SONG SCANSION IN THE LIGHT OF ENGLISH PROSODY: THE AESTHETICS OF SONG: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN POETRY AND MUSIC IN ENGLAND FROM 1880 TO THE PRESENT DAY.

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MUSICAL BARRING AND VALUATION APPLIED TO VERSE SCANSION

Introductory Note

I am not, of course, the originator of the argument set forth in the following pages. Apparently the first English theorist to realize the possibilities of musical measurement as applied to verse was Joshua Steele, who in 1775 laid down the Law of Verse and the Law of Speech as being metrically music, and introduced the bar, measured from stress to stress. This information, says D. S. MacColl in his lively article in the London Mercury,[1] is gained from an article by Coventry Patmore in the North British Review in 1857. Actually, however, Lanier, Egerton Smith and MacColl himself have been the real pioneers in this subject, in the realm of criticism. I suspect that their theories could be fertilised by a study of the actual methods of the song-composer when in his elongated and melodic way he scans a poem. Modern English song in particular has been distinguished by its attention to quantity and accent, yet depends for its prosodical value on the formality which these men were seeking. Smith says nothing about music, and Lanier, though a musician, was notoriously inaccurate in the facts of musical history,[2] which is apt to be a severe limitation in this particular subject. MacColl is so infatuated with his discovery, and his mastery of the simpler musical signs, that he leaves the whole matter on an elementary plane. The study of the theory in company with its best

(1) See Bibliography under M.
(2) As when he speaks of a great passion for accompanied recitative which appeared in Italy and England in the sixteenth century (p.269- The Science of English Verse).

practical exponents to date, contemporary English song-writers, might, I think, give it the prestige that mere theory always lacks. It will certainly subtilize and develop it at certain points. It will remove song from the stigma of archaic quantity-hunting, which has been a stock poetic criticism for ages. Finally, the clearing of this matter might become the basis for an altogether more healthy and sane relationship between the two arts, when similar ideals, in this particular, were once more discovered. It is not, I think, entirely irrelevant to mention the fact that it was when these prosodical ideals were mutual to the song-composer and to the poet, in the Elizabethan period, that their two arts flowered unsurpassingly. MacColl would attribute the current ignorance and diffidence on this subject in his own country (3) to the now long-abiding severance of literary and musical culture. And poets have become less interested in metrical theory and texture. These are interesting "pieces that fit."

(3) A state of affairs which does not apply to nearly the same extent on the continent, where theorists are already far advanced with the argument, so far as their own language is concerned. Good French books on English metrics exist. And Germans, it is interesting to note, have been able to reduce Greek metres to musical terms.

THE LIMITATIONS OF CLASSICAL SCANSION AS APPLIED TO ENGLISH VERSE

The main criticism of the application of the classical system, or rather its skeleton, to English verse scansion is founded on grounds of practicality. To me, there seems to be no point in scanning verse in a way that has no relation with how the verse must be spoken, as in some of the hideous monstrosities we were obliged to commit in school and university. It is something like measuring music as to how many bars you were able to put on a single page with no reference to the speed at which they were to be played or the relationships between them. And a system which measures verse in one, two, or three ways, and reads it in another, or in some combination of these, can only lead to confusion or to a dangerous freedom. Bridges, forinstance, talks about three metrical systems, one based on quantity, one on syllables, and one on stress, and says that two of them _may_ exist simultaneously in verse. "The Testament of Beauty", a grand experiment, tries to use them all and to bring them all together. It remains, in this particular, a theoretical work.

The Greek theory of prosody is of course imperfectly understood, even now. What is better understood is its influence on and application to English prosody. The system of Greek verse, it seems safe to say, was intimately bound up with Greek music, in a way that has not characterized the two arts since. Our enforced ignorance of Greek music, therefore, is partly to blame for the general confusion. What English theory has gained from

the classical system in the way of value signs seems to be limited to long (—) and short (⏑). Lanier asserts boldly[4] that in classical verse the ratio of long to short was always two to one, and that the monotony which this would induce was apparently offset by a formal melodic delivery. Egertson Smith,[5] while claiming that in classical verse each foot was the same length, asserts that usually only simple ratios existed between each part of the foot and that between syllables also, there were the same mutual time ratios.[6] The authorities seem to agree that these ratios were simple. It must also be recognized that they had grown out of the nature of the Greek language and might be supposed not to fit easily into any system that came along. Anyway the Renaissance, bringer of good things, also brought pedantry. The incompletely understood seventeenth century idea of Greek music engendered the absurdities of early Florentine opera. The incompletely understood and imperfectly known system of Greek versification began to be applied to contemporary verse scansion. MacColl says[7] that "the symbols by which they(the Greeks) allowed for differences of 'longs' and'shorts' and the occurrence of 'rests' had dropped out of usuage". The whole thing became so absurdly simple that it quickly departed from reality and an

(4) The Science of English Verse.
(5) Principles of English Metre.
(6) He adds the "interesting rejoinder" when it was not intended to be sung". Whether this is meant to imply that a more complicated system of ratios existed in sung verse rather than spoken verse (if indeed they could be distinguished) cannot be known, as he pursues the subject no further.
(7) Article in London Mercury.

English sixteenth century movement to "restore" the classical quantities to English verse was soon recognized for what it was.

"Long" and "short", therefore, in various symbols but apparently with the simple ratio 2:1 constantly in mind, were retained in English as a more or less free and indeterminate system of scansion. Their inadequacy as signs of quantity was soon recognized by most poets, although theorists have used them and denied them with bewildering inconsistency throughout the whole history of English criticism. Saintsbury is a good example. Most of the time he is a supporter of the syllabic theory of verse in the academic tradition. At one point, however, he allows the substitution of a foot of anapaests in a prevailing iambic line. He would therefore scan a line like:

"Unless he believe, that all is but vayne"

thus ◡ — ◡ ◡ —, ◡ — ◡ ◡ —.

He apparently would insist on the ratio of long to short as 2 to 1 under all circumstances. In this particular line this of course means that two of the feet are much longer than the other two. I suspect that even Saintsbury would find it much harder to read it this way than to scan it. But so long as one uses a classical symbol for a "short" syllable which means practically any length you like, the matter is bound to remain on an inexact indefinite plane. Contrast for a moment the musical symbolism for this line:

which without bars and without any subtlety past the use of one

more ratio, manages at once to outpace the other towards a realistic rendering. One could defend the classical (or pseudo-classical) scansion on the grounds that the time might change, in other words that some feet can with impunity be longer than others. Unless these irregular feet occurred in a pattern (which they most often do not), however, they would tend to create awkward sticky obstacles in an otherwise smooth rhythm. This point will become clearer when I have dealt with barring and the necessity for an even beat in poetry, as in music.

The impatience which some critics have felt with these naively over-simplified symbols and their realization that whatever value they may have had in the classical period, they have no use in English, has led them to deny the presence of quantity in English verse. Abdy Williams is typical of this attitude when he strikes out wildly with:

> "True metre therefore only exists in music at the present day. Verse is ruled entirely by accented and unaccented, or better, strong and weak syllables". (8)

Off-hand I think that few would care to assert that poets are usually uninterested in the actual time their words take, but only in the accents which guide the beat and the sense. And yet that is what this amounts to.

Anyway with these people the symbols for "long" and "short" become useful as a guide to accent, transforming themselves into "strong" and "weak". If you are interested in accent alone there

(8) The Rhythm of Song. P.8.

is really no necessity in indicating the weak syllables besides the strong. I suspect that this apparent superfluity has some basis in fact by the unconscious notion which this point of view holds, viz that perhaps after all quantity has a place. And the jog-trot degradation of beating out "iambic pentameter" acknowledges quantity (in the wrong way, of course) to an unbelievable extent.

The main thing which seduces readers to a denial of quantity is that in English accent is not wedded indissolubly to length. Length in Greek verse seems to have been invariably accompanied by the ictus, usually assisted by a rise in pitch of the notes concerned. This ictus or stress was apparently much less distinctive as to actual force used than in English. A similar comparison exists I suppose between French and English.(9) Anyway in English, although the ictus may be marked by a combination of the three conditions of duration, force and pitch, this is by no means always the case. Being more heavy in its accents English verse does not require duration and pitch to point out rhythm alone. This means in effect that the accented part of the foot can be equal to and even in some cases shorter than the unaccented part. All sorts of subtle and variable relationships can exist within the foot so long as the accent is preserved. The language, at least now, is not one of fixed syllable or sound lengths. The

(9) The spondee, for example, which was more or less a smooth foot in Greek (the two parts being equal in stress) has in English an invariable accent, real or imaginary.

same syllable may have at one time a completely different length and significance than at another. It depends on its companions and on the meaning and method of the writer. But it must at once be obvious that if the author's meaning and method are involved in quantity it is not a thing to be set aside or left to the crude and indefinite mercies of accent alone. What is wanted is a system of scansion that will combine the marking of accent, the rhythmic movement of a verse, with the ability to evaluate accurately(10) the relationship in quantity of the syllables within the foot. The musical symbols are highly efficient for the one: I will attempt to prove that these, together with barring, are a highly desirable method for the other. So long as the old classical system of "longs" and "shorts", which no one knows whether to regard as signs of accent or quantity and which are inefficient, because confused, and because length does not mean accent necessarily,--so long as this system is preferred, prosody will remain on an unrealistic useless plane.

(10) Musical/quantity symbols are of course not subtle enough to be infallible.

Note: Plunket Greene, in his book "Interpretation in Song" makes much of the limitations of music to reproduce the subtleties of quantity and accent. I think he underestimates their pliability; yet the point exists, that a mere handful of lengths and time signatures cannot possibly reproduce infallibly the nature of verse.

MUSICAL ACCENTUATION AND BARRING: THE EVEN BEAT

Lanier, of all people, in the "Science of English Verse" asserts that "neither the bar-line nor the accent is essential to rhythm".(1) This, I suspect, has much more connection with the nature of Greek verse than with English. In the Greek, once the poet had decided on the syllabic number and length of his foot, he generally adhered to it throughout the line and section. The fact that only simple ratios of quantity existed between the syllables made it still easier to preserve the rhythm with little or no "accent", although a felt stress, which might be imaginary, occurred with regularity. That this stress coincided usually with quantity and pitch longer and higher relatively than its surroundings, made it less necessary to make the stress with any degree of punched insistence.

This was partly the reason that the Greeks apparently found it possible to measure from the weak part of the foot to the following weak part. This is one of the things that has been preserved in English in a false sense of classical reverence, false because the conditions are entirely different.(2) Even in regular syllabic verse in English, that is verse that has an unvarying number of syllables in each foot, measuring from thesis to thesis is a difficult, if not an impossible task, mainly owing to the fact that English accents are much stronger than say in the romance languages.

(1) p. 103.
(2) The confused road of thesis and arsis seems to have been as follows. In Greek prosody the arsis(airo-lift) was the weak part of the foot, the unaccented portion. The thesis(tithemi-place) was the accented portion. The Romans, realizing that their language was less vocalic, less melodic than the Greek, reversed the meaning of the terms thesis and arsis, having the stress(ictus) fall on the arsis. The English prosodical system kept this designation but, in the iambic and anapaestic rhythms, fell down before the Greek idea of measuring from off-beat to off-beat.

Take for example the first two lines of Robert Bridges' poem "Thou didst delight my eyes":

> "Thou didst delight my eyes:
> Yet who am I?"

We have seen the uselessness of scanning these two lines in any such way as:

◡ — ◡ — ◡ —
◡ — ◡ —

because the long sign(—) has ceased to have any necessary connection with length, while attracting quantity to itself unnaturally by its name. If you introduce the vertical lines marking the feet thus:

| ◡ — | ◡ — | ◡ — |
| ◡ — | ◡ — |

it makes the matter worse because it begins to look like barring, and in this connection introduces a wholly unthough-of effect of syncopation. If you go one step further and use musical value symbols thus:

[handwritten musical note-value symbols in bars]

you can hardly escape the effect of syncopation(a misplaced beat), unless of course you give the short syllable the accent, turning it into trochaic rhythm, since length, in English verse, does not by any means invariably coexist with accent.

An argument might be made that it would be quite possible to use a system like the one I have used in these lines so long as one didn't keep thinking of music. After all a difference must be shown between a troachic and an iambic line! But there seems to me no reason for a separation of two systems that have

so many things, essential things, in common. An initial upbeat, for instance, is often the only difference between a trochaic and an iambic line. MacColl makes an example to this effect in the two lines:

"And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies"

and:

"Swims or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies"

Obviously the relationship is not:

"And swims,| or sinks,| or wades,| or creeps,| or flies |
Swims or | sinks,or | wades,or | creeps,or | flies. "|

As he says, "The accents are not displaced; trochees do not take the place of iambs but of the latent trochees already there." The whole point is that in these two lines the accents coincide: so that the best thing would be to have these accents occur at the beginning of the bar, measure or foot, or whatever you choose to call it. What difference there was in the upbeat "and" would be indicated in the spring of the eighth note value before the barline. The notion, which Saintsbury had, that the barline constitutes some check or pause to the movement of the verse, must of course be got rid of. The spring of the iambic measure(which was derived from a Greek dance step) is conveyed, at least to a musician, much more satisfactorily by the barline separation than without it. Certainly the anapaests at the beginning of Mozart's G. Minor Symphony:

lose none of their impetus by being cut by the bar-line, especially when clarified by phrasing marks. They simply can't be conceived as:

etc

which is the musical equivalent of the old type of measurement.

The superiority of the musical barring system applied to verse scansion becomes obvious when it is decided to recognize the irregular syllabic nature of English verse and the necessity for an even beat. Hardly any poetry in English is consistently regular as to the number of syllables in a foot. Dryden and Pope in their more formal moments generally adhered to a syllabic theory which forbade any change in the number of syllables to a foot while a certain rhythm was being maintained. Even they, however, in an extensive use of what is called "trochaic substitution" showed they were not adamant on this point.

Poets themselves, when they think consciously about theory at all, have almost invariably recognized the necessity for a varying number of syllables in a foot. Anyone who has had the good fortune to learn nursery rhymes should never have asserted the contrary. In this connection to compare the two lines:

"Now was not this a dainty dish to set before a king"

which is regular, and:

"By came a blackbird, and nipt off her nose".

is very instructive. It is generally our latter-day critics who have wanted to be strict. Saintsbury has an unfortunate time with this scansion because he so often feels in a regular mood. Bridges the poet is often very free. Bridges the theorist goes to the most abnormal lengths to explain Milton's irregular lines away by the device of elision. Even Gascoigne, in a neat and bridled time,

knew better than that. In a refreshing bit on Chaucer:

> " yet beyng redde by one that hath understanding, the longest verse and that which hath most syllables in it, will fall (to the eare) correspondent unto that which hath fewest syllables in it", (4)

he senses the whole matter.

But academic stuffiness, during the nineteenth century until near our own day, was never more evident than in the field of prosody. Hopkins wasted many unnecessary hours fighting an enemy who wasn't really there. I suspect that a musical regularity of beat, with a varying number of syllables in the feet, was what he was after in his revolt against the academic prosodic tradition. What he did not recognize was that his enemies were the critics, not the poets. He of course realized the possibilities of an even beat in poetry, regularizing feet of varying numbers of syllables. (5) But infatuated with the new freedom, he soon did away with that even beat, except in so far as it was to be kept in mind when reading "sprung" verse. If he had known more about musical measure he might have restrained himself further; (6) he did not recognize the difficulties of a long-~~continued~~ sustained process of doing one thing seriously and thinking of another. The extravagance known as "sprung rhythm", consequently, opened the way for a dangerous freedom. (7) His poems, which at the moment have an enormous influence, are,

(4) Certayn Notes of Instruction
(5) There is of course a limit to the number of syllables that may be contained in one foot.
(6) His naive attempts at song-writing reveal his ignorance of this subject.
(7) Latterly, of course, he put himself into the jaws of the enemy when he decided that the time could be marked off merely conceptually.

naturally enough, extremely hard to set. And incidentally this irregularity of beat is one of the reasons that make the poetry of his disciples, people like Day Lewis, Spender and others, very unpopular with songwriters, as we shall see later. Irregular rhythm is not a new thing in music, but is has not reached a stage (and I doubt if it will ever) where the time varies continually from bar to bar.

As an illustration of the superiority of musical barring and accentuation in scansion and the necessity for an even beat in poetry take the matter of what is usually called "troachic substitution". Even the most regular of poets, Dryden or Pope, used this device with freedom. In Thomas Hardy's "Cawrey Clavel" which has mostly an even iambic beat, there is the stanza which begins:

> "What will you do when Charley's seen
> Dew-beating down this way?"

Now according to the academic system of prosodic scanning, the measurement would be:

> "What will you do when Charley's seen
> Dew-beating down this way?"

or, in musical values: etc.

This is called troachic substitution, in which a foot of troachic rhythm is substituted for the usual iambic. This remains in the realm of theory, however, for it has norelation to what is actually read, as a trial with these values will reveal. The fault lies partly of course, in the absurd arrangement of iambic measure as instead of etc, an arrangement which is almost bound(especially in this case) to give an effect of syncopation

where no syncopation exists. An infinitely more realistic scansion would be, then,:

> "What will you do when Charley's seen
> etc.

which preserves the even beat, gives accents where they are wanted, and gives due recognition to the irregularity of the opening.

Similarly, in the A. E. Housman stanza:

> "So then the summer fields about
> Till rainy days began,
> Rose Harland on her Sundays out
> Walked with the better man." (8)

the last line used to be scanned (and may be now):

Here instead of shoving the short syllables into the first foot, equal with the first (as in the previous example) the best plan is to shorten them thus:

or thus:

For ordinary purposes of verse scansion this bar-a-foot method is sufficient, and infinitely superior both in pliability and accuracy to the old quantitative or accentual system because it brings them together.

But as Lanier points out, the first beat in a musical bar is often too strong for some beats in verse. Therefore if you wish to set verse accurately to music, or even if a more sensitive scansion alone is wanted, it may be necessary to put two or more metrical units (hitherto called feet) into a single bar, if a

(8) "This Time of Year" - Last Poems.

jog-trot effect is to be avoided. The method often used in song is to group the feet around beats (or main beats) rather than around bars. That is, although the bar-a-foot method may be very useful in simple measurment, the other developed process, which is what is generally used in song, is a more precise and yet more pliable way of indicating the exact movement of verse.[9] For example if you scan the Bridges' lines:

> "Thou didst delight my eyes
> Yet who am I".

thus:

it is obvious that, among other faults[10] the strong beats are too insistent and monotonous. It would be better, in this case at any rate, to make the time 6/8 instead of 3/8, avoiding the jog-trot of a triple rhythm and yet preserving the movement and flow of the verse.

My remarks about even beat, varying ratios and varying numbers of syllables in a foot, and the extended use of the bar as a measurement to more than one foot, may be illustrated by a passage from Peter Warlock's "The Curlew", a cycle of four songs to poems of W. B. Yeats. It would be difficult to scan the line:

> "Passion dimm'd eyes and long heavy hair that was shaken
> out over my breast".

according to the pseudo-classical method. Yet it reads beautifully. There are seven heavy beats, it is true, but too many loose syllables hanging about to be fitted into them in simple ratios.

(9) So far as is possible in the "elongated" manner of song. I will examine this point further in the section, the "Aesthetics of Song".

(10) Which I will examine in the sections on end pauses and English verse rhythms.

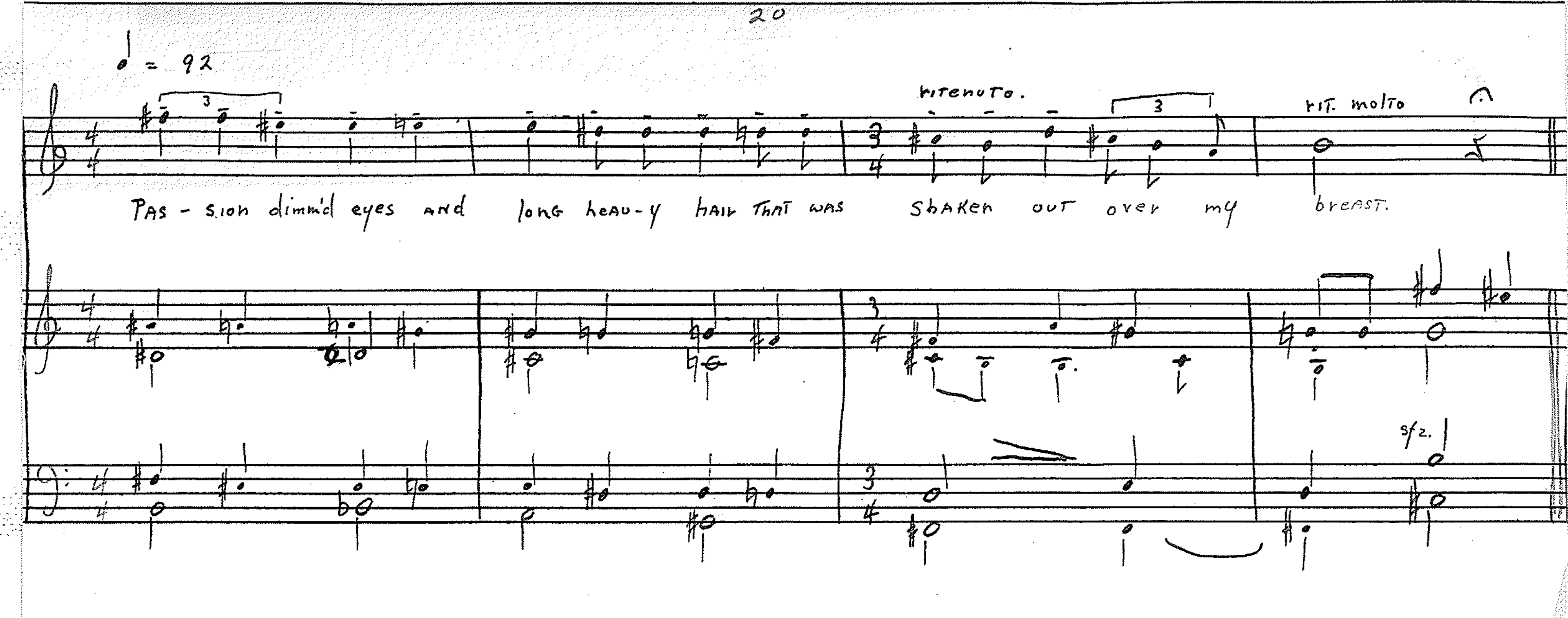
Warlock's setting scans the lines thus:

4/4 "Pas-sion dimm'd eyes and long heav-y hair that was
3/4 shaken out over my breast.

In the first foot the "pas" gets the accent but the other two syllables are equal.[11] The next foot has only two syllables, the next three and the next three. But these last two, it will be noticed, are not the same in ratio as foot one. It is in formalizing subtleties of this kind that music is superior. The next foot is more interesting still. Here accent does not rule quantity and yet there is no syncopation. The second last foot, like the first, is even and yet not so long. It is this broad opening foot that gives that curious ecstatic lift to the line. Strictly, of course, this scansion does not preserve an actual even beat as there is, formally, a slight hurrying at the last with the change from duple[12] to triple time. However, the composer has marked a ritenuto at the 3/4 measure which of course offsets the other. Here as elsewhere Warlock has tried to give his rubato a formal shape, that is to express it in actual musical values. The whole passage is one of the loveliest in contemporary song literature.

(12) It may seem strange that I call quadruple(4/4) duple. Actually, however, 4/4 with its two accents is being increasingly recognized as a duple movement, especially, I might say, in song, where two feet may be enclosed within a single bar. Incidentally a point I will make (in English Verse Rhythms) regarding the translation of iambic measure into 2/4 or 4/4 time has a place here.

(11) With qualifications that I will make regarding length and accent in the section on English verse rhythms.



It may be asserted that this method of syllabic manipulation and varying ratios leaves the way open for the scansion of any verses, good or bad, or even prose. But if the lines can be made to scan only by putting in unnatural pauses which are not essential or justifiable, or by putting stresses on syllables that will not bear them, then nothing can save them.

A NOTE AND QUALIFICATION REGARDING THE TRANSLATION OF IAMBIC MEASURE INTO MUSICAL SYMBOLS

As Lanier points out, the English have a passion for triple rhythm, 3/8, 3/4, or its duple relative, 6/8. It is instructive to note that this is undeniably true of English music, of which one of the most attractive features is the lift given to the phrasing by the accentuation of the off-beats in this time. Contrary to what might be expected, however, it is not necessary to translate a triple rhythm in verse (iambic, say) into a similar one in music when setting. The reason for this is the peculiar nature of duple time, e.g., 2/4 and 4/4. On paper these of course mean two or four beats in a bar and a quarter note getting one beat. In 2/4 time the main accent comes on one, and in 4/4 there are two accents, the main one at the first and a secondary one on three. In practice however the accents give length to these beats and thus the second(in 2/4) and the second and fourth(in 4/4) tend to be shortened and subdued.

Take for example in an experimental setting the two Bridges' lines:

"Thou didst delight my eyes:
Yet who am I?"

The classical method of scansion would call this iambic with three feet in the first line and two in the second. It would, I suppose, even now be classed as triple in movement. But translated

(1) The old method of scansion, besides being a far too easy way of indicating comparitive lengths, leaves completely out of account the pauses at the ends of the lines, a point to be examined later. Presumably a scansion:

˘ ¯ ˘ ¯ ˘ ¯
Thou didst delight my eyes
˘ ¯ ˘ ¯
Yet who am I?

presupposes a reading which would approximate in time value to:

Thou didst delight my eyes Yet who am I?

No, one would read it like this.

into a triple rhythm in musical signs it tends to create an undesirable jog-trot effect, completely contrary to the nature of the verse. If, instead, a 2/4 measure is used, the fact, as I have said, that the accent givento the first beat lends a subtle lengthening to the first syllable in the bar and that this subdues the second, might result in a much more realistic conception of the movement. Further, in accordance with the point I made in the previous section, if the time were made 4/4, avoiding a too-steady heavy beat, the result would be even better. The point is, that with a musical person who had the performance of 4/4 time in mind, this scansion would tend to approximate more closely to an actual reading than the other.

For example, in my setting of "Thou didst delight my eyes", I found that the desired effect was much easier to produce with a 4/4 time-signature than with an obvious 3/4 or 6/4. In this poem especially it seemed to me that the formal iambic measure was more deceiving than usual. The "thou" in the first line demanded more length than could be given it by a 1:3 ratio, and the broad ecstatic mood of the poem asked for a more sustained line. I found, therefore, that the metrical scansion of these two lines into

"Thou didst delight my eyes
Yet who am I?"

with the nuances of valuation which this time suggests, gives at least an adequate idea of the movement. And in the accompaniment bass, I wrote a 6/4 restless figure which modified the stiff 4/4 considerably. All this has interesting connotations for English prosody in general.

THE AESTHETICS OF SONG

Introduction

"That which is common to poetry and music is not a metaphysical figment. It may often elude analysis; but at present it has hardly been investigated scientifically. It ought to be possible to find out a great deal more about it, and to find out a great deal more about what constitutes the "poetical" quality--to use the epithet in a familiar if not very accurate sense--of musical interpretation, for these things are problems of actual physical sound." (1)

In consideration of the above statement, which states as well as may be the practical problem of the aesthetics of song, I have decided to preface this section with a short treatment, first, of the actual ways in which poetic devices have been transferred to the song medium, and secondly, of what musical device has been able to bring of its own to the relationship. I hope that by this method of approach the perhaps excessively theoretical discussion which follows will stand up better than it would alone. In other words however unsuccessful the explanation, if it can be shown the thing has been done, that would be something. And that explanation, though inept, is a start thus.

(1) E. J. Dent-- Terpander or Music and the Future, P. 29.

ENGLISH VERSE DEVICES MIRRORED IN SONG.

There are many devices of English speech which will not be mentioned in this section. Some of them, such as vocalic assonance, agreement of consonants other than initial, are rare enough to be ignored in a short treatment such as this, even if I could not say that, as far as I have been able to discover, they haven't much point in this connection. On others I simply haven't gathered enough data to say anything. A few, such as trochaic substitution and comparitive syllabic length, I have already treated. With these qualifications I will pursue a course of examination of the simpler English verse devices only.

(a) Punctuation.

There can be, obviously, no hard and fast rules about the musical delinietion of such a matter as punctuation, which in itself is usually variable of interpretation. But simple things can be suggested. Lanier spoke of the question as being inverisbly the rise of a fourth, but taking into consideration the different forms and expression of a question, it is obvious that this is by no means fixed. The difference, for example, between a rhetorical and a direct question is enough to upset this statement.

Periods and semi-colons, even commas, quite often lead to cadences. From the Roman Catholic chant(plainsong) Lanier discovers that such an interval as A to G often indicates a comma, A to B a semicolon and A to E a stop. But however effective these may be, the only place they might likely be fixed is in academic music examinations.

Exclamations, similarly, may often lead to a sudden break in the proceedings. There are, however, cleverer ways than this. In Thomas Hardy's "Great Things" occur the lines:

"Sweet cyder is a great thing,
A great thing to me,
Spinning down to Weymouth town
By Ridgeway thirstily,
And maid and mistress summoning
Who tend the hostelry:
O cyder is a great thing
A great thing to me! "

There is a prevailing four and three foot line, with the latter extending into four foot by pause. In line seven John Ireland's setting brings the "O" in breathlessly before the time and then extends it so that it fits the prevailing rhythm. The effect is entrancing.

4/4
And maid & mistress summoning Who tend the hostel-ry
O cyder is etc.

And for the Walter de la Mare verse ("Down-adown-Derry") in the stanza which opens:

"And lo! when like roses
The clouds of the sun
Faded at dusk--

after a stanza ending:

"Down-adown-derry
Sang the Fairy of Doone
Piercing the heart
Of sweet Annie Maroon."

Harry Farjeon interpolates a long pause after a fortissimo passage, then brings a soprano up to a long high C on "lo!".

(b) Alliteration

This device is usually effective enough by itself without any further pointing out by the music. It is important, however, that it be not impeded and that the alliteration, as in the poetry, come on strong beats. For instance in Moira O'Neills' poem "The Fairy Lough", which has been superbly set by Stanford (1901) the line:

"When the sun goes down at seven"

has been fitted as ——an arrangement which gives the sibilants ample time to insinuate themselves. In this connection Vaughan Williams' setting of the Seumas O'Sullivan line:

"It is a long low whispering voice that fills"

is interesting. He scans it thus:

(c) Rhyme

As far as I have been able to discover rhyme, in itself, cannot have any regularized counterpart in musical device. It may seem to be clinched in certain ways, but these are not necessary as a rule. With approximate or false rhyme the situation is a little different. Here the words or phrases may seem to match in accordance with their situation and yet a tiny difference emphasize the jar. For instance, in Benjamin Britten's setting of W. H. Auden's "Now the leaves are falling fast"(2) at the lines:

"Arms raised stiffly to reprove
Infalse attitudes of love."

(2) Look, Stranger -1936.

he gives the same musical phrase to each line, but harmonizes them differently in the accompaniment, wrenching the first ending with a discord.

(d) Parenthethis

As in so many other cases there is no formal device for indicating parenthethis. A few examples might be useful in showing a variety of approaches to this problem. In Arthur Benjamin's setting of "He is the Lonely Greatness"(words by Madeleine Caron Rock,) he reveals the parenthethis at:

" He is the lonely greatness of the world
(His eyes are dim)

by a change of time and accent. He has the tenors and basses (it is for five-part chorus) announce the first line in octaves, holding the last word while the three top parts creep in with the next line pianissimo. A similar solution is found by Herbert Howells in an a cappella version of Austin Dobson's "Before me, Careless lying". At the lines:

"Nay, Child(I say) I know them,
There's little need to show them!"

he buries the "(I say)" in a couple of parts while the rest carry on. This is almost better than you could imagine it read.

Finally take Holst's setting of Humbert Wolfe's "Persephone". The lines:

"Again they are singing
(O will you not heed them?)
With none now to answer,
And none to lead them.

are skilfully managed. At the parenthethis an entirely new strain enters, on an exalted lyrical plane, separating the line sufficiently from its companions.

(e) Refrain

As this device comes from music in the first place it would not be hard to imagine its effective use in this medium. Repetition is one of music's most characteristic elements. In D. G. Rossetti's "My Father's Close", the lines:

"(Fly away O my heart away!)"

keep recurring in parenthethis as a sort of chorus. In Clifton Parker's setting they are quite naturally given the same or an approximate strain each time they enter. What is even more interesting is that this strain keeps bouncing back in the piano introduction, in the interludes, and at the end. This melodic repetition is the method also followed by such a piece as Percy Judd's setting of Hilaire Belloc's rollicking carol "A while ago it came to pass", where the lines:

"(Merry we carol it all the day)"

and: "(Heart be happy and carol be gay,
In spite of the price of hay)".

and similar refrains, are usually put on the same melody.

(f) Syncopation.

Egerton Smith, though he wrongly calls syncopation counterpoint, gives it a legitimate place in verse structure. The counterpoint of two rhythms, that is when you are pursuing one rhythm contrary to the prevailing one set up by the time-signature, is called in music syncopation. Counterpoint is the interplay of two or more melodic lines. However, here is what he says:

> "Variation in the external concomitants of the ideal metrical ictus need not vitiate the mental rhythm and may have an actual aesthetic value."

In music this is of course an old game. Nevertheless, examine what a modern composer has been able to do with its poetic counterpart. In Edith Sitwell's poem "Old Sir Faulk" occur the lines:

> "And stalk with a gun
> The reynard-coloured sun
> Among the pheasant-feathered corn
> The unicorn has torn, forlorn the
> Smock-faced sheep
> Sit
>   And
>   Sleep.

The prevailing rhythm here is iambic, evidenced by that o-so-regular third line, which in Wm. Walton's brilliant setting ("nello stile americano") is emphasized by a strongly accented [rhythm] followed by a [rhythm] movement. But at "smock-faced sheep" he changes to the desired syncopation, an effect which is not possible unless the original rhythm is at the back of your mind. The prosody of the setting in this passage is as follows:

4/4
And stalk with a gun | The reynard-coloured sun, A-
mong the pheasant-feathered corn the unicorn has torn, forlorn the
smock faced sheep | Sit - and weep.

The speed of the passage, both in original and in the setting, is very quick owing to the great number of light syllables.

(g) <u>End-Pause: The Formal Recognition of Secondary Rhythm</u>

One of the main difficulties in setting poems to music has been the realization that the typographical arrangement was to suffer. One could retort to this, of course, with the argument that

verse arrangement is not any more obvious than a musical setting of it is, when the poem is read. And the same tricks that might be used to make this arrangement obvious by indirect means would apply. But the fact remains that verse is ever so much more often read out of a book than music. In other words music is far more often performed. This of course makes it more necessary that the typographical arrangement become clear in performance.

Incidentally, as far as the printing is concerned, there is really no reason why a musical counterpart of a poem could not be arranged like the verse, though a richness of texture and symbol would make it a difficult task.

Anyway, just as in reading poetry it is necessary to point out the line(and you are sometimes helped in this by rhyme and extra-accentuation) so as to prevent it turning into prose, so it is equally necessary in a similar musical performance. The secondary rhythm must be preserved. And to this end the whole formalized machinery of musical device pulls its weight with you.[4]

If it is true, moreover, that secondary rhythm has lately been treated by the poets with more and more freedom(and this at least can be argued), it becomes even more necessary, in settings, to assist by formal musical device an arrangement which, though

(4) The fact that musical device is so formalized is a decided deterrent to its bothering with prose, which although rhythmic, is so irregular as to lead to a formlessness in the musical expression when so treated. Or, on the other hand, it becomes in the process itself unnaturally formalized and so loses its nature. The former process plagues a long-continued recitative which soon results in musical boredom. I am willing to admit, however, that there may be possibilities in a kind of prose music, which, using different methods from traditional musical expression, approximates to the aura of prose.

important to the poet, has not been artificially set. Similarly the syllabic theory and practice of verse, which tightens up the line considerably, reveals secondary rhythm with comparative ease. But with the abandonment of this formality the end-of-line pause and the separation of lines must come to the ear by different means. Finally the gradual loosening of the ties that bound the sense pause and the metrical pause results in the same problem.

Because of all these reasons, from the original formality to the necessity of preserving a shred of that formality, musical settings of poetry have usually avoided a loose freedom. If a composer were setting the Pope lines:

> "Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs
> Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
> There stands a structure of majestic frame,
> Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name."

he would read them as six-foot lines rather than five-foot, taking into consideration the pause of the foot at the end of each line. It is altogether likely that this pause should not be a whole foot, yet it is undeniably better to formalize it in this way than to ignore the pause, and the secondary rhythm, altogether. It must be added, of course, that in accordance with musical time signatures, it is easier to manage a six-foot than a five-foot line. In other words it is harder to manage a five or a two-and-a-half bar phrase than a six or a three. By the very nature of formal musical construction it is difficult, effectively, to have true half-bars hanging about. So they are usually extended both on the grounds of symmetry and of recognition of the end pause. In Ivor Gurney's

setting of Francis Ledwidge's "Desire in Spring", for example, whose first two lines are:

> "I love the cradle-songs the mothers sing
> In lonely places where the twilight drops"

he puts it into 3/4 time, making the ordinary foot correspond to one beat. Its musical scansion is therefore:

3/4 [musical notation] etc

I love the cradle songs the moth-ers sing In lone-ly

We needn't worry at this point about the melisma on the last syllable of "cradle" and "mothers". Notice, however, the length of sing, which covers one and a half feet. And this in a line that could be taken as run-on.(5) This extra beat at the end of the line is rarely a rest alone as in Pope. But the gain of making the actual end syllable longer seems to me obviously greater than the loss, for the continuity is preserved through tone, and the secondary rhythm marked.(6)

Similarly a distich of alternating lines of four and three feet almost invariably develops into four and four, with a foot pause at the end of the second line. This is of course, the ballad measure which came out of the old fourteener, the Septenary. Usually it is formally preserved in a musical setting. For

(5) Incidentally, one of the best arguments in favor of the end-pause, is the convention that puts the short syllable of an iamb at the beginning instead of at the end of the (preceding) line.

(6) This prolongation of the last syllable might often be extended into the full value of the pause, if it weren't so necessary to take breath. It is of course obligatory to have frequent pauses for breath, even when merely reading verse. But in song they are still more necessary owing to the fact that tonal sound takes more breath than mere speech, also that the pace is usually much slower. This tends to a shorter time between pauses.

instance in my setting I have made the Housman lines:

"Oh, when I was in love with you
Then was I clean and brave"

into 4/4

Oh, when I was in love with you then
was I clean and brave And miles etc

Here the real and equalized formality of the ballad measure is kept by a straight progress through to "brave", and then a pause for a foot. But it is not only with set forms that this process of regularization goes on. With free verse settings, for instance, there is a tendency to pare or elaborate by pause or rest lines or phrases of differing length.

Most verse theorists maintain that if the end-pause is consistently ignored, or even often ignored, the secondary rhythm will collapse. This constitutes the problem of run-on lines which have been an ever-increasing feature of our verse methods since the eighteenth century bid for strict regularity. (7) Essentially, run-on lines indicate a clash of metrical and sense pauses, in which the sense is too often allowed precedence. It still seems to be a moot point whether run-on lines have the remnants of a pause remaining. Generally, I would say that some way of acknowledging that metrical pause and yet giving the desired movement and flow of sense, if it were found, would be ideal. This has been accomplished by son-writers in several ways. In his setting of Masefield's mystery play "The Coming of

(7) I leave out of account the recent neo-classical reaction against ~~verse libre~~ vers libre.

Christ", Holst treats the problem freely. The lines:

> "Men say Prometheus stole the holy fire
> And gave it to his fellows where they lay
> Under the rock, in winter, in the mire;
> And......

become, in musical prosody:

Men say Prometheus stole the holy fire, And gave it to his fellows where they lay Under the rock, in winter, in the mire And..... etc.

Here the stresses attract themselves to the beats, and there are four feet in a bar. The end of the lines are not marked by pauses as such but by accents on the initial syllable of the next line or by breaths. Much of this freedom of course can be put down to the character of the verse and its subject-matter, as an attempt is made to approximate to a medieval plainsong. It is "to be chanted freely", so we cannot grumble too much at the musical formlessness to which this undoubtedly leads.

Vaughan Williams also tries this method in his setting of Seumas O'Sullivan's "The Twilight People" where the lines;

> "It is a whisper among the hazel bushes;
> It is a long low whispering voice that fills
> With a sad music the bending and swaying rushes;
> It is a heartbeat deep in the quiet hills."

are treated thus:

It is a whisper a-mong the haz-el bu-shes It is a long low whispering voice that fills with a sad etc.

There is a regularity of beat here, but no regularity of musical form. It approaches the free chant of the minstrel. It happens to be effective enough here, because of the nature of the verse.(8) But it lacks musical form and couldn't be imitated as an approach to more formal verse.

Gustav Holst comes up against this problem in his treatments of Humbert Wolfe's free verse. Usually, therefore, he ignores end-pauses quite frequently, obviously feeling that the nature of the verse itself demands it. But whatever symmetry and secondary rhythm such lines as :

"Who lights the candle? Everyone
sleeps without candle all night, Son!" (9)

had before, they lose it now. It is significant that Wolfe does not use capital letters at the beginning of such lines as these. This problem may point to the essential weakness of free verse (which, according to Lowes, is attempting to explore the territory between prose and verse) in that it is apt to ignore one of the main feature of poetic construction, arrangement.

Usually, as I have tried to point out, the arrangement of run-on lines has been felt for by composers in other ways than by end-pause. For example in C. W. Orr's setting of Housman's "This Time of Year", he treats the run-on line:

"We needs must jangle, till at last
We fought and I was beat

thus:

3/4

We needs must jan-gle till at last We

fought and I was beat.

(8) As also in his setting of O'Sullivan's "The Piper"
(9) Journey's End.

Here the new line is marked by a high note and an accent on "fought", besides added length. But no pause is observed. Personally, I would like one, unless you are to leave yourself open to the charge that it is a fallacy to begin lines on an upbeat. Even a short pause would drive the short syllable on to the next line comfortably.

Quite often in lines that are almost run-on like John Masefield's:

"And merrily in the belfries
They rock and sway and hale" (10)

the new line can be indicated by a decided change of pitch, which gives the beat an extra accent. This is what John Ireland does in his setting.

Mordaunt Currie's "Love's Wisdom" opens thus:

"Wise is he, ah, wise is he,
And his eyes go searching me,
Search and search each secret nook
Of my heart with that keen look."

To give the end pause a place and at the same time to carry on the movement, Armstrong Gibbs scans the verse as the following, in his setting:

Search and search each se-cret nook of my heart with
that keen look.

I will have more to say of the poetic effects possible to a chorus as opposed to solo song. Here it is enough to notice one or two treatments of the run-on line in choral works. Armstrong Gibbs has made a superb three-part setting of Walter de la Mare's Song of Shadows". At the point:

(10) The Bells of San Marie.

"Frost on the windless casement weaves
A labyrinth of flowers"

this composer manages the run-on line by having the first soprano voice enter before the other two, thus achieving both the continuity and the subtle semblance of a pause.

1st soprano casement weaves A lab-y-rinth of flowers
2nd casement weaves A lab-y-rinth of flowers.
contralto -

In his "Dawn shall over Lethe break"(poem by Belloc) for four-part choir, he does just the opposite. At the point:

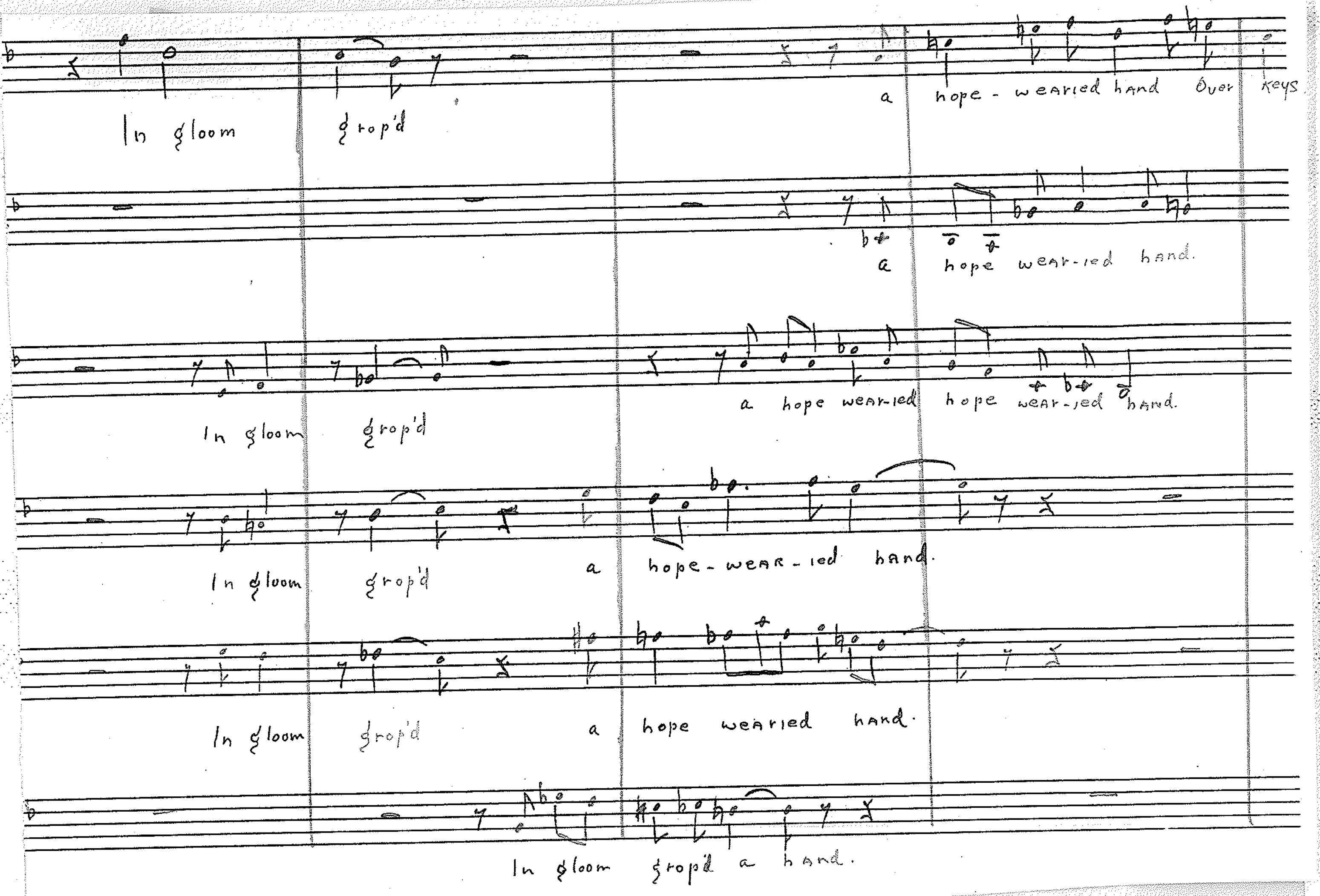
"And the quiet places keep
You that so divinely sleep"

he makes the top three voices (soprano, alto, and tenor) enter at once and the bass come in a beat later, thus achieving even more subtly the requisite drag.

Finally I cannot omit mention of a point in Clive Carey's setting of de la Mare's "The Ghost". The work is for a chorus of mixed voices. The lines:

"In gloom grop'd
A hope-wearied hand
Over keys, bolts and bars.

afford an excellent opportunity for ingenuity. I must quote the actual musical passage. The immediate point, the run-on line, is managed by one voice alone, the first soprano, which soars over the difficulty on to the next line, allowing for a comfortable start on the fresh strong beat of "keys". The other voices pause over the (metrically) unimportant transition. The cumulative rise of "A hope-wearied hand" in the other voices drives the line



over the top. Incidentally, notice the realistic syncopation of the treatment of "In gloom grop'd".

Feminine endings, in themselves, tend to override the end-stopped line. The movement is carried on dramatically. This extra syllable tends to fill the pause completely(especially when the short syllable of the iamb still exists at the beginning of the next line) and is itself one of the best arguments for the latent pause which it fills. Instead of allowing it to stand in its syllabic relationship, however, the idea of movement which this device engenders, can often be better

conveyed by a little formal manipulation. For example in a feminine run-on line like Housman's:

> "The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
> In fields where roses fade."

my setting lengthens the first syllable of "sleeping". This transferred pause and a little rubato conveyed the movement correctly to my ear.

2/4 The rose-lipt girls are sleep-ing, In fields where roses fade.

I must say that these dragging cadences sound less awkward in the setting, when formalized, than they do when read. But here as always interpretation and rubato can do as much to convey the movement and arrangement as many technical considerations. Yet a technical consideration can make it possible for an interpretation to have its way.

The use of an extra long syllable at the end of a line or at the beggining of the next is quite common in English verse. As in the case of feminine endings, which it includes, hypercatalectic verse tends to fill, at least to some extent, the natural pause. In any case it must be handled with ease, both in reading and in a musical setting. For an example take Robert Nichols' first two lines from "The Full Heart":

> "Alone on the shore in the pause of the night time
> I stand and I hear the long wind blow light":

"Time" of course is the extra syllable. In Warlock's fine setting, it is given a secondary stress, but lots of length, thus:

pause of the night time------.

(h) Mid-Line Pause--Caesura.

The caesura has long been a feature of English verse, although its progress has been from regularity to freedom. Gascoigne, for example, almost invariably marked the caesura by a comma after the fourth syllable.(11) In Pope caesuras are common enough to risk the generalization that he recognized them as regular. The dramatic writers of the Renaissance found it so definite that they felt they could insert extra syllables at that point, with impunity, provided that they were effective dramatically. Of course readers generally ignore these pauses, whether they come in the eighteenth century or in the twentieth. But song-composers have been more strict. For example in Muriel Herbert's setting of Yeat's "Lake Isle of Innisfree" she scans the opening line thus:

6/4

I will arise & go now, & go to Innisfree-- And a etc.

This is admittedly free, but the caesura is well managed. Similarly in Warlock's "The Curlew", to which I keep returning, occur the lines:

7/4 ... 3/4

The boughs have withered be-cause I have told them my dreams.

(i) Other Pauses.

As Egerton Smith points out pauses may occur in other places in the line besides what can be construed as caesura or end-pause. For instance the line:

"Fresh spring and summer and winter hoar"

(11) It is interesting to note that even here the comma has value as a rest, and some reality, a fact that nineteenth century poets too often forget.

can be scanned

This eliminates any misunderstanding of irregularity. Quite often it is the musician who has revealed this freedom and given it a meaning by providing for rests, or for extended tone, which music can do with impunity. Music has never, like verse underestimated the value of silence. For example in Humber Wolfe's "The Dream City" the third line of the group:

> "On a dream-hill we'll build our city
> And will build gates that have two keys--
> love to let in the vanquished, and pity
> to close the locks that shelter these."

can be scanned:

Holst has been much more sensitive than this to the compensatory pause, and yet does not ignore the rest, with:

love to let in the van-quished and pity

Similarly, in Clive Carey's setting of Walter de la Mare's "The Ghost", at the line:

"Over keys, bolts and bars."

the composer scans in one part (the first soprano):

Over keys, bolts and bars.

While in two others thus:

keys, bolts and bars.

In this way the silent periods of the foot, here marked in one case by commas, are given recognition.

(j) Tertiary Rhythm.

Tertiary Rhythm, of course, becomes evident in the relationship of groups larger than the line. The only way that I have discovered by which this becomes obvious in a solo musical setting is the spacing by which an interlude or an extended pause separates sections of the verse. If the sections themselves are more or less regular and equal to themselves similar interludes may clinch the matter.

Concerning this matter of tertiary rhythm, it is evident, when the unit is the stanza, that each stanza not only corresponds in metrical rhythm to its neighbors, but in inner sense-rhythm as well. Burns' verses are the supreme example of this. This point, of course, has a vital relationship to music. Whether the composer has decided to make the approach strophic(the same for each verse) or a variation of this, the whole system of musical device lends itself to the purpose in the most rewarding way. Repetition, in fact, is one of the most important musical devices, and jumps to use itself when it gets the chance, whether it is to point out some underlying unity, some recondite reference, to preserve the prevailing form, or even to join in the refrains. (12)

In the madrigal period the fact that the voices rarely come to end simultaneously except to enforce some well-defined close in the poetry might mean that a voice interlude might do the work of an instrumental one to point out the tertiary rhythm. And also nowadays when the contrapuntal part-song is coming back into favor.

(12) Nietzsche's statement that "Melody generates the poem out of itself by an ever-recurring process. The strophic form of the popular song points to the same phenomenon" is the aesthetic explanation of this.

Owing to the excessive use of repetition and melisma, however, the madrigalists rarely used more than one stanza. This of course, does not apply so much in the same medium today.

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It will have been noticed throughout this section that what music brings to a setting occupies itself with arrangement and form rather than texture. The texture, unless it is actually contradicted, speaks for itself. First, then, music tries to make up the things that are lost when a poem is taken from the printed page. If these can be reinforced without exaggeration it is all to the good. But the texture, apart from points of realism and the emotional "lift" that is given by the mere addition of tone, speaks for itself. What music can bring of its own is now to be considered.

MUSICAL DEVICES IN SONG

In these, also, it will be sufficient to examine only the main points, the most obvious ingenuities. The subject matter is enormous, and in almost every case I could multiply the examples I have given ad infinitum. As in the consideration of the verse devices the order is arbitrary and indicates no special importance in itself, except perhaps in the length I give each item.

(a) Phrasing.

I must mention musical phrasing and this seems the best place to do it. In purely instrumental works it indicates the shape and movement of a piece far more than do the formalities of bars and time-signatures. In song it adapts itself to the shaping of a verbal phrase. Quite often it is not indicated in the voice part but in the accompaniment. But it is something that might easily be emplo ed by the poet to indicate the movement of his verse. For example, to an inexperienced reader how much easier the line:

"To be, or not to be: that is the question"

would become if phrased thus:

"To be, or not to be; that is the question."

And with this there would be much less chance of the syllabic or pseudo-classical theory of verse structure interfering with reality.

(b) Realism.

Word painting is as old as music, abounds in the Troubadour

songs and in the madrigals, and has been a feature of song-writing from the beginnings to our time. It is surprising how the development of music has kept pace with the things which the particular civilization concerned wished to express. Modern harmony and colour, for example, is particularly useful in depicting, with just the right shade of subtlety and reticence, those psychological states in which we undoubtedly differ from our predecessors.

In a way, of course, and especially in song, everything has its illustrative aspect, but its forms may be simply external or subtly internal. I need remind no one of the simple realism of such lines as these, from Purcell's fifth welcome song to Charles II:

"The plot is displayed and the traitors, some flown
And some to Avernus by Justice thrown down"

where the last word pounces on a low D. Pitch, therefore, in following and emphasizing the natural rise and fall of the words can at times introduce an element of realism. Stanford, for example, in the superb setting of Moira O'Neill's poem "The Fairy Lough", to which I have referred, has the pathetic cry "Loughareema" proclaim itself in the rise of a minor third.

The rhythm chosen, both in the melody, as in the verse, and in the accompaniment, can be expressive of the basic idea of the poem. Purcell spoke of "dancing trochees" and "melting appogiaturas". But all this is more or less closely bound to the nature of the verse, and grows out of it. It is only occasionally, such as in Evelyn Sharpe's setting of Oscar Wilde's "Holy Week in Genoa",

that one part, here the accompaniment, takes on a rhythmic figure (♪♫ in 4/4) differing from the melodic line, but suggesting inescapably the aura of the words:

"I wandered through Scoglietto's for retreat."

Choice of medium is very important if the poetry is to have the desired effect. It was the terrible experience of hearing his "Lake Isle of Innisfree" sung by a choir of a thousand Boy Scouts, that for years set W. B. Yeats against song-writers in general. This kind of mistake isn't always made. Holst, for example, has set seven choruses from the Alcestis of Euripides, translated by Gilbert Murray, for voices in unison with harp and triple flue accompaniment. Here is subtle realism at the start, for both harp and flutes are almost the only modern instruments we know the Greeks tohave used, and harmony as such was unknown to them. And despite the fact that it is almost insurmountably difficult to prevent a male voice chorus from sounding like a male voice choir rehearsal, I feel his choice of this medium for George Meredith's "Dirge in Woods" to be eminently suitable. The point is that composers do think of these things and often achieve exciting realistic effects by them.

In the medium of the melody itself, apart from its rhythmic nature or suitability to the prosody of the poem, there is the question of its tonal suitability. This is almost ~~uncounted~~ unconnected with the superficial beauty or tasteful suitability of its melodic line. So much of modern English song, for example, is written to

melodies of a folk-song or modal flavor, simply because the poets are men like Housman and Hardy. But to set Auden or Spender this way would be an obvious mistake. In so far as the accompaniment grows out of the nature of the melody it must generally follow the harmonic structure suggested by that melody, although it may, within that, have discordant connotations of its own.

The resources of the accompanying instrument, usually a piano, are limitless in the elucidation or painting of verbal ideas. I am not referring to composers who have a spring song bird-carolling in every bar. But harmonically, melodically and contrapuntally, a piano can bring a wealth of emotional connotations and comments to a verbal phrase.

It can suggestan atmosphere at the beginning in a stroke. Consider for example the bare octave in bar one of Holst's setting of Humbert Wolfe's "In the Street of Lost Time". Just that and nothing more, and the mood is laid. It can prick the superficial meaning from a pathetic inane phrase, and reveal its real nature. It can underly the poem in its progress, ready to reinforce thinness or to bring in a necessary realism. Finally it can lay it quietly away in a postlude that continues the mood if not the action of the poem to the point where a contact with ordinary life is again possible. I will of course have more to say of this matter in the section on the aesthetics of song which follows.

Intimately connected with this subject of accompaniment, especially in solo song, is the matter of harmonic colour and realistic device. These devices are of course variable in effect,

just like words are in various connections and surroundings. That is to say, you can't dogmatize that an interval of a seventh brings this to mind or a bare fifth this, or a suspension that. They are general and very with their surroundings, and, of course, with the period in which they were written. A dominant seventh at one time was a radical discord; to us it would not be usually associated with painful situations. The chords of the seventh, eleventh and ninth are still, and especially since "Tristan", associated with love-longing. They are sensuous and pleasantly unsettled. Someone called Debussy's "Pelléas et Melisande" "a parade of ninths". Similarly the fall of a suspension on its resolution has comfortable connotations after pain. And so on. It would be useless to quote the innumerable examples of these devices, they are so many. The main thing to remember is that, however one talks of the glow of sixths and tenths, the yearning of sevenths and ninths and the bleakness of fifths, these are general terms, not particular and depend on their surroundings ever so much more than what they bring from themselves alone.

(c) Melisma.

"One syllable, one note" said Archbishop Cranmer, who was bothered, as a writer, by the contrapuntal ingenuities of his time, which raped words to the purposes of pure musical effect. Even Morley, in his "Plaine and Easie Introduction" theoretically deplored the use of one syllable over many notes, urging writers, when they felt more lyrical than the words could carry them, to use the "fa-las" and the "hey nony nos" of poetry's meaningless lyricism.

There is a situation, however, especially when used in moderation, where melisma can be employed with fine effect, and not too much jar to the rhythmical sense. It of course means that the word is lengthened out of its natural size, but in the circumstances, when the whole sensuous effect of the music has been to elongate and probe, the liberty seems scarcely noticeable. In Alec Rowley's lovely setting of Hilaire Belloc's "The Birds", for example, at the lines:

"Bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,
And bring my soul to Paradise".

he lengthens "soul" by a beat and a half, has it fall through a second and a fourth before entering "to". The method may just be to lengthen, as at the end the last syllable of "Paradise" dies away on tone to the cadence. A similar effect may be noticed in Benjamin Britten's setting of one of W. H. Auden's choruses from "The Dog beneath the Skin", where at the climax:

"Calmly till the morning break
Let him lie, then, gently wake".

"lie" is first of all long on a high G, then breaks into G with a new key beneath, preparing the way for a long dying fall in the accompaniment before ushering in the "then, gently wake". The length, the change and the accompaniment are all part of the strained melisma, and, in the circumstances must be regarded as legitimate.

The repetition of words or phrases or even lines of the poetry is also a form of melismatic treatment. This is often a compromise to musical form which demands repetition or at least

thrives on it, or perhaps on attempt to bring about a unity by a throw-back to the begin ing. This latter is often much better managed by the accompaniment. I will mention this point of clash

of ideals again in my essay on the aesthetics of song. The repetition of a word or phrase may not be so sacreligious as it sounds. Holst's liberty in this matter, when, in treating the Robert Bridges' lines:

> "Nor this the only time
> Thou shalt set love to rhyme"

he repeats the last phrase "set love to rhyme", can be excused on the grounds that it resembles the whispered mind repetition that fills the pause between stanzas.

(d) Change of Key.

Change of key or modulation is now almost a necessary device in any musical composition if monotony of effect is to be avoided. A change of temper in a poem can be approached by a gradual change of key. A sudden modulation can breathlessly point to a completely new idea and a chromatic rise in key can result in a new necessary tension. The opposites of course hold true, monotonality and a monotony of mood can be paired and the dying fall of a chromatic descent of key can be connected to a relieving and falling tension.

(e) Part Songs.

We have seenthe use to which contrapuntal method can be put in bridging the difficulties of end-pauses and run-on lines. It can be realized, too, to what point the part song can be made to serve the purposes of realism.

I will merely suggest what further can be done. Peter Warlock's setting of Robert Nichols' "The Full Heart" is a good point.

The restless(as if it hadn't made up its mind as to stress) quality of the poem, as well as its turgid heaviness, is matched in the music. That is to say the medium of the setting(for eight voices and soprano solo) sets one reading against another, in the differences requisite to produce a subtle unity in variety. Paradoxically, therefore, it produces a more settled and realistic reading than would be possible with the solo voice. At the word "bitter" for example, in the line:

"Long after I am dead, ended this bitter journey"

a suggestion both of shortness and accent(in one voice) and length (in three others) is given by the combined effect of the two.

ended this bitter journey

ended this bit-ter journey

ended this bit-ter journey

ended this bit-ter journey

Thus the contrapuntal reading, perhaps the ideal one, comes to light.

Further, dialogue in verse can be handled more realistically by this approach, and even, for certain effects, the sense of a new voice entering can be important. Stanzas can be overlapped if desirable, and harmonically, the part song can give colour and realistic effect. For my purpose, this is enough.

AN AESTHETIC OF SONG

According to its article in Grove's Dictionary song may be defined as " a shortmetrical composition, whose meaning is conveyed by the combined force of words and melody" (1) This implies, of course, the mixture of two arts, and, secondly, a collaboration. It immediately brings up the question of the relative importance of the two elements, the final justification and explanation of the act of their union, (2) and lastly, a consideration of whether a new art is emergent, or an old art weakened and falsified. I will attempt to examine all these points.

To the purist, naturally, song is anathema, as is opera, ballet and all forms of diversified entertainment. But when you come down to it, very few things in art are pure. "Pure poetry", despite George Moore, is either inferior or a myth. And just as you cannot expect an artist, any sort of artist, to live in a vacuum, untouched by the world, so you cannot expect him to remain inviolable to influences which other arts might bring, even though an acceptance of these influences might bring new elements into his work. It remains to be proven that the chosen two arts I am considering are sufficiently amenable to each other for elements of the one to mix with and be digested by the other.

The nineteenth century, the period, incidentally, in which song came into its real importance as a conscious art form, was very consciously occupied with the question of the mixture of the arts.

(1) Actually "by the combined force of words and music" would be better, since melody is common both to words and music, and this says nothing about the accompaniment.

(2) Technical elements in which I have dealt with earlier on.

Romanticism was not interested in practicalities or forms as they existed; it sought an ideal art, an ideal expression. Nietzsche would have found it in a new, a purer poetry. Schopenhauer thought that music contained the secret. Most of the aestheticians and theorists of the latter half of the century would at least have included music in the scheme, with poetry as a practical assistant. When Walter Pater announced that all the arts aspired towards the condition of music he sensed this tendency.

From mid-century, then, it was widely promulgated by German aestheticians and philosophers, with the possible exception of Nietzsche, that in the general search for an ideal art form or expression there were elements in music that were somehow sacrosanct. It was as vague as that. Words, natural objects even the inanimate material on which the sculptor moulds his idea, are bound, limited, by their necessary association with our ordinary lives. For the most part, music escapes this limitation; it can therefore exist without compromise. As Schopenhauer said: "That is why the effect of music is so much more powerful and penetrating than that of the other arts, for they speak only of shadows, but it speaks of the thing itself".(3) Music was "universalia ante rem", just as poetry was "universalia post rem", and the realities of ordinary life"universalia in rem". More vague, but obviously after the same pattern come things like this--"For, as we have said, music is distinguished from all the other arts by the fact that it is not a copy of the

(3) The World as Will and Idea, Bk III, Para. 52.

phenomenon, or more accurately, the adequate objectivity of the will, but is the direct copy of the will itself, and therefore represents the metaphysical of everything physical in the world, and the thing-in-itself of every phenomenon".(4) And unless the poet was willing, for the inarticulate best, to give up his own art completely, it is only one step from this to the belief that it would be wise for poetry to establish a connection with an art which had such lucky power to express the "infinite", the "best", towards which romantic art strove. This was partly the reason for the (rare) sympathetic attitude of the German poets of the period to the use of their poems for songs.

The question of the relative value of each of these two elements and the rewarding of the palm to music would be an extremely difficult matter to judge or justify. It must be obvious, insofar as natural sounds and their composers bear any relation to ordinary life at all, that nothing so divorced from natural experience as the "infinite" can usually be expected to emanate from their craftmanship. In fact the opposite view, which could hold poetry to be the plastic, perfect expression, and music the rough material or background aura out of which true art sprang, is equally tenable, as Nietzsche showed. Out of all this one thing seems certain, that although they may overlap to the extent of even having the same subject-matter, they either say different things about that subject-matter or they say it in such a different way that a differing effect is achieved.

Nietzsche did not believe in song as a conscious artificial form of art, but he said some interesting things about it. In

(4) The world as Will and Idea, Bk 1

his opinion poetry was the perfect, plastic art ("Apollonian") while music was non-plastic, variable ("Dionysian"). If the best poetry were perfection it should be inviolable and to add music to it was superfluous and degrading. The subsoil which music used had no place in true art. In his words:

> "The more subtle or powerful stirring up of that pleasure-and-displeasure-subsoil is in the realm of productive art the element which is inartistic in itself; indeed only its total exclusion makes the complete self-absorbtion and disinterested perception of the artist possible." (5)

To accept this one would have to agree that poetry, essentially, is capable of the expression of any kind of experience. To exclude the other arts thus, is obviously absurd. Likewise to name the musical part of a song as merely the work of a sensitive man not an artist,(6) puts absolute music, which is made of exactly the same material,(7) in the light of formless improvisation, whereas its tendency is precisely in the opposite direction. What is interesting in these two views, by two of the most important philosophers of the nineteenth century, is that they agree on the fact of the two spheres of experience, either complementary or evolutionary. Although, therefore, they might object to the possibility of an artistic union of these two elements, as did Nietzsche, neither of them, and this is important, would have said that either of the two elements was uninterested in, or uninfluenced by the other. To Nietzsche, poetry had grown to a plastic perfection out of the welter of experience in which music was still

(5) On Words and Music.
(6) "The postulate of the opera is a false belief concerning the artistic process, in fact, the idyllic belief that every sentient man is an artist"--The Birth of Tragedy--Nietzsche.
(7) Unless the skeleton of a song is consistent musically, it will never be satisfactory as a whole.

immersed. To Schopenhauer, the real world which was objectified by poetry could mingle and be coloured by tinctures of the "thing-in-itself" which was musical expression. Despite these underlying differences of opinion, then, it is agreed that poetry and music are complementary, of the same root, not antipathetic, warring.

Then there is the question of how far a collaboration in art can be justified. This partof the problem has at least a tradition to support it. In the folksong and in the Troubadour period poet and composer were indistinguishable. When it is impossible to separate the component parts, or to say where one begins and the other ends, it would be obviously wrong to try to do so. In other words it would be the merest foolishness to say a thing can't be or shouldn't be done when it has been done so well as to forbid analysis. That is the danger of judging scientifically before the event. That is the danger against which every aesthetician must earnestly guard himself.

However, it is when the poet and composer do become separate entities and begin to pursue their separate paths that the problem of collaboration asserts itself anew. One reason for this was that music began to discover its own form and to take a delight in it quite apart from its expressiveness as a sensitive rendering of the text it was using. Bound to this was an increasing worship of specialisation, the need for such specialization owing to the complication of the task of drawing together all threadsof life's experience, and the gradual increase of the intellectual element in poetry.

The drawing away can be observed even in the period from Wyatt and Surrey to say Donne. Whereas the poems in Totell's Miscellany were apparently all meant to be sung(although it was taken as such an ordinary procedure that it is hardly mentioned, and continually missed by students of our time) music in association with poetry becomes less and less important in the later Elizabethan period, until with Donne we can scarcely imagine it at all.(8) A sure sign that the relationship between poet and composer was becoming decadent and unnatural was the increasing poetic lip-service paid to the sister art and the increasing theoretical discussion of the problem. Richard Barnfield's famous sonnet and the fantastic embroidered panegyrics of the contemporaries of Purcell as to what poetry could do to music and what music could do to verse are stop-gapping hard. Theory, when the basic sympathy wasn't there, proved the real value of Wm. and Henry Lawes, as it did the Florentine operatic experimenters.

Poets generally, since their gradual withdrawal from a vital enlightened connection with musicians and musical activities, distrust a collaboration of this kind. If, like Lawrence Binyon, he confesses that he does not know what pitch means, this is an unfortunate blind alley. There is no more to be said. Likewise if the poet's knowledge of music is as inept and misunderstanding as was Hopkins' or Yeats' there is really no basis for argument. W. J. Turner, himself a music critic of uncommon ability, sees red on the subject of musical settings of good poetry, though characteristically, he neglects his reasons dreadfully. He is never so

(8) Thecontemporary settings of his work which do exist are not impressive.

dogmatic as when on this subject, partly, because I suppose that when one is a poet, and a good one, and one sees the things that are in poetry, one tends to feel, deep down, that to deal adequately with them would demand, finally, no less a person than oneself. This is not meant to be facetious, and, if accepted, points to a possible agreement despite the superficial objection. Hilaire Belloc comes to somewhat the same conclusion when, like Wagner, he thinks the poet should also be the composer. If the setting has been made by someone else

> "they have always found, I think, that the sound returning to them was insufficient and at odds with their demand." (9)

This would limit the field somewhat. Poet-composers are rare, especially those who were, unlike Ivor Gurney, interested in setting their own poetry. When you have mentioned Thomas Campion and Thomas Moore and perhaps Morley and of course Richard Wagner, the list is practially exhausted. Campion and Morley found it easy because at their time music could rape the words in ferocious counterpoint without a murmur from anybody. Thomas Moore's beautiful songs are as simple as folk songs and help us little with the necessary complexity of a modern problem. Richard Wagner was faced with the necessity, from the same artistic beliefs as Belloc on this problem, of writing his own libretti, which professedly, took their place in the general inspirational scheme. But, unfortunately, these are so much inferior to his musical work that they often take away from the general effect rather than adding to it. It seems impossible nowadays, with the complex sensibility which is necessary to evolve contemporary expression

(9) The Nature of Song- Radio Times.

in even one art, to extend ~~that~~ an equal proficiency and sensibility to another. To me, at least, it seems far more likely that the conditions which I have mentioned, conditions which make versatility almost a synonym for dilettantism, make it necessary for the composite work of song to be the work of two people so sympathetic in spirit, so alike in genre (and yet somehow incomplete) that they complement each other and set each other off. It was so in England before, when a technique of word-setting was not so conscious as to exclude the necessary imaginative elements. It is almost so again. Belloc, Yeats and Pound don't trust it because it seems to them "unnatural", which folksong wasn't. Yet in the association of a Debussy and a Maeterlinck, a Hardy and an Ireland, even a Britten and an Auden, there is a parallel to the healthy inevitability of a folksong's birth. And in the sense that their works are "unnatural" that is when the mind helps the imagination consciously, they share this quality with all works of art, just because they are works of art, and not of coincidence. Two qualities of such work aresolely contemporary, what our age and experimentation has added. The complexity of our times demands tha not all but only certain kinds of poetry are suitable for such treatment. Secondly, the enormous advance in poetic and musical device and the sophistication of taste makes it possible at times for technique itself to be a creation. For instance the placing of a word at a certain pitch, harmonically supported in a certain kind, to my ear at least can mean not merely the embellishment of poetry, or a certain kind of music, but something new, exciting

and entirely contemporary, as if new possibilities for expression had been released by the chromatic emancipation of key, the penetrating lyricism of contemporary verse, and the ready ebulliency of tone.

It may be asked at this point, "why bother with the aesthetic question or explanation of song? It is possible to get fully as much pleasure from a bad as from a good setting. Handel's fantastic rococo methods with words can be enjoyed as much as the most sensitive and discerning Wolf. When this is possible, why bother to try to set something else as the standard to which all must conform." This listener would also point out that a Schubert song, with everything wrong theoretically, can move one more than possibly the most sensitive modern English approach, which often proves no more than that the composer appreciates the words he has chosen. This is of course begging the question as he does not even mention the same composer. There are two answers to this objection. The first is that, given all things equal, (if this can be imagined), a setting which is sensitive to the words is relatively superior to one which is not. It must be obvious that if words bring anything to the song and they bring themselves, the relative completeness with which they are reproduced and the veracity with which they are handled adds up to a corresponding increase in the general value of the work. This, of course, as we have seen, must match in perfection a completeness and consistency of musical form at the same time. If then more were known about the actual things the two arts had in common there would be less danger in shocking the adherents of either, by a sacrifice of musical form or poetic effect. The crux of the matter is, I suppose, that when metrical law coincides with musical law, when pure sound approximates to articulate, significant sound, then the conditions are laid for a perfect setting. I am

going now to examine those elements which the two arts have in common and further, the ones that are more dangerous to bring together. The second answer to the question raised at the first of this paragraph is that, owing to its initial point, a thesis of this kind would more naturally concern itself with a form of art which meant a real union of poetry and music rather than one which merely used the other for its own convenience.

I have tried to show, in Section I of this thesis, how far, and in what particulars, verse metre, syllabic duration, and verse rhythms can be similar, and can fit, the similar elements in music. I also came to the conclusion that, so closely were they related that musical symbolism could be used for the formal analysis of verse. There is no need here, therefore, to go over these basic relationships, relationships which make it practically impossible to connect poetry in such a technical way with any other art than music.

What about pitch? Lanier, in the "Science of English Verse", says that speech contains a different set of scales than music. I think that one scale with variations would be less definite and more precise.

In between musical tune and speech tune is musical declamation, what recitative was striving for. More ideal theoretically (in the sense of accuracy) but much less beautiful so far in effect is "sprechstimme" and the expression of the jazz "torch-song". The smallest interval used in music was until recently the half-tone. Speech tunes, however, are made up of intervals much smaller

than this, from half-tones to ninth-tones, although the range used would be generally narrower. Recent experiments in music have tried to follow this lead, and quarter and sixth tone music has actually been composed and played on special instruments. Up until now, however, these experiments have had little influence on the main stream of music, especially in the realm of song, whose exponents tend to lag behind the results of technical experimentation in the other departments of the art. At times, however, Debussy's "Pelleas et Melisande" seems to be seeking this way out of a conventional formality, and the "sprechstimme" of Schonbergs "Pierrot Lunaire" definitely does. The jazz singer too has placed his foot along this path, although, of course he (or especially she) is not taken seriously.

The method here, in the improvisatory style of expression of the jazz lyric, illustrates a danger point. If the scale used in the singer's declamation is one differing in subtlety from the accompanying instruments, (and it usually is owing to the disgracefully diatonic basis of jazz) then there is a decided probability of the two systems of tonality clashing in the listener's ear. That is why poetry read, in the extremely formalized way of modern experiments, to a stylized musical accompaniment in the manner of Walton's "Facade",[10] is apt to engender an uncomfortable feeling of divided purposes in the hearer's mind. If the musical accompaniment is vague and general, such as in Harold Munro's London bookshop, this danger is less likely. But, on the other hand, where, as in quarter and sixth tone experimenters, the

10. Poems by Edith Sitwell.

system is of all of one piece, I should imagine that the possibilities of success are much more sure.

Under the present system of tonality, then, there are apt to be limitations which apply very definitely in song to subject-matter and method. It is likely that poems which have an obvious pitch scheme, with simple and pure relationships between the highs and lows of the emotional gamut, would be better suited to setting under that system than those in which the opposite were true. Lyrics which in the simplicity of their approach (which says of course nothing about the possible difficulty and high quality of their final effect) approximate to songs are ideal for this purpose. On the other hand the small, variable and subtle ~~and~~ emotional scale of celebral verse, is correspondingly difficult to manage in song, owing, as I have said, rather to a limitation of technique than to any constitutional incompatibility.

In either case the concomitants of intensity and tone-colour adapt themselves, with the skilful reading that one can expect, to the same ends. Up until recently, I might say, the verse-reader (if he is a good one) has had a distinct advantage over the singer in the production of tone-colour, mainly owing to the conventionalized tradition-bound system that has allowed and taught only a handful of "recognized" tone colours for a handful of emotional "effects". But this is no insurmountable obstacle and, as I have implied, applies not so much to the composer as to the singing-teachers, who occupies, at least in this country,

an unnatural and ridiculous position of judge in these matters. Indeed it is quite possible that tone itself, and its use in certain developed ways, may in fact lead to the converse becoming true, that a singer might find himself the easy winner in emotional effect.

It is in matters of form that we expect trouble in relation to this whole matter. And throughout an objective examination such as this, one must constantly bear in mind that one does not dogmatize too freely about what is or is not possible. One is so apt to judge on what has been done, without leaving room for a development in either section, a development that might lead to a new sense of values in the problem.

I mentioned before that up until now at least, the device of repetition has undoubtedly been more important in music than in poetry. If there is a feeling of the necessity of circumscribing this natural device because of the nature of the poem the composer happens to be setting, there is an uncomfortable sense of divided values and ideals. This is not to say, of course that repetition might not be a legitimate device in song just because it did not occur in the poetry that was being used. Indeed such a device might easily suggest the underlying unities of the poem in a fascinating way. But it is when the musical delight in repetition runs amuk and bends all things to its will that an absurd result might be reached so far as the poetic responsibilities were concerned. Even, then, a poem which might seem to lay itself open to repetition by a use of similar formal stanzas might be spoiled by a too obvious musical reworking of

the form. But then again modulation and a varying tone-colour might save what was thought to be lost.

In this problem, as ever, a sensitive handling of the accompaniment can accomplish wonders in giving formal musical requirements their due, underlying the poetic ones and unobtrusively fitting the clashes of ideals.

Besides the problem of pitch there is another point that tonality raises. If you write in a certain tonality, in a certain key, resolution and fulfillment has hitherto seemed to demand that at the end you come to rest in that key. Not only will you achieve unity by this connection with the beginning but everything that has happened in the meantime gains meaning and relation, like a house on a firm foundation. Now it is this apparent necessity of musical form that causes such annoyence in a poetry reader when confronted with a setting of some favorite poem. The whole effect of the poem may point to an indeterminate wispy aftermath and then suddenly comes that dominant tonic vulgarity with the inevitability and the tastelessness of the adjudicator's bell. Especially in this the case when there is no elaborate accompaniment to make the necessity less obtrusive. Grainger's superb four-part setting of Kipling's "The Running of Shindand" is utterly ruined by a tonic ending. So is Stanford's "The Fairy Lough" which I have mentioned before. Indications seem to be that composers of songs are taking a saner view of this matter and realizing the difference there may be in song from other musical forms in view of the entrance of a new art, with its new conditions, are

less loth to spoil a poetic effect that may be made. It is becoming realized that establishing the key in this vulgar way at the end is not the only method of preserving unity and musical meaning. And, as I have said before, an accompaniment which by its windings and evolutions leads us back gently to the normal world after such an aesthetic experience, can do this by a subtle technical progress from uncertainty, doubt, and questioning to the tonic centre. All poems do not demand such treatment, and these are especially easy to set, so far as this point is concerned. For example take Alice Meynell's poem "At Night".

> "Home, home from the horizon far and clear,
> Hither the soft wings sweep;
> Flocks of the memories of the days draw near
> The dovecote doors of sleep.
>
> O which are they that come through sweetest light
> Of all these homing birds?
> With which the straightest and the swiftest flight?
> Your words to me, your words."

This obviously demands a determined ending, even though the general mood of the poem may be vague and wistful, In Mabel Lovering's setting these things are observed.

It is the raising of such a point that leads to the conclusion, upôn further examination, that music is simpler in form, though not in texture, than poetry, especially within the small scope that is necessary in song. Its effects, such as this dominant-tonic business, and its obvious striving for unity, have tended to limit in some cases the effects of the verse. And also this tendency has had a link with the subject-matter chosen.

It is to be expected, therefore, that probably the most common type of poem chosen has been the "song", which in itself seems to demand a musical declamation. This type of lyric quite often employs the repetitive devices of music, refrains perhaps, and is usually short. As a rule, therefore, the matter of a reconciliation of the problem of form does not occur, as the poem has generally no serious architectonic quality. After this in preference comes the lyric proper, which, though it had through its name an initial relationship with music, has expanded in scope until it includes the most recondite and intellectual expression. Probably the most attractive lyrics from the song-composer's point of view are those in which merely a pathetic wisp of emotional value is suggested. They even be on the verge of inanity and banality by themselves, as shyly awkward as Hardy. Here a melody can be expressive to the full limit of its power, until the whole thing becomes lit by the violits and darks of musical device. It is true that a plain and even prosaic exterior can be the beginning of a moving poetry. And the exterior itself adds to the pathos of the effect. It can be so in song, where the pathetic quality engendered by the music in contact with a plain and simple subject can accomplish an effect which would be impossible with either alone.(11) It is not especially or even at all that the poetry is inept or second-rate. It may be rough, with the roughness of a great spirit, but it contains more than it displays.

(11) cf. Gerald Finzi's setting of Hardy's "Lizbie Browne".

The personal element in the lyric is admirably served by a tonal setting. It is much easier, indeed it is almost inevitable, to associate the singer with the words, in a way that a reading does not allow. This is so to such an extent that it has its limitations, as when we feel the absurdity of a female rendering of say, "Aedh wishes for the clothes of heaven".

Objective and philosophical lyrics are correspondingly more difficult to set. The melody must not be too expressive, as the sensuous personal element, in these cases, must not obtrude itself. The method is usually this. The melody takes on the character of a kind of idealized and elongated speech, while the accompaniment adopts the expressive and illustrative duties. But as the intellectual element becomes ever more apparent and the tonal progress more tortuous and subtle, the difficulties increase to such an extent that more is lost than gained. And the minute that virtuosity takes some of the attention to herself, the relationship that might be vital and natural has become theoretical and unpleasantly sophisticated.

One small point remains to be mentioned. Vocal tone has preferences in the arrangement of vowels and consonants that would not be considered by a mere reader. Vocal qualities are therefore necessary in the verse to be set. It is important, for instance, that the singer be allowed to open his mouth reasonably often. A good supply of open vowels and resonant consonants like "m" or "n" help the singer immeasurably. If the voice were a mechanical instrument and could be expected to improve these considerations would not arise. But there are

things it can and can't do. Whether you like them or not, "The minstrel boy to the war is gone" and " 'Tis the last rose of summer", whatever you may think of their poetic value, are effective in atleast a technical way. And verses like the first of "Two Songs" by Auden, which opens:

"Night covers up the rigid land
And ocean's quaking moor
And shadows with a tolerant hand
The ugly and the poor."

despite its high poetic value and its idealogical suitability for song, would be hard to set for its words. Thin hard consonents such as f, p. k. s, like thin short vowels, cause a contraction of the air passage as some point, or the closing of some vocal organ, which impoverishes the "body" of the sound. Unless this effect would be consistent with the desired expression, the poem must be abandoned.

An aesthetic of song, therefore, would revolve itself around the thesis, that if and when conditions are favorable (and with the limitations I have suggested this would be comparatively rare) a surprising and exciting union of poetry and music is possible, which adds so much, born of the particular talents of each element, that one can say, it adds to the extent of creating.

SECTION III

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN POETRY AND MUSIC IN ENGLAND

from 1880 TO THE PRESENT DAY - A SKETCH:

Introduction.

All the technical discussion that has gone before has of course a decided and vital relationship to what has been going on in England for the last fifty years, and especially since the turn of the century.

There have been many theories advanced for England's loss of leadership and vitality in music during the 18th and 19th centuries. Only those who had forgotten her glorious heritage of the 16th and 17th centuries dared to assert that the Englishman was fundamentally reserved and therefore unmusical (itself a shaky piece of logic). The advance in popularity of opera, a form of art, which England has always found delightful to listen to but difficult to make, has doubtless a place in this phenomenon. Opera was regarded as an entertainment and an amusement, not as a serious form of art--and in creative work the Englishman tends to be serious. If he is not indead earnest, he can't do anything, whereas the Italian or the Frenchman can pretend easily and delightfully, with no loss to his integrity. This reserve, then, with regard to the prevailing popularity, robbed English composers of a public, which (despite the highbrow suspicion of practicality) is still the surest method of destroying a school of creative artists.

Another reason for the decline can be traced to the ever

widening breach between poetry and music. There can be no doubt that the English musical genius is particularly strong when in association with words. When, as we have seen, the increase of the intellectual element in poetry pointed to directions and forms that music could not take, the divorce was felt creatively. The 18th century poetry's smoothness and regularity, above all its worship of the intellect, was at odds with the music of the period, which, despite its polish, wasinfinitely more varied and irregular than the sister art.

It is true that music was perhaps the most characteristic art of the romantic period, yet the full bloom of romanticism was not amenable to the English spirit. This says something about the sorrystate of English music at the beginning of the century. After the romantic heyday, which spent its force on the continent, it was found that a restrained lyrical non-exaggerated element had somehow been left over and was particularly apt for expression at that time. All the reticence, the shyness, the restrained sentimentality of the English spirit came to bear in a rebirth of English music, led by Parry and Stanford, in the 1880's. English words were rediscovered for this purpose and once more the two arts drew closer. It was not the ideal situation that it had been in the sixteenth century, for the poets had forgotten about music and composers, were continually coming into contact with unsuitable poets. Yet a basis of knowledge and appreciation was once more technically sought. It is an interesting comment that I suppose most composers are familiar with almost all I have been saying in this thesis though I imagine poets and critics of poetry are not.

But it would not be so always. The insensitiveness with which 19th century composers treated words from J. L. Hatton's scansion of Herrick's "To Anthea":

"Bid | me to live and | I will live Thy"

to the absurdity of giving a whole beat to an apostrophe in "The Church's one Foundation", is notorious.

....

In the generalizations and suggestions that I make in this sketch it must be admitted that I have no complete record of contemporary poem settings. It is impossible to get a full record either from the music publishers or the poetry publishers. Possibly work at the British Museum would be the best plan. I think that I am entitled to mention, however, that what I say is founded on the examination of every song that I thought relevant which came to my hand in the last four years, running into many thousands of [illegible].

When the English Renaissance in music really got underway, in the 80's and 90's, gaining a slow momentum which flowered all of a sudden after the war, the composers concerned had no especial predilection for contemporary poets. The whole spirit of the movement was so vitally different from that which actuated the symbolist and impressionsit "yellow verse" of the period that no healthy relationship could exist. Stanford, for instance, apart from some use (a wasted one) of such inferior poets as Mary E. Coleridge and a healthier one of Newbolt,[1] satisfied himself with Tennyson and Wordsworth. What a pity that circumstances seemed to

(1) His Songs of the Sea, poems by Newbolt, are at least from his youth, though of a different temper from his fine-spun genius.

have combined to make him miss Housman, to whose poetry he could have brought an element which no older poet could have engendered! In this whole matter there is an element of pastiche in handling a poet who is out of your epoch, with connotations and harmonies that only a contemporary would understand. Noone would attempt to write poetry in the style of Herrick or Milton, except as an exercise, and there is like wise something unsatisfactory about the mixing of the contemporary speech of one art with the archaic manner of another. At one point Parry found a sympathetic stimulus in the poetry of George Meredith, a taste which he did not pursue partly owing to the continual pressure small choral societies throughout the country made upon him for oratorios(the curse of English music!) with words in the old style and Mesopotamia or some other blessed word for a title.

The teaching these two men did, especially Stanford, bore the most surprising fruit. Not only did this include technical knowledge, but a new appreciation and feeling for words crept in, a feeling which has accelerated in intensity to this time.

The Imperialistic movement in English letters towards the close of the century did not have much lasting influence on music. Kipling has many musical admirers, chief among whom is Percy Grainger, but it is Kipling in his most satirical, bitter, mood that Grainger finds his inspiration. The rollicking sentimental open nationalism has no place in music. When Elgar tried it he wrote his worst music. On the other hand there is the shy restrained, slyly expansive Elgar that says quietly and yet

"nobilmente" all that can be lyrically expressed about the value of the English spirit.

It is easy for English composers to be jolly, as distinguished from witty or humourous, and the down-to-earth realism and roughness of such poets as Masefield, Henley and Herbert Trench has been well served by a galaxy of English composers from Graham Peel to Gordon Slater.

I mentioned before the lack of sympathy and appreciation between such composers as Stanford and Parry and the fin-de-siècle school of English poets. At least in part the temper of Frederick Delius was much more suitable to their expression. Indeed his settings of Dawson have qualities of vital relationship although technically he set words badly. There was something further in Delius to be brought out, however, and if he had read de la Mare we might have had another outpouring in the Wolf-Eichendorf tradition. These are bad misses, but are happening less and less nowadays.

Whatever was wrong with Georgian poetry had also a definite influence on the music of the period. It is true that music of the same type, evidenced by shch composers as the followers of Vaughan Williams(the folk-song school), never fell to the banality and unnaturalness of the worst of this school of poets, chiefly because it is easier for music to be simple and back-to-earth without becoming naive. And music, through its long idleness in England, was younger and on the upgrade, while poetry was not to be resusitated by a perverse archaicism. Nevertheless

the poison of "the noble savage" tinted the progress of music for a while, and still is the shoal on which many a young composer's career is undermined. It is instructive to note that only the minor English composers were attracted to the Georgians for any length of time.

The Catholic tradition at the turn of the century, the line from Christina Rossetti, through Francis Thompson to Hilaire Belloc and Frances Chesterton, has been admirably served by music chiefly because the source of inspiration, and its expression, is small without being precious, and sensuous without formlessness. This was the sort of thing that Warlock could use to its full advantage, although he unfortunately never found a poet to which he could attach all his talent for the poisons and violets of contemporary life.

The miniaturists, who are indebted to this tradition in technique if not in inspiration, are probably the most popular poets for song writers in England today, apart from Housman and Hardy. The whole set, from Katherine Tyman to Walter de la Mare, have been used to excess, and seem to like it, having given their permissions wholesale. De la Mare, of course, has never had a composer who is entirely worthy of his exquisite genius, despite Armstrong Gibbs, who, though sensitive, just misses the imaginative tautness and formal skill of the poet.

Housman of course has been the greatest boon to English song from the sister art. Even since the publication of the "Shropshire Lad" in 1896 has come Housman after Housman song, many of

them completely unworthy of him. He himself is said to have expressed annoyance at the extravagant use of his poems in this way, but he did little to stop them. I think I am justified in saying that he, too, missed his ideal composer, although Butterworth and C. W. Orr come close.

Hardy, on the other hand, is well served. All the bleakness and the lyrical modernity of this poet are reproduced in such composers as Gerald Finzi and John Ireland. I suspect the best is still to come from Finzi, who is still a young man. It is interesting to note that Hardy is by no means an easy poet to set, yet here, as ever, inate sympathy accomplishes wonders.

Of the newer poets it is harder to speak. Copyright here plays an important part. Owing to the ignorance and carelessness of the poets or their executors in the past so many per-, missions have been given to the wrong people. One saw with horror the best Housman and Hardy and Yeats dragged about the country and crucified at musical festivals and local and "celebrity"concerts.(2) Of late, poets generally have grown more careful of this tendency and have refused their permission on numerous occasions. There is a danger here too, as is illustrated by Yeats' refusal to Warlock for a time to grant him permission to the poems for the "Curlew". The only healthy solution is of course an actual personal association and appreciation such as has been the case with Auden and Benjamin Britten.

(2) It is of course not only to the mercies of composers to which poets can leave themselves but to the less tender mercies of performers. I know what it means to a lover of poetry to hear a lovely piece of verse mouthed, vulgarized and degraded before a company who are lusting after high notes, slurs and "effects"; what it might mean to the poet if he were present, I should hate to imagine.

If you know the man and his music, there is no danger of a tragedy ensuing. Nevertheless, this matter of copyright must be cited as a deterrent influence on the use of the newest poetry. It also qualifies the next paragraph.

Generally one may say, (although it is too early to pronounce with certainty), that the experimentation and increasing intellectualism in poetry since the Auden-Spender-Day Lewis-MacNeire revolt has had little effect on song. Music of course follows a time-lag in appreciation, and it may be ten years before these poets are adequately set. Their early poetry may never be set, owing to its tortuous and rough intellectualism. It is more likely that when this movement, admittedly the healthiest thing that has happened to poetry for years, finds its technique sufficiently pliable to allow it to reflect, consistently in a form without the necessity of such piling obscurity, then a place may be found for it in song. It contains a lyricism that is eminently, in itself, suitable for song at some points. This lyricism has already attracted Britten to Auden, and in his poetry the tendency has increasingly been of late to formalize itself in simpler and more telling ways. The future will tell whetherthis is merely a bywater or a real arrival. It is important for song that it be decided. The comment may finally be made that this lyrical yet plastic expression is different in temper from the Eliot image-cum-intellect tradition, which is not popular with song composers.

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