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GRADUATE COLLEGE

MICHAEL HEAD: HIS CONTRIBUTIONS AS COMPOSER, PERFORMER, EDUCATOR WITH AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SOLO SONGS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

BARBARA SUE STREETS
Norman, Oklahoma
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MICHAEL HEAD: HIS CONTRIBUTIONS AS COMPOSER, PERFORMER, EDUCATOR WITH AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SOLO SONGS

A Dissertation
APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY

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MICHAEL HEAD: HIS CONTRIBUTIONS AS COMPOSER, PERFORMER, EDUCATOR WITH AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SOLO SONGS

By: Barbara Sue Streets

Major Professors: Steven Curtis, Ph.D., and Meryl Mantione, D.M.A.

Entries in reference works list the Englishman Michael Dewar Head (1900-1976) first as a composer. However, his involvement in and contributions to music went beyond his considerable achievements as a composer. He was active as a singer, pianist and accompanist throughout his life, and also a professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music in London from 1927—1975. Unfortunately, his efforts on behalf of music education receive scant attention in the literature. Michael Head was indefatigable as an adjudicator for competition music festivals throughout the British Isles, and as an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. In this capacity he had the opportunity to encourage and influence countless amateur music makers. His contact with these amateur musicians was direct, in his written and verbal comments regarding their performances, and indirect, in the many compositions he wrote specifically for amateur performers.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the life and work of Michael Head and to document his contributions to music education. During the course of the study, answers were sought to the following questions:

1) What were the early life experiences and musical training that prepared Michael Head for his career as composer, performer and music educator?

2) What were Head's contributions to music education/vocal pedagogy? How do his contributions reflect or articulate Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy?

3) How was Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy reflected in his compositions?

Information was obtained from a variety of published and unpublished sources.

Michael Head was an impassioned proponent of the art called MUSIC. By his own admission he loved to sing and his performances reflected his desire to share his love for the art of music. thus encouraging others to participate in music making. During his lifetime he enjoyed considerable renown as a composer and achieved some fame as a performer. These two aspects of his work, composing and performing, informed his teaching. Because of his contributions to music, and particularly, to music education, Michael Head's life and work provide an exemplary model for music educators to study and emulate.

To
Bruce Michael Govich, D.M.A.
and
Peter P. Adams, Col. USAF (Retired)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Music was first introduced into the curriculum of the public schools in the United States on August 28, 1838, when the Boston School Board voted to have the committee on music contract with a vocal music teacher for the public schools. The Boston Academy of Music, long an advocate of music in the schools, referred to this action as "The Magna Charta of musical education in this country."[1] From Boston, school music spread gradually to other cities across the country so that after the Civil War school music was accepted as part of the school curriculum along with reading, grammar, and arithmetic. Instruction, at first, followed the method developed by the singing-schools for teaching music reading, but by the 1870's systematic graded work from first grade through the high school grades was in place. By no means was the method of instruction uniform in all schools but two concepts were of particular importance: "one, that the pupils should be taught as many songs as possible with the help of the teacher, a sort of rote-note process, the other that they should learn to read music in order to sing the songs."[2] It was no longer a question of whether there should be music in the schools, merely a question of which concept should receive instructional emphasis. As might be expected, there were conflicting views on which concept should receive precedence. For some, teaching music reading should be the primary goal of the music teacher, while for others "the real purpose of teaching music in the public schools is not to make expert

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[1] Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States* (Oliver Ditson Co., 1929; reprint, Reston, Va.: Music Educators National Conference, 1966), 55.

[2] Ibid., 112

sight singers nor individual soloists . . . a much nobler, grander, more inspiring privilege is yours and mine; to get the great mass to singing and to make them love it."[3] During the years 1885-1905 note reading gained ascendance over general song singing. After the turn of the century, there was a greater demand for more song-singing in the music lesson and the song method evolved as a means of teaching music reading with song as the basis rather than teaching music reading through drill and exercises. In this way the two concepts, note reading and song singing, reinforced each other rather than competing against each other for instructional time. Writing in *History of Public School Music in the United States*, Edward Birge stated that in the twentieth century the mastery of these two elements, reading and singing, were the means to achieve the real aim of music instruction, "a joy in music as music."[4]

In tracing the history of public school music Birge stated that it "sprang from community music."[5] By the time he wrote his seminal study of school music, public school music teachers and music supervisors were in turn making great contributions to community music. He cited examples of music teachers serving as civic chorus directors, community band or orchestra conductors, organizers of music festivals and public lecturers on varied musical topics. Amateur community musical activities were diverse and thriving and included "church choral societies, Sunday school choirs and orchestras, Y.M.C.A. orchestra and massed singing, singing in the shops and industries and their use of bands and orchestras, singing in lodges, the Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions Clubs, in such

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[3] Ibid., 162.

[4] Ibid., 164.

[5] Ibid., 225.

community enterprises as Christmas tree celebrations, National Music Week, neighborhood caroling, and in pageantry, celebrating town and city anniversaries."[6] It is significant to note that at the time Birge was writing, the aforementioned community musical activities and performances were not the exclusive provenance of the school children but included adult members of the community as amateur musicians. Birge further stated that the amateur spirit in music "affords the opportunity and encouragement of each person old and young to use the music that is in him in co-operation with others."[7]

Clearly, at the time Birge was writing, cooperative music making between the schools and communities was the norm, and it was expected that school music teachers and supervisors would contribute their expertise to these efforts. Community music making had fostered the development of public school music, and public school music enriched community music making through the participation of the children and their teachers. This symbiotic relationship between the public schools and the communities supported an environment in which life-long participation in music making was wide-spread.

Birge first published his book on American public school music in 1928 and since that time adult participation in amateur music making beyond the school years has declined considerably. In the intervening years the focus of music education has been directed almost exclusively towards the school-age population. However, the importance of amateur music making in the lives of the adult population in the community is

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[6] Ibid., 226.

[7] Ibid.

becoming a recurring theme in current music education discourse, and there is renewed interest in re-forging the connections between the schools and the community. These issues are addressed by Michael Mark:

> It would be ideal, however, if more music educators would create an active role for themselves in the out-of-school musical lives of their communities . . . If school music educators could find more ways to build bridges to community musical organizations and institutions, both school and community would benefit. A close relationship would offer opportunities for school music teachers to become leaders in community cultural life . . . Another consequential benefit of relating school and community music is the opportunity to extend music education to adults of all ages.[8]

Theresa Nazareth calls for music educators to take a "coherent, coordinated approach to lifelong music education" and suggests "current music education policy, therefore, needs to be examined to ensure that education can expand beyond such conventional outlets as the elementary school classroom."[9] Roy Ernst recognizes that "One of the frontiers of music education is service to people outside traditional K-12 school settings." He directs a project called "Music for Life" in which the goal is "to focus on the need to create new programs for adults of all ages."[10] Chelcy Bowles suggests that the key to adult amateur music making is "not only to consider seriously how to provide music education for the adult population as diligently as we do for the youth population, but also to attend to aspects of the teaching process during youth education that may profoundly affect adult

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[8] Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 3rd ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 301.

[9] Theresa C. Nazareth, "A Coherent Framework for Lifelong Music Education, *General Music Today* 12, no. 2 (1999): 17-19.

[10] Roy Ernst, "Music for Life," *Music Educators Journal* 88, no. 1 (2001): 47-51.

participation."[11] These "aspects of the teaching process" are dependent upon the answer to the question "What do we want our students to be able to do musically as adults?"[12] This question is echoed by Judith A. Jellison who further states that "those of us in the music professions . . . do what we do in order to improve the quality of life for present and future generations."[13] In order to facilitate this improved "quality of life," there is a need for educators to employ teaching strategies that will promote the transition from children making music in the classroom to adults making music in the community. Bowles points out that in spite of the successes of school music in this country, most adults are not involved in amateur music making, and Jellison cites statistics that indicate that there has not been an appreciable increase in the numbers of adults actively engaged in musical endeavors. She poses additional questions for educators: "Are we selecting goals for our students that will be meaningful to them and improve the quality of their lives as adults? Are we making any progress in teaching musical skills that will be used by our students when they are adults?"[14] She concludes by saying, "We are faced with pressing questions concerning the successful transitions of all children into meaningful music making environments—both inside and outside their schools, during childhood and into and continuing throughout their adult lives."[15]

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[11] Chelcy Bowles, "Teaching For Adulthood: Transcending The Child," *General Music Today* 12, no. 2 (1999): 15-16.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Judith A. Jellison, "Life beyond the Jungle Stick: Real Music in a Real World," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 17, no.2 (1999): 13-19.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

Perhaps the most pertinent question concerning music making should be "why?"—that is, why does one choose to engage in music making? Certainly children in classroom settings usually cannot choose whether or not to participate in music making (although they can control the level of their response), but adults must make a conscious choice to participate, or not to participate, in music. The questions surrounding adult motivation regarding participation in music making have occupied music educators for decades and the results of their investigations should inform the curricular decisions made for all students, regardless of age.

In an effort to determine the answer to the question "why?" Deborah Sheldon conducted a study entitled "Participation in Community and Company Bands in Japan." She asked members of the subject bands the question "Why are you a musician?" As expected, there were a variety of responses which could be distilled as "music performance gave them opportunities to express themselves and pursue musical excellence, as well as to strengthen human relationships and social ties."[16] One participant even responded "For my Life!" These responses parallel two factors which Sheldon cites as driving American participation in community ensembles: (1) social environment and (2) the pursuit of happiness and excellence.[17] What is of significance is the use of the term "participation." In this context it is evident that it is meant to describe a deliberate, conscious choice to be actively engaged in the art called "music."

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[16]Deborah A. Sheldon, "Participation in Community and Company Bands in Japan," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 17, no. 1 (1998): 21-24.Ibid.

[17] J. Burley, "Adult music education in the USA," *International Journal of Music Education* 9, 35 (1987) in Sheldon, "Participation . . . "

Sheldon's findings that the "social environment" and "the pursuit of happiness and excellence" govern a person's decision to engage in music making confirms David Elliot's paradigm for 'musicing'. Elliot defines MUSIC as "the human endeavor of making and listening for musical sounds that are culturally rooted and practice-specific and, therefore, artistic through and through."[18] Musical doers he calls 'musicers' and musical doing he calls 'musicing'. He further states that the primary values of MUSIC, or 'musicing', are: "self-growth, self-knowledge, musical enjoyment, . . . and the happiness that arises from these—in short, a certain musical way of life."[19] In this context, self-growth and self-knowledge represent Sheldon's "pursuit of excellence," and are life values whose pursuit is "natural and essential to human beings."[20] It follows, then, that one (musicer) engages in music making (musicing) in order to acquire self-growth, self-knowledge and to pursue happiness, the results Sheldon reported from her study. It is also evident that because MUSIC is "essential to human beings" it should not be the exclusive preserve of the professional but should rightfully inhabit the domain of the so-called amateur as well. Elliot adjures music educators to facilitate self-growth, self-knowledge, and pursuit of happiness for individuals by providing opportunities for 'musicing', but he also addresses the issue of MUSIC in the community:

> In terms of what our profession can do for itself, securing the place of music education depends on preparing ourselves to explain and demonstrate to others that MUSIC is achievable, accessible, and applicable to all students. In this regard, our ongoing tasks include the following:
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 4. To develop dynamic communities of musical interest by expanding music

[18] David Elliot, *Music Matters* (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 91.

[19] Ibid., 308.

[20] Ibid.

> education horizontally and vertically beyond conventional schooling. This task includes developing ways to link school and community-based music education programs; initiate and develop links between professional music educators and the musical needs and interests of corporate employees; and develop mentor-apprenticeship relationships between senior music students and junior students in the same school system.[21]

For Elliot, MUSIC is not an autonomous work or object but a practice, an active participation, or doing, by a doer. The value of engaging in MUSIC lies in the actual doing and the benefits the doer derives from the doing (self-growth, self-knowledge and pursuit of happiness). Elliot is not alone in this view. Christopher Small has written: "But the real power of art lies not in listening to or looking at the finished work; it lies in the act of creation itself."[22] Jane Manning, too, writes of the value of 'musicing': "There is no substitute for live music making, with its endless capacity to stir and surprise."[23] Although Mary Ellen Pinzino writes about singing and the child, her comments are eminently cogent for the adult amateur 'musicer': "The ultimate music experience is one in which the essences of the music and of the individual merge into one expressive whole . . . We must release the power of the individual to create his own music . . . Singing must be experienced by one's own power, by one's own soul."[24] Not only is music making essential for children, as Pinzino so passionately states, but Leon Botstein writes of its importance for university students: "More institutions have come to the conclusion that not only should music theory and history be taught, but music-making as well . . . the

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[21] Ibid., 305.

[22] Christopher Small, *Music, Society, Education*, 3d. ed. (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 218.

[23] Jane Manning, *New Vocal Repertory 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 3.

[24] Mary Ellen Pinzino, "Fanfare for the Common Kid," *The Choral Journal*, June 1984, 22-24.

time has arrived . . . to rethink the teaching of music history and theory in colleges and universities and the relationship between theory and history and the active making of music."[25] Roy Ernst is interested in the older adult community and writes: "The intrinsic qualities of making music have a high priority for most adults, who tend to be motivated by the music itself."[26] Bowles, too, targets this segment of the population and writes: "Most adults participate voluntarily because it gives them pleasure and fulfillment."[27] Estelle Jorgensen posits a dialectic approach to artistic expression which nonetheless embraces the tenet of 'musicing' as central to the experience of MUSIC: "The music education profession is in need of a broad perspective that accepts, embraces, and even celebrates both the making and the receiving of music, recognizing that all the actors in the process—composer, performer, and listener—are equally participatory in, and recipient of the musical experience, albeit in possibly different ways."[28] For Jorgensen, making music is 'musicking' (using Christopher Small's spelling of the term), and receiving is response to the action, such as listening to a symphony. To be responsive requires that the listener deliberately chooses to be open to receive the musical message. This type of conscious musical listening is possible only by intentional, active participation on the part of the listener and is included as part of the 'musicing' (doing MUSIC) as it is implied by Elliot's definition of MUSIC. Christopher Small, too, includes listening as a component of 'musicking' (his spelling). For him, "The

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[25] Leon Botstein, "Teaching Music," *The Musical Quarterly*, 80, No. 3, 385-391.

[26] Ernst, "Music for Life"

[27] Bowles, "Teaching for Adulthood . . . "

[28] Estelle R. Jorgensen, *In Search of Music Education* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 85.

fundamental nature and meaning of music lie not in objects, not in musical works at all, but in action, in what people do . . . To music is to take part in any capacity in a musical performance whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing) . . . "[29]

While much work and study is being done by music educators to ensure that children have opportunities to participate in musical experiences to enhance their quality of life and promote "self-growth, self-knowledge and pursuit of happiness," evidence indicates that there is very little transfer of music making from the school music class to music making in the adult community. Many authors have addressed the importance of 'musicing' as a means to enhance and enrich one's life, whether child or adult, and music educators are being challenged to devise strategies/methodologies that will facilitate the transition from child/student 'musicers' to adult amateur 'musicers'.

At the conclusion of her study, Sheldon highlights the importance of providing school music experiences that "will serve to create enduring positive attitudes. Teachers who inspire an enjoyment of and dedication to music may ultimately be leading their students to participate in community ensembles after graduation."[30] Because adult amateur music making is a relatively new field of study, Ernst calls attention to the fact that "many opportunities exist for research and development in music education for adults. We need additional research about musical and nonmusical outcomes. We need to know more about how adults learn music."[31] Bowles urges educators to "consider

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[29] Christopher Small, *Musicking* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 8-9.

[30] Sheldon, "Participation . . . "

[31] Ernst, "Music for Life"

what we can do to prepare students for the independence of adulthood. How can we structure various aspects of each session, as well as the long-term learning experience to inspire in them the desire to continue life-long engagement in music?"[32] Nazareth is quite pointed in her comments: "The music learning habits and interests of members of various age groups—other than school-aged learners—are underresearched as well as underserved by music educators. Such large omissions must be addressed if the availability of lifelong music learning opportunities is to be considered an achievable goal . . . "[33] Jellison, too, discusses the questions surrounding the transition of child music makers into adult music makers. She recognizes the "need to continue to pursue strong and important lines of research and apply empirically verified teaching techniques."[34] Jorgensen acknowledges that the focus of attention in music education in the West has been the student in the elementary, middle, and high school setting. She maintains "continuing or life-long music education, and geriatric music education . . . also require emphasis . . . music educators will need to broaden their focus to study how people come to know music throughout a seamless, life-long process."[35] Finally, Christopher Small concedes that "the big challenge to music educators today seems to me to be . . . how to provide that kind of social context for informal as well as formal musical interaction that leads to real development and to the musicalizing of the society as a whole."[36]

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[32] Bowles, "Teaching for Adulthood . . . "

[33] Nazareth, "A Coherent Framework . . . "

[34] Jellison, "Beyond the Jingle Sticks . . . "

[35] Jorgensen, In Search of Music Education. 83.

[36] Christopher Small, *Musicking*, 208.

At the present time, the training of music educators is focused primarily on courses of study that result in the acquisition of the knowledge and skills that are necessary to teach general, vocal, or instrumental music to students in grades K-12. In addition, applied, and/or private instructors teach vocal or instrumental performance skills to a student population ranging from young children to young adults in high school and college. However, music educators are being called upon to expand the field of teaching endeavors to include the adult population, most of whom are presently not 'music makers' or 'musicers'. Many authors have cited the need for further research in the area of adult amateur music making in order to investigate ways and means to encourage transition from child to adult participation in music, to better understand the needs of the adult learner, and to develop appropriate methodologies/strategies for teaching adults. More specifically, the training of today's music educators should include information concerning adults and the varied ways they relate to music and music making in order to facilitate their participation in the art of MUSIC.

This need for further research in adult amateur music making that has been articulated by many music educators calls for a clarification of terminology. Research has been defined as "the careful, systematic, reflective, and objective pursuit of information and understanding, which adds to human knowledge."[37] Cornelia Yarbrough states: "The goal of all research in music should be a product that contributes to knowledge about music and musical behavior."[38] She lists five specific methodologies

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[37] George N. Heller, and Bruce D. Wilson, "Historical Research" in *Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning,"* ed. Richard Colwell (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 103.

[38] Cornelia Yarbrough, "The Future of Scholarly Inquiry in Music Education." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 44, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 190-203.

for research in music education: Historical, Philosophical, Experimental, Descriptive and Qualitative. A working definition of Historical research in music education is provided by Heller and Wilson: " . . . the careful and systematic investigation of the past people, practices, institutions, and materials of teaching and learning sound (and silence) moving in perceptible form expressive within a context."[39] Heller and Wilson also offer four reasons for historical research in music education: 1) to satisfy interest or curiosity; 2) to provide a complete and accurate record of the past; 3) to establish a basis for understanding the present and planning for the future; and 4) to narrate deeds worthy of emulation.[40]

Since people first began to engage in music making, teachers have struggled to discover and implement the means/methods of imparting musical knowledge and performance skills to their students. Modern music educators, seeking answers to current problems relating to the teaching and learning of music, would benefit from a study of these past efforts. Consequently, in the current call for research concerning the issues surrounding adult amateur music making, historical research would be a viable mode of inquiry to employ. Certainly in the past there have been societies which have benefited from the enthusiastic music making of adults and a study of conditions, motivations, and instruction of these amateurs would be enlightening for today's music educator.

Within the realm of historical research, Heller and Wilson specifically cite the need for biographical studies and studies of musical pedagogy and its attendant materials: "Honest and thorough biography serves not only to provide worthy models, but also to

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[39] George N. Heller, and Bruce D. Wilson, "Historical Research in Music Education: A Prolegomenon," *Council for Research in Music Education* 69 (Winter 1982): 3.

[40] Heller and Wilson, "Historical Research," 102.

cast notables of the past in accurate, life-like (and therefore replicable) human models of behavior."[41] Thus, the training of today's music education students should include a study of the lives of exemplary music educators from the past and a study of their "replicable" teaching behaviors in order to provide valuable models for the students to emulate. While Heller and Wilson are concerned with the role of modeling in the acquisition of teaching skills in the formation of future educators, Malcolm Tait discusses various studies which investigate the part played by teacher modeling in the acquisition of musical skills or knowledge. He concludes that "musical skill development can be enhanced by teacher modeling" and "modeling can greatly affect the quality of learning."[42] Howard Gardner not only agrees that teacher modeling can be effective, but seems to view teacher modeling as a necessity in the learning process: "Teachers must serve as role models of the most important skills and attitudes and must in a sense embody the practices that are sought."[43] With this understanding of teacher modeling, it is evident that "replicable" teaching behaviors may include skills and techniques observed in the teacher's musical performances in addition to behaviors related to the instructional process per se.

Clearly there is a need for further research in music education. Specifically, there is a need for historical research in music education, including biographical studies. In addition, there is a need for research in the area of adult amateur music making with an emphasis on ways to effect a transfer of music making from school age to adult

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[41] Heller and Wilson, "Historical Research . . . A Prolegomenon," 17.

[42] Malcolm Tait, "Teaching Strategies and Styles" in *Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning*, ed. Richard Colwell (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 528-529.

[43] Howard Gardner in David Elliot, *Music Matters*, 289.

'musicers', sometimes referred to as "life-long" music making. One goal of such research would be to illuminate the life and work of exemplary music educators in order to provide models of replicable performing and instructional behaviors for other music educators to emulate. During his varied career as composer, performer, and music educator, Michael Head worked with children and adults, and amateurs and professionals. His life exemplified lifelong music making and in his work he encouraged others in lifelong music making. An examination of his life and career would provide insight into his philosophy of music education and thereby inspiration both for other practicing educators and future music educators.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the life and work of Michael Head and to document his contributions to music education. A major goal of the project was to ascertain Head's philosophy of music education and vocal pedagogy. In addition, a pedagogical analysis of selected songs was undertaken in order to demonstrate the application of his philosophical principles to his composition of songs. The researcher sought answers to the following questions:

1) What were the early life experiences and musical training that prepared Michael Head for his career as composer, performer and music educator?

2) What were Head's contributions to music education/vocal pedagogy? How do his contributions reflect or articulate Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy?

3) How was Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy reflected in his compositions?

PROCEDURES

Information for this study was obtained from a variety of published and unpublished sources. Most of the biographical data was found in Nancy Bush's book "*Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist: A Memoir.*" Additional facts were found in publicity materials made available by Head's primary publisher, Boosey & Hawkes, and by his agents, Ibbs & Tillett or the Imperial Concert Agency. Newspaper interviews given by Head were also used. Michael Head kept a diary through most of his life and selected extracts from his diaries were used to support and verify the biographical information from other sources.

In addition to the biographical details, information was sought concerning Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy. This information included statements made by and about Head concerning these topics. Sources included Head's diaries, newspaper articles and reviews of his performances and compositions, transcripts from four of his radio broadcasts, lecture notes, and periodical articles by and about Head. Because teacher modeling can be an important component in training students, it can be inferred that a teacher's performance exhibits skills that s/he deems valuable for students to imitate. Consequently, two recordings made by Michael Head were examined to aid in determining his philosophy.

Clifton Ware has stated that "one of the singing teacher's most important responsibilities is selecting repertoire that facilitates healthy vocalism and communicative artistry."[44] Even though Michael Head taught applied piano rather than applied voice at the Royal Academy of Music, his extensive work as an adjudicator of vocal classes and

[44] Clifton Ware, *Basics of Vocal Pedagogy* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 226.

as a participant in vocal master classes sponsored by the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) indicated his abiding interest in and dedication to vocal pedagogy, or the teaching of singing. Therefore, it is reasonable to presume that his activities in the area of vocal pedagogy influenced his song composition. Consequently, a pedagogical analysis of selected Michael Head songs was undertaken in order to determine the ways in which his songs reflect his philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy.

Because this study contends that Michael Head was a music educator/vocal pedagogue, a definition of the terms is in order. "Pedagogy" is defined as "the art or science of teaching."[45] Victor Fields offered a more explicit definition of pedagogy: "Specifically it is a system of imparting knowledge by formulating, regulating and applying the principles and rules that pertain to the acquisition of a particular type of knowledge or skill."[46] He continued by defining vocal pedagogy as "the aggregate of principles, rules and procedures pertaining to the development, exercise and practice of the art of singing; and the process of training, by a prescribed course of study or technical discipline, the individual's innate capacity for vocal utterance in song."[47] As Clifton Ware has pointed out, one of the concerns of a vocal pedagogue is repertoire selection and this often involves an analysis of the songs in question. "Analysis" is defined as "a separating or breaking up of any whole into its parts so as to find out their nature,

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[45] Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (1966) s. v. "pedagogy"

[46] Victor Alexander Fields, Training the Singing Voice: An Analysis of the Working Concepts Contained in Recent Contributions to Vocal Pedagogy (New York and London: King's Crown Press, 1947), 16.

[47] Ibid.

proportion, function, relationship, etc."[48] There are several methods of analysis that have been employed in the study of song literature, including descriptive, stylistic, performance, eclectic, and pedagogical analysis. This study proposes a pedagogical analysis of selected songs by Michael Head. For the purposes of this study, pedagogical analysis of the songs of Michael Head will mean "breaking up" the songs into their parts to determine how those parts are specifically related to concepts emphasized in the teaching of voice.

There have been several studies which have incorporated a pedagogical analysis of song and a description of a few of them would be of use in developing the most appropriate format for the present study. In her study of the Jugendlieder of Alban Berg, Wendy Zaro-Fisher listed both textual and pedagogical considerations for each song as well as a category she called "Other Considerations," which included interpretive suggestions and harmonic, formal, and technical issues. Pedagogical considerations included: voice category best suited, range, tessitura, level of difficulty, suggested tempo, and German musical markings. One of the reasons Zaro-Fisher gave for creating a pedagogical guide of the Berg songs was "to create a useful tool for the teaching and study of this repertoire."[49] Sue Ellen Teat conducted a study to compare "pedagogical opinions and suggestions regarding [the] teaching . . . " of selected American art songs.[50] She studied seventy-one vocal pedagogy books to determine the questions concerning pedagogical use. The two main categories of pedagogical uses, "to improve

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[48] Ibid., s. v. "analysis"

[49] Wendy Zaro-Fisher, "A Pedagogical Guide for the Jugendlieder of Alban Berg" (D.M.A. diss., University of Oregon, 1993), 8.

[50] Sue Ellen Teat, "A Comparative Pedagogical Study of American Art-Songs Recommended for Beginning Voice Students" (Ph. D. diss., North Texas State University, 1981), 6.

musicianship" and "to improve technique," contained eight and thirteen divisions respectively. Specifically, these were: intonation (pitch), rhythm accuracy, phrasing, dynamics, interpretation, knowledge of style, literature knowledge, knowledge of composer, breathing, attack, register(s), resonance, tone quality/placement, diction, range, flexibility, agility, scales, ornamentation, legato/sostenuto, relaxation.[51] In addition, she asked pedagogues to comment on a song's most suitable voice, most suitable voice range, appropriate student level, difficulty level of voice line (from easy to difficult), and difficulty level of piano score (easy to difficult). Patricia E. Collier listed ten pedagogical "tools" in her analysis of Broadway songs: intonation, interpretation, breathing, rhythmic accuracy, phrasing, resonance, tone quality, legato singing, diction, and range.[52] In another study involving Broadway songs, Jeffrey E. Bell listed range, tessitura, sostenuto, agility, dynamic control, and vocal coloration as factors to consider in pedagogical analysis.[53] In her study of the works of Richard Hundley, Esther Jane Hardenbergh presented a performing and pedagogical guide. Her pedagogical analysis described each song according to its level of difficulty, vocal requirements, and accompaniment. In Hardenbergh's study, the ratings for the level of difficulty were adapted from guidelines developed by David Alt and Novie Greene for an article in the January/February (1996) issue of the Journal of Singing. These ratings were "moderately easy," "moderately difficult," and "difficult." The vocal requirements discussed included

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[51] Ibid., 275.

[52] Patricia E. Collier, "The Pedagogical Applicability of Selected Broadway Songs to Southern Baptist Higher Education Classic Voice Study," (D. M. A. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 16.

[53] Jeffrey E. Bell, "American Musical Theater songs in the Undergraduate Vocal Studio: A Survey of Current Practice, Guidelines for Repertoire Selection, and Pedagogical Analyses of Selected Songs," (D. M. A. diss., Ball State University, 1996), 29.

range, tessitura, dynamic range, composers' markings and special techniques, difficult melodic and rhythmic passages in the vocal line, suggested voice categories, and level of difficulty.[54] The accompaniments were analyzed for level of difficulty, indication of style and texture, and technical requirements.[55] Hardenbergh's study is unique in its inclusion of analysis of the accompaniments as part of the song's pedagogical analysis. Her performance analysis included discussions concerning text, expressive characteristics, and composer's notes about the song. The final pedagogical analysis study to be considered is that by Janette Kay Ralston. She determined that there was a need to match appropriate repertoire to the capabilities of the student and that there was a need for an objective measure ("a valid and reliable instrument") to grade the levels of technical difficulty of vocal repertoire.[56] Her study resulted in the "Ralston Repertoire Difficulty Index." It is designed to measure the aspects of range, tessitura, rhythm, phrases, melodic line, and harmonic foundation, against set criteria for the classifications easy, moderate, and difficult.[57] After a pilot study was conducted to determine reliability and validity of her project, a seventh category, pronunciation, was added.

It is apparent from an examination of these studies that there is no single formula or blueprint that is utilized for all of the pedagogical analyses of songs. Bell, Collier, and Ralston tended to list each of the elements separately while Zaro-Fisher, Teat, and Hardenbergh divided the elements into categories. The elements roughly fit into

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[54] Esther Jane Hardenbergh, "The Solo Vocal Repertoire of Richard Hundley: A Pedagogical and Performance Guide to the Published Works," (Ed. D., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1997), 21.

[55] Ibid., 22.

[56] Janette Ralston, "The Development of a Valid and Reliable Instrument to Grade the Difficulty of Vocal Solo Repertoire," (Ph. D. diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 1996), 9.

[57] Ibid., 38-39.

categories which were comprised of technical (vocal production), textual (interpretive), or musical (harmonic, accompaniment, etc.) concerns. However, the groupings of the elements in those categories varied among the researchers. While each of these studies is unique in its approach, the pedagogical concerns which they have in common can serve as the foundation for the pedagogical analysis in the present study of Michael Head songs. The pedagogical concerns which were mentioned most frequently in the studies cited above were loosely grouped as technical issues: range, tessitura, rhythmic and/or melodic accuracy/difficulty, phrasing/breathing, legato/sostenuto, dynamic range, and diction/pronunciation. Textual or interpretive issues were also mentioned in some of the studies while the accompaniment was an issue in only two of the studies.

Victor Fields specifically addressed vocal pedagogy as being concerned with issues both of the art of singing and the technique of singing. Richard Miller has stated: "The only reason for any form of technical vocal study is to be able to sing in an artistic and communicative manner."[58] Although vocal pedagogy does involve more than teaching the technique of singing, freedom of function in singing is the foundation of the vocal art. Without functional freedom the singer is limited in his or her ability to effectively communicate to an audience. However, the vocal pedagogue must also endeavor to teach beyond the technique or mechanics of singing. The technique, functional freedom, is the means to an end, artistry and communication. Clearly a pedagogical analysis of song must include aspects concerning technical issues as well as aspects concerning performance issues (artistry and communication). A pedagogical analysis of songs which utilizes sections such as those in the Zaro-Fisher, Teat, and

[58] Richard Miller, *On the Art of Singing* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 249.

Hardenbergh studies seems most appropriate for the present study. Therefore, in this study the pedagogical analysis of selected Michael Head songs was divided into different sections. Drawing upon the studies cited above, the technical elements (concerned with vocal production), included range, tessitura, phrasing (as it relates to breath requirements), legato/sostenuto, dynamics, agility/flexibility, and registers. The performance elements (concerning artistry and communication) included both textual issues (may include poet, date, meter, rhyme, poetic form, etc) and musical issues (may include accompaniment, harmony, form, meter, rhythm, melody, etc). It should be understood that the components of each of these categories overlap—it is the interweaving of and interactions among the technical, textual, and musical elements which help create the artistic experience for the performer as well as for the audience. However, not all elements are present or operational at the same level of intensity in all songs. An analysis will include a discussion (description) only of those elements which are most crucial, apparent, or operative in contributing to the artistic whole.

LIMITATIONS

An exhaustive biography of Michael Dewar Head is beyond the scope of this study. However, a biographical sketch is included in order to provide information concerning his life and training and how it influenced his career as composer, performer, and educator. In addition, an exhaustive account of Head's long and varied career is beyond the scope of this study. However, the career information which demonstrates his contributions to music education/vocal pedagogy is included. While a complete catalog of his works (that is, as many as have yet been discovered) is included as an appendix,

the analyses will be limited to selected solo songs of Head. However, other works written for educational/pedagogical reasons may be briefly mentioned when necessary to illustrate a point.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED LITERATURE

Every person, place, or event exists or existed within a framework of historical and sociological influences and conditions. Consequently, an historical study of this type needs to establish the background conditions and influences against which the scrutinized lives and events unfolded. Michael Head was born in 1900 and began his performing and composing career while still a youngster. His first official success can be dated from the year of his first published song, 1919. From that time until his death in 1976, Head endeavored to engage and encourage others to participate in music making. He was born at the end of the Victorian Age and began his career in its shadow when its influences could still be felt. Therefore, an investigation of adult amateur music making in Victorian England is essential in establishing "probable cause" for his development as an educator/pedagogue whose target audience of students included this same segment of the population, the adult amateur music maker (musicer).

SOCIAL HISTORIES

In *A Social History of English Music,* E. D. Mackerness stated his purpose: "I have attempted to see English music and musical customs in relation to significant social tendencies, my aim being to follow up the musical consequences of the trends and movements I discuss."[1] Chapters four through seven are particularly pertinent to the present study. Chapter four, "Industrial Society and the People's Music," opens with a

[1] E. D. Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1964), ix.

quote by W. C. Smith in which he ascribed to the Industrial Revolution the conditions which fostered amateur music making on the part of the ordinary people. Mackerness further explored this topic in descriptions of the influence of employers, Sunday-school teachers, and other "'self-cultivation' enthusiasts" in the growth of music making throughout the Industrial Age. In addition, he recounted the efforts of the educationalists, moralists, and philanthropists to use adult amateur music making for its moralizing influence as a means to lure the "people" away from less seemly pastimes, such as frequenting the ale-houses, taverns, and public houses.

Chapter five, "The Victorian Era: National Education and Musical Progress," continues the discussion of the moral influence of music and then presents the next important development in amateur music making, a method of instruction to teach singers to read music. Largely through the efforts of John Hullah and John Curwen and their work with the Sunday schools and singing schools, an enthusiasm for music making spread as the amateur musicians improved their sight-reading/music reading skills. Mackerness tied the newly acquired thirst for music making to the development of virtually all of the Victorian amateur music making activities: choral competition festivals (a venue which would later be a major focus of Michael Head's work), brass bands, brass band competitions, ballad concerts, and ultimately, amateur music making in the home (another venue which would occupy the time and talents of Michael Head). In fact, the competition festival became such an important element in English musical life that Mackerness devoted an entire chapter to it. While acknowledging that England had long had musical competitions, in chapter six he traced what he called the "national institution" of the competitive enterprise beginning with Mary Wakefield and her festival

in 1885. Initially begun as a means of encouraging the improvement of musical skills, the popularity of these competitions and festivals eventually made significant contributions to the English musical scene which went beyond their contributions to the musical growth of the individual amateur music makers. Commissions for new works by English composers helped fuel the "English Musical Renaissance."[2] Of course, a demand for more music for festivals and competitions necessitated a parallel growth in the publishing industry in order to supply the printed music to meet the demand. Participation in choirs also led to increasing numbers of aspiring soloists which created a demand for more solo songs, which in turn led to the genre called the "drawing-room ballad," which in turn helped lead to the "ballad concerts" that were so popular from 1867 until the 1930's. The teaching profession also benefited as amateurs sought private instruction to improve their musical skills.

In chapter seven Mackerness addressed the effects that the technological advances and two World Wars had on the social history of music. The cinema, radio, and gramophone made available to the public an increasing amount of music of all types. However, it appeared that these media tended to discourage active *music making* in favor of passive listening. The typical music maker of the new age, according to Mackerness,

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[2] The 'English Musical Renaissance' is a title given to a movement in English music which originated towards the end of the Victorian era with the first performance in 1880 of Hubert Parry's *Prometheus Unbound.* Prior to this advent of a new beginning for English music, it was widely held that the last great English composer was Henry Purcell (1659-1695). After Purcell, English music was reputed to be but a poor imitation of foreign imports. (Handel, notwithstanding his remarkable contributions, is usually considered a 'foreign' composer.) However, from Parry onward English composers began to throw off the yoke of foreign domination and look for inspiration in their own country. Some of the significant elements which were crucial influences in the development of an 'English' music were: English literature, a love of the English countryside and a new-found interest in and love for English music from earlier periods, notably that of the Tudor composers. In fact, the recognition of Purcell's facility in setting the English language proved to have one of the most profound impacts on the composers of the 'renaissance'. In addition to the interest in the music of the great composers of England's past, there was a renewed interest in English folksong with its colorful modal inflections, robust harmonies and lively rhythms.

was the "ardent enthusiast for the long-playing record or tape-recorder."[3] Another factor which influenced the trend toward listening to music in lieu of engaging in music was addressed by Mackerness. In his conclusion he noted that "over the last two or three hundred years musicians have been jealously asserting their artistic status, and as music in general has become increasingly complex so the composer and performer have been obliged to adopt a 'specialist' approach to their work."[4] Certainly this complexity and specialization contributed to the reluctance on the part of amateurs to engage in music making themselves. Michael Head grew up at the end of a great age of amateur music making, as described by Mackerness, and began working during the onset of the technological age described by Mackerness. Head was a link from the past to the future as he continued to encourage amateur music making in the face of the increasing complexity and specialization.

While Mackerness began his "social history" with the Middle Ages, Dave Russell's study concentrated largely on the Victorian Age in *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914: A Social History*. Russell's study covers a narrower time frame and therefore covers topics in more detail. Russell's study also strongly presents the argument that the efforts to promote music for the "people" were due to the industrialists' desire to program or control the working classes. Parts 1 and 3 are particularly noteworthy for their contribution to the present study.

In Part I, "*Control: music and the battle for the working class mind*," Russell chronicled the development of the 'sight-singing' movement and its resultant impact on

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[3] Mackerness, 275.

[4] Mackerness, 286.

amateur music making in general, notably in the formation of community and festival choirs and the inclusion of music in the schools. The work of the industrial philanthropists in promoting concerts for the "people" is also discussed. Like Mackerness, Russell related the connections Victorians made between music and morality.

Part 3, "*Community: the music of 'the people'*," provides important information about the extent to which amateur music making permeated society. Russell stated: "The largest single element in the popular musical life of all but the very poorest in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was always provided by 'the people' themselves."[5] He began by relating how the music publishers and instrument manufacturers contributed to the growth of amateur music making. This was followed by a description of informal music making in the home, in public houses and on street corners. Brass bands and choral societies each merit their own chapter (9 and 10) which offer important information to verify the status of amateur music making during the late Victorian and early Edwardian years. Finally, Russell offered compelling arguments concerning the role of music in providing "artistic, social, economic and emotional satisfactions . . . [to] the people,"[6] cogent reasons directing Michael Head in his efforts to encourage amateur music making.

The role of amateur music making in English society was also explored by Henry Raynor in *Music and Society since 1815*. He traced the shift from a professional choir to the large *amateur* festival choirs. Like Mackerness and Russell, Raynor highlighted the

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[5] Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914: A Social History* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 133.

[6] Russell, 251.

contributions of the singing schools in the rise of the amateur choral societies and the eventual place accorded music in the school curriculum. In addition, Raynor described the evolution of the concert performance from the domain of the wealthy, elite patron to the domain of the ticket-buying public. The less educated, "popular" audience was to have an enormous impact on both the programming policies of the conductors/promoters and on the musical style employed by the composers. The brass band movement, as a manifestation of popular music making, received little attention from Raynor although he acknowledged it as a powerful social force among working men. He also pointed out that the popularity of the bands and band contesting gave rise to a demand for new compositions from *English* composers. Finally, while decrying the poor quality of much of the music written for the "popular" audience, Raynor also decried the musician who "accepts the notion of a divorce between the composer and the audience with whom it is his duty, as it should be his pleasure, to communicate."[7]

The Athlone History of Music in Britain, The Romantic Age: 1800-1914, is a series of essays by various authors covering a wide range of topics. Each of these essays provides a different perspective of the musical scene of this period. The book is divided into four large parts: Part 1: "Music in Society"; Part 2: "Popular and Functional Music"; Part 3: "Art Music"; Part 4: "Writings on Music." Stephen Banfield, in his essay "The Artist and Society," provided a view of the social background against which English composers worked. The Industrial Age and its emphasis on commercialism/capitalism stripped away the patronage system which had supported

[7] Henry Raynor, *Music and Society Since 1815* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1976), 162.

musicians and dictated musical taste. In its place was popularism, with musical taste determined by the people who purchased the tickets. In order to earn a living, composers who were without a source of private income were compelled to write music to suit the popular taste. In Banfield's view, mid-Victorian composers "were content for music to remain subservient to society."[8] Bernarr Rainbow, in his essay "Music in Education," provided an overview of the place occupied by music during the course of the nineteenth century. While the conservatories do receive some attention, it is the section on "Music in General Education" which is most pertinent to the present study. Of special interest is the discussion tracing the emergence of the 'tonic sol-fa' system of music reading as the preferred method employed to teach note reading in the elementary schools.

D. W. Krummel compared the music publishing business in Victorian England to the "Renaissance humanist prince who patronized the art of music."[9] He cited the publishers' efforts to provide affordable copies of music for the burgeoning amateur market as evidence of "patronage." Other topics which pertain to the present study were discussed by Krummel and these include: royalty ballads, technological developments, and Victorian "moralizing." "Ballroom and Drawing-Room Music" by Nicholas Temperley and "Glees, Madrigals, and Partsongs" by Michael Hurd provided valuable information about the performance practices of amateurs and the repertoire they performed. Temperley paid special attention to ballads as a genre greatly favored by Victorian amateur musicians, and early in his career Michael Head wrote songs which his

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[8] Stephen Banfield, "The Artist and Society" in *The Athlone History of Music in Britain. The Romantic Age: 1800-1914*, ed. Nicholas Temperley (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), 28.

[9] D. W. Krummel, "Music Publishing" in *The Athlone History of Music in Britain. The Romantic Age:1800-1914*, ed. by Nicholas Temperley (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), 59.

publisher called ballads. Temperley's discussion is helpful in establishing the link between Michael Head and the Victorian amateur music maker.

"Amateur Musicians and Their Repertoire," an essay by Dave Russell in *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain: The Twentieth Century*, carries the discussion of amateur music making into the twentieth century. He stated that advances in technological media were the primary catalyst for the waning of active participation in musical activities. Russell also explored the choral society and its music, the band movement and its music, music making in the church and chapel, domestic/informal music making, school music, and the activities of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Although he acknowledged that there is a decline in membership in the organizations which have traditionally attracted amateurs, he stated that "amateur musicians have been crucial figures in twentieth-century musical life, stimulating the musical service industries, forming the seedbed for future generations of professionals, and, above all, serving as an important artistic force in their own right."[10] Michael Head's activities on behalf of amateur music makers suggest that this is a sentiment he shared.

Cyril Ehrlich's *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History*, as the title suggests, is concerned primarily with the work of professional musicians from the eighteenth century until 1985, the year the book was published. His sources include contemporary accounts (in newspapers and journals, for example) and public records. He traced the fortunes of professional musicians through descriptions of

[10] Dave Russell, "Amateur Musicians and Their Repertoire," in *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Stephen Banfield (Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1995), 175.

patronage, salaries, working conditions, training, and job-related activities. Because the book is concerned specifically with the musician, it offers greater detail in the presentation of the topics under review than do the studies cited above. Ehrlich stated that "any specific musical event displays both supply and demand at work . . . "[11] and therefore devoted a substantial amount of space to a discussion of the demand for professional musicians and, subsequently, the supply of musicians. From about 1870 to 1930 the majority of the professional musicians listed in census accounts and directories were self-styled professors who made their living giving lessons to amateur music makers. Consequently, Ehrlich's book contains much information about amateur music making while discussing the cause and effect relationships that existed between amateur and professional musicians in a market place that was driven by supply and demand. In addition to the amateur/professional musician relationships, there are other relevant topics examined by Ehrlich: the increased demand for teachers, the founding of institutions such as the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) for training those teachers, and the establishment of examining boards to test and license teachers. Because Michael Head was a teacher, studied at the RAM, and was an examiner for the Associated Boards of the Royal Schools of Music during most of his career, this book is a valuable resource in providing background information regarding the social and economic conditions surrounding the music profession throughout Head's career. Ehrlich ended his book with an in-depth account of the effects felt by the music profession due to the advent and proliferation of the cinema, the gramophone, and the wireless. In keeping with his cause-

[11] Cyril Ehrlich, The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 54.

and-effect/supply-and-demand paradigm, he explored the social conditions which led to the ascendance of "omnipotent technology" and the decline of interest in live music making. His treatment of this topic offers valuable insight into the influences and conditions which affected Michael Head in his work in broadcasting and in his efforts to promote amateur music making in an increasingly adverse environment.

BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

In addition to the historical and sociological background information regarding the conditions which led to Michael Head's development as an educator/pedagogue, biographical data which trace Head's life experiences and training are necessary to provide a more complete picture. As is the case in most studies on a musical topic, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (1980)* was the first source consulted. Michael Hurd provides the main details of Head's life and a selective list of his works. The single bibliographic reference listed is the entry "Head, Michael Dewar" from *Grove 5*. The only other major source of biographical information for Head is a book written by his sister Nancy Bush: *Michael Head, Composer, Singer, Pianist: A Memoir by Nancy Bush*. Published in 1982, it includes 65 pages of text by Nancy Bush, an essay, "The Vocal Compositions of Michael Head" by Alan Bush (Appendix A), and a catalog of "The published works by Michael Head" (Appendix B). In this small volume, Nancy Bush described Head's youth and musical education, his teaching while a professor at the RAM, and his activities as an examiner/adjudicator. In addition, she described his work in broadcasting on the BBC and his work as a composer/performer. Interspersed in the pages of Bush's succinct text are passages taken from Head's diaries and personal letters.

These excerpts offer a fascinating glimpse into the life and personality of Michael Head and prompted the present writer to search for the complete diaries in an effort to arrive at a more definitive profile of this remarkable composer/educator/pedagogue. The search led to contacts with Michael Head's two nieces and their husbands: Dr. Michael and Mrs. Catherine Hinson, and Drs. Paul and Rachel O'Higgins. The present author was invited to inspect family holdings pertaining to Michael Head. These materials included family correspondence, legal documents, and photo albums, as well as some of Head's lecture notes, newspaper clippings detailing his performances and examining/adjudicating, and the personal diaries which he kept intermittently from 1919-1976. These resources contribute important new information about Michael Head the person and Michael Head the musician/educator.

Biographical material obtained from Michael Head's family was supplemented with material obtained from Boosey & Hawkes, the firm which published most of Head's works beginning in 1919. Boosey's promotional flyer, furnished to this writer in January 1995, included a brief biographical sketch and a current list of his compositions and recordings. Promotional flyers from Ibbs and Tillett, the concert agents hired by Michael Head, contained a list of recitals performed by Head, selected reviews of his performances, and the programs from selected recitals. These materials helped to provide insight into the programming decisions made by Head with inferences made regarding his repertoire preferences, the educational/pedagogical implications of the repertoire, and the possible influence of the repertoire on his own compositions.

MICHAEL HEAD'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

An unpublished doctoral dissertation by Loryn Frey entitled *The Songs of Michael Head: The Georgian Settings (and Song Catalog)* is the only study in which the primary focus is on the works of Michael Head. While Head's compositional output includes instrumental and choral works, as well as chamber operas, Frey limited her study to the nineteen solo songs with texts by Georgian poets. She began with a chapter which describes Georgian poetry and poets, devoted a chapter to Head's predecessors in English solo art song composition, and then provided a chapter with descriptive analyses of the Georgian settings of Head's contemporaries, including Herbert Howells, Benjamin Burrows, Cecil Armstrong Gibbs, Ivor Gurney, Lennox Berkeley, Peter Warlock, Arthur Bliss, Rutland Boughton, Benjamin Britten, Gerald Finzi, and John Ireland. Frey concluded her study with a chapter devoted to Michael Head. She began with a short biographical sketch gleaned from information in Nancy Bush's book and then proceeded with a descriptive analysis of each of the nineteen songs. The analyses are not exhaustive but, rather, present a general overview of each song and/or a description limited to the more obvious aspects of melody or accompaniment or word-setting of each song examined. In her discussions of Head's songs, Frey relied rather heavily upon the writing of Stephen Banfield quoted from his book *Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early 20th Century.* As Banfield seemed to exhibit a rather poor opinion of the artistic merit of Head's songs, it is unfortunate that Frey did not include the more

favorable opinions of Alan Bush,[12] Jonathan Frank,[13] and George Baker,[14] and thus provide a more balanced view of Head's songs.

In addition to Frey's study, information about Michael Head's compositional style is available in several other sources. The afore-mentioned book by Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song,* devotes approximately three pages to Michael Head in the chapter entitled "The uses and abuses of technique." In such a short space only general statements regarding Head's compositional style were offered. Arthur Jacobs, in the section entitled "The British Isles" from the Denis Stevens book *A History of Song,* stated that Head was influenced by Roger Quilter and Peter Warlock but offered no further commentary on Head's work.[15] Jonathan Frank and George Baker, in the articles cited above, described some of Head's compositional style characteristics and cited examples from specific songs. A more detailed analysis of Michael Head's compositional style is offered in the article "The Solo Songs of Michael Head: A Critical Re-Evaluation in His Centenary Year," in the journal *British Music.*[16] In this article, musical examples from many of Head's songs were used to illustrate various aspects of his style. In addition, quotations from his personal diaries, interviews, and radio broadcasts provided insight into his philosophy of song composition. To date, no studies linking Head's

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[12] Alan Bush, "The Vocal Compositions of Michael Head," in *Michael Head, Composer, Singer, Pianist: A Memoir,* by Nancy Bush (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982).

[13] Jonathan Frank, "A Singer-Composer," *Musical Opinion 84* (Feb. 1961), 287-289.

[14] George Baker, "What Are They Like at Home?," *Music Teacher and Piano Student 44* (April 1965), 169.

[15] Arthur Jacobs, "The British Isles," *A History of Song,* ed. Denis Stevens (New York: W. W Norton & Co., 1960), 174.

[16] Barbara Streets, "The Solo Songs of Michael Head: A Critical Re-evaluation in His Centenary Year" *British Music* 22 (2000), 5-25.

educational/pedagogical philosophy to his compositional style have been undertaken. The present study seeks to provide that link.

PEDAGOGICAL STUDIES

A search for studies which investigated the life and work of composer/performer/music educators failed to result in any matches in the area of vocal pedagogy. However, a search in the area of piano pedagogy revealed three unpublished dissertations which utilized a methodology of potential benefit as a model to employ in the present study. These three studies investigated the contributions of Boris Berlin, Lynn Freeman Olson, and Lili Kraus. A short summary of each of these studies and a description of their pertinence to the Head study follows.

In *Boris Berlin's Career and Contributions to Piano Pedagogy* by Laura Beauchamp, the author began with an overview of piano teaching in Canada. This overview included sections on the examination system used in Canada, the competitive festivals, and the Canadian Music Competition. This information is relevant to the Head study on two levels; one, because Head was both an adjudicator and an examiner in Canada, and two, because it establishes the importance of music educators' involvement in adjudicating/examining, in this particular case, Boris Berlin, but applicable to other educators, such as Head. The chapter on the Royal Conservatory of Music and its examination curriculum illuminates a system with which Head was very familiar and which had a probable influence on that portion of his compositions intended for the examination/competition participant. The Beauchamp thesis includes a biographical section which details Boris Berlin's early years, advanced musical studies, early

performing activities, publications, and adjudicating/examining/lecturing. This in turn leads to a discussion of his teaching philosophy. As will be apparent in the following chapters of this study on Michael Head, these are all areas which also had a profound impact on the development of Head's philosophy of music education. Two other aspects of the Berlin dissertation are of particular relevance to the Head study: 1) Beauchamp's inclusion of many passages taken directly from Berlin's writings or lectures in order to illustrate his teaching principles; and 2) her inclusion of a discussion of selected teaching materials and compositions written by Boris Berlin in order to illustrate his pedagogical philosophy. Both of these aspects were used in the Head study to present evidence of his philosophy of music education.

Like Beauchamp's dissertation on Boris Berlin, the unpublished dissertation *Lynn Freeman Olson's Contributions to Music Education* by Steven Lee Betts also provided a biographical sketch of the subject, Lynn Freeman Olson. However, the bulk of Betts' work consists of discussion and evaluation of Olson's piano courses and supplementary pieces. Betts provided the evaluation criteria he used in the course of the study. The development of evaluation criteria was of particular significance to the Head study. Although the criteria for evaluating/analyzing the Michael Head songs differed from that used by Betts for the piano works of Olson, Betts' study illustrates the need for providing the evaluation criteria in a pedagogical analysis of a composer's works. The discussion and evaluation of Olson's piano compositions is followed by a section on his other works which include: general music education materials, dance and circus music, music for television, music for religious education, and choral music. This section is in turn followed by a section detailing Olson's writings about music and playing the piano and

his activities giving workshops and radio interviews. Therefore the Betts study served as a useful model for materials to include in the Michael Head study because many of the musical activities in which Michael Head was involved were similar to those of Lynn Freeman Olson.

The third piano pedagogy study, Steven Roberson's *Lili Kraus: The Person, the Performer, and the Teacher,* contains a biographical sketch, but it also has a unique contribution to make to the present study on Michael Head. That contribution is the inclusion of many quotes by Kraus in which she articulated some aspect of her pedagogical philosophy. In addition, Roberson provided descriptions and reviews of Kraus' performances as supplemental evidence of her pedagogical philosophy. As noted above, the present study on Michael Head includes many quotes by Michael Head in order to illustrate his philosophy of music education. In keeping with the Kraus dissertation model, descriptions and reviews of Head's performances are also included in order to provide additional evidence of his educational philosophy.

The final element to be extracted from the piano pedagogy dissertations is the inclusion of an analysis of specific works written by the subject pedagogues. Both Betts and Beauchamp, in their studies about Olson and Berlin respectively, investigated the correlation between the stated or implied philosophy of teaching and the application of that philosophy as determined by an analysis of selected materials composed by Olson and Berlin. In like manner, an analysis of selected solo songs by Michael Head was undertaken in order to demonstrate the application of his educational/pedagogical philosophy to his song composition. Such an analysis required: 1) identifying commonly recognized pedagogical concerns and 2) developing an analysis tool or format that would

assess the various components of a song in terms of pedagogical concerns. In the "Procedures" section of Chapter 1 of the present study there is an account of the pedagogical studies which were examined in order to address both of these concerns. Following the discussions of the various studies is the description of the format or tool which was subsequently developed from a comparison of those studies and their specific merits, and it is this tool which was applied in the analysis of Head's songs. Those studies and their authors are: *A Pedagogical Guide for the Jugendlieder of Alban Berg* by Wendy Zaro-Fisher; *The Pedagogical Applicability of Selected Broadway Songs to Southern Baptist Higher Education Classic Voice Study* by Patricia Collier; *American Musical Theater Songs in the Undergraduate Vocal Studio: A Survey of Current Practice Guidelines for Repertoire Selection, and Pedagogical Analyses of Selected Songs,* by Jeffrey Bell; *A Comparative Pedagogical Study of American Art-Songs Recommended for Beginning Voice Students* by Sue Ellen Teat; *The Development of a Valid and Reliable Instrument to Grade the Difficulty of Vocal Solo Repertoire* by Janette Ralston; and *The Solo Vocal Repertoire of Richard Hundley: A Pedagogical and Performance Guide to the Published Works* by Esther Hardenbergh.

OUTLINE OF STUDY

Chapter 1, the INTRODUCTION to the present study, begins with a brief discussion of the English composer Michael Head and his importance as a proponent of the art of MUSIC in his capacity as composer, performer, and educator. The PURPOSE statement is followed by the section NEED FOR THE STUDY which develops the rationale for a study on the life and work of Michael Head. Included in this section are

citations from articles, books and dissertations which address the value of music and music education in the lives of adult members of the population. The PROCEDURES section outlines the methodology to be employed in order to complete the study, including the process used to develop the tool which will be used to analyze selected songs by Michael Head. The LIMITATIONS section clarifies what material is outside the limits of the study.

Chapter 2, RELATED LITERATURE, describes the resources which will provide the necessary information in several related areas. The first materials which will be examined are those which document the rise of amateur music making in Victorian England, the period immediately preceding that of Michael Head. Following that section is a section which describes the resources which were used to provide the biographical information about Michael Head. This is followed by a discussion of the sources which examine Head's compositional style in song composition. Descriptions of studies which trace the life, work, and educational contributions of individual piano pedagogues are followed by references to the previously cited song analysis studies.

Chapter 3 is entitled ADULT AMATEUR MUSIC MAKING IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND. It begins with an overview of life in Victorian England and the ways in which the Industrial Revolution contributed to the development of an environment favorable to the rise of adult amateur music making. This introductory material is followed by sections which examine the activities of the "people" as music makers. Specific areas of concern are: concert attendance, choral singing and choral festivals/competitions, brass bands and band competitions, at-home music making, and solo amateur music making.

Chapter 4 is entitled BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH. Although Michael Head's sister Nancy Bush wrote a brief biography about Michael Head in 1982, the book wasn't widely available and has been out of print for many years making basic biographical information about Head difficult for most readers to obtain. Consequently, a biographical sketch is included in the present study. This chapter is divided into three main sections: (1) Head's family background and early years, (2) Head's early training/education and (3) Head's student years at the RAM. Topics in section 1 include: Head's relatives and family life, early influences, early musical activities. Section 2 is an account of his early training and his early successes as a song composer. Section 3 is an account of his studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London as well as a continuation of the account of his success as a song composer.

Chapter 5, entitled WORK, examines the many-faceted professional life of Michael Head. It is divided into sections detailing his years as a school music teacher at Bedales, his work at the RAM, his work as an Examiner, and his work as an Adjudicator. The chapter continues with an account of his work as a performer with sections detailing his activities as a Lecturer/Lecture Recitalist, his activities in Broadcasting, and his activities as a Singer. With the discussion about the various aspects of his work are included statements made by Head about music and/or teaching/performing, as well as quotations from articles and reviews about Head and his teaching/performing. Throughout the discussion attention is drawn to the ways in which these statements and quotations can be said to illustrate Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy.

Chapter 6, MICHAEL HEAD AS COMPOSER, continues the discussion of Michael Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy. This chapter provides an overview of Head's instrumental and choral works with a brief discussion of the ways in which they are illustrative of his teaching philosophy. It concludes with a section on Head's solo songs, including a general overview and a discussion of their compositional style. Reference is made to Head's teaching philosophy as it is operative in his compositions.

Head's 'philosophy', as it is described in Chapters 5 and 6, was established by examining statements he made about singing, music, and composing in (1) his diaries, (2) selected interviews, (3) selected broadcasts, (4) lecture notes, and (5) articles by or about Head. Further inferences regarding his philosophy were drawn by an examination and analysis of his performances on two recordings of songs: *Michael Head Sings and Plays His Own Music,* and *Songs by Michael Head*, sung by Robert Ivan Foster and accompanied by Michael Head. Printed reviews of performances given by Michael Head contributed additional material.

Chapter 7, A PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SOLO SONGS, begins with a description of the tool or model which was used to conduct a pedagogical analysis of selected solo songs by Michael Head. This is followed by the analysis of the selected songs. The songs were chosen from early, middle and late periods of Head's career in an effort to provide an overview of his contributions to the field.

Chapter 8: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS, in addition to summarizing Head's life and career, re-iterates his contributions to music education/vocal pedagogy as

well as his philosophy of music education. The final section of this chapter is devoted to recommendations for further research.

Four Appendices conclude the study: Appendix 1 is a catalog of the solo songs by Michael Head; Appendix 2 is a catalog of other vocal compositions by Michael Head; Appendix 3 is a catalog of Head's instrumental compositions; and Appendix 4 is a list of the awards and prizes earned by Head while he was a student at the RAM.

CHAPTER 3

AMATEUR MUSIC MAKING IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

INTRODUCTION

Changes in society are seldom the result of a single cataclysmic event but are more often the result of a multitude of smaller changes accumulating over time. In addition, the people enmeshed in these changes are seldom aware of the significance of their own present. It is by casting back over a larger span of time that the evidence of significant change becomes apparent. Thus from our perspective in this twenty-first century it is possible to view the years from 1840-1914 as a Golden Age for music in England, a time when the English people were "arguably the most musically-inclined in the nation's history."[1] There were many factors which contributed to this great upswell of music to make it "the most acceptable, the most respectable of the arts."[2] These factors in turn were largely attributable to two major influences of the age: industrialization and the stability that resulted from the lengthy reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901).

Industrialization profoundly affected all aspects of English life, especially during the years 1760-1840 when England led the Industrial Revolution. The booming manufacturing economy created thousands of jobs in the factories and their attendant support businesses, resulting in a primarily rural population moving to the cities so that by 1851, for the first time in its history, the majority of England's people were urban

[1] Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914: A Social History* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 59.

[2] Ibid.

dwellers. The new jobs in the factories and businesses also gave rise to the burgeoning middle class as a result of the better wages and more leisure time enjoyed by the workers. In time, the prosperity from the new economy experienced a trickle-down effect, and the lower classes also began to share in the improved wages and increased leisure. New work laws were enacted with the result that the work week was shortened and most workers were free half of Saturday and all of Sunday. In addition, the work day was shortened so that workers could expect to have a few hours free in the evenings. At the same time, intra- and inter-city transportation improved, which enabled the population to be more mobile than at any other time in history. With more free time, more mobility and more disposable income, workers began to seek various forms of entertainment, and more often than not, the entertainment involved music.

The People and Concert Attendance

Families on holiday at the spas, hotels, and resorts could expect to hear concerts given by the bands and orchestras that were *de rigueur* (required by custom or etiquette) if the proprietor intended to attract guests. The programs that were played included the latest popular music hall tunes, ballads, marches, waltzes, and even arrangements of the classics. In addition, most public parks and gardens had a pavilion where bands or orchestras entertained the families who came to escape the heat and noise of the city. Again the programs reflected a catholicity of taste: arrangements of music hall tunes, ballads, marches, waltzes, opera selections, and classics. In addition to these more organized groups of music makers, there were street musicians plying their trade in most large towns and cities. Not much is known about who they were, but Dave Russell offered this description: "One assumes that most practitioners were either born into the

trade or were traveling theatre musicians or orchestral musicians fallen upon hard times."[3] The instruments used by the street musicians could include "zithers, piccolos, banjos, concertinas, one-string fiddles and even tumblers of water, as well as the better known barrel-pianos, barrel-organs and the brass instruments of the German bands"[4] played either singly or in a myriad of combinations. Like the bands in the parks and resorts, the street musicians played a variety of music, ranging from the popular to the classics, including favorite arias from the current operas. While they certainly sought locations where it would be most lucrative to play, middle class neighborhoods, for example, they could be found all over the city, thus providing the lower working classes "glimpses of music otherwise largely out of their reach . . . "[5]

While hearing music played by the bands at resorts and spas and by the street musicians on sidewalks and corners was largely by happenstance, attending music hall and concert performances was an *intentional* pursuit of the art of music. With more disposable income, more leisure time, and greater mobility, greater numbers of the population were able to join in this pursuit. The music halls emerged from the singing-saloons and public house concert-rooms by approximately the 1860's, in both the larger cities and the smaller towns. Initially, audiences consisted primarily of upper working class and lower middle class males, and early performances contained some bawdy or risqué elements. However, there was an increasing demand for more respectable entertainment so that women or even whole families could attend, and in the increasingly

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[3] Russell, 64.

[4] Ibid

[5] Russell, 66.

competitive market-place proprietors hastened to supply the demand. By the 1890's and into the early 1900's, matinee and early evening performances were added to those in the late evening in order to accommodate the increasing size of the audience. The more numerous audiences also led to the construction of larger and sometimes more opulent performing halls. From its origins in working class neighborhoods, the music hall spread to other parts of the city as it gained wider acceptance. Wider acceptance also contributed to change in the audience profile from the earlier lower-class male to one which might include the upper and lower middle class male and their families. In spite of the name "music hall," the entertainment presented was actually a variety show. Acrobats, jugglers, strongmen, and various animal acts would share the stage with equally varied musical performances. In the earliest days of music halls, the musical repertoire could have been drawn from supper-room songs, parlour ballads, folk tunes, classical selections, overtures, glees and madrigals, and opera selections. By the years just prior to the First World War, even though the repertoire had lost much of its eclecticism to the development of the "music hall" song type, most performances still began with an overture drawn from the operatic or classical repertoire.

The inclusion of classical selections in the performances given at the resorts, in the parks, on street corners, and in the music halls, helped to familiarize a new and larger segment of the population with classical or "serious" music, long almost exclusively the domain of the wealthy. This familiarity led to the desire to hear more of this genre and, paralleling the developments in other forms of entertainment, the improved conditions of the middle and working classes enabled them to satisfy their desire by attending classical music performances in the more formal concert halls.

The standardization of the work week, more disposable income, and improved transportation also contributed to the growth of the concert life in the community by increasing the size of the potential audience. Concert promoters and concert hall owners set about to entice that potential audience to attend their venues. This was done in a variety of ways. First, prices were adjusted so that a broader spectrum of the population could afford to purchase a ticket. The result of this strategy was that the audience that once included only the wealthy and upper middle class expanded to include the lower middle class and even the upper lower class. The second part of this marketing strategy involved providing program notes for the concert. Because the larger audiences included many people who had less education, notes were printed in the programs to assist them in following the music. It was felt that educating the audience would improve their understanding, increase their enjoyment, and encourage them to return to the concert hall. The third part of the strategy concerned the selection of music played. A sort of division occurred between the concert programs which were only serious art music and those which were a mix of the serious and lighter works. For example, Charles Hallé in Manchester refused "to educate the musically illiterate in his audience by leading it through shoals of light music to easy classics and from them to the profundities of Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The Hallé policy was simply to play great music as well as his orchestra could play it, and his audience—'operatives', 'factory hands', Lancashire business men and exiled German textile merchants nostalgic for the life they had enjoyed in Germany—accepted his offerings enthusiastically."[6] However, other concert

[6] Henry Raynor, *Music and Society: Since 1815* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), 113.

conductors or promoters such as Louis Jullien "gave renderings of major choral works. And by intermingling movements from symphonies with a miscellaneous collection of lighter pieces, he persuaded his audiences to accept a good deal of serious music while at the same time acquainting them with attractive *bonnes bouches* [dainty morsel]."[7] In addition to the accepted master composers' works, much of the music featured in these concerts was the work of the then contemporary composer. This was especially true of the operatic selections. A fourth strategy employed by the promoters to attract audiences to their halls was securing the services of the most popular and famous performers of the day to appear in their concerts. The combined effect of these four marketing strategies resulted in much larger audiences than the halls could hold, making necessary the construction of larger concert halls.

The most popular concerts of the time were neither the variety concerts nor the concerts of serious orchestral music, but in fact were choral concerts. However, unlike the variety concerts whose performers were professional musicians, the choral concerts featured *amateur* musicians. This tradition of amateur performers is the result of developments in several areas of community life. Since the time of Handel, performances of sacred oratorios were a fixture of any concert season in England, from the smaller towns and villages to the larger manufacturing towns and cities. In fact, oratorios were so popular that church and municipal choirs began to appropriate the repertoire for their seasonal performances, most notably Handel's *Messiah* at Christmas. Predictably, many of the church choirs lacked the requisite skills to perform the music.

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[7] E. D. Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1964), 181

Although originally only sacred works were performed, with those by Handel and Mendelssohn the most favored, late in the nineteenth century the repertoire expanded to include secular oratorios by the then living composers such as Parry, Stanford, and Elgar.

The People as *Music Makers*

While the growth of public concerts as entertainment for the people was a remarkable development of the Victorian Age, far more astounding was the pervasiveness of *amateur music making*. As with the concertizing cited above, the upsurge of amateur music making was the result of many factors arising out of the combined influences of industrialization and the reign of Queen Victoria. Three aspects of this phenomenon merit examination: choral singing, the brass band movement, and music-at-home.

Choral Singing

Part-singing had been a feature of the English musical landscape at least since Elizabethan times. There was a ready market for composers to supply glees, madrigals and part-songs, particularly to the many gentlemen's clubs in the eighteenth century.[8] The conviviality enjoyed by the clubs' members was also reflected in the many taverns, pubs and public houses where the men of the town or village gathered to eat, drink and sing. Again the repertoire consisted largely of glees, catches, and madrigals. The *bonhomie* (good nature) or sense of community engendered by singing together was an

[8] Michael Hurd, "Glees, Madrigals, and Partsongs," in *The Athlone History of Music in Britain: The Romantic Age: 1800-1914* (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 242

important element in the later popularity of choral singing, as represented by the municipal choirs, factory choirs, festival choirs, and competition choirs that sprang up all over England.

Reginald Nettel suggested that choral singing developed in part from the practice of rural workers gathering in the evening in a simple cottage to share warmth around a single candle. To help pass the time, these simple people would exchange gossip and sing songs. He added that it was likely that these singers improvised a harmony in thirds or sixths to the melody.[9] As in the gentlemen's clubs and the taverns, the act of singing together helped forge bonds of community and belonging which later helped fuel the enthusiasm for participation in choral societies or choirs. Nicholas Temperley referred to the part-singing of the laborers in working-class towns in the North as an element in the development of the later choral festivals. He quoted a man of Huddersfield: "working people sometimes would meet at a given house and sing glees, hymns and songs, accompanied by fiddle, flute, piccolo, and bass."[10] He went on to state that rural music making in the home also included singing in harmony and so corroborated Nettel's account of the prevalence of part-singing among the working classes which contributed to the subsequent flowering of choral societies, festival choirs, and competition choirs.

Methodism, with its emphasis on congregational hymn singing, provided another catalyst to amateur choral singing. Not only did Methodists teach their children to sing, but John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, wanted all members of the congregation to

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[9] Reginald Nettel, "The Influence of the Industrial Revolution on English Music," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 72nd Session (1945-1946): 26-27

[10] Nicholas Temperley, "Domestic Music in England:1800-1860," *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association*, 85th Session (1958-1959): 42

sing with enthusiasm, understanding, and spirit.[11] Henry Raynor has stated, "Music unites; singing together, Wesley knew, individual men and women become a community, a congregation."[12] And, indeed, whenever Methodists gathered together, group hymn singing was part of the program. This enthusiasm for communal singing led many to join the various municipal choirs, festival choirs, and competition choirs.

Another step toward amateur choral singing occurred in Hull in 1841 when a group of Sunday school teachers met to discuss the need to improve the singing in Sunday schools and choirs. They recognized that a method had to be found to teach music to those who had little education. John Curwen, a Congregational minister, was commissioned to identify which system of teaching music would be most successful. He subsequently recommended a system which he developed from the 'sol-fa' method of Sarah Glover to which he added features gleaned from other educators. Curwen's system came to be called '*Tonic sol-fa*'. This method was so effective in teaching sight-singing that there was a great demand for more classes to teach the growing number of enthusiasts. Singing classes were set up not only in Sunday schools, but also in temperance halls, Mechanics' Institutes, and day schools. The result was that thousands of adults achieved some degree of music literacy, which in turn contributed to an enthusiasm for music making in general and choral singing in particular. As a result, numerous so called 'sol-fa societies' were formed to enable the former members of Curwen's classes to continue singing together. As in the communal singing of the

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[11]Henry Raynor, *Music and Society Since 1815* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), 94

[12]Ibid.

Methodist congregations, the enthusiasm of the 'sol-faists' was partly responsible for the formation of the many community, municipal and factory choirs.

While the communal/choral singing discussed so far can be viewed as indigenous to the people engaged in its practice, other cases of choral singing were the result of concerted efforts made by reformers to involve "the people" in "rational recreation." During the reign of Queen Victoria, as the Machine Age wrought changes in all aspects of English life, reformers and philanthropists became more and more concerned about the effects of industrialization and urbanization on the lives of the workers. In addition, there was concern that the concentration of so many workers in a single area could lead to civil unrest. To combat these two problems, the reformers embarked on a program of "rational recreation" which was designed to provide the workers with wholesome opportunities for self-improvement to combat the evil influences of the ale-house and music hall. Bernarr Rainbow pointed out that musical education was advocated as a primary means of encouraging morality in the working classes and offered a quote by the noted music critic George Hogarth as epitomizing this sentiment:

> Whenever the working classes are taught to prefer the pleasures of the intellect, and even of taste, to the gratification of sense, a great and favourable change takes place in their character and manners. They are no longer driven, by mere vacuity of mind, to the beer-shop; and a pastime which opens their minds to the impressions produced by the strains of Handel and Haydn, combined with the inspired poetry of the Scriptures, becomes something infinitely better than the amusement of an idle hour. Sentiments are awakened in them which makes them love their families and their homes; their wages are not squandered in intemperance, and they become happier as well as better.[13]

[13] Bernarr Rainbow, *Music in Educational Thought & Practice* (Aberystwyth, Wales: Boethius Press, 1989), 177-178.

Among the programs instituted were the Mechanics' Institutes. According to Henry Raynor, the Mechanics' Institutes were at first designed to provide the workers with certain specialized knowledge which would enable them to be better workers for their respective employers.[14] The workers came to view education as a means of self-improvement, considered a particularly worthy pursuit by the Victorians, and as a means of improving their position in life. Consequently, in addition to the classes directly involved in their work, workers requested, and were provided, classes in other subjects, including Latin, sciences, math, and, notably, instrumental and vocal music. In many cases the reformers enlisted the cooperation of the factory owners in their efforts to provide "rational recreation" for the workers. The formation of factory choirs and brass bands was one response to this imperative. The owners contributed the funds to purchase music, instruments, and band uniforms, and often, a place to rehearse. The choirs and bands provided the workers with the opportunity to build a sense of community and belonging in the often de-humanizing conditions of factory work. However, even more important than the social aspect of participating in musical organizations was the development of a sense of accomplishment as their musical skills improved and the music was brought to a public performance. Many members of the factory choirs developed such an enthusiasm for choral singing that they joined a choral society or a municipal, competitive, or festival choir.

In addition to their work on behalf of the workers, reformers turned their attention to the need to improve the educational system in England. In fact, Mackerness stated that

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[14] Henry Raynor, *Music and Society Since 1815* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1978), 147

from the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, "the question of national education occupied the minds of practically all responsible English people."[15] In 1833 the first government grant toward popular education was made, and in 1839 a special Committee of Council on Education was formed to supervise its administration. Dr. James Kay was appointed Secretary and with his recommendation policies were adopted to widen the school curriculum and provide training for teachers.[16] Because of the widely held opinion that music had a moral influence on its practitioners, and because there was a need to improve congregational singing in the churches, vocal music was proposed as an important area of study in schools. As early as 1837, W. E. Hickson, called "the father of English school music," delivered a lecture before the London Mechanics' Institute in which he "voiced his ambition to have music taught even to the youngest children as a means of improving their general taste and happiness."[17] These views on vocal music were formalized in the Minute of the Committee of Council issued in 1840-1841. Dr. Kay maintained "that vocal music merited a place in popular education because of the distinctly civilizing influence which it exerted, as well as because singing formed a necessary element in public worship."[18] In order to achieve his goals for popular education, Kay established teacher-training institutes. He chose the sight-singing method developed by Guillaume Wilhem in Paris as the means to bring music to the masses. This system was adapted for English use, and in 1840 John Hullah introduced it at the

[15] E. D. Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 153

[16] Bernarr Rainbow, "Music in Education," in *Music in Britain: The Romantic Age 1800-1914* ed. Nicholas Temperley (London: The Athlone Press Ltd., 1981), 40

[17] Ibid., 154

[18] Bernarr Rainbow, The Land Without Music: Musical Education in England, 1800-1860, and Its Continental Antecedents (London: Novello and Company Ltd., 1967), 119.

teacher-training institute at Battersea. In 1841 in London's Exeter Hall, Hullah taught a series of singing classes for practicing teachers. In a pattern that ran parallel to Curwen's '*Tonic Sol-fa*' classes (also begun in 1841), Hullah's classes for teachers were so successful that his pupils were soon teaching children and adults in singing classes nationwide, and Rainbow has pointed out, "the seeds were set for that remarkable nineteenth-century phenomenon, the amateur choral society. The resulting improvement in the status of music making in public estimation was to provide support for the continuance of singing lessons in the nation's schools."[19] However, Hullah's system with its use of 'fixed do' was eventually considered less desirable than Curwen's '*Tonic Sol-fa*' (with its use of 'moveable do'), as a method to teach sight-singing. In spite of the fact that Hullah's system enjoyed official government sanction, by 1860 most teachers preferred to use '*Tonic Sol-fa*'. With the passage of the Education Act of 1870, educational policies passed from national to local control, and '*Tonic Sol-fa*' replaced Hullah's system as the method of choice for teaching singing in the newly established elementary schools.[20] Regardless of the system used to teach sight-singing in the schools, what is most significant is that an enthusiasm for music making spilled over into the adult population via singing classes and contributed to the growing popularity of choral singing.

As has been noted above, there was already an enthusiasm for choral singing among the people in England as evidenced by the congregational singing of the Methodists, the singing by communities of miners and rural workers, and the communal

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[19] Bernarr Rainbow, "Music in Education," in *Music in Britain: The Romantic Age 1800-1914* ed. Nicholas Temperley (London: The Athlone Press, Ltd., 1981), 41.

[20] Ibid., 42

singing of glees, catches, and madrigals in pubs, taverns, and supper clubs. The work of the reformers in encouraging self-improvement and in providing singing classes further contributed to this enthusiasm by enabling the masses to experience both the sense of accomplishment derived from their new-found ability to read music, and sheer pleasure in the act of *music making*. One of the results of all this fervor was the formation of choral societies by groups of singers who wanted to continue the rewarding communal singing experience they had come to enjoy in the numerous variations of singing classes. Dave Russell has stated that "the emergence of the choral society was one of the primary features of nineteenth-century musical history."[21] He further states "By mid-century, choral societies had been established in most English towns with a population of 20,000 plus, and in many of much smaller size."[22]

While improved musical skills were obviously paramount to the formation and survival of these amateur choirs, the availability of cheap music scores was also important. According to Dave Russell, "knowledge of the social base of choralism is in its infancy."[23] But enough is known about choral membership to determine that many of the singers were working class, skilled working class, and lower-middle-class. Prior to the improvements in manufacturing techniques which made possible the printing of affordable copies of music during the Victorian Age, choral societies would purchase a single score and then make enough copies by hand to distribute to the individual singers.

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[21] Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England: 1840-1914: A Social History* (Kingston and Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 13.

[22] Ibid., 199

[23] Russell, *Popular Music*, 200.

Their great love for the art of music inspired this labor but certainly access to cheap scores made their participation easier.[24]

Festival Choirs

Another notable aspect of the choral scene in England was the festival choir. These choirs were assembled to participate in the choral festivals that were an important feature of the musical landscape throughout England. Usually the choral festival was organized to raise funds for a charitable cause or in commemoration of a particular composer's work, such as the Handel Centenary Concert of 1784. It is probably not an exaggeration to state that Handel is largely responsible for the festival choir movement. Not only did his charitable concerts establish the pattern for the *raison d'etre* (reason for being) of many of the festivals in the nineteenth century, but the phenomenal popularity of his music, particularly the sacred oratorios, ensured its performance throughout England. In addition, Handel's music was considered to embody all that was noble, so a tradition of grandiose performances of his music evolved, such as the Handel Centenary Concert in 1784, in which over five hundred musicians from all over England participated.

The choral festival evolved from this beginning of charitable concerts and commemorative concerts as the result several interrelated factors. First, the Victorians' emphasis on philanthropy ensured that charitable concerts would continue to thrive in the nineteenth century. In addition, their preoccupation with moral issues provided a favorable environment for performances of sacred music, such as the oratorios of Handel,

[24] Russell, *Popular Music*, 136.

Haydn, Mendelssohn, and others. Such noble music required a grand gesture in performance, necessitating massed choirs numbering in the hundreds, a large orchestra, and soloists. The "rational recreation" espoused by the reformers was served by attendance at the festival concerts, and this led indirectly to perhaps the most significant development: the change from a professional to an amateur choir. Figuring prominently in this shift was the popularity of the festival concert itself. The combination of the music of favorite composers such as Handel and Haydn, a large professional orchestra and choir, and famous soloists proved to be irresistible. The amateur singers in the audience wanted to participate in the monumental music making. As a result of their attendance in singing classes, many of them now had the newly-acquired singing skills necessary for performing more difficult music, and they had developed a love for choral singing. As the members of the factory choirs, church choirs, '*Sol-fa Societies*,' and singing classes improved their musical skills, they wanted to sing more difficult works, especially the sacred oratorios they had heard in the professional concerts. Since most of the church choirs and choral societies were too few in numbers to mount a suitably grand performance, it was a common practice for two or more to join forces in order to give performances of larger works. Inspired by the professional festival concerts of music of the master composers, amateur choral societies began to join forces in order to perform this music themselves. Thus, the popular oratorio concert that had once been the realm of the professional choir became an important venue for the *amateur music maker* during the reign of Queen Victoria. However, as David Burrows pointed out "London was still the centre of professional music making. A provincial festival gained more fame and status from engaging London musicians (a famous conductor, solo singers and sufficient

players to make up a large orchestra) than from encouraging local talent."[25] The orchestra was still largely made up of professionals, and the soloists were still professionals, but the amateur festival choir supplanted the professional choir by mid-century.

Competitive Festival Choir

The experience of collaborating on the successful performance of "great music" for the local choral festival was often so gratifying for the choir members that community and municipal choirs were formed to continue the music making throughout the year. The development of the competitive choir later in the century provided amateur singers with further opportunities to engage in collaborative music making. Mary Wakefield (1853-1910) is widely regarded to be the originator of the competition festival movement. Music competitions had existed in England prior to her interest in them, but she envisioned one in which musical education was more important than prize-hunting. "I believe the highest attainable object," she wrote, "is to create the love and in consequence the demand for the greatest music, by the 'greatest number.' There is, today, no lack of splendid education for those who intend to make music the business and profession of their lives: neither are there any difficulties of instruction for those whom I will call cultured pleasure seekers in the paths of music. But the object of this movement, as I have already said, is to reach the 'greatest number', which must represent the great

[25] Donald Burrows, "Victorian England: an Age of Expansion," in *Music and Society: The Late Romantic Era from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to World War I*, ed. Jim Samson (Prentice Hall, 1991), 280.

general public, whose life is mainly spent in earning its livelihood."[26] She began in August 1885 by gathering three local vocal quartets at the Wakefield family home for a friendly competition in which each sang Stephen's *Ye Spotted Snakes.* This was a modest beginning, but in each of the following years there were more entrants so that by 1890 the more than six hundred competitors necessitated increasing the number of classes. Eventually the popularity of the festivals sponsored by Mary Wakefield encouraged the founding of others. By 1906 there were fifty festivals with the total number of competitors approaching sixty thousand.[27] While choral music was the primary emphasis, classes were added for solo singers, piano, and other instruments, as well as classes in drama and elocution. In keeping with the educational emphasis, the awarding of certificates and medals was considered preferable to cash prizes. In addition, judges wrote a critique of each choir to encourage improvements in their performance, and the concluding event of the festival was often a performance given by the combined choirs. The judges were recruited from the ranks of music professionals, including educators, composers, and conductors. Composers were often commissioned to write works for specific festivals, and it was not uncommon for the composer to subsequently conduct that work in the final festival concert, thereby providing the amateur musicians with an often unforgettable musical experience. In some cases, choirs were actually formed in order to take part in festival competitions. At the conclusion of the competition, especially if the choir was successful, many of these newly-formed competitive choirs elected to continue rehearsing and singing together throughout the year. The festival

[26] A. M. Wakefield, "The Aims and Objects of Musical Competition Festivals and How to Form Them' (reprinted from *The Commonwealth*, Kendal, n.d.), quoted in Mackerness, 205.

[27] Russell, 41.

movement continued to grow throughout the twentieth century and today there are untold thousands of amateur musicians taking part in the more than three hundred festivals which are affiliated with the British Federation of Music Festivals.

The huge growth and popularity of the choral movement provided a dynamic potential market for new music. The competition to fill this need forced the music publishers to publish not only more works of the past master composers but to seek new works from the composers of the day, thereby encouraging the growth and development of a native English school of composition. In fact, during this time there was little demand or market for large-scale orchestral or operatic music, and providing new works for the burgeoning festival, and later, competitive choir market, was one of the few opportunities composers had to earn money. While the great demand for choral pieces insured that there would be a huge number that are best confined to the distant past, many of those now recognized as masterpieces of the English choral tradition came into being because of the choral movement in its various guises. Edward Elgar, Gustav Holst, Hubert Parry, Charles Villiers Stanford, Frederick Delius, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Herbert Howells are perhaps the most renowned, but festival work was, and is, pursued diligently by a host of other, lesser-known composers right up to the present day.

It is evident that the popularity of choral singing had far-reaching effects on the musical life in England, in large part because it culminated in the *music making* of thousands of amateur musicians in the festival movement. Dave Russell provided the summary of the most important contributions brought about by this festival movement: "Choirs were brought into existence, especially in rural areas, which would almost certainly never have begun but for the festivals. In this sense they really did add to the

foundations of popular musicality. Moreover, by providing a large "market" for composers and by raising the standard of choral technique to arguably the highest level it had ever attained in this country, they called into being a body of part-songs by Elgar, Bantock, Delius and others which would otherwise have never been written. The festival movement was a critical part of the English 'musical renaissance.'"[28]

Brass Band Movement

Bands had existed for many years in England, but it wasn't until the 1820's that the exclusively brass band developed. There were many factors which contributed to this development, perhaps the most obvious being the effectiveness of brass instruments for open air performances. In addition, technological advances brought about by the Industrial Revolution led to improvements in instrument manufacture, which simplified playing. Another advantage of the brass instruments was the similarity of fingering among them which made it possible for players to shift from one instrument to another as needed. It has even been suggested that the factory laborers who comprised the membership of the bands found the brass instruments easier for their work-toughened hands to play.[29]

The brass band movement evolved on a course that in many ways was parallel to that of the choral movement. Membership in a band was an acceptable form of pursuing the self-improvement that was expected in Victorian society. Because bands were

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[28] Russell, 43.

[29] Raynor, 155.

considered to be a form of "rational recreation," factory owners sponsored bands for their workers and instrumental study was offered along with singing at many of the Mechanics' Institutes. The same work-related reforms that fostered membership in choirs and choral societies enabled interested workers to participate in brass bands, and just as enthusiastic choral singers copied their individual parts from a single score, band members painstakingly copied their respective instrumental parts until printed music became more affordable.

Brass Band Competitions

As noted above, 'contesting' played a significant role in the success of the choral movement and the history of English music. The phenomenal growth of the brass band movement was also due in large part to 'contesting'. Russell stated that the first formal band contest occurred in 1845 at Burton Constable near Hull.[30] It was designed on a model of French band contests, and its purpose was to encourage improved musicianship. As in the first choral contest, participants were few in number, five bands in all, but the 1853 contest at Belle Vue Gardens had eight bands competing and drew an audience of over sixteen thousand with coverage in the local press.[31] Success at contests encouraged community pride and support for the bands, just as it did for the successful choirs. In addition, two other trends mirrored events in the choral sector: many new bands were formed in order to participate in contests, and many bands decided to become a permanent body after participating in contests. By the 1890's when band 'contesting'

[30] Russell, 163.

[31] Ibid., 164.

reached its peak, there were more than two hundred and forty contests, and major English composers were writing works as test pieces or competition pieces for the band market just as they did for the choral market. Finally, the band movement echoed the choral movement by its very pervasiveness in the culture. Russell stated that most communities of over one thousand inhabitants and many with fewer "managed some type of band at some time in the nineteenth century."[32] By the twentieth century there were over twenty thousand brass bands in Britain.

While there were many similarities in the development of the choral and brass band movements, there were also some striking differences. The major difference to be considered is the membership profile. Choral societies were usually for mixed voices, although women outnumbered the men. Band membership consisted almost exclusively of males, and they described themselves as "working men." They came from the skilled or semi-skilled working class, whereas the choir membership consisted of a mix of upper working class and the middle class. Choral societies and competition choirs were usually formed by a combination of several singing classes and the competition choirs could be fairly large, numbering from two hundred and fifty to four hundred and fifty members.[33] Brass band membership, on the other hand, was usually drawn from a single factory or workplace, or even from a single shift, making the group more closely knit than was usual for the choirs. While contest band membership was standardized at twenty four, much smaller than the choirs, outside of 'contesting' it could number from as few as eight

[32] Ibid., 162.

[33] Ibid., 210.

in a small community to whatever size would accommodate the instruments available and the community's needs.

The membership profile was not the only way in which choirs and bands differed. The funding practices of the organizations were also markedly different. In the case of the choirs, the biggest difference concerned the instrument, the voice. Voices were free, and expenses, which were usually limited to the purchase of music and refreshments, could most often be met by the relatively low membership fees. Bands, on the other hand, required expensive instruments and uniforms in addition to music, and so depended upon sponsorship, either by factory owners as part of the reformers' "rational recreation" scheme, or by community subscription.

Bands were most often from small, usually industrial communities, and provided musical pomp and ceremony at political rallies, flower shows, processions, sporting events, and other community occasions. Because of the diversity of the events for which they played, the band played a fairly eclectic repertoire which included sacred music, light music and art music. Russell has stated that by bringing art music to a large audience, "the band movement played a central role in the process of musical education."[34] However, the most important benefit derived from the brass band movement was gained by the music maker, the amateur who played for the love of the art. Mackerness quoted Enderby Jackson, a famous band conductor from the nineteenth century:

> In a few years almost every village and group of mills in these districts (i.e. Lancashire and Yorkshire east and west of the Pennine Hills) possessed its own band. It mattered not to them how the bands were constituted, or what

[34] Russell, 191.

> classification of instruments was in use; each man made his own choice, and the teacher found music suitably arranged for their proficiency. If these things were cleverly managed, music was the result; and music was the love and pride of these people and their ever abiding pastime.[35]

Music Making At Home

Although the choral movement and the brass band movement were indeed pervasive in Victorian society, Russell has noted that "the largest part of community-based music was heard not in concert-halls or contest arenas but in pubs, houses, streets and similar focal points."[36] Of these amateur music making venues, the home was clearly the center of the most musical activity, and in the homes that were large enough, the parlour or drawing room was the preferred setting. As was the case with the choral and brass band movements, the surge in home music making as a form of entertainment or "rational recreation" was attributable to factors that emerged from work reform and the stability of the reign of Queen Victoria. First, the greater availability of leisure time was a significant contributing factor. The working class families had more leisure time to spend together due to the reduced hours of the work day and fewer days in the work week for both the adults and children. In the middle class families, the wives and daughters of the households had more leisure time for recreation because the improved wages enabled the family to hire domestic help to do most of the work in the home. Second, the model provided by Queen Victoria's own close-knit family unit encouraged and inspired her subjects to engage in leisure activities that would strengthen the family bond. Because the Queen herself was depicted playing the piano for Prince Albert, family music making

[35] Mackerness, 169.

[36] Russell, 133.

was clearly a worthy pursuit. A third factor affecting the popularity of home music making was its status as an expression of "rational recreation," that most worthy of Victorian ideals. A fourth factor that contributed to the abundance of home music making was the availability of more disposable income which enabled families to purchase the necessary instruments, sheet music, and professional instruction. In addition to the factors already mentioned, Victorian society offered more opportunities for upward mobility than had previously been the case in England and activities associated with music, the ultimate "rational recreation," clearly demonstrated one's worthiness to move into a higher level of society. Furthermore, Ehrlich explained that for the Victorians "music was a 'highly respectablising activity,' and that it could and should be morally uplifting."[37] Thus these two factors, music as "morally uplifting" (self-improvement or "rational recreation"), and music as "respectablising" (social mobility), were potent forces in establishing amateur music making in the home. However, it is important to recognize that although middle class society's code of behavior prescribed music as desirable "rational recreation," its predominance within Victorian society and the enthusiasm which accompanied its "practice" is evidence that music was pursued as much for the pleasure and enjoyment of the art as for its perceived social value.

Home music making often was an informal gathering such as Russell's description of a Sunday evening gathering in a weavers' community of Yorkshire during the 1840's:

> About fifty years ago any person going through Stanbury on Sunday evening could have stopped to listen to the singing and playing. Pianos were not common

[37] Cyril Ehrlich, The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 68.

> in those days, but there were fiddles and flutes and various other instruments. In many a house, if one could have gone in, he would have heard a good concert . . . Some of the houses were moderately large, and you would have seen the father and mother and children, also some neighbours, sitting round the house singing and playing. This was not done in one house only, but it was so in many cottage homes . . . At that time the young people were not satisfied with learning a few tunes, they wished to read the music themselves. Many of them would be able to play several instruments or take their part in singing. When one was tired of singing or blowing he would take up the stringed instrument and play.[38]

Clearly all of this activity is a natural expression of the inherent love of music for which the remote weaving communities in Yorkshire and Lancashire were renowned. What isn't clear in this account is which family member played which instrument. In Victorian England the choice of instrument was gender specific: in the drawing room the gentlemen would play string instruments or the flute, often accompanying the women; the women, on the other hand, would play the piano, guitar or harp.[39] Singing was most often the provenance of women, although the gentlemen would occasionally favor the company with a song or join the ladies in their singing.

Early in the nineteenth century it was also a love of music which motivated the more serious amateur musicians who played chamber music together. Most often chamber music took the form of the accompanied sonata in which the piano, the dominant instrument, would usually be joined by flute, violin or cello. Around 1800 there was even a "vogue for violin duets."[40] Chamber music also included the amateur string quartet party which had been a strong presence among the nobility in the

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[38] Russell, 142.

[39] Dave Russell has noted in *Popular Music in England* (143) that although the piano is seen by many as 'the woman's instrument', there is much evidence that men, especially of the working classes, played the piano. In addition, for many of the leading male figures in their local musical communities the piano was often a valuable tool.

[40] Geoffrey Bush, "Chamber Music," in *The Romantic Age: 1800-1914*, ed. Nicholas Temperley (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 381.

eighteenth century. Early in the nineteenth century the string quartet was appropriated by dedicated groups of males from the leisured industrialists "playing for their own edification."[41]

The technical advances in piano manufacturing combined with the piano's subsequent increased affordability ensured its place as the dominant instrument in home music making. The improved tone quality and action gave the piano great imitative powers so that it could "suggest a range of effects (e. g. pizzicato, drum points, flute-like arpeggiations.)," a veritable 'family orchestra.'[42] Not only was it an ideal accompanying instrument, but two players on a single instrument could give passable renderings of orchestral and opera selections. The wealthy were eager to purchase the "new and improved" pianos and released their "inferior" instruments to a brisk second-hand market. Many fine, moderately priced instruments were made for the middle-class drawing rooms, as well as lower-priced pianos for the working class market. There was even a 'hire-purchase' plan for those without the ready cash. By 1871 there were an estimated four hundred thousand pianos and one million pianists in Britain. After forty years of "piano mania" there were an estimated two to four million pianos in Britain.[43]

The enormous popularity of the piano was due in part to its being seen as a symbol of wealth and social attainment. Because of its expense, piano ownership had been limited to the wealthy, who considered the presence of a beautiful, ornately carved instrument to be an outward sign of their sensibility and good breeding. The ability to

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[41] Nicholas Temperley, "Ballroom and Drawing-Room Music," in *The Romantic Age: 1800-1914*, ed. Nicholas Temperley (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 120.

[42] Mackerness, 173.

[43] Ehrlich, 71.

purchase a piano enabled the middle or working class family to establish a link with the wealthy salon tradition and thereby establish their claim to a place in society. Another facet of this social emulation was the pursuit of female "accomplishments," made possible by the leisure time enjoyed by the women of a gentleman's household. Emancipated from the necessity of labor, the wives and daughters of the middle class were able to fill many hours perfecting the most worthy "accomplishment," music, particularly acquiring skill at the piano. In fact, "middle-class guides to female etiquette stressed the emotional, moral and physical benefits that stemmed from diligent practice."[44] The piano was also considered an aid to romance. Musical evenings at home were the ideal social gathering for young ladies and young gentlemen to become acquainted. There, under the watchful eye of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other adults, young ladies would be called upon to display their musical "accomplishments," perhaps even as the accompanist for young male singers who would be smitten by their grace and beauty. Talent was helpful, if not put on obvious display, but by no means necessary! Russell was careful to point out the need for balance in the case of social emulation and the piano: "It has been frequently argued that purchase of a piano, particularly by the lower middle and working classes, was more the result of social than musical considerations . . . over-emphasis upon the search for respectability obscures the existence of deep levels of genuine musical sensibility amongst the working population. The purchase of a piano was often simply *another manifestation of the contemporary appetite for music, and an attempt to satisfy it.*"[45]

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[44] Russell, 143.

[45] Ibid.

The advances in manufacturing that provided the means to make a greater number of better instruments more cheaply for the drawing rooms and parlors of enthusiastic amateurs also provided publishers with the means to print more music quickly and cheaply, thereby supplying the voracious public appetite for music for personal consumption. Thus, the favorite selections heard at public concerts, the theater, or the opera house were rapidly transcribed for piano, or for combinations of piano and other instruments, to be played by the amateur musician in parlor or drawing room. The qualities of the piano which caused John Hullah to call it the "family orchestra" also made it eminently capable of rendering the reductions of symphonies and operatic selections. Amateur performances of the piano transcriptions of these works were often the only opportunity people in many areas of the country, notably the provinces, had to hear large-scale serious works such as the symphonies of Beethoven, Haydn, or Mozart.

The presence of the piano in so many parlors and drawing rooms in turn "proved a stimulus to *composers* of studies, salon pieces, and, in particular, dance music which was poured out to suit the demands of the season."[46] Temperley offered a fairly comprehensive list of what a piano solo might be: " . . . a medley, fantasia, or rondo based on popular songs, mainly operatic; a set of variations on a well-known tune which might be in origin a ballad, operatic aria, or instrumental melody; a dance or set of dances; or, perhaps, a 'piece' of some kind, such as a nocturne, romance, song without words, or caprice. Sonatas were sometimes played, but on the whole they were too serious, although a sonata movement might pass for a 'piece'. And in all probability the

[46] Mackerness, 172.

composer would be foreign."[47] There were also waltzes, marches, and quadrilles in abundance. In keeping with the demands of the often unskilled amateurs who were playing to entertain their families and guests, much of this keyboard music was light in character. However, there was also much classical piano music published in simpler arrangements for the less-skilled but enthusiastic drawing room amateurs. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that in spite of the fact so many of these amateurs played the piano for primarily social reasons, there were undoubtedly many outstanding musicians among them who, by the end of the century, ultimately helped create a market for serious keyboard music from English composers.

In addition to the instrumental works, enormous quantities of English songs and ballads were published for the amateur market. According to Temperley, songs were ordinarily introduced at public concerts accompanied by orchestra. The usual procedure was that at the time a song was published with piano accompaniment, it was simultaneously introduced at a public concert accompanied by orchestra. Early concerts were still of a "miscellaneous" type comprising a mix of types including chamber music, symphony, songs, opera selections, and "light music." Publishers commonly hired well-known singers to introduce the songs in concerts in an effort to insure the success of a song and therefore a favorable reaction by the public. A favorable public reaction meant increased sales and a greater profit. The songs introduced by paid singers came to be called 'royalty ballads'. As the century progressed, the publishers sponsored concerts comprised solely of the songs they published. Two of these were Chappell and Co.'s "Monday Popular Concerts" and Boosey and Co.'s "Boosey Ballad Concerts," perhaps

[47] Temperley, 121.

the most famous. As in the earlier "miscellaneous" concerts, the songs were performed by famous singers whose skilled and sensitive delivery contributed substantially to the successful marketing of the songs. Specialty concerts of this type were referred to as "ballad concerts" and continued into the twentieth century. By the time these concerts disappeared from the scene, they had come under fire for their alleged crass commercialism. Judging by the enormous quantities of songs printed and sold, they were a huge commercial success. However, while it is true that they were organized for the purpose of promoting sales, these concerts made important contributions to the English musical scene. First, they provided a ready market for the works of English composers, and thus a means for English composers to earn a living during a time when there was scant interest in English music and English composers needed a private income or wealthy patron to survive. Second, they provided the middle and working classes with a relatively inexpensive form of "rational recreation." Third, of the thousands of ballads heard at the concerts, a "number gained great popularity; and this popularity means that the songs concerned had somehow called forth the feelings of those who bought, sang, and heard them."[48] In other words, these songs evoked a response from the people, touched them, spoke to them. The concerts provided the venue for the people to connect with a body of music which gave them a voice. Perhaps most importantly, they provided a body of works which encouraged amateur *music making*.

[48] Nicholas Temperley, "Ball-Room and Drawing-Room Music" in *The Romantic Age: 1800-1914*, 131.

Solo Amateur Music Making

While the preceding discussion centered on communal music making activities, there was a growing trend in solo music making from about 1880 onward. Of course, at-home musical evenings always featured an element of solo playing or singing in order to display (mostly) female attainments, but it was considered poor manners to show an inordinate amount of talent or ability. There were hours and hours of practice expected of the leisured females but limited opportunities for fulfilling performances reflective of their dedication and abilities. The inclusion of solo classes in the choral festivals and choral competition festivals provided both an encouragement for improved musicianship and an acceptable outlet for the display of the serious amateurs' musical accomplishments. As in the choral classes, the judges of the solo classes heard each participant, wrote a critique which included suggestions for improvement, and in some festivals, awarded marks or points. In addition, from the 1880's the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music conducted a system of exams in which students played their pieces for a judge.[49] A satisfactory performance qualified the student to receive a certificate and to proceed to the next level. As in the festivals, judges wrote suggestions/comments for improvement and assigned marks, or points, for the student's performance. While "display" playing wasn't acceptable in the drawing-room, competitive playing was certainly encouraged and success was enthusiastically applauded. The competitions and festivals inspired many more amateurs to engage in solo music making just as they had encouraged the formation of additional amateur choirs and bands. The increasing numbers of festival and competition participants

[49] The Associated Board administered exams for students of all ages, children, and adults.

enabled increasing numbers of composers, performers, and music educators to augment their income by serving as judges and examiners.

The demand for new works from English composers, another propitious consequence of the thriving festival and exam circuit, has already been mentioned with regard to the choral festivals and repertoire. Not only was there an increased demand for new choral compositions, but also for new solo compositions. The need for challenging and artistic repertoire provided English composers a large market for their work and was an important impetus for the development of English 'art song' for the first time since the works of Henry Purcell.

Clearly, the "golden age" of amateur music making was the result of many inter-related elements in English society from 1840-1914. Russell provided the summary of this phenomena: " . . . it was the community itself that generated the bulk of musical entertainment, albeit entertainment drawing largely on the compositions emanating from the various branches of the musical profession. Music gave a variety of emotional, social and economic satisfactions to its adherents and, partly in recognition of its popularity and capacity to influence, was regarded by ideologues of varied persuasion as a major vehicle for the promulgation of 'correct' ideas and attitudes."[50] While music's place as the preferred means of "rational recreation" and leisure activity was ultimately undermined by a proliferation of alternative entertainments, its ability to give a "variety of . . . satisfactions to its adherents"[51] has guaranteed its continuing presence in society. While the percentage of participants is no longer as great as in the "golden age," amateur music

[50] Russell, 249.

[51] Russell, 249.

making continues to require the services of composers, teachers, adjudicator/examiners, and publishers.

The societal changes which were set in motion by the Industrial Revolution were, of course, not static but continued to evolve and influence the conditions which made the "golden age" of amateur music making possible. Consequently, amateur music making continued to evolve throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. A proliferation of entertainment venues, notably competitive team sports (like soccer), the cinema, and the dance hall, vied with music making for the people's leisure time and money. The resulting decrease in male membership particularly in the choirs and bands was often a crippling blow. As train lines continued to spread across the country, people from the outlying towns and villages had easier access to a variety of leisure activities, often to the detriment of their communities' choirs and bands. Some writers have even suggested that the strong family ties were weakening, and young people were less likely to follow the leisure pursuits (notably music) of their parents.

The winds of change began to blow before 1914, but the First World War was certainly the most visible definitive factor which changed the shape of amateur music making in England. With so many young men marching off to war, many performing groups had trouble maintaining enough membership to remain a viable entity. Sharing members to cover missing parts was only partially successful and many groups folded. In addition, the gramophone which was issued to the troops to help relieve tedium subsequently entered civilian life in great numbers and gave people access to a wide variety of music without the necessity of making it themselves. Supplying the war effort

also meant that there were fewer instruments manufactured and less paper available for printing music, a further blow to the amateur music making sector.

From about 1918, music appreciation was introduced and rapidly gained ground, further weakening music making. While not intended to discourage the people's active participation in music making, music appreciation had that effect because its emphasis on guided listening, when combined with the greater access to quality recorded music via the gramophone and the wireless, resulted in a growth in a music-listening rather than a music making public. In addition, recorded music enabled the listener to isolate himself/herself to hear music and enabled the listener to concentrate on a particular type of music. Not only was music no longer primarily participatory, but there was a shift from music as a social or group activity to music as a personal experience. However, even with the changes, the competitive festivals continue to thrive, although perhaps not on so great a scale as previously, and amateurs continue to make music, albeit more for their own pleasure and edification than for its social implications. Consequently, there is a continuing tradition of amateur music making, necessitating compositions appropriate for their skills, teachers to aid in their continued improvement, and competitions and festivals to encourage their efforts toward excellence in the art of music. Michael Head (1900-1976) intentionally set out to foster amateur music making by his work as an examiner/adjudicator, broadcaster, performer and composer and it is to a description of his life and early training that we next turn.

CHAPTER 4

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Family Background and Early Years

Michael Dewar Head was born in Eastbourne on January 28, 1900, at the end of the great Victorian Age in Great Britain (Queen Victoria died on January 22, 1901), and the beginning of the Twentieth Century. While he lived well into the new century, dying in 1976, the influences of his family life and of his early musical training were firmly rooted in the Victorian traditions. In fact, he subscribed so strongly to the Victorian ideal of amateur music making that he worked actively on its behalf throughout his career as composer, performer and educator.

The Victorian Era was an age of empire building and expansionism and the adventurous spirit required for imperial growth was strongly represented in Michael Head's family. His paternal grandfather was the master of a sailing ship which carried cargo between the West Indies and England while his maternal grandfather served as a chaplain in the British army in India during the British Raj (British rule). In addition, many other members of his mother's family lived in India, working as magistrates, engineers, soldiers and tea planters. When they retired and returned to England, they brought back many beautiful objects to decorate their homes.[1] Seeing such exotic souvenirs and hearing the stories of sailing the seas and of life in far-away India must have fired the imagination of the young Michael Head because he exhibited an adventurous spirit throughout his adult life. For example, his sister Nancy Bush related that during World War I he was put to work for a time driving German prisoners of war.

[1] Nancy Bush, *Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982), 8.

He was "a good but spirited driver, and his passengers put in formal complaints more than once of the speed with which he rattled them down the narrow Dorset lanes."[2] In a letter written on board the S.S. Jamaica Head wrote "one has a wonderful feeling of adventure on sighting the last of England which has just disappeared at about 12:30 this morning."[3] Another account of his bent for adventure is found in a letter he wrote to Nancy while in route to Jamaica for an examining tour: "You will notice there is a distinct gap in the diary, but they have been blue dull days indeed between. They were really due to a second seasickness caused by the violent motion of the ship going through a real hurricane. There now! I am very proud to have experienced one, and the wind was colossal—ninety miles an hour."[4]

Even at the age of seventy-five he was undeterred in his zest for new experiences, as illustrated by the extracts from three letters he wrote while on a visit to the Grand Canyon, Colorado:

> I feel miles and thousands of miles from home, as well I am. The (Grand) Canyon is indeed vast, majestic, beautiful and sensational, worth all the effort of getting here . . . The hotel is a turmoil of visitors, many teenagers. We queue for nearly all meals but they are so good when you get them. I drink gallons of ice-water, also have ice cream and hot coffee. The weather here is glorious, brilliant sun, cool breezes. Tomorrow I venture on the all day mule ride, down to the Eldorado River. I sit now amidst a hubbub of youthful people, waiting for rooms. The place is packed out.[5]

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[2] Nancy Bush, *Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982), 17.

[3] Michael Head to Nancy Bush, 15 October, 1927, ALS, MH20, Michael Head Collection in the possession of Catherine and Michael Hinson, Birmingham, England (hereafter cited as MH20).

[4] Michael Head to Nancy Bush, 21 October, 1927, MH20.

[5] Michael Head to Nancy Bush quoted in *Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist*, 61.

The next letter is dated August 8, 1975: "Don't be alarmed, but I was very foolish to do the mule ride. Very tiring indeed. Just at the return I was thrown from my mule. Much bruised and shaken. I decided *not* to attempt the return—so guess—I was rescued by a helicopter! As it was an accident, it was considered to qualify for ambulance service."[6]

The last letter regarding the mule ride is, according to his sister Nancy, typical of Michael Head: "Such was the final dramatic ending to my visit, but I would not have missed such an unexpected experience."[7]

The Victorian Era was characterized by a rise in the middle class, fueled in part by an increase in the numbers of members of the professional classes. Again, Michael Head's family is well represented. Although widowed early in her marriage, his resourceful and industrious paternal grandmother managed to educate her five sons into professions: three as doctors, one as an architect, and one, Frederick Dewar Head, Michael Head's father, as a barrister. He was employed chiefly as a legal journalist, but Frederick Head's time spent as a classics scholar at Oxford undoubtedly contributed to his gifts as a story-teller. Nancy Bush described his talents in her book: "He spent much of his time in an armchair by the fire, and when we were young children this seemed the right and proper place for him to be; he was a great story-teller and he would, day by day, relate to us long tales of adventure . . . ."[8] It is likely that his father's stories fueled not only Michael Head's love of adventure, but also his love of descriptive language. Many

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[6] Ibid

[7] Ibid

[8] Nancy Bush, *Michael Head*, 8.

of Head's diary entries and letters to his mother and sister are filled with vivid imagery. As a young man of eighteen, while in the country driving German prisoners of war, he wrote the following letter to his mother:

> I've been for a perfectly glorious ramble today, right over the heather. I'll try and describe it. Perhaps I've told you that every morning and evening when I take the Germans I have to climb right up over a wild bit of down, very high, a part of the heath; now I've often seen a little way along the down a clump of trees standing all alone on a little headland and have thought 'what a beautiful view there must be from the place' so today I walked ever so far and reached it. It was really a most awe inspiring sort of feeling standing all alone with these few trees with the breeze just making a sound overhead. I could see for miles and miles. In one direction great stretches of downs covered with red colored bracken, then right across the valley the opposite hazy down with dark blue stretches with fair woods just below, and a glittering little river running the meadows and other autumn woods, while in the extreme distance straight over the whole length of heath, a shining white cliff of the Isle of Wight, and just below at the foot of the hill I was standing on there happened to be a great gray manor house surrounded by a wooded park, which seemed to just perfect the whole scene. I couldn't take myself away, sat on and on, just "feeling" the sort of effect of this great expanse. You've no idea what beautiful country it is around here . . . [9]

On an examining tour in 1927, he wrote while at sea: " . . . I managed to walk round the deck about 10 times this evening and I was quite moved by the security and comfort of a little manmade boat surrounded by the immensity of the sea, looking rather frowning with spurts of foam and a rainy sunset . . . ."[10] Later on the same voyage he wrote: " . . . If only you could see this marvelous sunset. The sea looks like a large dimpled pool of quicksilver, just gently undulating with a lovely crimson sunset right on the horizon."[11] Even during trying circumstances related to touring during World War II he wrote:

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[9] Michael Head to Nina Head, n.d., MH20.

[10] Michael Head to Nancy Bush, 17 October, 1927, MH20.

[11] Michael Head to Nancy Bush, 21 October, 1927, MH20.

" . . . A wonderful flight and magic scenery, floating on a sea of sparkly cloud with glimpses of valleys and mountains below . . . ."[12]

Akin to his love of adventure is Michael Head's love of travel. He was an avid photographer and his many photo albums are filled with evidence of his much loved holidays. Venice, Spain, Yugoslavia, Madeira, Los Angeles, Hawaii, Macao, Vienna, the Dolomites, Greece, France, Switzerland, Rome, Norway, Sweden, Copenhagen, and the Loire Valley are but a few of the places represented in his albums. Along with the evidence of his photos, his diaries and letters are filled with accounts of his travels, often in the descriptive language which was so illustrative of his enthusiasm. From a trip to the Victoria Falls in Africa he wrote: " . . . a lovely, luxurious hotel, that beautiful terrace. With the blue smoke of the spray in the distance, I spent from 3-6 PM exploring. A marvelous sight. Breathtaking."[13] Another example is a letter written home from a holiday in Tokyo after an Examining Board tour in Hong Kong: "It rains and rains. Finally we set off on a sight-seeing tour in a bus. Really, I quite enjoyed it all in spite of the downpour. First, the Imperial Palace, then a fine picture gallery showing the life of an Emperor—only no other pictures. Then a visit to a tea-garden, so pretty even in the rain. A pretty Japanese girl in a pink kimono escorted me everywhere under a paper umbrella. Very dainty and attractive, I thought. (No English, however.) We all watched the ceremonial of tea-making . . . ."[14]

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[12] Michael Head, quoted in Nancy Bush, *Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist*, 34.

[13] Michael Head Diary, 25, 26 July, 1964. Michael Head collection in the possession of Dr. Rachel O'Higgins, Cambridge, England.

[14] Michael Head, quoted in Bush, *Michael Head*, 59.

In addition to his travels abroad, Michael Head enjoyed holidays in England. His earliest diary accounts describe trips taken with his sister Nancy Bush, a carry-over from the popular Victorian practice of family holidays. After her marriage he continued taking holidays, traveling with friends and/or colleagues. His diary entry for August 22, 1923 gives an account of such a holiday: " . . . went on long walks over the mountains and bathed along the river. I kept on feeling almost physically the extreme beauty of the country, a most lovely, exhilarating sensation the gorgeous sweep of hills and the violet valleys with the river winding in and out below."[15] The rich imagery he employs in this entry serves to illustrate another of his great loves, that of the English countryside, a trait he shares with many of the British song composers of late Victorian and Edwardian times, including Ivor Gurney, Peter Warlock, Gerald Finzi, and George Butterworth. In her book, Nancy Bush referred to summer and spring holidays when she and Head would bicycle about the countryside together: "My brother loved the country, and on these outings was never content until we found a really good view-point before settling down to eat our picnic lunch. I always got tired before he did and wanted to stop and eat our sandwiches as soon as possible, but he would persuade me, always good-naturedly, to ride just a little further, to the next hill-top, perhaps, where a really splendid panorama of woods and fields spread before us. Gazing at this never failed to give him delight."[16]

This fondness for the countryside can in part be attributed to the Victorian penchant for family excursions to the country. These were undertaken to escape the heat and noise of the cities, and became popular after large segments of the population had re-

[15] Head Diary, 22 August, 1923, Head Collection.

[16] Bush, Michael Head, 15.

located to urban areas in order to take jobs in commerce and manufacturing. Michael Head enjoyed living in London because he wanted to be in the middle of the musical scene, but he frequently returned to the country for long solitary walks. If he couldn't leave the city, Michael Head would often drive to Richmond Park, in the southwest part of the city, for an invigorating ramble.

The Victorian predilection for family evenings at home was another important influence in Michael Head's early life. As noted above, Michael Head and his sister often spent evenings by the fireside listening to their father tell his wonderful stories. Nancy Bush also described Michael Head's efforts to entertain the family: "Michael built a theatre with sets of scenery, workable electric lighting and cardboard puppets on wire . . . The plays were written as well as spoken by himself, prefaced by an overture which he played on the piano."[17] In addition, visits to friends and acquaintances often included performances by Head, reminiscent of the Victorian at-home musical evenings. His natural warmth and ease of delivery, notable characteristics of his public appearances later in life, were nurtured in the intimate atmosphere of these music making experiences in drawing-rooms and parlours.

Nancy Bush has suggested that Michael Head's musical talent came from their mother's side of the family. Their grandfather, the Reverend George Frederick Watson, had a beautiful speaking voice. Their mother, Nina Watson, was a talented amateur singer who was also taught piano by her sister, Rachel Watson, an "outstanding" pianist in her own right.[18] Although Nina Watson's accomplishments as a singer and pianist

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[17] Ibid., 12.

[18] Bush, *Michael Head*, 9.

were typical for a young middle class lady in Victorian England, her later profession as a police woman was decidedly atypical. By the end of the Victorian Age and into the Edwardian Era, women were beginning to enter the work force in increasing numbers. However, those jobs were usually in the professional or white-collar occupations, including elementary teachers and office workers such as clerks, typists, and telephonists.[19] Mrs. Head's choice of occupation was quite outside the mainstream. Nina Watson Head was also unorthodox in other areas of her life. For example, at one point she adopted a strict vegetarian diet. During another period, she adhered to the practices of the Christian Science religion (which was a marked departure from the religious practices of her childhood). In addition to her other activities, Mrs. Head was also a suffragette, a distinctly unconventional stand. She was also untraditional in her views for educating her children. For awhile she sent Michael Head to the co-educational Home School, Highgate, where the students did not wear school uniforms which was highly unusual for school children during that time. Nancy Bush described the teaching at the Highgate school as "unconventional and sometimes imaginative." It was at Home School that Head first encountered Dalcroze Eurythmics, which, at the time, was considered an avant-garde approach to music education.[20] Michael Head seems to have inherited his mother's trait of strong-willed non-conformity. Although gifted mechanically he chose a profession in music during a time when it was scarcely considered a respectable profession. A career as an engineer would have been considered more acceptable for a

[19] Harold Perkin, *The Rise of the Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 79.

[20] Bush, *Michael Head*, 10.

man and was in fact encouraged by his father.[21] Nancy provided the following anecdote concerning Head's sometimes eccentric behavior:

> Always unconventional, Michael believed in getting what he needed when he traveled, regardless of what was the usually accepted thing. On one occasion, after a tiring evening concert, he went with Evelyn (Rothwell) into the crowded bar of an hotel and when his companion's drink had been ordered he leant over the counter and enquired of the tough North Country barman in his quiet voice; 'Do you think you could provide me with a glass of milk?' The beer and whisky drinkers all around paused, unable to believe their ears, and the expression on the barman's face was at first one of stupefaction, but to do him credit he then replied 'Certainly, sir, just one moment. If you would like to step into the dining-room, we'll serve you there.' Michael for his part seemed unconscious of asking for anything out of the way.[22]

Another instance related by Nancy refers to Michael Head's work adjudicating in Canada. Apparently two of the other members of the adjudicating committee were "shocked at his informal style, which went so far as an appearance on the platform one day in carpet slippers. He believed in being completely natural, and also comfortable . . . ."[23]

Early Musical Training

Nina Head gave Michael Head his first piano lessons when he was just four years old. By the time he was seven his accomplished playing signaled that his was a prodigious talent. His family provided great encouragement for him in the development of his musical talents. In about 1907 he attended Monkton Combe school near Bath where he accompanied performers at the end-of-term concerts in addition to performing

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[21] Nina Head to Michael Head, n.d., MH20.

[22] Bush, Michael Head, 42.

[23] Ibid., 49.

as a piano soloist.[24] A letter written by the Headmaster, E. Easterfield, testifies to Head's prowess: "His power to transpose at sight any song, his taste as an accompanist, and his precocity as a composer, gave him a position here that no boy has ever held . . . "[25] After leaving Monkton Combe, Michael Head was a student at the Home School, Highgate. He began musical studies at the Adair-Marston School of Music at Emperor's Gate (hereinafter referred to as "The Gate"), Gloucester Road, London, in 1912. A letter in the Hinson collection, addressed to Mrs. Adair from F. Stoverton Beeching, organist and choirmaster at The Annunciation, Bryonston St. W., is apparently a response to Mrs. Adair's inquiry concerning Michael Head's abilities:

> You ask me my opinion of Michael Head. I consider him a musical genius-both in pianoforte playing and in composition his powers are enormously advanced for a boy of twelve; he has interesting and original musical ideas and his reading at sight is excellent. I have no doubt that with further good training and careful management he will make his mark later on. I have had, as you know, many boys pass through my hands, and I can confidently say that I have never before struck such promising material in any pupil.[26]

It is not known what or how much music Michael Head wrote while a pupil of Stoverton Beeching. However, the Hinson Collection includes a manuscript written by Michael Head for his mother when he was twelve. The first piece is a song, followed by a "Menuetto" for piano, followed by another song, which is in turn followed by a piece entitled "Sherherazade [*sic*]."[27] Although clearly a juvenile work, the keyboard parts, which he apparently played, contain many passages of octave work for both hands,

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[24] Bush, *Michael Head*, 10.

[25] E. Easterfield, n.d., MH20.

[26] F. Stoverton Beeching to Mrs. Adair, 5 July, 1912, MH20.

[27] Manuscript by Michael Head, Hinson Collection.

perhaps not surprising for someone who reportedly had large hands. While at the Adair-Marston School, Michael Head studied piano with Mrs. Jean Adair, who had been a pupil of Clara Schumann. After his voice broke, he studied singing with Mr. Fritz Marston, who had been a pupil of Charles Lunn, the English tenor.[28] Here, as at Monkton Combe, Michael Head distinguished himself by the facility with which he accompanied, sight-read, and transposed difficult accompaniments. In addition to his lessons at the "Gate," Head apparently taking composition lessons and continued composing, because the diary entry for February 21, 1919, refers to his first composition lesson with John Ireland and the April 10, 1919, entry refers to lessons with John Ireland, Mr. Marston (with whom he studied voice), and Mr. Beeching. Although the exact dates of the compositions aren't known, two programs from performances given by the students at the "Gate" on October 28, 1917 and November 18, 1917, list a group of partsongs by Michael Head: "Te decet Hymnus," "When in longer shadows," "Smet-Smet," and "Jabberwocky."[29] In addition, on the November 18 program Michael Head accompanied a Mr. Raymond Metcalfe who sang two solo songs composed by Michael Head: "The Island," and "Give a Man a Horse He Can Ride."[30] These two concerts were given at Wigmore Hall "In Aid of 'Our Day' Red Cross Fund." The manuscripts to the partsongs have so far not been found so dating them precisely or assessing their musical effectiveness is not possible at this time. Of the two solo songs, it is unclear what has become of "The Island" but "Give a Man a Horse He Can Ride" is listed in Nancy Bush's book as having been published by Boosey

[28] Bush, *Michael Head*, 16.

[29] Mrs. Jean Adair, director, Concert , "In Aid of 'Our Day' Red Cross Fund," Wigmore Hall, London, England, 28 October, 1917. Program in the Hinson Collection

[30] Ibid., 18 November, 1917. Program in the Hinson Collection

& Hawkes in 1923, while Stephen Banfield, in *Sensibility and English Song,* lists the song as written in 1917 and published in 1923. The song *Claribel,* with a text by Tennyson, was also written while Head was a student at "the Gate."[31] According to his diary, this song was among a group that he showed to Mr. Boosey on January 23, 1919: "A most astonishing surprise . . . The very first song he accepted. *Claribel.* He seemed greatly taken with it and suggests Jordan (a tenor) shall sing it!"[32] By this time Head had written many more songs and a later entry illustrates the young composer's assessment of his work written two years before: "Received 1st proofs of *Claribel.* (My-what a pot-boiler! Never mind. I wrote as my very best, not as my worst.) It certainly has a sweet tune."[33] Despite Head's less than flattering opinion of *Claribel,* it was published by Boosey in 1920.

Michael Head had been a full time student at the Adair-Marston School of Music since leaving school. In January 1918 he volunteered for the Royal Air Force,[34] but he failed the final medical and was sent to work at a munitions factory. While his war work prevented him from continuing his musical studies, he did continue to compose. It was during his time at the factory that he wrote the song cycle, *Over the Rim of the Moon,* which was published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1919. The texts of these four songs, *Ships of Arcady, A Blackbird Singing, Beloved,* and *Nocturne,* were by the Irish poet Francis Ledwidge, who was killed during World War I. By October of that year Head had been reassigned to landwork on Sir Ernest Debenham's farm in Dorset. He became friendly

[31] Bush, *Michael Head,* 17.

[32] Head Diary, 23 January, 1919, Head Collection.

[33] Ibid., 29 November, 1919.

[34] Bush, Michael Head, 17.

with the Debenham family and was able to return to practicing music. Nancy Bush added that he "was sometimes invited to sing and play in their country home in the evenings."[35] These musical evenings at home were an extension of those he had enjoyed with his own family and with friends of his family ever since he was a youngster. He was by nature a shy person and talking with people was a struggle for him but playing the piano, and later, singing were natural means of expression for him. He was at ease when performing in the intimate surroundings of the drawing room or parlour and often tried out his latest song in these congenial settings.

During his stay in Dorset, Michael Head began to seriously contemplate his future and apparently explored various possibilities in letters to his mother. Her letters in response provide a glimpse into his concerns:

> We seem to have been thinking along the same lines with regard to your future-I feel too that music is your greatest gift & that you should live for it-but like you, I am wondering how it will be best for you to attain this object . . . I began to read the Arnold Bennett article, & was so interested that I went on to the end. There was a passage, almost the last-which I nearly marked for you, expressing almost what you feel about living for music. Bennett says something to the effect that it is best to live for the thing that is strongest in one-even at a risk- & although you may fail-because it is the only satisfying thing to do-or words to that effect . . . & now here is your letter expressing the very idea! It is strange . . . As you say, composers have gone through much varied training and when the war is over, I trust that you too will get the right opportunity. It is wonderful to me that you can write as you do with the small amount of help which you have had-& the little you have heard –for training sake-in the way of operas, etc. . . . And this brings me to your voice. Naturally it does not grow bigger because you do not know the <u>real</u> way of using it-& for the present, until you do know, it is for the best for you to use it in a small way & not to force it. For recitals, quality tells much more than quantity-& that vital spark, which you really <u>do</u> possess, of individual expression.

[35] Bush, *Michael Head*, 17.

> There is always a soul behind your singing, and this, curiously enough, is much lacking, at present in your playing . . . .[36]

Two other letters from his mother also refer to his abilities and his future endeavors. One was written in October, evidently in 1918 due to its references to his ongoing war service:

> . . . I have been thinking over all you say, & am now writing this quietly in the evening. I knew a time would come when you would be weighing things over just in the way you are at present . . . And now to tell you how much Aunt Ray seems to have liked your music . . . She thought you were looking very well, & spoke of your "great talents" in connection with your present work. Thinking with us all, that some day, it is music you must devote your life to . . . They all seem to have been struck with your singing . . . Aunt Ray says you have a real "Watson" voice . . . she especially mentions "To One Dead" as beautiful[37] . . . And now, I want to say what is often in my mind about your singing. I think we should both set it in front of us as the next thing to achieve-the development of your voice-work for it. I know it is going to be beautiful . . . [38]

This letter clearly shows that Head was trying to make a decision. It also presents a picture of a family which encouraged his musical efforts, acknowledged his "great talents," and were inclined to direct him toward a career in music. At the same time, his mother recognized the need for him to further develop his talents by undertaking a serious study of voice. The second letter has no date but bears the inscription "Wednesday, 11:30 P. M." Because of its content, it too must be from 1918. In this letter Nina Head seems to be responding to one from Michael in which he mentions Engineering as a possible occupation:

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[36] Nina Head to Michael Head, dated 22 October, 1918, MH20.

[37] "To One Dead," written by Michael Head in 1918, is the original title of the song which was published by Boosey in 1919 as "A Blackbird Singing," the second song in the cycle *Over the Rim of the Moon.*

[38] Nina Head to Michael Head, dated October, 2nd, Wednesday night, MH20. (October 2nd was not a Wednesday in 1918 so it appears that Nina Head miss-dated her letter to Michael.)

> Before going to bed I want to write you some "thoughts for the Boiler House!" After writing my letter last night, I thought I would like to hear Father's opinion on your letter . . . He said at once that it would be a good thing for you to have Engineering as a background-"say Electrical Engineering-just to make a couple of hundred pounds a year" . . . I am telling you this as it is always wise to keep both sides of a question before you-& of course there is much to be said for Father's views . . . At present your engineering is really a workman's work, & therefore very hard & monotonous for you . . . but I think just because you <u>are</u> so unpractical, & have forgotten your mathematics, that it is good for you to apply; yourself for a time to these things . . . cultivate the practical side now . . . Nothing is ever lost or useless that we strive for. It may be that it will give balance and strength to your music. And then, this has just struck me. If you do your best cheerfully to work for Mr. Debenhem now, some day perhaps if he were to help you towards your ideals, you would feel you could accept it. You remember what he said to Mrs. Adair about you.[39]

In this letter Nina Head relates Frederick Head's suggestion that Michael Head should pursue Engineering; yet she remains consistent in her encouragement of his pursuit of music. Frederick Head was clearly aware that Engineering was a more lucrative, reliable profession than music. Nina Head seemed to acknowledge the difficulties of making a success in music by her references to the possibility of help from Mr. Debenham. In 1918 it was still extremely difficult for a composer to make a living just on the proceeds from his music. In order to survive, most composers needed to have an independent income, either from their families or from a patron. Nina Head's allusion to help from Debenham is a hint at seeking patronage to enable Michael Head to undertake a career in music. From her reference to a conversation between Head's piano teacher, Mrs. Adair, and Mr. Debenham, it appears that Debenham was already kindly disposed toward Michael Head. In fact, later entries in his diary confirm that Mr. Debenham played an important role in Head's later musical endeavors.

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[39] Nina Head to Michael Head, n.d., inscribed Wednesday, 11:30 P. M., MH20. (It should be noted that Michael Head worked at the Debenham's farm in Dorset in 1918, so this is the probable year in which this letter was written.)

The War was over in November of 1918 and by January of 1919 Michael Head was back at the "Gate." Having made the decision to seek a career in music, he was not yet convinced that he could make a living. In his diary on January 22, 1919 he wrote: " . . . I am to take up composition firstly as profession, secondly singing. It is such a very difficult question how I shall actually earn any living out of the four things. Composition, piano, singing and organ."[40] At this time in England it was somewhat risky for a composer to embark on a musical career. An appreciation for British music had still not come fully into its own and composers needed to supplement their income by teaching, by judging festivals, or by commissions for works for festivals. As noted above, a few composers were fortunate enough to have a private income from their families or from a wealthy patron, and this income enabled the composer to concentrate on his writing because it released him from the necessity of earning a living. However, Michael Head was not so fortunate, and he was acutely aware of his precarious position. The next day, January 23, 1919, he went to see the music publisher Mr. Boosey: "A most astonishing surprise. I went to see Mr. Boosey to show him some of my MS. With no hope of him liking anything as they had all been to him before! Well! The very first song he accepted. *Claribel.* He seemed greatly taken with it and suggests Jordan (a tenor) shall sing it! He was very agreeable and I played him many others including *Song of a Hero.* I wonder if knowing Boosey will help me in the future?"[41] The Boosey referred to in these early diary entries was Mr. Leslie Boosey, who was the head of the publishing department at Boosey & Company, an English firm which was both a music

[40] Head Diary, 22 January, 1919; Head Collection.

[41] Ibid., 23 January, 1919.

publisher and instrument manufacturer. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the company specialized in publishing popular ballads intended primarily for the at-home amateur market. In order to help promote the sale of the ballads they published, John Boosey of Boosey & Co. established the London Ballad Concerts in 1867 at St. James Hall. Later Ballad Concerts were given at the new Queen's Hall.[42] Performances by well-known popular singers (who were paid royalties for each song sold) insured increased sales for the publishers and greater recognition for the composers. After the commercial success of a song given at a ballad concert, a composer could be assured that subsequent works would be more favorably considered by the publisher. These concerts continued into the 20th century, both on the concert platform and, later, on broadcasts by the BBC. The Ballad Concerts ceased in the Thirties when their popularity waned due to the combined effects of the increasing influence of America's popular music, a change in the public taste as it moved away from sentimentality, and the erosion of the amateur music maker market.

It is remarkable that the work of a young man not yet a student in a university music department should garner the support of Mr. Boosey, support which would prove to be a pivotal point in Michael Head's career. Through the Twenties, Boosey assured Ballad Concert performances of Michael Head's music by such well-known singers as Astra Desmond, Isobel Baillie, Carrie Tubb, and Keith Falkner as well as the aforementioned Arthur Jordan.[43] Ballad Concert performances were an important way for composers to place their works before the public, but quality performances by famous

[42] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th ed., s. v. "Boosey & Hawkes," by D. J. Blaikley, William C. Smith, and Peter Ward Jones.

[43] Bush, *Michael Head*, 24

singers were not a guarantee of the commercial viability of their music. Even promotion by the publisher could not insure a market for a favored composer's work. Ultimately, the music had to appeal to the music making, music buying public. Apparently, Michael Head's music did have audience appeal because Boosey & Hawkes first published Head's music in 1919 with the song cycle *Over the Rim of the Moon,* and continued to publish nearly all of his songs, concluding with the posthumous cycle, *Three Songs of Venice* in 1977. Nancy Bush has noted the following about his music: "He won a position of some popularity, as is shown by a catalogue compiled by the BBC of music by living British composers broadcast in serious music programmes on Sound or Television in 1962. In this list, which was headed by Benjamin Britten, followed by William Walton and Lennox Berkeley, in that order, Michael Head's music stands in fourth place."[44]

All of this success was still a long way off when the nineteen year old Michael Head was contemplating his future. While he had decided on a career in music, exactly what form that career should take was as yet unclear. His diary entries for the next several months provide a glimpse into his decision-making process, from questions about which school to attend, to composition lessons and advice from well-known composers, to meetings with his publisher, Mr. Leslie Boosey.

> Another wonderful day. (These are surely some of the most momentous days of my life?) Mrs. Adair and I went to talk things over with John Ireland, expecting to be squashed absolutely, but he never criticized at all except one tiny detail and said that my work was most promising and that he thinks it is quite safe me going into the profession. He talked most intensely about things and I like him personally. He is to give me lessons I hope if it can be arranged financially . . . I have

[44] Ibid., 55.

> definitely decided on working for the Baliol scholarship. I start singing, composition & organ at once! Settled at last.[45]

On February 10, 1919, he had a definite offer from Mr. Boosey. The terms stated that Head was to offer his manuscripts only to Boosey & Co. in exchange for royalties. The agreement was to be for three years with a provision to make a new agreement at the end of that time. Mr. Boosey told Head that during the three years he "would have made my name."[46] As might be expected from one so young and inexperienced, Michael Head sought advice concerning Boosey's offer. He wrote to his mother on February 15, 1919:

> . . . It's quite a remarkable thing that I should have an offer at all you know! Last night Winifred and myself and Mrs. Adair went to Debenham. I think we were both quite a success and I got in an opportunity to thank Mr. D. He seems very set on the Oxford idea and asked me about my Latin and Maths, etc. I told him about Father and Uncle Chris. Also he was most emphatic about the 'agreement' . . . he wants to see the agreement in writing first so I will get it next time. I haven't talked to Mrs. Adair about what father said yet last night . . . [47]

Clearly Michael Head recognized that it was unusual for someone so young to have an offer from a major publisher and he was anxious to make the right decision regarding Boosey's offer. On February 20, Michael Head writes "I am about to make the great decision. I am going to give Boosey & Co. the rights to publish any of my songs for three years . . . I am quite dazed by my good fortune in starting so early in life."[48] However, the decision hadn't been made definitively, as is evident by the next diary entry, written after his lesson with John Ireland: "Had my first lesson with John Ireland.

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[45] Head Diary, 30 January, 1919, Head Collection.

[46] Head Diary, 10 February, 1919, Head Collection.

[47] Michael Head to Nina Head, n.d., inscribed "posted Feb. 15, 11:15." MH20. (From the information contained in the letter, it is possible to determine 1919 as the year.)

[48] Head Diary, 20 February, 1919, Head Collection.

My word how lovely it is to learn with somebody who's every little touch is a bit of genius. He has given me lots of hints in criticizing my piano writing. He was shocked at my counterpoint . . . very. He has given me food for thought about Boosey and Co. I haven't signed yet. I think I better ask his absolute advice."[49]

A final decision must have been made by March 11, 1919, because he noted that the group of Ledwidge songs (the cycle *Over the Rim of the Moon)* and *Claribel* would be published.[50] He continued to write songs, and he continued his lessons with John Ireland, Fritz Marston, and Stoverton-Beeching, preparing for the next step in his career. Michael Head played two of his songs for Landon Ronald on May 26, 1919, and wrote: "To my great surprise he was very pleasant and listened attentively. He thinks I have very great talent (I believe "genius"). He especially liked *Autumn's Breath.* His criticism of all my stuff – not enough development! Should have more fire & passion."[51] Then in June he wrote about another possibility: "News about the new idea – Mendelssohn Scholarship – Mrs. Adair's great friend Mr. Hill knows one of the trustees, Dr. Stainer. He is going to write for particulars, and going to mention that I was recommended to go in for it by Landon Ronald."[52]

Although his songs were being published and Mr. Debenham had contributed one hundred pounds toward his education, Michael Head still needed a scholarship in order to attend school. In the meanwhile, he gave his first piano/vocal/ composition recital on July 14, 1919, to an audience which included "heaps of relations." After it was over he

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[49] Head Diary, 21 February, 1919, Head Collection.

[50] Head Diary, 11 March, 1919, Head Collection.

[51] Head Diary, 26 May, 1919, Head Collection.

[52] Head Diary, 11 June, 1919, Head Collection.

wrote in his diary: "How lovely it would be if I could keep all this up, and give piano, composition and vocal recitals in future."[53] Michael Head's love of performing, and especially, love of singing, stayed with him his entire life and would direct his later activities as a music educator. However, his immediate problem still revolved around school. On August 26, 1919, he wrote: "Packed up ready to send off *Sea Gipsy*, *For One Dead*, *Golden Ladie*, *Shadows*, *Variations*, for Michael Costa Scholarship. Latest Idea. I'm to try to get into the Royal Academy of Music."[54] Of these works, *Sea Gipsy* was published by Boosey in 1920, and "For One Dead" was re-titled *A Blackbird Singing* when published in the song cycle *Over the Rim of the Moon*. *Autumn's Breath* was also published in 1920. There has been no song found with the title *Golden Ladie* although a song with the title *On a Lady Singing* was published in 1920 and sung by Carrie Tubb. In his diary on October 28, 1919, Head mentioned that he played Boosey his new songs and one was called *Gentle Lady*. Since no song with that title has been found either, it is not known if it is the one earlier called *Golden Ladie* or whether either of them was subsequently published as *On a Lady Singing*. Given the short amount of time that elapsed between the two entries, it is not unreasonable to suggest that *Golden Ladie* and *Gentle Lady* may be the same song, especially since it was not uncommon for him to mention songs by a different title in his diary than that given when the song was published. Of the remaining two selections that Michael Head submitted for the Costa scholarship, there is no further clue either in his diary or in the titles of his published works which would indicate what these pieces might have been.

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[53] Head Diary, 14 July, 1919, Head Collection.

[54] Head Diary, 26 August, 1919, Head Collection.

Finally, on September 13, 1919, Head could set his course; on this date he wrote: "Won it. "The Sir Michael Costa Scholarship has been awarded to Michael Head." What a surprise when it was read out! What new things will happen now? Who shall I learn under? Three years at the Academy. Now I've really done something substantial."[55]

It is incredible that a young man who had his first songs published when he was just nineteen did not use the word "substantial" when recounting his success as a composer. Rather, he considered winning the Costa scholarship "substantial." Perhaps his attitude is not so surprising when one considers how frequently his diaries record his doubts about whether his songs are any good. He seems always to have been surprised when anyone liked his songs. However, on September 13, 1919, those entries had yet to be written and Michael Head was about to embark on the next phase of his career, the years as a student at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

The Student Years at the RAM

During his student years at the RAM (which stretched to five from the anticipated three), Michael Head divided his time between student and professional activities. His diary entries reflect this duality, but it is his student experiences that will be addressed first. As the Sir Michael Costa Scholar, his first study was composition with Frederick Corder, and his second studies were piano with T. B. Knott and organ with Reginald Steggall. For awhile he also studied horn and viola. Interestingly, although his long professional career included innumerable performances as a singer, he never studied

[55] Head Diary, 13 September, 1919, Head Collection.

voice at the Academy. Instead he continued intermittent work with Fritz Marston of the Adair-Marston School, where he also continued to perform in the school's concerts and recitals as a singer and pianist.

When he entered the Academy, Michael Head had already studied composition and had already signed a contract with a publisher. Nonetheless, he was eager to begin his studies and seemed frustrated by his first meeting with his new composition teacher, Frederick Corder. September 24, 1919, his "first proper day at the Academy," he wrote that he liked Corder but "was disappointed he had no plan for teaching me."[56] Exactly what Michael Head had in mind as a desirable plan isn't clear, but his diary entry on October 10, 1919 seems to indicate that he had adjusted to Corder's methodology in teaching: "Had a ripping lesson with Corder. My word. What an insight he has in all the great composers' work. How he knows their weak points! I managed to get him to let me play some of my own work to him. I want to gradually let him know that I've got something in me and mean to be something!"[57] The key passage is the one regarding the weak points of the great composers. In the "Preface" to his text *Modern Musical Composition*, Corder espouses this exercise as an important tenet of his teaching philosophy: "In previous writings I have unintentionally shocked the minds of some by pointing out faults in the works of great composers. The ignorant believe that a great composer cannot commit faults; the musician knows this to be a fallacy and I find that the student is much more strongly impressed by the blot on the brilliant robes of the great

[56] Head Diary, 24 September, 1919, Head Collection.

[57] Head Diary, 10 October, 1919, Head Collection.

artist than by a worse one on the garb of ordinary men."[58] The "Preface" also contains statements which illustrate Corder's preference for modern, progressive musical trends: "To summarize one's own knowledge, to analyse and tabulate the works of the great masters of old, may be very interesting to the cultured reader, but I have found it is very little assistance to the learner. The student finds the idiom of the past irksome and repellent; it is the vernacular that he desires to learn: he does not wish to take as his models the unapproachable gods of antiquity, but his immediate contemporaries."[59]

Corder himself adhered to modern models. He was known to be a great supporter of the music of Wagner and is credited with securing its acceptance in England by the translations of Wagner's operas which he undertook with the assistance of his wife Henrietta. Further evidence of his modernist approach is to be found in his statements regarding analysis:

> . . . analysis of existing works is of great assistance, but it is of little use studying the old masters, however great . . . It is a question of acquiring the current idiom, and the student will find it therefore more helpful to dissect the music of Tschikowski [sic]or Wagner than that of Mozart or Beethoven. The supreme workmanship of Haydn, as I shall have to point out later, can only be brought very indirectly to bear upon what *we* are striving to do. True, the methods are eternally the same, but in music the modern, practical details are whole worlds away from those of a century ago.[60]

Michael Head was certainly influenced by Corder's emphasis on modernism in music. According to his sister Nancy Bush, Michael Head "found Schonberg, Bartok and Webern stimulating."[61] Two of his diary entries give further credence to his appreciation

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[58] Frederick Corder, *Modern Musical Composition* (London: J. Curwen & Sons Ltd., n.d.), 1.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 6.

[61] Bush, *Michael Head*, 19.

for some of the modern repertoire: "A thrilling experience. Listened to a concert version of *Wozzeck*. It was the real thing, modern music absolutely justified, satisfying and most exciting. What variety and orchestration."[62] "Gorgeous-gorgeous-What music. Heard Scriabin's *Divine Poem*. It really is a magnificent great work."[63]

Michael Head later performed the Scriabin Second Sonata at the RAM. In addition, many of the programs from his recitals include modern selections which he sang and/or played. Some of the composers represented were Schonberg, Cyril Scott, Britten, Honegger, Warlock, Vaughan Williams, Granados, John Gardner, Stanford, Pizzetti, Respighi, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco. The tinge of modernism was also manifested in Michael Head's compositions. His diary entry of November 10, 1922 relates an incident during a rehearsal of his orchestral tone poem *Babbulkamul*: "The principal tried twice my orchestral tone poem and thoroughly abused me and the composition!! Apparently the very tame discords (B maj. And C min) rubbed him up the wrong way. And we had an awful time over a C & C# together."[64] Further evidence of his use of modern elements in his compositions is provided by the composer Alan Bush's assessment of Michael Head's music:

> . . . his basic vocabulary of melodic intervals and chords was similar to that of his English contemporaries, especially to Roger Quilter. He did not, however, follow the principled national style of Vaughan Williams and his school . . . in order to express points of intense emotional content in a text he would resort not infrequently to Wagnerian chromaticism . . . in minor and modal songs the harmony is often expressive and sometimes quite unusual. Furthermore, he employed at times a highly chromatic

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[62] Head Diary, Head Collection.

[63] Head Diary, 29 November, 1920, Head Collection.

[64] Head Diary, 10 November, 1922, Head Collection.

> style which is not Wagnerian. It would be a mistake, therefore, to underestimate his range of harmonic originality.[65]

In addition to a professed preference for modern musical styles as a model for would-be composers, Corder believed in a course of systemized study and called composition a "constructive art," stating that it must "be practiced consciously until long use and experience enable us to exercise our painfully acquired powers subconsciously. The real artist reasons out his work first; then, having fashioned it in the rough, he re-writes and re-writes until the bare bones are quite hidden. I am aware that cold intelligence and hot enthusiasm are two oddly matched steeds for the chariot of Phoebus Apollo, but they must be taught to go in double harness, neither leading, but side by side and mutually helpful."[66]

This process of writing and re-writing while composing is another element of Corder's tutelage that influenced Michael Head, as the following diary entry attests: "I couldn't do any work today; too sickening. My word, I don't wonder the great composers have been frightfully irritable. It is exasperating when things won't go or you go over & over the same bit trying to get it right."[67] Seemingly this was a pattern of working which he continued throughout his life as indicated by Nancy Bush's description of Michael Head's procedure for writing a song: "He composed at the piano, singing and playing his work through repeatedly as soon as it began to take shape . . . when the tape-

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[65] Alan Bush, "The Vocal Compositions of Michael Head," in *Michael Head Composer, Singer, Pianist: A Memoir*, by Nancy Bush, (London, Kahn & Averill, 1982), 67.

[66] Ibid., 4.

[67] Head Diary, 16 February, 1922, Head Collection.

recorder had been invented he sometimes made use of it, singing through the various versions as they developed . . . ."[68]

In addition Nancy Bush related in her book that Michael Head tried out new songs by singing them to his family or groups of friends and asking for opinions or criticism.[69] In an article for the NATS Bulletin Head stated "I have always felt that the ideal plan is to sing a song at a public concert before it is printed, and I try to do this."[70] Often such performances resulted in a revision of the song in question and occasionally a song was discarded altogether as an unworthy effort. However, it is important to note that although Corder proscribed a course of study which emphasized structure and the necessity to "re-write and re-write," these mechanical efforts were merely the means to an end. Corder maintained that "Beauty is our one aim."[71] This sentiment must also have been embraced by Michael Head because accounts of performances given by him often refer to that aspect of his music and music making. In fact, Michael Head's affinity for the beautiful in music is noted in articles written about him throughout his long career. A few samples follow: "Here was discernible in the work of one of the finest song-writers of our times a flowering of those qualities which have been characteristic of the highest traditions of English composition, and which constitute some of the most exquisite aspects of our musical heritage-the qualities of simplicity, directness, and purity of style; warmth of feeling; a lyrical utterance; whimsicality; perfection of workmanship, and a certain

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[68] Bush, Michael Head, 30.

[69] Bush, *Michael Head*, 55-56.

[70] Michael Head, "Contemporary English Song," *NATS Bulletin*, 15:22-23, May 15, 1959.

[71] Ibid., 5.

spiritual essence inexpressible in words."[72] Another newspaper critic from Wellington, New Zealand wrote: "The intense poetry and love of the beautiful seeped through everything he played or sang, and while his interpretative powers with other composers works brought out these qualities in rich flower, the most satisfying insight to his artistry came through the songs he had composed himself."[73] An unknown critic in Scotland wrote this about Head in the 1950's: "Mr. Head concluded his recital with a group of his own songs. All were calculated to give point and significance to the poems treated and to sublimate their beauty, and all were eminently singable."[74] Finally, George Baker, well-known British baritone, lecturer and adjudicator, wrote of Head and his music: " . . . the question is still before us—how will Michael Head be best and longest remembered? In my view it will be through his songs. He has composed many, many beautiful songs; songs for singers to sing; songs for audiences to enjoy and songs for musicians to admire."[75]

Although Michael Head's best-known works are his songs, his formal studies with Corder consisted primarily of instrumental works. While he was a successful and published song composer, he had much to learn about instrumental writing, especially longer works. Apparently Corder shared John Ireland's view of Michael Head's counterpoint because Head wrote that his work that first term consisted of "heaps of counterpoint and the first movement of a piano sonata . . . " and added that "Corder says

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[72] Valerie O. Corliss, "Michael Head-His Music-An Appreciation," *The Post*, New Zealand, 1936.

[73] Unknown author, "Mr. Michael Head: A Splendid Recital," *The Post*, Wellington, New Zealand, 10 September, 1936.

[74] Unknown author, "Piano and Song Recital: Programme by Noted Composer," unknown paper, Dumfries, Scotland, ca. 1950.

[75] George Baker, "What Are They Like At Home? Michael Head," *Music Teacher*, April 1965, 169.

nothing about it in the criticism sense on the big scale."[76] By the following year he seemed to have adjusted to his composition teacher and to have become more adept at instrumental writing: "I had a jolly lesson with Corder after two very bad ones . . . He is still tremendously particular but I think he was interested in my two-piano scherzo as he made heaps of suggestions etc., and generally approved. "A." I am as usual at the last minute trying to write 3 pieces for two pianos for the N. Batson Haynes Prize of the R.A.M. I should love to get it as I feel I am not doing as well as I might at the RAM I must push a bit, apparently it is the only way."[77]

Although Michael Head continued to enjoy publishing success as a song-writer, he often had misgivings about his abilities, especially concerning large-scale works. Periodically, after attending orchestral concerts in which the music particularly moved him, he would express his doubts in his diary: "Just came back from a heavenly concert. Why haven't I been more often? Landon Ronald conducting Philharmonic Orchestra. He gave a most exhilarating and gorgeous performance of Rach. E min. Sym. What a fine work! I've never been so excited. It is so wonderfully rhythmical . . . I thought I must write for orchestra in the end. I wonder if I could ever rise to a symphony?"[78] By 1922 he hadn't yet written a Symphony but he was hard at work on a 'concertino' for piano: "Feel so happy. I played right thro' my 'concertino' as it's supposed to be called to Corder, and almost for the first time he really praised what I'd done – "makings of a very good concerto – liked the 'ideas' very much – thinks it will be a very effective

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[76] Head Diary, 16 December, 1919, Head Collection.

[77] Head Diary, 15 October, 1920, Head Collection.

[78] Head Diary, 28 April, 1920, Head Collection.

piece" . . . He wants me to make a good copy and get it done for the Philip Haynes prize . . . and then very likely Mackenzie will do it at the Centenary. (what a favour!)."[79]

He did win the Philip Haynes Prize in 1922 and his concertino was subsequently chosen by Sir Alexander Mackenzie[80] to be performed at the Queen's Hall in 1922 for a programme of the RAM centenary celebrations. The Concerto (as it was later called) was so successful that Sir Dan Godfrey[81] conducted it at the Bournemouth Symphony Concerts in October 1923 and at the Easter Festival the following year, with Maurice Cole[82] as soloist. There was also a broadcast performance of the Concerto in March 1924.[83]

Michael Head followed his successful concertino with an orchestral tone poem, *Babbulkuml*, which his diary states was composed and scored in a fortnight.[84] It was intended as an entry for the Charles Lucas Medal, which he in fact won in 1922 for an "Orchestral Scherzo." Clearly he was becoming more adept in his writing for larger

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[79] Head Diary, 10 March, 1922, Head Collection.

[80] Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1847-1935), Scottish composer and conductor, was appointed principal of the RAM in 1888. During his tenure the Academy regained its artistic reputation, which had been in decline for a number of years. By the time the RAM celebrated its centenary in 1922 he had succeeded in increasing its enrollment and securing its financial footing. As a conductor he was noted for introducing new works to London audiences. As a composer his works show the influences of Schumann, Liszt and Wagner. Jennifer Spencer, "Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (1980), ed. Stanley Sadie.

[81] Sir Daniel Godfrey (1868-1939), British bandmaster and conductor, organized the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra and remained its conductor until his retirement in 1934. His performances included standard repertoire and works by British composers, many of whom were invited to conduct at Bournemouth. He was elected FRAM in 1923.

[82] Maurice Cole (1902-////) was a fellow student of Michael's at the 'Gate'. He was a concert pianist and gave recitals throughout the British Isles. During the Second World War he made many appearances under the auspices of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A). He began broadcasting in the early days from the 2LO Station at Marconi House.

[83] Roger Carpenter 'Editor's Note' in "The Solo Songs of Michael Head: A Critical Re-Evaluation in His Centenary Year," *British Music*, Volume 22, 2000, 5-24.

[84] Head Diary, 9 June, 1922, Head Collection.

instrumental forces-and more inspired as his diary shows: "Lately I have been filled with a sort of ecstatic anticipation of all the lovely possibilities there are in the way of composition. Oh so many things (combinations—songs with String quartet, orchestral Dances, etc.) that I long to start on. Especially as now I have just set "White Moths" for piano & str. Quartet."[85] In spite of his enthusiasm for orchestral writing, Michael Head spent the bulk of his compositional energies on vocal writing, especially solo song. While there was more than one reason for his specialization, this particular diary entry provides a very cogent clue. After describing his plans to sing at the RAM, and rehearsals for a public performance of his concerto, he wrote "I suppose I will be able to make a living somehow?" While he was inspired by his successes with orchestral writing, there was not a ready market for instrumental works. However, his songs were being published and performed. Clearly there was a greater potential to earn a living by writing songs that people wanted to sing than by writing orchestral works, and Michael Head needed to earn a living. Later in his career he returned to instrumental writing, composing pieces for colleagues. Some of these musicians had collaborated with him in recital, notably oboist Evelyn Rothwell (Lady Barbirolli), flutist Gareth Morris, and violinist Cecelia Keating.

While Michael Head the student was toiling to master instrumental/orchestral writing, Michael Head the song composer enjoyed continued success. Boosey published nearly everything he wrote and secured performances of his songs by well-known singers, often with Head on the platform as the accompanist. However, even with what

[85]Head Diary, 24 February, 1923, Head Collection.

must be regarded as unusual success for so young a composer, Head remained surprised and gratified that someone should like his songs:

> I've had a most glorious day, a real thriller! I went to see Boosey in the morning and played him my new songs. *Tewkesbury Road & The Gentle Lady*, which he liked quite well, but the other he seemed to like extremely. Alas he was so friendly-to little me! "Have you got anybody in mind to sing *Sea Gypsy*? etc., etc. (None would hardly think I am only nineteen). He is going to publish a great many of my old ones as well . . .[86]

> A day of my life! Arthur Jordan sang 2 of my songs at the Albert Hall and I played them. Just fancy little me on the platform of that vast hall. And I was recalled twice as they went awfully well. He sang them simply splendidly, and was so nice to me; we practiced in the morning. The *To One Dead* was sung twice . . . What an excitement. Hooray![87]

> I went to play a new song of mine *On a Lady Singing* to Miss Carrie Tubb. She was nice and said she liked it immediately; consequently I sang her several others, including *The Three Witches* . . . It always comes as a shock to me after one of these interviews with a great singer. I can hardly realize that they really like my compositions. Little Michael Head-so middle class??[88]

> Arthur Jordan sang . . . my songs at the Winter Gardens today and I played. They went very well especially the *Sea Gipsy*. It is rather nice getting known all over the place. I wonder if really my songs are any good – or only just rather attractive to singers?[89]

By February of 1923, even after another successful Ballad Concert performance of his songs, he was still questioning himself: "[First performance of *A Piper* and *A Green Cornfield* by Carrie Tubb] Another Ballad Concert. Somehow I felt today a wee bit, for the first time almost, that I am falling between two schools. My songs are too good for that audience . . . and will the constant (so far) performances at these concerts prohibit

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[86] Head Diary, 28 October, 1919, Head Collection.

[87] Head Diary, 10 January, 1920, Head Collection.

[88] Head Diary, 19 February, 1920, Head Collection.

[89] Head Diary, 3 April, 1920, Head Collection.

them going any further? Even as I write this I feel no. I really mean to go on improving and improving and these I hope will only be looked upon as 'early efforts.'"[90] In December, after hearing a concert of " . . . the most wonderful and notable music" that he "had ever listened to," he wrote "How childish my little musics seem to this great conception."[91] Arguably, when compared to the grander scale of symphonies, tone poems, and concertos, Michael Head's songs might be called "little musics," but the continued popularity and performances of many of his songs while much so-called serious music languishes for want of a performance, is testimony to the quality of his craftsmanship and artistry. However, he himself seemed not to be convinced of the value of his songs because throughout his career Head recorded similar passages of self-doubt in his diaries, often appending "Are they any good, I wonder?" to entries concerning his songs.

Michael Head's discontent was also evident in his estimation of his abilities as a singer. Although he recognized his skills in expressing the text, and in executing a *mezza voce* and *messa di voce*, he always felt hampered by not having a large voice: "I have not the physique for a great singer."[92] And yet, it was singing he loved, as the following diary entries reveal: "How I love singing . . . "[93] "I love expressing myself in singing and my voice seems certainly a lovely quality, especially in mezzo-voce. But I am badly hampered by small breath capacity. Ah! If only I had a bigger physique!"[94] He echoed

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[90] Head Diary, 24 February, 1923, Head Collection.

[91] Head Diary, 6 December, 1923, Head Collection.

[92] Head Diary, 1 January, 1924, Head Collection.

[93] Head Diary, 29 October, 1919, Head Collection.

[94] Head Diary, 14 September, 1922, Head Collection.

this love for singing during a radio talk he made in 1944. At the end of the last of three broadcasts directed toward amateur singers and entitled *Make Your Own Music*, he stated "Singing is one of the greatest pleasures in the world."[95]

Michael Head's two great loves, composition and singing, received the most attention in his diaries from his student years. He makes no further references to his organ studies beyond a cursory statement describing his first lesson: "An interview with Steggall, the organist. I played badly. I have one lesson a week on a mediocre organ I believe."[96] His piano studies merit a little more space. He was apparently quite a gifted pianist before he entered the RAM, as his very early accompanying activities and recitals at the Adair-Marston School attest. His mother was hoping that his piano study at the Academy would improve his technical skills, which she felt may have suffered in favor of the development of his expressive abilities.[97] The fact that he was often the accompanist for the singers who performed his songs at Ballad Concerts and other appearances is evidence that his playing did improve. Additional evidence is provided by the following statements from his diaries:

> "After all my misgivings and doubts and feelings that I was not good enough to appear as a pianist, etc., I apparently did very well in the difficult 'Scriabin' 2nd Sonata."[98]
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> . . . . . .
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> In the afternoon I played with the RAM Orchestra Brahms No. 3 Concerto last 2 movements. Me of all people! Cheek as it's a most difficult piece. Well I didn't play at all badly and it went rather well. The

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[95] Michael Head, *Make Your Own Music*, BBC Radio Broadcast, London, 6 June, 1944.

[96] Head Diary, 24 September, 1919, Head Collection.

[97] Nina Head to Michael Head, October 22nd, year unknown, although written before Michael's entry to the RAM, MH20.

[98] Head Diary, 18 March, 1922, Head Collection.

> Principal was very pleased and wants me to do it again with another movement. That beastly tricky 'scherzo'.[99]

Michael Head may have had misgivings about his pianistic abilities but he nonetheless earned several prizes for his playing while he was a student, and in the mid-twenties was appointed a Professor of Piano at the RAM.[100]

During his five years as a student at the RAM Michael Head worked to improve his skills and craftsmanship as a composer and pianist. At the same time he continued his vocal studies with Fritz Marston. His goal was to refine and develop his voice in order to realize his ambition to perform his own songs in public recitals. He was alternately encouraged by his successes and dispirited by his self-perceived short-comings. After his five year journey, he retained his love of singing and composing, and remained determined to "live for music." He was earning some money by way of royalties from his songs, but it was necessary to earn a living so in 1926 he accepted a position as a music master to Bedales School, Petersfield, Hampshire.

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[99] Head Diary, 13 October, 1922, Head Collection.

[100] Bush, *Michael Head*, 21.

CHAPTER 5

WORK

Bedales School

Bedales School is located in rural Hampshire, near Petersfield, a provincial town which originally was a staging post on the old coach road from Portsmouth to London. Always sensitive to his surroundings, Michael Head described the setting in a letter he wrote to his mother the day he arrived: "The country is gorgeous. The school building beautiful."[1] Restless, energetic, and ready to explore, the following day, Sunday, he noted "Took lunch out on to the hills round. Very lovely."[2] By his next year at Bedales he was able to go further afield because he had obtained his license and an old Ford automobile. A life-long enthusiast for cars and motoring, he often invited groups of his students to go on his excursions through the countryside. However, he first had to settle into the routine at Bedales, a somewhat difficult adjustment for a young man as shy and unassuming as Michael Head.

Although Michael Head had enjoyed a distinguished student career at the RAM (a list of his awards appears as an Appendix), he entertained misgivings about his abilities to fulfill his duties as a teacher at Bedales School. Nancy Bush described the school as modern and co-educational and added that the children "were high-spirited and had been known to give new and inexperienced teachers a rough passage as far as discipline was concerned."[3] She further noted that her brother was "apprehensive" about being able to

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[1] Michael Head to Nina Head, 1 May, 1926, MH20.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Bush, Michael Head, 20.

"keep order" among the children. Her statements are confirmed by a letter he wrote on May 1, 1926: " . . . I am terribly nervous of the children, as they are so grown up and – oh well- I haven't met any of them yet so they may bear with me . . . I am very much in trepidation as to my teaching capacity . . . ."[4] According to Nancy Bush, his responsibilities included piano and solo voice lessons (in this same letter Michael stated to his mother that he had to schedule 21 or 22 lessons each week) along with some class singing.[5] In addition, he had a stint conducting the school orchestra, although it isn't clear how long he was engaged in this capacity: "I think I shall enjoy the orchestra though, but I simply can't order people about and lecture small pert boys which really worries me, as I won't stay here if I cannot keep order, and be respected by the smaller boys. They are awful-the way they forget and miss lessons . . . ."[6] In spite of his early apprehension, Michael Head came to enjoy his teaching at Bedales. This is shown by the following passages taken from letters written to his mother: "I've done it! I took the whole school singing tonight and they were perfectly good and quite attentive and quiet and sang well. I am blessed."[7] "Had a busy but pleasant morning as they are nice to teach and there is no mistake about it. Quite eager to get things right instead of treating it as drudgery."[8] Nancy suggested that his success in teaching class singing can be attributed to the fact that he "was a musician who accompanied them fluently, could

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[4] Michael Head to Nina Head, 1 May, 1926, MH20.

[5] Bush, *Michael Head*, 20.

[6] Michael Head to Nina Head, 7 May, 1926, MH20.

[7] Michael Head to Nina Head, 20 September, 192?, MH20. (Although the numbers for the year are somewhat difficult to read, the letter also carries the heading "Bedales, Wed. Evening. Because Michael was only at Bedales from 1926-1929, and September 20th fell on a Wednesday in 1927, it is reasonable to date the letter as having been written in 1927.)

[8] Michael Head to Nina Head, 5 Ju (?), 1927, MH20.

improvise and also sing well himself."[9] In addition, she noted that "he was sympathetic to young people and had little difficulty in making contact with them."[10] This success in turn "did something to build up [his] confidence in himself, which at that time was not very high."[11]

Besides his initial lack of self-confidence in his teaching ability, Michael Head exhibited a lack of confidence in his own musicianship while interacting with his colleagues. In 1926 he wrote to his mother: "It is appalling the way the staff look upon me as well quite an authority of music."[12] Although his pre-Bedales accomplishments make it difficult to understand his attitude, perhaps his seeming reluctance to be seen as an "authority" can be attributed in part to his shyness. Fortunately, the staff were "charming and friendly" so it wasn't long before he was taking part in the informal musical "evenings" among his fellow music "staffites."[13] Nancy Bush noted that sometimes he joined the teaching staff on "weekend expeditions together either into the country or to the sea . . . ," and added that "social life at Bedales . . . did a good deal to wean Michael from his rather solitary ways."[14]

Following the pattern of constant activity that he established during his student days at the RAM, Michael Head plunged into additional activities outside of Bedales. Besides his music making with the children and staff at Bedales, he continued his

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[9] Bush, *Michael Head*, 20.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Michael Head to Nina Head, 7 May, 1926, MH20.

[13] Michael Head to Nina Head, 1 May, 1926, MH20.

[14] Bush, *Michael Head*, 20.

professional music making as a performer and accompanist. There is a glimpse of this aspect of his life in a letter to his mother written in 1927: " . . . Rex Palmer has asked me to accompany him . . . on Sunday week. I accepted-next best thing to singing myself."[15] Michael Head also had opportunities to sing, a fact made clear by an advertisement dated November 29, 1928, which announced a concert to be given at "Grayshott & Hinhead Village Hall . . . by the Petersfield String Quartet and Michael Head." The advertisement concluded with the note that "The Programme will include Songs composed by Michael Head, Schumann Piano Quintet, etc."[16] Evidently, Head appeared as singer and pianist in this instance, a combination which was to become more frequent as his career progressed.

Although he undoubtedly stayed busy with his teaching and performing, Head continued to compose during his years at Bedales. The catalogs of Michael Head songs which were compiled by Nancy Bush[17] and Stephen Banfield[18] are instructive for tracing Head's work in this capacity. Bush's catalog provides only the date of publication for the songs, while Banfield's catalog provides both the date of composition and the date of publication. The Bush catalog lists the following songs for the Bedales years: the solo song *Love's Lament*, 1926; the solo song *The Three Mummers*, 1928; and the cycle *Songs of the Countryside*, comprised of six songs to texts by W. H. Davies, 1929. The Banfield catalog lists *Love's Lament* as written in 1918 and published in 1926; the solo song *The Three Mummers*, written and published in 1928; the cycle *Songs of the Countryside*,

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[15] Michael Head to Nina Head, 5 Ju (?), 1927, MH20.

[16] Poster/Advertisement for a concert, dated Thursday, November 29th, 1928, in the possession of Mrs. Catherine Hinson.

[17] Bush, *Michael Head*, Appendix B.

[18] Catalogue of Michael Head songs in Volume 2 of *Sensibility and English Song* by Stephen Banfield (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; 1985), 474-476.

published in 1929. Three songs from this cycle, *The temper of a maid; Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad;* and *Money, O!* are listed as having been composed in 1928, and received a first performance from proof copies by Keith Falkner in Queen's Hall in December 1928.[19] The three remaining songs in the cycle, *When I came forth this morn; Nature's friend;* and *Robin Redbreast,* are not given a date of composition. Although these are the only songs which have been definitively attributed to Michael Head during the years 1926-1929 while he was employed at Bedales, other songs may well have been in process. His diaries contain many passages which refer to his habit of working on more than one song at a time and the sometimes lengthy trial period for a song before it was ready for performance and/or publication. For example, the song *Sea Gypsy* is first mentioned on August 26, 1919, when he sent it to the RAM as part of his entry for the Costa Scholarship. He next refers to it on October 19, 1919 when he went to see Boosey. The tenor Arthur Jordan sang it at a concert on January 20, 1920, and on March 18, 1920, the song arrived in 'proof' from the publisher. Other songs are mentioned in diary entries but are never published (*The Three Witches* and *Gentle Lady,* for example), or are given performances but not published (*London Town* and *When first my way to fair I took,* for example). From the evidence cited above, and the many more examples present in the diaries and newspaper interviews, it is clear that a song's publication date is not necessarily indicative of the time it was actually composed. Consequently, Michael Head was likely engaged in composing other songs during the Bedales years in addition to those which were actually published from 1926-1929. However, because his diaries for the Bedales years have not yet been found, it is unknown what other songs may have

[19] Bush, Michael Head, 24.

been written and are now lost; or written during the Bedales years and subsequently published after he left Bedales and returned to London to live and work.

Although Michael Head did not make his permanent residence in London until 1929, he did not expend all of his time and energy during the years 1926-1929 solely at Bedales. The relative ease with which one could travel from Petersfield to London enabled Head to continue his professional activities in London even though he spent the majority of his time living and working at Bedales. Not only did he make periodic trips to meet with his publisher, but he also traveled to London to broadcast for the BBC, a line of work he began with his first broadcast in September 1924, and continued until 1964. In addition, Head was appointed a professor of piano at the RAM in 1927 and had to travel to London to meet with his students. Nancy Bush stated that in the beginning of his tenure at the RAM he would merely go in to teach his students and then leave. This is perhaps not surprising considering the other demands on his time. With his teaching and performing at Bedales, his BBC broadcasts, and his composing, it seems unlikely that Head would have had much time for social life at the RAM. It is also possible that his usual shyness made him reluctant to venture into activities outside of his teaching. Nancy Bush added that "as the years went on his attitude changed and he became less retiring and more sociable; he attended more events and would lunch in the professors' dining room, where he enjoyed meeting his colleagues."[20] In 1929 it was no longer necessary for Michael Head to juggle his two lives, rural and city, Bedales School and the RAM, because that year he left Bedales and classroom music teaching and returned to London to live and work.

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[20] Bush, *Michael Head*, 21.

The RAM and the London Years

After returning to London in 1929, Michael Head plunged into the numerous musical activities which were to form the pattern of his professional life. These included: teaching piano at the RAM, composing (solo songs primarily but from 1952 he also wrote choral, instrumental, and dramatic works), adjudicating/examining, performing (both as soloist and in collaboration with others), and broadcasting. However, he did not fill all of his hours with work. Once again he was living in the musical hub of England with ample opportunity to indulge his passion for attending live performances (whether concerts, recitals, shows or plays), a habit he developed during his student days at the RAM. Nancy Bush commented about this predilection: " . . . for what was the good of living in the centre of things, he would say, if one did not take advantage of it?"[21] In a diary entry written after his return to London, Head described his dilemma: "I am tempted to go to so many concerts. I ought to be working but I simply cannot resist them."[22] From this time forward, his diaries contain numerous passages referring to the performances he attended and his reactions to the music he heard.

These years in London constitute the bulk of Michael Head's professional life from the years 1929 until 1976. Because he was involved in so many facets of the music profession and because the time span under review is considerable, an examination of his career and his contributions to music would best be approached categorically as follows: professor of piano, examiner, adjudicator, lecturer, broadcaster, and singer. A discussion

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[21] Bush, *Michael Head*, 45.

[22] Michael Head, in *Michael Head* by Nancy Bush, 18.

of his work as a composer is included in Chapter 6 of the present study. Although the varied aspects of his work will be organized into categories in order to be examined more easily, it should be understood that the many aspects of his work were interwoven and interrelated.

Professor of Piano

Appointed a Professor of Piano at the RAM in 1927, Michael Head went to the Academy two or three days a week to teach his students and usually spent the remainder of his time composing. In 1945 he was made a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music[23] (F.R.A.M.) retiring in 1975. In his diaries he is mostly silent on the topic of his piano teaching so information about this aspect of his work must be gathered from other sources. Nancy Bush included the following description of Michael Head's studio method: "One of Michael's students, Judith Newberry, has described the informal atmosphere of her lessons, but at the same time a considerable amount of work was got through. Students were given a great deal of music and expected to prepare it thoroughly. As they played, Michael would often conduct them, insisting on all the nuances of dynamic and rubato."[24] Sir Thomas Armstrong[25] wrote an obituary which

[23] F.R.A.M. is a distinction limited to one hundred and fifty "Fellows." Past Students who have distinguished themselves in any of the subjects which form a part of the Course of Study at the RAM, or who have rendered distinguished service to the Institution, may, on recommendation of Committee of Management and the written Certificate of the Principal Music Professor, be elected by the Directors "Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music." Information provided by the Royal Academy of Music, London.

[24] Bush, *Michael Head*, 22.

[25] Sir Thomas Armstrong, a noted organist, conductor, adjudicator and educator in England, was appointed Principal of the Royal Academy of Music in 1955, retiring in 1968. According to Bernard Rose in his article about Armstrong in the 5th Edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Sir Armstrong was "one of the most sought-after adjudicators in the country." Consequently, Sir Armstrong's opinion regarding Michael Head's contributions to music can be considered valid and relevant.

was published in the *RAM Magazine* after Michael's death. Because it provides a particularly illuminating portrait of Michael Head, it is quoted at length:

> The sensitive insight . . . was also a decisive factor in his dealings with other people, especially those whom he taught. Quick awareness of a student's feelings and problems helped him to create from the start a helpful relationship: and the pupil's confidence , quickly gained, was at once his reward and his opportunity. Not that he was an indulgent or easy-going teacher. His own technique, acquired in a stern school, gave him the authority to insist on technical and musical discipline at every stage in a pupil's progress. But he also imparted a feeling for all that music is about, and the ingredients that go to the making of musical experience: he taught his pupils to listen, and to look for the meaning of all that they attempted. I used to notice that Michael's students, even when they were not outstanding performers, had distinct style . . . His teaching work was only a part of Michael's contribution to music; but this special quality, apparent in all that he did and all that he was, made it an important and individual part that should not be overlooked or underestimated.[26]

In another obituary quoted in the *RAM Magazine* Philip Cranmer also addressed Michael Head's contributions to music, particularly to student musicians: "His influence on young musicians cannot be calculated. Whether in teaching or adjudicating, or in tracing that spidery but just legible hand up the side of a mark form (there was never quite room for all he wanted to write), he showed great skill and penetration in comment, and in suggestions for improvement . . . "[27] Head's insistence on technical facility and accuracy, as well as musical sensitivity, was reflected in his own playing, as evidenced by the following excerpts from reviews of his performances: "Mr. Michael Head provided . . . not only a musical entertainment, but an *education* to Auckland music lovers . . . . In his piano work this artist showed himself a most sympathetic accompanist and a solo pianist

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[26] Sir Thomas Armstrong, "Michael Head," *RAM Magazine* 212 (Autumn 1976): 12.

[27] Philip Cranmer, quoted in *RAM Magazine* 212 (Autumn 1976): 12.

of very high order. His colouring in tone gradation was exquisitely beautiful . . . "[28] The author of the review cited above also noted that Head played with a "lovely singing tone," or "appropriate crispness," or "catching the spirit of the East," as required by the mood of the selections he played. The implication was that the recital was an "education" because of Michael Head's ability to communicate the color, atmosphere, and character of the music; in short, because he was able to communicate the essence of the music to the audience. Another review from New Zealand which appeared in *The Post* also remarked upon Head's ability to communicate with an audience:

> . . . Here is a musician who thinks and feels in sound and communicates the ideas, moods, and emotions that engendered with a direct and magical potency straight to our minds, our imaginations, and our hearts. This communicative and vital quality is evident in whatever medium of expression Mr. Head chooses to transmit his musical message. In his compositions, his singing and his piano-forte playing, there is inherent a magical quality of that true musicianship compounded of purity and intensity of thought, the expression in sound of a personality sensitively tuned to every aspect of beauty in nature, and in life, the ability to create combinations of sounds which reveal beauty of constructive arrangement and true expression of feeling, and of that imagination and individual style which creates immediately the unifying current of understanding and response with his listeners.[29]

A review in the Brisbane Telegraph referred to his playing as having " . . . intimate feeling for detail and colour"[30]while one from a Hong Kong paper stated that "his piano technique reveals a remarkable delicacy and understanding . . . each interpretation was

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[28] Author unknown, " Michael Head Recital: Artistry and Versatility," review from an unknown publication found in a family scrapbook bearing Michael Head's caption "Australia and New Zealand." This review is included with one from 1936. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[29] Valerie G. Corliss, A.R.A.M., "Michael Head: His Music: An Appreciation," review written for "The Post," from an unknown publication, found in a family scrapbook bearing Michael Head's caption "New Zealand, 1936." In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[30] Unknown author, "Composer, Pianist, Singer, Accompanist: Michael Head's Busy Time at 4QG," *Brisbane Telegraph:* June 17, 1936.

musicianly."[31] Clearly the precedent for the standard he demanded from his students was first established by the demands he made upon himself with regard to his own playing.

Although Michael Head was noted for the consummate craftsmanship and artistry with which he imbued his performances, he was also noted for his ability to create an atmosphere of intimacy and informality, as was noted in the following review: "Mr. Head is an accomplished artist of highly professional competence, who, nevertheless, contrives to give the impression of an amateur (in the best sense of the word), keenly enjoying spontaneous music making for its own sake and thereby conveying his own enthusiasm to the audience."[32] Another review of a broadcast he made for the C. B. C. (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) during his 1951-1952 tour offers further evidence of his engaging performances: "To excel as a singer, pianist, and composer is remarkable enough, but to retain at the same time an infectious sense of humour and natural approach to your audience is even more remarkable."[33] These attributes of Michael Head's, the impression of being an "amateur," of "enjoying spontaneous music-making for its own sake," "conveying his enthusiasm to the audience," and retaining a "natural approach to your audience," can be directly traced to the family music making experiences of his childhood which were an extension of the Victorian practice of family at-home music making. His enthusiasm for music making and his ability and desire to teach were at

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[31] K. C. Harvey, "Supreme Artistry of Michael Head," review written for and unknown publication, found in a family scrapbook bearing Michael Head's caption "Hong Kong, 1955. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[32] Review by unknown author in the *Musical Opinion*, March, 1951. Quoted in promotional flyer for Michael Head from the Imperial Concert Agency. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[33] Review by M. H. in *The Varsity*, Canada, 1951-1952. Quoted in promotional flyer for Michael Head from the Imperial Concert Agency. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

least partly responsible for his extensive work as an adjudicator and examiner, two aspects of his career which will be examined next.

Examiner

As noted in an earlier chapter, the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening decade of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of music as a preferred means of "rational recreation" and a subsequent increase in the numbers of amateur music makers. In addition to an increased demand for instruments and music for these amateurs to play, there was an increased demand for teachers to instruct them. However, without a recognized uniform standard of training the quality of instruction varied widely from the barely musically literate dilettante to the graduate of the Royal Schools of Music. In 1889 the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music collaborated in forming the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music to design and administer a system of graded exams, given locally, which had clearly defined goals for each level of student achievement. It was presumed that those teachers whose students successfully mastered the exams for each level were the more competent teachers. Thus the exam system served a dual function: first, it provided the music student with an opportunity to measure his or her achievement, and second, it provided prospective students with a way to measure teacher competence. It was tacitly hoped that the teachers who were demonstrably incompetent based upon poor student achievement in the Associated Board Exams would be forced to leave the profession.

The Associated Board Exams were not the only exams available for students but they became the most pervasive, spreading throughout Britain and abroad. In the first

years the exams were given, 80 percent or more were for elementary pianists, 8 - 10 percent for theory, 7 percent or less for string players, and a negligible proportion for singers and other instrumentalists.[34] By the year 2000, the Board (which today operates with the authority of the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music, and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama) offered graded music exams in over thirty instruments, singing, music theory, and practical musicianship. Because the exams were taken by more than five hundred and fifty thousand students in more than eighty countries, there was a need for a pool of examiners to administer the exams. Publicity for the Board described examiners as: "highly qualified and skilled musicians and music teachers, all of whom receive comprehensive and continuing training in the application of the Board's assessment criteria."[35]

Because the Associated Board administered exams worldwide, it was sometimes necessary for examiners to be gone for months at a time, especially in the early years of the Board. Michael Head's change from school music teaching to teaching piano at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) afforded him the scheduling flexibility that was necessary in order to work as an examiner for the Associated Board and as an adjudicator for the competition festivals. This flexibility and the fact that he was single enabled him to embark on the often long examining and adjudicating tours all over the world. Michael Head's first adjudication was for a festival in Jamaica in November 1929, and

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[34] Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 119.

[35] Richard Morris, *Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music* (data on-line) available from http://www.abrsm.ac.uk/welcome.html; Internet; accessed 1 March 2000.

his first Associated Board tour was in 1934 when he traveled to the West Indies, Canada and British Guiana.[36] Nancy Bush noted that the foreign tours "developed in my brother a great liking for travel abroad and an interest in seeing as much of the world as he could."[37] In discussing Board tours, Michael Head confirmed his sister's statement: " . . . one of its chief advantages was the examiner traveled extensively and was in touch with the musical centres of the world."[38]

Michael Head's diary entries refer to the often grueling schedule he kept on examining tours: mornings from 9:30-12:30, afternoons from 2:00-5:00, and evenings often spent hearing concertos. This was a schedule he retained throughout his life. On June 14, 1967, at the age of sixty-seven, he noted that he had been gone five months and had heard "thousands of candidates." Not only did he hear "thousands of candidates," but he usually gave lectures, lecture recitals, and broadcasts while on his tours. For example, in 1937 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, he gave a talk to explain his "methods of examining candidates in order to discover the extent of their talent for teaching."[39] This was followed by a lecture-recital entitled "Colour and Atmosphere in Music" in which he illustrated his points by playing and singing various compositions. The fact that the audiences included large numbers of students and teachers attests to the importance of Michael Head's influence as a music educator, especially considering that on this tour alone (1936-1937 to Australia and New Zealand) he had administered exams to three

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Bush, *Michael Head*, 31.

[38] Author unknown, "Michael Head Plays, Sings and Lectures," *Halifax Daily Star*, 15 March, 1937.

[39] Author unknown, "Artist Wins Acclaim in Fine Lecture," *The Halifax Mail*, n.d.

thousand candidates and given fifty concerts and broadcasts.[40] Indeed, the broadcasts enabled Michael to reach an even larger audience than did his appearances in lecture halls and auditoriums. A review of one such broadcast (from 1955) attests to the educational value of his work in this genre: " . . . one special reason why I should like him to sing over the radio again is because he can in this way give an object lesson to so many."[41]

For present day music educators accustomed to the speed and convenience of modern travel, it must seem amazing that Michael Head would agree to be gone for such long tours, conducting countless exams and giving countless performances. Certainly he was paid to be an examiner for the Board and he enjoyed the added benefit of extended trips to often exotic destinations; however, his participation in the Exam system was greatly influenced by his belief in its value to the students. This fact can best be illustrated by a talk he gave after a year long tour to Australia and New Zealand: speaking to the Halifax chapter of the Canadian College of Organists he noted that "He [Michael Head] supported examinations in music on the grounds that they encouraged students to study good music, gave them an aim to work for, and the examiner's marks represented a measure of attainment."[42]

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[40] Author unknown, newspaper title unknown, "Pianist Will Be Heard in Recital Here," n.d. Article is included on a page of cuttings identified by Michael Head as 'Nova Scotia, Canada. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[41] Fr. T. F. Ryan, S.J., "Professor M. Head Plays His Own Accompaniments at Song Recital," *S.C.M. Post*, cutting found in a family scrapbook with the caption 'Hong Kong, 1955', written by Michael Head. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[42] Author unknown, "Michael Head Plays, Sings and Lectures," *Halifax Daily Star*, 15 March, 1937.

Adjudicator

In 1929, Michael Head embarked upon another aspect of his diverse career, that of adjudicating for competitive festivals. Because festival adjudicating occupied so large a part of Michael Head's professional life, a more detailed description of the festival process is desirable in order to better understand this aspect of his work. As noted in Chapter 3 of the present study, competition festivals arose partly from a desire to afford amateur musicians an opportunity to receive recognition for their work in achieving mastery of a specific musical goal or "level." Prior to the festival dates, interested teachers and students would obtain the syllabus prepared for that festival. The syllabus listed the "Conditions," or rules, of the competition, and the classes, which could be organized by the musical category (Choral, Vocal Solo, Pianoforte Duet, Brass Ensemble, Bach Class, Light Opera, for examples), age of the competitors, the grade level of the repertoire, or the test pieces (such as the "class of adults playing the Brahms Rhapsody" that was cited in a letter from Michael Head written from Jamaica in 1927). When a test piece was specified, the key of the test piece was also prescribed. The categories of classes and the requirements for the classes were established by the committee for each festival, resulting in considerable variety from festival to festival. However, the adjudicating procedure that was followed remained fairly uniform. Most classes were open to the public, which enabled the students to hear each other perform. The judge awarded marks and wrote a critique for each competitor. At the end of the class the adjudicator was expected to give a speech to summarize his or her findings regarding the merits of the performances heard. In effect, the speech was a "summing up" to justify the awards given. In order to be of greatest benefit to the student

performers, the judge's comments needed to be educational and substantive. However, the public nature of the venue, with teachers and parents likely to be in attendance with the students, made it necessary for the judge to exercise tact and diplomacy when giving his or her speech. In his summary speeches, Michael Head often sang or played an example to illustrate his points, and based on the following account, he was quite adept at his craft: "The best singer at the Festival was Michael Head, but he was not a competitor and when I heard him on Saturday evening he sang only for a minute. Yet that one minute must have been of more value to the competitors and for that matter to the audience than many minutes of talking could possibly have been."[43]

Experienced judges often acted as mentors to less experienced colleagues who were just beginning careers in the field of competitive festival adjudicating. Early in Head's career, Sir Hugh Roberton[44] (the founder and conductor of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir[45]) acted as Michael Head's mentor, and according to Nancy Bush: " . . . taught him much in the difficult art of correctly assessing the candidates and at the same time satisfying a critical audience with ideas of their own on the subject."[46] The fact that he

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[43] Quoted in *Michael Head*, by Nancy Bush, 49.

[44] Sir Hugh Roberton, (1874-1952), was the founder and conductor of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. He himself was largely self-taught as a musician but was able to draw the very best efforts from the amateur singers in his choir, which enjoyed a worldwide reputation for excellence. In addition to his work as a conductor, he composed and arranged several hundred works for voice and vocal groups. Sir Hugh studied the history and tradition of Scottish music, and was a dedicated music educator who was in large part responsible for the establishment of the competitive festival movement in Scotland and Canada.

[45] The Glasgow Orpheus Choir was the name assumed in 1906 by the Toynbee Musical Association, which had originated five years earlier under the conductorship of Sir Hugh Roberton. The Orpheus was noted for both the technical mastery and spirited delivery of its singing. They were considered to be the 'Voice of Scotland' but their repertoire included folk songs from around the world, Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Church music, English and Italian madrigals and motets, and the works of major composers, including Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Elgar. So great was the Choir's respect and love for Sir Hugh Roberton, that upon his retirement in 1951, the Choir disbanded. Later, many former members of the Orpheus reformed as the Glasgow Phoenix Choir, which continues to perform and tour.

[46] Bush, *Michael Head*, 47.

was asked to adjudicate festivals throughout his long career is testimony to his mastery of this "difficult art." A quote from a colleague gives further evidence of his skill: "He seemed to have the knack of combining encouragement with criticism in such a way that all competitors felt they had had a measure of success."[47] Michael Head's own words, quoted in newspaper accounts of his judging activities, also testify to his ability to encourage as well as instruct:

> In a reference to the popularity of folksongs, Mr. Head said, "Young people bravely come up and sing very well-known songs with an ease and gaiety which is quite good, but the disturbing thing about a good deal of the folksong singing is that the singers are not skilful enough to keep in tune." Awarding the prize medallion to Lesley Bennett, of Hessle, he referred to the "sad beauty of an appealing voice" as she sang her second choice, "O, Waly, Waly." Her singing of the first song, "Tis a Rosebud in June" had not been perfect, he said, but it was still an outstanding performance.[48]
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> . . . . . .
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> Placing Geoffrey Alan Tungate, of Anlaby, second, the adjudicator said he sang musically but "put in a little bit of his own composition at the end."[49]

These brief quotes demonstrate why another colleague wrote of his: " . . . caring attitude to competitors of all ages and his ability to pass on expert advice in a most friendly fashion."[50]Even when he was in his seventies, after a lifetime of adjudicating, Head retained his sensitivity and concern for the feelings of the amateur music makers he encountered, as the following newspaper article recounts: "He [Michael Head] said that in a small community like Timaru, amateur groups should not be criticized too much for

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[47] Ibid., 48.

[48] Unknown author, "Where are the boy singers of Hull?," *The Daily Mail*, May 19, 1960.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Bush, *Michael Head*, 47.

a performance, unless the criticism was tempered with praise as well."[51] Since one of the main purposes of the competition festivals is to encourage amateur musicians in their studies, festival committees require astute, sensitive judges who can clearly state the competitors' strengths, suggest areas for improvement, and educate the audience of competitors, teachers and parents. Based upon the quotes cited previously, it is apparent that Michael Head was particularly skilled in this exacting art.

Like the days spent examining, days spent adjudicating could be long and arduous. In a letter written to his mother on November 8, 1929, Michael Head gave a brief description of one of his days at his first festival:

> Today I started at 10 and went right on until lunch time listening hard and doing the usual summing up . . . Started again at 2 – went on until 5:30 – blessed interval. Strolled a bit in the cool of the evening, supper in my room, then the test. Had to decide between 23 grown-up candidates, who played the Brahms rhapsody in g minor the best. I had a good system of marking and then heard few of the best again. It was most interesting, and there was a large audience. I had to decide 1st, 2nd, 3rd, high commended, and commended . . . It was a matter of patience – it took nearly three hours! I also gave not a bad speech at the end of it and I am told the audience all felt it was a good judging.[52]

While this letter provides a glimpse of how arduous adjudicating could be, a newspaper article from the *Northern Whig and Belfast Post* provides additional details: "Coleraine Music Festival, the third oldest in Ireland, opened yesterday with an entry of 1,060; 294 more than last year . . . Mr. Michael Head, F.R.A.M., is adjudicating instrumental, choral and vocal solos . . . Forty-four entered for the girls' open solo (under 15 years) and the competition occupied 2-1/2 hours. Half-way through, the adjudicator, Mr. Head, called

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[51] Unknown author. "'Silence Best Form of Criticism'-English Composer," *Wellington Herald*, n.d. Found in a family scrapbook with the year '1973' appended by Michael Head. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[52] Michael Head to Nina Bush, 8 November, 1929, MH20.

for a cup of tea as he was feeling 'rather exhausted.'"[53] As if a single class of forty-four entries wasn't daunting enough, in the above-mentioned festival Head apparently shared adjudicating duties with only one other gentleman so the amount of time and effort expended to hear the remaining classes must have been prodigious indeed. In spite of the enormous amount of work involved with festival adjudicating, Nancy Bush stated that Head "took part in many music competition festivals up and down the country and sometimes abroad, often four or more each year . . . "[54] Clearly, as with the examining tours, Michael Head's willingness to invest so much time and effort in the festival movement is evidence that he recognized the educational value to be derived by the competitors' participation in it. However, he also liked festival work, as the following diary excerpts help to illustrate:

> These festivals are tiring sometimes but they often produce some talented work.[55]
>
> . . . .
>
> . . . full days adjudicating at Hastings festival, such good singing. I enjoy it all.[56]
>
> . . . .

[53] Unknown author, "Coleraine adjudicator called for a cup of tea," *Northern Whip and Belfast Post*, 13 May, 1952.

[54] Bush, *Michael Head*, 47.

[55] Head Diary, April 18, 1971, Head Collection.

[56] Head Diary, March 28, 1956, Head Collection.

> How the time flies! So many delightful experiences. A whole week in Plymouth. 6 days of adj[udicating] children, women, men singers, lovely ladies choirs singing my "Under the Bower of Night" for 1st time. Choir from Somerset was lovely. On top of that, we had a Cornish choir sing my "Sea Gipsy"—91 marks! I was again thrilled. We'd had a fine Michael Head class, too, with a singer of "Lavender Pond" winning.[57] I do this job rather well, as I feel an affection for the singers. But it is most tiring.[58]

Lecturer/Lecture Recitals

As noted above, while on examining or adjudicating tours Michael Head scheduled recitals, lectures, lecture-recitals and broadcasts in the cities and towns he visited. These venues provided him with additional opportunities to educate the public on those topics he considered of significance in the education and training of musicians. (In this context, musicians included students of all ages as well as amateur and professional music makers.) Because he was skilled both as a singer and as a pianist, he could effectively demonstrate the points he wished to make in his lectures. At the same time, the artistry and craftsmanship of his performances were illustrative of the skills he sought to instill in others. For example, following a broadcast recital in Brisbane, Australia, he gave a lecture to members of the Queensland Musical Association. According to the newspaper account, his talk concerned:

> . . . various aspects of colour and atmosphere in music. In music, the aim of interpretation, he said, was not, or should not be, a display of temperament, individuality, or virtuosity but a rendering of the music in the best of one's ability as the composer would like it. Both colour and

[57] Michael Head's music was so popular that he often judged classes in which the singers were singing his songs. In addition, some festivals included classes comprised solely of Michael Head songs. This particular diary entry is referring to such a class, in which the participants were to sing "Lavender Pond" by Michael Head.

[58] Head Diary, December 9, 1957, Head Collection.

> atmosphere were vague terms yet their meaning was unmistakable. The difference between the two was that in the case of colour it often devolved upon the player to bring it to life, while with atmosphere was inherent in the music, waiting to be brought out by the player. In piano playing colour could only be achieved by a touch that was capable of variety of tone . . . Colour in piano playing depended on the fingers . . . therefore there must be subtlety in the use of the fingers . . . Mr. Head proceeded to demonstrate on the piano how touch could be used to bring out the colour in works . . . [59]

He went on to discuss "atmosphere": "Atmosphere was an even more vague thing in music, he said. All the arts of the musician were required to conjure it up out of the music's depths."[60] That early Australian tour lasted a year and at the end of it, in March of 1937, he stopped in Canada and gave a lecture recital for the Halifax chapter of the Canadian College of Organists. Once again, his subject was "Colour and Atmosphere in Music." The newspaper account of this occasion provides additional details of Michael Head's views concerning these aspects of music. Because this article contains so many statements that reflect Michael Head's teaching philosophy, it is quoted at some length:

> "Colour and Atmosphere in Music" were the subjects treated by the recitalist by word and illustration, and in his remarks the vividly descriptive adjectives which he applied to the compositions he played were arresting examples of his meaning. He explained that tone color was something the player gave to the music, but atmosphere was inherent in the composition, the contribution of the composer. He contended that a sense of tone color and a feeling atmosphere were essential for interpreting both classical and modern music, and that such abilities as that of playing a cantabile passage well were sometimes lacking in good players. He gave illustrations of "making the top note sing" and "bringing out the alto."
>
> "The fun of playing the piano," he remarked, "is in deciding how much tone and how much shading you will give to various pieces of music."

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[59] *Brisbane Telegraph*: June 17, 1936.

[60] Ibid.

> His illustration of his theories, namely the recital part of the program, comprised compositions chosen exclusively from modern music. [Michael played pieces by Debussy, Bax, Goosens, and Moeran.]
>
> A song recital, which included many of Michael Head's own compositions, formed the second part of his recital program. He pointed out that the singer had an advantage over the instrumentalist in being able to alter the tone color of the voice. He stressed the need of a would-be singer having an adequate voice and sufficient technical control to sing smoothly a legato line, also the importance of emotion in singing and good diction, which he considered particularly necessary as the composer gets his inspiration from the words, and the listeners will lose the effect unless they can hear the words.[61]

Although subsequent talks focused on additional topics, the main points which he emphasized in this presentation were recurring themes in his lectures: the importance of "colour" and "atmosphere" as interpretive devices; the necessity for technical proficiency in piano playing (as is made evident by his statements to "make the top note sing" and "bring out the alto," as well as the reference to cantabile playing); the necessity for the singer to have an adequate voice and technical control; the requirement for emotion in singing; and the necessity for good diction.

In this lecture recital Michael Head followed a pattern that was repeated countless times in the innumerable appearances he made during the course of his career. Because he was always nervous performing, he would choose a topic upon which to speak, and then would give the speech many times to many different audiences, polishing and revising it with each presentation. During the Australian/New Zealand tour of 1936-1937, he had, by his own account given more than fifty performances, many of them in a lecture format, so the "Colour and Atmosphere" talk was well-honed by the time he arrived in Canada. While he lectured he would include musical examples, both piano and

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[61] Unknown author, "Michael Head Plays, Sings and Lectures," *Halifax Daily Star:* March 15, 1937.

vocal selections, which he performed from memory. Usually he included some of his own compositions with the musical examples he performed. His ability to accompany himself enabled him to control every aspect of the music and thereby to illustrate his points precisely. Furthermore, the combination of his accompanying ability and practiced familiarity with the topic under discussion led to his presentations acquiring an aura of intimacy, warmth and charm, which produced the effect of "an instructive and entertaining lecture-recital."[62] Not surprisingly, many of the aspects of music and musicianship which Michael Head addressed in his lectures were also notable aspects of his own performances.

Broadcasting

Not all of Michael Head's lectures and lecture recitals were given in person. Often on his tours he was in the broadcast studio instead of the lecture or recital hall. He was, of course, quite at ease in this medium as a result of his ongoing work with the BBC. From his first broadcast in September 1924, until his last one in 1964, Head presented programs on a regular basis. His first program consisted of three songs at the piano, two of them his own compositions. Nancy Bush stated that subsequent programs consisted of "English folk and traditional songs, and always a group of his own [songs]."[63] Michael Head also gave talks on various aspects of music, and following the pattern of his live lectures, he often played and sang passages to illustrate his points. The

[62] Unknown author, "Artist Wins Acclaim in Fine Lecture," *The Halifax Mail*, n.d. Clipping refers to the lecture-recital which is reviewed in the *Halifax Daily Star*, dated March 15, 1937, and is on the same family scrapbook page as the article cited. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[63] Bush, *Michael Head*, 28.

warmth and charm for which he was noted on the concert and lecture platform were also valuable assets for his work in the broadcast studio, because his audiences were "often quite unsophisticated music lovers who took pleasure not only in his songs but in his voice and *style of performance.*"[64] Transcripts from a few of these programs reveal Michael Head's commitment to teaching amateur music makers both because of the topics that were covered and the way in which the topic was presented. In a talk entitled "Discords in Music," presented on the program *Music Lovers' Diary*, he began by saying:

> Music has always contained discords, even from the earliest times and I want to try and show you how they form a necessary part of the music itself.
>
> As one can't possibly include everything, I won't deal with music built on the twelve-note system. I can only illustrate some of the treatment of discords in music. It's a very large subject and one could talk for hours about it. Discords can be used as – contrast – modulation – dramatic effect – for enhancing the poetic and imaginative ideas of the music. First of all lets get this clear – what is a discord?[65]

This introduction had the flavor of a friendly, informal chat that seemed to invite the audience to listen and learn. While Michael Head clearly desired to give information, he didn't talk down to his listeners. Instead he used more familiar phrases: "I want to try and show you how . . . " "It's a very large subject and one could talk for hours . . . " and "what is a discord?" The rest of the talk consisted of explanations simple enough for amateur musicians to understand, coupled with musical examples to illustrate his meaning. Although this talk was comparatively short, he began with Palestrina's *Pope Marcellus Mass* and progressed through the periods of music history, finishing with

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[64] Ibid., 29.

[65] Michael Head, "*Music Lovers' Diary*," BBC Radio Broadcast, London, May 12, 1946.

Bartok's *Bagatelles, Op. 6, No. 10.* In order to give a more complete picture of his style of teaching amateurs, an excerpt from this broadcast follows:

> I'll take this little song of Schubert's "Schwanengesang" as an illustration of harmonic enrichment enhancing the poet's words. The Swan sings as she dies, feeling the fear of death but the joy of transfiguration. Schubert gets the atmosphere of sadness by alternating major and minor:
>
> PIANO: Opening bars
>
> He uses only a few chords of the 7th – the discords in the song – but hear how they add to the line "Das auflosend durch die Glinder riant" (that disintegrating steals thro my limbs) and finally, how he emphasizes the word "belated" with the same diminished 7th Mozart had used. [The Mozart example preceded the Schubert example in this talk.] I'll sing the song all through.
>
> SONG: "Schwanengesang"
>
> We are now on the threshold of the great Romantic Period, with composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt and Wagner, Elgar and Strauss. The golden age of harmony as it has been called, with that wonderful enrichment and expansion of harmonic resources that took place. Composers felt the need of a more fluent style, capable of expressing the romantic and imaginative ideas of the time. To illustrate this let me first return to Palestrina and play that little fragment again.
>
> PIANO
>
> As if improvising, let me change it – instead of beginning in the key, thus:
>
> PIANO:
>
> Let's start with this vague chord:
>
> PIANO:
>
> Note how my melody falls one note too low. Back again:
>
> PIANO: continue to play
>
> These chromatic chords PIANO:
>
> Into a far-away key PIANO:
>
> Back home to the tonic again PIANO:
>
> This is rather fatally easy to do and there were many imitators of the great romantic composers, but this chromatic style of harmony can be most expressive when used by a master.
>
> Let us sum up this period with the first beautiful phrases from the Prelude to "Tristan." Hear how Wagner has attained mastery in gliding from one chord to another, with only the most illusive feeling for key.[66]

[66] Ibid.

He took the listener step by step on this journey through "discords," weaving the musical examples smoothly into his narrative to help the listener understand the concepts he presented. The performing skills he exhibited as a singer/pianist on the concert platform enabled him to effect a nearly seamless transition from one section of music to the next, resulting in minimal interruption to the flow of information and ideas.

Michael Head utilized the same procedure of combining narrative with musical examples in a series of three talks he broadcast for the BBC Home Service entitled *Make Your Own Music*. The target audience for these programs was clearly amateur music makers, as stated by the Announcer at the beginning of the first of them: "Make your own Music. Do you sing? And are you making the best of your voice? In the next three programmes in this series Michael Head is going to give hints to amateur singers on how to make the best of their voices, repertoire and similar matters. In this evening's programme there will be illustrations by Kate Winter (soprano), Clement Hardman (baritone), and three amateur singers."[67] The opening statements made by Michael Head are so illuminating that they will be quoted at length:

> I expect you have all heard of the musical evening of Victorian days, how every one would be asked to bring their own music and then would sing or play, often only after much persuasion. It was a drawing-room accomplishment, but too often displayed with little voice or real talent.
>
> Amateurs nowadays are reluctant about making music, as there are more opportunities for hearing professional performances on wireless, gramophone and in the concert hall. But if you have a good average voice and enjoy singing, you should sing – but you want to sing as well as you can, and songs that suit your voice.

[67] Michael Head, "*Make Your Own Music*," BBC Radio Program, London, May 23, 1944.

> Music at home should be encouraged; it not only should give pleasure to yourself and your friends but also it'll widen your appreciation of music and add interest when listening to other people's performances.[68]

These statements clearly indicate that two basic tenets of Michael Head's philosophy were: the importance of amateur music making ("Music at home should be encouraged."), and the importance of education and training for amateur music makers ("you want to sing as well as you can"). The program proceeded with the vocalists singing various selections while Michael Head accompanied and gave "hints here and there as needed . . . "[69] After the amateurs sang, he prefaced his corrective remarks with praise, for example: " . . . you've a good voice and the way you float up to your high notes so easily is lovely."[70] He then gave constructive criticism pertaining to the singer's performance. Head's next step in this process was perhaps the most instructive for the amateurs: he sang fragments of the songs, first with the errors and then with his suggested corrections, thus insuring that the singers and "listeners-in" knew precisely where, how, and what was the change to which he referred. Finally, the professional singer was asked to sing the selection through so that the amateurs could hear the song in the appropriate voice, range, and style, thereby providing an accurate aural image for the inexperienced singers to emulate. Michael Head's experiences as an adjudicator/examiner had given him ample opportunity to observe how important it was for students to have a standard toward which to strive, and in this instance, the professionals' performances were the standard.

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

The program transcript relates specific vocal topics upon which Head commented: approaching high notes, breathing, tone, and resonance. He also stressed the importance of the accompaniment: "David,[71] you're murdering that accompaniment. It's too loud and too fast. It's very important for the accompanist to set the right mood in the introduction. The singer and the accompanist must get together and agree as to the pace of the song."[72] 'Slurs' were also discussed: " . . . you're very fond of that song aren't you? But you are in a sentimental mood tonight, and I think you've been listening to crooners. The charm of this song (*The Brown Bird Singing*), is its simplicity, and you mustn't put so many slurs in."[73] Atmosphere, one of Head's favorite topics, was also the subject of some of his comments in this program: "I'm afraid that's very matter-of-fact, Philip. You're not getting to the root of the song (*Trade Winds* by Frederick Keel), its mood or atmosphere. You're not using your imagination. Here we have the little Spanish town by the sea, the harbour, the orange trees, the gentle breeze of the trade winds always blowing. A picture of haze and nostalgia in the Southern Spanish seas – the music – with its flowing melody and rhythm."[74] Closely tied to "atmosphere" in many of Head's talks was "expression," and in this program he included statements which referred to this concept:

> Now for something rousing, "Glorious Devon" by Edward German.
> (Philip sings 1st verse. M.H. interrupts)

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[71] David was the name of a fictitious accompanist, actually Michael Head, whose poor playing was used as an example for this program.

[72] Michael Head, Radio Program, BBC Home Service, London, May 23, 1944.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

> You're not singing the song with enough vim and go. You're a countryman singing of the glory of his native Devon. Rhythm and a sense of the words you're singing is what's wanted.[75]

Not surprisingly, diction, the topic to which he refers most often in his lectures, was also addressed during this broadcast: "Then your words were not always clear or convincing . . . "[76]

The following week, in the second *Make Your Own Music* program, Michael Head gave many more hints to amateur singers. He began by remembering the "old ballads that were popular about twenty years ago." These ballads were so well-known and so popular that they provided a common point of reference for his audience in his subsequent remarks about singing. His warmth and charm, hallmarks of his lectures and performances, were again evident in his opening remarks: "I can remember when I first started to sing how I used to enjoy singing the old Ballads that were popular about twenty years ago. I liked those songs because of their broad tunes and they were eminently singable. In fact, this style of song absolutely asked for a generous voice and rolling tone. (When you first start to sing you enjoy hearing your own voice.)"[77] Michael Head accomplished much in these first few lines of text. He identified with his audience by admitting that he liked to sing the "old Ballads," songs which had since fallen out of favor with the serious musicians, but which very likely remained the favorites of his listeners. In a sense, he validated their preferences because he, as a noted authority on music, confessed to liking these songs. Because he obviously respected their opinions,

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Michael Head, "*Make Your Own Music,*" Radio broadcast, BBC Home Service, London; May 30, 1944.

they were more apt to listen to and to trust what he had to say. Establishing a bond of trust between student and teacher is an important first step in the instructional process and Michael Head took care to build this relationship with his listeners. Finally, he created a bond of commonality, a sort of "we're all in this together" mentality, by his humorous reference to the enjoyment derived from "hearing your own voice."

After his opening remarks, Head sang the first verses of a few of the more popular ballads. After singing the selection with the faults exaggerated, he repeated the verse with the corrections, providing the more acceptable vocal model for his listeners just as he had in the previous week. After stating that any "song can be ruined by bad singing," he again cautioned the singer in the use of slurs: "As a rule, don't make any slurs unless the composer marks them."[78] Certainly the choice of one of the "old Ballads" to demonstrate this point was apropos because the sentimentality of those old-fashioned songs made them especially susceptible to excessive slurring. After he sang the next example Head commented on "excessive sentiment, slurs and incorrect 'ooh' vowels, and 'that fatal habit of tenors sitting on their high notes.'"[79] He finished the opening section of the broadcast with another Ballad example followed by the admonition: "For goodness sake, be natural. That mouthing of the words and artificial pronunciation of the words is ruinous to any song."[80] Head used ballads familiar to his listeners to emphasize that all songs, even old favorites, should be sung with care.

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[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

Before the next instructional section of his talk, Michael Head inserted an explanation regarding the program from the previous week: "Now I want to break off for a moment. You may remember my Broadcast last Tuesday. Well, I have received several letters referring sympathetically to David and my severe criticism of his playing. I have a confession to make. David didn't exist. I took his place at the piano and he played so badly that I had to reprimand myself. I hope you will forgive me for the innocent deception."[81] Although brief, its content is enlightening for three reasons. First, by taking time to respond he made it clear to his audience that he listened to their concerns and considered their opinions deserving of a response. Second, his response was couched in language which suggested mutual respect, "I have a confession to make," which in turn implies "you deserve an explanation." And third, his gentle humor reinforced a feeling of commonality because he wasn't afraid to laugh at himself: "I had to reprimand myself."

After his slight diversion, Head made a very profound statement in an almost roundabout way when he introduced his guest, a young tenor whose voice he described as sounding "easy and natural, the aim of all good teaching." This seemingly simple statement is also in fact a basic tenet of his philosophy of teaching; that is, the aim of all good teaching is to train or teach a student to acquire a voice that sounds easy and natural. Not only that, but based upon his earlier statements, the songs should be sung in a manner that sounds "easy and natural" so an additional statement would be that the "aim of all good [voice] teaching" should be to instruct the student in the art of the "easy

[81] Ibid.

and natural" singing of songs. Michael Head placed so much emphasis on this aspect of singing that it must be regarded as another basic tenet of his philosophy of teaching.

Michael Head continued his broadcast with suggestions on how to choose and learn a new song, using Schubert's setting of *Who Is Sylvia?* as the example. His first point was to get the song in the correct key, "so that it will lie comfortably in your voice." Next, although he acknowledged that it was probably the *music* which first attracted the singer, he emphasized that the words are paramount: "What's it all about?" His next question was "What sort of music has Schubert given to this poem?" The steps he outlined included ways to work with an accompanist and making technical exercises of difficult passages (he illustrated a few exercises derived from specific passages of the song). After the technical aspects of the music, he gave a "few hints as to interpretation" before singing the first verse - incorrectly. After asking what was wrong with his singing, he spoke the words with corrected accentuation and then sang the verse correctly, again insuring that the audience had an accurate model in their ear. This portion of his talk was concluded by the guest tenor singing the song in its entirety.

Before he summarized the points he had made in the first two talks of the *Make Your Own Music* series, Head offered suggestions on "practice and the care of the voice." The main points were: "Smoking does your voice no good and often does it harm; bad [vocal] production will damage your voice, especially constricted tone or shouting or singing consistently with too 'open' tone; nothing is more tiring for the voice than to have to talk all day; don't sing when you are very tired, and especially don't launch forth

into a dozen songs on end when you haven't sung a note for weeks; keep your voice in training."[82]

Head concluded his broadcast with the following summary:

> Last week was very informal and I touched on faults only very briefly; some of the advice I gave was:
> Don't run your words into one another
> Don't slur except for special effects
> Don't sing your songs too fast
> Cultivate a round resonant tone
> Don't shout top notes
> Get to the root of the song, its mood, atmosphere and the meaning of the words themselves
> Good rhythm is vital to any song
> This evening I have shown how to sing vowels and verse correctly.
> Don't over-sentimentalize and slur and don't be artificial
> In learning a new song be sure that you appreciate the words of the poem as well as the music.
>
> Now to finish. Here is a song of the 'great Elizabethan age of poetry and music', and never have the two been better wedded.[83]

The summary was a valuable teaching tool because it served to highlight the points which Head considered most important, and it provided a review of the topics discussed. His final song then was the example of how all of his advice could be put together in order to give an informed, artistic performance. The implication was that the amateur music makers of the audience could also give a creditable performance if they followed the instructions offered during the broadcasts.

The third and final program of this short series focused on repertoire selection and interpretation. In his opening remarks Head encouraged singers to explore repertoire that is outside the ordinary: "Don't forget how wide the range of song literature is and don't

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

be content only with the popular ballads, or even the songs that everyone sings. Look further afield. Perhaps you like *Solveig's Song* by Grieg? What do you know of his other songs?"[84] He made many suggestions of relatively unknown songs by the more familiar composers beginning with the Elizabethans: Dowland, Campion, Morley, and Arne. He continued with Purcell and Handel before he recommended the many beautiful arias from Bach cantatas, although he acknowledged that they were a "more difficult proposition. The vocal line is more difficult to sing." He mentioned the old Italian songs and arias, and then returned to the English composers: Bishop, Dibdin, and Boyce. The "great German Lieder writers" were next on his list, along with the advice to sing those songs in the language if possible. Bearing in mind that he was speaking to an amateur audience, he added: "Among the many songs of Schubert and Schumann and Brahms there are a great number you can sing. Wolf is more difficult especially from the pianists' point of view."[85] This was followed by a long list of modern English composers for the singers in the audience to investigate. In keeping with the procedure he used in his lectures and talks, Head not only made suggestions, he also sang fragments of some of the songs, thus providing a clearer example of their attractive qualities. After he discussed the repertoire possibilities, he made programming suggestions, a skill he realized most of the amateur music makers would not possess. These suggestions were followed by "one further word of counsel":

> When you're singing to a roomful of people, don't walk grimly to the piano and glare at the audience, before plunging into the first song. Give out the name of your songs, and if they're in a foreign language, tell

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[84] Michael Head, "*Make Your Own Music.*" Radio Program for the BBC Home Service, London: June 6, 1944.

[85] Ibid.

> us briefly what each is about, as you come to it. Then stand quietly and *naturally* whilst the opening bars of the accompaniment are played. Remember your song starts with the first note of the accompaniment and doesn't end until the pianist has played his last note. Hold the picture until the end.[86]

From his comments it is apparent that he expected that amateurs to sing for a "roomful of people," and that the amateur singers should be well-prepared not just musically but in the skills of performance. All of the instructions Michael Head offered were to enable the singers to move to the next step, which he called "the most fascinating part of singing, the interpretation of the song."[87] After encouraging the listeners to read Plunkett Greene's book *Interpretation in Song*, he gave specific guidelines to help the singers in their pursuit of that important skill, and these statements were really the culmination of all three programs:

> Learn the music of the song and memorize it. Then find some clue to the mind of the poem, absorb the rhythm, sing it as a whole and polish the details later
>
> Then you must pay attention to the voice as such. Your voice should be like an instrument at your command. You should be able to sing smoothly, with beautiful tone, sustaining long phrases, and increasing the volume or fading it away at will. You should develop a certain vocal agility singing runs and ornaments clearly, in fact aiming at the ideal of the Italian Bel Canto school of the 18th century. Then the tone of the voice must be capable of reflecting human emotions such as joy, fear ecstasy and love. Then you must have enough imagination to get right into the atmosphere of the song. Diction must be so good that not only are the words clearly sung, but they convey meaning in themselves by your skill in the use of consonants.[88]

In his lectures and talks Michael Head returned again and again to the elements of atmosphere and diction, and it is very clear from his incisive statements that for him,

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[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

atmosphere and diction were the cornerstones of the singer's art. Following this important section of his broadcast, he illustrated some of the different styles of singing. After singing Handel's aria *Art Thou Troubled*, he commented that "the ideal here is beauty of tone and phrasing – absolute smoothness and a tranquil mood."[89] Next he sang Coleridge-Taylor's *Eleanore*, after which he stated: "the voice needs warmth of tone and should convey depth of feeling."[90] He included a "Diction Song" (a Ballymore Ballad arranged by Herbert Hughes), and a "bloodthirsty song" called *Shepherd see thy horse's foaming mane*. These selections were followed by a group of three modern songs sung by renowned contralto Kathleen Ferrier, again providing an exemplary vocal model for the listeners. After Miss Ferrier sang, Head closed his broadcast with the following remark: "I hope these three talks will have been of some help and encouragement to you. *Singing is one of the greatest pleasures in the world.* Make yourself as good a singer as you can – for you are one of the instruments through which the composer speaks – that is both a responsibility and a privilege."[91]

Michael Head concluded these talks as he began them, with warmth and charm, and a final word of encouragement, reminding his listeners not only that "singing is one of the greatest pleasures in the world," but also that they too could engage in this art form, they could be singers, they could become better singers. In other talks and other lectures his remarks were not always directed exclusively to amateur singers, but the over-riding premise was that music making should be encouraged, and the corollary was

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

that amateur music makers should strive to improve their skills. His career was in large part dedicated to the pursuit of these two ideals.

Singer

Michael Head made many instructional suggestions during his broadcasts, lectures, lecture-recitals, and the talks he gave while examining/adjudicating. Because he was a skilled singer/pianist, he could demonstrate the points he wished to make, and this enabled him to be very specific in his comments as well as very accurate in his execution of the musical examples. However, his recital performances were also instructional because they reflected an adherence to the high musical standards that he advocated in his lectures. In his singing and playing he modeled the artistry to which he always encouraged others to aspire, so it is not surprising that reviews of his performances consistently referred to those qualities of his musicianship which were also the topics most frequently addressed in his lectures and talks.

It has already been noted that as a performer Michael Head exhibited "supreme artistry"[92] while at the same time creating the effect of being an amateur "in the best sense of the word":

> A charming concert in an admirable cause, sums up the pianoforte and vocal performance given by Michael Head, the distinguished composer, in St. George's Hall, Dumfries, on Tuesday evening. The effort was in aid of the Queen's Institute of District Nurses. And yet, somehow, the words "concert" and "performance" are peculiarly inappropriate to the

[92] K. C. Harvey, "Supreme Artistry of Michael Head," Article from an unknown newspaper. Found in a family scrapbook and notated by Michael Head 'Hong Kong, 1955.'

> occasion. They suggest formality, and of such austerities there were none. It was an evening of quietly persuasive music-making among friends.[93]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Mr. Head's vocal resources are modest, but his is cultivated singing of infinite charm and persuasiveness that virtually disarms criticism, while he also possesses the fortunate faculty of making his hearers forget the frigid formality of the public platform.[94]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Mr. Head's baritone voice is less phenomenal than pleasing, but he is a skillful singer, who knows how to make the most of his vocal resources, and he also achieves the unique feat of singing and simultaneously playing his own accompaniments [many of them difficult] from memory. We have all heard this sort of thing attempted by amateurs, and, indeed, much of Mr. Head's recital, with his friendly platform demeanor and air of intimate informality . . . savoured more of the studio or the salon than the concert hall but it is precisely herein that he scores heavily: Mr. Head is an accomplished artist of highly professional competence . . . [95]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . it is a beautifully produced small voice over which its owner has remarkable control. The tone is rich and warm . . . [96]

Head was very aware of the fact that his voice was "less phenomenal than pleasing," as many of his early diary entries indicate. After hearing his song *Ships of Arcady* sung at the Albert Hall he wrote: "I must get a big enough voice to sing them myself. I must."[97] In order to improve his voice he studied singing with Mr. Fritz Marston and later wrote:

> I wonder if I shall succeed as a singer first as well as a composer afterwards. I love expressing myself in singing and my voice seems certainly a lovely quality especially in mezzo-voce. But I am badly

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[93] Unknown author, "Piano and Vocal Recital: Programme by Noted Composer"; Unknown newspaper, n.d., in a family album on a page which bears the inscription "Dumfries, Scotland, 1950's" in Michael Head's hand. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[94] Unknown author, "Evelyn Rothwell and Michael Head," *Musical Opinion*, March, 1953, 329.

[95] Unknown author, (initials of C. G.-F.), "Michael Head," *Musical Opinion*, March, 1951, 261.

[96] Unknown author, "Composer, Pianist, Singer, Accompanist: Michael Head's Busy Time at 4QG," *Brisbane Telegraph*, June 17, 1936.

[97] Head Diary, October 11, 1919, Head Collection.

> hampered by small breath capacity. Ah! If only I had a bigger physique![98]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> My voice is everyday very gradually getting brighter and bigger and I have more control. Hurray![99]

On March 7, 1923, he was contemplating his future as a professional singer and listed among his drawbacks: " . . . too small a volume of voice to arrest in a big hall. Hope it will grow."[100] By January 1 of the next year (1924) he wrote that his voice was stronger but that he had "not the physique for a great singer."[101] In spite of the fact that his was not the voice of a "great" singer, Head continued to study because, as he said: "How I love singing!"[102] and "I love expressing myself in singing . . . ."[103] He gained sufficient technical mastery to give his London recital debut on January 9, 1930, at the Wigmore Hall, appearing as a self-accompanied singer assisted by Maurice Cole, solo piano.[104] Nancy Bush noted that a critic writing for the *Daily Telegraph* "found his voice, though not large, 'undeniably pleasant in quality and smoothly produced.'"[105] Thus at this first recital of what would prove to be a lifelong commitment to sharing his love of song, Michael Head embodied the principle of self-improvement that he would later advocate in his lectures and talks.

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[98] Head Diary, September 14, 1922, Head Collection.

[99] Head Diary, December 19, 1922, Head Collection.

[100] Head Diary, March 7, 1923, Head Collection.

[101] Head Diary, January 1, 1924, Head Collection.

[102] Head Diary, October 29, 1919, Head Collection.

[103] Head Diary, September 14, 1922, Head Collection.

[104] Bush, Michael Head, 24.

[105] Ibid., 26.

Head's performance at this Wigmore Hall recital was notable from another standpoint, his impeccable diction, which was reportedly so clear that every word could be understood, even at the back of the hall.[106] This attribute of his singing is the one mentioned most frequently by critics, as the following examples illustrate:

> . . . .even more striking is Mr. Head's use of words. He confesses to be rather particular on this point . . . every word in everything he sang last night was perfectly formulated and completely intelligible in his singing, a fact which gave several of his songs an added point.[107]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> There were three groups of songs in the half-hour's concert. The first was of Elizabethan songs. In them we had the first experience of that clarity of diction and perfection of phrasing which gave distinction to Mr. Head's singing.[108]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> His light baritone voice is just right for this kind of music and his diction is of the clearest. The note of intimacy is effective and it is spontaneous.[109]

For Michael Head, the singer's art depended upon clear diction, as is evident by the following quote from a lecture he delivered in 1936:

> In the case of the singer he [Michael Head] wished to be emphatic on one point. And that was the matter of clear diction. A composer was inspired by a poem to set it to music. Atmosphere in a song could never be achieved if the hearer could hear no words, for in this case the performer lost some of the points in the composer's meaning. Some folk appeared to think that well formulated diction was inclined to spoil the vocal line. That was not correct. Without good diction a composer's work could not be adequately presented.[110]

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[106] Ibid.

[107] Unknown author, "Composer, Singer, Pianist, Accompanist: Michael Head's Busy Time at 4QG," *Brisbane Telegraph*, June 17, 1936.

[108] Fr. T. F. Ryan, S. J., "Professor M. Head Plays His Own Accompaniments at Song Recital," *S. C. M. Post*, Hong Kong, 1955.

[109] G. A. R., Unknown title, *Manchester Guardian*, January, 1949. Press opinions excerpt from publicity material distributed by Imperial Concert Agency. In the possession of Mrs. Catherine Hinson.

[110] Unknown author, "Composer, Pianist, Singer, Accompanist . . . "

In Head's view, therefore, good diction is the means by which the singer communicates or interprets the composer's intent. Sensitive interpretation was another notable attribute of his performances, as the following quotes attest:

> Here is a musician who thinks and feels in sound and communicates the ideas, moods, and emotions thus engendered with a direct and magical potency straight to our minds, our imaginations, and our hearts. This communicative and vital quality is evident in whatever medium of expression Mr. Head chooses to transmit his musical message. In his compositions, his singing, and his piano-forte playing there is inherent a magical quality of that true musicianship compounded of purity and intensity of thought, the expression in sound of a personality sensitively tuned to every aspect of beauty in nature and in life, the ability to create combinations of sounds which reveal beauty of constructive arrangement and true expression of feeling, and of that magnetism and individual style which creates immediately the unifying current of understanding and response with his listeners.[111]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Each of his items was a vivid picture, whether a scented and wind-swept landscape, the dankness of a prison, or the whisper of a drowsy village. His moods changed like an October sky as he caught the true spirit of the gravity or gaiety . . . The intense poetry and love to the beautiful seeped through in everything he played or sang . . . his interpretative powers with other composers works brought out these qualities in rich flower . . . [112]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Mr. Head's strength lies not in the power of his voice, not in his capacity as a pianist, but in his caressing and lyrical approach to the song, of which he is truly a Maser. His is the personality that gains the immediate response of an audience, and is such that music and platform finesse are attuned with a fine degree of sensitivity . . . The Grieg group revealed a wealth of fervour and vocal shading: Spring, With a Waterlily, Good Morning, and the renowned I Love Thee (sung in German) were given expressive portrayal. [113]
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> . . . . . .

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[111] Valerie G. Corliss, "Michael Head, His Music: An Appreciation," *The Post*, New Zealand, 1936.

[112] Unknown author, "Mr. Michael Head: A Splendid Recital," *Wellington Post*, September 10, 1936.

[113] K. C. Harvey, "Supreme Artistry . . . "

> . . .his [Michael Head] performance represented a high order of sensitivity and musical sophistication.[114]

Although reading descriptions of Michael Head's performances contributes helpful information regarding those elements of music he apparently considered important, hearing an actual performance by him could help to further clarify his viewpoint. Fortunately, during a span of time from late 1966 to early 1967, he made a long-playing record for Pilgrim Records on which he accompanied himself singing thirteen of his own songs. (A fourteenth selection, *The Lord's Prayer,* was accompanied by organist Douglas Hawkridge.) An analysis of his performance on that recording provides additional details concerning his performance style and how specific elements relate to pedagogical statements he made in his talks, lectures, and broadcasts.

Several outstanding features are immediately apparent on this recording. The first one is perhaps to be expected, and that is the merging of the piano and vocal parts into such a unified structure that it is impossible to imagine them separately. In his lectures he stressed the importance of the singer and accompanist getting together and agreeing on interpretive aspects in a song, but the fact that Head was both pianist and singer enabled him to achieve this unity from disparate parts to a degree that is remarkable to hear. For example, the song *The Ships of Arcady* opens with a six measure introduction for the piano that is marked *p(iano)* and is fairly static harmonically with half-note chords in a descending pattern creating a feeling of hushed stillness. The vocal line, also marked *p(iano),* enters out of the quiet of the piano. Barely causing a ripple on the surface of sound, Head sang the repeated notes of the text "Thro' the faintest filigree" with utmost

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[114] Unknown author and title, *Buffalo Evening News,* 1952-53. Press Opinion in a publicity brochure distributed by Imperial Concert Agency. In the possession of Mrs. Catherine Hinson.

clarity but without exaggerating the fricative 'f' or sibilant 's'. For the text "Dreaming still of Arcady, / I look across the waves, alone; / In the misty filigree," Head the pianist eased the forward movement of the line just slightly so that Head the singer could be suspended a moment, lost in his dream, before uttering his word "alone" with such acute vocal shading that the listener is left in little doubt as to the singer's solitude. It was merely the slightest stretch, the slightest bit of word-painting, but the combined effect was masterful in its ability to communicate the performer's understanding of the mood and meaning of the text. This song concludes with a repeat of the opening text, "Thro' the faintest filigree; / Over the dim waters go; / Little ships of Arcady; / When the morning moon is low." For this section Head's voice entered as a mere thread floating over the top of the accompaniment, spinning out a long, lyric line until it faded away as the ships passed from view. The piano part in this section is written in gently rippling eighth-note patterns in the treble while the bass has half-note chords on each beat (the meter is 3/2). Michael Head as pianist kept the right hand skimming the surface and the left throbbing quietly, always in perfect balance with the voice as it faded in the distance. Even at the age of sixty-seven, Head maintained the technical facility, both as pianist and singer, that he encouraged amateurs to cultivate.

The other selections on the recording all illustrate the close relationship between singer and pianist for which Michael Head was so well-known. There are also many examples of the clarity of his diction, which sounded natural and unaffected, having none of the artificial, exaggerated pronunciation often associated with singing, and which he had cautioned his listeners to avoid. And yet, even in the smoothly flowing line he used 'word-painting' with key words to give additional point to his text. For example, in his

best-known song, *Sweet Chance, That Led My Steps Abroad,* he sang the first two words, "sweet chance," *tenuto* as marked in the score, not so much lingering on the words as taking time to utter all of the sounds in the words clearly. Consequently, the initial letters '*sw*' became, in a sense, almost an independent syllable in the word "sweet," while the '*ch*' of "chance" was clearly voiced rather than glossed over in order to arrive at the rich vowel 'a' more quickly. The vocal line echoed the beautiful, lyric, opening melodic line of the keyboard introduction, creating a sort of "fondly remembered past" effect when combined with the carefully nuanced singing of these two words (sweet chance) sung *tenuto*. In singing the lines of text, "A rainbow and a cuckoo; / Lord, how rich and great the times are now; / How rich and great the times are now," he was careful to minimize the '*ck*' combination in the word "cuckoo" which is on beat four in a 4/4 measure, but he invested the first "rich" with a richness in vocal shading, rolling the 'r', and broadening the vowel slightly before a minimally lengthened 'ch'. The repeated portion of the text was sung as an echo, softer and more fluid, and the second "rich," was sung in a straightforward manner, without any added coloration. The second stanza of the poem ends with the word "tomb" ("May never come / This side the tomb") which was sung with such expert shading that there was no doubt of the emptiness of the place or the unending span of time associated with it. This was followed by the final line of text, a repetition from verse one, "A rainbow, and a cuckoo's song / May never come together again," sung with a wistful resignation, fading into the piano part, which died away *pianississimo.*

It is difficult to convey, via a written narrative, an adequate sense of the exquisite sound paintings that were the trade-mark of Michael Head's performances. His singing was characterized by "sensitivity and musical sophistication," expressive interpretation,

"communicative and vital qualities." He responded particularly to the "colour and atmosphere" that was evoked by the combination of the musical setting and the poetry. His sensitive performances reflected his insistence that students and amateur music makers get to the root of the meaning of the poem. That desire to illuminate the meaning of the poetry was also responsible for the painstaking care with which he approached song composition, and it is his work as a composer which will be examined next.

CHAPTER 6

MICHAEL HEAD AS COMPOSER

The Instrumental Works

In an interview in 1936, Michael Head stated "I have always sung. It seems such a natural form of expression."[1] However, he could also have said "I have always composed." He began when he was a young boy, composing music to accompany the plays he wrote to entertain his family and he worked steadily until he died while on an examining tour to South Africa in 1976. He wrote pieces for a variety of instrumental and vocal combinations, which included solo songs, choral songs, cantatas, children's operas, chamber operas, incidental music for broadcast plays, a piano concerto and various other instrumental works, as well as test pieces for the Associated Board.[2]

Although the manuscript from Head's earliest known work is comprised of both solo piano and vocal material, he apparently concentrated his efforts on writing for the voice. As noted in Chapter 4 of the present study, public recitals by students at the "Gate" in 1917 and 1918 included Partsongs and solo songs written by Head. Two of these, the solo songs *Claribel* and *Give a Man a Horse He Can Ride*, were later published by the firm of Boosey. His diary entries from the years prior to his becoming a student at the RAM refer to many more of his solo songs, a number of which were performed at the Boosey Ballad Concerts and subsequently published by Boosey.

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[1] Michael Head in "People Expect Me to be Middle-aged," *New Zealand Radio Record:* September 11, 1936. Cutting in the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[2] Barbara Streets, "The Solo Songs of Michael Head: A Critical Re-evaluation In His Centenary Year," *British Music* 22 (2000) 7.

After he became the Costa Scholar for Composition at the RAM, Head divided his compositional time between the assignments from his teacher, Frederick Corder, and the songs which the firm of Boosey continued to publish. As might be expected, Corder set him the task of learning to write for instruments. It was understood at this time that serious composers wrote monumental music, music which was intended to make an important statement. While operas and oratorios were certainly accepted as monumental music, the majority of so-called serious music was comprised of instrumental works: symphonies, concertos, string quartets, and tone poems. Consequently, a student composer, particularly one as gifted as Michael Head, had to learn to express himself and his times in the accepted instrumental forms. Art song had yet to achieve the status it was to later enjoy through the efforts of Frederick Delius, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Roger Quilter, Peter Warlock, John Ireland, and many others, while Ballads were often considered banal, commercial, and unworthy of a composer's best efforts. It's no wonder that the young student Michael Head was at first reluctant to show Corder his songs, especially those which were so popular at the Ballad Concerts. He himself seemed occasionally to harbor prejudices toward song, as is evident from the diary entry written after a particularly successful concert at Albert Hall in which three of his songs were sung: "What are songs after all? I must keep before me the serious side of composing. I wonder if I shall ever rise to a symphony? I sometimes feel I'm only destined for a 'little light' in spite of peoples opinion –including John Ireland-of me."[3]

The following year, after attending a concert, he wrote: "I have just heard some of the most wonderful and notable music that I have ever listened to. Such skill, such

[3] Head Diary, September 25, 1920, Head Collection.

invention. Such orchestration—so full and spirited—and such lofty conceptions. The whole symphonie was rather overpowering . . . but I reveled in it. How childish my little musics seem to this great conception."[4]

He doesn't mention the title of the Symphony, but the effect it had on him must have been profound because less than a month later he wrote: "I badly feel the need of something reasonable and more practical. I seem to have lost my enthusiasm. I no longer think I can be a great composer. I have not the physique for a great singer. Piano is out of the question now. What am I aiming at? A song writer?"[5] Clearly, for Michael Head song writing didn't fall into the category of "lofty conception," but fortunately for the thousands of singers, voice teachers, and students who love to sing his songs, a "song writer" he became.

In spite of the pessimistic tone of the diary entry quoted above, Head wrote successfully for large forces during his student days at the RAM. His most notable effort was his piano concerto, which was played at the RAM centenary concert at the Queen's Hall in 1922, at the Bournemouth Symphony Concerts on October 23, 1924, and in a broadcast performance from Manchester in March 1924.[6] However, he favored writing more intimate, small scale works, noting in his diary "I have not the talent for . . . sticking for hours a day at one thing."[7] None of the instrumental works from his Academy days were published. He had approached Boosey about publishing his Piano Concerto after its successful public performance at the RAM Centenary Concert, but he was told it would

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[4] Head Diary, December 6, 1923, Head Collection.

[5] Head Diary, January 1, 1924, Head Collection.

[6] Editor's note following the article "The Solo Songs of Michael Head . . . ," p. 24.

[7] Head Diary, January 1, 1924, Head Collection.

not be a "business proposition as cost would be about 60 pounds."[8] If the RAM had agreed to supply twenty five pounds, Boosey would have published the piano score. In the end, the Concerto wasn't published because it wasn't a commercially viable proposition to publish serious music, even those works which had proven to be successful in performance.

After he left the Academy, Michael Head's instrumental writing was confined mainly to exam pieces for the Associated Board. He returned to serious instrumental writing during the 1950's with three pieces written for oboe, the result of his numerous concert appearances with oboist Evelyn Rothwell (Lady Barbirolli). He found his collaborations with Lady Barbirolli and other artists so fulfilling and enjoyable that he was inspired (and sometimes requested) to write works for them to play. The three pieces for oboe (*Gavotte, Elegaic Dance,* and *Presto*), which one reviewer called "well-turned and pleasing pieces,"[9] were published in 1954. Jonathan Frank, writing for *Musical Opinion* in 1961, offered further remarks on these three pieces: "The first is a graceful and sensitively written Gavotte, the second a gently swaying Elegaic Dance, containing pleasantly Griegish harmony and finally, an extremely lightfooted and witty Presto. These pieces are, to my way of thinking, an example of art concealing art. For their lightness and easy-going charm is a mask behind which is to be found mature artistry and imagination of a high order."[10] Frank also referred to three pieces for solo piano with the titles *In the Forest, Echo Valley,* and *Galloway Dance.* The last of these three pieces,

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[8] Head Diary, May 15, 1923, Head Collection.

[9] C. G.-F., "Evelyn Rothwell and Michael Head," *Musical Opinion,* March, 1953.

[10] Jonathan Frank, "A Singer-Composer," *Musical Opinion,* February, 1961, 287, 289.

Galloway Dance, was frequently played by Michael Head in recital and after a performance in Hong Kong a reviewer called it "rollicking and highly effective."[11]

In 1962, *Echo Valley* for clarinet and piano was published. *Pastorale by the River in Spring* for flute and piano, published in 1964, was written for Gareth Morris and played by him in recital with Michael Head in March of 1951, and was described as having "many moments of interest, to say nothing of unfailing ingenuity-rhythmic and harmonic . . . ."[12] *Suite for Recorders or Pipes*, was commissioned by the Piper's Guild[13] and published in 1968, while *Rondo* for oboe or violin and piano was published 1974, and *Scherzo* for horn or bassoon and piano published in 1974. These pieces were originally published by Boosey, while the following works were published by Emerson Editions: *Siciliana* for oboe and harpsichord or piano in 1975, and *Trio* for oboe, bassoon, and piano in 1977. In addition to his published instrumental works, there are other instrumental pieces mentioned in his diaries as works in progress or as works performed in concerts and recitals: *Sonata* for violin and piano, dedicated to Cecilia Keating (Lady McKee), and played first by her on Radio New Zealand in Auckland in 1975;[14] *Romance and Dance Caprice* for violin and piano, played by Anthony Cleveland in recital with Head at the Hampstead Music Club.[15] In his diaries Head noted that he

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[11] K. C. Harvey, "Supreme Artistry of Michael Head," cutting found in a family scrapbook with the inscription 'Hong Kong, 1955', written by Michael Head. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[12] C. G-F., "Michael Head," *Musical Opinion*, March, 1951.

[13] "The Guild was founded in Britain in 1932. Its main aim is the threefold craft of making, playing and decorating bamboo pipes. Pipes are made for personal use, and are not sold - i.e. if you want to play one, you'll have to make one." There are now groups and guilds around the world—the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, the United States, and Japan. Information provided by the Pipers' Guild of Great Britain.

[14] Bush, *Michael Head*, 61.

[15] Head Diary, February 5, 1972, Head Collection.

wrote *Romance* for Tony Cleveland and *Dance* for Winifred Small, adding "Are they really good pieces? I hope so. They sound lovely."[16] *Contrasts,* for 12 cellos and percussion, was written for Florence Hooten (professor of cello), a colleague at the Academy, who: " . . . always declared that its basic ideas were suggested by the cacophony of sound heard by the composer through the wall of his Academy room as her students played together her specially devised string exercises."[17] After playing the work through for her, Head wrote in his diary "O, she was pleased!"[18] He always seemed surprised and delighted when people liked his compositions, and there are many diary entries which reflect his modest regard for his own work, which makes the following positive statement about *Contrasts* quite unusual: "I wrote my 12 cello piece. Some of it is quite brilliant."[19] He went on to say that he was "rather pleased" with the violin and piano Sonata which he wrote for Cecilia Keating, calling it "fresh, lively." Unfortunately, like many of the compositions mentioned in the diaries, these unpublished works have not yet been found. In addition, he was in the habit of giving pieces to friends, sometimes before the work had been copied, so it is not known what other instrumental works may have been written and subsequently lost.

During the 1950s Head's return to instrumental writing included composing the incidental music for several plays which were broadcast on the BBC Third Programme. According to Nancy Bush, these were "based on episodes from Proust's novel *A la*

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[16] Head Diary, September 25, 1970, Head Collection.

[17] Bush, *Michael Head,* 64.

[18] Head Diary, dated February 25, 1974, Head Collection.

[19] Head Diary, dated July 28, 1974, Head Collection.

Recherche du temps perdu,"[20] with the first one broadcast in March 1952. She went on to say that the producer of the program, Rayner Heppenstall, was a near neighbor of Head's so the close collaboration necessary to insure the precise timing of the music to the dialogue was often accomplished in the home of Michael Head or Mr. Heppenstall. The music for the first play was for piano and violin, and for the fifth and last, a septet of instruments. Nancy Bush noted that Head's music suggested to listeners "the period atmosphere of the unusual plays"[21] and the producer and authoress seemed satisfied with the result. After the recording of the last, *A Window at Montjouvain,* Head wrote in his diary "How well they acted! [the cast] My music did sound good! Altho' the scoring of the Septet could be better, especially the end."[22] Once again, it's as if he's surprised that his music was good; and once again he found something that, in his view at least, needed to be improved. The music for these broadcasts, like so much of his work, has not been found.

The last category of Michael Head's instrumental work to be considered is pieces he wrote for the Associated Board. His diaries refer to them only occasionally and briefly: on November 6, 1971, the Board accepted *Spanish Dance* for Grade III (for violin) , and on February 5, 1972, "The Associated Board have taken two more pieces. For viola. Folk song Melody and Divertimento." *Spanish Dance* was on List A for 1973 and 1974 for violin examinations. These were not intended to be great or serious works, but rather works to measure student ability and progress. By writing for the Board,

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[20] Bush, *Michael Head,* 42.

[21] Ibid., 43.

[22] Head Diary, March 29, 1956, Head Collection.

especially so late in his career (when he was in his 70s), Head demonstrated his continuing interest in the education of student musicians

The Vocal Works

While Michael Head returned to instrumental writing later in his career, he never stopped writing for the human voice. His published works for voice include the children's opera *The Bachelor Mouse,* several unison songs for children's voices, a choral cantata, *Daphne and Apollo* (scored for orchestra or piano, Baritone and Soprano solo and S.A.T.B. choir), *Snowbirds* (a set of seven pieces for Baritone and ladies' choir and piano), several other choral pieces in various voicings, and one hundred and seven solo songs. Of the solo songs, most were written to be accompanied by piano alone, two may be sung unaccompanied, one was set for voice and clarinet, two for voice and flute with piano, one for voice and violin with piano, one for voice and cello with piano, and several for various string combinations and/or piano and voice. Thus his output of works displays a wide variety of instrumental and vocal combinations, with their inherent sonic colors, as well as exhibits his facility in handling the technical demands of writing for such diverse musical forces. Besides these published works, two song cycles are soon to be published by Roberton Press and an additional solo song, *The Lark,* was printed in the journal *British Music*, Volume 22, bringing the total to 124 solo songs. This number reflects only the songs found to date, but Michael Head's diaries mention many more songs, now missing, that were written and/or performed but never published. Because he was in the habit of writing songs and giving them to friends without first making copies or sending them to his publisher, there may well be other Michael Head songs which are

awaiting discovery. Besides the solo songs, there are other unpublished vocal works which are known to have been written. These include: the four chamber operas, *The Bidders' Opera* (in one act, for four voices and piano), and *Key Money, Day Return,* and *After The Wedding* (all described by Nancy Bush as one-act light operas);[23] the opera for schools titled *Through Train;* and *New Town,* a choral work for male voice choir and piano. Taken all together, this is a rather sizable body of works for a composer who spent so much of his time on his other endeavors as teacher, examiner, adjudicator, lecturer and broadcaster.

Just as he did with the instrumental works, Michael Head wrote choral works early in his career, discontinued writing choral pieces for a period of time, and then returned to choral writing later in his career at the suggestion/request of colleagues. However, while many his later instrumental works were written for professional musicians, his choral works were written primarily for student and adult amateur musicians. The earliest known choral works were partsongs composed while he was a student at the "Gate." On October 28, 1917, at a concert at Wigmore Hall under the direction of Mrs. Adair, a group of four partsongs composed by Head were performed: *Te Decet Hymnus,* with a Latin text, as the title suggests; *When in Longer Shadows,* with the text by his voice teacher, Fritz Marston, and dedicated to Mr. Marston; *On the Death of Smet-Smet, the Hippopotamus-Goddess,* bearing the sub-title, *Song of a Tribe of the Ancient Egyptians,* with the text by Rupert Brooke; and *Jabberwocky* with the popular text from *Alice Through the Looking-Glass,* by Lewis Carroll. A month later, on November 18, 1917, these same partsongs were again performed by the "Choir" of

[23] Bush, *Michael Head,* Appendix B.

students from the "Gate." In this same concert, Mr. Raymond Metcalfe sang two solo songs which were written and accompanied by Head. There is no record of how well the partsongs were received, nor have they been found. In like manner, one of the solo songs, *The Island,* has not been; however, the other solo song, *Give a Man a Horse He Can Ride,* was published by Boosey in 1923.

These early partsongs are the only known choral works written by Michael Head until he was in his forties. According to Nancy Bush, "Beginning in 1946, choral pieces by Michael and four-part settings of his songs were included in these programmes on several occasions."[24] The programs to which she referred were some of the many choral and orchestral concerts organized by Ernest Read, FRAM, music director of the London School of Dalcroze, and chairman of the Dalcroze Society. Head had been a student in Read's aural theory class at the RAM and presumably began his long association with Read as a consequence. Head had learned Dalcroze Eurhythmics as a boy, and when the RAM supported a demonstration by the London School, he gave a two-piano improvisation with Joan Bottard, who later was the principal demonstrator in Geneva for M. Emile Jaques-Dalcroze.[25] Head retained his interest in Dalcroze teaching and even gave a recital in 1952,with Florence Hooten, cellist, to help raise funds for the London School of Dalcroze, one more indication of his support for various music education activities.

Michael Head's association with the educational enterprises of Ernest Read and the Ernest Read Music Association (ERMA) contributed to his renewed interest in

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[24] Bush, *Michael Head,* 54.

[25] Ibid., 53.

writing choral settings after a lapse of many years. In a Christmas concert given on December 8, 1962, in the Royal Albert Hall, the "London Senior Orchestra and the Schools choir of girls and boys" (groups organized by Ernest Read) included a choral setting of Head's solo song *The Three Mummers.*[26] Nancy Bush wrote that "in 1968 the first performance of a Christmas carol, dedicated to Ernest Read and his wife Helen, was given by ERMA . . . "[27] In his diary entry dated December 3, 1968, Head referred to this performance: "The Duke's Hall was full of singers E. R. [Ernest Read] (senior choir) Soon they would sing my music! I felt quite nervous. With orchestra too. The Robin's Carol sounded lovely!!" Even though Michael Head had heard his music performed at numerous Ernest Read Concerts, public performances of his music always provoked feelings of nervous anticipation. What is rather curious about this performance is that Nancy Bush referred to it as a "first performance" and noted its dedication to the Reads, and Head's diary entry named the song in question as *The Robin 's Carol.* However, Head had written a solo song titled *The Robin 's Carol,* with text by Patience Strong, which was published in 1950 and bore the dedication "For Tim and Edith Simpson." Furthermore, Nancy Bush's catalogue of Michael Head's works lists a choral setting of a song titled *The Robin 's Christmas Carol,* with text by Marjory Rayment, published in 1968, the year of the concert mentioned by Nancy Bush. The question which arises from these apparently contradictory facts is: Are these two separate songs, or the same song with a somewhat different title? Some of Head's other solo songs had been given choral settings (*The Three Mummers,* for example), and sometimes the choral setting received a

[26] Information obtained from a printed program of the event. In the possession of Catherine Hinson.

[27] Ibid.

different dedication than the solo. For example, the solo song *I will Lift Up Mine Eyes* was dedicated to Marilyn Horne, and the choral setting, for 4-part male voice choir was inscribed "For the Sylviidae Male Voice Choir, Jersey." So it is possible that the two different titles refer to the same song. Futhermore, in a Boosey catalog of Michael Head works a version of *The Robin 's Carol,* with text by Patience Strong, was listed as published in 1950 in an arrangement for soprano and alto. This same catalog also listed a setting of *The Robin 's Christmas Carol* for SATB choir and orchestra, with no date of publication and no poet listed. Because of the statements in Michael Head's diary entry, it seems likely that the SATB version was published in 1968. The two-part song, *The Robin 's Carol*, has a charming text, and is written with a simple, lyrical melody which makes modest demands on the singers. Because the ERMA concerts featured student musicians, *The Robin 's Carol* would be a logical choice for an SATB setting for a student choir. In the opinion of this writer, *The Robin 's Carol* and *the Robin 's Christmas Carol* are most likely the same song bearing one dedication for the solo version, and a different dedication for the SATB version. The "first performance" mentioned by Nancy Bush was the first performance of the SATB setting of the song, and the text of the 1968 version of the song was mistakenly attributed to Marjory Rayment.

The ERMA concerts were also the inspiration for the choral settings for Michael Head's *Five Finnish Christmas Songs.* His diary first mentions these songs on December 22, 1970 with the statement: "Just done nice recording of Finnish songs with Ingrid Murray." (Head habitually recorded works in progress so that he could listen and then revise his work.) He doesn't mention them again until May 18, 1972: "Boosey will publish the 5 Finnish songs. I almost felt sure they would not. Possibly not my best

music. However, I'll do my best to orchestrate them well." These songs were performed on December 8, 1972, and apparently with mixed results, at least in Head's view:

> Heavens I'm tired. A packed sellout Festival Hall for the ERMA Christmas music. My Finnish Songs! I attended the rehearsal this afternoon and that was rather wearing.
>
> However, No. 1- sounded very gracious.[*Christmas*] No. 2-is fair.[*When it is Christmas*] I missed the loud brass, and hated the piccolos. No. 3-"sparrow" sounded charming, especially as the choir swelled up in verse 3.[*A Sparrow on Christmas Morning*] The Bells sound lovely chorally.[*Christmas Bells*] But I missed the celeste bells-I didn't think he played his chimes. Ritti Ritti, [the song title is *Uncle Frost*], sounded poor-I thought too fast too loud. The interlude begins rather feebly. A good idea to end with No. 2 but the final Christmas is too tame. [This is a reference to the final word 'Christmas' in the text of the second song.] Well thank goodness it was not a flop. Terence says he'd like to do it again. That is good news, as I can improve the orchestration, altho' some of the orchestration is good.[28]

Boosey listed the *Five Finnish Christmas Songs* for soprano chorus and orchestra, 1972, in a catalogue of Michael Head's works but the songs, published in 1972, bear the inscription "for mixed chorus and orchestra (or piano)." The second song of the set, *When it is Christmas*, is listed separately in the Boosey catalogue as an SATB setting and has an alternate ending *CODA* with the instruction that it is "to be sung only when the song cycle is performed complete." The song without the *CODA* ends with the choir sustaining the word "Christmas" from a *forte* to a *pianissimo* dynamic through two measures of whole notes with fermata. The *CODA* repeats the line "When it is Christmas" twice from *forte* to *fortissimo*, marked *molto rallentando* and *allargando*. After the singers release their final sustained notes, the piano finishes with a flourish of marcato chords, *a tempo*, at a *fortissimo* dynamic. Apparently Head addressed the problems he noted in his diary entry.

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[28] Head Diary, December 8, 1972, Head Collection.

While Michael Head's choral writing for ERMA was a means of contributing to music education, it was not his only work in the field. Several of his solo songs were published as choral settings for festival use. *The Fairies' Dance, A Funny Fellow, The Little Dreams, The Little Road to Bethlehem, The Robin's Carol,* and *Star Candles* were all published in SA arrangements with piano accompaniment. Songs published for three part voices (SSA) with piano accompaniment were *Ave Maria, The Little Road to Bethlehem, The Ships of Arcady,* and *The Three Mummers; The Little Road to Bethlehem* was also published for SAB voices. SATB arrangements were made of the songs *The Little Road to Bethlehem, The Lord's Prayer,* and *The Three Mummers.* There was an SSAA arrangement of *Slumber Song of the Madonna*, and TTBB arrangements of *The Little Road to Bethlehem, The Sea Gipsy* (a cappella), and *When I Think Upon the Maidens.*

Michael Head's festival work also led to his composing other choral pieces, which were not originally solo songs, and which are in a variety of voicings. He wrote four unison songs: *A Day in Town, A Morning Salutation, New Shoes,* and *Wishes;* and also wrote two stage works for children, both of which require a chorus: T*he Bachelor Mouse,* from 1951, published by Boosey in 1954, and *Through Train, Railway Musical in one Act,* which is unpublished and currently missing. In 1954 he wrote in his diary that he had "arranged all seven Acharya songs for Elsie Harrop's choir."[29] This was a reference to *Snowbirds,* a cycle of seven songs for baritone and SSA choir and piano. Acharya was Sri Ananda Acharya, the Hindu poet who wrote the texts Head set in this cycle. Elsie Harrop was the founder of the Hazel Grove Singers, a choir "which had built

[29] Head Diary, October, 8, 1954, Head Collection.

up for itself a considerable reputation."[30] This cycle was also sung by the Jersey Ladies' Choir in a broadcast for the BBC in 1958. In later entries in his diaries Head mentioned hearing performances of songs from this cycle while he was adjudicating festivals throughout England, and he always wrote how thrilled he was to hear his music performed. In an essay on Michael Head's vocal compositions, the composer Alan Bush described *Snowbirds*: "In *Snowbirds* the subjects of the poems appear to bear little relation to one another; they concern the sunrise, the sound of a flute, a boy bereaved, love offerings, a poet's disclaimer, spring grass in the sun's rays and finally a history of the legendary King Ra. The musical settings are in turn lyrical, intimate and dramatic, in some cases with quite elaborate piano accompaniments."[31] The sixth song of the cycle, *Spring Grass,* can also be sung as a duet for baritone and mezzo-soprano, and it is an exquisite setting, demonstrating a mastery of word-painting, tonal shading, and sensitive text setting in the creation of color and atmosphere. It is a lovely addition to the repertoire.

Michael Head contributed another beautiful duet to the repertoire with *His Footsteps Haunt the Grove,* the sixth movement of *Daphne and Apollo,* a cantata for soprano and baritone soli, mixed chorus and orchestra. This was written in 1964 to poems by his sister Nancy Bush. Alan Bush called this:

> His finest choral work . . . The classical legend is presented in seven parts. The composer employed his non-Wagnerian chromatic idiom where the content of the poems demanded, but this style, as well as alternating with his basic modal vocabulary, is even integrated with it at times quite convincingly. The work is substantial in length, with an effective orchestral introduction, the last

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[30] Bush, *Michael Head*, 48.

[31] Alan Bush, "The Vocal Compositions of Michael Head," in *Michael Head . . .* by Nancy Bush; Appendix A

of the seven movements comprises one hundred and thirty bars including two passages for orchestra alone . . . This work includes some of the composer's most expressive and indeed impassioned music.[32]

Head mentioned in his diary on March 22, 1959, that he had to "struggle to complete cantata to Nancy's poems." On January 27-28 he commented that he had several compositional bursts in 1961-1962, and then continued: "Daphne and Apollo revived I hope, to be published soon after." By December 15 of 1964 he noted that it was "difficult to get a first performance of my Daphne." This cantata finally received its first performance at the debut concert of the West Riding Singers on October 21, 1968. One reviewer wrote that the music "had a distinctive melodic line and a sensitive feeling for harmony . . . It is modern enough to test the singers' abilities, not too daring as to dismay an audience that must have been charmed by Nancy Bush's poems . . . The music is instantly appealing . . . ."[33] Another reviewer described the same performance:

> Michael Head is a name beloved of singers, who appreciate his great melodic gifts and his ability to write a musical line that enhances the voice.
>
> It is these qualities that lie uppermost in his latest work, the cantata "Daphne and Apollo" . . .
>
> This was not music for the devotees of the young 20th century school of composers or the followers of indeterminacy in music; but for those who retain a love on the melodic line, this was a very attractive work.
>
> The orchestration was colourful, many pastoral effects coming from the woodwind and percussive detail adding to the sense of urgency and excitement in the more dramatic verses of the text.[34]

On the evening of the performance Head wrote about it in his diary : "The great event is over! The choir sang splendidly, altho' too small for climaxes of Daphne. [the choir numbered 40 singers] I listened entranced to my orchestration. No. 2 was splendid

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ernest Bradbury, "New Choir has no need for apology," *Yorkshire Post;* Leeds, October 21, 1968.

[34] B. D. H., "Michael Head-composer singers like," Yorkshire Evening Post; October 21, 1968.

. . . I wonder if the work will survive? Some lovely moments!"[35] In his diary on November 6, 1971, Head wrote about another performance of *Daphne and Apollo:* "The great looked forward to day! Halifax Choral Society – a big 200 member choir sang Daphne & Apollo with a reasonably (?) good orchestra. Donald Hunt conducting. I was thrilled to hear my own music with orchestration is effective! Quite lovely. So it's not a loud work after all!"[36] Nancy Bush gave a publication date for *Daphne and Apollo* of 1964 in the catalogue of Head's works and the published score bears a copyright date of 1964. It is such beautiful music that it is difficult to understand why it had to wait so long for its first public performance. Perhaps the length of the work was an impediment to its performance, or perhaps the unusual subject had limited appeal. Whatever the reason, by all accounts its performance provided ample reward to its participants, and Head responded with his customary enthusiasm.

Nancy Bush said Michael Head "gave the impression of living life at high speed,"[37] but by the 1970's, by his own admission, he was trying to slow down: "I'm trying to get used to less work! Less pupils, less festivals."[38] However, he was moving into a very productive period of his life in terms of composition-and he was still inspired: "One nice thing. I've started to compose 3 settings of the psalms suggested by Charles Carrel. What wonderful words! Is my music any good with its tunes?"[39] Charles Carrel was with the Sylviidae Male Voice Choir, which was conducted by Florence le Cornu.

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[35] Head Diary, October 21, 1968, Head Collection.

[36] Head Diary, November 6, 1971, Head Collection.

[37] Bush, *Michael Head*, 45.

[38] Head Diary, October 1, 1971, Head Collection.

[39] Ibid.

Two of the Psalms, *Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord* and *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes,* were arranged for male voice choir and dedicated to the Sylviidae Choir. Nancy Bush noted that this choir gave a first performance of these two settings, but doesn't provide the date.[40] These two Psalms, plus a third titled *Be Merciful Unto Me, O God,* were published as vocal solos in 1976 by Roberton Publications. There is no indication that *Be Merciful Unto Me, O God* was ever set for choir, most likely because the rhythmic complexity, frequent meter shifts, and sections of recitative-type text setting in the solo song rendered it unsuitable for a choral arrangement. However, the other two psalm settings for male voice choir proved successful, especially *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes.* On May 15, 1976, Head wrote in his diary: "A special day. I traveled all the way to Cheltenham to hear Male Voice choir sing my I will lift up mine eyes. I was rewarded indeed. The choir from Sheffield gave a thrilling performance-slow, with breadth, feeling, and rich tone. I was thrilled. I know I have written a very simple beautiful piece! Cheers."[41]

In this passage he answered his own question: "Is my music any good with its tunes?" And he demonstrated that even after so many years adjudicating, he could still be "thrilled" listening to amateur choirs, further proof that he was indeed an educator.

The Solo Songs

Although he wrote successfully for a variety of instrumental and vocal combinations, Michael Head has long been associated most strongly with English art

[40] Bush, *Michael Head,* 48.

[41] Head Diary, May 15, 1976, Head Collection.

song. Part of the reason for this association is that his works for solo voice far outnumber his instrumental and choral works. In addition, his own engaging performances of his songs certainly contributed to their popularity. The concerts and recitals he gave as he traveled around the world provided him with innumerable opportunities to present his work to the singing public.

Until he was in his sixties, Michael Head's busy professional life left him with very little time to devote to composing. When he did write music he concentrated mainly on art song. There are a number of possible reasons to consider as contributing factors to this focus on art song. First, Head needed to earn a living and when he first began writing songs the Boosey Ballad Concerts were still a fixture of musical life in London. A successful performance at one of these concerts practically guaranteed a market for a composer's work. Michael Head's early songs enjoyed marked success in this venue and secured a favored (and enduring) place in the repertoire of amateur singers. Singers (amateurs and professionals) wanted to sing his songs because they combined a congenial text with a lovely, singable melody. Boosey wanted to publish his songs because singers wanted to sing his songs, and the resulting royalty payments helped to secure Head's future. The second factor which contributed to Head's song writing is that he was good at it. Nancy Bush described his ability in her book : "He had a facility for hitting off a melody, sometimes striking upon it almost at once as he sat at the keyboard with the words propped up in front of him."[42] Head provided one more reason for his song-writing in a statement he made in an interview he gave during a tour of New Zealand in 1936: "At first I played the piano, then did orchestral work, and went through the usual

[42] Bush, *Michael Head*, 30.

round of composing at the Academy. Lately I've specialized in songs because I've become well known in that capacity."[43] By this time Boosey had already published more than 40 of his songs, and he was just 36 years old. A fourth contributing factor to his interest in art song is the most cogent: he loved to sing and he loved to write songs, as he so ardently professed in his diaries. On October 29, 1919, he stated "How I love singing," and on September 14, 1922, "I love expressing myself in singing," and on January 22, 1974, nearly at the end of his career, "How I love writing songs."

This love of song writing began while he was just a youngster and continued unabated until his death. His labor of love resulted in a fairly substantial body of work: 124 solo songs, both published and unpublished. Because the songs represent the most sizable portion of Michael Head's works, and the area of his greatest interest, it is reasonable to presume that they also reflect his teaching philosophy. Consequently, a pedagogical analysis of selected songs will be undertaken after the following general overview of Michael Head's songs and their compositional style. (For a more in depth discussion of Head's compositional style, the reader is directed to the article "The Solo Songs of Michael Head: a critical re-evaluation in his centenary year," by Barbara Streets, published in *British Music: The Journal of the British Music Society*, volume 22, 2000.)

For the texts of the 124 solo songs, Michael Head chose the works of more than sixty poets, most of whom were contemporary to his time. In addition, he set the texts of a few earlier masters of English verse, including Keats, Shakespeare, Milton, and

[43] Unknown author, "People Expect Me to be Middle-aged," *New Zealand Radio Record*, September 11, 1936.

Tennyson. His sister Nancy Bush collaborated with him late in his career, furnishing the texts for some of his songs and furnishing the librettos for some of his chamber works. As a writer herself, she often gave Head suggestions for authors to read or for poems to set to music. She wrote of his ongoing quest for material: "Like so many composers, he constantly sought suitable texts and had difficulty finding them."[44] Throughout his long career he was requested to write songs for friends and colleagues and it was not uncommon for the request to be accompanied by a suggested text. Because he was "wild about descriptive poetry that said something, that got to the core of things . . ."[45] Head was particularly attracted to texts that would enable him to paint sound pictures that would depict an amazing variety of subjects, moods, atmosphere, feelings, and emotions.

Michael Head the performer was noted for the clarity of his diction which resulted in his being understood even at the back of the concert hall. He was also noted for the expertise with which he combined accompaniment and text, resulting in a performance in which every nuance of mood and atmosphere in the music was convincingly displayed. Michael Head the educator was noted for his insistence that the student/amateur performer sing the words of the song with utmost clarity and precision: "A composer was inspired by a poem to set it to music . . . Without good diction, a composer's work could not be adequately presented."[46] He also emphasized the importance of expression in singing, and often lectured on the topics of mood, atmosphere, and color in music: "Get to the root of the song, its mood, atmosphere and the meaning of the words themselves,"

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[44] Bush, *Michael Head*, 30.

[45] Dr. Bruce Govich, quoted in "The Solo Songs of Michael Head, a Critical Re-evaluation in his Centenary Year," by Barbara Streets. *British Music* 22 (2000) 8.

[46] *Brisbane Telegraph* (Australia), June 17, 1936.

and "You must have enough imagination to get right into the atmosphere of the song."[47] Just as Head the performer and Head the educator had emphasized the importance of clear and precise diction and the importance of the role of mood and atmosphere in music, Head the composer also emphasized the importance of these elements in his work. He highlighted their importance both by what he said and by the ways in which he used the elements in his compositions. In an interview he gave in 1936 he was asked "What are the things to be most considered in good song settings?" and he responded:

> I feel that the value of a modern song can be estimated by two aspects of equal importance: the musical content and its effectiveness 'as a song'. That is, as a medium of conveying the meaning of the poem to the listener, by singer and pianist. In many modern songs the spirit of the poem is lost by a musical setting of over-elaboration and exaggeration—either in the accompaniment or in the vocal line. I am an admirer of modern harmony if it is used as a means of illustrating the meaning of the poem, but the vocal line should follow the natural rhythm and accentuation of the poem to convey its meaning as simply and melodiously as possible.[48]

The statements made by Michael Head in this interview will serve as a framework for investigating the compositional and/or musical elements which can be identified as hallmarks of his art song style. Michael Head's intent as a composer of song was to convey the meaning of the poem to the listener, and any investigation into his style of composition must examine the methods he used to articulate or enhance the meaning of the words as he perceived them or responded to them.

Because he was insistent that the musical setting of the vocal line should follow the natural rhythm and accentuation of the words, Head's text-setting is predominantly syllabic, and often rhythmically complex. This rhythmic complexity is often, but not

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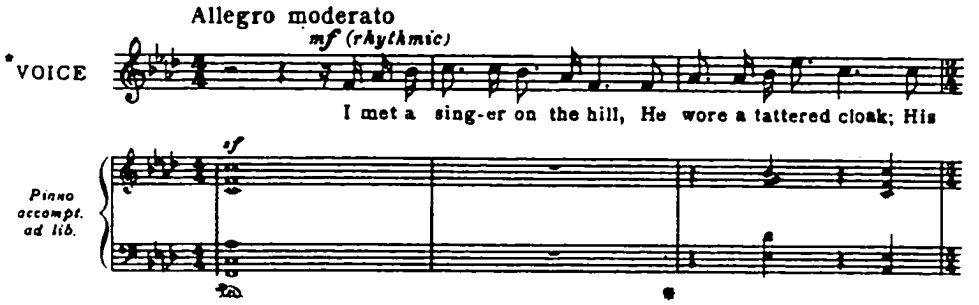
[47] Michael Head, *Make Your Own Music*, BBC Home Service (London) May 23, 1944.

[48] Unknown author, "People Expect Me to be Middle-aged," *New Zealand Radio Record*, September 11,1936.

always, coupled with a 'parlando' style of singing[49] as is illustrated by the excerpt from *The Singer.* (See Example 1.)

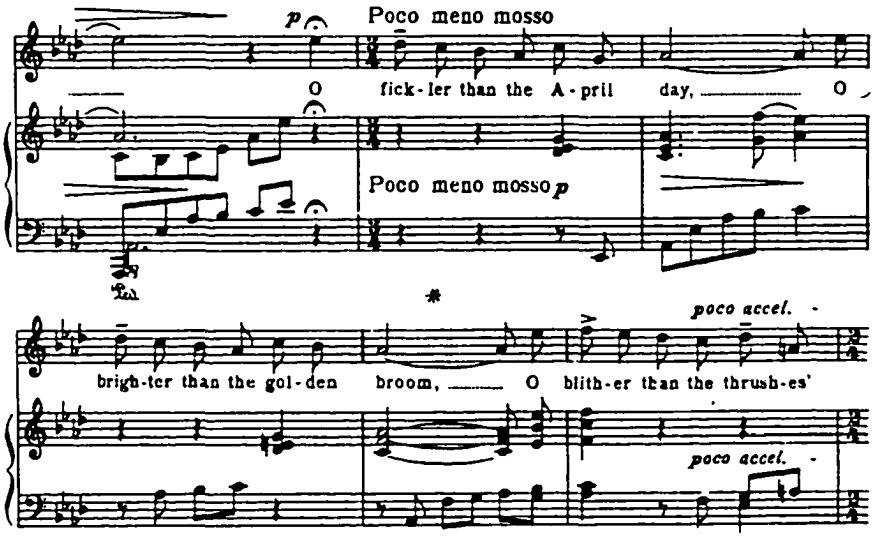
Example 1, *The Singer,* meas. 1-3.



The importance Michael Head accords to the text is also responsible for another facet of his compositional style, his use of frequent meter shifts. For example, the song *The King of China's Daughter* begins in 5/4 but in the space of its forty measures changes meter twenty-two times. These metric shifts are text-driven and result in a very fluid vocal line in which the word stresses are meticulously manipulated to serve the composer's desired musical aim. The song *Why Have You Stolen My Delight* provides another illustration: in measures 12-16, the meter shifts from 4/4 to 3/4 in order to have the metric stress coincide with the syllables *fick, day, brigh, broom,* and *blith.* (See Example 2.) This produces a very different understanding than the stresses that would result from the meter remaining in 4/4. (See Example 2.)

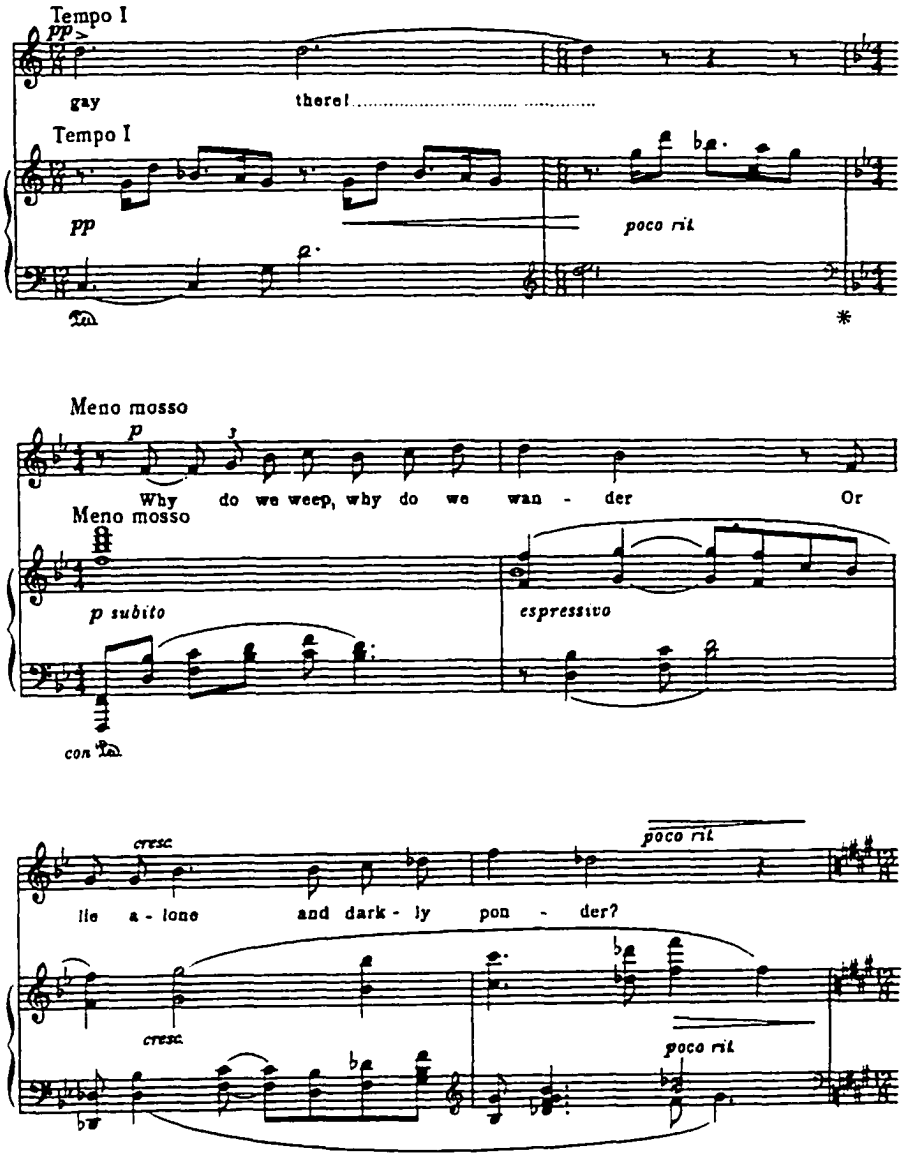
[49] In this study, 'parlando style' is understood to mean syllables more disconnected from one another than in 'legato style' and "therefore are often more obviously stressed." As defined in Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman, *Poetry into Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 61

Example 2, *Why Have You Stolen My Delight,* meas. 11-16.



Michael Head also used metric shifts as a means to create that all-important "atmosphere." The song *Holiday in Heaven* from the Ruth Pitter cycle offers an example: in meas. 38-41 there is a shift to 4/4 meter from the previous compound meter with the result that the skittering, dance-like rhythm of the vocal line is interrupted and replaced by a rhythmic pattern that seems to stand still, to stagnate. This musical scene-painting occurs as the text shifts from the action of the dance to moments of reflection, as the participants stop to "ponder." From measure 42 to the end, the compound meter returns as the flourish of the dance carries all 'away.' (See Example 3.)

Example 3, *Holiday in Heaven,* meas. 36–41.



The use of metric shifts is perhaps a rather subtle way of creating atmosphere; a more obvious means to employ is the manipulation of the harmonic element, either in the ways in which the sounds of the melody are organized or the ways in which the sounds of the accompaniment are organized. Like word-setting, atmosphere is dependent upon the text because the composer is inspired to make a musical setting of a poem as a response

to feelings and images evoked by the words of that poem. It is the composer's interweaving of the disparate elements of text, vocal line, and accompaniment that results in 'atmosphere'. It is, in fact, this creation of atmosphere,[50] including the mood or scene-painting, that is the most arresting quality of Michael Head's songs. Because creating atmosphere was one of Michael Head's main preoccupations in his writing, there are examples of his often magical effects in every song: consequently, the pedagogical analysis which is the focus of the next chapter in the present study will often address those elements of Michael Head's writing. For that reason, further discussion on the topic of atmosphere will be deferred to the specific examples found in the songs selected for analysis in Chapter 7.

[50] In the context of this study, *atmosphere* will be understood to mean the general effect of the music. The *atmosphere* can be created by compositional devices that set the mood, paint the words or paint the scene evoked by the text.

CHAPTER 7

A PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SONGS

Michael Head was active as a performer and as a composer from a very early age, and he was active as an educator from the time of his first position as music master at Bedales School in 1924 until his death in 1976. Of all his compositional work, art songs were his "specialty" and his great love. To date 124 solo songs are known to have been written, and as the composer Alan Bush noted: "Michael Head showed astonishing versatility as a composer of songs; his output included the comical, the gently pastoral, the robust, the bucolic and the thought-provoking. He earned the gratitude of singers for such varied opportunities from which to choose and with which to please listeners, who, on their side, will continue for a long time to enjoy examples of all these aspects within the wide repertoire which he left to posterity."[1] Michael Head's songs are alluring for singers and listeners, but they also offer voice teachers/pedagogues a rich field from which to select study material for their students. What follows is a pedagogical analysis of selected songs from the early, middle, and late years of his career. The analysis of each song will be divided into two main sections: one for technical elements (concerned with vocal production), and one for performance elements (concerned with artistry and communication). The technical elements which will be addressed are: range, tessitura, and "other considerations," which may include phrasing (as it relates to breath management), legato/sostenuto, dynamics, agility/flexibility, and vocal registers. The performance elements which will be addressed will be divided into two broad categories,

[1] Alan Bush, "The Vocal Compositions of Michael Head," in *Michael Head-Composer, Singer, Pianist: A Memoir*, by Nancy Bush (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982), 72.

each of which may be further sub-divided: (1) textual considerations (may include poet, date, meter, rhyme, poetic form, etc.), and (2) musical considerations (may include accompaniment, harmony, form, meter, rhythm, melody, etc.). As was noted at the beginning of the present study, there is considerable overlapping of the various elements and an analysis will include a discussion of only those elements which are most crucial, apparent, or operative in contributing to the artistic whole.

Before selecting the songs to be analyzed, it is necessary to establish the chronological parameters of each of the three periods into which Michael Head's professional life can be logically divided. Although specific years have been chosen as a convenient line of demarcation for these periods, it is to be understood that in fact definitive boundaries do not exist, and individual songs may fall into, or between, two periods. In other words, an overlapping of some years within the periods is to be expected.

The first, or early, period will include those works written, performed or published before 1930. Up until 1930 Michael Head's professional activities consisted of his few years of classroom teaching at Bedales School, piano teaching at the RAM, and accompanying many of the singers who performed his songs. While he did occasionally perform as a singer with his colleagues from Bedales, his official London debut as a singer/pianist did not occur until 1930. The songs from this early period were written primarily because he loved to write songs, and because professional singers requested songs from him. Many of the thirty-two songs which were published in this early period enjoyed considerable success on the concert stage, especially at the Ballad Concerts sponsored by Boosey. In his diary, Michael wrote about many of the songs and the

singers who performed them: Astra Desmond sang *Ships of Arcady* and *Beloved;* Arthur Jordan sang *To One Dead* (later re-named *A Blackbird Singing*), *Nocturne, Sea Gipsy, O Let No Star Compare;* Carrie Tubb sang *On a Lady Singing, A Piper, A Green Cornfield;* Ivan Foster sang *When I Think Upon the Maidens;* Phyllis Lett sang *Slumber Song of the Madonna* and *Autumn 's Breath;* and Flora Woodman sang *Love Me Not For Comely Grace.* Head's surprise at the enthusiastic reception his songs received is revealed in his diary: "A most astonishing surprise. I went to see Mr. Boosey to show him some of my MS. With no hope of him liking anything as they had all been to him before! Well! The very first one he accepted. *Claribel* He seemed greatly taken with it . . . "[2] Later, after a meeting with Arthur Jordan, Head wrote the following account: "Such a week I've had! Today I met Arthur Jordan, the tenor . . . I sang four or five songs to him including the *Sea Gipsy.* Then he sang all the songs I had sent him. To think I have really come to having my songs sung and thought a lot of by a famous singer."[3] A similar meeting with Carrie Tubb was the subject of another diary entry from 1920: "I went to play a new song of mine *On a Lady Singing,* to Miss Carrie Tubb. She was nice and said she liked it immediately, consequently I sang her several others, including *The Three Witches* . . . It always comes as a shock to me after one of these interviews with a great singer. I can hardly realize that they really like my compositions. Little Michael Head . . . "[4]

Several things occurred at the end of 1929 and in 1930 which indicate a shift or a change in direction for Michael Head's career and thus the beginning of his middle

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[2] Head Diary, January 23, 1919, Head Collection.

[3] Head Diary, October 31, 1919, Head Collection.

[4] Head Diary, February 19, 1920, Head Collection.

period. This middle period was initiated by his departure from school music teaching when he left Bedales School and concentrated his formal teaching efforts on his position as a professor of piano at the RAM beginning with the fall term in 1929. The flexibility of his schedule at the RAM enabled him to begin his work as an adjudicator with his first Festival tour in November 1929. Festival work in turn led to a new direction in his composing with the publication in 1930 of the first song which was intended specifically for Festival participants, *Ludlow Town,* written for the Blackpool Musical Festival. Head's work as an examiner for the Associated Board also began during his middle period. His first tour abroad took place in 1934 with stops in the West Indies, Canada, and British Guiana.[5]

Although this middle period marked the beginning of Michael Head's writing for Festivals, not every song he wrote was intended specifically for the Festival market. He continued to write songs because he loved to sing, and after his London debut recital in the Wigmore Hall on January 9, 1930, he had ample opportunity to sing, and thus had a continuing need for new repertoire. The increased visibility that resulted from his many performances afforded him the opportunity to influence (or teach by example) an expanded audience of amateur music makers.

In spite of the fact that his new work adjudicating and examining occupied an enormous amount of his time and required an enormous amount of energy, Michael Head continued his teaching at the RAM and continued his broadcasts for the BBC during this

[5] Bush, *Michael Head*, 31.

middle period. During the Second World War, he added strenuous tours for CEMA,[6] the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts.

After the war, Head expanded his work at the BBC by writing the incidental music for radio plays. He also began collaborating in performances with the oboist Lady Evelyn Rothwell and this collaboration included concerts given in London and the provinces. Nancy Bush described this period of his life: "He was always busy with one project or another, composing, giving recitals, teaching, adjudicating and examining, with travel and holidays thrown in. He found it hard to relax completely . . . When not working he was restless and liked to be out and about. Living in London, he went as often as he could to concerts and theaters . . . "[7]

Apparently, the increasingly busy pace of his life took a toll on his compositional activity. During the 1930's he had twenty three songs published, during the difficult war years only seventeen songs were published, and during the 1950's only eleven songs were published. His diary entries during the 1950's also reflect an increasingly busy schedule, culminating in the entry for March 22, 1959: "[Festival Work] Alas, only snatches of composition . . . Struggle to complete cantata to Nancy's poems. Also song and a trio for Evelyn. I teach RAM too . . . Find it difficult to keep up with my singing, BBC etc . . . "[8]

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[6] Nancy Bush described their work in her book: "It was regarded as part of the war effort, a stimulus to morale, and it recognized 'the very real contribution which the arts have to make to the life of a people at such a time'. As far as music was concerned, concerts were organized in all parts of the country outside the London area, mostly though not entirely for civilian audiences." (Bush, *Michael Head*, 32.)

[7] Ibid., 45.

[8] Head Diary, March 22, 1959, Head Collection.

The very busy middle period of his career, marked by a frenzy of tours, travel, performances, broadcasts, etc., drew to a close by the beginning of the 1960's, which is the beginning of his late period. He continued to perform, noting in his diary "I still sing. Nice recent concert with Evelyn Rothwell, a dear."[9] However, he gave fewer recitals as a singer/pianist, especially after his regular broadcasts on the BBC ended in 1964. Head also continued his Associated Board tours, but the wonderfully descriptive diary entries began to contain passages such as this one from 1964: "I long for home."[10] In December of that same year he wrote "I feel a little older! In need of rest and fresh air."[11] The increasing occurrence of references to feeling tired or old is another indication of the shift into the late period of his career. This shift is even more evident by the fact that in the early 1960's he began taking fewer students at the RAM and spent more time on his "exciting compositions." The variety of compositions which occupied his time also serves to delineate a new period. In addition to the solo songs (fourteen in the 1960's and twenty six in the 1970's), Michael Head devoted considerable time and energy to instrumental works (written for the performers with whom he collaborated), choral works (including two cantatas and thirteen choral songs), three chamber operas, and one school opera.

Despite the fact that Michael Head made more frequent references to being tired during his late period, his enthusiasm for composing seemed to be re-kindled, and there are many diary entries which attest to his excitement: " . . . my beloved compositions.

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[9] Head Diary, January 27-28, 1962, Head Collection.

[10] Head Diary October 4, 1964, Head Collection.

[11] Head Diary December 15, 1964, Head Collection.

1961-1962 have had several bursts. 'Daphne and Apollo' revived I hope, to be published soon after. A trio for Evelyn-working on this now. The flute piece for Gareth is revived (very pretty this). The opera for Nancy half completed (Key Money) . . . lastly, 2 lovely songs I think-for the Ledwidge festival. I have that old excitement here and adore to dwell on the lovely melody of 'Closed Eye'. 'My Sheep' too. I hope they are good . . . "[12]

On December 11, 1965, after a lengthy description of a very busy stretch filled with festivals, examining, performing, and teaching, he wrote: "All through this activity I have the inner excitement that I may be writing a beautiful song for Norma Procter & Alec Redshaw on Shakespeare's 'How sweet the moonlight shines upon this bank.' Oh, I hope so."[13]

The diary entry quoted above also serves to illustrate that in spite of the success he had enjoyed as a composer throughout his life, he was still plagued by self-doubt. Other entries from this late period contain passages which give further evidence of this intriguing aspect of his personality:

> Exciting! I start a new light opera for Nancy 'After the Wedding.' I hold my breath-Is the music any good? A third setting of Favorite Cat, the style of Arne. Is it any good?[14]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> My head is so full of tunes! Composing all day . . . I'm sketching out Nancy's second short light opera (After the Wedding). Is my music any good? George's song? Anthea's song. "Jenny is sweet" a haunting tune? Finally I couldn't resist jumping in to the Italian Record lesson-Is the music here just perfect! So simple. Gosh I'm excited! Of course it may be too commonplace![15]

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[12] Head Diary, January 27-28, 1962, Head Collection.

[13] Head Diary, December 11, 1965, Head Collection.

[14] Head Diary, December 15, 1967, Head Collection.

[15] Head Diary, December 18, 1967, Head Collection.

. . . . . .

I started to compose 3 settings of the Psalms . . . What wonderful words! Is my music any good with its tunes?[16]

The ambivalent response to his own work was also present in the entry which referred to the last solo songs he composed: "Latest excitement-I am composing three 'Venice songs' (Nancy's poems). I am really excited. I think they are lovely . . . "[17]

By 1971 Michael Head was teaching "two days and a bit to keep active" at the RAM with most of his free time spent composing. He loved all the time he had free to compose, but he also still enjoyed his teaching. He wrote: "Rather an effort to get to RAM each morning, as I suppose I am getting older-but I always feel better for the teaching I do there."[18] Not only did he still enjoy his teaching, but he also still enjoyed Festival work. In this same diary entry he wrote that he had four Festivals running, and added "Glorious music and talent."[19] However, on October1, 1971, he wrote in his diary that he was trying to get used to "less work, less pupils, less festivals." Even so, while he did take on less outside work, especially when he was in his seventies, and although he was forced to retire from the RAM in 1975, he never completely retired. He continued to compose and perform, and he continued his Festival and Associated Board work. And Michael Head, the seemingly indefatigable, continued his travels. Perhaps the tale which is most representative of his spirit is the one from his visit to the Grand Canyon. According to Nancy Bush, Michael had always wanted to see the Grand Canyon so in 1975, before one of his Board tours, he visited the Canyon. Not surprisingly for someone

[16] Head Diary, October 1, 1971, Head Collection.

[17] Head Diary, December 31, 1974, Head Collection.

[18] Head Diary, March 23, 1971, Head Collection.

[19] Ibid.

with his adventurous spirit, he took the mule ride to the bottom of the Canyon. His letter home told the tale: "Don't be alarmed, but I was very foolish to do the mule ride. Very tiring indeed. Just at the return I was thrown from my mule. Much bruised and shaken, I decided not to attempt the return—so guess—I was rescued by a helicopter! As it was an accident, it was considered to qualify for ambulance service. Such was the final dramatic ending to my visit, *but I would not have missed such an unexpected experience.*"[20] The late period of his career ended on August 24, 1976, when Michael Head died unexpectedly while on another examining tour for the Associated Board.

Early Period Songs

In an article written in 1965, George Baker posed the question "How, and in what way, will Michael Head be best and longest remembered?" and then answered his own question: "In my view it will be through his songs. He has composed many, many beautiful songs; songs for singers to sing, songs for audiences to enjoy, and songs for musicians to admire."[21] Another writer, Jonathan Frank, described Michael Head's music as: " . . . obviously sincere and which makes a definite impact on its audience, whether by stirring them, exciting them, making them laugh or bringing the tears to their eyes."[22] It is precisely their ability to engage the music maker and the audience that makes the songs of Michael Head so appealing a choice of repertoire by those who teach singers.

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[20] Michael Head, quoted in *Michael Head . . .* by Nancy Bush, 60.

[21] George Baker, "What Are They Like At Home?," *Music Teacher*, 44, April 1965, 169.

[22] Jonathan Frank, "A Singer-Composer," *Musical Opinion*, 84, February 1961, 287, 289.

As George Baker pointed out, Michael Head wrote songs which singers want to sing and there are songs from throughout his career which have remained in print because of the pleasure they bring to those who sing them and those who hear them. From his early period, his first cycle, *Over the Rim of the Moon*, has never been out of print and the first song from this cycle, *Ships of Arcady*, his first published song, has remained one of his most popular. It was frequently sung on Ballad concerts, and its popularity with the public caused it to be arranged for SSA choir. In fact, Michael Head chose *Ships of Arcady* to be included as one of the selections on both of the long-playing record albums of his solo songs. In addition, the solo version was included on the program of the *Michael Head Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute Evening of Song* and the choral version was included in the *Music Teachers' Association Composer of the Year Concert honoring Michael Head.* Because of its long-standing appeal and because Michael Head obviously considered it to be representative of his work, *Ships of Arcady* is one of the songs selected for pedagogical analysis. Two other songs from this early period will be analyzed and they are: (1) *A Funny Fellow,* selected because Boosey listed it as a children's song in their catalog and the two-part version was a set piece for choirs at various festivals; (2) *A Slumber Song of the Madonna,* selected because it was frequently performed by Phyllis Lett. Head mentioned it as one of the songs he often heard when he was adjudicating, and further commented that he was "quite touched by my own song."[23] An unqualified, positive statement from Michael Head regarding one of his own songs is unusual enough to warrant an examination of the song in question.

[23] Head Diary, January 14, 1922, Head Collection.

The Ships of Arcady

The song *The Ships of Arcady* was written in 1918, dedicated to Jean Adair and first performed by Astra Desmond at the Royal Albert Hall in 1919. It was first published singly in 1919 but in 1920 was included in the cycle of four songs published with the title *Over the Rim of the Moon,* set to texts by the Irish poet Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917) who was killed in Belgium in World War I.. The poems were all taken from Ledwidge's second book of verse titled *Songs of Peace*, which was published three months after his death at the front. Although Ledwidge's work had enjoyed some success before his death, the "sentimental appeal of a 'Soldier Poet Fallen in the War'"[24] certainly contributed to a greater number of sales for the book. It is no surprise that the young Michael Head, assigned to a munitions factory and to land work during the War, would have been attracted to the poetry of the romantic poet-soldier, Francis Ledwidge. The four poems chosen by Head to be set to music, *The Ships of Arcady, Song, To One Dead,* and *Nocturne*, were not grouped together as a set by the poet. Rather, Michael Head chose the poems and set them to music because the texts were attractive to him. By the time the songs were published as a cycle, two of them had been re-titled: the poem *Song* as the song *Beloved,* and the poem *To One Dead* as the song *Blackbird Singing.*

Technical Elements

Key/Range: D major: d'-g''

Tessitura: a'-f-sharp''

[24] Alice Curtayne, Francis Ledwidge, *A Life of the Poet* (London: Martin Brian & O'Keeffe, 1972), 190.

Other Considerations: Ledwidge favored shorter line lengths in his verse and Michael Head's musical setting presents the singer with frequent opportunities to catch a breath as needed, usually every two measures, with a measure or two extension at the end of each of the five stanzas of the poem (in the song setting, the first stanza of the poem is repeated after stanza four). The mostly syllabic setting of the words, with the marking of *sostenuto*, can prove challenging to the inexperienced singer, as can the requirement for the use of a *piano* dynamic level through most of the song.

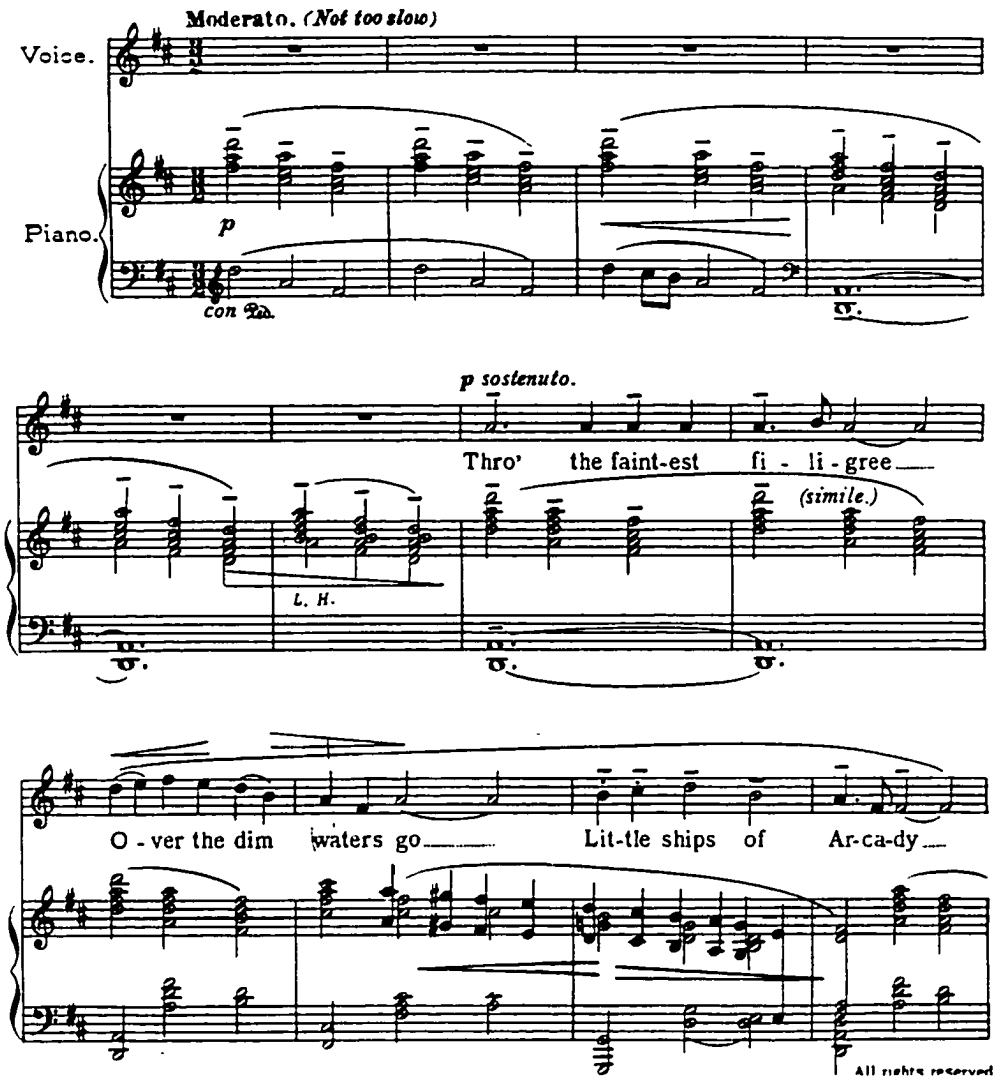
Performance Elements

Textual Considerations: The word "Arcady" in the title *The Ships of Arcady* suggests a dream-like, other-worldly mood by its association with Arcadia, which was an isolated mountainous region of ancient Greece. In Renaissance literature Arcadia was used to symbolize paradise. The expectation of mystery which is the result of the use of the word "Arcady" is more fully realized by the atmosphere of the poem. This is accomplished by the images evoked by the poet's fanciful text, especially the use of the words "filigree," "moon," and "dreaming." Ledwidge favored using short words and short lines, and in this particular poem, he rhymed the final syllables of the first and third lines and the second and fourth lines of each of the four stanzas. This fairly simple structure resulted in a poem in which the meaning can be comprehended fairly easily, an important consideration when viewed from a pedagogical perspective.

Musical Considerations: This song was written while Michael Head was still a young man but the emphasis he placed on the importance of atmosphere in music was already

apparent in the musical setting of Ledwidge's poem. For example, a sense of stillness and dreaminess is established by the opening measures of the keyboard part. In the first three measures, descending half-note chords are repeated, both hands in treble clef, with the outer voices an octave apart. The third measure has a slight variation of the left hand pattern by the addition of two passing tones between chords 1 and 2. The placement of the chords in the upper part of the keyboard gives the music the sort of shimmery quality conjured by the words "faintest filigree." Measures 4, 5, and 6 repeat the descending chord pattern at a different pitch level (the D-A-F from the first three measures changed to A-F-D), and with the addition of an open fifth D and A pedal in the bass. Again there is a slight variation in the third measure of the three measure pattern, in this case the addition of a B to each of the three chords, and no change in the harmony. The next three measures repeat the pattern of two identical measures of descending half-note chords with the third measure being a slight variation of the other two. The voice enters *piano* and *sostenuto* out of the fabric of the piano chords, and the first two measures of repeated 'A's (with the exception of one 'B'), contributes to the sense of stillness. With the words "Over the dim waters go," the vocal line rises and falls rather like the movement of the ship on the waves. (See Example 1.)

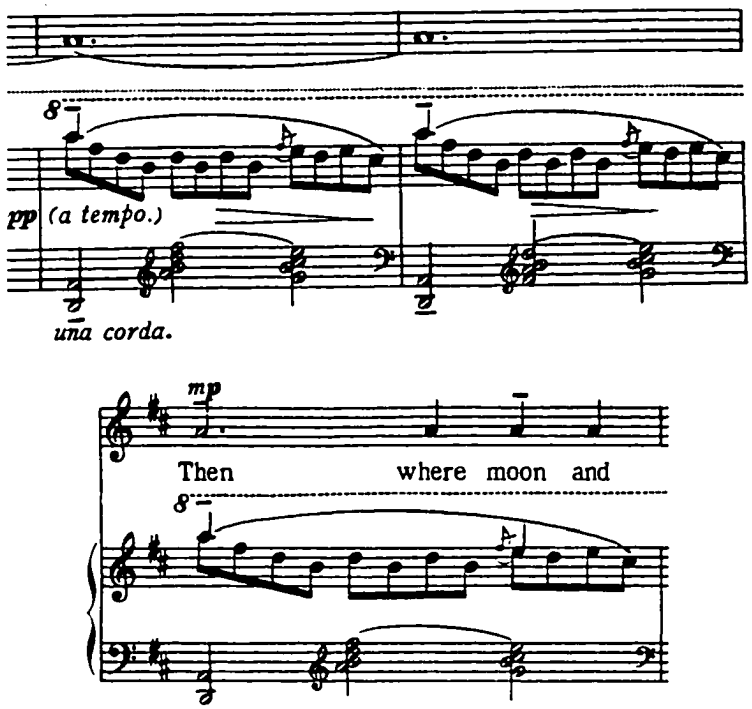
Example 1. *Ships of Arcady*, meas. 1 – 12.



Another example of Michael Head's attention to creating atmosphere occurs in verse three. The sparkling, shimmery quality of the light that results from the fall of moonlight on the water is beautifully evoked by the piano part which begins in measure 24, anticipating the line of text "Then where moon and waters meet," which begins in measure 26. The right hand has a tinkling, skittering eighth-note pattern, marked *8va*, over a left hand part which has an open fifth (D and A) in the bass on beat one followed by treble chords on beats two and three. This musical scene-painting, marked *pianissimo*

and *una corda,* continues throughout this verse of the song, which corresponds to stanza three of the poem. (See Example 2.)

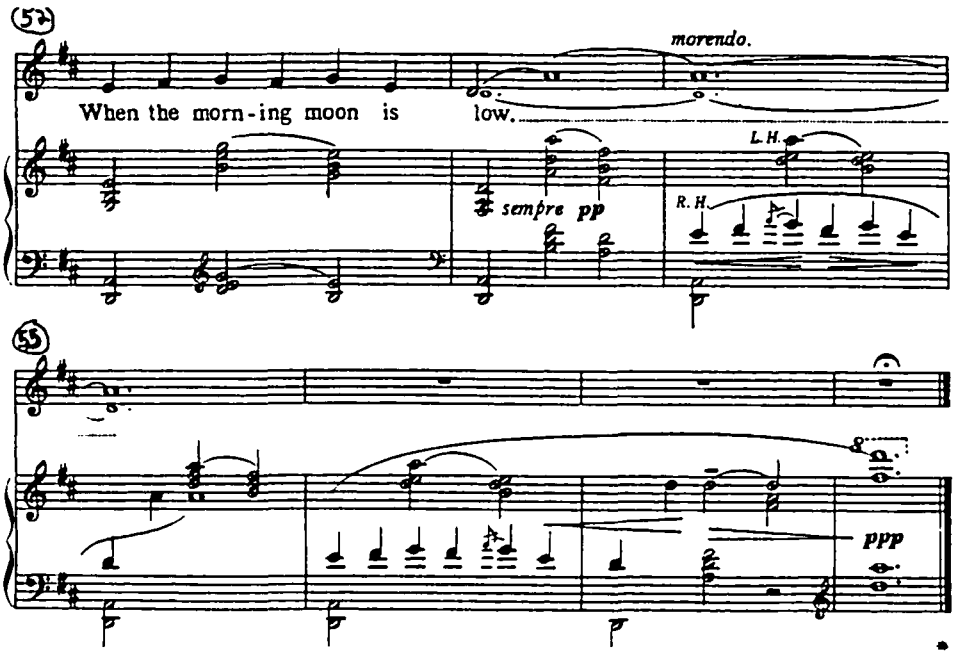
Example 2. *Ships of Arcady*, meas. 24-26.



The repetition of stanza one of the poem as verse five of the song is a musical necessity because of the way in which Michael Head has constructed the song. He established the melody with verse one (stanza one). In verse two, he retained the descending half-note chord pattern and began the melody in the same way as verse one, although at a *mezzo-forte* dynamic. However, the remainder of the vocal line for verse two differs significantly both rhythmically and melodically from verse one. For verse three, the vocal line is a repeat of the melody of verse one but the accompaniment is significantly different. The vocal melody line of verse four is almost completely different from any of the preceding verses. The piano part is comprised of descending half-note chords but with many altered pitches. The unease or unrest engendered by the music in

this verse corresponds to the unease experienced by the narrator of the poem at the realization of being "alone." This unrest demanded to be resolved so Head repeated verse one text and melody, at a softer dynamic, coupled with the gentle undulating eighth-note pattern in the right hand of the accompaniment from verse three. The piano completes the musical thought by twice repeating a fragment of the melody in the tenor line over the pedal D and A in the bass, all marked *morendo*. The overall effect is that of a half-remembered dream, or a return to the other-worldly quality with which the song began. (See Example 3.)

Example 3. *Ships of Arcady*, meas. 52-58.



A Funny Fellow

According to Banfield's catalogue of Michael Head's songs, *A Funny Fellow* was written in 1920 and published in 1925. It is the third song in a three song cycle titled *Three Songs of Fantasy* and is set to a text written by the American judge Frank Dempster Sherman (1860-1916). The first song in the cycle, *The Fairies' Dance*, also

used a text by Sherman while the text for the second song, *The Little Dreams*, was by Eileen M. Reynolds. In his diaries Head refers to the first song in the cycle, *The Fairies' Dance*, as already being in 'proof' from the publisher on June 11, 1920, but there is no mention made of the other two songs in the cycle, *The Little Dreams* and *A Funny Fellow*. There was a long-playing record made of twenty Michael Head songs sung by the baritone Robert Ivan Foster who was accompanied by the composer. The song *A Funny Fellow* was included in this recording and the notes from the album jacket state that the "music of this song was written in 1925."[25] A publicity brochure from Boosey lists the song with the date of 1920, while yet another publicity brochure lists the song singly as a children's song, with no date noted. Boosey published a two-part arrangement of the song in 1941, and again in 1951 as part of their "Modern Festival Series." The British Music Information Service lists *A Funny Fellow* in their catalog of Michael Head songs with the date 1920.

Technical Elements

Key/Range: G major: d'-g''; (also published in F major)

Tessitura: d'-d''

Other Considerations: The vocal line of this song is grouped roughly into 4-measure phrases, with a tempo marking of the quarter note =160, which doesn't present serious difficulty with breath management, with one exception. In measures 34-38 the melody line contains several sustained high notes and the usual 4-measure phrase is extended to 5

[25] E. Onslo, Notes on the album jacket, *Michael Head: 20 Songs*, Robert Ivan Foster, baritone, Michael Head, pianist, Onslo Record NO. ART-52-1 (Mono).

measures, with the result that it may be a challenge for the singer to keep sufficient breath flow to the end of the phrase. This phrase is followed by a 4-measure phrase which also is written with sustained high notes. These pitches are mostly repeated d'', but the *crescendo* marking from *mezzo-forte* to *forte* encourages the singer to use a steady breath flow. The vocal line of this song is marked with slurs where there are groups of eighth notes which move stepwise. The notes which move by skip may be sung in a detached manner, thus enabling even an inexperienced singer to have reasonable success in shaping the line. Because of the fast tempo marking, a fair amount of agility would be required to execute the passages with eighth note groupings. The fast tempo could also make it more difficult for the singer to clearly articulate the text. Octave skips occur four times, three of them from g''-g', and one from d''-d'. In this key, only the d''-d' could be a potential problem in registration shift but this could be minimized by the use of a light adjustment throughout the song, which would be preferable in any case due to the subject matter and rapid pace. The dynamics in this song are problematic in two places: in measure 31 the singer is directed to sustain g'' *pianissimo* with a fermata; and in measure 46, g'' *pianissimo* is again written, and should be sustained over two measures plus one additional beat. Although the problem is somewhat alleviated by the fast tempo, these two places are potential pitfalls for an inexperienced singer. It is worth noting that the two-part version of this song was published in the lower key, which would make it more accessible for young singers because the demands of the high *pianissimo* passages would be minimized.

Performance Elements

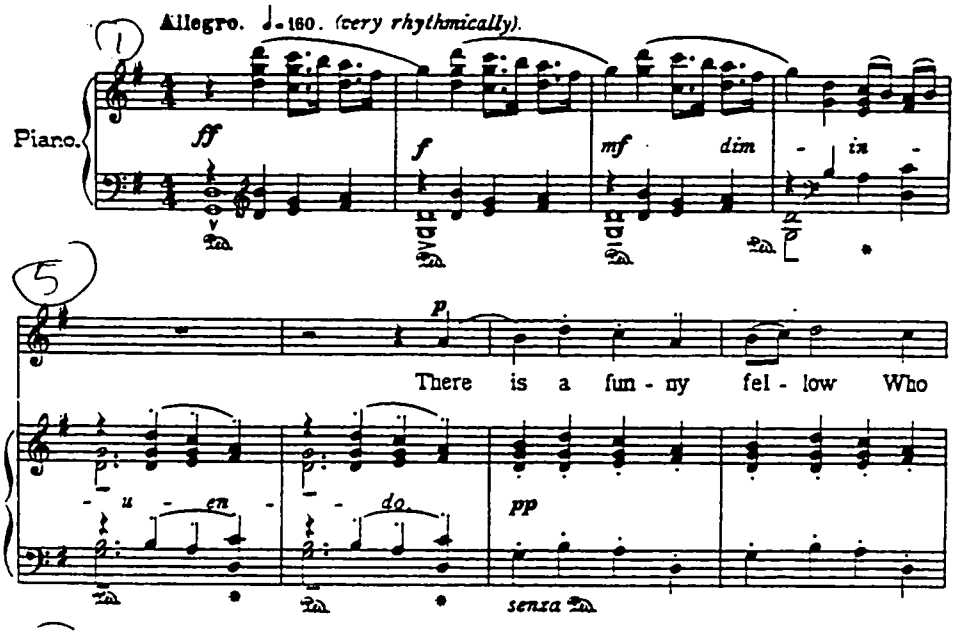
Textual Considerations: The poem *A Funny Fellow* is divided into two stanzas of 8 lines each, with the number of syllables in each line alternating from 7 to 6, 7 to 6, etc. Sherman uses end-rhyme with stanza 1 in the pattern ababcdcd and stanza 2 in the pattern efeffgfg. The text itself is a silly, light-hearted romp, which makes it very appealing for young singers. The song is also effective in providing a lighter moment as contrast to more serious songs in a recital for a more advanced singer.

Musical Considerations: Each line of text is extended over 2 measures of music with the first word of each line written as a pick-up to the next measure. Two lines of the text are then combined to form each musical phrase. In verse 1, the musical phrases are 4 measures long, but in verse 2, only the first two phrases are 4 measures long, and the last two musical phrases are extended. Using letters to represent the melody of each half-phrase, the pattern for verse 1 would be ABAC/DEFC and the pattern for verse 2 would be ABGC/HIHC. Looking at the musical scheme, it is clear that musical unity is achieved in part by beginning each verse with the same melodic phrase, AB, and ending each half of each verse with the melodic fragment represented by the letter 'C.' The final statement of 'C' is lengthened by doubling the note values, which contributes to the sense of closure signaling the end of the song.

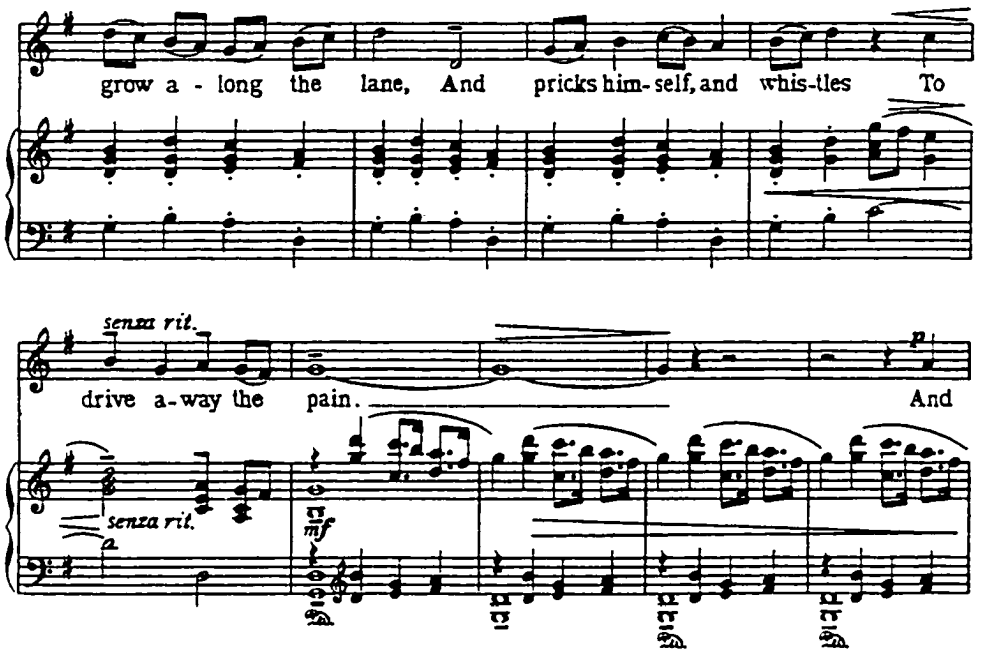
The accompaniment seems to rush along at a breakneck pace over a ground bass which must remain steady and very rhythmic. When the voice enters, the texture of the chords thins, and the score is marked *pianissimo*. Throughout the first verse the chords are to be played staccato which highlights the more legato vocal line. The repetitiveness

of the accompaniment also focuses the listener's attention on the vocal line. (See Example 4.) In a sense, the seeming monotony of the piano part lulls the listener into a state of aural complacency-that is, the listener knows what to expect, which makes it all the more surprising when measures 20 and 21 deviate from the pattern by the introduction of a fragment of melody in the piano part, inserted as a subtle reference to the "whistle" mentioned in the text. (See Example 5.)

Example 4. *A Funny Fellow*, meas. 1–8.

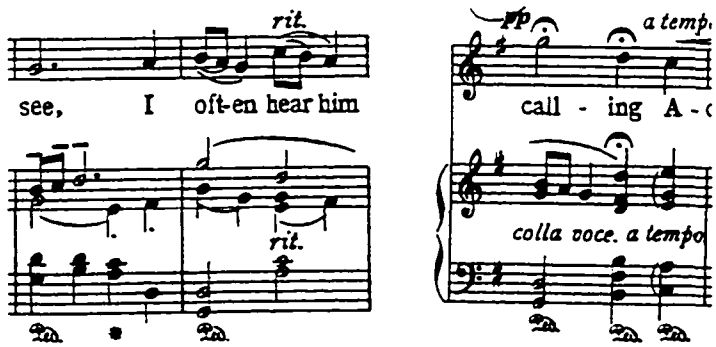


Example 5. *A Funny Fellow*, meas. 17–25.



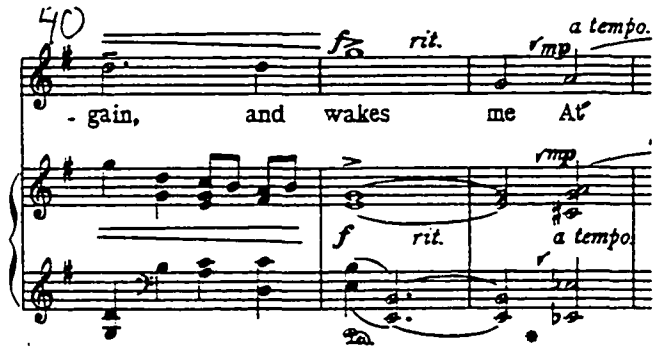
The score is marked *senza rit.* and the music rushes on, so the listener is left feeling just a bit unsure about what was heard, but the interruption is repeated at measures 29-31, in this instance with a true *rit.* and a fermata-insuring that all stop to hear the "funny fellow" calling. (See Example 6.)

Example 6. *A Funny Fellow*, meas. 29-31.



The respite is short-lived, and the accompaniment marches on inexorably until measure 40 when the melodic fragment reappears in the accompaniment just before the word "wakes" in the text, at which point it actually stops, sustaining the chord over 6 beats. (See Example 7.)

Example 7. *A Funny Fellow*, meas. 40–42.



The editor has suggested a *rit.* at this point but that is a redundancy because the combined effect of the sustained chord in the keyboard and the whole note in the vocal line accomplishes the cessation of forward motion without the need for a *rit.* The song concludes with the 'C' melody in the vocal line, augmented, and a return to the accompaniment of the ground bass pattern, staccato, *piano*, rising over three octaves. The combined effect of this simple song, with its charming text, rollicking

accompaniment, and colorful word-painting is captivating, leaving performers and listeners alike smiling and bemused.

A Slumber Song of the Madonna

In his diary on April 21, 1920, Michael Head noted "I've written a little lullaby. I don't think very much of it. Tho' perhaps it will improve with age."[26] In the entry for May 10, 1920, he recounted a visit to the singer Phyllis Lett:

> Another little thrill of success! I went in rather an uncertain state. Talked Phyllis Lett Hampstead—she had sounded so severe on the telephone-to play her "Autumn's Breath." But after I'd nervously sang it to her she broke the ice by asking for it again just as I had decided she didn't care for it and she sang it right through. Then she made me play several more, including "A Madonna's Slumber Song" which I had barely finished. That did it really. "No one else must sing that except herself! Etc. etc. a perfectly beautiful song-etc." Such praise I got. Anyhow I am to send her a copy at once and she is also going to sing "Autumn's Breath" . . . What joy!![27]

While the April entry didn't name the lullaby as *Madonna's Slumber Song*, this later entry makes it seem likely that this is the song to which he referred. Apparently it did "improve with age." On June 23, 1920, he played "Slumber Song" for Mr. Boosey, and Boosey liked it "at once."[28] On January 21, 1921, Head noted that he'd been to see Mr. Boosey, who was trying to come to terms with Alfred Noyes for the right to print the text for the *Slumber Song of the Madonna.* The British Music Information Center lists *A Slumber Song of the Madonna* with a date of 1921, and Stephen Banfield gave it a composition date of 1921 and a publication date of 1921. With the evidence of the diary

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[26] Head Diary, April 21, 1920, Head Collection.

[27] Head Diary, May 10, 1920, Head Collection.

[28] Head Diary, June 23, 1920, Head Collection.

entry from May of 1920, it is clear that Head had in fact composed the song in 1920. With a subsequent publication in 1921, Mr. Boosey was apparently successful in his negotiations with Noyes. A year later the song is mentioned again in a another diary entry which is unusual for its positive tone: "Quite a satisfactory day. Went up for the 1st ballad concert, Albert Hall, this year. Phyllis Lett sang most beautifully 'Slumber Song of the Madonna.' I really felt quite touched with my own song."[29] *A Slumber Song of the Madonna* is included in *Christmas Song Album*, volume 2, published by Boosey & Hawkes. There was also an arrangement for women's voices, SSAA, by Max and Beatrice Krones, which was published by Boosey in 1941.

Technical Elements

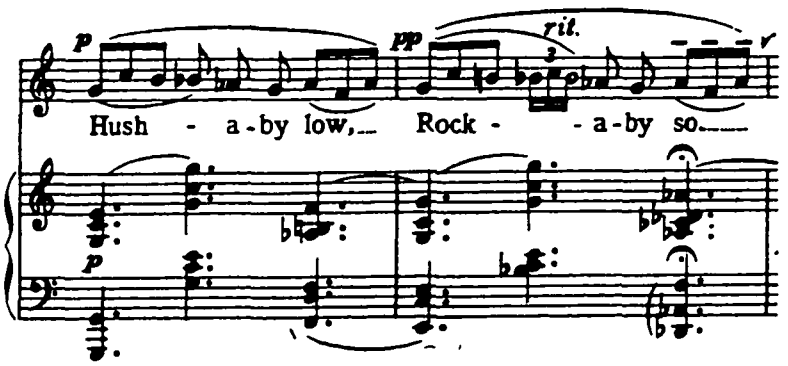
Key/Range: C major: c'-e''; (Also published in B-flat-major)

Tessitura: c'-c''

Other Considerations: This "touching" lullaby presents no significant problems for the singer in terms of breath management or vocal registers. However, it does require a capable handling of *piano* and *pianissimo* singing, although the composer doesn't write the vocal line exceptionally high which reduces the difficulty of the soft passages. The technical challenges presented in this song lie with the necessity for a very fluid, legato line and accuracy in the handling of altered pitches within the fluid line, especially in the melismatic passages. (See Example 8.)

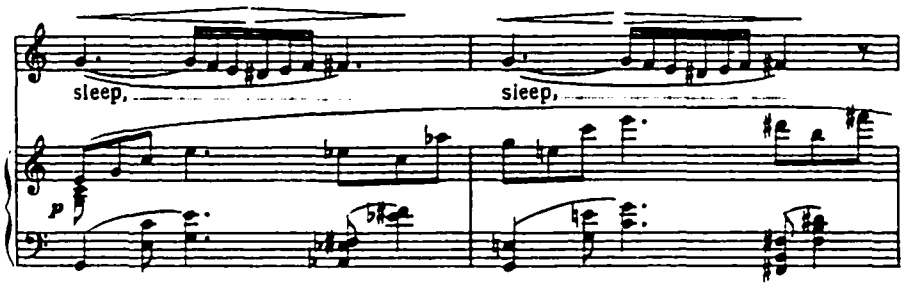
[29] Head Diary, January 14, 1922, Head Collection.

Example 8. *A Slumber Song of the Madonna*, meas. 16–17.



There are two passages which require some agility in order to smoothly and cleanly negotiate ornaments in the vocal line: first in measure 17 with the triplet on beat 4, (the meter is 9/8) (See Example 7.), and later in measures 32 and 33 with the sixteenth-note pattern written for beats 4, 5, and 6. (See Example 9.)

Example 9. *A Slumber Song of the Madonna*, meas. 32-33.



Performance Elements

Textual Considerations: The text of this song is by Alfred Noyes (1880-1958) the English poet best known for his narrative verse and ballads, especially *The Highwayman* and *The Barrel-Organ*. He was one of the few writers who was popular enough with the public to earn a living from his poetry. This particular poem is neither a ballad nor a narrative, but is instead a verse of gentleness and poignancy. The poem is written in the first person—the narrator, the Madonna, first affirms her love for her baby: "I love thee."

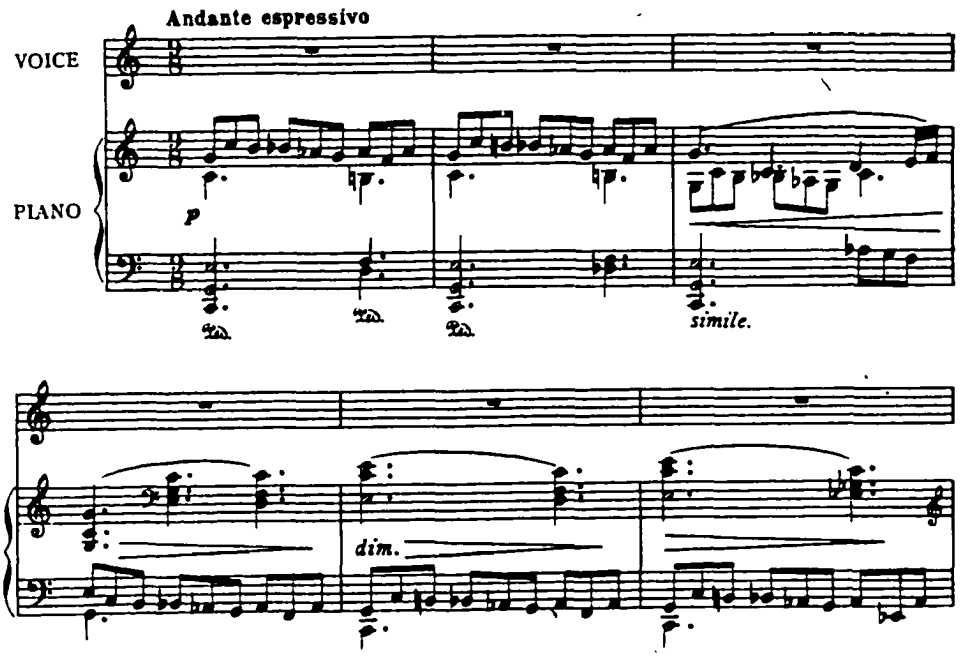
Later she acknowledges His kingship-but she is His mother and her gift is her love, her kiss. She seems to have a sense of dread about the future as she weeps while singing the infant to sleep. For the singer, the most important task is to be conscious of reciting the poem, to highlight the text, while singing the song. Musically the song can be divided into two verses with a coda which is the equivalent of two stanzas of the poem.

Musical Considerations: In this setting by Michael Head, the performer is presented with a masterful setting in which the combination of the music and the text is a more profound artistic statement than either of the parts could be separately. While that should be true with any or all songs, there are sometimes those particularly apt unions of music and words which, when sung, make it inconceivable to imagine the one without the other. *The Slumber Song of the Madonna* is such a song. It is often impossible to pinpoint exactly how certain elements combine to make the whole work, but a few of Michael Head's most effective compositional devices can be identified and discussed.

The opening six-measure piano introduction (see Example 10) demonstrates Michael Head's masterful skill in creating atmosphere. In the first measure he introduces the germ motive from which the rest of the song develops. The meter is 9/8 and the melody, in eighths, begins on g', skips up a fourth to c'' and then descends chromatically back to g', turns and rocks from a-flat' to f' and back to a-flat'. The descending chromatic line is reminiscent of a sigh or moan and the singer must maintain a fluidity in the line even while insuring accuracy in singing the chromatic intervals. The rocking figure of the germ motive represents the swaying movement of rocking a baby. This melody pattern is repeated at the same pitch level in the next measure before it is passed

to the alto line for a measure (with a slight alteration) and then to the tenor line for three measures. (See Example 10.)

Example 10. *A Slumber Song of the Madonna*, meas. 1-6.



Not only does Head suggest a rocking motion in the right hand, but he subtly reinforces the rocking by the chord movement in the left hand. The first six eighths are accompanied by dotted half-note C-major chord. For the last three beats of the measure the chord is changed to a d-diminished seventh which rocks back to the C-major chord at the beginning of the next measure. The second measure also has a rocking motion in the chord movement but from C major to a surprising D-flat major seven. This subtle shift foreshadows the unexpected shift in the mood of the song as the Madonna's feelings are wrenched from the warmth of the love she feels for her Child to the pain she doesn't understand when she begins to weep. In measures 3, 4, and 5, the pattern reverts to that of the original C major to the d-diminished-seventh. Measure 6 of the piano introduction

has an unexpected chord movement from C major to A-flat major to prepare for the entrance of the voice in measure 7. This six-measure introduction with the repetitive, almost hypnotic rocking motive establishes a mood of restful quiet, which is conducive to the "slumber" suggested by the title, but it is mixed with an undercurrent of anticipation.

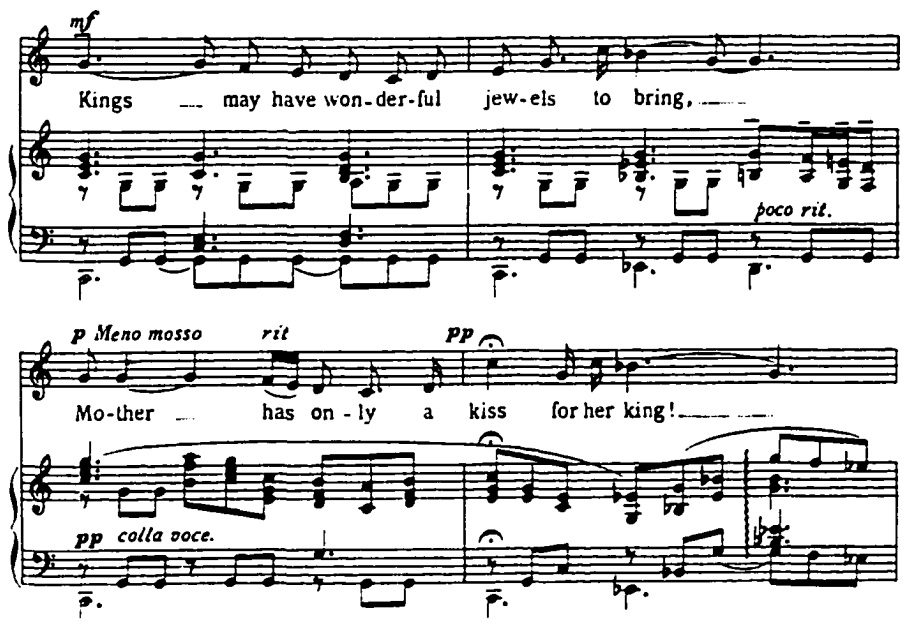
When the voice enters with a variant of this melodic pattern, the soprano line of the accompaniment returns to the original germ motive for three measures with a slight alteration in measure 8. The vocal line takes over the motive in measures 16 and 17 with the text "Hushaby low, Rockaby so" set melismatically, a rare occurrence in Michael Head's songs. This is followed by a 4 measure piano interlude to introduce verse 2. In this interlude a variation of the germ motive is passed among the voices of the accompaniment, to be taken over by the vocal line in verse 2. In measures 28-30 the piano doubles the vocal line and both lines are moved to a higher pitch level to underscore the anguish of the weeping Mother. The Coda returns the music to the softer, gentler statement of the germ motive, as if the Mother regains her composure in order to not disturb the almost sleeping baby. The Coda is comprised of one statement of the variant form of the germ motive followed by two measures in which the variant motive is varied as a melismatic setting of the word "sleep." (See Example 8.)

The final statement of the word "sleep" is written in dotted half notes and dotted eighth notes, from g'-a'-c'', fading away from *piano* to *pianissimo* to *pianississimo*, becoming the merest whisper of sound. The repetition and lengthening of the word "sleep" has the effect of slowing down the music and easing it to a stop in the same way that a lullaby is ended once the baby is finally asleep. The vocal line of the Coda is accompanied by a rising line of eighth-note arpeggios in the keyboard which then

cascade down to the bass in a flurry of delicate sixteenths, which sound like angels' wings or harp strings.

One other remarkable section needs to be mentioned and that is measures 22-25. The text in these four measures refers to the visit of the Three Kings to the infant King. In the accompaniment Head inserted a pedal 'G' in measures 22-24, not only as a part of the sounding chord, but also played on beats 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9, which strikes the ear as the ponderous steps taken by laden dromedaries. The other unusual feature in this section is the chord movement from C-major to G-major seven to E-flat major, a combination that sounds particularly rich in the prevailing tonality. (See Example 11.)

Example 11. *A Slumber Song of the Madonna*, meas. 22–25.



Taken altogether, this is a remarkable song, a song in which the elements of an appealing text, a simple, poignant melody and a captivating accompaniment combine to enchant audience and performers alike.

Middle Period Songs

Throughout the approximately thirty years of his middle period (the 30's, 40's, and 50's), when his career was a frenzy of Festivals, Associated Board tours, piano teaching at the RAM, and innumerable recitals and lectures, Michael Head wrote fewer songs per decade than was the case either before or after this period. On the other hand, these decades were noteworthy for the amount of instructional activity in which he was engaged. Although his teaching, adjudicating, and performing left him with limited time for composition, many of Head's most popular songs and many of his most unusual songs were written during this phase of his career. As happened with a number of the songs from his first period, Head began to hear some of his songs from this middle period when he was adjudicating at Festivals. Among these was *Ludlow Town*, which was written specifically for the Blackpool Musical Festival and published in 1930. Because of its obvious connection to Michael Head's Festival work, this is the first of the middle period songs selected for analysis. It will be followed by an analysis of the song *The Little Road to Bethlehem*, written and published in 1946, and which, according to Nancy Bush, "had, in the first three months after its publication . . . proved something of a best-seller, rather to the surprise of the composer."[30] The success of this song continued unabated with later publications of arrangements for SA, SSA, SAB, SATB, and TTBB voices. In addition to a version for voice and orchestra, Boosey's catalog has also listed it as a "Children's Song." *The Little Road to Bethlehem* has been included in a number of books of Christmas carols, both for soloists and choirs. Furthermore, it has it been a selection on several choral recordings, and was one of the fourteen songs Head chose to

[30] Bush, *Michael Head*, 39.

include in the recording he made of his own songs. The fact that Boosey undertook the publication of several arrangements of this song is evidence that it caught the fancy of the singing public, which in turn makes it an obvious choice for closer examination.

Although Michael Head is most often associated with his more lyrical offerings like *Sweet Chance That Led My Steps Abroad* and *A Green Cornfield,* or his robust songs like *Money, O!* and *When I Think Upon the Maidens,* he also wrote songs in which the pairing of text and music draws the performers and the listeners into a sonic landscape altogether outside his usual milieu. *The Viper,* second in the cycle titled *Six Poems by Ruth Pitter,* is one of these extraordinary songs, according to both Alan Bush and Jonathan Frank in their commentaries on Michael Head's songs. Because a study of *The Viper* would provide the singer with unique challenges (and thereby opportunities for growth) and because it would be such an unusual addition to the repertoire, it is the third middle period song selected for analysis in the present study.

Ludlow Town

Ludlow Town was sub-titled *The First of May*, the actual title of the poem by A(lfred) E(dward) Housman (1859-1936) which was used by Michael Head as the text for his song. The poem was numbered XXXIV in the volume of poetry titled *Last Poems,* which was first published in 1922. While this is the only one of Housman's poems to be set by Michael Head, the poet's verse, especially the collection known as *A Shropshire Lad,* was well-represented by a number of other composers. Housman spent the greater part of his career as a Classics scholar, specifically a Latinist, and was renowned in his day. He taught first at University College, London and then, from 1911, at Cambridge, where he

died in 1936. Housman actually wrote comparatively little verse throughout his life, only two collections having been published before his death in 1936. The first was *A Shropshire Lad*, published in 1896, and the second, was *Last Poems*. The remainder of his poetry was published posthumously. Housman restricted himself to verse cast in simple forms and simplicity of expression. He was attracted to the beauty of nature but the beauty was tinged by the realization of the brevity of life. Death, especially the untimely death of the young, was a recurrent theme. He admired the works of Shakespeare and Blake and admitted that he was influenced by the verse of Heinrich Heine. Housman lectured on poetry and stated that the function of poetry is "to transfuse emotion—not to transmit thought but to set up in the reader's sense a vibration corresponding to what was felt by the writer . . . "[31] He also stated that poetry should be "more physical than intellectual."[32] The love of the countryside and the appeal to the physical, to feeling, which characterizes Housman's poetry, received a ready response in Michael Head.

Technical Elements

Key/Range: E-Major: b-e', (also published in G-Major)

Tessitura: e'-c-sharp''

Other Considerations: This song presents no significant challenges for breath management—there are logical places to breathe approximately every two measures, an arrangement which corresponds to each couplet of the poem. Although the range of this

[31] Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair., eds., *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), 96.

[32] Ibid., 97.

song is an octave and a fourth, most of it lies well within the middle voice, without a preponderance of wide, awkward skips. As is the case with nearly all of Michael Head's songs, the text setting is syllabic with the rhythm written to correspond closely to the natural accentuation of the words. This aspect of the song can make it somewhat difficult for the inattentive singer to keep a legato line. However, Head's fastidious care to be rhythmically accurate in his text-setting should alleviate the potential legato problem. The *Allegretto, ma non troppo* marking at the top of the score, coupled with the mostly eighth-note movement of the vocal line, eliminates any problems with agility/flexibility, and the mostly step-wise melodic movement in the vocal line eases the transitions between registers. The dynamics, too, remain within moderate limits, from the *mezzo-piano* at the opening to *forte.* There is one instance of *pianissimo* but it occurs at the beginning of a phrase on the pitch c-sharp'', thus reducing the potential difficulty in singing the line as marked.

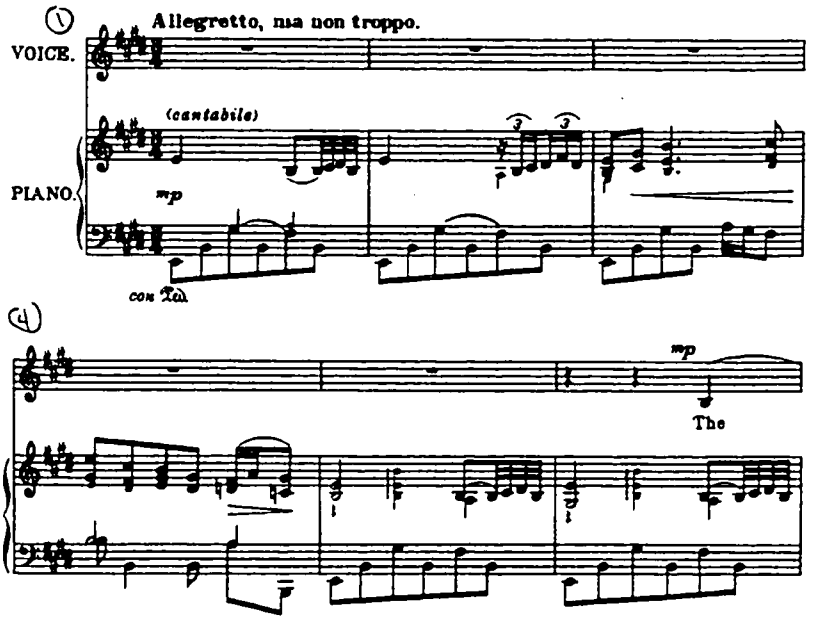
Performance Elements

Textual Considerations: Housman's poem *The First of May* is comprised of four stanzas of eight lines each. In each quatrain the ending syllables of the first and third and second and fourth lines rhyme. In each stanza, the second quatrain has lines of 7, 6, 5, and 6 syllables. Because no line has more than seven syllables, the writing is very concise, lending itself to a musical setting like Head's in which each two lines of verse is contained in one phrase of the melody. Each musical phrase is begun on a pick-up in order to have the musical stress fall on the first stressed syllable of the text. Head deviates from this pattern in only four places which correspond to the one line in each of

the four stanzas where the initial word is stressed: in measure 9, the word "Flowered"; in measure 24, the word "Dressed"; in measure 37, the word "Theirs"; and in measure, 48 the word "May."

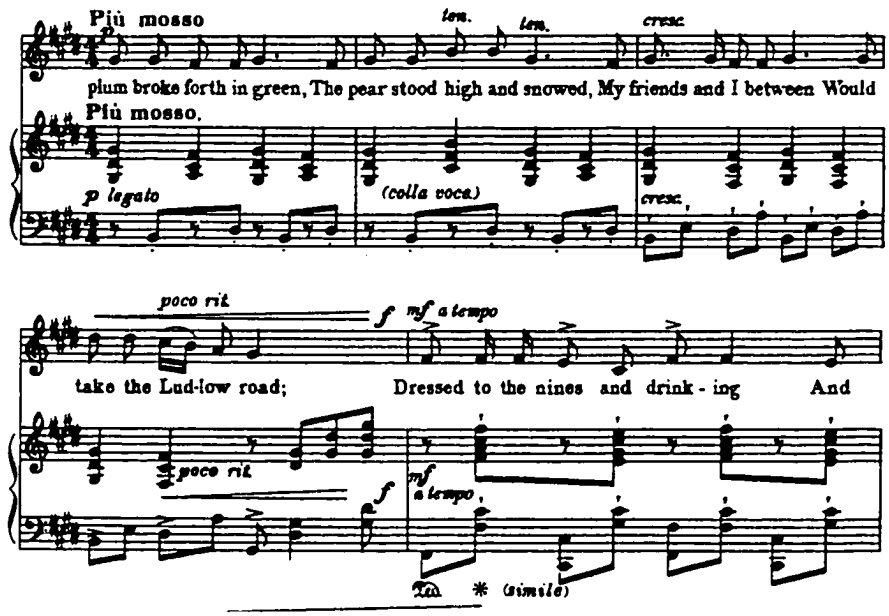
Musical Considerations: In Michael Head's musical setting of the poem, a piano introduction and three piano interludes separate each of the stanzas of the poem. While this divides the song into the equivalent of four verses, the verses are not identical, although there are similarities among verses 1, 3, and 4. The opening piano passage bears the editor's marking of *cantabile* and is very much in the character of an easy, graceful song. However, the unruffled calm is disturbed by the note of expectancy sounded in measure 4 on beat 3 with the altered pitches of d-natural and c-natural which slide the prevailing tonality from the expected dominant seventh (B-major seven) to the diminished seventh (d-sharp-diminished-seventh) to the tonic (E-major) in the next measure. Instead the dominant seventh moves to a *D-major* chord, unexpected in this key (E-major), although a flatted seven would not be unexpected in modal writing. The clash of the C-natural against the B-natural in the second half of beat 3 adds to the sense of unease engendered by the altered chord preceding it. (See Example 12.)

Example 12. *Ludlow Town,* meas. 1-6.



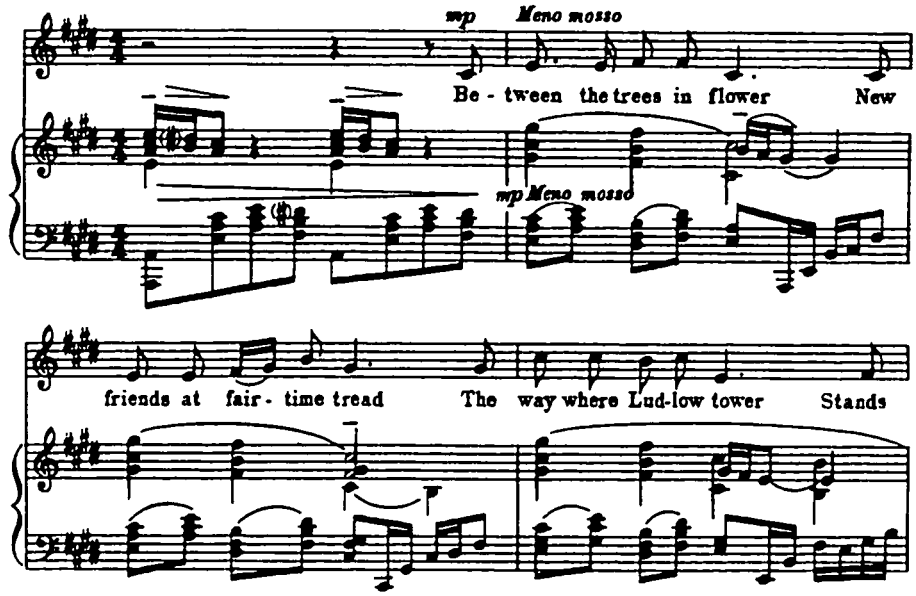
This particular harmonic device is repeated between verses 1 and 2 in measure 18, and leads to the markedly different setting of verses 2 and 3. The relatively tranquil music in verse 1 depicts the narrator in a mood of fond remembrance of the past, but the unsettled music of the next verse seems to represent the narrator actually re-living the past with its youth and vigor. The staccato, broken chords, *piu mosso* tempo marking, louder dynamic, and more active harmonic writing all contribute to the mood of reckless youth. (See Example 13.)

Example 13. *Ludlow Town,* meas. 20-24



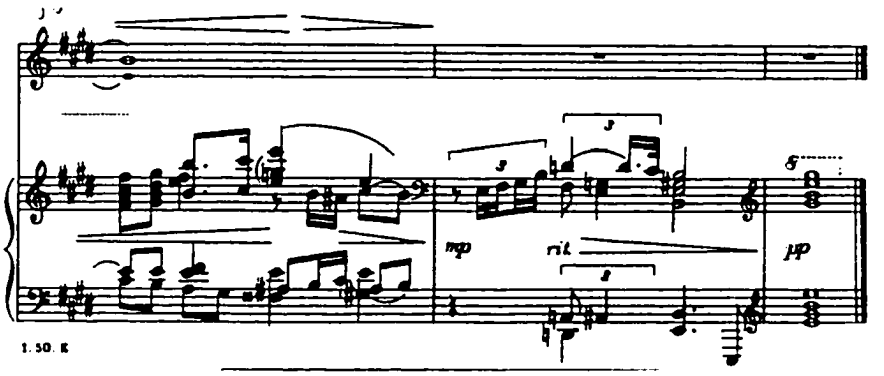
The accompaniment for stanza 3 is a remarkable example of mood painting. The text describes the continuum of life—"new friends" go to the fair over the ground where other young men from the past lie buried. There is an implication that nothing really changes, that life is suspended for the narrator, and the music is suspended in this verse. For the right hand piano part Michael Head wrote a recurring series of octaves from g-sharp'' to f-sharp'' to c-sharp''. This sequence is repeated for 4 measures and then just the g-sharp'' to f-sharp'' is repeated for 6 beats. The tempo marking is *meno mosso* and the dynamic, which begins *mezzo-piano,* sinks to a *pianissimo* with yet another *meno mosso* marked in the score. (See Example 14.)

Example 14. *Ludlow Town,* meas. 30-33



The narrator stands outside the scene, both watching it and re-living it, caught in the moment as the music is caught in the recurring pattern of pitches. This verse ends with the vocal line sustained (*crescendo*) on c-sharp'', leaving the listener with a curious feeling of anticipation waiting for the highly active chords of the accompaniment to resolve—which they finally do on beat 1 of measure 41 with the return in the opening melody in the tonic of E-major, *Tempo 1, mezzo-forte.* The song ends with the piano playing a faint, slightly altered echo of the last melodic fragment, enhanced with a bit of the piquant flavor of the expectant opening due to the altered pitches. (See Example 15.)

Example 15. *Ludlow Town*, meas. 50-52.



Two additional points need to be made regarding pedagogical aspects of this song. The first concerns the rhythm and meter. Although the meter at the beginning is 3/4, in measure 8 it is changed to 4/4 to accommodate the flow of the text. In measure 10 the meter reverts to the original 3/4, then back to 4/4 in measure 11. This pattern of changing meters due to the accents inherent in the language occurs seventeen times. However, when the singer is careful to use language stresses accurately, the listener is minimally aware, if at all, of the metric shifts. In addition to the metric shifts, there are a few rhythm patterns which may cause some difficulty for an inexperienced singer. The first is the use of thirty-second notes, which are uncommon enough in this song to give pause. Another is the use of eighth-note triplets against an accompaniment of even eighth notes. These minor challenges can be easily overcome with practice. The second point to note is that for the most part the vocal melody is present in the accompaniment. Consequently, even in verses two and three, when the piano part is substantially varied from the first and fourth verses, the singer should experience minimal difficulty in maintaining the integrity of the vocal line.

A final thought about the song *Ludlow Town* originates with Louis Untermeyer in writing about the poet Housman: "Housman's verse is condensed to the uttermost, stripped of every superfluous ornament, pared and precise. Not the least of his triumph is the mingling of pungent humour and poignance. Possibly the outstanding virtue is the seemingly artless but extraordinarily skillful simplicity of tone. This is song sharpened, acid-flavored, yet always song . . . They haunt the mind, and many of them are as nearly perfect as lyrics can hope to be."[33] These are statements which would be as appropriate if used to describe the music of Michael Head. Certainly in his setting of *Ludlow Town* he contrived to capture the beauty of the pastoral scene, the bittersweet sense of fleeting youth and did so with a lyric line and apt accompaniment which combine to create a musical moment both simple and profound.

The Little Road to Bethlehem

This song was set to a text by Margaret Rose and dedicated to Olive Groves. It has become something of a favorite with English choirs at Christmastime and has been arranged for various combinations of voices. Although it is perhaps not Michael Head's best work, it has charm and grace and has engaged the interest of countless amateur and student singers over the years, making it a worthy addition to the repertoire.

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[33] Louis Untermeyer, editor, *Modern British Poetry: Mid-Century Edition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), 92, 93.

Technical Elements

Key/Range: F-Major: c'-f''; (also published in A-flat-major)

Tessitura: f'-d''

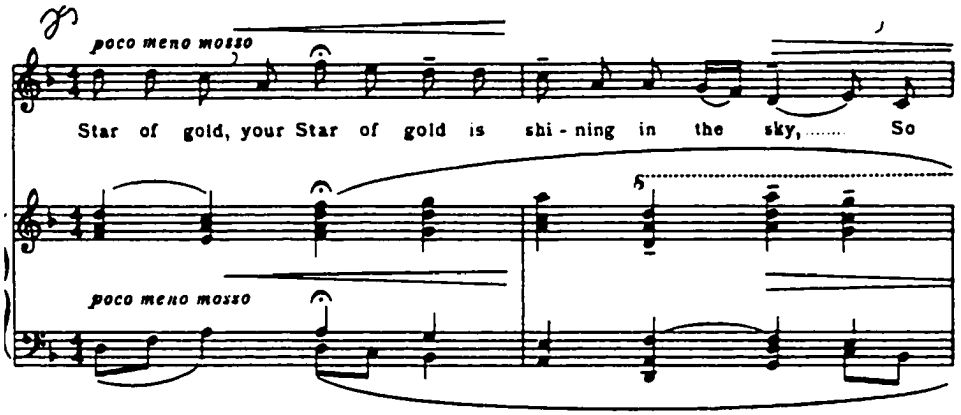
Other Considerations: Predictably for a song which had such wide appeal for amateur singers, *The Little Road to Bethlehem* poses few technical difficulties. While the musical phrases are generally four measures long, the text conveniently breaks into two-measure fragments, enabling the singer to easily take ample breath on a regular basis. The mostly syllabic setting needs care in singing a sufficiently legato line but the smoothly flowing accompaniment provides support to the singer in attaining a fluid line. The greatest challenge, and even this one is minor, lies in maintaining the soft dynamic throughout the song while keeping a feeling of flow or forward motion. The opening phrase is marked *piano* which eventually leads to a passage marked *poco cresc.* before subsiding back to *piano.* By the end of the song the dynamic marked is *pianissimo* and the tempo *rit. e dim.*, requiring a fair amount of control on the part of the singer. Melodic movement is mostly stepwise with a few skips of a fourth or fifth. If the singer is careful to maintain the light adjustment appropriate for singing a soft lullaby, shifts between registers should not be a problem.

Performance Elements

Textual Considerations: The poem consists of three stanzas of four lines each, with ten syllables per line, and with rhyming ending syllables for each couplet. In setting the poem to music Michael Head has made two alterations in the text. The first occurs in

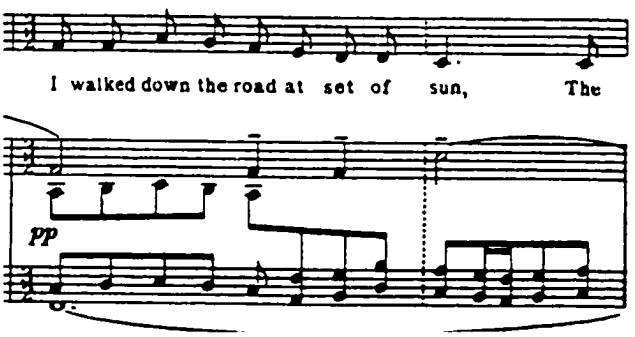
measure 25 with a repetition of the words "your Star of gold," sung at a higher pitch level than its first appearance, with a fermata over the word Star. (See Example 16.)

Example 16. *The Little Road to Bethlehem,* meas. 25-26



Because he was so careful in his text-setting, it can be inferred that his intention in lengthening the poetic line was to highlight the importance of the image conveyed by the words. The second alteration to the text is the repetition of the entire first verse at the end of the song. For this last verse he kept the melody exactly as it was in the first verse, but at a softer dynamic level and with a *rit.* However, there is a slight variation in the accompaniment in the final verse with the addition of new notes in the soprano line in measures 30 and 31. (See Example 17.)

Example 17. *The Little Road to Bethlehem,* meas. 30-31.



These pitches do not change the music substantially but merely contribute a subtle bit of magic to the atmosphere by recalling the sound of sheep bells tinkling far in the distance. This melodic fragment made its first appearance in measure 10, between verses 1 and 2, and recurs between each of the subsequent verses. Its use in the repetition of verse 1 provides a thread to tie the last verse with the rest of the song, and it provides a stronger signal of impending closure. This subtle detail contributes much to the overall artistic impression of the song without in any way distracting the singer.

Musical Considerations: In *The Little Road to Bethlehem* Michael Head again manipulates the meter to accommodate the natural accents and flow of the words. It begins in 4/4 but already by measure 4 it changes to 2/4, which lasts only a measure before it is changed to 3/2. The meter changes 13 times in the course of the song. His meticulous text-setting is also apparent by his placement of the initial syllable of each line on an upbeat in order to insure that the stressed syllable falls on the appropriate musical stress. The melody for verse 2 is the same as that for verse 1 so the accompaniment is varied slightly to enhance the musical interest. In verse 2 the continually moving eighth notes in the inner voices are replaced by chords on each beat. This can be taken to represent the narrator's stopping and peering in the door while listening to Mary singing her lullaby. When the text refers to her singing about the lambs and rocking the Child, the piano part is written with the soprano line repeating the pitches D-C in slurred quarter note chords, giving an image in sound of the rocking Mother. The third verse describes the "silver sheep-bell" ringing "across the air," and the piano part paints this picture by having the opening melodic fragment of a falling fourth played with

both hands in treble clef. The walking pattern of eighth notes reappears with the repetition of verse 1 as all fades into the distance. In this song Michael Head again demonstrated his high level of craftsmanship by manipulating simple elements to create a song rich in musical imagery and capable of transporting listeners and performers alike to a scene brought alive by the union of a captivating text and evocative music.

The Viper

The Viper is the second song in a cycle of six songs titled *Six Poems by Ruth Pitter,* written during the years 1944 and1945 and published in 1946. The other songs from the cycle are *The Woodpath in Spring, Holiday in Heaven, The Comet, Constancy,* and *The Estuary.* Of these six, *The Estuary* is the most widely known but *The Viper* is the most unusual. The poet, Ruth Pitter (1897-1992), was largely self-taught. She wrote her first verse at the age of five and published her first book of poetry at the age of twenty-three. Her work didn't enjoy great success with the public, which was surprising considering the fact that she was a traditionalist and wrote verse in much the same vein as the more popular A. E. Housman and Thomas Hardy. Nonetheless, her fellow poets gave her encouragement, and she received the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 1955, the first woman so honored. In 1979 she was appointed a Commander of the British Empire. Louis Untermeyer described her work as "a poetry which is both passionate and restrained, ecstatic and yet completely governed."[34] Pitter herself, in the preface to a volume of her collected poems, wrote passionately of her work:

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[34] Louis Untermeyer, editor, *Modern British Poetry: Mid-Century Edition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), 396.

> My purpose has never varied, I believe, from five years old. It has been simply to capture and express some of the secret meanings which haunt life and language: the silent music, the dance in stillness, the hints and echoes and messages of which everything is full; the smile on the face of the tiger, or of the Bernini seraph. The silent music is within oneself too . . . So that I think a real poem, however simple its immediate content, begins and ends in mystery. It begins in that secret movement of the poet's being in response to the secret dynamism of life. It continues as a structure made of and evolved from and clothed in the legal tender and common currency of language; perhaps the simpler the better, so that the crowning wonder, if it comes, may emerge clear of hocus-pocus.[35]

There is much of the "silent music" and the "mystery" in Pitter's poem *The Viper*, and a clarity in the descriptive language, which in its simplicity still conveys the "dynamism of life" clothed in the skin of the serpent. Michael Head surely recognized the mystery present and responded to it with an economy of means and with a simplicity of musical language, both of which complement Pitter's verse.

Technical Elements

Key/Range: d minor: c'-e''

Tessitura: d'-d''

Other Considerations: *The Viper* is not a song which should be assigned to any but an advanced singer because of the numerous technical difficulties it presents. However, the fact that it is fraught with challenges is one of the reasons it is a valuable addition to the repertoire because interesting and surprising songs which afford the singer the opportunity to learn new skills are an important pedagogical tool. In this song, breath management will not be problem due to the short musical phrases. The vocal line is marked *smoothly* at the outset, and that method of delivering the text should continue

[35] Ruth Pitter, *Collected Poems* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1968), xi-xii.

throughout the song. There is considerable rhythmic complexity in the text-setting, which closely follows the flow of the language. It should be noted, however, that while the singer should observe accurate word accents, the necessity for an ultra-smooth vocal line to aid in depicting the viper's sinuous movement necessitates less emphasis on word accents than would ordinarily be the case. The flexible vocal line also requires that the singer have a reasonably agile or flexible instrument to negotiate the rhythmic complexities smoothly. The dynamics dictated by the composer range from the *piano* at the opening, which *crescendos* to a *mezzo-forte* before sinking to a *pianissimo* at the end. There are many subtle gradations within the narrow scope of the dynamic level, and these are driven by the word-painting required by the text. Such fine-tuning would most likely be outside the abilities of all but advanced singers. Another potential problem with the soft dynamic is related to the range of the song. Much of the melody lies from c'-g', an area which can be difficult for a high voice to sing with clarity or presence in the tone at the *piano* dynamic, so for these voices care must be taken in adjusting the head-voice/chest-voice mix. Finally, there are two places where the singer must negotiate an upward leap of a sixth, and one in which the interval is a seventh. While a sixth is not necessarily a difficult interval to sing, these leaps occur in passages which otherwise move by step, so the element of surprise tends to increase the difficulty of execution.

Performance Elements

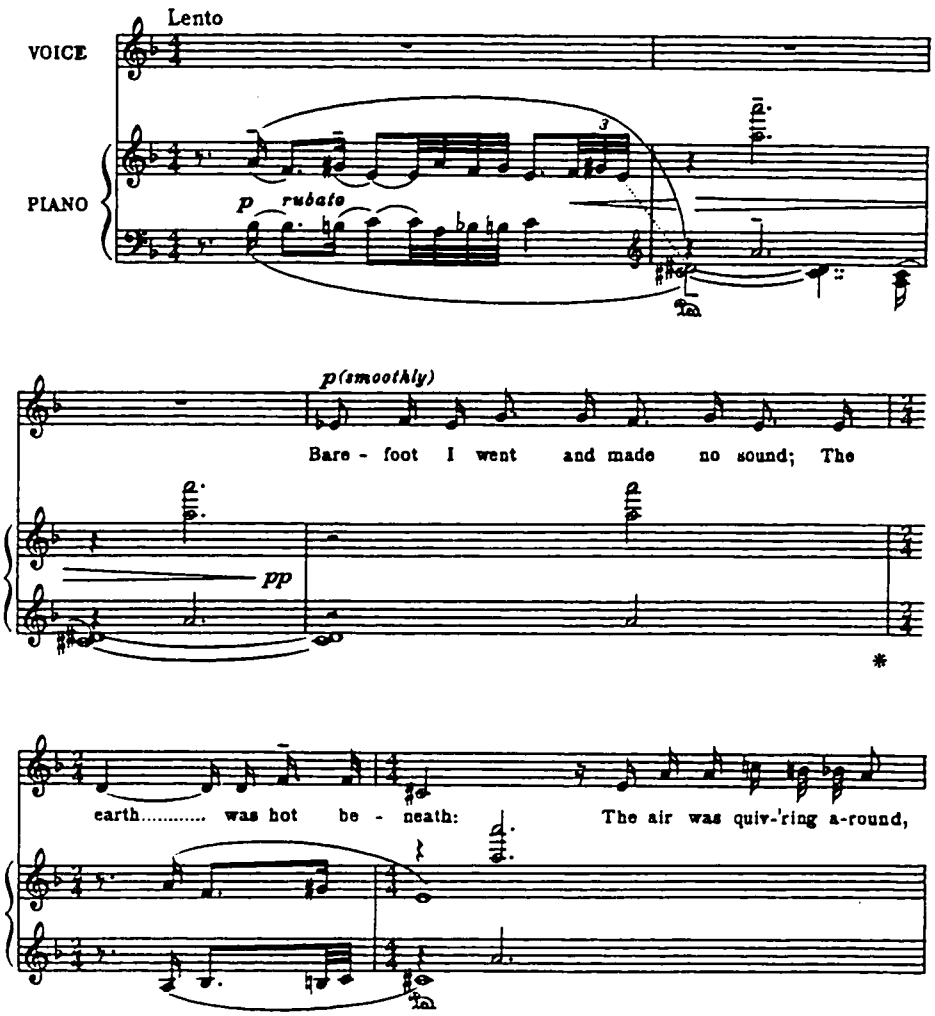
Textual considerations: Ruth Pitter's poem is written in three stanzas of five lines each. The rhyme scheme is tied to the line length: lines 1, 3, and 4 each have eight syllables with the final syllables of each line rhyming; lines 2 and 5 each have six syllables with

the final syllables of each line rhyming. The pattern of the rhyming syllables can be represented by letters: abaab | cdccd | efeef. The simple structure of the poem serves as a framework for the exquisite imagery and lush sounds of the language. In the first stanza, the heat of the day is palpable, "The air was quivering around." In the second stanza, the poet presents the unlikely pairing of the word "*lovely*" with the word "*serpent*," and then depicts the usually fearsome creature as "stealing away." In the third stanza she continues the image of the viper as something beautiful to behold, and stands gazing after it rather than running away. Her words conjure a feeling of somnolence both because of what they represent and because of the actual sounds shaped when they are uttered, as for example, in the line "The earth was hot beneath," in which all of the h's slow the delivery of the text. The third verse provides another example: the words describe the viper vividly, but the sounds of all those doubled s's in "*dress*," "*bless*," and "*comeliness*," with the attendant allusion to the hissing of a snake, bring the text vividly to life whether uttered or sung.

Musical Considerations: Michael Head's setting of Ruth Pitter's *The Viper* is a brilliant tour-de-force in both the technique of word-painting and of creating atmosphere, and examples of his ingenuity can be found in each of the 19 measures of the song. He begins with the piano and in three measures he sets the scene: the tempo marking is *Lento*, with the added playing direction of *rubato*, and the dynamic marking is *piano*. The piano part is sparse, with only two voices in the first measure and only three, on octave A's, in measures 2 and 3. A feeling of pulse or forward motion is suspended by the use of the dotted eighth rest on beat 1, followed by a rhythmically complex motive

which twists and turns on itself before settling on a sustained, tied second followed by dotted half-note octave A's. (See Example 18.)

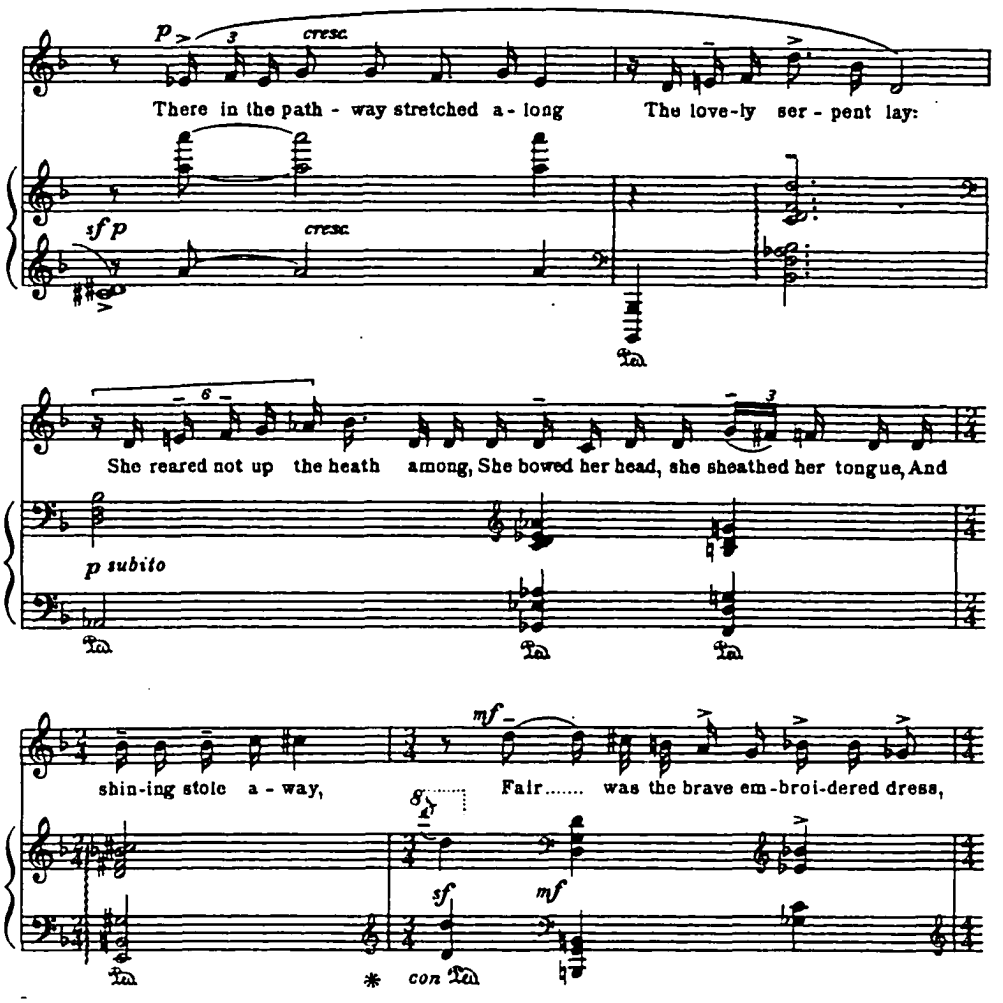
Example 18. *The Viper,* meas. 1-6



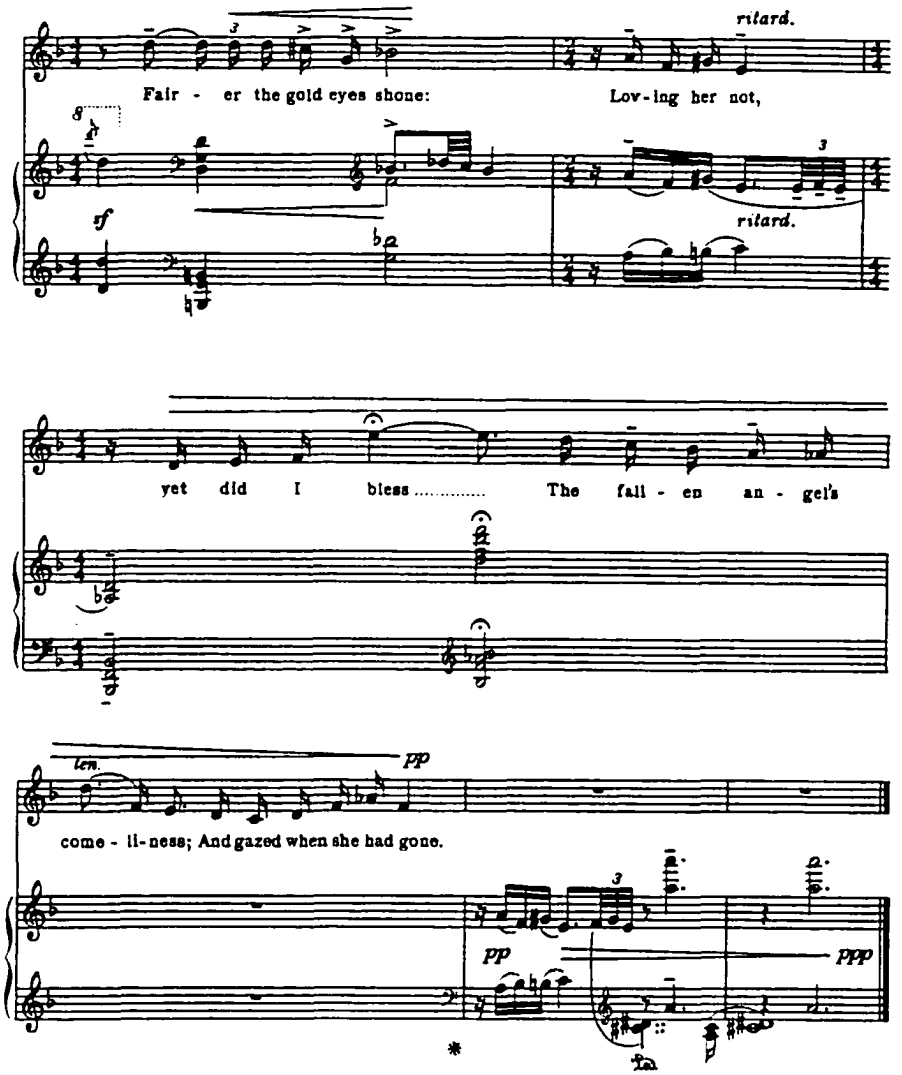
The effect produced for the listener is that of watching a snake slither a little and then stop, raise its head, and peer around before moving on. This pattern is repeated, with some combination of these rhythmic and melodic elements appearing in the accompaniment throughout the song, making the viper a constant presence intruding on the listener's consciousness. The vocal line, which begins in measure 4, has the same twisting/turning characteristics as the melodic fragment in the piano part. The note

values in the vocal line are predominately eighths, sixteenths, and thirty-seconds. But this pattern is interrupted at the end of five of the lines when specific words and the images they evoke require longer note values. For example, the word "*beneath*" is written as a half-note to enable the singer to linger on the '*th*' at the end of the word, and to allow the performers and listeners to contemplate the hot earth with the heat shimmering off the surface. In the next line the word "*heath*" is written with a half-note, once again to enable the singer to linger on the '*th,*' and to represent the kestrel hanging suspended in the sky. Before the word "*along*" comes to rest on a quarter note, the vocal line is "*stretched*" out in imitation of the textual meaning. (See Example 19.) In measure 10, at the end of the phrase, the serpent does "*lay*" as long as it takes to sustain a half-note. (See Example 19.) In measure 14, as the "*gold eyes shone,*" the listener is given two beats to stare in wonder. (See Example 20.) Word painting of another sort occurs in measure 11 as the vocal line rises along with the text "*she reared not up the heath,*" and sinks down again for the text "*she bowed her head.*" In measure 13 the piano introduces a new viperish effect—the octave D's preceded by the grace note and played *sforzando*--which seems to recall the image of the snake's darting tongue. (See Example 19.)

Example 19. *The Viper,* meas. 9-13



Example 20. *The Viper,* meas. 14-19.



In measure 16 the vocal line leaps up for the word "*bless*" where it lingers before sliding down with the "*fallen angel*" in the text. The piano drops out of the musical fabric in measure 17 to underline the emptiness of the landscape after the snake is "*gone,*" and the emptiness is augmented by the dynamic fading gradually to *pianissimo.* It is critical that the singer not linger on the word "*gone*" but let the sound disappear as the snake has disappeared. The piano re-enters for the final two measures with the signature snake motive from the beginning, fading to a barely audible *pianississimo.*

Certainly the word-painting and atmospheric elements are critical in establishing the mysterious mood that is suggested by the words of the poem. However, the heightened chromaticism of the harmonic writing is equally important in achieving the desired effect. Alan Bush's apt description of this aspect of Michael Head's writing in *The Viper* bears repeating:

> In the particularly striking song *The Viper*, sinister turns of phrase in the accompaniment abound; these include rising augmented seconds as well as rising and falling chromatic semitones, and they recur no less than twenty-five times during the nineteen bars of the song; in the voice part, perfectly attuned in harmonic idiom to the piano part, such unusual intervals are largely excluded by the clever intent of the composer, there being for the singer only two augmented and four chromatic intervals. The voice part is, however, highly expressive with its two rising major sixths and one rising major seventh, which dominates the final phrase.[36]

Although the highly chromatic style of writing that is operative in *The Viper* is less common in Michael Head's songs than is the diatonic style, it is evident from the preceding discussion that Head was proficient in adopting whatever stylistic and technical means were best suited to serving the expressive demands of the chosen text.

Late Period Songs

In the present study Michael Head's late period is limited to the years 1960-1976. Although the total number of years included is approximately half the number of his middle period, these last years proved to be the most fruitful for composition. In the last sixteen years of his life he had at least as many solo songs written, performed, or published as in the thirty years of his middle period. The fact that he completed so many

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[36] Alan Bush, "The Vocal Compositions of Michael Head" in *Michael Head . . .* by Nancy Bush, 71.

songs during the same years in which he also completed 4 chamber operas, 2 choral cantatas, and a number of other choral and instrumental works, is testimony to his renewed fervor for composing. There are a number of reasons for the amazing productivity of these last years, but the main one is that he intentionally slowed the hectic pace of his professional life. He took fewer students at the RAM and he took fewer jobs with Festivals and the Associated Board. Another factor which had a direct influence on his compositional activity was his move to his own house in the suburbs in 1968. Nancy Bush wrote that "he felt able to compose in the music room there . . . (and) kept increasingly late hours, often playing or listening to music until one or two o'clock in the morning, secure in the feeling that in his studio . . . he could not be easily overheard."[37] Many of Michael Head's diary entries from this period, of which the following is one example, confirm Nancy Bush's statement: "Exciting days! Firstly, I'm composing the opera like mad! (Day Return) This house is gorgeous to compose in-nothing to stop me, early morning to quite late at night. So tempting to play on and on."[38]

During this late period, Head continued to write songs for amateurs to sing at Festivals, and he continued to write songs for professional singers who requested them. However, the most powerful reason he had for continuing to write songs was the same reason it had always been-he loved writing songs.

Of all the songs he wrote in this last period of his career, *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps* received the most attention in his diaries. In fact, this song is mentioned more than any other from any of the three periods of his life. It was written

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[37] Bush, *Michael Head*, 63, 64.

[38] Head Diary, October 29, 1968, Head Collection.

for Norma Procter and performed by her on the BBC Third Programme on February 20, 1968, and because of its obvious importance to the composer, will be the first of the songs from this late period to be analyzed. The second song selected for analysis is *O To Be In England (Home-thoughts, from Abroad)*. This song was written for Jacqueline Delman, to a text by Robert Browning, which had been suggested by her. After its publication in 1960, Head often heard it performed at Festivals and so it has been included in the present study.

How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps

Although it was performed by Norma Procter in 1968, *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps* was published in 1967. Michael Head first mentioned the song in a diary entry in 1965: "I have the inner excitement that I *may* be writing a beautiful song for Norma Procter & Alec Redshaw on Shakespeare's 'How sweet the moonlight shines upon this bank.' Oh, I hope so."[39] A month later he seemed cautiously optimistic when he wrote "Yes. I think 'How sweet the moonlight' is a beautiful melodic song."[40] By February 11, 1966 he felt "excited about 'How sweet the moonlight'-finished copy at last."[41] His diary entry about Norma Procter's broadcast performance is charming as well as revealing: "The much-looked-forward-to event took place. Mme. Procter included my song 'Love's Lament' and 'How sweet the moonlight' (first time) in third programme 11:00 A. M. music (BBC). Yes, I have played the recording several times. She sings

[39] Head Diary, December 11, 1965, Head Collection.

[40] Head Diary, January 1, 1966, Head Collection.

[41] Head Diary, February 11, 1966, Head Collection.

beautifully, lovely lilting phrases. Possibly 'How sweet' is a little long? I meant the middle section to move on more. But she sings it with such expression."[42] This passage is charming because it shows the unabashed excitement of the distinguished older composer as he described the performance of one of his songs. In fact, he was so excited that he had to listen to it again and again. At the same time, this passage is enlightening because in it the reader gets a glimpse of the qualities of a performance which Michael Head values: "beautiful singing, lovely lilting phrases, and expression." Certainly many of his songs, and particularly *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps*, are written with those qualities of singing in mind.

Technical Elements

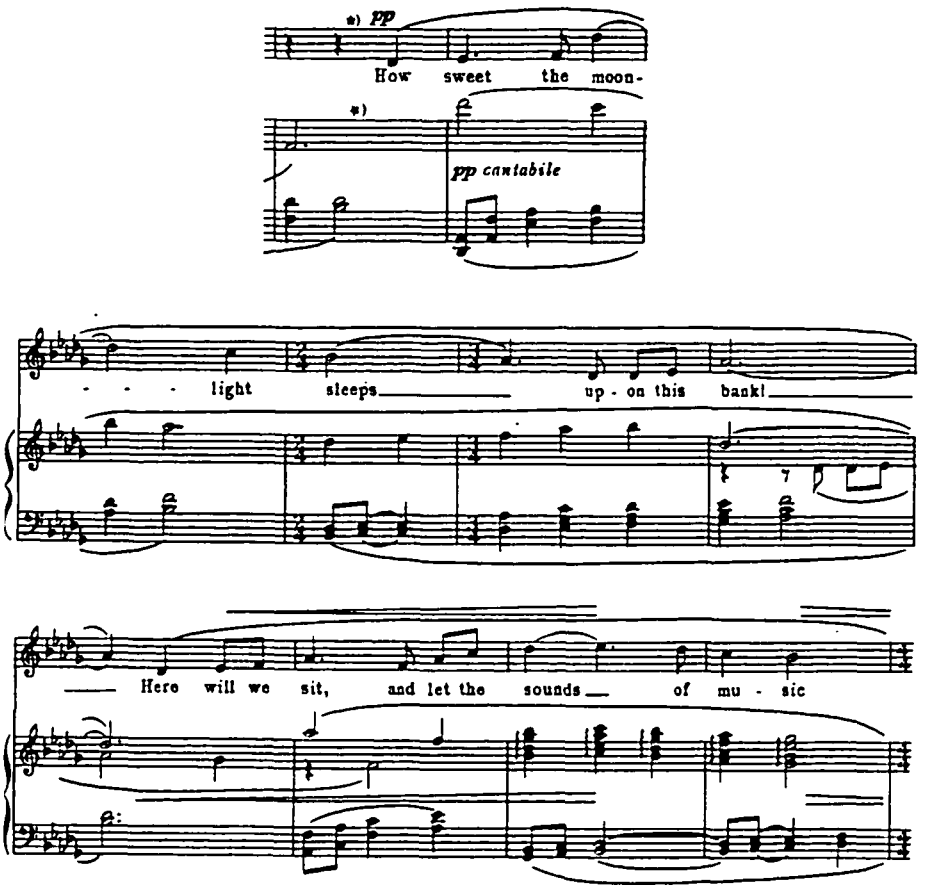
Key/Range: D-flat Major: a (b-flat)-f'' (c-flat'')

Tessitura: d-flat'-d-flat''

Other Considerations: Because this song was written for a professional singer, there are significant technical challenges in the music. Michael Head's description of Norma Procter's "lovely lilting phrases" is a clue to the first potential hazard. Many phrases of this song are long and sustained, requiring both prodigious amounts of breath and great control in order to spin out those "lovely lilting phrases." For example, the first phrase is more than five measures long, rising from d' to d'' before settling on a'. Half-notes and dotted quarter-notes predominate, with a dotted half tied to a quarter to end the phrase. To add to the breath management difficulty, the phrase is marked *pianissimo* with a tempo marking of *circa* 74 for the quarter, and a slur over all. (See Example 21.)

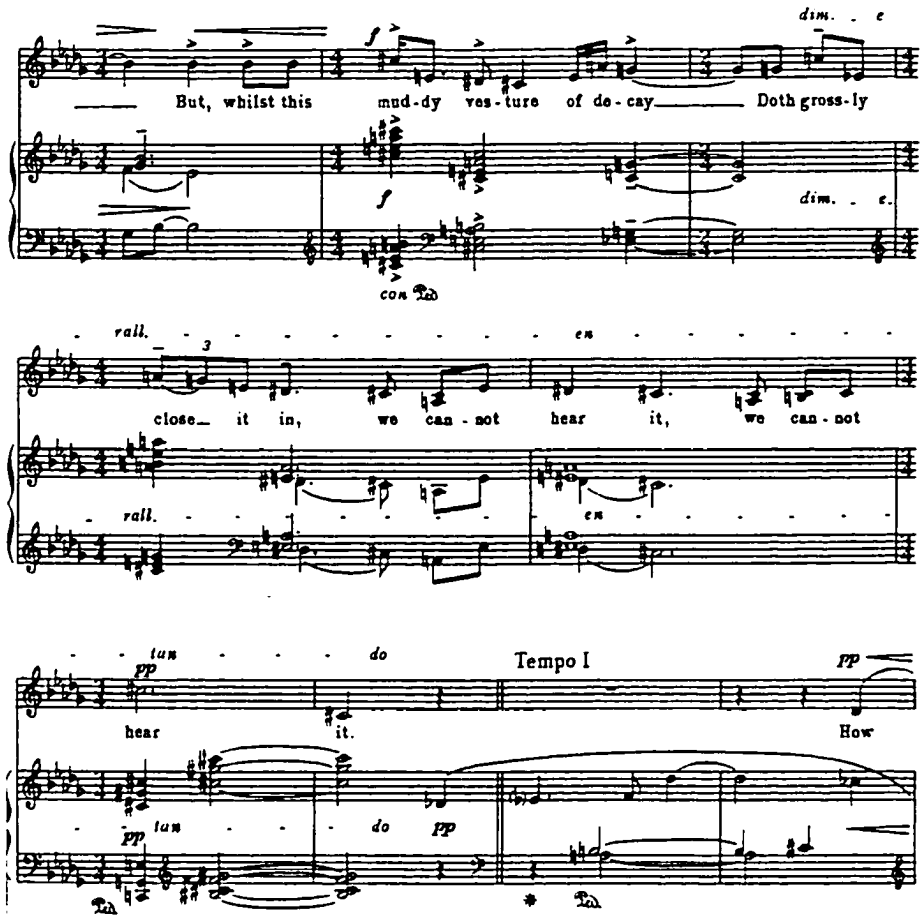
[42] Head Diary, February 20, 1968, Head Collection.

Example 21. *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps,* meas. 21-30



The requirement for the ultra-legato, long, spun-out phrasing occurs mainly in the opening and closing sections of this rather lengthy song. The middle sections require another style of delivery altogether. For these portions of the song, the tempo picks up and the note values are shortened, necessitating a fairly agile, flexible instrument. In addition, the melody in these sections is more angular, and the text demands a more dramatic, pointed delivery. The combination of melodic angularity and need for dramatic singing compels the singer to make some abrupt registration adjustments, especially at measures 80 and 83-84. (See Example 22.)

Example 22. *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps,* meas. 79-86



Because this song was originally written for a contralto, the many middle-voice passages marked *piano* or *pianissimo* could pose a challenge for a high voice to keep well-energized while still maintaining the soft dynamic; a lower voice would, of course, experience less difficulty in these passages. Finally, this song requires that the singer have an acute sense of intonation in order to accurately negotiate the many key changes and highly chromatic writing, especially since the singer's part often is not doubled in the keyboard part. In fact, it is not uncommon for the vocal line to signal the key change before the piano part. Even in the places where the piano part has a chord sounding in the new key simultaneously with the new key in the vocal line, intonation can be tricky

because the switch to the new key takes the ear by surprise. The surprising shifts in tonality are quite captivating for the listeners to experience, but they can be quite treacherous for the singer to accomplish.

Performance Elements

Textual Considerations: The text for this song is taken from Act V of William Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice.* Michael Head took twelve lines from the beginning of a speech given by the character Lorenzo:

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
> Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
> Become the touches of sweet harmony.
> Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

In extracting the first portion of the speech for his song, Michael Head made only two alterations. The first was to delete the words "Sit, Jessica" which were spoken by Lorenzo to the other character present during this portion of the scene. The other alteration was a repetition of some of the words and of some of the lines of the text, a device that Head used occasionally in his songs in order to highlight or emphasize the particular ideas or thoughts represented by the words. For this song, the repeated lines of text were: "And let the sounds of music creep in our ears; the touches of sweet harmony; Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins; we cannot hear it." In addition, he repeated the

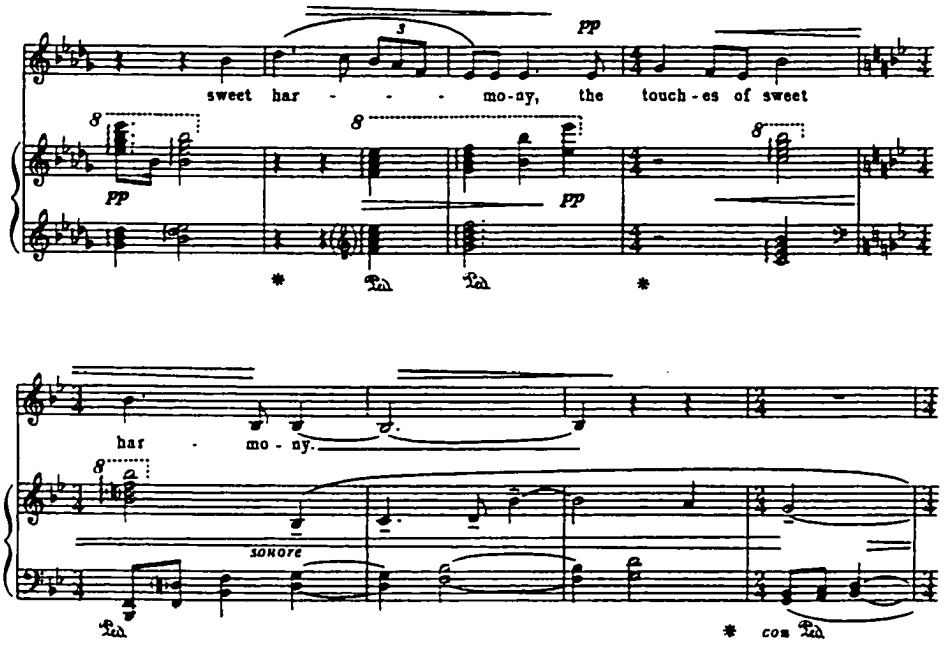
entire first section of the song at the end of the song. With the addition of the repeated section of text, Head had sixteen lines to set to music. The music is divided into four main sections with the first section using the first four lines of the text, the second section using the next five lines of text, and the third section using the last three lines of the text. The fourth section of the song is a repeat of the first. While there are clear sectional boundaries, the song could be divided into a different configuration of three main sections with the first remaining the same, the second and third combined, and the fourth the same as the first.

Musical Considerations: Determining the form of this song can be a bit confusing. It actually begins with a lengthy (20 measures) piano introduction which could stand on its own as a piano solo. The score notes that this section can be shortened to a mere four measures of music before the entrance of the voice in measure 21. The first texted section of the song, using the first four lines of Lorenzo's speech, is a repeat of the melody first heard in the keyboard introduction (measures 22-37), and then has an additional fourteen measures of music to accommodate the rest of the text from the first four lines. The middle portion of the song can be divided in either of two ways. After the next five lines of text, the listener will hear a clear sectional boundary at measure 71, because of a definite change in the character of the melodic material. The listener will hear another sectional boundary after the last three lines of text, at measure 86, when the character of the melodic material changes again. These two sections are then followed by a repeat of the first texted section of the song. This form could be represented by letters as A (piano), A-prime (voice), B, C, A-double prime (voice and piano, no repeated text).

While the ear would recognize this form in terms of the musical material which is heard in each section, it is rather awkward because of the uneven length of the material distributed among the sections. Perhaps a more logical form would combine the B and C sections into one larger section, with the vocal versions of the A sections acting as bookends. This configuration would then have four lines of text for A (30 measures), eight lines of text for B+C (34 measures), and four lines of text for the repeated A (25 measures). The symmetry of this second plan is more appealing, and the musical reasons for adopting it are discussed below.

The solo piano introduction, in the key of D-flat major, plays what will come to be recognized as the signature melody of the song, corresponding to the first two and one half lines of text, including the repeated "Creep in our ears." This opening is followed by the first texted section of the song, which repeats the signature melody, and then adds the remaining portion of the first four lines of the text, with the words "touches of sweet harmony" repeated. This added portion of music is highly unstable harmonically and serves as a bridge to the new key of B-flat major. After the key change, while the voice sustains the final syllable 'ny' from the word "harmony," the piano part repeats the opening fragment of the signature melody. (See Example 23.)

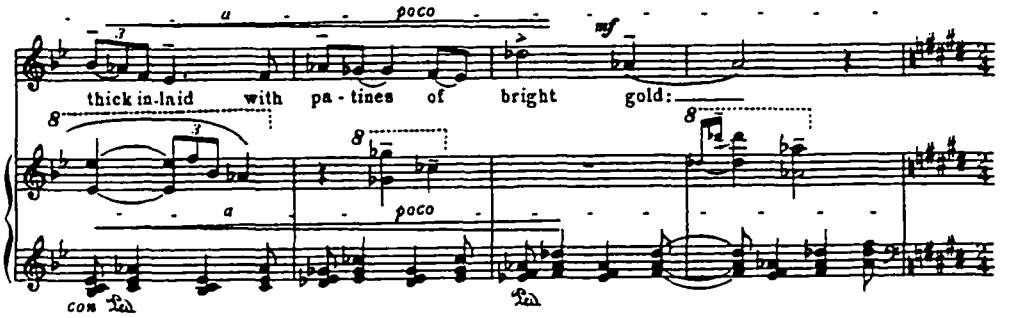
Example 23. *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps,* meas. 43-50



In the new section, from measure 52-86, the vocal line contains the last eight lines of the text, with fragments of three of the lines repeated. Harmonically, this section is very unstable, moving from the key of B-flat major to c-sharp-minor, to D-major, before finally arriving back at the opening key of D-flat major. The key signatures written in the score are highly suspect, however, because beginning in measure 55, there is so much fluidity to the harmonic movement, including many ninth chords, and so much chromaticism, both melodically and harmonically, that there isn't a real sense of arrival in a key until the return of the section I material at measure 86. The feeling of unease is heightened by the very angular melody and the complexity of the rhythmic writing, which is in stark contrast to the smoothly flowing legato line of the first section. For example, in measures 55-58, the meter is 3/4 and the left-hand piano part is written in note values of eighth-quarter-quarter-eighth, keeping the music off-balance. The right-

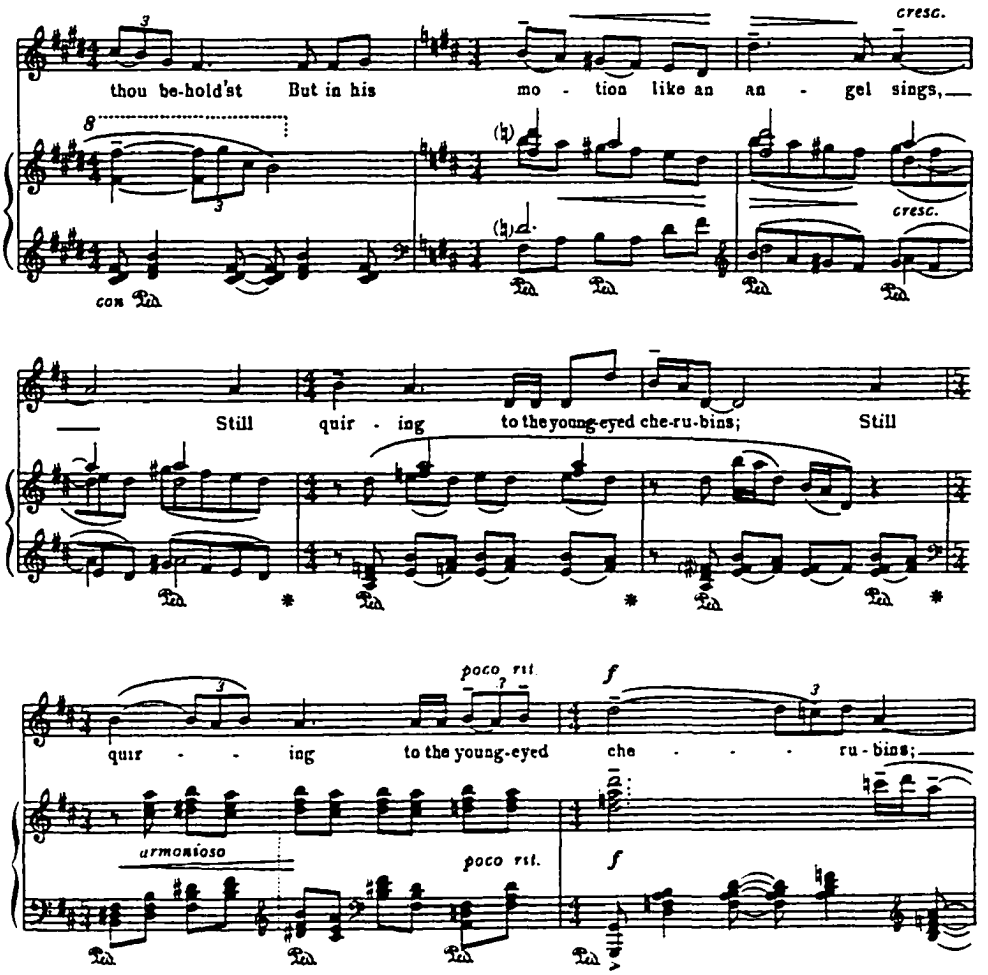
hand melody in these same measures is disjunct and the vocal line exhibits some of the angularity mentioned above. (See Example 24.)

Example 24. *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps,* meas. 55-58



In measures 63-68, there are running eighth notes written for both hands in the piano part and beginning in measure 67, the rhythmic fragment of two sixteenths and an eighth is added to the mix. It first appears as an echo of the vocal line melody for the text "young-eyed cherubin" from measure 66, then imitates the same text from measure 69. As this section of music is moving into the transition before the repeat of section one, the sixteenth-note fragment skitters in twice more, a reference to the "young-eyed cherubin." (See Example 25.)

Example 25. *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps,* meas. 62-69

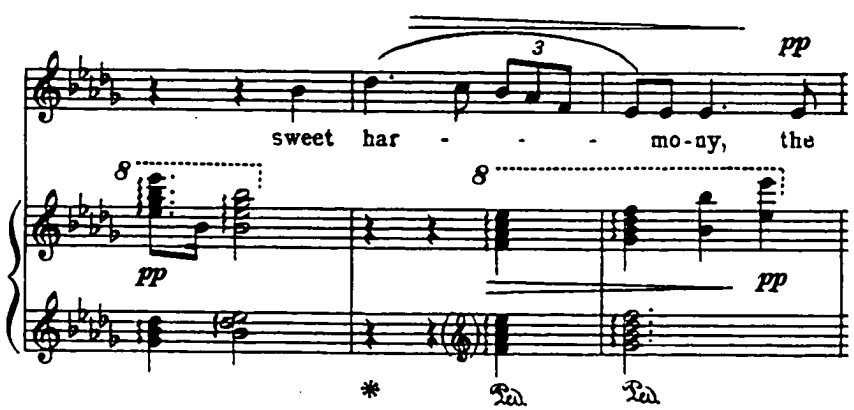


As is clear from the foregoing discussion, the middle section of the song, from measure 52-86, is markedly different than the first and last sections. Furthermore, even though there are two easily identifiable sub-sections in the middle section, one grows out of the other and the two share enough traits in common to be considered part of the same larger section of music. For these reasons, the second proposed model for the overall form is the more accurate one.

The text setting in *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps* is as carefully planned as in Michael Head's other songs, with the rhythm of the vocal line closely following the

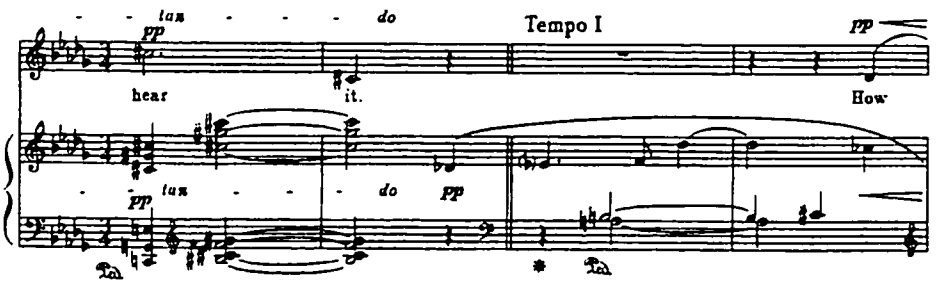
natural accents of the words. However, in this song the word setting is not as syllabic as is usual for Michael Head, especially in the opening and closing sections. This is most likely done to aid in creating an atmosphere of ease and quietude as befits a scene with sleeping moonlight. The *cantabile* marking and *pianissimo* dynamic also contribute to the atmosphere in this section. In fact, the scene is set by the opening figure of the piano part with its rocking movement, played *pianissimo* and *tranquillo*. Throughout this section, nothing disturbs the unruffled calm of the moonlit scene. With the word "stillness" the piano part is "still," followed by the "sweet harmony" sung with a gently descending melisma. (See Example 26.)

Example 26. *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps,* meas. 43-45



One of Michael Head's most magical atmospheric effects occurs in measure 85. For the repeat of the words "we cannot hear it," he wrote an accompaniment part that is such a clash of pitches that the "harmony" referred to in an earlier line cannot be heard! Even with all the swirling chromaticism which preceded it, this musical moment is unexpected. While the vocal melody has octave C-sharps, the piano plays chords of C-sharp and C-natural simultaneously. (See Example 27.)

Example 27. *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps,* meas. 85-88



Out of the decay of these sustained clashing chords the signature melody rises, first in the piano and then carried by the voice, and the listener is returned to the unruffled tranquility of the beginning.

Even though the score suggests that all but the first three measures of the opening piano solo may be omitted, the song is most effective if performed in its entirely. The piano solo is crucial in establishing a feeling of serene contemplation, of utter peace and stillness. The listener needs time to be lulled into a state of calm, to be drawn into the atmosphere of the music. The piano part rocks the listener gently, and the voice enters softly and sweetly into the scene, gliding in over the top of the softly fading piano solo. Hearing the singing is, in effect, becoming conscious of what was unconscious; in this case the unconscious being represented by the piano solo, which is barely heard but later remembered when the voice enters with the same melody. If the song is sung without the piano solo, the intensity of the mood that is created will be substantially impaired. Not only does the extensive piano solo set the mood of the song, it also combines with the first texted section of the song to condition the listener. In other words, the combined effect of the piano opening and the first texted section is to imprint the mood of tranquility on the listener's ear so that with the final return of the signature melody in measure 86, the feeling of tranquility returns with it.

In *How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps* Michael Head has taken a lilting, lyrical text, and set it with utmost care into a meticulously constructed framework of finely wrought melody and expressive harmony. By doing so he has created a masterpiece that enchants and captivates performer and listener alike.

O To Be In England

It is not surprising that this Robert Browning (1812-1889) text, suggested by Jacqueline Delman, should have appealed to Michael Head. The graceful lines abound with those fresh images of the English countryside which he so loved, and the sub-title, *Home Thoughts, From Abroad* (the proper title of Browning's poem), must have struck a responsive chord with the aging composer as his thoughts increasingly turned homeward while he was away on his long tours. In Michael Head's tuneful setting, the performers and the audience join the composer for a ramble through lanes and fields kissed with spring and its bountiful array of birdsong and blossom. It is a song to which singers readily respond, as is evident by its frequent appearances on competitive Festival platforms.

Technical Elements

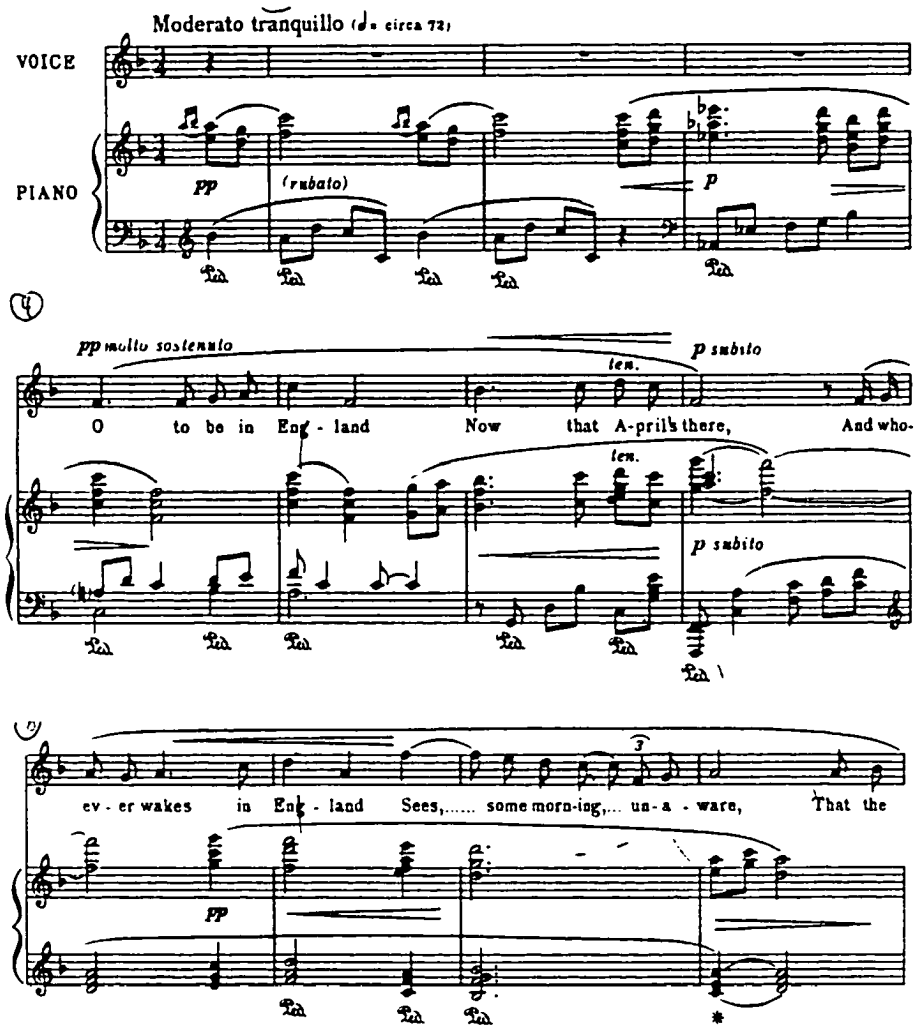
Key/Range: F-major: d'-a'' (g'')

Tessitura: f'-d''

Other considerations: The wistful mood invoked by the title of this song, followed by the gentle unfolding of the opening motive in the piano introduction, insures that the majority of singers would gladly include *O To Be In England* in their repertoire; however, it is

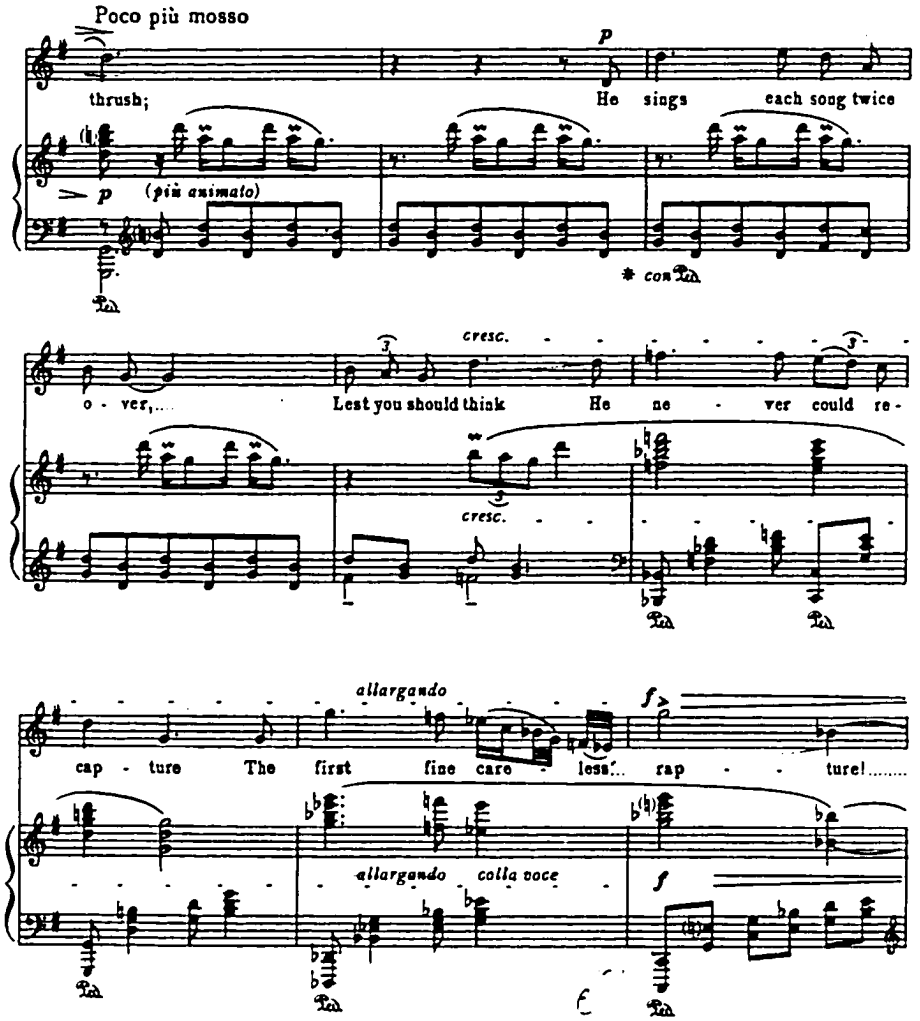
most suitable for an advanced singer. The tempo marking at the beginning of the song is *Moderato tranquillo*, the dynamic is *pianissimo*, and there is an additional direction to the singer of *molto sostenuto*. In terms of breath management, the combination of these three factors makes the 4 and 5 measure musical phrases a challenge to sing. Each of the musical phrases is comprised of two lines of the poetic text so the singer could logically take a breath mid-phrase if necessary, but the musical line is better served by sustaining the breath throughout the musical phrase. (See Example 28.)

Example 28. *O To Be In England,* meas. 1-11.



Besides the phrasing/breath management concerns, the vocal line presents a challenge to the singer because the majority of the melodic movements are by skip, including numerous leaps of an octave or more. The presence of so many wide intervals increases the difficulty of maintaining a *sostenuto* line. In spite of the number of wide skips the singer must negotiate, only in two places are there real concerns with registration adjustments. The first place is in measure 37. In this measure the singer has an eighth-note d' pick-up, which moves to d'' on beat 1 in the next measure. The singer must sing the d' with a fairly light mix in order to manage a smooth adjustment up the octave to d''. (See Example 29.)

Example 29. *O To Be In England,* meas. 36-44.



The second place that presents concerns with registration adjustments is in measure 43-44. Here the melody line descends from g'' to e-flat', only to leap back up to g''. Because the e-flat' has a time value of only a thirty-second, there is little time to adjust for the g''. The technical demands of these two places require that the singer be experienced and have a reasonably agile instrument in order to sing through these intervals smoothly and easily. In fact, the numerous skips throughout the vocal line dictate the need for an advanced singer with a flexible voice.

Performance Elements

Textual Considerations: Robert Browning was born in London in 1812, the son of a well-to-do clerk in the Bank of England. His father was an avid book collector so Browning was educated at home with the benefit of the family's exhaustive library. Except for extensive travels when he was a young man, Robert Browning remained in his parents' home until the age of thirty-four. Resisting their efforts to have him enter a profession, he pursued his goal of becoming a poet. He gained some renown with the 1835 publication of *Paraclesus*, a lengthy poem about the sixteenth-century alchemist. In 1846 he married the poet Elizabeth Barrett and the couple moved to Italy, eventually settling in Florence. The Brownings remained in Italy until Elizabeth Barrett Browning's death in 1861. After her death, Robert Browning returned to London and continued to write, spending a part of each year visiting friends in France, Scotland, Switzerland or Italy. He died in Venice in 1889.

Robert Browning is best known for his mastery of dramatic monologue, but his shorter lyric verses have gained greater popular appeal. The carefully constructed cadence of his lines and the immediacy of his vivid imagery are often coupled with the commonplace, enabling the reader to respond to the familiarity of shared experience. He intentionally wrote his verse to more closely resemble the patterns of everyday speech, interrupting the flow of the line with new ideas, inverting phrases, and scandalizing "the gentleman's club atmosphere of English poetry with snorts, coughs, grunts and

onomatopoeic noises."[43] Nonetheless, these effects are created and controlled with great artistry. His poetry often has a robust quality that belies its painstaking craftsmanship. Daniel Karlin opines that Browning has a "gift for a memorable phrase" and a "colloquial energy of style . . . The varied discourse of Browning's poetry is perhaps its most immediate attraction . . . (it) opens the gates of poetry to the common people and to everyday things."[44] It seems fitting that Browning's verse for the "common people" should be set to music by Michael Head, a composer whose songs proved so attractive to the "common people," the amateur music makers.

Home-Thoughts, from Abroad

I
Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England – now!

II
And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops – at the bent spray's edge –
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

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[43] Daniel Karlin, editor, *Robert Browning: Selected Poems* (London: The Penguin Group, 1989) 14.

[44] Ibid., 12, 13.

The poem *Home-Thoughts, from Abroad* consists of twenty lines of text divided into two stanzas of eight lines and twelve lines respectively. There is no pattern to the number of syllables per line, but the rhyme scheme is as follows: Stanza I, ababccdd, and Stanza II, eefgfghhiijj. Looking at the pattern of the rhyme scheme in the two stanzas, the reader is struck by the curious placement of a rhymed couplet before the quatrain in Stanza II. Appending that couplet to the end of Stanza I would have resulted in two 10-line stanzas which shared a similar rhyming pattern of a quatrain followed by three pairs of rhyming couplets (ababccddee | fgfghhiijj). However, Browning sought to reflect in his verses the often irregular rhythm of common speech, and that desire for vernacular authenticity in the pattern of the spoken language undoubtedly influenced the irregularities in the arrangement of the lines between the stanzas of this poem.

In the first stanza, the lines of text flow smoothly from one to the other, calling to the mind's eye a remembrance of the beauties of rural England in the springtime. The second stanza continues to paint the picture, but the flow of the text is more irregular, as if the narrator sees one image, turns his head and sees yet another wonder, turns again and a new scene unfolds. This sort of interrupted flow is a common poetic device in Browning's style. Michael Head responded to the poetry by writing a song which is through-composed but which can be divided into three major sections instead of the two that would be expected by the poem's two stanzas. However, the mood shifts suggested by Head's musical setting closely follow the shifting scenes and changes of pace effected by Browning's lithesome verse.

Musical Considerations: The form Michael Head adopted for this poem is quite interesting. The poem's layout on the page makes clear its division into two stanzas of unequal length; Head has written a through-composed song which just at clearly falls on the ear in three sections of nearly equal length. The sections are delineated by musical factors related to the melodic material and the harmonic structure. The melodic elements are two-fold: first, the melody lines in the first and third sections are rather long, with lyrical, smoothly flowing phrases while the melody lines in the second section are shorter and more angular; second, the opening motive from the vocal line is repeated at the beginning of section two and section three, providing a clear aural signal of the sectional divisions. The changes heard in the harmonic structure parallel those in the melody: the song opens in F-major and remains in that one key throughout the smooth lyrical section 1; section 2 is fairly unstable and shifts from F-major to D-major to G-major with the more angular melody; section 3 is announced by a return to the original key of F-major, which continues as the harmonic foundation of this smooth lyrical section. The first musical section of the song (measures 1-23) corresponds to the first stanza of the poem with long, lyric lines which flow smoothly from one to the next. In the second musical section (measures 23-45) Michael Head used the first eight lines from the second stanza of the poem. The first phrase of this section is the musical setting of that curious rhyming couplet (ee) which one would have expected to find at the end of the first stanza. Interestingly, Head also seems to have felt the couplet's kinship to the first stanza because the phrase continues in the original key of F-major and begins with a fragment of the opening vocal melody. However, the couplet's relationship to the second stanza is alluded to because the melody then expands into new material, melding it into the

structure of the second stanza and leading to a key change for the next musical phrase. In this phrase (now in D-major) Head set the next three lines of the poem (fgf). When the flow of the poetic line is interrupted with a new idea (one of Browning's favorite poetic devices), Michael Head changed keys again, this time to G-major, which heralds the next musical phrase with the "wise thrush" and his rapturous song trilling away for three more lines of text (ghh). The return of the original key of F-major and the opening melodic fragment signals the shift to the third musical section of the song (measures 45-61). As was the case in the second section, the opening melodic fragment soon unfolds into new melodic material which in this final section of the song deviates slightly from the poem. The remaining four lines of the poem are expanded (iijj plus a) because Head repeated the opening lines of the text, with one minor adjustment: he shortened "O to be in England / Now that April's there" to "O to be in England now." This alteration changes the focus from fond remembrances of England in April with its myriads of blissful images, to a present wistful yearning for a faraway, beloved England.

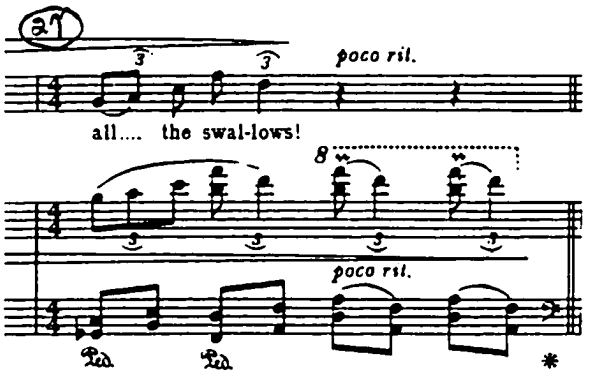
Not only was Michael Head sensitive to the overall form of the poem when he set it to music, but he was also responsive to the flow of the line, and to the natural rhythm and accentuation of the words. Head changed the meter signature 13 times within the song's 61 measures. As in his other songs, the meter was shifted in order to accommodate the natural accents of the words, to adjust for line irregularity in the text, or to provide additional beats for musical effects. When the singer is exacting in his or her execution of Head's meticulous word-setting, the flow of the music is not interrupted or disturbed by the meter changes.

Form and meter were two of the elements which Michael Head manipulated when setting a poem to music; harmony was another. Like all of his songs, *O To Be In England* is filled with examples that illustrate Head's imaginative use of harmonic elements in his efforts to create the mood or atmosphere induced by the poetic texts. As noted above, the first and third sections of *O To Be In England* are fairly stable harmonically, remaining in the key of F-major, but Head does insert some very colorful, unexpected musical material. For example, the opening measures begin on an upbeat, *pianissimo,* with grace notes in the soprano to simulate birdsong. The chord movement is from a C-nine to an F-major, decidedly not in root position. It's as if the listener/narrator barely notices the birdsong, which first hovers on the edge of consciousness. The surprising appearance of the full-textured A-flat major chord (in root position) at the beginning of measure 3 signals the moment when the birdsong moves from the unconscious to the conscious mind. Even though written with a dynamic of *piano*, the bright spark of sound produced by this colorful chord almost bursts upon the awareness of the listener/narrator, triggering the memory of England in the freshness of Spring. The entry of the voice at measure 4 is the inevitable response to the awakening memories. (See Example 28.) Another marvelous color effect occurs in measure 7. The text for the singer is "Now that April's there," written with a *crescendo* that leads to a *subito piano* on the word "there." It's as if, at that moment, the narrator came upon scene of exquisite beauty that caused him to catch his breath in wonder. The breath-stopping moment is painted by the composer with the inclusion of dissonant octave G's in the right hand of the piano part, quivering for a moment against the sonorous octave F's in the bass before gently easing into resolution on octave F's on beat 2. The difficulty for the singer in this

passage is not the result of a technical issue. Rather, the performer must be acutely attuned to the sublime shades of color in the piano part and weave the vocal line unobtrusively and seamlessly into the fabric of the whole.

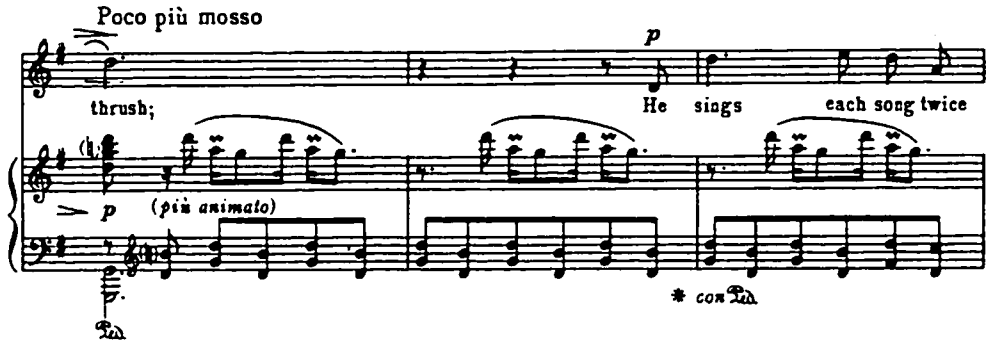
Other atmospheric effects make their appearance as birdsongs, which are scattered throughout the song. In measure 27 after the word "swallow," the song of the swallow is heard, played as trills in the right hand of the piano, twittering away on the descending f''' to d'''' pattern that is an echo of the pitches sung on the word "swallow." (See Example 30.)

Example 30. *O To Be In England,* meas. 27.



The swallow repeats his song in measure 34 before the "wise thrush" makes his appearance in measures 36-40; once again, the piano accompaniment plays a birdsong motif. (See Example 31.)

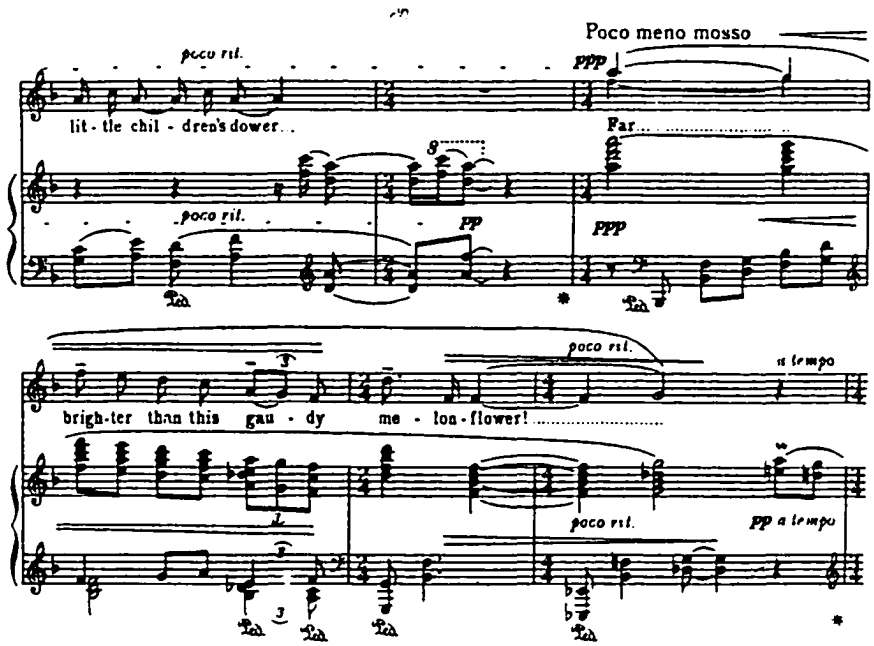
Example 31. *O To Be In England,* meas. 36-38.



The birdsongs in the accompaniment eventually shift to the vocal line for one wonderful outburst to simulate the "rapture" of the thrush's song. (See Example 30.) At the end of the song the piano introductory material is repeated in measures 56-57, as the birdsong which inspired this musical reverie recedes into the distance.

The final example of scene painting that will be discussed occurs in the third section of the song. The key returns to the original F-major, and the vocal line unfolds in three phrases of the text (iij) in which the melodic character resembles that of the melody from the first section of the song. The piano writing is rather sparse, once again avoiding block chords in root position, as was the case in the accompaniment in the first section. The gentle pastoral scene unfolds, calm and beguiling until it bumps to a stop in measure 52. Nowhere else in the song has there been a total cessation of sound but here Head has written a quarter rest after a *poco rit.* marking, leading to a *pianissimo* statement of a fragment of birdsong. Total silence, expectant-and then, from far in the distance, the voice floats in on a barely audible thread of sound, *pianississimo* a'', spun out over two beats at a *poco meno mosso* tempo before easing to g'' for one beat, and then wafting down to f'. (See Example 32.)

Example 32. *O To Be In England,* meas. 51-56.



This single moment, when masterfully sung, is one of the most exquisitely beautiful utterances in English song.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Entries in reference works list the Englishman Michael Dewar Head (1900-1976) first as a composer. He was certainly that, as his 124 known solo songs, numerous choral songs, two children's operas (*The Bachelor Mouse* and *Through Train),* three choral cantatas (*Daphne and Apollo, Snowbirds,* and *New Town),* four chamber operas (*After the Wedding, Key Money, The Bidder's Opera,* and *Day Return*) and various instrumental works attest. However, his involvement in and contributions to music went beyond his considerable achievements as a composer. He was active as a singer, pianist and accompanist from his childhood until his death. In addition, he was a professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music in London from 1927 until his retirement in 1975. Unfortunately, his efforts on behalf of music education receive scant attention in the literature. Michael Head was indefatigable as an adjudicator for competition music festivals throughout the British Isles, and as an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. In this capacity he had the opportunity to encourage and influence countless amateur music makers, both children and adults. His contact with these amateur musicians was direct, in his written and verbal comments regarding their performances, and indirect, in the many compositions he wrote specifically for amateur performers. Sir Thomas Armstrong wrote of Michael Head: "His influence on young musicians cannot be calculated. Whether in teaching or adjudicating, or in tracing that spidery but just legible hand up the side of a mark form . . . he showed great skill and

penetration in comment, and in suggestions for improvement . . . "[1] So many of his songs were either selected as test pieces or pieces of the contestant's choice at competition festivals, that some of the festival committees included classes devoted exclusively to Michael Head songs.[2] Indeed, his songs were considered such a valuable contribution to the teaching repertoire that in 1967 the Music Teachers' Association selected him as their 'Composer of the Year'.

From September 1924 until 1964, Michael Head had further opportunities to encourage amateur music making through his broadcast programs on the BBC. In addition to programs of songs which he sang to his own accompaniment, he delivered talks on musical topics, such as the series of three entitled *Make Your Own Music* which were broadcast in 1944. In addition to his radio talks, Head frequently presented recitals and/or lectures on musical topics to music clubs and associations in the cities and towns where he carried out his examining work for the Associated Board. Almost every year he traveled outside of the British Isles for the Associated Board and, when possible, he scheduled additional professional engagements in the host country after his Associated Board duties were completed. He visited the United States to take part in master classes and summer schools sponsored by the National Association of Teachers of Singing after examining tours in Canada, Australia, and the Far East. Finally, Michael Head was an avid recitalist. He crisscrossed the country singing and/or playing for local music clubs, at mid-day and luncheon concerts, and for local radio broadcasts. His recital programs,

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[1] Sir Thomas Armstrong, Michael Head Obituary, re-printed in *RAM Magazine* 212 (Autumn 1976), 12.

[2] Nancy Bush, *Michael Head: Composer, Singer, Pianist—A Memoir* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982), 48.

noted for their often unusual selections, always included a group of his own songs. In his performances he was noted for both his level of artistic accomplishment and for the impression of his being an amateur "keenly enjoying spontaneous music-making for its own sake and thereby conveying his own enthusiasm to the audience."[3]

The purpose of this study was to investigate the life and work of Michael Head and to document his contributions to music education. During the course of the study, answers were sought to the following questions:

4) What were the early life experiences and musical training that prepared Michael Head for his career as composer, performer and music educator?

5) What were Head's contributions to music education/vocal pedagogy? How do his contributions reflect or articulate Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy?

6) How was Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy reflected in his compositions?

In an effort to answer these questions, information was obtained from a variety of published and unpublished sources. A summary of the results of the study follows.

Early Life Experiences

Michael Head was born in 1900, a year before the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, and was raised in a family in which many of the distinctive features of the Victorian Age had an important influence on his upbringing and his development as a composer/performer/educator. From his grandparents he inherited an adventurous spirit which he retained throughout a lifetime of travel, often to far-away, exotic destinations. His love of adventure soon led to a love of travel, and this was one of the contributing

[3] Author unknown, review from *Musical Opinion*, March 1951, reproduced in publicity brochure.

factors to his lifetime spent crisscrossing the globe for Festivals and Associated Board tours. His parents and grandparents were part of the burgeoning middle class which valued music as a desirable leisure activity so Michael Head's prodigious musical talents were vigorously encouraged from a young age. This encouragement initially took the form of piano lessons, first from his mother, then his aunt, and later with Mrs. Jean Adair at the Adair-Marston School. While he was still a boy, his piano lessons were supplemented with lessons in composition and when he was a teenager he studied voice and organ. Also in keeping with a Victorian middle-class lifestyle, the Head family enjoyed amateur music making at home and their son Michael honed his musical skills, playing the piano, singing, and sometimes even writing a musical play for which he designed and built the sets (complete with working wiring), in addition to performing the music and the dialog. There were also musical evenings spent at the homes of family and friends and here, too, Michael Head gladly performed, developing a performance style noted for its air of intimacy, warmth, and charm.

As a young man Head was interested in all things mechanical and for a brief time he struggled with choosing between Engineering (eminently practical) and music as a profession. Fortunately for singers everywhere, the lure of music proved stronger and in 1919 he entered the Royal Academy of Music in London. For five years he was the Sir Michael Costa Scholar in Composition and studied with Frederick Corder. In addition to his studies at the Academy, he continued his voice lessons with Fritz Marston at the Adair-Marston School (known as "the Gate" among its students). As a student at the "Gate" Head often performed in the student recitals, appearing as solo pianist, accompanist, singer, and composer. These recitals, which were held on a regular basis,

provided the student-performers with valuable experiences on the concert platform, a fact noted by Head in his diary: "What magnificent practice these concert evenings are at the Gate."[4] These student performances also helped to nurture his growing love of composing and performing, as is evident from another early entry in his diary: "How lovely it would be if I could keep all this up, and give piano, composition and vocal recitals in future."[5]

As Corder's student at the RAM, Michael Head worked diligently to master writing for various instrumental combinations. That he was successful is evident by the many composition prizes he won while there. However, his great love was song and it was as a songwriter that he came to the attention of Mr. Leslie Boosey of the music publishing firm, Boosey and Company (later Boosey & Hawkes). From 1919 with his first published song *The Ships of Arcady*, to 1977 with the posthumous publication of *Three Songs of Venice*, Head had 105 solos songs, numerous choral songs, a children's opera, and several instrumental pieces published by Boosey. Many of his early songs were performed on Ballad Concerts, thereby reaching a large audience of enthusiastic amateur singers. Many of his later songs were selected as set pieces at Festivals, and some of them were written specifically for Festival participants, continuing his association with amateur singers. Michael Head's association with amateur music making went beyond the solo songs he wrote. In the 1950's he began to write choral works for student and amateur choirs, and later he wrote instrumental works for the Associated Board.

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[4] Head Diary, September 29, 1920, Head Collection.

[5] Head Diary, July 14, 1919, Head Collection.

After his studies at the RAM, Head went to Bedales School, where he remained as a music master until 1929. While engaged principally as a piano teacher, he also taught some solo and class voice. Initially he was concerned about his ability to teach young children, but his experiences at Bedales apparently were instructive for him because in one of his letters home he noted that the children had performed well for a school program and that they had wanted to "get things right." This insight about the importance for children to set goals and to work to accomplish them is reflected in comments he made regarding the value of participation in the Associated Board exam system : "Examinations in music . . . encouraged students to study good music, gave them an aim to work for, and the examiner's marks represented a measure of attainment."[6] In addition, Head's colleagues noted that as an adjudicator/examiner he upheld a high standard but was positive and encouraging in his remarks to the students with whom he had contact.

In the year 1929 Michael Head left school music teaching and concentrated his formal teaching on his work as a Professor of Piano at the RAM. The same year he began his work as a Festival adjudicator and from 1934 his work as an Examiner for the Associated Board. It was as an adjudicator/examiner that he had his most extensive contact with student and amateur musicians. In his capacity as an examiner, he spent countless hours hearing student performers and writing instructive comments for their continued improvement. As an adjudicator he not only spent countless hours hearing students and amateur music makers, and writing constructive comments, he also gave

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[6] Unknown author, "Michael Head Plays, Sings and Lectures," *Halifax (Nova Scotia) Daily Star*, March 15, 1937.

"summing-up" speeches to the assembled contestants, teachers, and parents. His speeches were illuminating, astute and diplomatic, and afforded him additional opportunities to both teach and to share his love and enthusiasm for music making. In spite of the fact that his Festival and Associated Board activities were often grueling, Head usually scheduled recitals, lecture-recitals and/or radio broadcasts in conjunction with them, further extending his sphere of influence with the music making public.

Michael Head's Contributions to Music Education/Vocal Pedagogy and his Philosophy of Music Education

Michael Head spent his life sharing his artistry, both as a performer and a composer, with innumerable audiences around the world, in the concert hall, and from the broadcast studio. He also spent his life as a teacher: as a Professor of Piano at the RAM, as a Festival adjudicator, as an Associated Board examiner, as a lecturer, and as a broadcaster. Whether as a performer/composer or as a teacher, his desire to share a love and enthusiasm for the art of music was paramount. He didn't write books or treatises on music education or pedagogy, but rather worked tirelessly to encourage others to engage in music making. During the course of his career, he delivered many talks and lectures about music and some of his statements and speeches have survived in newspaper clippings, in broadcast transcripts, and in his own handwritten notes. In addition, two long-playing recordings were made of his performances. These sources, together with his diaries, provided the information that was used to formulate Michael Head's philosophy of music education/vocal pedagogy.

Michael Head was first and foremost an advocate for amateur music making, a stance that was a natural outgrowth of the home music making experiences of his childhood. In addition, he was an inheritor of the Victorian traditions of the amateur music Festivals and Associated Board examination system. His tireless work under the auspices of these two widespread systems certainly attests to his support of the underlying principles which governed them, principles which were the two basic tenets of his philosophy of music education. These two tenets were: 1) the benefits to be derived by engaging in music making; and 2) the desirability of education and training for amateur music makers. In his work as a broadcaster and lecturer, too, he labored to educate others in the art of music making and encouraged his listeners to actively participate in making their own music. His advocacy on behalf of music making was also evident in his countless performances, which were noted for their enthusiasm, warmth and charm, exuding the air of music making among friends rather than the cold formality usually associated with the concert platform.

As noted above, Michael Head's efforts on behalf of music making often included talks or lectures on its various aspects. An examination of their content revealed specific instructions that were made to amateur musicians in order to enable them to improve their skills and therefore to derive greater pleasure from their music making efforts. First, the amateur performer was expected to be accurate in his or her execution of the written score, and to have sufficient technical ability to play and/or sing it well. Head the educator encouraged amateurs to work hard to improve their skills, and the two main topics which he addressed were "Color and Atmosphere in Music," and diction in singing. These topics were targeted because of their importance in aiding the performer

to accomplish the primary goal of the musician, that of interpretation, or communicating the composers' meaning or intent to the listener. Sub-topics he chose to discuss included: tone color and how to use it (in singing and piano playing), the importance of cantabile playing and some ways to accomplish it, and the importance of a legato line in singing.

Head considered singing to be "one of the greatest pleasures in the world" and so he devoted considerable attention to the singer's art. The basic tenet of his philosophy regarding the art of singing, or of vocal pedagogy, is that the aim of all good teaching it to help students acquire a voice that sounds easy and natural, and the extension of this principle of good teaching is that the teacher should instruct the student in the art of an easy and natural manner of singing songs. Over the course of the many years he spent instructing others in the art of singing, he made numerous statements regarding factors which contribute to accomplishing the stated goal of ease in singing. These factors included the technical aspects of singing as well as the performance aspects of singing. Some of the technical aspects he discussed were: 1) the voice should be an instrument at the command of the singer; 2) the need for a beautiful, resonant tone in singing; 3) the singer must be able to sing a legato line; 4) the singer must be able to sustain long phrases; 5) the singer must be able to sing with complete control of the dynamic adjustments—increasing the volume or fading it away at will; 6) the singer must have an agile and flexible instrument; and 7) the singer must be able to utilize vocal shading to reflect the emotion of the text. Some of the performance aspects Head discussed were: 1) the singer must discover the "mind of the poem"; 2) the singer must get right into the atmosphere of the poem; 3) the singer must sing with utmost clarity in the diction; 4) the singer must use the consonant sounds skillfully in order to convey the meaning of the

words; 5) the singer should learn repertoire that is outside the ordinary or commonplace; 6) the singer should reserve the use of slurs for special effects; 7) the singer should follow the natural accents and flow of the words; and 8) the singer should sing the selection in the original language if s/he has an accurate pronunciation.

Michael Head's Philosophy of Music Education/Vocal Pedagogy and his Compositions

The final question to be investigated in this study concerned the correlation between Michael Head's philosophy of music education and his compositions, with particular emphasis on his solo songs. His instrumental works fell into two main categories: those written for his professional colleagues in response to the joy and pleasure he experienced making music with them; and those written in response to the desire to craft pieces suitable for amateur musicians to study and learn for Associated Board exams. Head wrote his choral works for similar reasons. First, he wrote some pieces because the beauty of a particular text moved him to compose a setting which would enhance and illuminate that beauty. Second, he wrote some of his choral pieces for amateur choirs and choral festivals, seeking to provide music which would inspire by its beauty as well as encourage amateurs to improve their musical skills.

By far the largest category of Head's compositional efforts was solo song. In this area, too, more than one reason motivated his work. First, as he noted so often, he loved to write songs. He never really attempted to give a reason for this love, rather he said singing seemed such a natural means of expression for him and he loved to sing. He also noted that he always seemed to have tunes in his head and that he had always written

songs. Consequently, Head wrote the kind of songs he felt would be appealing to others, the kind of songs which would encourage others to sing, the kind of song which would enable others to experience some of the same pleasure he derived from singing. He wrote songs with lovely, lilting melodies, and songs with a robust, infectious bounce. He wrote songs which told of fairies, and songs which told of gods. Some of his songs are humorous while some of them bespeak aching loss, and some of them are spine-tingling while others are soothing lullabies. Almost without exception they combine an evocative text with an apt musical setting which encourages both amateurs and professionals to engage in the act of music making.

Michael Head emphasized the importance of "color and atmosphere" in music and his songs are replete with atmospheric effects and coloristic devices. He insisted that singers utilize precise and careful diction, and in his songs he was painstaking in his text-setting, following the natural accents and flow of the words. In addition, his songs require the singer to utilize many of the other desirable elements of good singing that he advocated in his lectures, broadcasts, and performances. The technical elements which are most often needed by the singer are: the need to sing a legato line; a command of the dynamic elements; the need to sing a long, smooth phrase; a need for agility and/or flexibility in the instrument. The performance elements most often required of the singer are: a need to discover the "mind" of the poem; a need to "get into the atmosphere" of the poem; the ability to color or shade the voice in order to aid in expression. Other performance elements which were discussed in the pedagogical analysis of selected songs included accompaniment, harmony, form, meter, and rhythm. These elements are related to musical accuracy and were not addressed directly by Michael Head in his lectures

about singing because he insisted upon and presumed musical accuracy as a minimum standard in song performance. However, because the relative difficulty of these elements has a significant impact on the selection of a particular song for study and performance, they were included in the pedagogical analysis. Of these elements, the ones which were most often a potential challenge for the singer were as follows: 1) rhythm, which was frequently complex in order to accommodate the flow of the text; 2) meter, which was often manipulated or changed, again usually to accommodate the flow of the text; and 3) harmony, which often shifted keys unexpectedly or included much chromaticism in order to paint the text or create the mood or atmosphere of the text. Certainly not all of the elements presented the same degree of difficulty in each song; rather, each song had its own unique combination of elements calculated to engage the interest of the performers and listeners, as well as to present challenges which would foster the musical growth and development of the participants.

Michael Head was an impassioned proponent of the art called MUSIC. By his own admission he loved to sing and his performances reflected his desire to share his love for the art of music and thereby to encourage others to participate in music making themselves. During his lifetime he enjoyed considerable renown as a composer and achieved some fame as a performer. These two aspects of his work, composing and performing, informed his teaching, a vocation which he pursued with unflagging dedication throughout his life. Because of his contributions to music, and particularly, to music education, Michael Head's life and work provide an exemplary model for music educators to study and emulate.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has focused on Michael Head's contributions to music education/vocal pedagogy as determined by his work as a performer, composer, examiner/adjudicator, lecturer/lecture recitalist, and broadcaster. During the course of the investigation additional topics of interest in the field of music education/vocal pedagogy have emerged. These can be divided into two main categories: those relating specifically to Michael Head and his career, and those relating generally to the field of music education/vocal pedagogy. Following are recommendations for further research concerning some of these topics:

Michael Head and His Career:

1) A search for additional music composed by Michael Head could provide new works to the teaching/performing repertoire.

2) A search for additional lecture notes and broadcast transcripts/recordings could provide additional insight into Head's teaching philosophy.

3) A search for additional newspaper articles, reviews, and interviews could provide additional insight into Head's teaching philosophy.

4) A pedagogical analysis of Head's instrumental, choral, and/or dramatic works could be undertaken in order to provide additional insight into his teaching philosophy.

5) A pedagogical analysis of Head's remaining songs could be undertaken in order to determine their contribution to the teaching/performing repertoire.

6) A search could be conducted to locate Head's former students and interviews could be conducted in order to discover aspects of his teaching philosophy regarding piano.

7) A search could be conducted to locate Head's adjudicating/examining colleagues and interviews could be conducted in order to determine additional aspects of his philosophy of music education.

General Topics Concerning Music Education

1) Additional studies concerning the lives of other vocal pedagogues could be conducted to determine their contributions to music education.

2) Additional studies could be conducted in which the works of composer/pedagogues are examined to determine their philosophy of music education/pedagogy, and the ways in which their works reflect their principles.

3) There is a need for additional studies to determine ways in which amateur music making could be encouraged and improved.

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APPENDIX A

SOLO SONGS OF MICHAEL HEAD

SOLO SONGS OF MICHAEL HEAD					
Title	Set	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Acquaint now thyself with him		Job, adap by Denice Koch		1960	B&H
As I went Home Zig-Zag	Nine Cornish Songs	Charles Causley	1974		Rob
Autumn's Breath		R. W. Dixon	1919	1920	B&H
Ave Maria (w/ piano and string quartet)	Three Sacred Songs	(trans. Nancy Bush)	1952	1954	B&H
Ave Maria Stella		Latin Sacred Text	1952		none
Back to Hilo	Six Sea Songs	C. Fox Smith		1949	B&H
Be merciful unto me, O God	Three Psalms	Psalm 57		1976	Rob
Behold, I Send an Angel		Denice Koch		1964	B&H
Beloved, Let Us Love One Another		Denice Koch		1964	B&H
Beloved	Over the Rim of the Moon	Francis Ledwidge		1920	B&H
Bird Song (w/ flute)		Marjorie Rayment	1964	1966	B&H
Blackbird Singing, A	Over the Rim of the Moon	Francis Ledwidge	1919	1920	B&H
Blunder, The	Five Songs	Jan Struther		1939	B&H
Burial, The	Nine Cornish Songs	Unknown	1974		Rob
Bridal Benediction, A		Denice Koch	??		Rob
Carol of the Field Mice, The		Kenneth Grahame	1970	1971	B&H
Child on the Shore (w/ violin)		Nancy Bush	1966	1976	Rob
Christmas Childhood, A	Songs of Reminiscence	Patrick Kavanagh	1973		Rob
Claribel		Tennyson		1920	B&H
Come take your lute		Helen Taylor		1930	B&H
Comet, The	Six Poems	Ruth Pitter		1946	B&H
Constancy	Six Poems	Ruth Pitter		1946	B&H
Cotswold Love	Three Cotswold Songs	John Drinkwater		1938	B&H
Dead Oak Tree Bough, The		Edward Thomas	1930		none

SOLO SONGS OF MICHAEL HEAD					
Title	Set	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Dear Delight		Walter de la Mare		1965	B&H
Dog's Life, A	Six Sea Songs	C. Fox Smith		1949	B&H
Dove, The		Keats		1969	B&H
Down by the Sally Gardens		folksong	1922		none
Dreaming Lake, The		Elizabeth Evelyn Moore		1925	B&H
Elizabeth's Song (unaccomp. Opt.)		Lascelles Abercrombie		1970	B&H
Entreat Me Not to Leave Thee		Bible	1956		none
Estuary, The	Six Poems	Ruth Pitter		1946	B&H
Fairies' Dance, The	Three Songs of Fantasy	Frank Dempster Sherman		1920	B&H
Fairy Tailor, The		Rose Fyleman		1945	B&H
Fallen Veils	Five Songs	D. G. Rossetti		1939	B&H
Foxgloves	More Songs of the Countryside	Mary Webb		1933	B&H
Funny Fellow, A	Three Songs of Fantasy	Frank Dempster Sherman		1925	B&H
Gaiete & Orior		Alastair Miller		1947	B&H
Garden Seat, The	More Songs of the Countryside	Thomas Hardy		1933	B&H
Gentle Ladie		Unknown	1919		none
Give a Man a Horse he can Ride		James Thomson		1923	B&H
Golden Ladie		Unknown	1919		none
Gondolier, The	Three Songs of Venice	Nancy Bush	1974	1977	B&H
Green Cornfield, A		C. Rossetti		1923	B&H
Green Rain	Five Songs	Mary Webb		1939	B&H
Gyllyngdune	Nine Cornish Songs	John Harris	1974		Rob
Had I a Golden Pound to Spend		Francis Ledwidge	1923	1962	B&H
Hail! Bounteous May		Milton		1930	B&H
Happy Wanderer, The		Helen Taylor		1931	B&H
Holiday in Heaven	Six Poems	Ruth Pitter		1946	B&H
Homecoming of the Sheep, The		Francis Ledwidge	1962	1966	B&H

SOLO SONGS OF MICHAEL HEAD					
Title	Set	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps		Shakespeare	1966	1967	B&H
I Arise from Dreams of Thee (w/ cello)		Shelley		1921	B&H
I will lift up mine eyes	Three Psalms	Psalm 121		1976	Rob
If You Ever Go to Dublin Town	Songs of Reminiscence	Patrick Kavanagh	1973		Rob
I'll Sail Upon the Dog Star		adap'n fr. Purcell?	1950		none
Island, The		Unknown	1917		none
King of China's Daughter, The	Five Songs	Edith Sitwell		1939	B&H
Kynance	Nine Cornish Songs	John Harris	1974		Rob
Lark, The		Sir William Davenant			none
Lark, The	Nine Cornish Songs	John Harris	1974		Rob
Last Morning in July, The			1957		none
Lavender Pond	Six Sea Songs	C. Fox Smith		1949	B&H
Lean out of the Window	Three Poems of James Joyce	James Joyce	1959	1961	B&H
Light of the World		Sacred Text	1957		none
Limehouse Reach	Six Sea Songs	C. Fox Smith		1949	B&H
Little Dreams, The	Three Songs of Fantasy	Eileen M. Reynolds		1925	B&H
Little Road to Bethlehem, The		Margaret Rose		1946	B&H
London Pride (unaccomp.)		Unknown	1936		none
Lone Dog		Irene McLeod		1960	B&H
Lord's Prayer, The				1954	B&H
Love Not Me For Comely Grace		[anon]		1921	B&H
Love Rhapsodie, A		Michael MacDermott	1922	1924	B&H
Love's Lament		C. Rossetti		1926	B&H
Ludlow Town		A. E. Housman		1930	B&H
Make a joyful noise unto the Lord	Three Psalms	Psalm 100		1976	Rob
Mamble	Three Cotswold Songs	John Drinkwater		1938	B&H

SOLO SONGS OF MICHAEL HEAD					
Title	Set	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Mary, Mary Magdalene	Nine Cornish Songs	Charles Causley	1974		Rob
Marjory's Song		Arthur Russell	1957		none
Matron Cat's Song, The		Ruth Pitter		1936	B&H
Memory of my Father	Songs of Reminiscence	Patrick Kavanagh	1973		Rob
Money O!	Songs of the Countryside	W. H. Davies		1929	B&H
My Room	Songs of Reminiscence	Patrick Kavanagh	1973		Rob
My Rose is in a Light Attire	Three Poems of James Joyce	James Joyce	1959		none
My Sword for the King		Helen Taylor	1925	1930	B&H
My Young Man's a Cornishman	Nine Cornish Songs	Charles Causley	1974		Rob
Mystic Melody	Nine Cornish Songs	John Harris	1974		Rob
Nature's Friend	Songs of the Countryside	W. H. Davies		1929	B&H
Nocturne	Over the Rim of the Moon	Francis Ledwidge		1920	B&H
Oh, for a March Wind		Winifred Williams		1965	B&H
O Gloriosa Domina (string quartet & piano)	Three Sacred Songs			1954	B&H
O Let No Star Compare with thee		Henry Vaughan		1920	B&H
O Sanctissima		Latin Sacred Text	1952		none
O to be in England		Robert Browning		1960	B&H
October Valley		Nancy Bush		1951	B&H
On a Lady Singing		Edward Quillinan		1920	B&H
On the Wings of the Wind		Alastair Miller	1958	1959	B&H
Piper, A (w/ flute)		Seumas O'Sullivan	1922	1923	B&H
Plague of Love, The		adap'n fr. Thomas Arne	1950	1962	B&H

SOLO SONGS OF MICHAEL HEAD					
Title	Set	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Plough Horses	Songs of Reminiscence	Patrick Kavanagh	1973		Rob
Porthleven	Nine Cornish Songs	J. D. Hosken	1974		Rob
Primrosy Gown, The		Edward Lockton		1934	B&H
Rainstorm	Three Songs of Venice	Nancy Bush	1974	1977	B&H
Robin Redbreast	Songs of the Countryside	W. H. Davies		1929	B&H
Robin's Carol, The		Patience Strong		1950	B&H
Rowley Mile, The	Songs of Reminiscence	Patrick Kavanagh	1973		Rob
Sancta et Immaculata Virginitas (w/ piano and string quartet)	Three Sacred Songs			1954	B&H
Sea Burthen, A	Six Sea Songs	C. Fox Smith		1949	B&H
Sea Gipsy, The		Richard Hovey	1919	1920	B&H
September Morning	Songs of Reminiscence	Patrick Kavanagh	1973		Rob
Ships of Arcady, The	Over the Rim of the Moon	Francis Ledwidge		1919	B&H
Singer, The (unaccomp.)	Five Songs	Bronnie Taylor		1939	B&H
Slumber Song of the Madonna, A		Alfred Noyes	1920	1921	B&H
Small Christmas Tree		Mona Gould		1951	B&H
Song of a Hero		Unknown	1919		none
Speciosus Forma	Four Medieval Latin Hymns	Latin Sacred Text	1954		None
Spring Grass	Snowbirds	Sri Suanda Ackarya			see Chorals
St. Mark's Square	Three Songs of Venice	Nancy Bush	1974	1977	B&H
Stabat Mater		Latin Sacred Text	1954		none
Star Candles		Margaret Rose		1942	B&H
Summer Idyll, A		Richard Le Gallienne		1924	B&H
Sweet Almond Blossom		Samuel Waddington		1931	B&H
Sweet Chance	Songs of the Countryside	W. H. Davies		1929	B&H
Sweet day so cool		George Herbert		1921	B&H

SOLO SONGS OF MICHAEL HEAD					
Title	Set	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Sweethearts and Wives	Six Sea Songs	C. Fox Smith		1949	B&H
Temper of a Maid, The	Songs of the Countryside	W. H. Davies		1929	B&H
Tewkesbury Road		John Masefield	1919	1924	B&H
There's Many will love a Maid		Penuel Grant Ross		1954	B&H
Three Mummers, The		Helen Taylor		1928	B&H
Three Witches		Unknown	1920		none
Thus spake Jesus		St. John 17	1954	1955	B&H
To Hell With Common Sense	Songs of Reminiscence	Patrick Kavanagh	1973		Rob
Twilight Turns to Amethyst, The	Three Poems of James Joyce	James Joyce	1959		none
Twins, The				1960	B&H
Vagabond Song, A	Three Cotswold Songs	John Drinkwater		1938	B&H
Viper, The	Six Poems	Ruth Pitter		1946	B&H
Weathers	More Songs of the Countryside	Thomas Hardy		1933	B&H
What Christmas Means to me		Joan Lane		1957	B&H
When First My Way to Fair I Took		A. E. Housman	1930		none
When I came forth this Morn	Songs of the Countryside	W. H. Davies		1929	B&H
When I Think Upon the Maidens		Philip Ashbrooke		1920	B&H
When in Longer Shadows		C. F. Marston	1917		none
When Sweet Ann Sings		Margaret Rose		1938	B&H
White Moths are on the Wing (string quartet)			1923		none
Why have you stolen my delight	More Songs of the Countryside	Francis Brett Young		1933	B&H
Woodpath in Spring, The	Six Poems	Ruth Pitter		1946	B&H
World is Mad, The (w/ clarinet)		Louis Macneice		1977	Emerson
You cannot dream things lovelier		Humbert Wolfe		1936	B&H

SOLO SONGS OF MICHAEL HEAD					
Title	Set	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
You shall not go a-Maying		Murdaunt Currie		1932	B&H

APPENDIX B

OTHER VOCAL WORKS OF MICHAEL HEAD

OTHER VOCAL WORKS OF MICHAEL HEAD						
Title	Set	Voices	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Ave Maria		SSA	words by Nancy Bush		1954	B&H
Bird of Morn, The	Snowbirds	Bar, 2 Sops, Contralto	Sri Ananda Acharya		1956	B&H
Blessed are They		Bar/Mezz solo, SATB	Psalm 32		1967	B&H
Christmas	Five Finnish Christmas Songs	SATB	Robert Armstrong	1970	1972	B&H
Christmas Bells	Five Finnish Christmas Songs	SATB	Robert Armstrong	1970	1972	B&H
Day in Town, A		Unison	Kathleen Boland		1964	B&H
Fairies' Dance, The		Fem Voices, Parts	F. D. Sherman		1930	B&H
Funny Fellow, A		2 voices	F. D. Sherman		1941	B&H
I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes		TTBB	Psalm 121	1976	1976	Rob
I Will Magnify Thee, O Lord		mixed	H. D. McKee		1977	Rob
Jabberwocky		partsong	Lewis Carroll	1917		unpub'd
Little Dreams, The		2-part female	E. M. Reynolds		1941	B&H
Little Road to Bethlehem, The		SATB	Margaret Rose		1947	B&H
Little Road to Bethlehem, The		SSA	Margaret Rose		1947	B&H
Little Road to Bethlehem, The		TTBB	Margaret Rose		1952	B&H

OTHER VOCAL WORKS OF MICHAEL HEAD						
Title	Set	Voices	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Little Road to Bethlehem, The		2-part	Margaret Rose		1954	B&H
Little Road to Bethlehem, The		SAB	Margaret Rose		1965	B&H
Lord's Prayer, The		SATB	traditional		1959	B&H
Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord		TTBB	Psalm 100		1976	Rob
Morning Salutation, A		Unison	A. Eustace Haydon		1949	B&H
New Shoes		Unison	Frieda Wolfe		1960	B&H
New Town		male choir & piano	Nancy Bush	1965		unpub'd
Night has a Thousand Eyes, The		TTBB	F. W. Bourdillon	1954	1955	B&H
On the Death of Smet-Smet		partsong	Rupert Brooke	1917		unpub'd
Oxen, The		mixed	Thomas Hardy		1980	Rob
Robin's Carol, The		2 part, treble	Patience Strong		1953	B&H
Robin's Christmas Carol, The			Marjory Rayment		1968	B&H
Sea Gipsy, The		parts for male voices	R. Hovey		1942	B&H
Ships of Arcady, The		SSA	Francis Ledwidge		1941	B&H
Slumber Song of the Madonna, A		SSAA	A. Noyes		1941	B & H Belwin
Sparrow on Christmas Morning, A	Five Finnish Christmas Songs	SATB	Robert Armstrong	1970	1972	B&H

OTHER VOCAL WORKS OF MICHAEL HEAD						
Title	Set	Voices	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Star Candles		3 voices, treble cleff	Margaret Rose		1942	B&H
Sweet Chance		SA	W. H. Davies		1929	B&H
Sweet Chance		ladies' choir	W. H. Davies		1980	B&H
Te decet Hymnus		partsong	Sacred Latin Text	1917		unpub'd
Three Mummers, The		SATB	Helen Taylor		1942	B&H
Three Mummers, The		2/3 part	Helen Taylor		1942	B&H
Uncle Frost	Five Finnish Christmas Songs	SATB	Robert Armstrong	1970	1972	B&H
When I Think Upon the Maidens		parts for male voices	Philip Ashbrooke		1935	B&H
When In Longer Shadows		partsong	C. F. Marston	1917		unpub'd
When it is Christmas	Five Finnish Christmas Songs	SATB	Robert Armstrong	1970	1972	B&H
Windy Weather		women's choir		1967		unpub'd
Wishes		unison (or solo)	Rose Fyleman		1960	B&H

OTHER VOCAL WORKS OF MICHAEL HEAD						
Title	Set	Voices	Poet	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Daphne and Apollo	Cantata	Sop & Bar soli, mixed chorus & orchestra	Nancy Bush		1964	B&H
Snowbirds	Cantata	ladies' choir w/ baritone solo	Sri Ananda Acharya		1956	B&H
Bachelor Mouse, The	Opera	children	Nancy Bush		1954	B&H
Bidder's Opera, The	Opera	four voices & piano	Nancy Bush			unpub'd
Key Money	Opera	light	Nancy Bush	1965		unpub'd
Day Return	Opera	light	Nancy Bush	1968		unpub'd
After the Wedding	Opera	light	Nancy Bush	1971		unpub'd
Through Train	Opera	schools	Nancy Bush	1965		unpub'd

APPENDIX C

INSTRUMENTAL WORKS OF MICHAEL HEAD

INSTRUMENTAL WORKS OF MICHAEL HEAD					
Title	Set	Instruments	Comp. Date	Publ. Date	Publisher
Babbul Kuml		orchestral poem	1922		unpub'd
By the River in Spring		flute & piano	1951	1964	B&H
Concerto		piano & strings	1922		unpub'd
Contrasts		12 cellos & percussion	1974		unpub'd
Echo Valley		clar & oboe		1962	B&H
Elegiac Dance	3 pieces for oboe	oboe and piano	1953	1954	B&H
Galloway Dance		piano solo	1950		unpub'd
Gavotte	3 pieces for oboe	oboe and piano	1953	1954	B&H
Legend		oboe	1956		unpub'd
Presto	3 pieces for oboe	oboe and piano	1953	1954	B&H
Romance and Dance-Caprice	two pieces	violin & piano	1970		unpub'd
Rondo		oboe/violin & piano		1974	B&H
Scherzo		horn/bassoon & piano	1970	1974	B&H
Siciliana		oboe & harpsichord/piano	1972	1975	Emerson
Sonatina		violin & piano	1975		unpub'd
Suite for Recorders or Pipes		recorders or pipes		1968	B&H
The World is Mad	(Louis Mac Neice)	clarinet, voice & piano		1977	Emer
Three Fantastic Pieces		bassoon & piano		????	Emer
Three Hill Songs		oboe & piano		1976	Emer
Trio		oboe, bassoon & piano	1968	1977	Emer

APPENDIX D

AWARDS WON AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

AWARDS WON AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

1919

Sir Michael Costa Scholar

1920

Sir Michael Costa Scholar
Bronze – Harmony and Sightsinging

1921

Sir Michael Costa Scholar
Cuthbert Nunn Prizeholder
Matthew Phillimore Prizeholder
Silver – Harmony and Sightsinging

1922

Sir Michael Costa Scholar
Philip L. Agnew Prizeholder
Charles Lucas Prizeholder
Certificate - Sightsinging
Bronze – Piano

1923

Sir Michael Costa Scholar
Henry R. Eyers Prizeholder
Philip L. Agnew Composition Prizeholder
Hubert Kiver Prize (Composition)
Oliveria Prescott Prizeholder
Certificate - Harmony
Silver – Piano

1924

Messrs. Chappell & Co. Prizeholder
Certificate - Piano