# THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MUSIC AND POETRY IN THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE AND YEATS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO *TWELFTH NIGHT* AND *AT THE HAWK'S WELL*

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by

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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis the interaction of music and poetry in drama was to be investigated with a view to recognizing a tradition in the aesthetic of speech in the theatre. It was decided to concentrate on two typical and helpful plays of two great dramatic artists, namely; Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare and At The Hawk's Well by W. B. Yeats. The findings for Shakespeare were tentative. However, it was found that Yeats had revived a tradition by writing plays in which poetry and music were inter-dependent.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE RENAISSANCE IDEAL IN POETRY AND MUSIC

I welcome you that have the mastery
Of the two kinds of Music: the one kind
Being like a woman, the other like a man.
Both you that understand stringed instruments,
And how to mingle words and notes together
So artfully that all the Art's but Speech
Delighted with its own music; and you that carry
The twisted horn, and understand the notes
That lacking words escape Time's chariot;
For the high angels that drive the horse of Time --
The golden one by day, by night the silver --
Are not more welcome to one that loves the world
For some fair woman's sake.[1]

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lovest thou that which thou receivest not gladly;
Or else receivest with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: "thou single wilt prove none."[2]

In these quotations, which are controlled by the essential comparison between music and human life, music is the metaphor for

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[1]W. B. Yeats, "The King's Threshold", from The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats (London: Macmillan and Company Ltd., 1963), p. 107.

[2]W. Shakespeare, The Complete Works of Shakespeare, Sonnet VIII, Hardin Craig, ed. (New York: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1961), p. 473. All future references to plays are from this edition.

unity. However, a somewhat different attitude toward the use of music can be discerned in each selection. On the one hand, music is an inseparable part of the totality of a poet's aesthetic; on the other hand, music is a separate, though indispensable, part of life woven into the fabric of the great design and used by the poet to enhance his dramatic art.

For Yeats, there are two kinds of music. One kind is the music that is inseparable from the music of speech where words and voice and instruments are all mingled so artfully that one cannot tell them apart, and "all the Arts but Speech Delighted with its own music". This kind of music is to be understood in conjunction with words. The other kind of music is the "twisted horn" - instrumental music that is to be understood by itself. These musical sounds, lacking words, will communicate directly with the feelings. Such music can be used alone to arouse emotion, or along with the music of speech, to unify thought and feeling. These two kinds of music are like man and woman -- one complements the other. If the union is good, the resulting concord of mingled words and notes will reflect a unity of expression that will appeal to the emotions and to the intellect.

In order to fully appreciate Yeats' dramatic art we must understand his ideas about the relations between words and music. Music, whether created by an instrument or by the human voice, is a more subtle expression than words of the emotions. When this music colors and reinforces the spoken words, the appeal is emotional as well as intellectual, and this unity in the art gives us a unity of experience which

delights the whole man. The very subtlety of this kind of art lifts us out of the commonness of the intellectual theatre and we can partake in an imaginative, universalized experience. Yeats is not a poet who writes out of his intellectual beliefs, for "that is all wrong".[3] His poetry arises from intense feeling. It was his hope to create plays for an "uncorrupted and imaginative audience, trained to listen by its passion for oratory", plays which would aim at expressing "the deeper thoughts and emotions".[4] This kind of theatre was what he imagined the Renaissance theatre of Shakespeare's time to have been.

Words, of course, were always of paramount importance for Yeats, but he, unlike the young Cambridge poets and unlike Shaw, did not desire an intellectual realism. Rather, words were the beautiful guides to emotional meaning, but they could, when combined with the other arts, create intense passion.

Yeats stated his thesis near the end of his life:

> All arts are an expression of desire ... exciting desirable life, exalting desirable death. ... all arts must be united again, painting and literature, poetry and music. Bless synthesis; damn Whistler and his five o'clock.[5]

This unity of experience in art was a continuing interest with Yeats, but the results of this interest were subject to change throughout the

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[3]Joseph Hone, W. B. Yeats: 1865-1939 (London: Macmillan and Company Ltd., 1962), p. 455, citing W. B. Yeats in his letter to Mrs. Llewelyn Davies.

[4]Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 158, citing a formal letter circulated by the Irish Literary Theatre.

[5]Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 458, citing W. B. Yeats' proposed B.B.C. broadcast.

three major periods of his career.[6] It is during the middle period, when Yeats wrote the Dance Plays, that we observe his most determined effort to:

> (bring) the stage back again to that beauty of appropriate simplicity in the presentation of a play which liberates the attention of an audience for the words of a writer and the movements of an actor.[7]

The ideal of theatre was to be achieved by Yeats' method of having spoken verse reinforced with instrumental music, and also by the spare, artificial movements of the actors in a style of theatre that was influenced by the Japanese Nōh plays.

The four Dance Plays, two of which have music written by musician friends of Yeats, did not realize all that Yeats hoped they would. The first play, At the Hawk's Well, performed in April 1916[8] in Lady Cunard's drawing room for fifty invited poetry-loving friends, was a great success. The second performance, for Queen Alexandra, again featuring the Japanese dancer, Mr. Itow, as the hawk, and Edmund Dulac, the composer, as one of the musicians, was a fiasco.[9] Yeats despaired of finding an audience for his new art, for, as he says:

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[6]Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 465.

[7]Ibid., p. 192.

[8]W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies (London: Macmillan and Company Ltd., 1923), p. 419. Joseph Hone, op. cit., reports this event to have taken place in March.

[9]Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 297.

> I knew that I was creating something which could only fully succeed in a civilization very unlike ours. I think they should be written for some country where all classes share in a half-mythological, half-philosophical folk-belief which the writer and his audience lift into a new subtlety. All my life I have longed for such a country, and always found it quite impossible to write without having as much belief in its real existence as a child has in that of the wooden birds, beasts, and persons of his toy Noah's ark. I have now found all the mythology and philosophy I need.[10]

As far as the theatre was concerned, Yeats finally gave up the fight for getting poetry spoken to music in any intelligible manner. When The King of the Great Clock Tower was produced, Yeats remarked that the fable, the dance, and the dialogue could be easily understood by the audience from the performance. If the audience wished to find the little tunes within the words, they could find these from their own reading if they were curious, but this idea of art would not be thrust upon them. Nevertheless, toward the end of his life Yeats was still moved to restore the singing side of the poet's art. Yeats constantly discussed this subject with poets of his acquaintance who had knowledge of music. He was interested in the "marriage" of words and music, but he did not demand that words come first and determine the music. He was not averse to a writer writing new words to old tunes as, perhaps, Shakespeare had done. Whether tune or words came first, he believed "the success of the union does not depend upon precedent or relative importance, but upon a unity of conception".[11]

Like all great men, Yeats had both an appreciation of the past and a vision of the future. His vision was ahead of his time. He

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[10]W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies, op. cit., p. 434.

[11]Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 439, citing W. J. Turner telling about W. B. Yeats.

deplored art's categories -- a separation and specialization of the arts that began at the end of the sixteenth century. He looked back to the Renaissance as the ideal age,[12] when life and art enjoyed a "Unity of Being". Certainly this unity would come again. The figure of the inter-penetrating gyres was his archetypal pattern which is mirrored and re-mirrored by all life, by all movements of civilization or mind, or nature. Man or history is conceived of as moving from right to left; as soon as the fullest expansion of one cone, the objective cone, has been reached a counter-movement has already started towards the fullest expansion of another cone, the subjective cone. If we apply the cones to history, objectivity was at its fullest expansion at the time of Christ, and the self was struggling to escape from personality. At the time of the Renaissance, however, subjectivity was at its fullest expansion, "and great personalities were everywhere realizing themselves to the utmost".[13]

Although the modern age is dedicated to specialization and cold, abstract realism, there is evidence, beginning with Yeats, of a renewed interest in the Renaissance ideal. For Yeats, all the passion and energy of the Renaissance Englishman could, perhaps, be found in Ireland's eighteenth century, and the eighteenth century seems to have a kind of mythical identification with the possibilities of modern Ireland, as Yeats saw them. It was this rooting of mythology in the

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[12]T. McAlindon, "Yeats and the English Renaissance", Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, May, 1967, Volume LXXXII, p. 160.

[13]Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (London: Faber and Faber, revised edition, 1960), p. 232.

earth which drew Yeats to the Irish peasantry and their stories and which impelled him to find much of his subject matter in legends spoken in ancient Ireland. The Dance Plays, written around the legend of Cuchulain, were plays in a new form which, Yeats says, "shall awake once more...under the slopes of Slieve-na-mon or Croagh Patrick, ancient memories...."[14] With these plays, perhaps, Yeats could restore the passion of Elizabethan speech to modern dramatic art.

The second quotation, Shakespeare's eighth sonnet, shows us that music, and what music stands for, are part of the accepted philosophy of Renaissance life. Shakespeare was able to use musical imagery as a symbol of universal order. Into that "true concord of well-tuned sounds" each part must perform its function and fit into the harmony of the whole. In the same manner the young man, to whom the sonnet is addressed, must marry and beget a child in order to achieve immortality[15] and fit into the universal scheme of things. According to the accepted philosophy of the age, one was not a number.[16] It was, therefore, most desirable not to confound "in singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear". Like the well-tuned strings of the viol and the ordered music of the spheres that produce concords of sweet sound, man, too, must bear his part in the universal harmony, for "(man) single wilt prove none".

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[14] Ibid., p. 218.

[15] W. Shakespeare, The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets, "How True a Twain" by Northrup Frye (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962), pp. 26-37.

[16] Edward Hubler, Shakespeare's Song and Poems (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 11.

Music, then, was represented among the forces believed to govern the universe. Rhythm was the principle invoked to explain the ordered motions of the stars, and the planets danced to the music of the spheres. Terrestrial government aimed at copying these laws of nature; the state was a part-song that blended the voices of all classes, and the virtuous private character was a harmonious organization of all the civilized qualities. Sir Thomas Elyot advises that a tutor:

> shall commende the perfecte understandinge of musike, declaringe howe necessary it is for the better attaynynge the knowledge of a publike weale: which, as I before have saide, is made of an ordre of astates and degrees, and by reason thereof, containeth in it a perfect harmony.[17]

The Elizabethan pictured the world and the individual as part-songs because his life was filled with music. Performers rather than mere listeners, the Elizabethans had inherited also a rich traditional art that expressed their own creative life. This folk-song art, although it still exists in isolated areas, is no longer central to our culture. But, in the sixteenth century, it was still vigorous and constituted the literature as well as the music of the people. Although few could read, "neat and spruce ayres" were the property of all classes. Such popular songs of the people became the raw material for the creations of the virginalist and lutanist composers and was incorporated into the plays of Shakespeare.

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[17] W. de Sola Pinto. The English Renaissance: 1510-1688, "Literature and Music", by Bruce Pattison( New York: Robert M. McBride and Company, 1938), p. 120, cited by Thomas Elyot in The Boke Named the Governour, Everyman's ed. p. 28.

According to Bruce Pattison,[18] the penetration of a folk-culture throughout society partly explains the relations of music and poetry in the Renaissance. The folk-singer focused his attention on the emotional expression of the words. The verse had no form apart from the music, and the singer did not regard words and tune as separate things. Although Chaucer, as a lyric poet, had attained considerable freedom from definite musical associations, generally speaking the lyric continued to be sung rather than read until the seventeenth century.

Most of the Elizabethan poets had an excellent knowledge of music. Campion set his own verses to music. Other poets wrote to existing tunes or endeavored to make their lyrics:

> propres à la Musique et accords des instrumens, en faveur desquels il semble que la Poësie soit née: car la Poësie sans les instrumens, ou sans la grâce d'une seule, ou plusiers voix, n'est nullement agréable, non plus que les instrumens sans estre animez de la melodie d'une plaisante voix.[19]

Music, up to the end of the sixteenth century, was mainly song form and was generally associated with words or movement. The musicians needed the support of the poets, for the instruments merely doubled or reproduced voice parts and were rarely used alone. The song followed the rhythm and stanza structure of the poem. The melody had its own melodic phrase but the phrases had to correspond to those of the poem. During Dowland's time, polyphony was giving way before the figured bass and its attendant harmonic developments. Yet Dowland's A Pilgrim's Solace, appearing at this time, is the most contrapuntal of his works, with a

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[18]Bruce Pattison, Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance. (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1948), pp. 17-19.

[19]Jean Jacquot, Musique et Poésie au XVI^e Siècle, (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1954), p. 289.

wide range of purely harmonic combinations. This was new music, but it bore little resemblance to the new music of the Italians who wished to make music subservient to diction. In setting some of the most perfect lyrics that have ever been written in the English language, Dowland preserved the unity of the arts, for "never did he fail to recreate the full beauty of the poet's thought in music".[20] These masterpieces of English song seem successfully to combine the resources of music and poetry, gaining strength from both the natural declamation of the poetry and the sensitivity of the counterpoint and harmony.

However, the influence of Italian music and opera style in the seventeenth century put an emphasis on the mechanical aspect of declamation. With this growing separation of the arts, the great Renaissance genius for letting the sense of the words dictate meaning and inflection of the music of the song was lost. After the Restoration, poetry was increasingly to be read rather than sung, and music was to be listened to for its own sake, without literary associations, though for a time, Purcell, against enormous odds, tried to maintain a union of the arts that Yeats would have approved had he known. But, in general, music and verse were separated, and their Elizabethan union became only a memory by the eighteenth century.

Yet the whole Renaissance laid great emphasis on "fitting the music to the life of the words".[21] The Elizabethan had a feeling for speech rhythms which marked an interest in rhetoric. Both the great Elizabethan vocal forms, the madrigal and the air, strive to infuse

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[20]Peter Warlock, The English Ayre (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 51.

[21]Bruce Pattison. "Literature and Music", op. cit., p. 126.

vitality into the melodic line by fidelity of declamation. Thus, Pattison informs us, Thomas Morley's Canzonets to Three Voyces (1593) and John Dowland's First Booke of Ayres (1597) represent two diverging progressions from the polyphonically accompanied solo song of Byrd.[22] Both were integrally connected with advances in poetic technique and style, but these advances had not yet separated the arts. According to Morley's Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musicke, (Shakespeare Assoc. Facs., p. 181)[23] the composer must apply the notes to the words so that in singing there is no barbarism committed. No syllable that is naturally short in speech is to be expressed by many notes or by one long note, and no long syllable is to be expressed by a short note. Perhaps this "freer" system of declamation had some influence in helping to transform the rigid stress metre of the mid-century poetry into the flexible rhythm of the later Elizabethan poets.

Campion was interested in the representation of poetic rhythm in correct musical terms. In the title page of Two Books of Airs, probably published in 1613,[24] Campion stated:

> In these English ayres I have chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together, which will be much for him to do that hath not power over both. The light of this will best appear to him who hath paysed our monosyllables and syllables combined, both of which are so loaded with consonants, as that they will hardly keep company with swift notes, or give the vowel convenient liberty.[25]

Campion published a treatise on quantitative metre.[26] He subscribed

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[22] Ibid., p. 126.

[23] Ibid., p. 128.

[24] Peter Warlock, op. cit., p. 101.

[25] Ibid., p. 102, citing an essay by Campion on the proper relation between music and poetry, Two Books of Airs.

[26] Bruce Pattison, "Literature and Music", op. cit., p. 132.

to the view of those who proposed to return to what they considered the Greek practice of representing the natural speech-rhythm and melody of the poetry and accompanying it with expressive chords rather than elaborate counterpoint. Thus, the air was inevitably drawn towards recitative; however, the early recitative had little resemblance to what we have come to associate with that term in the present day. Pattison tells us that the English school which adhered to the view held by Campion did not, by 1620, succeed in stylizing speech rhythm in music even though it quickly learned the method of Caccini and his successor, Monteverdi, the Italian exponents of this idea. In 1601 Caccini had produced a Nuovo Musiche which came to be called stilo recitativo and, in 1606, the Italianized Englishman, John Coprario, published a volume of declamatory airs. The new ideas influenced English composers and these imported methods were incorporated into songs that still remained essentially English. Thus, music and verse were still united, and spoken verse retained many traces of its musical ancestry until the seventeenth century. It was not until then that poetry and music became specialized into two separate arts, and the English tradition of music founded on speech rhythm failed to be maintained.

But, as we have seen, Renaissance art reflected the philosophy of the age. The prevailing idea of unity in all things kept poetry and music closely related. Just as Shakespeare was interested in all of life, as his plays so well demonstrate, so, it seems safe to assume, he was interested in music. Indeed, his use of music in the plays is a reflection of the musical life of the times. Although the texts of Shakespeare's plays do not record the music which was part of the dramatic

action, it is generally agreed that madrigals and other more complex forms of polyphonic music seem to have been little used in the Elizabethan theatre.[27] Rather, the theatre abounded in folk-songs, street songs, "ayres", and a particular form of instrumental music. We can further assume that there was a close connection between stage-acting and rhetorical delivery,[28] for Richard Flecknoe in his Short Discourse of the English Stage (1664) tells us that Shakespeare's actor, Richard Burbage, "had all the parts of an excellent Orator"[29] because he animated his words with a musically modulated voice and his speech with appropriate action. This union of animated speech, song, and music produced a dramatic art that the Elizabethan play-goer enjoyed.[30] Theatre, then, for Shakespeare, embraced life, and this theatre included poetry and music.

Seeking to define the highest kind of literature and the principles on which to judge theatre, Yeats' theory was that literature is but praise of life.[31] By "life" Yeats meant passion, energy, and self untouched by moral or political desiderata. His ideal dramatic art, therefore, is one of "the soul rejoicing in itself". He finds that such an art flourished in the Renaissance in Shakespeare's plays and especially in the characters of Antony, Cleopatra, and Coriolanus, whose

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[27]Edward Hubler, op. cit., p. 54.

[28]B. L. Joseph, Elizabethan Acting (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 1.

[29]B. L. Joseph, op. cit., p. 1.

[30]Ibid., p. 141.

[31]W. B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), pp. 277-278.

"noble pride" carried them to that sublime plane where common laws exist but to enhance self-expression by opposition.[32] These are the characters Yeats has in mind when he holds up the men of the Renaissance as models of human nature at its most abundant.[33]

"Our disastrous break with the past took place after the Renaissance,"[34] It was then that the idea of unity in life and unity in art lost its hold on the imagination. Yeats would restore this unity, and the "new art" of his Dance Plays, like the plays of Shakespeare, would combine words with music and the dance.

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[32] W. B. Yeats, Explorations, sel. Mrs. W. B. Yeats (London: Macmillan & Company, Ltd., 1962), pp. 154, 155, 160, 170.

[33] Ibid., p. 162.

[34] Ibid., pp. 148, 149.

## CHAPTER II

## YEATS' MUSICAL SPEECH

Music, as explained in the quotation from "The King's Threshold", page one, was a necessary and integral part of Yeats' poetic experience. Whenever a poem or play involved music, he gave serious consideration to what instruments might be most appropriate. He listened carefully to the kinds of sounds the instruments made so that he could choose the instrument, or combination of instruments, whose sound would best intensify the spoken or sung words and the dance movements of his verse plays, thereby creating the desired mood and atmosphere for the context. Yeats felt that language, in the English-speaking nineteenth and twentieth century world, had become devitalized; therefore, he made a study of the pitch and cadence of speaking voices and expressed a desire to pattern his artistic speech on the rhythmical speech of what he called "ordinary" Irishmen.

To understand what Yeats meant by this term "ordinary" it is necessary to realize that two traditions made their claim on Yeats. Often he said that his aim was to found an aristocratic esoteric literature in Ireland. He complained that Ireland had literature for the people but nothing for the few.[35] On the other hand, he wanted to come closer to the folk and so projected this version in peasant idiom of the Red Hanrahan stories. Thus, literature could go two ways-"upward into ever-growing subtlety" until it gave birth to a new passion, or downward to the market carts "taking the soul with us until all is

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[35]Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 141.

simplified and solidified again".[36] The two traditions, that of the aristocracy and that of the folk, were in every way distinct from the middle-class region of culture. Yeats never faltered from his belief that from these two sources came all beautiful things. This, Joseph Hone tells us, was Yeats' "dream of the noble and the beggarman".[37]

But at first Yeats chiefly sought the folk culture for the evidence of the supernatural and proof of survival. The innocence of the cottage dwellers and their ability to experience supernatural events delighted Yeats:

> I work from 11 to 2, chiefly at my novel (he wrote to his sister Lily in July 1898). ...I have no news, for Galway is not the place for it, at least no news of this world -- I have plenty of news of the other. For instance, a woman who came to mend chairs went a walk down the avenue with the housemaid last week and presently both came in in a fainting state. They had seen three fairies -- tall figures with black hats ("Steeple-hats") and ruffs, evidently Elizabethans. (Isaw an Elizabethan woman here a year ago.) That night, later on, one of them was going upstairs to bed and saw a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots that is here, and fainted because she recognized the ruff.[38]

Here, then, was the Irish tradition Yeats wished to preserve. He felt that the speech of such innocent Irish people had not lost its spontaneous and imaginative freshness of expression and that he must recapture this vitality of speech in his verse plays for, as he says, "what the delicately moulded flesh is to human beauty, vivid musical words are to passion".[39]

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[36] W. B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions, op. cit., pp. 266-267.

[37] Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 141.

[38] Ibid., pp. 143-144, citing W. B. Yeats in a letter to his sister Lily in July 1898.

[39] W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies, op. cit., p. 23.

In order to carry out his new ideas about musical words, it was necessary for Yeats to explain to his actors his method of speaking verse. In this he was assisted by Florence Farr, who gave illustrations of this musical speech spoken to the psaltery. But Yeats' revolutionary sweep did not stop at the method of speaking words. He believed that the theatre must be reformed in its plays, its acting, its scenery, as well as its speaking. In acting he wanted to keep the actors very quiet in their movements, often just posing and speaking to create a dream-like and gentle effect. Scenery might be no more than a curtin or a simple scene indicating vaguely the picture in the poet's mind. The cast should speak in such a way that their words would evoke the picture. The words, then, should be delivered in a certain "pitched tone" so that the audience could hear every word and detect the metre without difficulty.

Yeats liked to speak of the revival of the art of speaking verse to well-defined musical notes, and, beginning with Homer, he would continue through the centuries and the countries of the world with what he called "Bardic" poetry.[40] When he had finished, Florence Farr would recite selected pieces with strong rhythmical emphasis, intoning others or doing a type of chant to distinct musical phrases. Yeats thought that speeches that need the full attention of the mind need only slight changes of pitch and cadence.[41]

Yeats and Miss Farr had experimented with a system for setting down spoken tonal variations in something like musical notation[42] which

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[40]Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 191.

[41]W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies, op. cit., p. 129.

[42]W. B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions, op. cit., p. 13-27.

was to be learned by the actor much as a singer would learn the notes of a song. (Figure I) The notation is far less complicated than for a singer and the speaker is permitted slight modification of the fixed note when dramatic expression demands it and the accompanying instrument is not sounding. The notation, which regulates the general form of the sound, leaves the voice free to add a complexity of dramatic expression from its own instinctive genius at the discretion of the speaker. The regulation of sound gives the speech form and beauty. Florence Farr tells us[43] that if we study the history of the beginning of opera and the "nuove musiche" by Caccini, or study the music of Monteverdi and Carissimi, we will find these masters speak of doing all they can to give an added beauty to the words of the poet. However, when beginners attempt to speak to musical notes they begin to intone in a manner that we hear in religious festivals. Certainly there is no ecstasy in the delivery of ritual, and recitative is not now usually treated by opera singers in a way that makes us wish to imitate them. Speakers, then, must be forced to use their imaginations and express the inmost meaning of the words. It is not until their thought imposes itself on the listeners and each word invokes a special mode of beauty, that the method rises once more from the dead and becomes a living art.

According to Yeats, even if one is speaking to a single note sounded faintly on the psaltery one can get an endless variety of expression. All art is a monotony of external things for the sake of an internal variety, a sacrifice of gross effects to subtle effects. This

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[43] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

new art, new in modern life, but common, Yeats imagines, to the life of Homer and Shakespeare, will have to train its hearers as well as its speakers, for it takes time to give up the accustomed gross effects for what may at first appear as monotony but what is, indeed, infinite variety. Yeats believes that modern acting and recitation have taught us to fix our attention on such gross effects till we have come to find gesture, and an intonation that copies the surface of life, more important than the rhythm, yet it is precisely this rhythm which is the spirit of all intense literature. Speaking poetry to musical notes would give actors a subtlety of hearing that would demand new effects from them, Yeats thought. They will come to notice one another's voices until poetry and rhythm come nearer to common life again.

Yeats seemed to have in mind a new order of actors, much like the Troubadours,[44] who would travel about speaking verse and stories to poetical-minded people. These troubadours would differ from the original troubadours in that they would be "well-taught and well-mannered apeakers" who would be trained to do that which the first troubadours had done untutored. These actors will:

> know how to keep from singing notes and from prosaic lifeless intonation...and they will have by heart...so many poems and notations that they will never have to bend their heads over the book, to the ruin of dramatic expression and of that wild air the bard had always about him in his boyish imagination.[45]

Yeats says that those who love lyric poetry but cannot tell one set tune from another repeat a state of mind which created music and yet was incapable of the emotional abstraction which delights in patterns of sound

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[44] Ibid., p. 19.

[45] Ibid., p. 19.

separated from words. To this mind music was an unconscious creation, the words a conscious creation, for "no beginnings are in the intellect, and no living thing remembers its own birth".[46]

At this stage of Yeats' experiments with his new art he was mainly concerned with the music inherent in the words of lyric verse. In his earlier verse plays, to gain more dramatic freedom, he loosened his texture into blank verse and, according to Joseph Hone,[47] sacrificed something of his music. Yet in his Four Plays for Dancers, Yeats' power of synthesis fuses lyric and dramatic verse. This greater freedom in working with verse plays lets Yeats realize a more complete union of the arts, and he combines musical speech with sung poems and instrumental music. The plays achieve dramatic effect through a lyric medium, sublimating action to the plane of the imagination, restoring, to some extent, the Elizabethan theatre.

Perhaps a few words should be said here about Yeats' being tone-deaf. Joseph Hone reports that because of this fact Yeats' "recognition of the music is in itself miraculous".[48] Yeats' problem, I think, was one of coordination between his own ear and his ability to reproduce the tones he heard. However, he could recognize, with perfect accuracy, the different tonal inflections made by others, and he certainly could give emotional expression to his own readings. Arnold Dolmetsch says:

> I once spent a whole night listening to Yeats reciting, and I came to the conclusion that he did not recognize the inflections of his own voice. In fact he had a short phrase of fairly indistinct tones which he employed to recite any of his poems. This did not interfere with the expression of his readings, which was very beautiful.... The idea of reciting poetry to well-defined musical notes is sound; it may be revived some day given the right exponent.[49]

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[46] Ibid., p. 20.

[47] Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 339.

[48] Ibid., p. 383.

[49] Ibid., p. 191.

Yeats did not have the ability to listen to the instrument and make his voice and the instrument fit together; however, this did not affect his ability to hear the musical inflections in other voices. He admired the golden and expressive tones of Florence Farr and the ability of Margot Ruddock to pass naturally and unself-consciously from speech to song.[50]

However, the fact that Yeats did not know enough about the technical side of music and voice production prevented him from being able to explain his desires sufficiently to both actors and musicians. Perhaps this is one important reason, along with his being tone-deaf, that he had such difficulty in communicating his startling ideas about musical speech. At best, the subtle shadings of voice that expressed the pictures of the imagination would be difficult to explain. To musicians and actors, who often had more technique than imagination, Yeats' task would be almost impossible. Yeats did not speak their language, and they did not really understand his. Mr. Barnes reports of Yeats' difficulties:

> Forcibly as his ideas about music were expressed, he had no ear for music as it is understood in Western Europe. He could not hum a tune and his notion of pitch was wildly inaccurate, qualities which made his demands upon the professional instrumentalists who took part very exacting. On the other hand, his ear for the sound of speech was so sensitive that it outran comprehension. His sensitiveness to the sound of words made rehearsals long and exacting. Knowing exactly what he wanted himself, he found it difficult to express because he noticed nuances which we could hardly hear. Nor was he helped by his own voice, an instrument inadequate (when I knew him) for conveying his meaning accurately. Margot, perhaps by intuition, could get what he wanted but could not be depended upon to reproduce it later... At times Yeats would get exasperated at our insensitivity to his meaning.[51]

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[50] Ibid., p. 456.

[51] Ibid., p. 457, citing Barnes' account of Yeats' B.B.C. broadcasts on modern poetry, 1937.

Yeats disagreed with Mallarme's theory that a play could not have style if the people talked as they talk in daily life. Mallarme was interested in "fabricating a separate life out of a perverse syntax and a verbal subtlety as different as possible from common speech".[52] Style was a matter of rewriting until one moved away from common speech where the finished phrase would resemble as little as possible the one that had initially come into his head, Ellmann says. But Yeats wanted to use the speech of the unspoiled, still imaginative common Irishman. His speech would be still vital. Yeats thought that those who accepted the ideas of Mallarme must surely be thinking of a play made out of typically modern life where there was no longer vivid speech. Yeats offered a remedy for a language that had become abstract and dead. He recalled Falstaff and his abundant and richly-textured vocabulary that Yeats thought must have been but little magnified from the words of such a man in real life. In Shakespeare's age, men could vary their spoken tones to convey the emotions they felt, and men must learn to do this again. For Yeats, the greatest play was not the play that gave a sensation of external reality, but the play in which there was the greatest abundance of life itself -- a play which expressed the reality that is in the mind. It was impossible, then, to make a work of art, which needs every subtlety of expression, out of a dying language, and certainly Yeats thought the naturalistic language around him was moribund. By reviving language Yeats hoped to stop the long decline of the arts towards naturalistic realism and make the poetical play a living dramatic form again, as it had been in Shakespeare's time.

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[52]Richard Ellmann, op. cit., p. 76.

Yeats wished to develop a musical speech -- a rhetoric* for the speaking of lyric and dramatic verse -- and he would intensify this speech with instrumental sounds as he would heighten the drama with song and dance.

*The meaning of the word "rhetoric" in the Renaissance was unlike our concept of the term. It has now come to be associated with an artificial eloquence in language and literary style. Yeats expressed his dislike of rhetoric in the conventionally accepted sense in "Ego Dominus Tuus".

## CHAPTER III

## ELIZABETHAN RHETORIC

In his book, Elizabethan Acting, B. L. Joseph tells us that according to sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century writings, stage-playing and rhetorical delivery were so alike that whoever now knows the methods of speaking used by the Renaissance orator has a good idea what was done by the actor on the Elizabethan stage.[53] The idea is that eloquence consisted of a graceful delivery of the words which was "an external image of an internal mind".[54] The inflection of the voice, the countenance, and the gestures of the body proceeded from some passion and stirred a like passion in the spectator. We learn that Richard Burbage animated his words with varied pitch and inflection, and employed hand, arm, and finger gestures to emphasize his speech and give significance to his words.[55] This rhetorical delivery, also known as Pronunciation during the Renaissance, was part of the basic education of pupils of the grammar and song schools. Such education, with its emphasis on the disciplined use of voice and gesture, taught a large number of boys and men from an early age to associate public speaking and the reading of poets with this discipline. Those who received this schooling understood the relationship between acting and literature, between the musical inflection of the voice and spoken poetry. The public was accustomed to hearing this kind of speaking. However, this

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[53] B. L. Joseph, op. cit., p. 1.

[54] Ibid., p. 2, citing Thomas Wright, The Passions of the Mind (1604), p. 176.

[55] Ibid., p. 1.

decorum of speech and gesture was not a parrot-like mouthing of the words and artificial mannerisms. The speaker was meant to animate words and gesture with sincere fervor according to the sense and emotion of what was being spoken. That this Pronunciation was not to be done for the sake of attracting attention to the antics of the actor at the expense of the meaning of the words of the play is evident in Hamlet's advice to the players who must not "saw the air too much with your hands thus". The gesture must correspond to the tone and inflection of the voice. As Hamlet said, "suit the action to the word, the word to the action".[56]

Gestures, of course, were often symbolic and signified certain emotional states appropriate to the context.[57] These symbols seemed to have their roots in Renaissance culture and were thus understood by the audience. (Figure II) Because of the method of acting and the traditions on which it was based, there was easy communication among the poet, his players, and their audience. In the Elizabethan theatre there was a fusion of voice, gesture, and imagination which gave to an audience the emotional and intellectual mingling found in Renaissance dramatic poetry. Good actors realized that the words used by the author should be a sensitive record of the exact quality of thought and emotion in the poet's mind. The quality of voice and the appropriate gesture that the actor employed must be imagined at the moment thoughts are turned into language and must grow out of an understanding of the poet's words.

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[56] Hamlet, III, ii, 19-20.

[57] B. L. Joseph, op. cit., p. 49.

The voice of the modern Shakespearean actor is surely quite unlike the declaiming voice of the actor of Shakespeare's day. This seems evident from the accounts of the Elizabethan training of the voice, both in oratory and in singing.[58] Training was also evident in the gestures of the actor. By careful observation of voice and gesture as they portrayed emotion in ordinary life, the actor was able to heighten and refine until he had art. Thus the theatre was natural without being naturalistic. This was what Yeats imagined the Renaissance theatre to have been -- a theatre where the richly-textured vocabulary of Falstaff was but little magnified from the words of such a man in ordinary life. The use of Pronunciation and gesture "fit for every emotion" enabled the Elizabethan actor to represent those emotions naturally and vigorously. The play was a living dramatic form. Yeats hoped this could be realized again in modern times.

It was the business of the Elizabethan actor to make certain that the emotion and sense of the poet's words were able to exert their full effect upon the audience in the theatre. The actor must correctly "tune"[59] his voice and vary his gesture so that the words of the speech would play on the emotions and intellect of the audience. The art of rhetorical Pronunciation made use of the variety of elevation and cadence and the meaningful inflections of the voice according to metre, rhetorical structure, and emotion. Failure in this art can produce a pompous, artificial style of declamation that is monotonous and

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[58] Ibid., p. 35-41.

[59] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

empty of meaning. Even if the full significance of the play escaped the man of limited understanding, the rich and elegant appeal of the emotions of rhetorical declamation could still delight. The rhetorical technique was "designed traditionally to evoke an adequate response from people who were not capable of analysing... a play".[60] The Elizabethan audience responded, not as a result of its own skill, but of that of the play-wrights who knew how to use words, and of the actors who knew how to declaim them. Burbage[61] and later Betterton[62] are reported to have performed with an ingeniousness of speech fitted to the person portrayed and a gracefulness of action fitted to the speech. The actors produced their effects by a stylized decorum, not a naturalistic imitation, and yet the result was an image of reality.

Yeats dreamed of establishing this kind of theatre again, but he greatly distrusted the professional actor and musician who had difficulty in producing the subtle and varied tonal effects he wanted.[63] Yeats believed that he would have to perfect his new art very gradually. Good play-writing, good speaking, and good acting were the first necessity. He believed that the "flow of life" was away from realism in the theatre. "The hour of convention and decoration and ceremony is coming again".[64]

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[60] Ibid., p. 81.

[61] Ibid., p. 141.

[62] Ibid., p. 149.

[63] Joseph Hone, op. cit., p. 457.

[64] W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies, op. cit., p. 136.

The nineteenth century naturalistic conception of drama with its realistic imitation of what speakers might be expected to say in real life must inevitably lead us astray when evaluating the works of Yeats and Shakespeare. Both writers, it seems to me, are concerned with representing, not what might actually happen if a person were placed in a given situation, but how the reactions of a character illuminate the situation and create a meaningful world. The situation, then, is expressed in vivid, natural words. The acting, too, must be artful and imaginative, for the style must create, not realism, but a wholeness in the mind's eye. The doctrine of decorum for Yeats' theatre and the Elizabethan stage demands the perfect correspondence between subject and style which can exist in the theatre only when the actors use voice and gesture to communicate the spirit in which the persons represented have been imagined.

The Elizabethan audience was affected by the power of language, properly spoken. In the theatre, in order for poetry to achieve its full effect, there is no need for the actors to speak to one another as in real life. If they speak their lines to the auditorium we can better imagine dialogue in Shakespeare's terms. The naturalistic method of speaking dialogue frowns on speaking "out front". Actors must address the other person in the appearance of realistic conversation. But it is highly probable that the modern method of speaking dialogue was never known to Shakespeare.[65] For example, instead of true dialogue between Cleomenes and Dion at their return from Delphos in the Winter's Tale we have a sequence of alternate declamation. This almost antiphonal chanting should induce the audience to imagine the wonder of the travel

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[65]B. L. Joseph, op. cit., p. 130.

experience being told, rather than to respond to what seems like ordinary conversation. Musical speech and gesture, as well as song and instrumental music, are used by the dramatist to prepare the audience emotionally to react at levels of emotion that correspond to the dramatist's active imagination, that is, to be delighted with the dramatists' imagination rather than his talent for verisimilitude.

In the Renaissance, the pleasure of performance resulted from the animation of words by voice and gesture that communicated the full quality of the writer's use of language. But the beauties and sublimities achieved by an actor trained in rhetorial delivery were lost by Johnson's time. The play performed was no longer a complete literary experience, for the actor no longer achieved a poetic intensity. The power of the Elizabethan rhetoric was lost.

## CHAPTER IV

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND SONG

During the Renaissance, music was a basic part of every gentleman's education:

> The man who hath no music in himself
> Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.[66]

A common form of entertainment was to sing part music at sight or to do extempore singing of a descant part to a written plain song. The composing of songs and melodies was not an extraordinary occurrence. Even the ordinary Englishman enjoyed the delights of music. In the Elizabethan age, the individuality of skilled craftsmanship or labor that required hard physical effort encouraged rhythmical song. Masters valued servants who were able to bear their parts and join the family in a musical evening. This mingling of classes kept different levels of taste and education in contact and created a store of genuinely popular music of high quality sung and whistled by all classes of people. These people, then, who made up Shakespeare's audience, were delighted with music in whatever form it was presented. First, to hear an actor improvise the music of a play was no strange event. On the other hand, to listen to the varied inflection of his tones as they reflected the emotion of the phrase and the meaning of the words was a joy to the Elizabethan play-goer. An actor who did not provide the vitality that inspiration and invention bring could not please an audience whose ear

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[66] The Merchant of Venice, V, i, 83-85.

was atuned to the musical freshness of the age. Few stage directions for the use of music are given in any of the folios, but Shakespeare seems to have been able to rely on his actor's knowledge of music to suit the song to the character being portrayed.

Shakespeare, we presume, from the abundance of musical passages and references to music found in his plays, knew the value of using songs and instrumental sounds to communicate emotion and convey meaning to his audience. Instruments, in Shakespeare's time, were used in instrumental family groupings and the audience associated the use of a particular instrumental family with a particular kind of dramatic event. Thus, a fanfare of trumpets, or drums and trumpets, was associated with royalty and action, and had the function of signalling or announcing. Hautboys, besides being a particular instrument, is an important musical term that occurs about fourteen times in eight plays. It always implies a special importance in the music, and is generally connected with a royal banquet, masque, or procession. [67] We see that airs, serenades, dances, dead marches, and instrumental music were used in the plays for various dramatic purposes.

Because of the Elizabethan's knowledge of music and the prevailing ideas about philosophy that saw the universe in musical ratio, Shakespeare could use musical imagery and be sure that his audience would understand him. Hamlet invites Guildenstern, "Will you play upon this pipe... Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music."

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[67] For a more detailed explanation of this idea see Edward W. Naylor, Shakespeare and Music, (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1965), revised edition.

When Guildenstern replies that he does not have the skill, Hamlet answers, "Why look you now how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; ... S'blood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me."[68] Shakespeare could use the words of a song to add significant meaning to a play or use music alone to create mood and atmosphere. He could combine, in supreme artistic fashion, the use of music as art and music as entertainment in an imaginative realism that made entertainment art and made art entertaining. He delighted and captivated an audience for whom music and musical imagery were all part of the current Renaissance theory of the nature of music and its effects. It was as Bruce Pattison says in his book, Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance: "The mere range of musical terms in common use in Elizabethan times is astonishing -- we must conclude that the audience saw the point of them, else the dramatist would gain little".[69]

The dramatic conventions of the Elizabethan stage, both technical and philosophical, permitted and encouraged the introduction of songs and instrumental music into its spoken drama. The audience knew music, liked to hear it, and expected the dramatist to provide it. Music fit in perfectly with the Elizabethan idea of Pronunciation.

Then, too, Shakespeare's repeated imagery referring to the music of the spheres reflected the prevailing ideas about Pythagoreanism,

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[68] Hamlet, III, ii, 364-388.

[69] Bruce Pattison, Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance, op. cit., p. 18.

which taught that the whole universe was constructed according to musical ratio. When all was well in the universe and nothing interrupted the motion of the spheres, harmony was produced. But when an unnatural event took place, discord resulted. All of life's relationships were absorbed into this theory of harmony, for the microcosm was an imitation of the macrocosm; man's music was a copy of the universal music.

Yeats' conception of music also had spiritual and mystical connotations, but his aim for music in the plays was more complex than the aims of Shakespeare. Perhaps this is because Yeats is consciously trying to create again a unity of art which was an accepted way of life in Shakespeare's day but not in his own. Yeats wanted to move naturally from declaimed speech into song into instrumental music. All was a finely interwoven whole, and in the Dance Plays the entire dramatic presentation seems to take on the artistic unity of a Monteverdi opera. The success of the play depended upon an artistic unity that involved speech, myth, song, mime, dance, staging, lighting, costumes, and instrumental music.

Shakespeare's audience, more so than the audience of Yeats, was accustomed to both musical speech and music within the play. Indeed, as we have seen, the Elizabethans had enjoyed a unity of art that Yeats felt had since been lost. The formal separation and specialization of the arts began during the late Elizabethan period. Although this separation brought a greater freedom and a greater degree of technical perfection to each art, Yeats felt that it was again time, in literary history, to prepare a stage for "modern lyricism" -- a stage that would bring the arts together to recreate an imaginative representation of an

art that is but "a vision of reality". In order to realize his ambition, Yeats turned away from the existing conditions of the Abbey Theatre towards his new art. Music was as necessary for Yeats' new art as it had been for Shakespeare's poetic drama. For both poetic dramatists, then, music had a vital role to play.

With this statement in mind, serious students of drama must consider whether musical numbers in a spoken play are peripheral episodes or are essential elements that contribute to the dramatic action. If we find the musical numbers necessary, we must further consider why the music appears at one particular place and no other, why the mood of the song and its words are what they are, why one character sings and not another, and what the music either reveals about the character or does to the audience's mood.

A hypothetical question now arises. If Feste, as singer, were removed from Twelfth Night, would the play have the same dramatic impact? Again, if we removed the song from At the Hawk's Well, what would be left? Music, of course, represents some kind of image of our experience of living in time, with a double aspect of recurrence and becoming. Our emotions are aroused by an imagined experience and this experience is heightened by a repetition of the particular sounds that first gave rise to it, and also by the sense that the emotions as well as the sounds, must be resolved in some way. So, too, in a play, our experience of the imagined reality is heightened by repetition and the dramatic tension is resolved. Thus, the psychological effect of the musical presentation, like that of the dramatic presentation, can be one of increasing the sense of diversity, in order to strengthen the sense of unity.

Depending upon how and where music is used within the structure of the play, we can have order dissolving into chaos, discord merging into harmony, or a completely absorbing emotional experience in which music and words reveal the same essential act of imagination.

## CHAPTER V

## THE RELATIONS OF WORDS AND MUSIC IN TWELFTH NIGHT

There is a conscious but not expressible form of musical enjoyment when tonal appreciation is woven into day-dreaming. Our attention is led to the music and away from it, and we simply indulge ourselves in the voluptuousness of sound and our own images. One may spend a whole evening in this kind of dream and carry nothing from it. In Twelfth Night this is the kind of listening the Duke does in the opening lines of the play, for music will feed his grief, not allay his passion. "Give me excess of it", he cries, which probably led Shaw to remark that music is the brandy of the damned.[70] At any rate, Orsino is well steeped in his sentimental self-indulgence. The words "excess", "sicken", "die", and the lines "Enough; no more: Tis not so sweet now as it was before",[71] suggest that "the sweet sound That breathes upon a bank of violets",[72] has cloyed. The play opens with music but it does not express an ordered harmony. Orsino's love knows no order and knows no grace. His love is "all as hungry as the sea And can digest as much".[73] In solitariness he indulges his fanciful folly and takes what seeming pleasures can be his.

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[70] G. B. Shaw, Shaw on Music, selected by Eric Bentley. (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955), p. 237.

[71] Twelfth Night, I, i, 7-8.

[72] Ibid., I, i, 5-6.

[73] Ibid., II, iv, 99-100.

If Elizabethan music reflects the emotional meaning suggested by the words, the opening music, played either off stage or on, (Musicians attending)[74] will be sweetly sad, for a soft, dreamy musical quality is perfectly in keeping with the languid mood of the first scene. The Duke pursues his love-dream away from the object of his love, and seems to keep himself isolated from all activities, being interested only in reports which concern Olivia. Olivia, too, will retire from the world. This music, then, is strategically placed at the beginning of the play where its nostalgic charm prepares the audience for Orsino's mood, and acts as a stimulus for Orsino's own thoughts and feelings. Love, in two different forms, but both carried to excess, is responsible for the sweet melancholy of Orsino and Olivia, and the audience is charmed.

However, we soon learn of another kind of love. The inactivity of the first scene is replaced by the briskness of the second scene and we contrast Olivia with the vital Viola who is also alone and unprotected in the world, for she believes her twin brother to be drowned. There is no sentimentality about Viola. She will give generously and hazard for love. Her influence will bring harmony from the disorder, as she says:

> I'll serve this Duke:
> . . . for I can sing,[75]
> And speak to him of many sorts of music
> That will allow me very worth his service.[76]

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[74]W. Shakespeare, The Works of William Shakespeare, Vol. III, (Macmillan and Company Limited, 1923), The Cambridge Shakespeare, edited by W. A. Wright, p. 267.

The audience is now delighted as well as charmed, but also uncertain. And Shakespeare will increase the suspense, for along comes Sir Toby, a hanger-on, indulging in wine and goodfellowship, closely followed by Sir Andrew Aguecheek, whose presentations, both to being a gentleman and to winning Olivia's hand, are absurd. By now the Twelfth Night revelry with its upside down ordering of values is beginning to unfold.

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[75]It has been suggested that the songs of the play, at least some of them, were originally meant to be sung by Viola instead of Feste and that the songs were only given to the clown when the play was revised somewhat for a different clown-actor who could sing. However, there seems to be some inconsistency here. "O mistress mine", as we have it, is set for high voice, possibly soprano. (Figure III) It would be much more convenient for Viola, who would be played by a boy who plays a eunuch anyway, to sing the songs with the exception of the catches and the last song. From the evidence of the speeches in the play the clown is old and it seems unlikely that he would have a high voice. Perhaps, however, the actor merely adapted the tune of a known song to his own voice range. Because this is a special situation one cannot make a generalization about all the songs. Lack of specific evidence keeps us from knowing for sure if the songs were originally meant for Viola or Feste, and whether or not the songs were written especially for the play or were adaptations of known tunes.

Peter Warlock (op. cit., p. 117), tells us that Morley's First Book of Airs or Little Short Songs to sing and play to the Lute with the Bass Viol (1600) and thirty-five copies of the First Folio edition of Shakespeare are owned by a New York Collector who forbids others to see them. Morley's sole surviving exemplar of that song book contains the only musical setting of any song from a Shakespeare play that was printed during the poet's lifetime. It is the setting of "It was a lover and his lass". Warlock says (op. cit., p. 118) that no correct copy of it, in complete form with its accompaniment, is available in print. A manuscript of 1639, preserved in the Advocate's Library in Edinburgh, contains the tune in a version which is substantially the same as that given by Professor Wooldridge who saw the original edition before it left England. The rest of the accompaniment has been supplied by Sir Frederick Bridge. If this book were available, it might give us some clue to the actual setting of the songs in this play. (It does contain a "Mistress Mine", but it is not the same as the "O mistress mine" in Twelfth Night, although Shakespeare may have used the known tune for his own words.).

[76]Twelfth Night, I, ii, 55-59.

When "what you will" takes over, we can prepare ourselves for unlicensed merriment. Impromptu song is now in order, and Feste, that wise "fool", is joined by Sir Andrew and Sir Toby in the rousing catch "Thou Knave" which has humorous words and is made even funnier by the punning of the clown. The rough, uneven quality of the song and its unrestrained and unpolished rendition suits the Bacchanalian mood of this festive disorder. Sir Toby is so boisterously merry that he pours out his rather coarse feelings in the extracted lines from four old songs.[77] (Figure IV) When Malvolio comes in, furious with these unconventional order-breakers whose revelry awakens the household in the middle of the night, he applies precisely those epithets to the proceedings that the story and the catch-music lead us to expect. The merry-makers "gabble like tinkers... as they squeak out (their) coziers' catches...with no wit, manners, nor honesty".[78]

Now it might take a Sir Toby to sing the crude songs, but it would also take a Malvolio to make these remarks. The impromptu song makes an important contribution to the dramatic action. Such songs seem to be the natural extension of heightened speech. They release the pent-up feelings of the characters and communicate to the audience the emotion that the writer has imagined such a character would feel. They also seem to be a form of personal behaviour and usually reveal

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[77]Figure four is an example of one of the snatches of song bawled out by Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night (II, iii). "The words are almost identical and it seems likely that the tune Shakespeare knew was this one of (Robert) Jones', seeing that Twelfth Night was produced in the year following the production of Jones' book." (Peter Warlock, op. cit., p. 68).

[78]Twelfth Night, II, iii, 84, 87.

something about the singer and the action of the play in which they are set. The general impression is comic, although there are pathetic overtones. What better way, then, for Shakespeare to unfold his plot? We have a scene of comic disorder set in the framework of the Twelfth Night festivities with overtones of pathetic sadness. The music in the play fully realizes this duality.

Feste has been part of this evening's entertainment, but Shakespeare usually uses him for another type of song -- the called-for song -- which is requested by one of the play characters. While this song is sung, all action and speech halt. Feste's real role in Twelfth Night seems to be a musical one, but he is a dramatic character nevertheless. Feste seems to be a merry fellow who cares for nothing. However, the word "seems" in Twelfth Night takes on the same overtones as it does in Hamlet. Feste sings, dances, jokes, but we always know he is no fool. In fact, he is instrumental in showing up the folly of others and is, perhaps, used by Shakespeare to add a new dimension to his comedy. We are concerned with love and personal relationships and music and disorder, but the emphasis is on young love, and the youthful lovers, particularly Olivia, seem to think that youth's beauty and charm last forever. Feste, the professional, detached jester introduces the carpe diem theme. In the youthful Illyria he sings of death and the passage of time. The shadow of the cypress falls across the merriments of the revelry when he sings, "'What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;", he warns:

> Present mirth has present laughter;
> What's to come is still unsure:
> In delay there lies no plenty;
> Then come kiss me sweet and twenty,
> Youth's a stuff will not endure.[79]

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[79] Ibid., II. iii, 48-51.

Feste sings of the confusion that is the theme of the play in order to remind us that youth will not last forever. The duality of order and disorder, of light and dark, is emphasized throughout the play by the music. The words and tune of Fest's song are light and pleasing. But the white vocal line is set against the dark sounds of the lute accompaniment which draws out a certain undertone of sadness from the words. The dark sounds of the accompaniment bring out the poignant quality of an otherwise light and tuneful love song. This contrast of light and dark sounds, the contrast of the comic and the wistful, further illuminates the upside-down order in the play. Feste knows that the world of Twelfth Night[80] is temporary. The carpe diem theme has two sides -- the lightness of the "what you will" revelry and the sadness of the disorder it produces.

Yet, while Feste celebrates the carpe diem theme of "Present mirth hath present laughter" in his song,[81] he is pointing out in the same words that Twelfth Night is not forever, "Every wise man's son doth know (that) youth's a stuff will not endure". His song is a warning to those like Olivia who would shut themselves off from life, "for love is not hereafter" and "in delay there lies no plenty". Feste sees beyond the moment. He is perfectly capable of joining in the Twelfth Night revelry, but he is also the last person on stage to sing of man's folly and disorder and the passing of time.

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[80]For a full treatment of Twelfth Night festivity see J. D. Hotson, The First Night of Twelfth Night (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), pp. 11-16, and M. B. Smith, Dualities in Shakespeare (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), pp. 111-122.

[81]Sir Frederick Bridge, in Shakespearean Music in the Early Plays and Operas, (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1923), pp. 110-116, tells us that this version (Figure III) of "O Mistress Mine" by Morley is dated 1959.

A poignant echo of Feste's songs is heard when Viola and Orsino speak of the tune for "Come away death". The melody is soothing and Orsino finds its haunting charm more suited to his mood than any of the modern, lively tunes. He says:

> Mark it Cesario, it is old and plain;
> The spinsters and the knitters in the sun
> And the fierce maids that weave their thread with bones
> Do use to chant it; it is silly sooth,
> And dallies with the innocence of love,
> Like the old age.[82]

Is the song, then, the voice of heaven, the music of the spheres that may exert a magical influence on human beings? Is the music the song of love, the platonic imitation of the unheard cellestial music which has a curative effect? The heard song is material; that of the spheres immaterial. The Elizabethans could speak in terms of analogies because they thought that everything was unified. Heard music was an imitation of the unheard music of the universe; man's unity reflected the unity of all things. Again, we return to the opening music when the Duke says,

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He says that although the song was originally arranged for a six part accompaniment, only the parts for viol, flute, citterne and pandora have been recovered. Those for lute and bass viol are still missing. (Figure V) Bridge has supplied the present bass and harmony. However, Peter Warlock (op. cit., p. 119) tells us that the table of contents of Morley's unavailable book (see footnote 104) is printed in Dr. E. H. Fellows' English Madrigal Composers from which one tries to identify some of the songs. The "Mistress Mine" is probably "Mistress mine, well may you fare", of which the words, tune, and bass appear in the manuscript known as Giles Earle's book. Two other songs may be identical with two anonymous songs contained in a manuscript in the library of Christ Church, Oxford. A tune which appears (without words) in Morley's Consort Lessons under the title "O Mistress Mine" has been thought to be a setting of the lyric in Twelfth Night but has been reprinted in a very distorted form. There is no authority, Warlock says, for associating Shakespeare's words with this tune; the words do not fit the music which is metrically quite different. (See Figure VI).

[82] Twelfth Night, II, iv, 42-47.

"That strain again! It had a dying fall:" This could simply mean the end of the musical cadence that brings the musical composition to an end. It could be a particular kind of extended cadence -- part musical term and part symbolic cadence. We remember that the same sounds[83] describe Orpheus' irretrievable loss of Eurydice, and if we add the causal connection among the music of the universe, of man, and of musical instruments one wonders if "dying fall" is not only the final phrase of the musical composition but also the reminder that death closes that other piece of music, man -- whose earthly music God brings to an end with a final cadence.[84] This theory seems to reinforce the message in all Feste's called-for songs.

As the music plays Orsino bids Viola:

> ...if ever thou shalt love
> In the sweet pangs of it remember me....[85]

than asks, "How dost thou like this tune?" Viola replies from the sincerity of her ordered love:

> It gives a very echo to the seat
> Where love is throned.[86]

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[83]A cadence suggesting the final close of Eurydice's life and her loss to Orpheus is found in Peri's Eurydice.

[84]Donne uses the same kind of metaphor in his poem "Hymn To God my God, in my Sicknesse" from The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne, ed., C. M. Coffin (New York: Random House, 1952), p. 271.

[85]Twelfth Night, II, iv, 14-15.

[86]Ibid., II, iv, 20-21.

In this play, if the music is part of the same emotional experience as the poet's words, then the music traces the path from disorder to order. The called-for songs are, no doubt, sweet and melancholy and reinforce the excessive emotion of the Duke, for the clown says to Orsino:

> Now, the melancholy god protect thee;
> ... I would have men of such constancy put
> to sea, that their business might be everything and their
> intent everywhere; for that's it that always makes a good
> voyage of nothing.[87]

Order in the play is threatened by Olivia enchanted with Cesario and Orsino enchanted with Olivia; yet through disorder love's order is finally established. Toward the end of the play there are few called-for songs but more catches. The mood is no longer plaintive. At the end of the play the characters join hands in mutual accord. The discord seems to be resolved. However, Malvalio's wish for revenge reminds us of the sadness that disorder brings. It is also a part of life and is echoed in the songs. Orsino and Viola, Sebastian and Olivia, Sir Toby and Maria will enjoy the pleasures of love now:

> For women are as roses, whose fair flower
> Being once display'd doth fall that very hour.[88]

Feste remains alone on stage. Accompanied by pipe and tabor[89] his final song no doubt returns to a minor key as he sums up the difficulties that a disordered life can bring, and reflects on man and the universe.

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[87] Ibid., II, iv, 72-78.

[88] Ibid., II, iv, 37-38.

[89] W. Shakespeare, The Cambridge edition, op. cit., p. 370.

If Feste, as singer, were omitted and the singing parts deleted, the play would be over before this final song. W. H. Auden says[90] that in this play Feste would be hired as a singer, not as an actor, for if he were not needed to sing, the dramatic action in Twelfth Night would have got along quite well without the clown. James Joyce reports in Stephen Hero that Father Butt skipped the two main songs of the clown explaining when pressed that:

> The clown sings those songs for the Duke. It was a custom at that time for noblemen to have clowns to sing to them...for amusement.[91]

But if we consider again Shakespeare's reported purposes for using music in his plays, we must think about the effect derived from the use of music as an auditory image of things beyond man's immediate rational comprehension. Feste, alone on stage, sings of man's folly and disorder, of the passing of time, and of the wind and the rain. The theme moves from the particular to the universal; the mode changes from the major to the minor.

According to the Renaissance idea of acting, as we have seen, the actor's modulated tones and his actions must be suited to the words he is speaking. Musical speech and song were all part of the same art. In the true Shakespearean tradition, then, one would find it difficult to separate singer and actor. Feste's called-for songs were not included exclusively for the amusement of the audience. Neither were they meant to be listened to for their own sake in the modern sense of concert singing. The songs serve a dramatic purpose within the play. The music is as much a part of the dramatic action as gesture and poetry, but music is subtler,

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[90]Anne Ridler, (ed.), Shakespeare Criticism: 1935-60, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), W. H. Auden, "Music in Shakespeare", pp. 306-328.

[91]James Joyce, Stephen Hero, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), p. 34.

less overt or conscious. It excites our feelings and we respond to it without being as conscious of it as we are of the words. The unity of verse and music plus the theatre and dance gives us a full dramatic experience.

H. W. Garrod says:

For Shakespeare, his songs still sang themselves as he made them.

> What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
> Present mirth hath present laughter;
> What's to come is still unsure:
> In delay there lies no plenty;
> Then, come kiss me sweet and twenty,
> Youth's a stuff will not endure.

There are words, made, not for, but with music, and the art is dead, and it is a chance if anything like it will again revisit literature. The body of our joy has sensibly shrunken. From the old Greek, and the old human, unity of words, music, and dance, we have dropped to mere verse and already we are asking whether it need scan, and yet again whether poetry need be in verse at all.[92]

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[92]H. W. Garrod, "The Profession of Poetry", an Inaugural Lecture, delivered before the University of Oxford, 13 February 1924, English Critical Essays Twentieth Century, selected by Phyllis M. Jones (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 220.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE RELATIONS OF WORDS AND MUSIC IN AT THE HAWK'S WELL

At The Hawk's Well is a play about Cuchulain, but it has no single source in the Cuchulain legends and is purely symbolic. It is to be acted to the accompaniment of flute, harp, drum, and gong, but the words are not to be spoken "through music"; that is, the musical speech and the actual songs are "two halves of the soul, separate and face to face". The players move to drum taps and the beating of the drum reinforces important words in the verse. All must be as artificial as possible, Yeats insisted, for art is not nature and must stand apart from nature. "I call to the eye of the mind" Yeats informs us, and there is no mistaking the path the chorus-musicians wish us to follow. The spare, dream-like quality of the music, the mythological-religious theme, the masks, the stylized movement, the symbolic scenery have a powerful and magical effect. The voice of the chorus is to be lacking in the personal and erotic and as like pure music as possible. This will be a marked contrast to the "white-heat" passionate outbursts of the solo music and the intensity of the musical speech. The boughs are "stripped", there is an "ivory face", the place is lofty and remote, and always the "salt sea wind" sweeps through this barren place and gives a timeless, bodiless quality to the scene. Everything here is removed from the activities of the real world. Symbolically, we are transported to the land of the gods of ancient Ireland where the Sidhe still journey in the whirling wind.

The hero, Cuchulain, comes as a young man to the well of immortality which symbolises wisdom and creativity, and finds an old man who has been sitting by the well for fifty years waiting to drink from it; however, he is always foiled by the hawk-woman who guards the well. The old man is symbolic of intellect, and the young Cuchulain is his instinctive self. Both are intent upon the same goal, yet each is led astray, for neither reason nor instinct had enabled Yeats to drink of the well of wisdom. Each is deluded by the hawk who here symbolises logic and abstract thought.

At the beginning of the play the hawk-woman is cloaked in black suggesting complete objectivity or phase one of the moon. "That one stupid face" is dull and expressionless. To her the old man, intellect, "may speak and get no answer".[93] The old man chides youth, his instinctive self, for daring to think that he may succeed in drinking from the well when the old man has failed these fifty years. To gain immortality is not such an easy task. The old man says:

> And do you think so great a gift is found
> By no more toil than spreading out a sail,
> Or climbing a steep hill? Oh, folly of youth..."[94]

Creativity comes, like the water in the well, of its own volition. It, too, will splash up and then be gone. It cannot be forced; it cannot be gained by intellect alone. Yet the old man would jealously preserve the well for his own drinking. He tries to exclude his instinctive self.

Now, if Yeats' ideas are followed, the musical inflection of the spoken verse should grow out of the symbolic meaning of the poetry as it is re-imagined. The emotional intensity thus engendered guides

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[93]W. B. Yeats, The Collected Plays, op. cit., p. 211.

[94]Ibid., p. 212.

the audience to an imaginative and emotional experience which would not have the same depth if any part of the singing-speaking-dancing art were removed. Therefore, the actors and musicians have the responsibility of using rhythm and tone and inflection to bring the poet's words to life and to arouse the imagination of the audience.

The stage is bare and two masked players enter. They are the second and third musicians who slowly unfold and fold a black cloth on which there is a gold pattern symbolizing a hawk. As these musicians approach the first musician they lament the heart-ache of the old man's mother: (Figure VII)

> How little worth
> Were all my hopes and fears
> And the hard pain of his birth![95]

The futility of the old man's life is further emphasized as the musician sings:

> What were his life soon done!
> Would he lose by that or win?[96]

The old man struggles between two desires:

> The heart would be always awake
> The heart would turn to its rest.[97]

The two men wait together by the well and the old man warns Cuchulain of the woman of the Sidhe who lives on the mountainside. She is a mountain witch and anyone who gazes on her unmoistened eyes is cursed. This is the price one must pay for seeing beyond the realistic world.

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[95] Ibid., p. 208.

[96] Ibid., p. 208.

[97] Ibid., p. 209.

Yeats tells us that the spoken parts are to be done with medium voice, letting the musical value of the sound dominate the spoken value. No exact musical notation was put down for the spoken parts, but Yeats expected the actors to have a degree of competency so that their own taste would guide them in their artistic performances. This, however, did present some difficulty, for Yeats, as I have said, did have trouble communicating his ideas about his new art to his performers. We are told that the first performance was very successful, so we must assume that the actors, in this performance at least, were able to do as Yeats wanted. Even so, Yeats felt, during the performance, that there was still much to discover.

The four Dance Plays are to be accompanied by music, but on no account are the words to be spoken "through music" in the fashionable way.[98] The music served a definite dramatic function, and Yeats did not want it in any way to resemble our modern idea of "mood music". The music for the songs was to be integrated with the words and rhythm of the vocal line. The music emphasized the emotion inherent in the poetic context and helped to communicate this emotion to the audience so that the audience would more easily imagine the play-character's situation. Music also could heighten the dramatic action, for the movements of the players were to be accompanied by gong, drum, or zither, at the discretion of the musician-actor, whenever the intensity of emotion in the play called for such accompaniment.[99]

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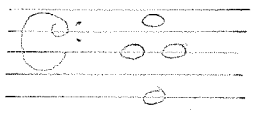
[98] W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies, op. cit., p. 331.

[99] Ibid., p. 339.

To achieve the idea of great simplicity of execution, instruments were chosen that could be mastered by the performers, who had a fair idea of music, without undue difficulty. The strings of the zither, beginning by the lower ones, are grouped in nine or ten chords of four notes consisting of the key note, two strings in unison giving the fifth above, and the octave of the key note.

Ex. 

Beyond these chords there are seven double strings tuned to any pentatonic scale that suits the play.[100] One musician plays the drum and gong, one the flute, and the singer plays the harp. The drum and gong are to be used during the performance to emphasize the spoken word. How this was done was left to the imagination and taste of the performer-musician. The intensification by drum and gong of the spoken parts was kept very simple, for always the music of instruments and the music of speech were different from each other. The object of the composer was to find a tonal formula which would bring out the music underlying the words, for it is the music of speech that communicates feeling.

As the play progresses, the dramatic warning "I am afraid of this place", is heightened by the use of portamanto,[101] done in the Oriental fashion, and the forlorn wind song:

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[100] Ibid., p. 420.

[101] Portamanto is a continuous gliding from one note to another.

O wind, O salt wind, O sea wind!
Cries the heart it is time to sleep;
Why wander and nothing to find?
Better grow old and sleep,[102]

keeps out temporary ideas, for according to Yeats, music is the notion's clothing of what is ancient and deathless. And the old man is deluded again. While the water bubbles up, he sleeps. Between watching and waiting, "it is enough to drive an old man crazy". Accursed, indeed, is the life of man. Between passion and emptiness what he longs for never comes.

The woman who guards the well is now possessed by the hawk and dances a magic dance. (See figure 8) She throws off her black cloak and reveals herself as complete subjectivity, phase fifteen of the moon, symbolizing imagination and beauty, which will express the reality of the inner vision. The old man is already asleep. Cuchulain is lured away from the well and the musicians tell us that he has lost what may not be found until men heap his burial mound. He might have lived at his ease. Instead, Cuchulain pursues the hawk. The hawk-woman's dance is as intense and passionless as the moon. Now,

All complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.[103]

Mask and dance were two of the supreme images through which Yeats had come to express the reality of the inner vision. Mask, paradoxically man's best means of creating and communicating what he is; dance, where the dancer's character is lost but his whole soul is paradoxically intensified:

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[102] Ibid., p. 210.

[103] W. B. Yeats, "Byzantium," from Collected Poems, op. cit., p. 281.

O chestnut-tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossomer, or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?[104]

Here we have the surrender of personality to the objectified emotion of the dance, the complete immolation of intellect in body that Yeats means when he speaks of a visionary dancer who has out-danced thought.

In the play, Yeats uses the analogy of the beauty of woman, which should be non-intellectual, inexpressive, and mysterious --should, indeed, out-dance thought like the hawk-woman who is a symbol of this beauty. Yeats re-creates the decadent theme of the Fatal Woman, Salomé, to his own finer purposes. She is transformed and has a place in Yeats' aesthetic. As a dancer she represents the idea of the Image as non-discursive, without separable intellectual content. As the woman who demanded the head of the saint she emblematized the cost of the artist's achievement. She haunts Cuchulain. The effect of her musical art is powerful and magical. Cuchulain gets to his feet and follows the music. The song and dance open his present to expectation at a moment when he might have closed it to all but past memories.

When Cuchulain returns from his pursuit of the hawk, he finds the well again dry. The people of the hills are now roused against him and the rest of his life will be spent in continual warfare. Cuchulain has looked on the eyes of the hawk. Now he can never go back to being what he formerly was. For the old man, however, the dancers are "deceivers of men", and he remains "one whom the dancers cheat". Inspiration can lead intellect only so far. The chorus grimly concludes that he who pursues wisdom must lead a bitter life, and he who pursues it prizes the dry

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[104]W. B. Yeats, "Among School Children", from Collected Poems, p. 245.

stones of a well and a leafless tree more than the comfort of the old hearth:

> This is the plight of the old man... to be with the scarecrow thinkers and teachers and poets, out of life; the scarecrow is the emblem of such a man, because he is an absurd, rigid diagram of living flesh that would break the heart of the woman who suffered the pangs of his birth.[105]

Yeats' central idea of unity is illustrated in this play. The dancer cannot be separated from the dance. There is unity of self and anti-self, of complete objectivity and complete subjectivity. The well of immortality unites the desires of the old man and Cuchulain. We see that intellect alone is but a "withered tree". It cannot gain wisdom.

Yeats' Dance Plays vary blank verse with other lyric metres. Such a contrapuntal structure of verse combines past and present. What moves Yeats and his audience is a vivid musical speech that must not exercise the ghostly voice. In Yeats' moment of revelation he is awake and asleep, self-possessed in self-surrender, like the dancer. Yeats believes that in man there is something called "Unity of Being" which can be compared to a musical instrument so strung that if we touch one string all the strings will sound faintly. (This belief is not unlike the Pythagorean idea of the musical spheres of the universe prevalent in Shakespeare's time.) This unity of being was central to his whole aesthetic. It is therefore no accident that Yeats, in his Dance Plays, combines music, dance, theatre, and poetry. Yeats' genius is the belief that he has found the natural form of this unity in a perfect proportion of beauty -- a mystical order, unstained by time. Moving from Shakespeare to Yeats the wheel has come full circle once again to achieve a union of the arts.

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[105]Frank Kermode, Romantic Image, (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 84.

To achieve this union Yeats felt that he must turn away from the colloquial tone and realistic facial expression of the Ibsenite-Shavian movement. He must also turn away from the naturalistic Abbey Theatre to create a drama of symbol and myth -- a drama which was remote, spiritual, ideal, indirect, and symbolic. Yeats would not try to restore the "irrevocable past" of Shakespeare. Rather, he wished to revive, for the modern theatre, a tradition of poetical drama that was "now resounding and declamatory, now lyrical and subtle".[106] With the discovery of his "new art" Yeats felt that he had found the way where the subtler forms of literature could find dramatic expression. His new verse style was more spare and the images were exactly delimited by the words. The form of the Japanese Noh play gave him the dramatic equivalent of this new verse style. The Noh showed him how he could combine music and dance with words without letting the words be overpowered. Yeats followed the general principles and formal framework of the Noh, but otherwise his Dance Plays are definitely Yeats and no one else. Thus, with his mind full of ghosts, witches, and supernatural phenomena, fascinated with masks and the ritual of the dance that he said was pure image, Yeats rejected character and gave us the spiritual world to which Cuchulain can lead us.

Here was a mysterious art reminding us of half-remembered things,[107] always doing its work by suggestion, not direct statement; always a complexity of rhythm, color, music, and gesture. Simple, yet remote, its imaginative allusions were kept alive by the distance created by the formalized stage conventions, the formal mask faces, the chorus that had no

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[106] W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies, op. cit., p. 418.

[107] Yeats' idea of incarnation is made clearer by reference to his play "The Dreaming of the Bones" in the Collected Plays.

part in the action, and the actor's movements copied from the marionette shows of the fourteenth century. The poet and artist could now create images of those profound emotions that exist only in "solitude and silence".

The poetic image is a symbol of inner experience which is otherwise incommunicable. The stylization helped Yeats to ignore character and limit himself to the soul of life. Yeats conveys a purely emotional intimation of spirituality, yet by the stabbing violence of the emotion, heightened by the music and the climactic ecstasy of the dance, the theme shows itself at the end of the play. The non-verbal arts echo and amplify the musical cadence of the words and, if the performance is a good one, the audience is given an intensity of passion which transcends mere mood. One must pass through the gateway to the soul-life, for the theme that is organically incorporated in the play is not discernible by logical analysis. Rather, it comes from the tragic rhythm -- a process that leads us from purpose, to passion, to perception, or from Cuchulain's affirmed purpose, to the Hawk's dance, to the realization of what it all means. The music, the dance, the ritual, lead us to this full realization and we can only achieve this out of passionate involvement. We come to Yeats not to understand and see, but to feel and imagine, as Plato might have done.

Perhaps this indicates the essential difference between the verse plays of Shakespeare and Yeats and their use of music within the plays. In Shakespeare we certainly come to feel and imagine, but we also understand and see with little difficulty. His message comes to us through the words and actions intensified by the symbols and music.

Yeats' force also comes through the words, but the words are symbols to create "The Image". The music not only intensifies the symbol, it is part of the symbol, and it is absolutely necessary if we are to get Yeats' full symbolic meaning and gain an intense experience of our own. The philosophy of the unity of all things was accepted as part of the Elizabethan culture. Yeats tried to re-unite that which had become separate.

## CHAPTER VII

## CONCLUSION

The Elizabethan thought of the universe as governed by rhythmical motion where "All things that Are or, what's the same, are Musicall".[108] Even philosophers were aware of three kinds of music to correspond to three levels of existence -- music of the universe, music of man's soul and body, and music of instruments which imitated God's harmoniousness. John Dee said, "the whole world is, as it were, a lyre...and man too, for all is analogous".[109] Speech, dance, and music were inseparable, not only for Shakespeare, but also for Yeats.

In the occult philosophy of the East, the Arab writers saw in the four strings of the ʾūd, their musical instrument, a microcosmic representation of the zodiac, the elements of the universe, and the temperaments and humours of the human body. Later the fifth string was added to the ʾūd and placed in the centre to represent the soul. If the strings represented the humours of the body, then, by Arab reasoning, the body could be manipulated musically as could the artificial instrument. The "soul" embodied the four strings which are paralleled in the four elements, the four humours, the four parts of the soul -- "sense, imagination, reason, intellect".[110] The acceptance of these theories

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[108] John Donne, "Preached at Lincoln's Inne Upon Trinity-Sunday, 1620", Sermons, op. cit., p. 480.

[109] G. L. Finney, Musical Backgrounds for English Literature: 1580-1650 (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1961), p. 2, citing John Dee, Propaedeumata Aphoristica (London, 1618), Aphorism XI (here translated from the Latin).

[110] G. L. Finney, op. cit., p. 8.

depended upon seeing a kind of unity of the physical characteristics of the heavens, of man, and of instruments. It also depended upon a close relationship between "speculative" and "practical" music. One must be able to discuss divine harmony in terms of the stringed instrument and the stringed instrument in terms of universal music. Perhaps we can trace this Eastern influence in Yeats' use of the pentatonic scale and his ideas of certain sounds producing certain reactions in the emotions of man. At any rate, the idea of man's music being an imitation of divine music influenced the Elizabethans.

Shakespeare's audience had been alive to nuances of sound and variations of rhythm in the verse play. By Yeats' time, however, the understanding and interest of the common man in verse plays had waned, yet Yeats hoped his ideas of theatre would provide a remedy. Yeats wanted literature to return to its "old habit" of letting the power of the emotion and the situation bring forth the right word. This would give the writer a living speech again, and rid him of dead, meaningless words, for speech must be so natural and dramatic that the hearer would feel the presence of a man thinking and feeling:

> Let us go back in everything to the spoken word, even though we have to speak our lyrics to the psaltery or harp, for we have begun to forget that literature is but recorded speech and even when we write with care we have begun to write with elaboration what could never be spoken.[111]

From his earliest years, Yeats was fascinated by the possibility of using musical tone and rhythm to reinforce the words of drama, for in drama the sound of the voice is the important thing, for the sound conveys the emotional meaning. Words, as prose, may appeal to our reason; it is

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[111] W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies, op. cit., p. 31.

only when we recognize the little tunes that are in the words, as Yeats says, when we delight in the varied pitch and cadence of the spoken verse, that we realize the more complete art, with its subsequent appeal to the whole man, that I believe Shakespeare and Yeats intended when they wrote their plays.

Yeats, then, would present musical words with theatre and dance, and lofty emotion; indeed, ecstasy would be his aim. The musical-choreographic climax would contain a literary context to define its meaning. Come, Yeats invited his audience, and imagine yourself as different from what you are; assume your second self. Let ear and tongue delight in the subtleties of sound and let men continually delight one another with the little tunes that are in the words, for when men love language all literature becomes the perfection of an art that everybody practices. Poetry, then, must be spoken by those who have music in their voices and a learned understanding of its sound.

As we have seen, Shakespeare's use of music in his plays reflects the philosophy of his age. However, this musical interpretation of the universe gradually lost its hold with the growing scepticism towards the theories of the ancients. Utilitarian science had silenced the heavens and the Elizabethan kind of imagination. The age of empiricism replaced the unity of art with categories within art and specialization within these categories. Finally the singer lost sight of the unified whole of the art work that was to be presented, and sacrificed words and meaning for beautiful tone alone. It was this approach to music and to art that Yeats complained of so bitterly in Plays and Controversies. Man shares with harp and zithern the great world's harmony, and Yeats wished to restore this harmony.

Shakespeare was concerned with musical sound, with the technique of playing instruments to enrich our knowledge with two things at once -- with artistic truth and with similitude. He was concerned with the relationship of all things, particularly with people to each other. Some modern artists seem to have returned to a metaphysical conception of music as a representation of life. Musicians are now breaking from their scientific rules to find again a macrocosmic harmony into which their age will fit. For Shakespeare, the great world, assumed eternal, immutable, and musical, was an instrument perfectly in tune. For Yeats, earthly instruments merely glimpse a higher sphere of being, of a reality in which only a few have faith. Modern man, separated from his imagination, specialized, and compartmentalized, has lost the unity of being Yeats saw in the Renaissance man.

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## MUSICAL APPENDIX

Figure I — W. B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 23.

Figure II — B. L. Joseph, Elizabethan Acting (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 40.

Figure III — Sir Frederick Bridge, Shakespearean Music in the Plays and Early Operas (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1923), pp. 77-78.

Figure IV — Peter Warlock, The English Ayre (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 68.

Figure V — Sir Frederick Bridge, op. cit., p. 15.

Figure VI — Peter Warlock, op. cit., p. 120.

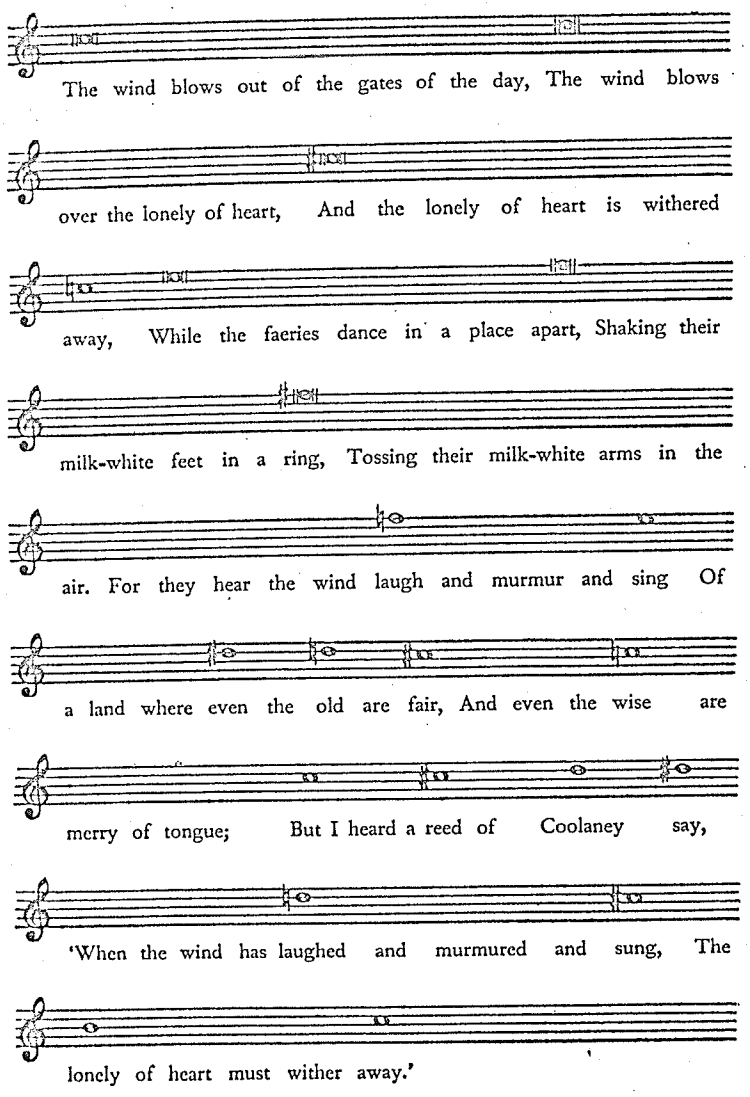
Figure VII — W. B. Yeats, Plays and Controversies (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1923), pp. 422-432.

Figure I.

# *Speaking to the Psaltery*

## THE WIND BLOWS OUT OF THE GATES OF THE DAY [1]

FLORENCE FARR.




[1] The music as written suits my speaking voice if played an octave lower than the notation.—F. F.

Figure II.

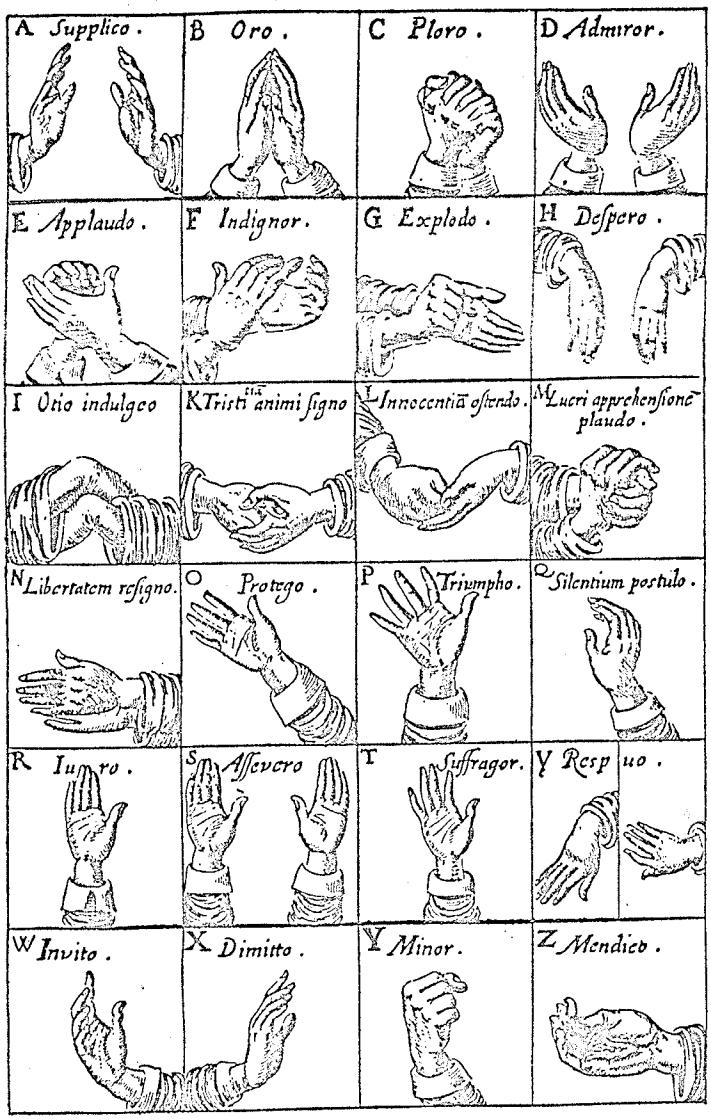



FIG. 2

Figure III.

# MUSICAL APPENDIX

## O MISTRESSE MINE

(With Morley's original Harmony for the Citterne and Pandora)

From Morley's *Consort Lesson*, 1599.

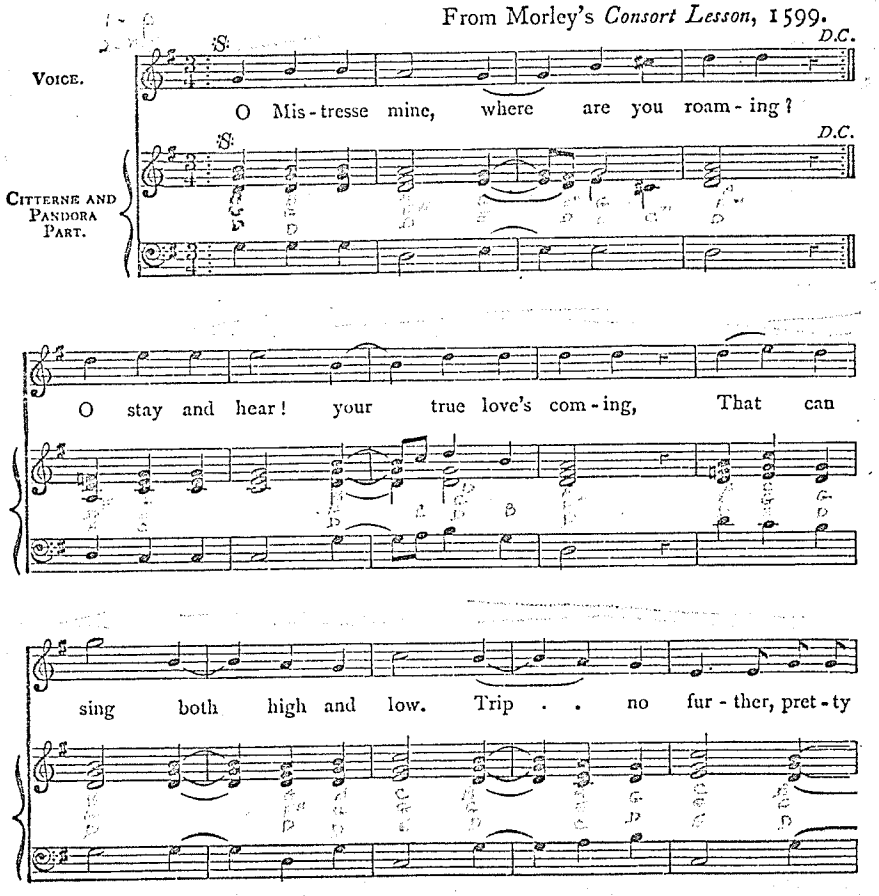


Figure III.



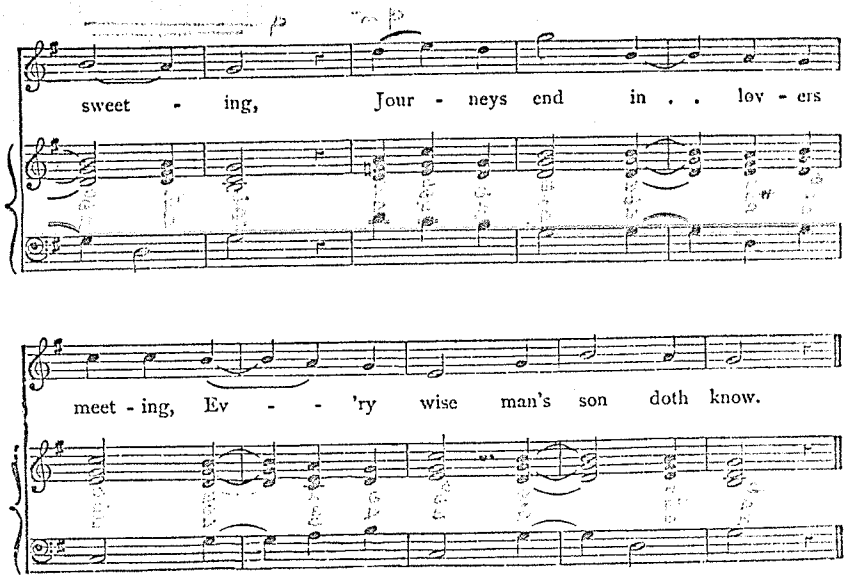
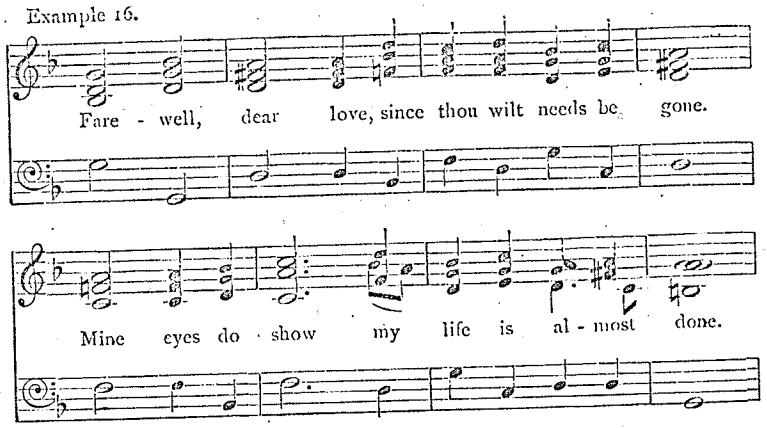

sweet - ing, Jour - neys end in . . lov - ers
meet - ing, Ev - - 'ry wise man's son doth know.

Figure IV.



As a good example of the style of the work, the opening strain of No. 12, 'Farewell, dear love, since thou wilt needs be gone', may be quoted:

Example 16.

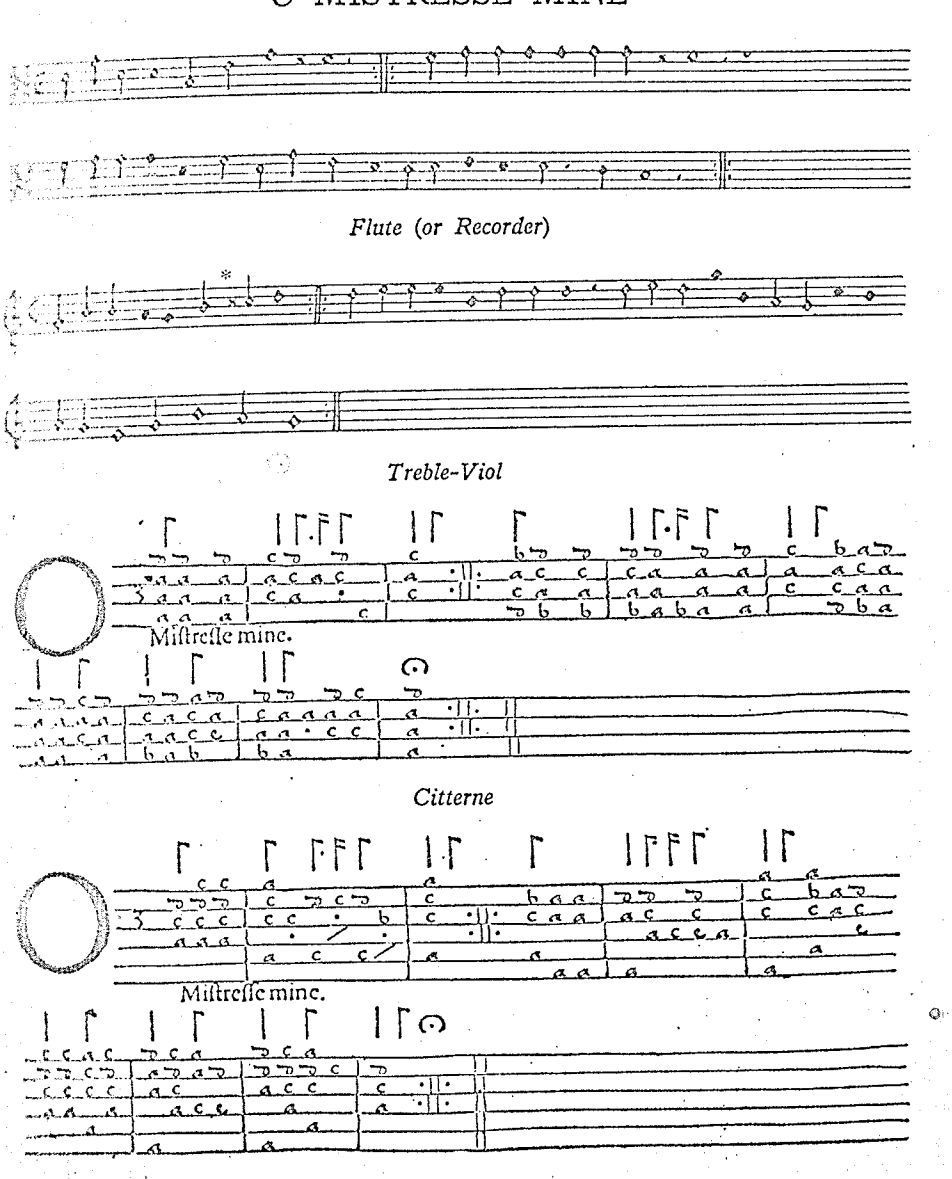



This is one of the snatches of song bawled out by Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night* (II. iii), when Maria and Malvolio come in to protest against the shindy he and Sir Andrew are kicking-up in the middle of the night. The words are almost identical, and it seems likely that the tune Shakespeare knew was this one of Jones's, seeing that *Twelfth Night* was produced in the year following the production of Jones's book. The popularity of the song is attested by the appearance in the composer's fourth book, nine years later, of a song identical in metre and very similar in melody, 'Farewell, fond youth, if thou hadst not been blind'.

*The Second Booke of Songs and Ayres, Set out to the Lute, the base Violl the playne way, or the Base by tableture after the leero fashion* appeared in 1601. It is dedicated 'To the right virtuous and worthy Knight Sir Henry Leonard':

'Worthy Sir and my honourable friend, I give you this Child, I pray you bring it up, because I am a poor man and cannot

Figure V.




MORLEY'S INSTRUMENTAL PARTS OF "O MISTRESSE MINE"

* This sharp is wanting in the original, but is proved to be a printer's error.

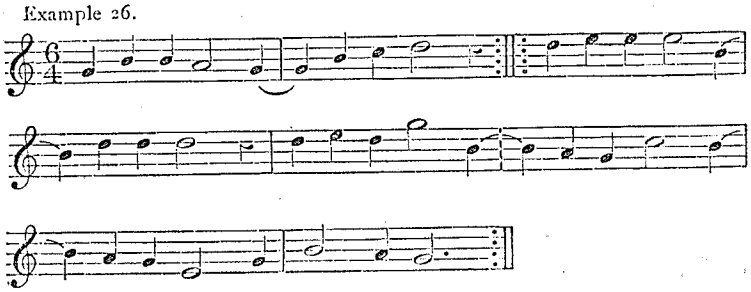
Figure VI.



But with the exception of 'Said I that Amaryllis', 'O grief, even on the bud', and 'Our Bonny-boots could toot it', it cannot be said that any of the songs are particularly effective in this form, and even these three lose a great deal in the transcription. One or two of the ballets would be much more suitable for singing as accompanied solos, and indeed the tune of 'Now is the month of maying' does appear with lute accompaniment in Add. MS. 15117 in the British Museum, allied, curiously enough, to Campion's poem, 'The peaceful Western wind'.

A tune which appears (without words) in Morley's *Consort Lessons* under the title 'O Mistress mine' has been in recent years thought to be a setting of the lyric in *Twelfth Night*, and as such has been reprinted in a very distorted form. There is no authority whatever for associating Shakespeare's poem with this tune; the words do not even fit the music, which is metrically of a quite different construction.

Example 26.



The tune looks as though it belonged to a five-line stanza with a rhyme-scheme *a-a-b-b-a*, the last three lines being repeated. The words may have been those of a popular song which Shakespeare adapted and made use of as a starting-point for a flight of his own fancy—or, as is far more probable, Shakespeare may have had nothing to do with the matter, and the similarity of title in tune and lyric is mere coincidence. The three words

## MUSIC FOR "AT THE HAWK'S WELL"

*To be sung without accompaniment as they unfold the curtain.*

I call to the eye of the mind A well long choked up and dry And

boughs long stripped by the wind, And I call to the mind's eye Pall - or of an ivory

face Its lofty dis-so-lute air, A man climbing up to a place The salt sea wind has swept bare.

I have dreamed of a life soon done, Will he lose by that or win? A mo-ther that saw her

son Dou-bled o - ver a speckled shin Cross-grained with nine-ty years Would cry, "How

little worth Were all my hopes and fears And the hard pain of his birth!"





*To be sung as they sit down*

FLUTE. *pp*

HARP.

*p*

The boughs of the hazel shake, The sun goes down in the west. The

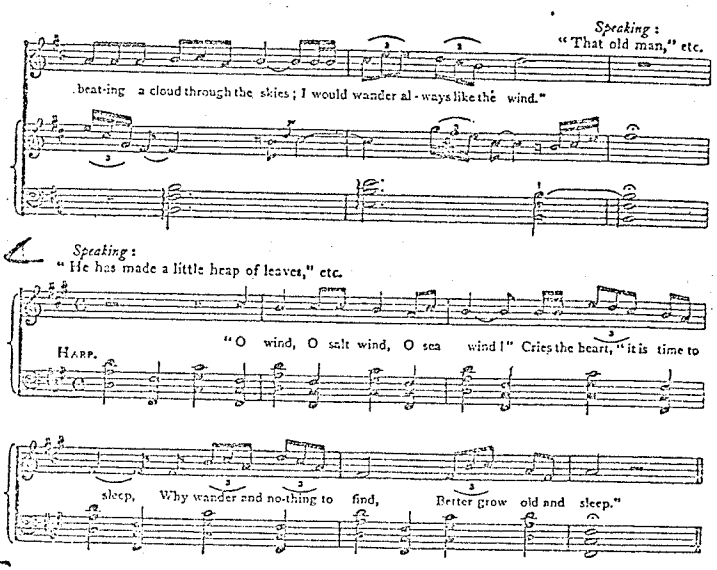
*Speaking:*
"Night falls," etc.

heart would be al-ways a - wake, The heart would turn to its rest

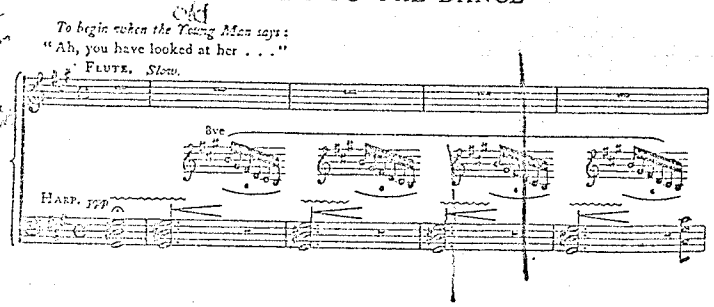
*p*

"Why should I sleep," the heart cries, "For the wind, the salt wind, the sea wind Is

Figure VII.




## PRELUDE TO THE DANCE





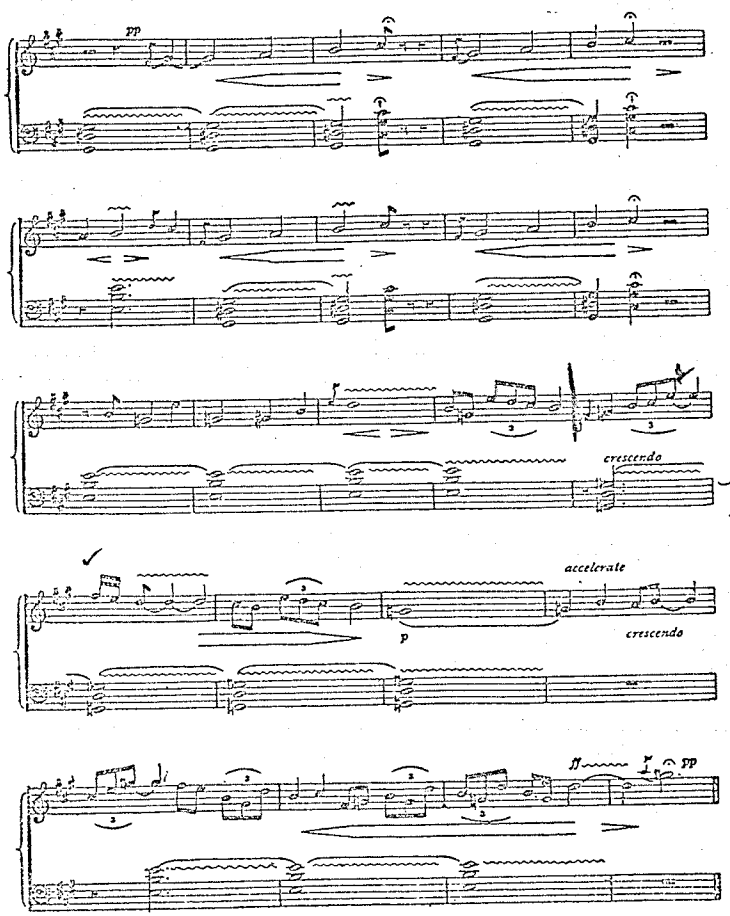
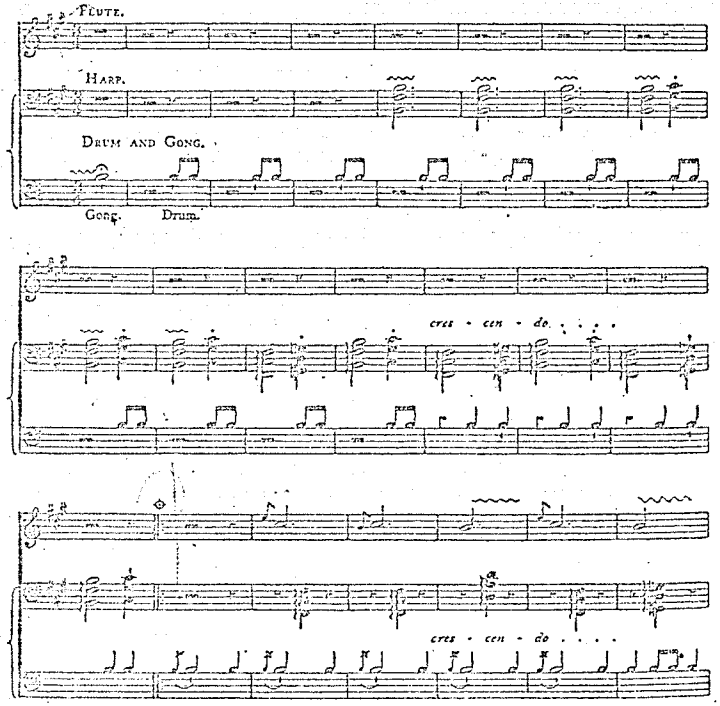




Figure VII.

## THE DANCE

The Dance is played through to ⊕ A, begun again at ⊕ going to B, begun again at ⊕ and played to the end, omitting the passage from A to B. Thus it ought to last about 3½ minutes.

*This Dance is joined on to the Prelude by a soft roll on the gong while the girl begins to move.*







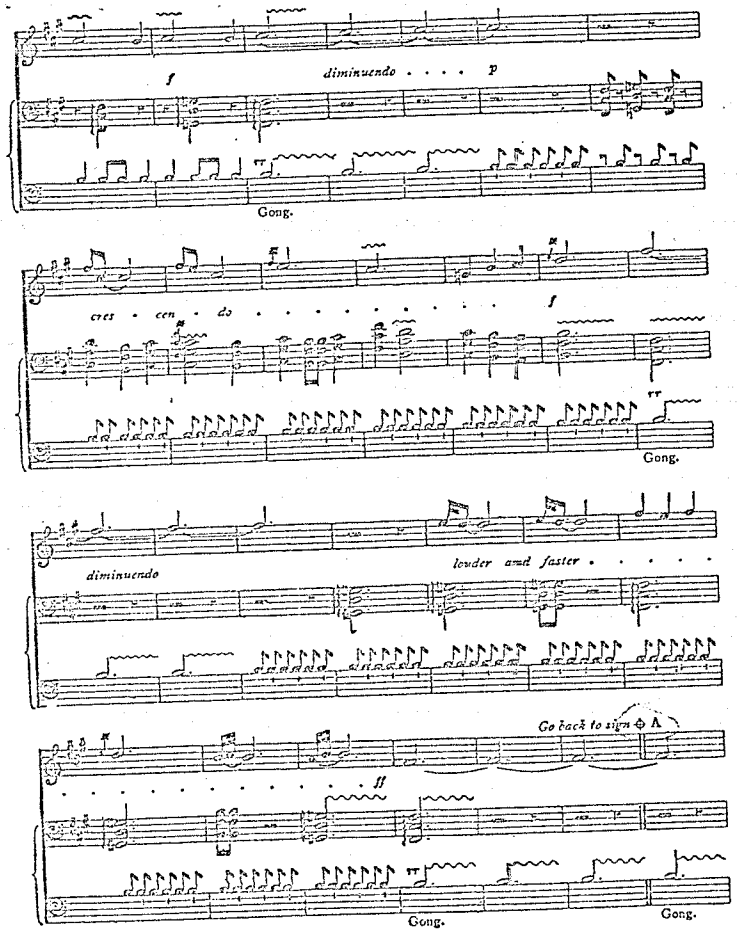
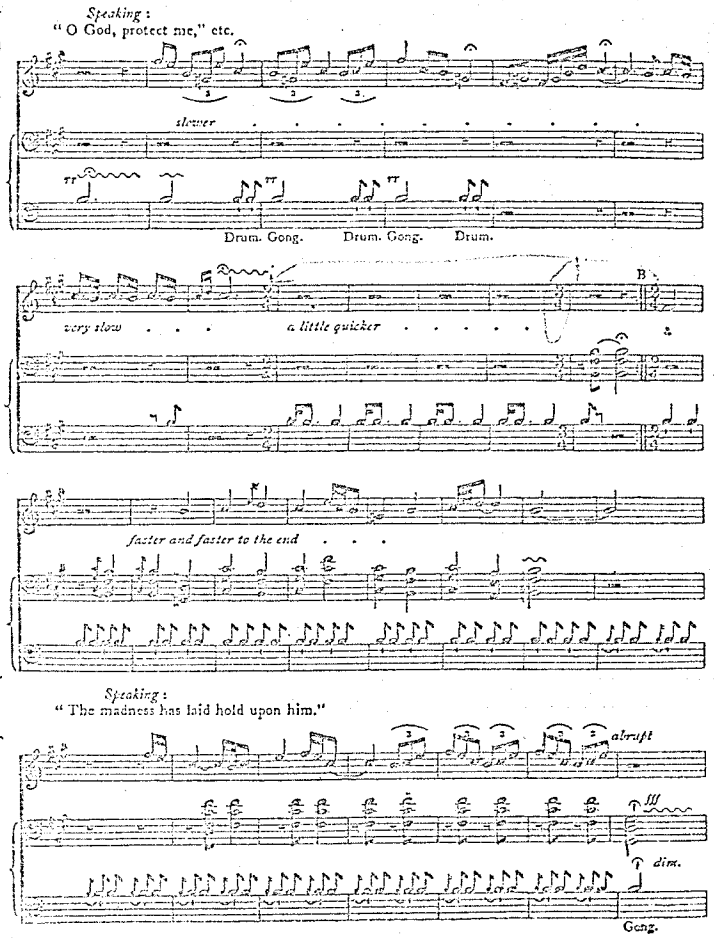




Figure VII.


Speaking:
"O God, protect me," etc.
slower
Drum. Gong. Drum. Gong. Drum.
very slow
a little quicker
B
faster and faster to the end
Speaking:
"The madness has laid hold upon him."
abrupt
dim.
Gong.



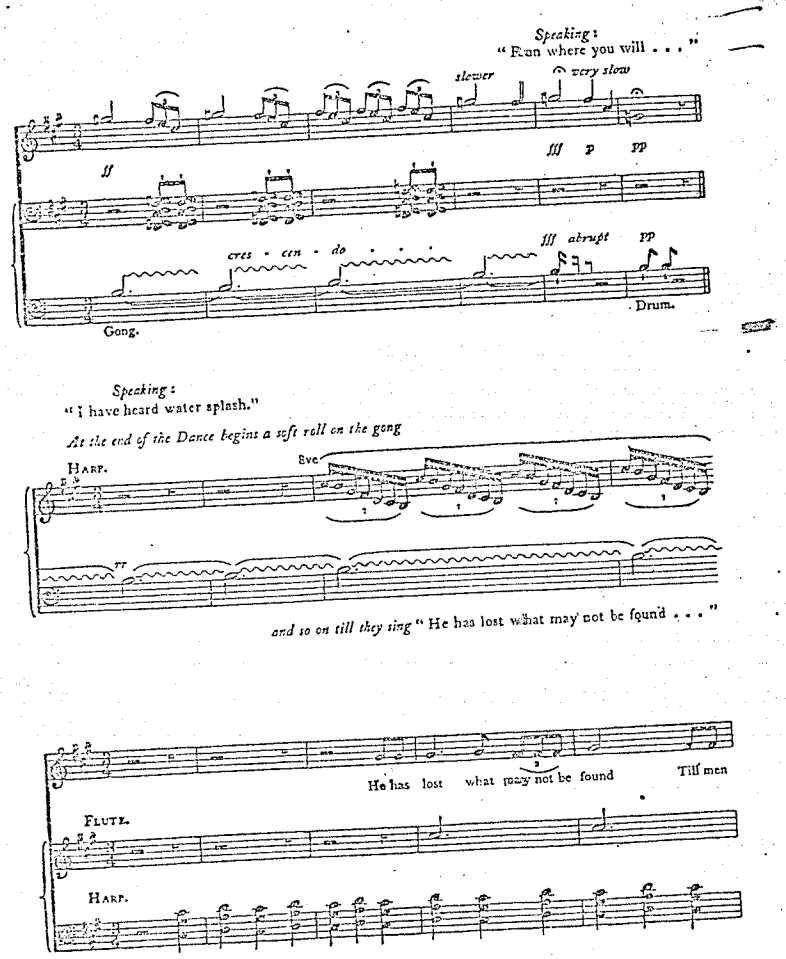
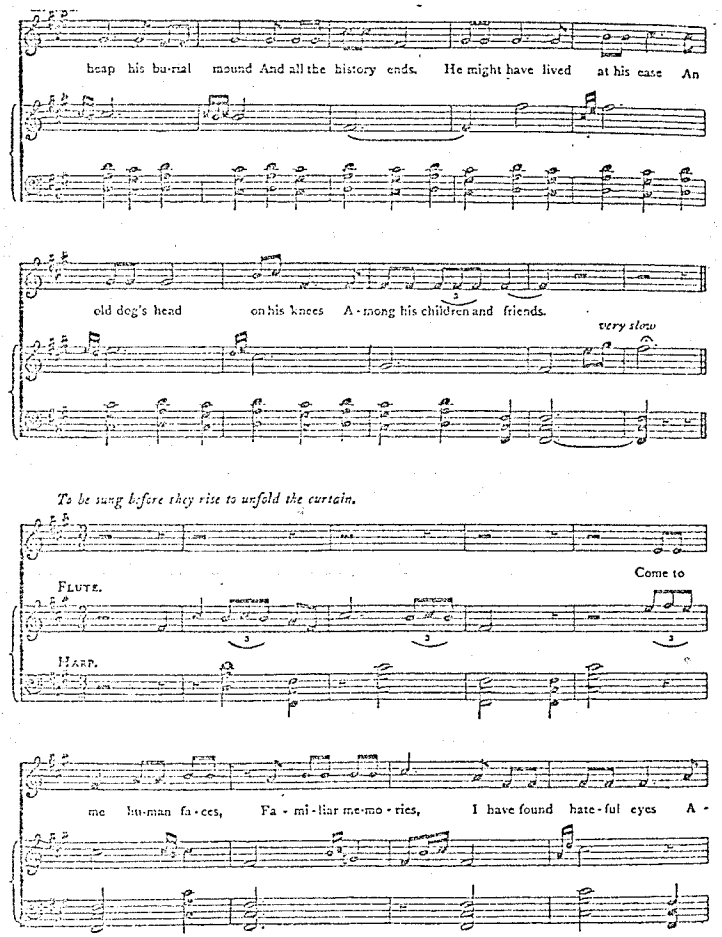

Speaking:
"Run where you will . . ."
slower
very slow
Drum.
Gong.
Speaking:
"I have heard water splash."
At the end of the Dance begins a soft roll on the gong
Harp.
8ve
and so on till they sing "He has lost what may not be found . . ."
He has lost what may not be found Till men
Flute.
Harp.

Figure VII.


heap his burial mound And all the history ends. He might have lived at his ease An
old dog's head on his knees A-mong his children and friends.
very slow
To be sung before they rise to unfold the curtain.
Come to
Flute.
Harp.
me human faces, Fa-mi-liar me-mo-ries, I have found hate-ful eyes A-



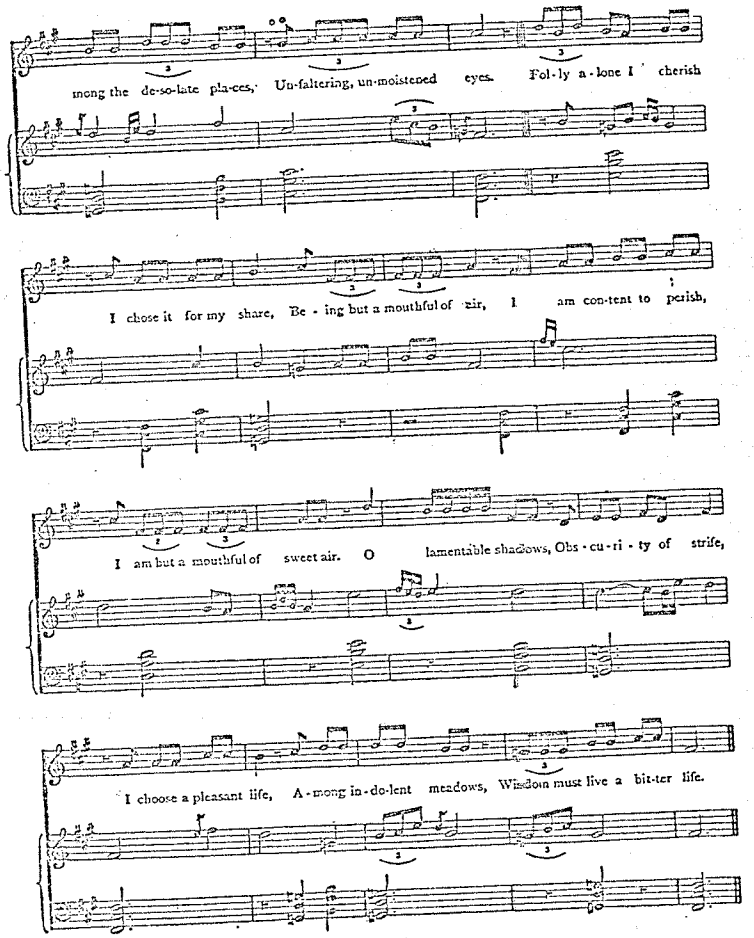

mong the de-so-late pla-ces, Un-faltering, un-moistened eyes. Fol-ly a-lone I cherish
I chose it for my share, Be-ing but a mouthful of air, I am con-tent to perish,
I am but a mouthful of sweet air. O lamentable shadows, Obs-cu-ri-ty of strife,
I choose a pleasant life, A-mong in-do-lent meadows, Wisdom must live a bit-ter life.

Figure VII.

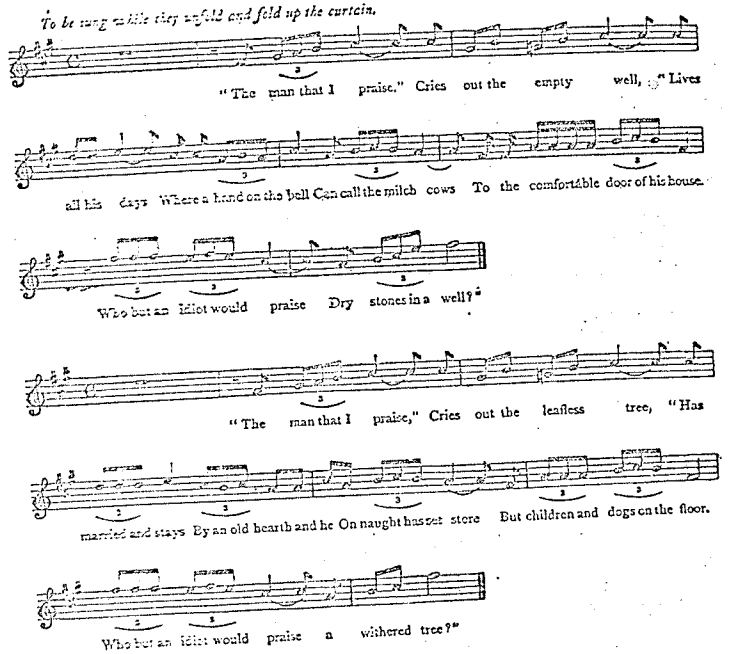

To be sung while they unfold and fold up the curtain.
"The man that I praise," Cries out the empty well, "Lives
all his days Where a hand on the bell Can call the milch cows To the comfortable door of his house.
Who but an idiot would praise Dry stones in a well?"
"The man that I praise," Cries out the leafless tree, "Has
married and stays By an old hearth and he On naught has set store But children and dogs on the floor.
Who but an idiot would praise a withered tree?"

Figure VII.