventh chords in measure 42, to the words "golden weather." The chromatic dissonant major ninth on the third chord sounds obtrusive in this context. The song modulates only twice, both times to B major.

"Had I a golden pound"

This song was written by Michael Head in 1962. It is remarkable that Head is the only known composer to make a solo song setting of this fine poem by Francis Ledwidge. The poem was published posthumously in 1918 in the Ledwidge collection Last Songs. John Drinkwater called the poem the most outstanding of this final collection.(34) Alice Curtayne, as

34. John Drinkwater, "The Poetry of Francis Ledwidge," in The Edinburgh Review, (July, 1918). In Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 23, 112.

expressed in Francis Ledwidge: A Life of the Poet, considers this poem to be an enchanting example of what Ledwidge would have produced had his genius reached maturity.(35) Ledwidge uses the Gaelic verse form of internal rhyme and assonance, for example, "spend . . . mend", "more . . . floor", and quern . . . turn" in the first verse.

Had I a golden pound to spend,
My love should mend and sew no more.
And I would buy her a little querne,
Easy to turn on the kitchen floor.

.

The song is marked "gaily" by the composer, and there are other specific expressive instructions from the composer. The song is in 4/4 with cadential bars in 2/4 inserted in measures 7, 16, and 30, the penultimate measure. The 2/4 bar serves to enhance the vocal line.

The initial rhythmic character of the piano accompaniment is an alternation of staccato eighth notes and short legato figures and is introduced in the first measure (Ex. 37).

35. Alice Curtayne, Francis Ledwidge: A Life of the Poet (1887-1917), (Martin Brian & O'Keeffe, 1972), In Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 23, 123.

Ex. 37

"Had I a golden pound to spend"

Measures 1-2



This idea is expanded and varied as in measures 6 and 7 (Ex. 38a), measures 8 and 9 (Ex. 38b), and measures 21 and 22 (Ex. 38c) where the right hand of the piano carries a legato melody over the staccato which appears in the left hand. The execution of this idea is very effective.

Ex. 38a

"Had I a golden pound to spend"

Measures 6-7



Ex. 38b

Measures 8-9

Ex. 38c

Measures 21-22

"Had I a golden pound to spend" begins in C major. There is a modulation to E minor at the line "Easy to turn on the kitchen floor." Immediately the music returns to C major, then modulates to E flat major at the lines "To face with pride the road to town, And mellow down her sunlit room," returning again to C major on "To spend," measure 17. After the C

major piano interlude, which is of the same material as the introduction, the voice enters to cadence strongly in G major in measure 23. The song moves back to the original key of C major for the final eight measures.

The vocal line of this excellent song is more folk-like than the Ledwidge settings from forty years earlier. Although the range of each two measure phrase in this and the earlier settings encompasses an octave or more, a nondramatic effect in this song is achieved by both the use of a low tessitura in almost every line and repeated notes which begin the phrases. The effect, heightened by the disjunct character of the accompaniment, is almost conversational.

"Dear Delight"

This lovely setting of a poem by Walter de la Mare is interesting in that the piano part could stand alone. The vocal melody is, for the most part, doubled in the piano part of this 61 measure song except for measures 14 through 28. In measures 14-28 there is a linear relationship between the voice and piano; in measure 16 and 18 there is contrary motion between the two mediums and there is imitation of the word painting in the voice ("shrill a-ring") by the piano in measures 22 and 23.

The voice "sings" more in this piece than in all other previous Georgian settings, with the exception of

"Elizabeth's song." Gone is the totally syllabic concept of text setting. There are often two notes per syllable such as on the words "'tis," "thee in," and "shrill a-ring." There are five notes per syllable in measure 26 on the word "straying," six notes per syllable on "lovely," and the tonic syllable in the word "a-maying" moves melodically on eight notes. "A-maying" is set again in measure 38 to a D major chord with the added dissonance of a major seventh, c#, resolving to c natural in measure 42 (Ex. 39).

Ex. 39

"Dear delight"

Measures 38-42



There is considerable text repetition. The line "Youngling fair, and dear delight" is repeated twice, as is "a-maying" and "'Tis love hath thee in keeping."

"The homecoming of the sheep"

The sheep are coming home in Greece,
Hark, the bells on ev'ry hill!
Flock by flock, and fleece by fleece,
Wandering wide a little piece
Thro' the evening red and still,
Stopping where the path ways cease,
Cropping with a hurried will.

.

The poem "The homecoming of the sheep" is from Ledwidge's Songs of Peace, published just prior to his death in 1917. According to Irish novelist, critic, and biographer Alice Curtayne, "the influence of Yeats's early poetry is . . . evident on Ledwidge's work: dwelling on unrequited love, repining for a lost Arcadia, recalling the heroic personages of the Celtic sagas, being comforted by fairy visitants." (36) "The homecoming of the sheep" is set in Greece, and as mentioned earlier in the discussion of Head's setting of Ledwidge's "Ships of Arcady," "Ledwidge writes of an eternal Greece . . . all countries under the moon are the same country to him." (37)

36. Ibid.

37. "Lost Music," in Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 23, 109.

This song is the last of the Georgian settings by Michael Head. It is an almost impressionistic setting of a simple, straightforward, descriptive poem. The piano introduction has a dreamy quality of remembrance which is oddly appropriate since this poem was written by the poet only after he had been to Greece. The initial motive is strongly dissonant (Ex. 40). The oscillating octaves are varied but persistent through the first sixteen measures and occur intermittently thereafter until replaced by a new but similar motive in measure 25 (Ex. 41). Because this motive continues to appear on the dominant and because of its dissonant major second there is no strong key feeling through the entire first stanza of text until the second verse begins in measure 25.

Ex. 40

"The homecoming of the sheep"

Measures 1-4

Molto moderato

The musical score is for measures 1-4 of the piece. It is written for piano and features a treble and bass staff. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Molto moderato'. The score begins with a piano introduction. The first measure (measure 1) has a piano (pp) dynamic. The second measure (measure 2) has a piano (p) dynamic. The third measure (measure 3) has a piano (p) dynamic. The fourth measure (measure 4) has a piano (p) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests. There are also some markings like '8' and '8' with dotted lines, and a '*' symbol in the bass staff.

Ex. 41

"The homecoming of the sheep"

Measures 25-27

Thro' the cot-ton bush-es low Mer-ry boys- with

p a tempo *poco cresc.*

pp a tempo *poco cresc.*

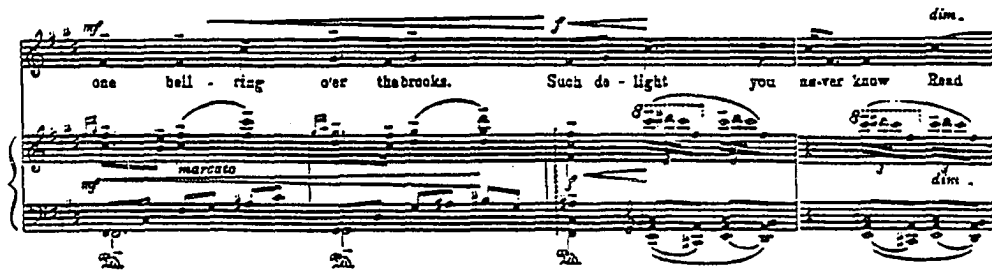
This is a lyrical song and can be sung by almost any voice type. The two-measure vocal melody which begins in measure 4 is heard in the voice in its entirety five times. Other phrases are derived from the rhythm of this opening melody, such as the vocal line in measure 18 on "Stopping where the pathways cease," and the opening measure of "Cropping with a hurried will."

The sound of bells can be heard in the piano first in measure 33 in the right hand and then again in both parts in measures 35 and 36 (Ex. 42).

Ex. 42

"The homecoming of the sheep"

Measures 33-36



The original motive from the first measure returns in measure 56, but the song, which began in the key of C sharp minor, ends in F sharp major.

Summary

Unlike contemporary composers who chose Georgian poetry only in the early years of their careers, Michael Head chose to set Georgian poetry over a period of almost fifty years. Head's style was a blend of present and past procedures. His musical vocabulary varied little throughout the years, relying steadily on traditional techniques. Although in two later non-Georgian settings Head attempted atonal procedures, in the Georgian settings there was no striving to grasp

new techniques. His usual idiom was modal or tonal. Generally, Head failed to avoid a pronounced eclecticism of style, and this failure to develop a style uniquely his own weakened the effectiveness of some of his Georgian settings.

Like his contemporaries, pictorial devices occasionally used to depict separate elements of a poem do not often appear. For the most part, thematic devices, expansive melodies, and chromatic harmonies are the expressive core. Modality is a common feature and imitates the English folk song. Another "English" feature is the use of text settings with "wandering" tonic accents, particularly in "The temper of a maid."

The voice parts can be highly expressive and of great melodic beauty, as in "Elizabeth's song," "Sweet chance, that led my steps abroad," and "Dear delight." Less frequently the vocal line appears more folk-like, with a narrow ranged melody and a distinctive rhythmic pattern as in "The temper of a maid" and "When I came forth this morn." With the exception of "Elizabeth's song" and "Dear delight," Head, like Finzi, Ireland, and others, adhered to a folk-like one-note-per-syllable approach.

Unlike Warlock, who disliked excess, and Ireland, who continually refined his melodies in his later works, Head was more inclined to pad his music. One evidence of padding is the development of the text

through repetition. Textual repetition did not occur often in the Georgian settings of those contemporaries who made solo song settings of Georgian poetry. Another kind of padding is the musical epilogue in "Mamble."

Dramatic writing occurs in his earliest songs and certain characteristics appear in almost all of the Georgian settings. The pianistic finish which Head used repeatedly is similar in concept to the final chords in a Quilter setting. Most of Head's songs are Romantic, with octave doublings in the piano and occasional occurrences of lush chromatic harmonies. In the minor and modal songs particularly, the harmony is often beautifully expressive and sometimes quite unusual and appears to be the most original and effective feature of these songs.

For his total song output, Michael Head chose texts from over sixty different writers. His selection of Georgian poetry represents one-sixth of his total song output. In the beginning of this paper it was suggested that there are some similarities in style between the Georgian poetry and Michael Head's settings of these poems. Georgian poetry tends to be descriptive and Head was proficient in portraying a setting or evoking a mood in his songs. Like the Georgian poets who relied on traditional forms, Head relied heavily on traditional late-nineteenth-century

Romantic techniques. Georgian poetry is limited in depth and scope, and for the most part, Head's song settings of these texts tend to be superficial.

However, for poetry of this kind a spontaneous setting can be appropriate and effective. The best songs from Head's Georgian settings are those most consistent in style.

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APPENDIX

A Catalogue of Michael Head's Songs

The song catalogue presents, as far as it has been possible to ascertain, Michael Head's song output in full. The dates of the songs are those of composition and copyright. The songs are listed, as far as possible, chronologically. When there is a complex of dates for one work, the composition date takes precedence. Songs comprising a set or cycle are first listed singly by date of composition, and then within the set. A song listed without a copyright date remains unpublished.

All items are for voice and piano unless otherwise indicated. Many of the songs are available in a number of different transpositions and all known keys are listed.

The poetic attributions and spelling follow those in Granger's Index to Poetry. Surnames only are given where the poet is well known.

Abbreviations


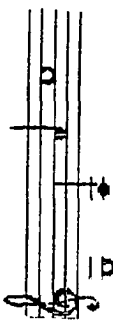

acc.	accompanied
arr.	arranged
o.p.	out-of-print
p.o.p.	permanently out-of-print (1)
unacc.	unaccompanied
w.	written
w/	with
n.d.	no date
n.a.	not available
P.S.	part of a set of songs
publ. sep.	also published seperately

Explanation

For range and tessitura designations whole notes indicate range and quarter notes indicate tessitura. The treble clef is used for all range and tessitura designations since none of these songs are published with the voice in any other clef but treble.

1. Designation by the publisher.

The titles for the two cycles Songs of Reminiscence (1973) and Nine Cornish Songs (1973) were designated by Kenneth Roberton of Roberton Press in consultation with the composer's sister, Nancy Bush.

File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title					Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
ROOSEY AND HAWKES					1917/1920	Tennyson	D Major		o.p.
Claribel									
							F Major		
							G Major		
Give a man a horse he can ride					1917/1923	James Thomson	A Minor		o.p.
							E♭ Minor		
Love's latent					1918/1926	Christina Rossetti	F Minor		
							A♭ Minor		

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Date

Poet

Key

Range and Tessitura

Comments

When I think upon the
maidens

1918/1920

Philip Ashbrooke

C Major



E♭ Major

D♭ Major

A♭ Major

F Major

Over the Rim of the Moon
The Ships of Arcady

1918/1919

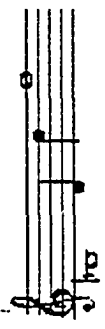
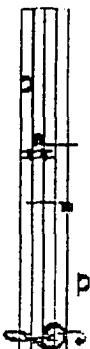
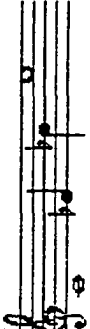
Francis Ledwidge

E♭ Major

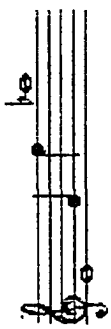

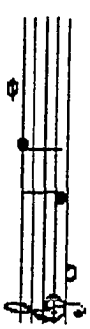
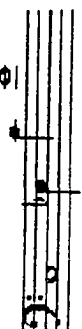




publ. sep.

D Major




File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue					
Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Beloved			Bb Major		
			D Major		
A blackbird singing			E Major		publ. sep.
			Ab Major		
Nocturne			Gb Major		publ. sep.
			Bb Major		




File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue

Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Sweet day, so cool	1919/1921	George Herbert	F Major		o.p.
Autumn's breath	1919/1920	R. W. Dixon	B Major		o.p.
On a lady singing	1920	Edward Quillinan	F Major		o.p.
The sea gypsy	1920	Richard Hovey	C Minor		
			E Minor		
			B Minor		





File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title		Date	Reet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Three Songs of Fantasy The fairies' dance	Frank Dempster Sherman	1920/1925		G Major-E Minor		o.p. publ. sep.
				Eb Major--		
				C Minor		
The little dreams	Ellen M. Reynolds			F Major-D Minor		
				Db Major		
				C Major		
				Eb Major		

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title





Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
A funny fellow	Frank Dempster	E♭ Major		p.o.p.; publ. sep.
	Shuman	F Major		
O let no star compare with thee	Henry Vaughan	F Major		
		A Major		
I arise from dreams of thee	Shelley	G Major/Minor		o.p., also w/ cello obbligato

File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue					Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Title	Date	Poet					
Love not me for comely grace	1921	Anon., 17th c.			F Major		
A slumber song of the madonna	1921	Alfred Noyes			G Major		
					C Major		
					Bb Major		
A green cornfield	1922/1923	Christina Rossetti			F Major		
					Bb Major		




File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

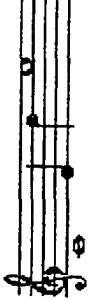
Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
A piper	1923	Seumas O'Sullivan	F Minor		Also w/ flute obligato
			D Minor		
A summer idyll	1924	Richard Le Gallienne	F Major		
			Ab Major		
A love rhapsodie	1924	Martin MacDonnott	F Major		o.p.
Tewkesbury Road	1924	John Masefield	E Minor		

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

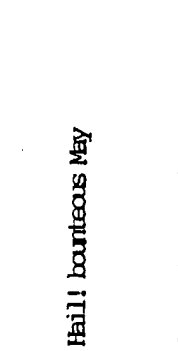
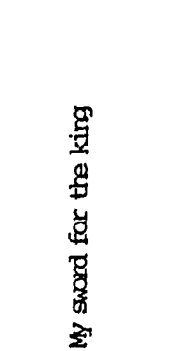
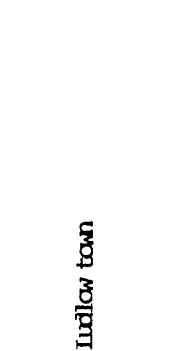

Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
The dreaming lake	1925	Elizabeth Evelyn Moore	E Major		o.p.
The three numbers	1928	Helen Taylor	A♭ Major		
The tamper of a maid	1928/1929	W. H. Davies	B Major		o.p., P.S.
Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad	1928/1929	W.H. Davies	F Major		P.S.
			D Major		





File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

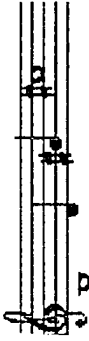


Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
1928/1929	W. H. Davies	G Minor		P.S.
		B Minor		
1928-29/1929	W. H. Davies	G Major		o.p.; publ. sep.
1929		E♭ Major		
				publ. sep.
1929		D Minor/Major		o.p.; publ. sep.

File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue					
Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
F Minor/Major					
Robin Redbreast	1929		A Minor		o.p.; publ. sep.
C Minor					
Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad	see 1928				publ. sep.
Money O!	see 1928				publ. sep.






File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title





Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Hail! bounteous May	1930	Milton	D \flat Major		o.p.
Come take your lute	1930	Helen Taylor	D Minor		o.p.
My sword for the king	1930	Helen Taylor	E Minor		
Willow town	1930	A. E. Houston	D Minor		
			E Major		o.p.
			G Major		






File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Sweet almond blossom	1930/1931	Samuel Waddington	G Major		
			F Major		
The happy wanderer	1931	Helen Taylor	F Major		o.p.
You shall not go a-maying	1931/1932	Mordant Currie	E♭ Major		
			C Major		
More Songs of the Countryside	1932/1933				
Fogloves		Mary Webb	C Major		publ. sep.

File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
			Ab Major		
The garden seat		Thomas Hardy	E Minor		o.p.
Weathers		Thomas Hardy	Ab Major		o.p.
			E Major		
Why have you stolen my delight		Francis Brett Young	Ab Major		publ. sep.
			F Major		




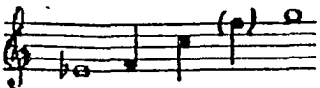
File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
The primrosy gown	1933/1934	Edward Lockton	Ab Major		o.p.
You cannot dream things lovelier	1936	Humbert Wolfe	D Minor/Major C Major		o.p.
The matron cat's song	1936	Ruth Pitter	A Minor		
Five Songs	1936-1938/1939				
Green rain		Mary Webb	Db Major		publ. sep.
The King of China's daughter		Edith Sitwell	D Minor		o.p.




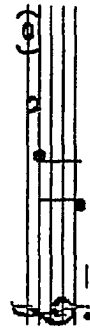
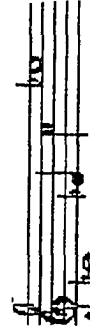
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Fallen veils		D. G. Rossetti	D \flat Major		o.p.; publ. sep.
The singer	w. 1936	Bonnie Taylor	F Minor		unacc.; acc. optional publ. sep.
The blunder		Jan Struther	D Minor/Major		o.p.
Three Cotswold Songs A vagabond song	1938	John Drinkwater	C# Minor		o.p.; publ. sep.

File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Six Poems The woodpath in spring	1944-45/1946	Ruth Pittter	D Major		o.p.; publ. sep.
The viper			D Minor		o.p.; publ. sep.
Holiday in heaven			A Minor		publ. sep.
The comet			D Minor		o.p.; publ. sep.
Constancy			F Major		o.p.; publ. sep.





File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
The estuary	w. 1945		E♭ Major		o.p.; publ. sep. Orchestral accompaniment available
The fairy tailor	1945	Rose Fyleman	G Major		o.p.
The little road to Bethlehem	1946	Margaret Rose	F Major A♭ Major		
Gaiete & Orrior	1947	Alastair Miller	F Minor		o.p.

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
1948/1949	C. Fox Smith			
Six Sea Songs				
A sea burthen		G Minor		o.p.; publ. sep.
Limehouse Reach		G Major		o.p.; publ. sep.
Back to Hilo		E Minor		o.p.; publ. sep.
A dog's life		D Minor		publ. sep.
Lavender Pond (Surrey Commercial Docks)		A♭ Major		o.p.

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Sweethearts and wives			G Major		o.p.; publ. sep.
The robin's carol	1950	Patience Strong	Ab Major		
			C Major		
October valley	1951	Nancy Bush	G# Minor/ Ab Major		o.p.
Small Christmas tree	1951	Mona Gould	Ab Major		o.p.

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Date

Poet

Key

Range and Tessitura

Comments

F Major

Elizabeth's song

1954/1970

Iasoel les Abercrombie G Major



o.p.

There's many will love a maid 1954

Pennel Grant Ross

D Major



o.p.

G Major

Three Sacred Songs

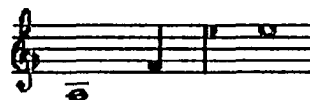
1954

English and Latin




Trans. N. Bush

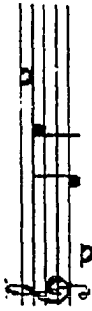


Ave Maria

A Minor

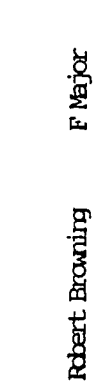
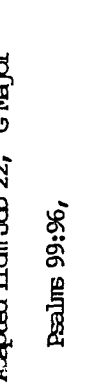




o.p.; publ. sep.






File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue		Title		Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
O Gloriosa Domina						C# Minor		Also w/ piano quintet; publ. sep.
Sancta et Immaculata Virginitas						G Major		Also w/ piano quintet publ. sep.
The Lord's prayer				1956		Eb Major		


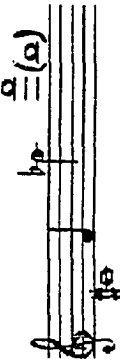

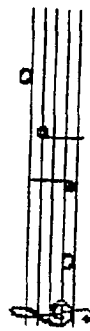
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Thus spake Jesus	1955	St. John 17	B Major			
What Christmas means to me	1957	Joan Lane	B Minor			
On the wings of the wind	1959	Alastair Miller	F Major			
			C Minor			
			E♭ Major			

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
1960	Robert Browning	F Major		
1960	Adapted from Job 22, Psalms 99:96, Micah 6	G Major		
1960	Irene McLeod	C Minor		
1960	H. S. Leigh	C Major		

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Lean out of the window	1961	James Joyce	C Minor		o.p.
Had I a golden pound to spend	1962	Francis Ledwidge	C Major		o.p.
The plague of love	1962	William Whitehead	E Major		Arr. from Thomas Arne
			C Major		
Dear delight	1965	Walter de la Mare	Ab Major		
O for a March wind	1965	Winifred Williams	A Major		

File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
The homecoming of the sheep	1966	Francis Ledwidge	C# Minor		
Bird-song	1966	Marjorie Rayment	F Major		For soprano, piano, and flute
How sweet the moonlight sleeps	1967	William Shakespeare	D# Major		
The dove	1969	Keats	G Minor		o.p.

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Date

Poet

Key

Range and Tessitura

Comments

MANUSCRIPT

The Carol of the
Field Mice

1971/n.d.

Kenneth Grahame

In the private
collection of
Stephen Banfield;
text from the
Wind in the
Willows

ROBERTON PRESS

Three Psalms



I will lift up mine eyes n.d./1976

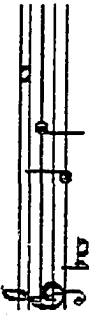

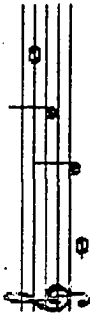

Psalms 121


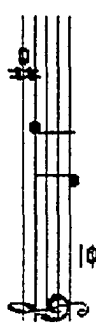

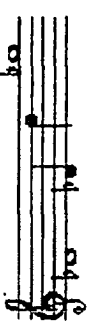

D \flat Major




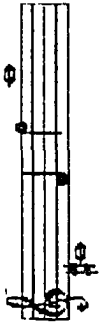



Orig. Key;
publ. sep.

File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
			F Major		
Be merciful unto me, O God	n.d./1976	Psalms 57	D Major		Orig. Key? publ. sep.
			D Major		
Make a joyful noise unto the Lord	n.d./1976	Psalms 100	F Major		Orig. Key? publ. sep.
			G Major		

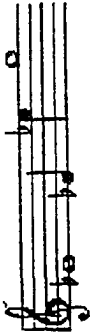


File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Child on the shore	n.d./1979	Nancy Bush	D Major- G Lydian		w/ optional violin
Songs of Reminiscence	1973/n.d.	Patrick Kavanagh			In preparation for publication See page 179
A Christmas childhood			D Minor		
Memory of my father			F Major		
If ever you go to Dublin town			D Major		





File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
My room			B Minor		
The Rowley mile			D Major		
Plough horses			A Major		
September morning			G♯ Major		
Nine Cornish Songs	1973/n.d.				In preparation
Kynance		John Harris	D Major		for publication See page 179

File: Michael Head
Report: Song Catalogue
Title

Title	Date	Root	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Mystic melody		John Harris	F# Major- C Major		
Forthleven		J. D. Hosken	F Major		
The Burial		John Harris	E Minor		
As I went down zig-zag		Charles Causley	E Major		
The Lark		John Harris	Ab Major- F Minor		

File: Michael Head
 Report: Song Catalogue
 Title

Date	Reet	Key	Range and Tessitura	Comments
Mary, Mary Magdalene	Charles Causley	Eb Major		
Gyllyngdune	John Harris	E Major		
Kitty Cornish	Charles Causley	F Major		an alternate version for soprano has different text and title w/ some changes in the melody

File: Michael Head Report: Song Catalogue					Comments
Title	Date	Poet	Key	Range and Tessitura	
BOOSEY AND HAWKES					
Three Songs of Venice	1974/1977	Nancy Bush			o.p.
The gambolier			B Minor		
St. Mark's Square			D Major		
Rain storm			F# Minor-- D Major		
EMERSON EDITION					
The World is Mad	1975/1977	Louis MacNeice			For clarinet, voice, and piano; n.a.

Vita

Loryn Elizabeth Frey, the daughter of W. Kirk and Edith Ditmer Frey, was born in Lima, Ohio on August 30, 1951. She graduated from Wooster High School in Wooster, Ohio in 1969. From Baldwin-Wallace College she earned the Bachelor of Music degree in 1973. From the University of Cincinnati she earned the Master of Music degree in vocal performance in 1975. While at both institutions Ms. Frey was the soprano soloist in numerous opera performances.

While serving on the faculty as Coordinator of Vocal Studies at Louisiana College, Pineville, Louisiana, she began work on the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Louisiana State University. After a sabbatical leave she returned to Louisiana College and was promoted to Associate Professor. Her voice instructors have included Eve Roine Richmond, Melvin Hakola, Lucille Evans, Earl Redding, Sandra Kungle, and Martina Arroyo.

Ms. Frey has memberships in numerous organizations, including the College Music Society, and has served as president of the South Louisiana Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. In 1980 she was a National Endowment for the Humanities Verdi Scholar. Her article, "Temporo-mandibular Joint Dysfunction in Singers: A Survey," was published in The NATS Journal, January/February 1988.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Loryn Elizabeth Frey

Major Field: Music

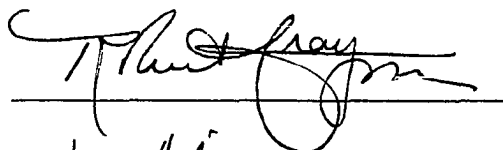
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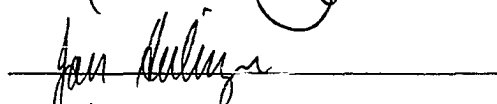
Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman

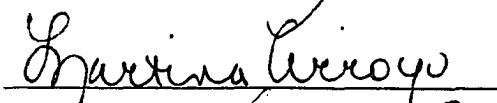

Dean of the Graduate School


EXAMINING COMMITTEE:











Date of Examination:

April 30, 1990