English Folk under the Red Flag: The Impact of Alan Bush's 'Workers' Music' on 20th Century Britain's Left-Wing Music Scene

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Abstract

Workers' music: songs to fight injustice, inequality and establish the rights of the working classes. This was a new, radical genre of music which communist composer, Alan Bush, envisioned in 1930s Britain. At the time, Bush was an established figure of the musical elite and was well known for his highly modernist, serial compositions. Yet he began theorising a new cultural movement, one which would diametrically oppose pre-existing musical norms found in capitalist-driven, bourgeois-influenced society. His radical vision prompted new compositions, concerts, events, publications and recordings in the run up to the second world war. Due to the inaccessible nature of the materials and its topical subject matter, much of this music has been disregarded in academic literature. Yet, by tracing the development of the movement, this thesis attempts to shed light on its pivotal role in the left-wing music scene. It considers how it continued to grow and diversify in the postwar era, even whilst Bush's ambitions for workers music reached a hiatus. It argues that Bush's theories, which underpinned the socialist concept of workers' music, were an elemental component of the work which cultivated the Second British Folksong Revival. The approach taken in this study is twofold: on the one hand it interprets vast amounts of unpublished, undocumented archival materials and, on the other, it goes on to contextualise such material within contemporary historical and cultural movements.

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Contents

Introduction

In his day, Alan Bush (1900-1995) was considered an influential composer, musicologist, writer, and lecturer, yet in more recent times his work has fallen into obscurity. His individualistic approach to musical composition is rarely acknowledged and his role, as the leading figure of many cultural initiatives, is often ignored. As this thesis will go on to explore, it is possible to credit this social and cultural marginalisation to his left-wing political convictions. Bush was a communist sympathiser and correspondingly he endeavoured to portray these sentiments, such as the importance of the working classes, through a broad spectrum of compositions. One particularly innovative style of composition was his 'workers' music', a new form of socialist music which Bush theorised and developed in the 1930s. This study will consider the impact of the workers' music genre, by showing the extent to which it differed from established musical practices and how it became the genesis of a new, socialist, second culture of British music.

Alan Bush was appointed at the young age of 25 to the role of Professor of Composition and Harmony at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) where he remained for 52 years (1925-1978). In 1928 he temporarily suspended this teaching post to move to Berlin and continued his music studies in piano, musicology and philosophy in order to learn 'more about the world, more about politics'.[1] During this time, he came into close contact with Hanns Eisler (1898-1962) and Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) whose influence radicalised Bush's political opinions, markedly affecting his musical output for the rest of his life. On his return to the academy, Bush was accepted as a musical authority and he was often called upon to speak at symposiums and interval talks. 'Musicology' was not a fully developed discipline in British Universities in the early twentieth century, yet in 1936-37 he gave the first ever series of lectures on music history at the RAM.[2] During this time, he proved himself to be a prolific composer and wrote in many different genres. For example, he wrote works for professional orchestras, chamber ensembles and amateur choirs, as well as going on to complete four full operas

[1] Bush, *In my eighth decade and other essays,* 20.
[2] Kerman, *Contemplating Music,* 27.

and scoring multiple musical pageants. However, regardless of his vast oeuvre and his active professional career, it is apparent that his work has received much less attention than those of his contemporaries, such as John Ireland (1879-1962), Michael Tippett (1905-1998) and Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). Any assessments that have been made of his music are often narrow, with writers focusing on his role as a modernist composer or evaluating his political interests through the veil of his art music. This is a narrative that must change. As a composer who wrote throughout the whole of the twentieth century and played an active role in many grassroots organisations, Bush's work uniquely encompasses a turbulent era of political and social change. The two world wars revolutionised the role of music in people's lives and the breadth and topicality of Bush's work neatly encompasses these changes.

In 1925 Bush joined the Labour movement and by 1935 he had become a fully-fledged member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). He surrounded himself with eminent east European composers and musicologists that he had met in Berlin and who shared his socialist principles: including Eisler, Georg Knepler (1906-2003) and Ernst Hermann Meyer (1905-1988). During the same period, he became director of the London Labour Choral Union and founded the Workers' Music Association (WMA). Both societies had musical performance and education at the heart of their work, with the intention that music would bring working-class people together to celebrate their identity. Bush was a major contributor of musical material for these proletarian organisations, writing seemingly simplistic yet passionate works for non-musical members to engage with. Compositionally, such works contrasted with the other compositions Bush wrote in his early career. As a new professor at the RAM, he also composed highly individual and dryly complex works to explore various new composition techniques, from which he developed a new method of serial composition called 'thematic composition' or 'total thematicisation'. This he used in various pieces including *Relinquishment* (1928) and *Dialectic* (1929). However, after the Second World War, Bush changed direction as a composer. In response to Zhdanov's dictates and the 1948 Prague Manifesto, he condemned the complex intellectualism of his earlier works. For example, he rejected the

'formalism' of his Symphony no. 1 in C (1939-40); 'formalism' being a derogatory term applied by the Soviet regime to any 'complex' music. Therefore, after 1948, Bush adopted a simplified national style based on folksong models for all his genres of composition, with the aim to make 'art music' accessible to all. These post-1948 works have suffered from their political association as many believe that Bush's socialist principles stood in the way of his potential as an innovative composer and that he renounced his individuality when he began writing for the masses.[3] Thus, many critics dislike this uncomplicated national style, instead favouring Bush's earlier work which they regard as more 'highly sophisticated' and individualistic music.

By the time Bush began writing in the 1920s, the First British Folksong Revival of 1880-1915 had already gained momentum and was a well-established movement. Collectors had gathered and distributed many traditional melodies across Britain, in the belief that they were effectively safeguarding the country's heritage. The majority of music collected by members of the bourgeoisie, typified by Cecil Sharp towards the end of the nineteenth century, represented the upper class' nostalgic image of romanticised folklore.[4] For many English romantic composers writing during the turbulence of the twentieth century, the lure of representing a pre-war, pre-industrial era of bucolic simplistic peasantry through a romanticised pastiche of folksongs is understandably appealing, even if such folksongs projected a patronising and simplistic view of the lives of the lower classes. Whether these songs were 'anti-socialist' is debatable, but they certainly did little to further the cause of the working man and were therefore not in keeping with Bush's radical left-wing theories. Whilst Bush arranged settings of some preindustrial folksongs, for example 'Rosetta and Her Gay Ploughboy', he only did so after he signed the Prague Manifesto in 1948. Before the war, he nigh-on completely avoided the use of folksong and instead created his own genre of socialist music:

[3] Bullivant, 'Modernism, Politics, and Individuality in 1930's Britain' and Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and his Music,* 38-39.
[4] Boyes, *The Imagined Village* and Brocken, *The British Folk Revival.*

'workers' music'.[5] As this thesis will demonstrate, in the 1930s, he theorised extensively about 'workers' music' with the aim of creating a form of music which was truly *of* the people and showcased the real needs and desires of the working classes. Although aesthetically, workers' music is far removed from any style of folksong, it is possible that many of its underlying principles created a platform for new ideas. It is plausible that these ideas effected remarkable changes within the old musical establishment and informed the social lives of the working classes, to the extent that they formed a new movement of music; a new culture which expressed a happy and meaningful existence free of oppression and injustice. This work, supposedly, led to the creation of the Workers' Music Association and may have informed the development of other major institutions, such as Topic Records and *Sing* magazine. There is also correspondence to suggest that he developed working relationships with contemporary folksong scholars, including Ewan MacColl and Albert (Bert) Lloyd, prominent members of the Second Folksong Revival.

Bush's work is certainly worthy of advanced study. His unique position in the history of British music is fascinating: whilst some composers romantically harked back to halcyon days of rustic idylls through folksong pastiches, others saw strict modernist techniques as the only way forward. Bush, on the other hand, paved a path between these two narratives. In doing so, he created a new style of music, a music for the people symbolic of united man standing against the oppressed. This was pure communist music, and the study of it provides a fantastic base for a broader evaluation of important topical issues including: the role of the arts in society, the role music plays in forming nationalist and personal identity, the issues of the bourgeois re-contextualising folksong, the polarisation of high and low art, and the constraining effects of institutional control on the license of artistic freedom. Since the 1980s, major folksong scholars have claimed that communist music, and the work of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB),

[5] 'Rosetta and Her Gay Ploughboy' was one of the folksongs Bush set for his *Ten English Folksongs arranged for Mixed Voices or Female Voice Choir* (1953). The first written record of this romantic ballad is found in a collection of broadsides printed by J. Harkness during 1840-66.

influenced the second revival of folksong in Britain. This study intends to add weight to this argument and to curtail any doubt which may have arisen in more recent academic literature.

Overall, this thesis wishes to explore Bush's legacy on twentieth century British history through the way in which he gave the people a voice and wove it into works symbolically bearing the banner of the communist red flag. To do so, it aims to consider three main areas of Bush's work. Firstly, it will consider how Bush's attitude towards folksong and workers' music changed throughout the twentieth century. Secondly, it will show whether his attitude reflected, or opposed, any popular attitudes towards folksong and left-wing politics in Britain. Thirdly, it will consider if any of Bush's work fed into the development of the Second British Folksong Revival, or if he simply created a type of English Socialist Realism.

Each chapter of this thesis will address a specific issue concerning Bush's work as a left-wing composer. Chapter One will consider the notion of a second culture and Bush's role in its creation during the 1930s. During the 1920s, Bush had gained a reputation as a highly skilled, modernist composer. He was a well-educated upper-class intellectual and a respectable member of the elite British musical establishment. Therefore, it is seemingly surprising that he was not only interested in socialism as an abstract ideology, but that in the 1930s, he also began to theorise about politically motivated music. He wrote extensively about the importance of promoting left wing music, touting beliefs such as:

> Music in capitalist culture is nearly always conscious or unconscious propaganda for the present system in one way or another. It is not necessarily composed and performed for this purpose, though that also can happen on occasion (war, jubilee, royal funeral, etc.). Irrespective of the composer's or performer's intention, music can act as propaganda for the present system, just as other cultural institutions do (film, theatre, broadcast, newspaper, magazine, novel, etc.). Music in capitalist culture tends to divert the listener

> from politics and occupy his mind with vague aspirations after nothing in particular rather than with the problems of everyday life.[6]

This extract is reflective of many of his writings from this period. They recognise the need for an alternative form of music, one which was independent of the 'current capitalist system'. Many of Bush's close friends understood and recognised his passion for a politically motivated music. This is illustrated in Meyer's writing:

> Alan Bush, Britain's foremost progressive composer, is filled with an iron determination to aid the workers' struggle for peace, freedom and progress. It is his unshakable conviction that the composer can make a vital contribution to the progress of society only if he sides with the forces of Socialism. It is this conviction which enables him to speak, through his music, with great passion and vigour.[7]

As Bush became more resolute in his beliefs and his music began to realise his ideology, a new left-wing cultural art-form arose in London. This new cultural scene has been examined by Ian Watson and Duncan Hall in contemporary academic literature and they link it to the rise of a 'second culture'.[8] This chapter hopes to develop an understanding of the second culture through Bush's writings and explore the way in which music of a second culture differed from other popular music forms of the day. It will also look at Bush's colleagues' attitudes to folk music in order to demonstrate why Bush believed that folksong was not a suitable platform for expressing a political ideology.

Chapter Two will look at the genre of music Bush created to replace folk music: a new style he termed 'workers' songs'. Many members of the musical establishment accused Bush of lowering his standards when he began to write short works for working class choirs and as such, they have suffered serious neglect in contemporary academia. However, some of these works are seemingly quite innovative, combining a skilful and inventive approach to harmony with a simplicity suitable for

[6] Bush, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', 1.
[7] Meyer, 'The Choral Works', 33.
[8] Watson, *Song And Democratic Culture in Britain*, and Hall, '*A Pleasant Change from politics*'.

inexperienced singers. Not only are the aesthetic qualities of these works worthy of greater scrutiny, but they neatly demonstrate the way in which Bush developed his socialist ideas throughout the 1920s and thirties. He finalised his ideas in a 1936 article 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' and this gives the reader an exacting set of guidelines on how to write music that differs from music of the dominant culture. This chapter will use that article as a blueprint and will compare five of his workers' songs to it, all from different periods. These will be: two of his early workers' songs, 'Song to Labour' (1926) and 'To the Men of England' (1928), a middling work 'Question and Answer' (1931), and two later works 'Song of the Hunger Marchers' (1934) and 'Labour's Song of Challenge' (1936). The extent to which these songs match those guidelines set out in 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' will show how successful they were, theoretically, as an alternative form of music. However, a culture can only be established through the real, physical, everyday activities of people; it is not formed on writing paper. Therefore, in order to assess the true success of these songs, it is also important that this chapter should consider how well these songs were received amongst members of the public, the working-class choirs, and by members of the musical establishment.

The third chapter will continue studying the growth of a second culture in 1930s Britain by focusing on some of the large proletarian musical events Bush helped organise. There were three main events, each of which were ambitiously large visual and musical spectacles. They were called: The Pageant of Labour 'Towards Tomorrow' (1934), A Pageant of Co-operation (1938), and the Festival of Music for the People (1939). Each of these three theatrical productions were in line with Bush's beliefs as, in principle, such events could rally the working classes into action, demonstrate socialism through within the arts, and give the people a voice. In other words, they could engender a second culture.

> To sum up, a Workers' Music Festival will be a demonstration of devotion to music as well as to the working-class political movement. It will show forth the workers as the standard-bearers of art as well as of social revolution, as the propagators of new art

> forms and the enthusiasts for the art of previous periods as well as the conscious builders of a new social order.[9]

Bush left detailed instructions on the best way to stage large left-wing musical events by writing a paper titled 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival'. It was written in 1936, the same year as 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' therefore it echoes many of the same ideas, the central theme of both being: 'In every case the fight of the workers against capitalism and their ultimate victory must be the final impression'.[10] It was important to Bush that these events should differ from the norm:

> The Workers' Music-Festival. This must differ essentially from a music-festival organised by a bourgeois musical society; not for the sake of being different, but because the world-outlook of those taking part is different and result will only come out the same if some repressive influence is at work, perhaps unconsciously, which will mould the form of the festival into the likeness of something already familiar in the bourgeois musical world.[11]

Therefore, those productions which Bush chose to work on had overtly propagandist programmes. Each one tells the story of the historic struggles of the working classes, extolling the honest strength of the labouring man whilst demonising the wealthy and powerful as deceitful and oppressive. Bush continues, in 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', to detail more specific issues a composer, organiser, or conductor should address when setting up a workers' festival. It is interesting to consider to what extent these theoretical ideas were realised in the pageants. It may be presumed that Bush was forced to make some ideological concessions, compromising his artistic and theoretical vision to some degree, due to the size and scale of such events. The scale of these events also meant that they drew attention from a wide variety of people all of whom had differing opinions, not necessarily positive, on the success of such events. Yet the size of the three productions made them a perfect vehicle for a second culture as, theoretically, Bush could reach out

[9] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 13.
[10] Ibid., 10.
[11] Ibid., 11.

to the masses and inform them of an alternative way of life in only one performance. If this was achieved, then he successfully established a second culture of British music.

The challenges that many British musicians faced during World War Two were considerable and will form the basis for the fourth chapter. This was a turbulent era of British politics and musicians were under pressure to conform to party-politics, to bring the nation together under one national, homogenised voice. Any composer who worked against this unified voice, by openly defying the government's agenda, suffered consequences. However, the second cultural movement had defined itself as being in opposition to the establishment, therefore, those at the epicentre of the new left-wing scene came under the scrutiny of the government. This resulted in Bush having a volatile relationship with MI5, the MOI, and the BBC. At times, they shunned his work and vilified his character yet at others, they actively promoted it as propaganda to aid the war effort. The extent to which the pressures of these political and musical establishments affected Bush, and if he altered his musical style and ideological convictions to suit, will be considered in this chapter. When looking back at Bush's work in the 1930s, it seemed as though his attitude to composition and socialist music would never change. He had advocated his strict methods and theories so widely and emphatically that it would be surprising if these were dismissed for the purpose of the government's war. Yet, the pressure of the government, and the BBC, combined with the disruption to the London music scene, made it very difficult for any left-wing composer working in Britain at this time.

Chapter Five begins by looking at the lasting effects of the war on Bush's political ideology. After the war, Bush's interest in workers' music had all but faded, as he began politicising his art music instead of promoting socialism through workers' songs. He signed the Prague Manifesto in 1948, which came out of a series of conventions earlier in the same year and this decreed that all communist composers should reject modernist compositional techniques and instead adopt a 'national style'. It was stated that a national style should be popular, accessible to all people, and understood by the masses, whilst promoting local cultures and traditions: essentially, this was a new form of 'English Realism'. Thus, Bush denounced his previous modernist compositions, like his

Symphony no. 1 in C (1939-40), and instead began to develop 'Englishness' in his music. This is no easy task: a country's musical style is difficult to define because its cultural functions, and relationships to other musical traditions, vary considerably over the course of history. Yet, like many other composers, Bush turned to local folklore and song in order to connect to 'the peoples' music' of the country. An analysis of *The Nottingham Symphony* (1949) will explore how he practically applied the compositional features of 'English music' into symphonic music, using programmatic elements and modes to replace the serious features of his art-music. The extent to which Bush's use of parochial musical traditions were portrayed authentically will also be investigated. Bush's localised research into the musical rituals of the North East was extensive, to the effect that he wrote an opera, *Men of Blackmoor* (1956), about the working conditions and lifestyles of nineteenth century County Durham and Northumbrian coal miners and he wrote the first 'classical' work for the Northumbrian Smallpipes, *Northumbrian Impressions* (1953). *Northumbrian Impressions* is one of Bush's many forgotten works even though it paved the way for other composers, such as John Casken, Michael Finnissy and Peter Maxwell Davies, to recontextualise this enculturated instrument into different musical genres. Yet, as these works show, Bush's use of parochial folksong is far from clear cut and the extent to which these works were authentic, the extent to which they were 'of the people', and the extent to which they promoted a left-wing socialist agenda, is questionable.

The fifth chapter will follow on by studying Bush's legacy through the establishment of the Workers' Music Association (WMA) and its *Topic Records* label. The WMA was founded in 1936, 'for the organisation and publication of music in the Labour Movement' and Bush was actively involved in the association, as a founder and its president from 1946. It was widely influential in the left-wing music scene as most of Bush's pre-war workers' music was published through the WMA and the massed choirs required for proletarian musical events were often derived from the various organisations and activities affiliated with the WMA. Thus, this organisation was key in developing Bush's socialist ideas in the 1930s and had a large role in establishing, what Watson termed, a second culture. Therefore, this thesis will finish by looking at the impact such an organisation had on

the development of the Second British Folk Revival, by considering how the principles that led to the development of the second culture fed into the socialist ideas driving the work of ethnomusicologists in the 1950s. It will consider Bush's relationship with Bert Lloyd, his input in the creation of works such as 'Folk Song in England' and other seminal folklore scholarship of the era, as well as his role in the running of *Topic Records.* Thus, the question of this chapter is: at a time when Bush's output of left-wing compositions began to wane, did his earlier socialist work feed into a much bigger movement? Did the Second British Folksong Revival have feet in the 1930s second culture of workers' music, developed by the committed communist composer, Alan Bush?

Literature Review

i) Overview: Politics vs Popularity

Alan Bush has only relatively recently become a figure of study in British music and consequently there are only a limited number of published works on him. The reason for this delayed interest in Bush's work may be due to old, prejudiced attitudes towards his political activities. Communists were disliked for most of the twentieth century, as demonstrated in Francis Somerville's article for *The Irish Monthly* (1949) which reflects the anti-communist sentiment that was prevalent in Britain during Bush's lifetime.[12] Somerville stated that the CPGB's aims were to 'destroy social order' so as to establish communism. He bemoaned the communist take-over of trade unions, reputedly known as 'red unions', via the use of manipulative voting strategies and delay tactics in order to gain unrepresentative decisions. He also reflected on the party's 'inglorious' history due to its fickle allegiance with Russia, pointing out that the CPGB supported the war until the Russian-German pact became known whereupon they 'reversed their policy and pursued a defeatist campaign'.[13] The party had another 'volte face' when Hitler invaded Russia in June 1941 by supporting the war to assist the Russians. In the article, Somerville went on to suggest that this attempt by the CPGB to 'defend the indefensible' for over twenty months resulted in many artists and composers distancing themselves from the internal dealings of the organisation. Sommerville believed that even the most stoic socialists were 'appalled' by the CPGB. This is true of a few of Bush's close colleagues, including Randall Swingler.[14] More general dislike of communist ideology was also echoed by critics, especially when party-political objectives were expressed through music. For example, whilst writing about the 'Festival of Music for the People' in 1940, Basil Main stated:

> Whether this was to be regarded as an attempt to drag music into politics or politics into music, the motive in either case was to be reproved. […] The organiser … [was] Alan

[12] Somerville, 'Communism in Britain'.
[13] Ibid., 87.
[14] Croft, *Comrade Heart,* 100.

> Bush, and it is chiefly due to him that this unhappy association of music and politics exists in Great Britain.[15]

These negative attitudes, towards communists and their ideology, were only amplified by the catastrophic consequences of postwar Soviet policies. Such attitudes had a detrimental effect on the reception of Bush's compositions after the war, as Anthony Payne stated in 1964: 'his [Bush's] neglect, whether on ideological grounds or otherwise, is disgraceful'.[16] In the same year, Scott Goddard reiterated the fact that Bush's works were 'astonishingly underperformed' and that 'rare as performances may be (repeats are still more rare)'.[17] In both articles, it can be ascertained that both Payne and Goddard blame Bush's political convictions for his obscurity in the world of modernist composition. In more recent decades, Ian Kemp (1987) and Suzanne Robinson (2002), reflect on these writings and have studied the negative effect of composers' political alliances throughout the twentieth century. Whilst Kemp considered the positive inspiration which Bush's contemporary, Michael Tippett, gained from writing socialist workers' songs, he believed that the rules and regulations placed upon those associated with the Soviet music scene had a tiring effect on their music, including Bush's.[18] As well as this, Robinson stated that Bush, like his foreign artistic associates Hanns Eisler and Bertolt Brecht, submitted his musical and theoretical individuality to mass action and political dogma.[19] This stereotype is highly discredited by one of the few contemporary academics who has published multiple works about Bush's music, Joanna Bullivant. In a short article 'Modernism, Politics, and Individuality in 1930's Britain' (2009), she focuses on Bush's modernist approach to compositional technique and his involvement with left-wing politics. These ideas are further developed in her new, richly detailed, publication *Alan Bush, Modern Music, and the Cold War* (2017). Unlike previous writers, Bullivant uniquely demonstrates how much

[15] Maine, *New Paths in Music,* 92-3.
[16] Payne, 'Alan Bush', *Musical Times,* 263-5.
[17] Goddard, 'Alan Bush: Propagandist and Artist', 697.
[18] Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and his Music,* 38-39.
[19] Robinson, 'From Agitprop to Parable', 86.

individuality Bush *gained* from his political convictions, illustrating how his relationships with fellow communist musicians inspired him and gave his work greater originality.

ii) Archives

Although few writings on Bush have been published, he left behind a mass of unpublished work currently held at the Bush family home in Histon, Cambridgeshire. These include his unpublished articles, his correspondence, handwritten scores, notebooks and personal artefacts, which are available to view due to the supportive work of his daughter, Rachel O'Higgins, who continues to promote his legacy. More recently, a small selection of newspaper reports, journal articles and some of Bush's letters and handwritten scores have been categorised and moved to The British Library in London. A useful archive has been the Janey Buchan Political Song Collection (JBPSC) which is held at Glasgow University. This has a large quantity of papers, songs and magazines associated with various left-wing musical movements of the twentieth century, including those of the Workers' Music Association. Some of the papers are published online, yet the JBPSC has a vast number of resources many of which have not yet been digitised. I am thankful to the curator, John Powles, for his help and support in my research. Another source of original documentation is the BBC's Written Archives Collection, in Caversham. Not only does this collection include memos and letters demonstrating the dissention between Bush and the BBC, but it also demonstrates predicaments faced by other composers during the Second World War. During the war, prominent artists were placed under pressure by the government to promote British democratic values and those who refused were placed under investigation by the Secret Service. The Kew National Archives have recently released papers by MI5 on composers the government believed to be rebellious, including Alan Bush, Randall Swingler, Montagu Slater, and others associated with the WMA. These written accounts at Kew demonstrate how the government attempted to supress Bush's political influence during the war. For example, Bush was recommended for a transfer to the Army Education Corps (AEC) in May 1945, yet the files show that he was instead put on a draft for the Far East as a medical orderly because of

the intervention of the Secret Service.[20] The final archive to be mentioned is that of the late Aubrey Bowman, as it holds artefacts, documents and paraphernalia relating to the WMA. When Ron Tendler donated Bowman's collection to the Bishopsgate Institute in London, he kindly informed me of its contents and suggested that it may be of interest, which it certainly was.

iii) Letters

Bush's relationships with his contemporaries are neatly documented in the vast collection of his correspondence. He was a prolific letter writer and he kept facsimiles of many letters, along with the replies from their recipients: these are now preserved in the Histon Archive (HA) and The British Library. Although Bush rarely comments in detail on the workings of his current compositions, they form a detailed insight into the reception of his work and his relationships with other musicians. For example, the correspondence between Bush and Ralph Vaughan Williams demonstrates a fascinating conflict of interests between the two men as Vaughan Williams adamantly states that music should not be used for political gain alongside a discussion about his work to promote the 'music of the people' and his musical settings for the WMA.[21] The collection of letters between Bush and Britten, on the other hand, shows how they both had similar perceptions of workers' music, to the extent that in July 1945 Bush asked Britten to contribute to a talk taking place in Switzerland on 'music & life in general'.[22] There are also letters between Britten's librettist, Montagu Slater, Bush, and left-wing writer Randall Swingler, all of whom worked closely together on the organisation and content of co-operative musical pageants. The extensive correspondence between Bush and Ireland has been recently compiled by Rachel O'Higgins in *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland 1927-1961* (2006). Her editorial observations provide this book with an in-depth commentary on Bush's life and clarifies useful dates and events. The letters depict the long and intimate

[20] File on Bush dated 22.4.45, Note marked 'To A.E.2. re A. D. Bush'. TNA: KV 2/3515_1, 12.
[21] Some of these letters have been published in *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958,* yet most remain at the Histon Archive.
[22] These letters were stolen from the Histon Archive but were recovered by the Britten-Pears Foundation in 2009 and placed in The British Library.

friendship between the two men which spanned most of their careers. They also demonstrate the co-dependency Bush and Ireland had on one another. Ireland, who was an eminent and well-established composer, had a large influence over British musical establishments but he struggled financially throughout his lifetime. Bush inherited a large amount of money when his father died and helped Ireland by lending him the money to buy a house. At times when Bush's work was received negatively due to its perceived political intent he often relied on the reputation of Ireland, a highly esteemed non-political composer, who vouched for his work. This reciprocal relationship could be construed in a cynical, materialistic fashion yet this would belie the intimacy of their friendship. Their discussions covered many topics, including Bush's socialist aspirations and, although Ireland respected Bush's political leanings, he was not inclined to become an active socialist himself. Only at the start of the war, when Ireland was commissioned to write *Epic March* did he consider quoting the theme from the socialist anthem the *Internationale* as the opening to the third movement and asked for Bush's advice: 'As the U.S.S.R is now our gallant Ally, I do not see how anyone can object to my quoting the Internationale- do you?'.[23]

iv) Alan Bush's Articles

During his lifetime, Bush wrote many articles for music journals, symposiums, lectures, and media broadcasts. There are over eighteen unpublished articles written by Bush which remain stored within the Alan Bush Trust's archives. However, thanks to the generosity of Bush's daughter, Rachel O'Higgins, it has been possible to access and read all of these articles which throw light onto Bush's ideas and theories concerning the composition of socialist music, especially the composition and importance of workers' music in the mid-1930s. These papers are referenced extensively in the first three chapters of this thesis and the most prominent of which, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' (1936), was written for the presentation to members of the co-operative. It is a useful piece

[23] This was written a few months after Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941, so British feelings towards the Soviet Union were generous. The original letter is from John Ireland to Alan Bush, dated 10 September 1941 and is marked PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL. It is currently held in The British Library. O'Higgins, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland 1927-1961,* 137.

of writing which clearly sets out Bush's idea of a perfect workers' song: it includes specific instructions for composers of workers' music alongside more general statements such as 'The music must be easily understood'.[24] Yet this is only one of Bush's pre-1945 articles: as previously pointed out, this thesis will draw on many others, nearly all of which are unpublished. These include 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism' (1934/36), 'Music and the Working Class Struggle' (1935-6), 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival' (1936), 'Marxism and Music' (1940), 'Music in the Soviet Union' (1944?), etc. Nearly all are undated, yet the year is often indicated from the content of the article. It is also unclear why he wrote these pieces, though it may be assumed that many were written as lectures or as papers. On average, they span three to 12 pages long and though they all touch on different subjects, most are focused on the issues of writing music as a communist. Even those that cover other subject areas, such as 'What is Modern Music?' (1936-37), are correspondingly similar in style and content, indicating the consistency of Bush's theories.

Many of Bush's papers reflect personal opinions, but they often relate to current-day issues too. For example, in 1943, a time when the UK was attempting to better relations with Russia, Bush edited a *Handbook of Soviet Musicians* (1943). He was blatant about the positive intentions of such a work, stating in his foreword that:

> The growing friendship between the peoples of Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. stimulates mutual interest in the cultural achievements of both countries, and will no doubt make available the data which are indispensable to complete mutual understanding on both sides.[25]

After the war Bush continued writing essays and a greater proportion of these were published. He compiled seven prominent essays in *In my eighth decade and other essays* (1980) yet these essays were less instructive than the earlier unpublished ones. They reveal fewer radical theories and cover

[24] Bush, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', 2.
[25] Boelza, *Handbook of Soviet Musicians*, vi.

a wider range of subjects: for example, 'In my eighth decade' (1980) looks at his life as a musician and 'The Byron Symphony' (1973) simply reflects on his own composition. One main point of interest which can be found in nearly all of Bush's papers written in the 1950s and later, is the regular assertion that he believed there was a 'crisis' in modern musicology and composition. He labels John Cage's work 'ludicrous' and makes clear his disapproval of Schoenberg's serial dodecaphonic compositional method. He critiques the teachings of Hindemith and Schoenberg and confirms that 'They may both be wrong or partially wrong'.[26] These opinions were reflective of the new stance he was taking against the composition of atonal works, in keeping with the pledge made in the 1948 Prague Manifesto. In his introduction to Erno Lendvai's *Béla Bartók; An Analysis of his Music* (1971), Bush lists those treaties which 'show the way forward to the composer and to help him to find a firm foothold in the period of chaos which followed the disintegration of the major and minor scale period'.[27] This list includes treaties by Boris Asaviev, Deryck Cooke and Ernest Ansermet, and he adds Lendvai to this, commending Lendvai on his scientific deconstruction of Bartók's use of modality drawn from traditional Hungarian folksongs.[28] These writings are suggestive of how Bush attempted to avoid the perceived 'crisis' and how he formed a new approach to composition after signing the degree in 1948. They certainly match the theories he had spelled out in the early fifties, in the article 'On the Study and Teaching of Musical Composition' (1952). This article recommended that students of composition should not study modern music and instead, should research baroque music and folksong, 'to avoid the dogmatism of one or other of the new systems of composition'.[29]

There is a lot of repetition between the postwar articles, both published and unpublished, proving that Bush's theories were continuously consistent: for example, 'National character an essential ingredient in musical art today' (1969) reflects many of the ideas found in an unpublished

[26] Bush, *In my eighth decade*, 47.
[27] Bush, in the Introduction to Lendvai, *Béla Bartók*, viii.
[28] He also makes his approval of fellow composer, Bernard Stevens, known in his chapter contribution to *Bernard Stevens and His Music: A Symposium* (1989). In this he discusses Steven's intricate application of modal harmony in his choral work *Hymn to Light* (1970). Bush, 'The Choral Works', 26-27.
[29] Bush, *In my eighth decade,* 45.

article written 15 years earlier, 'Problems of Musical Theory' (1954), and also shares many of the ideas expounded upon in a lengthy discussion titled 'What Does Music Express?' in *Marxism Today* (1963).[30] In these three pieces, he questions if there is such a thing as a natural musical expression and whether music can express human feelings. In the latter article, he goes on to consider Deryck Cooke's 1959 treatise, which argues that music has a direct language of emotions with its own detailed, specific idioms of meaning: an 'Esperanto of intervals'. Such a theory is dismissed by Bush, but the discussion makes for interesting reading.

v) Other Publications

Bush's family have worked to keep his legacy alive by supporting and publishing new writings. They have set up the Alan Bush Music Trust which publishes *Clarion*, its yearly newsletter, each edition of which has one article addressing various aspects of his work. Nancy Bush's biographical work on her husband, *Alan Bush: Music Politics and Life* (2001), gives a chronological overview to his life. It covers his early years in a wealthy upper-class household and his time in Berlin when he became involved in the Second Viennese School. This was the early thirties, a time when the democratic failings of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) were apparent: the rise of the Brown-Shirts, antisemitism, and hyperinflation. Bush saw democracy as the cause of the unjust social divide between Britain's rich and poor and he had similar issues with the Indian caste system which he experienced whilst examining for the ABRSM. Whilst this book provides useful details about Bush's life, it is rarely sentimental and refrains from providing any in-depth conceptual or musical analysis. The introduction to Stewart R. Craggs' *Alan Bush; A Source Book* (2007) also provides a chronology of the composer's life, basing its information on sources such as letters and other personal artefacts.[31] The main content is a bibliographic list, providing detailed information about the performances of Bush's works and the locations of scores and manuscripts. This is a useful source for anyone studying the life and works of Bush, however it must be noted that there are some factual inaccuracies.

[30] Bush, 'Problems of Musical Theory' and Bush, 'What Does Music Express?', 204-209.
[31] Craggs, *Alan Bush*.

Two works on Bush that were published during his lifetime are *Tribute to Alan Bush on his Fiftieth Birthday* (1950) and Ronald Stevenson's *Time Remembered: Alan Bush - An 80th Birthday Symposium* (1980). These are collections of anecdotal writings by members of the WMA and Bush's close musical acquaintances including Vaughan Williams, Ireland, Eisler, Meyer and Wilfrid Mellers. Some contributions to the book are personal tributes to Bush as a friend and others are positive appraisals of his work. For example, Mellers' piece 'A Note on Alan Bush and the English Tradition' found in the WMA collection, reflects on a concert of Bush's work in 1939 in which all of the compositions had elements drawn from Britain's musical heritage. He comments on Bush's achievement of giving *Dialectic* an international outlook whilst basing it on a traditional, localised, English folksong, the 'Cutty Wren'. The concert must have demonstrated 'a cosmopolitan convergence of styles' as Mellers highlights the disparity between Bush's political 'deliberately simple and direct' workers' music and the 'highly sophisticated, complicated, intellectual' art music. Through this, he implies that Bush embraced art music as an 'apolitical' form.[32] Mellers concludes the article with a description of Bush's enigmatic character, an observation repeated throughout the book by other contributors, for example, Thomas Russell and David Ellenberg.

In more recent literature, Duncan Hall's *'A Pleasant Change from politics'; Music and the British labour movement between the wars* (2001) is one of the few books to fully acknowledge Bush's unique position in Britain's left-wing music scene. Hall devotes a chapter to Bush's, Rutland Boughton's, and Tippett's work within the labour movement looking at the musical unions and the WMA, stating:

> through the Workers Music Association, Bush could be seen as having introduced ethnomusicology (called comparative musicology until the postwar period) into [British] academia.[33]

[32] In *Twentieth Century Music and Politics* (2013), Pauline Fairclough states that the extent to which a work could be 'a-political' during war was debatable, as she repeats Bush's sentiments that if one party promoted a specific style within their propaganda, then the opposing fraction renounced it. Fairclough, 'Introduction', 1-6.
[33] Hall, *'A Pleasant Change from politics',* 138.

Although Hall's book neglects to talk in detail about Bush's music, it draws together many of the differing theories about politically motivated music, including folk music and its role in society. This has become a well-established subject of interest within academic circles and there are many academic publications which reflect negatively on the right-wing leadership of the First British Folksong Revival movement. For example, David Harker's *Fakesong* (1985), and more recently Georgina Boyes' *An Imagined* Village (2010), criticise the First British Folksong Revival for being too far removed from the working people.[34] They argue that the individual voices of the working people and their social values were largely ignored, and that the music was instead subjected to authoritarian control and used as a form of nationalist stimulus. It will be interesting to consider the extent to which Bush's workers' music divested itself of this notion and if it had any influence on the Second British Folksong Revival, as addressed in Michael Brocken's *The British Folk Revival; 1944-2002* (2003).

As a communist, a large majority of Bush's work was premiered in the Eastern Bloc where strict controls on music existed. In order that his music was considered acceptable in the Soviet state, it had to fall within the remit of Socialist Realism: at the very least, music had to be partisan, realistic and relate to the proletariat. The issues of writing and performing music in communist countries is not a new subject area and there have been many articles and papers published on this topic over the past century, some of which date back to the 1930s. For example, 'Music and Musicians in the U.S.S.R.' (1934), 'Communism in Britain' (1949), 'The Soviet Attitude Towards Music' (1957), 'Symphonic Marxism' (2003) and 'Art and the State' (2005).[35] It is interesting to compare Bush's writings and compositions to such articles and note the similarities between them. There are also plenty of newer publications that address the issues of mixing art music with politics, some of which mention Bush and his colleagues. For example Pauline Fairclough's *Twentieth Century*

[34] Harker, *Fakesong,* 36-59 and Boyes, *The Imagined Village.*
[35] Sabaneev, 'Music and Musicians in the U.S.S.R.'. Somerville, 'Communism in Britain'. Arbatsky, 'The Soviet Attitude Towards Music'. Botstein, 'Art and the State: The Case of Music'. Smrz, Jiri. 'Symphonic Marxism'.

Music and Politics (2013) has a chapter on Bush's socialist opera *Wat Tyler*, Nathaniel Lew's PhD thesis 'A New and Glorious Age: Constructions of National Opera in Britain, 1945- 1951' (2001) also considers *Wat Tyler*, and Kate Guthrie looks at Ireland's political dilemmas in 'Propaganda Music in Second World War Britain: John Ireland's *Epic March*' (2014).[36] In this article, Guthrie considers the Ministry of Information's commissioning of propagandist works during the Second World War for political gain and she questions whether such utilitarian works of art could be considered durable pieces of 'high art'.[37] Critics, including Adorno, have studied the dichotomy between the durability of high art and the topicality of low art, a debate often raised when considering the divide in Bush's music between his modernist style of thematic composition and his more topical workers' music.[38]

Julie Waters' article 'Proselytizing the Prague Manifesto in Britain' (2009) examines Bush's postwar music.[39] Like Guthrie's, Fairclough's and Lew's writings, Waters views Bush's art music against the backdrop of his Marxist ideology and, like the other publications, this work focuses only on Bush's art music. Yet Waters also poses a question which relates to all genres of composition and which dogged Bush throughout his career: should 'the people's capacity for appreciation [of complex musical works] be elevated, or was the style of music to be simplified?'.[40] This question will be addressed throughout the course of this thesis.

Finally, the newest and most comprehensive study concerning Bush's music is by Joanna Bullivant. Bullivant released her first work on Bush in 2009 in a paper entitled 'Modernism, Politics, and Individuality in 1930s Britain: The Case of Alan Bush'. As the title suggests, it considers Bush's attitudes towards modernism during the 1930s, the era when his compositional style was perceived to be split between the simplicity of his workers' music and his intellectual art music. It is possible to

[36] Guthrie, 'Propaganda Music in Second World War Britain', 137-175.
[37] Ibid., 140.
[38] In fact, Bush himself also addresses this subject (the longevity of political music) in his paper 'The Second International Congress of Composers and Music Critics' (1948). Bush, 'The Second International Congress of Composers and Music Critics', 280-281.
[39] This article was developed from her doctoral thesis, *'*Against the stream'. Waters, 'Proselytizing the Prague Manifesto in Britain' and '*Against the stream*'.
[40] Waters, 'Proselytizing the Prague Manifesto in Britain', 11.

see continuity between that article and her more recent, extended publication *Alan Bush, Modern Music, and the Cold War.* This insightful book delivers a highly anticipated and discerning commentary on a broad range of Bush's compositions. However, because it focuses on Bush's later compositions rather than his earlier works, the review of workers' music is relatively brief. Unfortunately, this gives the impression that Bush's workers' music is less culturally significant than his art music. In the future, it would be wonderful to see Bullivant publish another piece which exclusively explores the topic of workers' music. In the meantime, however, this thesis aims to bridge the gap and establish the importance of Bush's workers' music in the British left wing music scene by giving it the full attention it deserves.

Chapter One: A 'Second Culture' of Music in the 1930s

'All evolution in thought and conduct must as first appear as heresy and misconduct'.

– George Bernard Shaw

Three major academics, Dave Harker, Michael Brocken and Ben Harker, have claimed in their writings that the Second British Folksong Revival had its roots in Britain's pre-war communist party. During this time Alan Bush, a highly prominent communist musician in London, renounced folksong and began writing 'workers' music'. This chapter will discuss Alan Bush's reasons for writing workers' music in 1930s Britain. It will consider those who influenced his socialist ideology, including the German composer Hanns Eisler, and will clarify the theories that governed his approach to writing music for the working classes, including the role of functional music, the effect of musical collaboration and the issues of performance. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the concepts behind workers' music developed into a 'second culture' of British music: the same second culture which filtered into the folk scene and may have instigated the growth of the Second British Folksong Revival.

There have been a few brief studies of Bush's workers' music yet the way in which his work is critiqued is varied and often problematic. Critics, such as Wilfrid Mellers, took issue with the divide in Bush's 'utterly disparate' work between his 'highly sophisticated' art music, found in works like *Reliquishment* (1928) and *Dialectic* (1929), and his 'deliberately simple' workers' music.[1] In this, Mellers is critiquing the aesthetic value of the songs, which resulted in him and later writers disregarding Bush's workers' music as an over-simplified medium. Ian Kemp, in his study of Michael Tippett, went as far as to state that Bush forfeited his own individual compositional voice to political 'dogma [which] seemed to [Tippett] to have an enervating effect' on Bush's music.[2] Here, Kemp was disregarding music which he saw as having little cultural value due to its transient topical nature. The

[1] Mellers, 'A Note on Alan Bush and the English Tradition', 21-22.
[2] Kemp, *Tippet,* 38-39.

most recent publication on Bush, by Joanna Bullivant (2017), does consider the value of Bush's workers' music. However, Bullivant sets out Bush's theoretical concepts and musical practices as a series of problematic contradictions. Even though she goes on to address the issues within Bush's ideologies, overall, the book gives the impression of Bush as an inconsistent and slightly illogical composer. It is possible that one of the reasons why Bullivant was faced with such a multitude of seemingly contradictory statements may have been because, even though she considers Bush's workers' music, the focus of the book is Bush's art-music and, as such, it considers how his art music best fitted his musical aesthetic. Instead, if one studies Bush's practical application of socialist principles through his workers' music, it is easier to better understand the composer's all-encompassing musical aims and ideologies. This is because workers' songs were an adaptable idiom in which Bush could quickly realise his ideas in multiple ways. It is important to point out that Bush himself believed that his workers' songs were an important part of his music oeuvre. He told Ronald Stevenson in a letter of 1962:

> We never got round to my workers' songs. You cannot write about me without reference to them.[3]

Bush's socialist principles, which were at the core of his workers' music, were reflected across 1930s Britain. The spread of socialist ideology during this time was, in effect, a political reaction against the march of fascism across Europe. Because of this, the British Labour movement was transformed from a passive organisation into a movement which could actively change history, or as Marx put it, a 'class *in* itself' to a 'class *for* itself'. Not only did Hitler and Mussolini's rise to power affect activism in the British left wing circles, but the success of the CPGB and other such left-wing organisations during this period, such as the Popular Front and the anti-bourgeoisie United Front, was tied up with the 1936 Spanish Civil war, which also created a need for a united front

[3] Bush. Letter to Ronald Stevenson, 12th September 1962, 2.

against fascism.[4] It is thought that, due to this political upheaval in the 1930s, the period also denotes a change in British artistic history. It was an era in which art began defining itself as a part of and, for some, against the rapidly growing popular culture movement and it also heralded a point in which the combination of art and politics became the norm. Bush was a part of this movement, as he believed that music could be a major aide to the socialist concept of the 'working class struggle':

> …no apology is needed, therefore for introducing the subject of music and its part in the workers' struggle. It is, in fact, an all-important matter, since on the one hand no other art is so widely practised by the workers themselves, and on the other hand in no other art are the workers more completely dominated by the culture of the ruling classes without being aware of the fact.[5]

Bush's political principles and intentions for using music were in part influenced by his study of philosophy and partly 'as a result of discussions [he] had with Marxists'.[6] As Bush commented in an interview with Schafer, he was inspired upon hearing the German workers' choirs sing Hanns Eisler's 'remarkable militant songs' when he was in Berlin (1928-1931).[7] He went on to state that when he was back in England he lived 'next door' to Eisler and Brecht, when they were refugees in England, and that they taught him 'about Marxist theory and the policy of the Soviet Union'.[8] This fostered Bush's interest in the socialist scene of the German workers' choirs, which had been reformed by Eisler. Eisler stated in 1931 that he wished to 'apply the method of dialectical materialism to music'.[9]

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[4] Bush did not fight in the Spanish Civil War. Andy Croft believes that due to the deaths in Spain of the Communist Party's 'most distinguished intellectuals and writers -notably Ralph Fox, John Cornford, Christopher Caudwell and David Guest, the party was less keen to let those risk their lives who might be able to serve more effectively in the propaganda war at home'. Croft, *A Comrade Heart,* 54.

[5] Bush, 'Music and the Working Class Struggle', 1.

[6] Schafer, *British Composers in Interview,* 55-56.

[7] Ibid.

[8] These principles influenced Bush's work for the rest of his life and became central to his musical ideology. As such, these men became some of the few who held Bush's life-long respect; as he wrote in a letter to Ronald Stevenson in the 1960s, 'I tell you quite sincerely that there are very few people whom I have ever met, and none in Britain, for whose opinion I have much regard at all. Two or three of my friends in the G.D.R., such as Ernst Hermann Meyer and Georg[e] Knepler and, of course, Hanns Eisler, as well as several others, one or two friends in the USSR, the young violinist Leonard Friedman, Max Rostal and my former teacher John Ireland, make up the list.' Bush. Letter to Ronald Stevenson, 12th September 1962, 1.

[9] Eisler, *A Rebel in Music,* 32-35.

In this, he was referring to Marx's concept of dialectical materialism, which was to prove that society is a product of its surroundings and that nothing occurs accidentally.[10] Thus Eisler believed that, in order to improve society, workers' music should, either through music or text, be shown to pursue ideas which reflected the way in which the material life of society could be developed for the better. Because of this, the new repertoire of workers' music which Eisler created for the German choirs differed radically from any other musical genre. This difference is clear if the different genres of songs sung by the working classes in the 1930s are compared. As Ian Watson states, whereas 'popular culture' had to be written *by* the working classes, 'mass culture' and 'Labour Anthems' were written *for* the working classes. [11] What unites 'popular culture', 'mass culture' and 'Labour Anthems' is that each of these were written for financial or economic gain. Whilst workers' music was written for the working classes, it was *not* written for commercial reasons. Instead, its purpose was to rally the workers into political action against the ruling capitalist elite.

Ian Watson, and subsequently Duncan Hall, believes that Bush's workers' music resulted in the growth of a second culture in Britain.[12] Watson was inspired to theorise about the socialist content of the workers' songs in 1978 after an interview with Bush.[13] This theory was an extension of Lenin's writings about 'two cultures' under capitalism: one 'dominant' culture and one culture with a 'democratic and socialist' purpose.[14] As Watson explains, the two cultures were not a division of wealth, as was described by the Victorian concept of 'Two Nations', rather it was a division of *ideology*. Therefore the second culture represented the portion of the nation who held socialist principles, by 'expressing opposition to exploitation and thereby the right to a happy and meaningful

[10] Marx, *Selected Works,* 269.

[11] Watson, 'Progress-Report on research project'.

[12] Hall states that some elements of the workers' music '*did* approach a crude concept of hegemony probably grounded in some of the writings of Lenin'. Hall, *A Pleasant Change from Politics,* 20. Hall's emphasis. However, Bullivant states that the 'second culture' had 'been subjected to serious critique by Duncan Hall', yet the example she references is a section of Hall's book which considers the broad concept of 'workers' culture' with its commercial music, which Watson goes on to state are *not* part of the second culture. Bullivant, *Alan Bush,* 64.

[13] Watson, 'Alan Bush and Left Music in the Thirties', 80-90.

[14] Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain,* 43-44.

existence'.[15] There were those outside the working-class movement from a bourgeois background who added to the second culture, such as Engels and Lenin, but in the main the second culture stemmed from the proletariat. However, 'working class culture' is a broad concept which includes 'all conditions imposed by capitalism'. Thus not all art forms enjoyed by the working classes were appropriate to the ideology of a second culture.[16] Watson states that the music hall, for example, did not represent a form of second culture as it was regulated by the ruling classes who could defuse working class resistance and rid it of revolutionary and socialist purpose.[17] For similar reasons, according to his daughter Rachel O'Higgins, Bush disliked brass bands and jazz music.[18] With brass bands, although they were of the working class, they were a non-left-wing passive leisure activity due to 'the considerable expense required to support a brass band [by] their employers'.[19] The reason for Bush's distain towards jazz music is found in an MI5 report of an address Bush gave in 1935, which states that Bush thought that jazz existed due to 'a degenerated form of capitalist composers'.[20] Watson concludes that the second culture was made up of any music which demonstrated radical politics and whose objectives and performers were unrelated to 'mainstream' culture. This clearly appealed to Bush, yet the path to a theoretical and practical manifestation of such a culture was less than straight forward.

Bush's attitude towards folk song of the 1920s and thirties, and the extent to which folk music was a part of Watson's second culture, must be addressed. Like brass bands, folk music is a form of music heavily associated with Britain's proletariat yet, as previously stated, this did not automatically mean that they were a part of the creation of a second culture. Eisler recognised that

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., 47. At the same time that Watson was writing his book in the seventies, Gerhard Ritter, an academic who has published work in collaboration with Jurgen Kocka on German working class culture, also noted the problematic issue of confusing 'workers' culture' with 'the culture of the socialist workers'. Ritter, 'Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany', 180. See also Evans, 'The Sociological Interpretation of German Labour History'.
[17] See Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain,* 49-50.
[18] In conversation with the author.
[19] Bush, 'Music and the Working Class Struggle', 6.
[20] TNA, KV-2-3515_2, 110.

there were two types of folksongs: those that would advance the socialist movement and those that would hinder it. He stated:

> There are two sorts of folk songs, the genuine and the false […] The false folk song is the product of a corrupt and sordid entertainment industry which 'borrows' the idiom of the genuine folksong, only in a course and distorted form. [21]

The majority of folksongs readily available during the twenties and thirties were those collected by members of the First British Folksong Revival and many post-Lloyd academics continue to debate the extent to which these songs were 'genuine' and truly 'of the people'. Even though some folksong revivalists recognised the need for authenticity, it is believed that a large proportion of their collections are, in fact, carefully selected bowdlerised versions of rural and pastoral folk songs based on nostalgic revelry of middle class song collectors for the entertainment of the upper classes.[22] The general acceptance of this type of 'false folksong' by the first folksong revivalists is evidenced in Hubert Parry's inaugural address in 1899 to the English Folksong Society. In this address, Parry cautioned that 'There is an enemy at the doors of folk music'. He was in no doubt as to what type of people he believed were 'the enemy of folk music', as he continued:

> If one thinks of the outer circumference of our terribly overgrown towns where the jerry-builder holds sway; where one sees all around the tawdriness of sham jewellery and shoddy clothes, pawnshops and flaming gin-palaces; where stale fish and the miserable piles of Covent Garden refuse which pass for vegetables are offered for food - all such things suggest to one's mind the boundless regions of sham. It is the people who live in these unhealthy regions… that will drive out folk music if we do not save it.[23]

Parry believed that the 'sordid vulgarity of our great city-populations'[24] were endangering folksongs and that the only folksongs worth collecting were those of 'the by-ways and hedges'.[25] He saw

[21] Eisler, *A Rebel in Music,* 98-99.
[22] For the first folksong revivalists concern over authenticity, see Baring-Gould, *A Garland of Country Song,* x.
[23] Parry, 'Inaugural Address', 1-2.
[24] Ibid., 3.

folksong as a way to counter, what he deemed to be, the physical and moral demise of England's urban masses. Ralph Vaughan Williams held a similar attitude towards folksong, one which was also anti-urban. He believed that 'the peoples' music' should instead be comprised of old-fashioned fairy tales: stories which endorse an unequal distribution of wealth and celebrate a powerful elite.[26] Because these theories were touted by such established figures of the British bourgeois musical establishment, they had an extensive impact across the country. Yet the bourgeois influence over folksongs was not limited to England. Barring-Gould, a prominent member of the First Folksong Revival, perceptively points out that German folksongs were not 'genuine[ly]' of the people either:

> The Volkslieder Schatz is made up to a vast extent of compositions by cultured musicians of the end of last century and the beginning of the nineteenth […] and only a small percentage are really spontaneous productions of the people themselves.[27]

Thus, it may be concluded that, no matter the intentions of the early song collectors, some elements of both British and German folk-music of the 1920s and thirties were what Eisler described as 'false' because they were affected by the fanciful notions of the upper-classes.

Bush had reservations about the anti-urban style of folksong, as he was concerned that their usefulness in promoting the communist cause was limited. He points out in his unpublished article 'Music and the Working-class Struggle' that many folksongs, rather than having socialist origins, had 'romantic associations of an idyllic pre-capitalist era'. Bullivant uses this quote to demonstrate Bush's dislike of the *whole* genre of folksong:

> Even at the stage of writing the *Symphony in C,* his [Bush's] attitude to the use of folksong and modes in composition was far from clear cut. In a 1936 article, for

[25] Ibid., 2.
[26] Vaughan Williams states 'to give a true and just account of the peoples music one must represent the people as celebrating in song many things which we doubtless deplore such as battles and kings and coronations & highwaymen and kind squires etc - Unless you include these things in your scheme you are to my mind giving a *false* impression of 'the people's music.' Ralph Vaughan Williams to Alan Bush, 7 January 1939, in Cobbe, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams.*
[27] Baring-Gould, *A Garland of Country Song,* x.

> example, Bush was particularly scathing about using folk song because of its "romantic associations of an idyllic pre-capitalist era".[28]

Yet if Bush's full, original, quote is considered:

> An impressionistic style, such as characterised much music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries should be avoided, a return to folk-song with romantic associations of an idyllic pre-capitalist era likewise.[29]

The impression given is not that the *entire* genre of folksong should be avoided, rather, any elements which had anti-urban notions should be rejected. This second reading is more in line with the original article as a whole, as Bush had previously pointed out that in many upper class situations, pastoral folksongs were often performed by 'middle class and petty bourgeois' vocal and orchestral societies'.[30] This implies that his issue was not with the folksong itself, instead it was with the societies who monopolised its image to the extent that it became ineffective to help 'further the cause of the working-class movement as a whole'.[31] Therefore, it is problematic to state that Bush disliked the whole genre of folksong. He was only frustrated by the style and use of folksong which lacked political or social purpose and could not lead to a 'real revivification' of working-class culture.

One of the main issues facing those wishing to use folksong within the workers' movement was the decided lack of contemporary, relevant socialist folksongs available in the thirties. He stated that the 'remnants of folk music which had survived in the agricultural districts from the pre-industrial era' were 'no longer a living art among the classes out of which it had developed' and that any composer who attempted to use it would create 'semi-animated museum pieces', rather than music appropriate for a second culture.[32] He reasoned that the lack of historic revolutionary folksongs was due to oppression by political leaders and that they were therefore 'omitted from the

[28] Bullivant, *Alan Bush,* 146-147.
[29] Bush, 'Music and the Working Class Struggle', 7.
[30] Ibid., 5.
[31] Ibid., 7.
[32] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 6.

more reputable collections'.[33] Any that had survived were unknown due to a lack of 'research in this direction'.[34] Bush repeated these sentiments in an interview to Watson in the 1970s, reflecting on the inadequate nature of folksong in the thirties:

> Folk music in Britain didn't become a mass experience (especially of the youth) until after the Second World War. During the 1930s folk music was known to some composers - and I myself tried to introduce the idiom of English folksong into my workers' songs - but that was not widespread; I mean, we didn't know anything of folk industrial ballads or things of that kind. That was a field that was quite unknown before the Second World War. We used a kind of simplified style really, partly influenced, in my case, by English folk music […] They [English folksongs] *were something completely divorced from the political* musical experience of the working class.[35]

Therefore, because the only available form of folk music in the early twentieth century represented an anti-urban and anti-working-class attitude, it was impossible that this style of 'folksong' could form the basis of a radical, new 'second culture'.

At this time in Germany, the image of folksong was similar to its image in Britain: as a rural, old-fashioned, populist genre. Ernst Meyer stated that it was an expression of 'local, agrarian and national Chauvinism' and bemoaned the dissociation between the genuine desires of 'the people' and 'their' folksong.[36] Eisler realised that, in its current form, it had no purpose in the everyday lives of the working classes in the new, modern-day, mechanised era of the twentieth century:

> The Industrial Revolution disturbed most of the old folk music [which] is useless for factory workers to sing in a factory.[37]

[33] Ibid., 4.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Watson, 'Alan Bush and Left Music in the Thirties', 87. My emphasis.
[36] Meyer, 'Contemporary Musical Research', H.A., 4.
[37] Eisler, *Music and Politics*, 419.

Therefore, he went further in his theories, stating that workers' music could, and should, *become* a new type of folk song. As he replied to the question 'Are there any modern folk songs?':

> If by folk song we mean a song that is sung everywhere then yes. But if we mean a song that has been made by the people, then on the whole, no. […] But we have something else - the mass song. The mass song is *the fighting song* of the modern working class and *is to a certain degree, folk song* at a higher stage than before, because it is international.[38]

This interview, demonstrating Eisler's enthusiasm over the new 'fighting song[s] of the modern working class', was recorded in 1935. Yet, at the time of the interview, the concept of the new workers' movement was only a recent development, partly born out of frustration from the lack of political songs available in Germany. He had previously rejected much of the repertoire being sung by *Deutscher Arbeitersangerbund* (DASB, the German Workers' Choral Society) as he believed their political stance too temperate. They had been using folksongs from various countries and included 'classical' songs, such as choral parts by Goethe, Schiller, Schubert and Brahms, in their repertoire. In a letter written to John Miller, it is suggested that these pre-1930s' choirs were popular due to the singers' enjoyment of songs and their identification as a member of the working class, rather than their desire for political change.[39] This motivated Eisler to revolutionise the choirs:

> We are now trying to change the extraordinary situation in which the workers' choral movement has not produced a single fighting song for the mass movement during the last ten years.[40]

It appears that the same problem could be found in the music of Britain's left-wing. Looking at publications of songs and songbooks since the 1880s, it is apparent that there was a large repertoire

[38] Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 98-99. My emphasis.
[39] JBPSC PSC/1/2/1/10. Letter from 'Jon' (presumably Jon Clarke) to John Miller, 7th March 1977, in response to Miller's article 'Revolutionary Songs' (PSC/1/2/1/09).
[40] Eisler, *A Rebel in Music,* 32-35.

of socialist songs in print before the 1930s. Many of these songbooks were published by left wing organisations, such as the Socialist League Office, the Labour Press Ltd., or by the radical William Pember Reeves (1857-1932). These were used at meetings and in clubs and their popularity amongst the working classes meant they were often re-issued multiple times. This included William Morris' 1885 *Chants for Socialists* and the 1888 *Chants of Labour* edited by Edward Carpenter.[41] Because of this, by the late 1920s many of these songbooks, which included old favourites such as 'Red Flag', 'International' and Edward Carpenter's 'England Arise', were still in circulation. Nearly all the songs were written before the First World War and the October Revolution, and were therefore topically out of date for the current workers and their struggle.

In order to alleviate this issue, Bush set about appeasing the demand for new, contemporary, socialist songs under the auspices of his new organisation, the 'Workers' Music Association' (WMA). The WMA was set up in 1936 and through it, Bush published many articles and songs. It soon became his focal point as a socialist musician as it was the most immediate way in which he could convey his ideologies to the working classes. It must be noted, however, that there are some social historians who take issue with the way in which the lives and beliefs of the everyday people came to be represented through left wing organisations such as the WMA.[42] Gerhard Ritter, an academic who has published work in collaboration with Jurgen Kocka on German working class culture, states that 'many features of workers' lives - like material culture and the social history of the day to day existence […] cannot be understood by investigating workers' associations alone'.[43] However, even though the work of the WMA may not have given a rounded representative picture of the working classes, its legacy and work demonstrate the way in which Bush, as its president, created a socialist

[41] Morris, William (ed.), 'Chants for Socialists'. This was first published by the Socialist League in 1885, with following editions being released in 1892 and 1894. 'Chants of Labour' was republished in 1892, 1897, 1905, 1912 and 1922.
[42] See Abrams, *Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany*.
[43] Ritter, 'Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany, 180. See also Evans, 'The Sociological Interpretation of German Labour History', 15-53.

music scene which showcased the injustices placed on the working classes, a scene which differed from the normal conventions of the dominant music scene.

In his writings of the mid-thirties, Bush begins questioning the role of art in social revolution. At the time, this would not have been unusual as the social value of music has been debated for centuries. Because music does not directly affect a country's major political and social policies, its security, its political standing, or its nation's health, it has little bearing on major laws. As an abstract entity, it is near worthless for economic commodification. However, music reflects the histories of local and foreign cultures and every society which has been studied until now, from African tribes to western civilisation, has its own music. In present-day developed societies, it is utilised in all aspects of everyday life, for example whilst relaxing, partying, studying, exercising, and driving. There is music for prestigious events, such as coronations, as well as specifically composed works for religious rituals. It can create a strong emotional impact on an individual basis as well as affecting masses of people attending a large event. These occasions could still occur without music however it is likely that the emotive effect would be less intense, resulting in a less memorable event. The inability to precisely measure and gather empirical evidence about music's impact is perhaps the reason why its utilitarian value has been much debated since the early 1900s. Having studied philosophy alongside modern music whilst in Berlin, Bush had a deep understanding that the value of music was not in its aesthetic qualities. Rather, he believed that music which was able to demonstrate socialist principles and fight for the equality of working men was more important.[44] He asked:

> What then can musicians do in present circumstances to aid in bringing such conditions [of fairness and equality] about here in England? They should work simultaneously along various different lines. They should study the political, social and economic changes which are the prerequisite of the establishment of socialist society. They should join any

[44] Bush, 'What Does Music Express', 204-209. See Chapter Two for further discussion of this subject.

> political or cultural organisation which in their opinion is working in the right direction. Among their colleagues individually and through their professional organisations they should try to make clear the results upon music of the present organisation of society and the results socialism would have. Most important of all they should place their talents and traingin [sic] at the service of working-class music organisations and work with them to build up an art which springs from their struggle against the capitalist forces. Let music do its part alongside of philosophy to change the world.[45]

Through the meetings, lectures and publications undertaken by the WMA and similar working-class music organisations, Bush began laying down his rules and regulations for the composition, performance venues and the stylistic performance practices to create an 'art to change the world' (1935).[46] This 'art' was socialist workers' songs and he believed there were certain ways in which workers' music could be written and performed in order to deliver a socialist message directly and with maximum impact. Firstly, Bush held the notion that the creation and performance of music should be a *communal* effort in order for it to fit the ideals and aspirations of many people. His first sentence of the short but important article, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' (1936), states that 'Music is made for man by man. … It is not a matter of a single person but always of a group or multitude'.[47] This idea was realised through the songs written for choirs and the songs published by the WMA, where many people of the working classes joined together to make music. Bush also attempted more radical methods to create communal music. For example, in 1937, the year after writing the article, Bush created the 'Composers' Group' as a part of the WMA. The idea of the group was to make sure that, not only was the work performed *en masse*, but that the composition was created by multiple people. One work which was the product of this process was a workers' unison song, 'For the People's Use'. At the bottom of the published score, it tells the performers how the work was composed:

[45] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 15.
[46] Bush, 'Music and the Working Class Struggle', 6.
[47] Bush, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', 1.

> A text was chosen from a number of poems suitable for the purpose. Each member of the group then composed a tune independently. All the tunes were then considered by the group and one […] was selected as the best basis. Each member of the group then worked on the tune selected and made such modifications as he or she thought desirable. The final form of the tune, incorporating various alterations, agreed by a majority of the group to be improvements, was then fixed. Each member of the group then wrote a piano accompaniment independently, one of which […] was subsequently chosen and worked on like the tune.[48]

The most positive outcome of the 'Composers' Group' project was that Bush developed a seemingly revolutionary way in which music could be democratically composed; it rid each work of the 'individual autonomy of the composer'.[49] Yet, as Bullivant points out, a significant downside to this process was that it ended up being 'dazzling laboriousness' because it left a lot of redundant material.[50] As well as this, the extent to which this was a new and 'revolutionary' method of composition should be questioned, as this procedure is simply a formalised and accelerated method of the process aurally transmitted music goes through. As traditional folksongs are passed between people, with each new person they are revised by the individual singing the song, to suit the song to their own and their audiences' tastes. Also, multiple versions of songs are often lost, as certain texts or melodies are forgotten or made redundant due to their lack of relevance. Therefore, whilst it is true that such a method of composition is democratic and mildly innovative within its formalised setting, it was not a revolutionary process in and of itself.

A more general way in which Bush believed workers' music could deliver a strong socialist message was to make sure that the songs held the attentions of audiences and listeners. There were various ways that an audience could be kept actively engaged with the political content of the event,

[48] 'For the People's Use', JBPSC, PSC/1/2/2/65. The melody was first put forward by WMA secretary, Will Sahnow and the text was written by Randall Swingler. The song's lyrics are concerned with the fact that riches and freedom should be shared amongst the many, rather than owned by a few.
[49] See Croft, *Comrade Heart,* 60.
[50] Bullivant, *Alan Bush,* 84.

all of which were centred around the concept of ridding the music of its 'old narcotic function'. Bush believed that most normal art had a narcotic function which acted like a sedative on the working-classes. He believed that this was a way in which society's elite manipulated people into passively accepting their working-class situations rather than fighting for justice and their rights. An early example of Bush's feelings on this is found in a MI5 report on a 1937 concert:

> Last night's entertainment was a communist review of the period from 1931 to 1937 […] During this review a Coronation decoration shewing [sic] shewing [sic] photographs of T.M. [sic] The King and Queen was fixed on the balcony of the stage; this was met with loud booing by the audience. Allan [sic] BUSH referred to this decoration as part of the 'dope' which was being administered to the workers by the National Government.[51]

It is impossible to ascertain whether pictures of the King and Queen really were 'booed' by the audience, yet this account demonstrates Bush's aversion to all forms of subliminal messaging, both in pictorial and musical form. He felt strongly that entertainment should not 'dope' the listener or immerse them in a fug of sentimentality. Instead, music should be consumed in a mindful manner, by a listener who holds a logical and rational mindset. In this, it is clear that Bush hoped to utilise the technique of 'Brechtian alienation'. As an author and playwright, Brecht began conceptualising the idea of a distancing effect, *Verfremdungseffekt*, after he moved to Berlin in 1925. Brecht was good friends with Hanns Eisler who also moved to the densely populated city in the same year and stayed there until 1933 whereupon they collaborated on multiple occasions, resulting in numerous songs, workers' songs and plays. Bush studied in Berlin from 1928 until 1931 and became a student of philosophy alongside his musicology decree. Because of this, Bush met Brecht on a number of occasions as he attended regular discussions concerning ideas of Marxism and Socialism, topics that were rife amongst the intellectuals living in the centre of Weimar culture. Through this, Bush

[51] TNA, KV-2-3515_2, 104. 'Report on a concert at Shoreditch Town Hall', 1st May 1937.

became a partisan to the development of the idea of infusing art with a dose of reality. Brecht first used the term 'alienation' much later, in his essay 'Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting' published in 1936 and it became a major feature of Brecht's reconceptualised theatre productions, in the writing, staging and production of Epic theatre. Therefore, this concept influenced many Marxist artists living in Berlin at the time. Those who believed in the distancing effect hoped that the objectivity it engendered could educate the workers and make them realise the extent of social injustice: by becoming mentally stimulated, they would become politically active.

There were various ways in which a composer or musician could encourage the listeners to engage but not immerse themselves in the music. Firstly, this could be achieved by creating balanced and varied musical programmes. Montage was a favoured technique of Eisler and Brecht and there are similar examples of Bush creating varied programmes. Bush also goes on to suggest that part of choral pieces could be interspersed with 'spoken remarks, quotations from newspapers etc.'.[52] Another method was to make the listener aware of the political significance of a song before it was performed. A simple spoken introduction to a song, either by an individual or a chorus, could help give the listener an intelligent understanding of the items performed and of their historical background.[53] Finally, the performance context was important. Bush liked to use the workers' songs at political meetings, to intersperse speeches. An example of this is shown in a report by MI5 on a meeting held on the 13th of December 1939, which states 'During the interval the Labour Choral Union, led by Allen [sic] Bush sang the Soviet Airman's Song, and other songs dedicated to the Soviet fighting forces'.[54]

Even though the concert hall was an established feature of working-class entertainment, Eisler and Bush believed that the style of the performance should deviate from that used in a normal concert hall. Bush had concerns about the music found in a normal concert:

[52] Bush, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', 3.
[53] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 10.
[54] TNA, KV-2-3515_2, 78.

> Often the solo items are of no cultural value […] a worthless specimen of bourgeois commercialism […] this is the stuff worker-musicians and performers should be ashamed to touch.[55]

Eisler went further to state that music performed in a concert hall was generally futile in its endeavours to aid the workers' struggle:

> Further experience induced us to reject the concert form [which was] *useless for the purposes of the revolutionary working class*. It can only offer noncommitted pleasure and make the listener passive […].[56]

Because of this, Bush began devising ways in which they could avoid such 'noncommitted pleasure'. One was to break up normal, staid, concert-hall performances by having long, cantabile sections of music interjected with forceful mannerisms. For example, a performer could 'hurl' speech at the audience in spoken or shouted sections. Or, instead of using *Sprechstimme* the melodic line could be broken with other percussive element, such as indicating that the worker-singers stamp their feet. If these methods were combined, as found in 'Song of the Hunger Marchers' (1934), the resulting impression of the song's text would be forcefully distinct. In his writings, Eisler also went on to state:

> We are well aware that it is wrong only to listen to a fighting song; that the activating purpose of a fighting song can only be achieved if the people sing it themselves.[57]

The idea of people singing the songs 'themselves' can be found in the work 'Question and Answer' (1931). Here, the choir sing a succession of questions ('Are the workers' badly fed?') to which the audience is expected to reply ('Yes! Most of 'em!). This style of performance broke down the distinctive concepts of 'audience' and 'performer' and matched Bush's desire to elide any division between the two. Further evidence of Bush attempting to manifest this theory, to have the audience as involved as the performers in the music, is also found in a report by MI5. This report states that in

[55] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 8.
[56] Eisler, *A Rebel in Music; Selected writings,* 32-35. My own emphasis.
[57] Ibid.

a New Year's Day concert in 1938 Bush 'endeavoured to teach the audience [by ear] the last and less known verses of the "Red Flag" and "International".'[58]

Another means to break down the distinction between performer, composer musician and audience could be found in a very early initiative of the WMA. In 1936, Alan Bush posted an advertisement in the *Daily Herald*, asking for 'worker-composers'.[59] Bush asked for the working people 'whose efforts never see the light of day, to have their work [simple choruses or brass band compositions] published and performed'. The article states that Bush 'believes that there is a vast amount of untapped artistic wealth among workers in mines, factories and offices' and that:

> It is only lack of self-confidence and encouragement […] that prevents such people from creating valuable work. They are much closer to real life, which is the mainspring of all great art than many famous poets and composers.[60]

He thought worker musicians would have more to contribute to 'real life' society than those who composed in a manner disengaged with real life. This idea, of the workers being 'closer to real life', marks a contrast to the modernist concept of an individualist composer in an ivory tower, removed from society. The importance of combining life and art was recognised not only by Bush but also by other writers of the time:

> Art to be vital must spring from the needs and outlook of those practising it. The needs and outlook of the working class are profoundly different from those of the middle and professional classes.[61]

Yet Bush lamented the fact that there were few opportunities for those of the 'working-class' to demonstrate their art. In a different article, also written in 1936, he acknowledged that it was not just the 'lack of self-confidence' that restricted worker musicians but that a lack of economic means

[58] TNA, KV-2-3515_2, 100.
[59] Bush, 'Encouraging Music By Worker-Composers', *Daily Herald*. This must have been one of the first actions of the WMA 'Mr. Bush's scheme will be carried out under the auspices of the Workers' Music Association, founded a few weeks ago'.
[60] Ibid.
[61] W.R.A., 'Music and 'Left-Wing' Politics'.

also hindered their efforts. If the country had a fairer socialist system, the working classes would have as many opportunities to work on and showcase their artistic skills as those of the elite:

> In a classless society the existence of people of independent means is no longer possible. Composers from every type of home and parentage would enjoy equal opportunity to develop their gifts. Research into musical theory and musical instrument manufacture would be subsidised.[62]

Bush believed that the music he wrote, his workers' music, could also change the world by literally conveying strong socialist principles via the music. Although he thought it improbable that one could 'draw up a list of meanings' from music as Cooke suggested, and believed it equally unlikely that an 'Esperanto of intervals' existed, Bush did believe that music could convey feelings.[63] This idea, of art having an ability to express more than simple sounds for pleasure, lies far beyond Marxist theory. The concept of music delivering thoughts and concepts dates back to Plato, in whose writings such as *Laws* and *Republic* it is clear that only certain songs, melodies, instruments and modes were 'good' and thus could be used in order to educate the state. It was thought that the 'evil' types of music could negatively affect societies' behaviour. The same theme is found in the Confucian ideology of China, where certain melodies were used to indicate the status of a person or people. Thus, music could not simply exist for pleasure, and there is no such thing as innocuous music: art must always have a purpose. Bush's own beliefs were along these lines and he thought that by combining music's elements of 'melodic line, rhythm and harmony' in different ways, music could deliver a range of expressions much broader and wider than language.[64]

There are a few articles in which Bush lists the exact combination of musical features which would give an objective, constructive basis for composition, not grounded in musical anarchy, but one which challenged the emotional and individualistic aesthetic. In this way, he hoped that

[62]Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 14.
[63] Although he specifically expresses this in a much later article, written in 1963, it seems unlikely that his opinions on this subject had altered from the 1930s. Bush, 'What Does Music Express?', 204-209.
[64] Ibid.

workers' music would present an alternative experience to the 'anodyne' way of listening to music and aid the delivery of a socialist message: the socialist message which effectively formed Watson's concept of a second culture. Bush wrote the first article in 1935 and in it he states that although 'The technical aspects of workers' music have as yet to be worked out', 'certain principles' had been formed.[65] The most prominent of these was that the music should have modern day features meaning that, either no major or minor scales should be used or the 'intervals of those scales' should differ from the norm.[66] This desire for 'modern features' in working class music was a difficult issue, due to the general disliking of modern music and atonality amongst the working classes of Britain. Bush knew that many people of the working classes reacted with 'bewilderment and hostility […] when faced with the works of the leading composers of the present day.'[67] Bush blamed such a reaction on the fact that the working classes' access to serious music was restricted in Britain. Spike Hughes, writer for the *Daily Herald* in the 1930s, commented on how progressive the Russian attitude was towards modern music. Hughes stated that 'there is no such thing in Russia as highbrow or lowbrow' therefore the whole nation had access to good art music.[68] This meant that performances, such as those of Shostakovich, were sold out and because of this access to different styles of music, the working classes were open minded about different types of music: they were unprejudiced by traditional use of tonality and were thus receptive to modernism. This effectively created a classless and non-hierarchal interpretation of all music.

Bush wished to get rid of the cleft between serious and light music in Britain. Not only because an acceptance of modernism by the working classes would have demonstrated a grand type of musical equality in society, but he believed that modern features could enhance music's socialist message. Firstly, modern features in the music would demonstrate that the songs were topical. If the words were accompanied by a contemporary harmony, it would immediately contextualise the

[65] Bush, 'Music and the Working Class Struggle', 7.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 1.
[68] Hughes, 'Land without "Box-Office" Art'.

music in the present day. Secondly, he realised some styles of modern music could be used to avoid the passive emotional responses often engendered by music of the romantic era and, instead, to provoke thought and action. This concept can also be found in the works of literary geniuses, such as the so-called 'Auden gang' of poets from Oxford. In particular, Stephen Spender realised that it could be used to demonstrate a way of working which incited objectivity and a socialist outlook on life. This represented a new style of modernism which was far removed from the previously held notion, of a subjective and individualistic way of thinking, where in order to be modern an artist should retreat from society to their 'ivory tower'. The objective and rational approach was essential to workers' music to engage the audiences and listeners. Bush believed that songs which had sensuous harmonies and cadential chords effectively 'drugged' the listeners into a passive state, rather than motivating them to react to the music with socialist action. Thus, to rid music of a 'narcotic function', Bush preferred to avoid late nineteenth-century tonal elements. For this very reason, the folksong of the present day, with its harmonious tunes and rural imagery was the very opposite of workers' music: whilst this folksong was a nostalgic form of escapism from reality, workers' music was modern with the objective of getting the listeners to engage with reality. Therefore, the ideology of Bush's workers' music differed from the 1930s' concept of folksong.

Another form comparable to workers' music is the style found in the Soviet Union's Socialist Realism. In many ways, the rules outlining the composition and performance of workers' music are comparable to the rules created after the congress of 1934 governing Socialist Realism. These four main rules can be summarised: that art should truthfully depict the proletarian struggle in a realistic manner. As Nikita Khrushchev, of the Russian state party, once famously exclaimed 'we are for melodic music, rich in content, which stirs the soul of men… We are against cacophonic music.'[69] Obviously, Bush had at the heart of his workers' music the aims of the proletariat. However, the major difference between Bush's compositions and those of the Soviet composers was the inclusion

[69] Khrushchev, <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Socialist_realism>.

of non-tonal idioms in Bush's music. Therefore, in theory, Bush's musical ideologies vastly differed from any 'normal' style of music, or any dominant cultural form, which existed during the 1930s. In this sense, his workers' music was a type of second culture, radically different from any other form of music.

Chapter Two: Workers' Music and the Realisation of a 'Second Culture'

As previously discussed, Alan Bush left behind a mass of articles, both published and unpublished, which outline the theoretical effects of music with a socialist message and the way in which it could form a second culture in Britain. This second culture can be summed up by the statement:

> The workers' task is to fight the capitalist system and workers' culture is, and should be, based on the workers' fight and should reflect it.[1]

To realise this new culture, Bush created a new genre of music, so called 'workers' music', which would reject the orthodox thinking that 'music is an aspect of eternal beauty' and instead would be functional, fulfilling a utilitarian role in society by spreading a socialist message.[2] However, within his written legacy, not only did Bush discuss the advantages of socialist music and its performance, but he also included exacting instructions for the composers who wished to write this music. The most detailed of these instructions are found in two short unpublished articles, currently held in the Histon Archive, both of which Bush wrote in 1936. They are titled 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' and 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival'.[3] This chapter aims to consider the extent to which Bush's workers' music fits this blueprint and if so, how it deviated from normal musical practices in a way which could form a second culture.

Due to many of the instructions and some of the jargon found in these 'blueprint' articles, it may be assumed that they were written for people who had undertaken some type of formalised musical training. Although musical education was accessible to the working-class community, for example the classes Bush and his associates ran at Morley College, it is clear from some of his ideas that Bush actively encouraged professional composers to write 'workers' music' alongside amateur musicians. For example, Bush proudly states that 'For the People's Use' was composed by 'a group of nine composers, consisting of two students at musical institutions, one professional violinist and six

[1] Bush, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', 2.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., 1-3.

amateur musicians of various kinds'. It is unlikely that any of the professional musicians or students writing these songs had a working-class background because, as Stevenson noted in 1964, '*not one* contemporary British composer of national renown had a truly working class origin'.[4] By today's standards, the revision of a people's culture by a privileged minority is mostly seen as immoral and it could be assumed that this contributed to the decline in popularity of workers' music throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. However, the following statement Bush made in 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' (1936) suggests that, if this were the case, that it did not matter:

> A working-class culture can be evolved only if the workers break through the cultural disguises by which the ruling-class conceal the workers' true situation. Only when the workers realise and protest against their exploited condition *can they evolve their own culture*.[5]

It implies that Bush did not evangelise 'workers' music' as a complete replacement of working-class culture. Instead, he believed he, along with other professionals, could use it to enlighten the labouring classes, to demonstrate that there was a need for change, from which they could subsequently move on and 'evolve their own culture'.[6] Why the working classes needed to be enlightened, and develop their cultural life, is explained in more detail in another 1936 article by Bush:

> The present position is a very difficult one. The rising class of the present age, the working class, can only develop its cultural life with extreme difficulty. The atmosphere of the

[4] Stevenson, *Song in Gold Pavilions*, 43. It seems that Bush believed he was more in touch with the working-classes than any of his contemporaries. For instance, he wrote to Tippett on Boxing Day 1934, 'Hope you have had an agreeable Xmas of a bourgeois order. I on the contrary have been really hectically proletarian. This afternoon I scrubbed the kitchen floor. Do you ever do that?'. Letter from Bush, to Tippett, 26th December 1934. H.A.

[5] Bush, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', 2. My own emphasis.

[6] The same idea, of the workers 'developing their own music' from the composed workers' music, is reflected in his paper 'Music and the Working Class Struggle'. In this paper he states, 'they must foster the development of their own music, music which has a direct bearing upon the life of the present time and which clarifies and encourages a working-class world outlook'. Bush, 'Music and the Working Class Struggle', 6-8.
These ideas illustrate Bush's support for the concept of Stalinism over Trotskyism: that a higher authority should take socialist culture to the masses, regardless of their desires, rather than waiting for the working classes to develop a socialist culture for themselves. Bush's belief in Stalinism over any 'romantic' notions of Trotskyism can be found in his debates with Michael Tippett. Letters in the Histon Archive.

> worker's daily work, where the economic suicide of his class goes on without cessation, is no basis for culture. His leisure hours are spent amid the cultural influence of the capitalist state, whose function it is to preserve the present property relations intact as far as possible and whose prime need must needs be to keep the worker ignorant of his true position and to delude him into thinking that his interests are being served by the preservation of those proerty [sic] relations. Deceit can never form the basis of a living art. Hence it is no wonder that the cultural products of the present ruling classes are so perverse when they are not entirely devoid of any kind of value.
>
> The answer to the problem is to be sought in the discovery of what elements in the worker's life are peculiar to him as a member of the rising class. These are his consciousness of his position in capitalist society, and his determination to act in order to bring about a classless society in which the property relations will be appropriate to socialised means of production, in which mankind will produce for use and not for individual profit. The worker's culture is centred in the class struggle. Out of the experiences and needs of the class struggle will be evolved these new elements which will bring about a true revivification of art.[7]

Whether 'a true revivification of art' was achieved is the greater question of this thesis, but it is clear from the detail found in these articles that, if Bush did not succeed, it was not due to lack of thought or instruction.

'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' is split into four parts and within the second part, 'What should Workers' music be like?', Bush considers how best to impel the *listener* to action by fostering an engagement with the song's topical text. Engagement with the text was the most important element of workers music, as Bush explains in the introduction to the Left Song Book:

[7] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 7.

> Great attention has been paid to the words of the songs. Where the song is entirely new, or when new words for an old tune were wanted, we followed the principle of making the text as concrete and as clearly related to our movement as possible. We must sing what we really mean and sing it as though we meant it, or else our singing is only a pleasant way of passing the time. Which it will be, of course, but it must be much more as well, if we are to get the true value from our singing and to develop the art of music in the process.[8]

To increase this engagement, he lists two musical styles that a composer should avoid. Firstly, a composer should avoid sentimentality. Bush reasons that music which conjures strong emotions, especially pessimistic and resignatory emotions, would lower the listeners' impetus to action would thus distract from their 'task of overthrowing capitalism'. In the same year, 1936, he expounded in a different article upon his dislike for emotionally sentimental music because he believed that it is product of a capitalist society: as society became more mercantile and industrialised during the nineteenth century, demand increased for a 'narcotic which would absorb the mind and emotions without harming the body'.[9] In many ways, an appropriate style of composition would have been the one which Bush favoured for his 'serious' art-music works, the modernist 12-note technique of serialism. The 12-note method may, theoretically, have been a suitable style for workers' music due to it being rooted in a logical, objective system. It would have avoided any artificial lowering of standards and instead, would have given the workers a chance to experience a new and different genre of music. However, this may have resulted in a style of music which was too unusual for an untrained ear and had the danger of being too complex. Bush stated that 'if it becomes too complex the attention of the listener will tend to wander'.[10] So, in order to retain the attention of the listener, Bush indicates that the works had to be relatively simple. In the same way, a composer should also avoid intricate harmonic and polyphonic structures. Therefore, romanticism should be replaced with

[8] Bush, *The Left Song Book* (1938).
[9] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 3.
[10] Bush, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', 2.

modernism and complexity should be replaced with simplicity. Bush believed that this would make the songs more topical, increase engagement with the texts and make them more accessible to untrained singers. Many of these guidelines on the new style of music were formulated after discussions with fellow Marxists, whilst studying in Berlin. Therefore, Eisler's own writing on the new style of workers' music has many similar ideas:

> Music, like every other art has to fulfil a certain purpose in society […] The workers' music movement must be clear about the new function of their music, which is to activate their members for struggle and to encourage political education. This means that all music forms and techniques must be developed to suit the express purpose, that is the class struggle […] The task of workers' music will be to remove the sentimentality and pompousness from music, since these sensations divert us from the class struggle.[11]

These objectives which Bush established, form the framework for the third part of the article, sub-headed 'The Composition of Workers' Music', in which Bush gives more direct instructions on how to write modern, simplistic works which would exaggerate the meanings of socialist texts. Thus, he describes how the songs' harmonies, melodies, and structures could be formed in a way which would demonstrate modernity and deliver the text with strength. For the harmony, he states that a diatonic harmony was better than a chromatic one. Chromatic semitones should not be used, and suspensions 'must be used with great caution on account of their tendency to sentimental effect'.[12] He thought whole unison phrases could be effective and that it was 'not necessary always to write in four parts', thus two part harmonies could be written where the third of the chord was omitted.[13] The final point he makes about the harmonising of workers' music is that the bass line had to be 'vigorous' because 'an energetic style devoid of sentimental elements is the one to aim at'.

Bush believed that the melodies should differ from those written in previous centuries, suggesting that composers could either: avoid major and minor scales, or include augmented and

[11] Eisler, 'Unsere Kampfmusik', 170.
[12] Bush, 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', 2.
[13] Ibid., 3.

diminished intervals because they 'were at one time carefully avoided'. But along with this, he was aware that they should be easy for the singers to learn, so he advises for much repetition and linkage of common elements between phrases. As well as this, he wanted to use the melody to exaggerate the text, therefore he focuses on using the highest note in the phrase to impart significance. He said that this note should coincide with an important word, and two consecutive phrases should not have the same high note unless in repetition.

The structures of the songs were important. Bush believed that the highest pitched note in the work should occur threequarters of the way throughout a song, which would effectively form a dramatic arc. However, structural design was not only for sensational effect, as it was necessary that the songs were constructed in a way which would enhance 'the sense of the text as a whole'. To achieve this, Bush states that the 'words must be set as nearly as possible according to their natural accentuation in speech'. This meant that the settings should be syllabic, that phrases lengths should be uneven to match sentence structure and that rhythmical note-values would vary according to specific words. In 1964, Robert Stephenson talked about these ideas of text-setting:[14]

> There are three considerations in setting English words: the pitch graph, plotted from emotive intensification; the rhythm graph, plotted from the relative time values of different vowels; and the effect of the frequent consonants in breaking up the graph of the melodic line. … Multiplicity of consonants, which is an embarrassment to lyric-melodic flow, is a positive blessing to delivery of prose, by reason of the consonants' aid to clear diction. In political oratory, consonantal punctuation is as much an asset as an aggressive forefinger.[15]

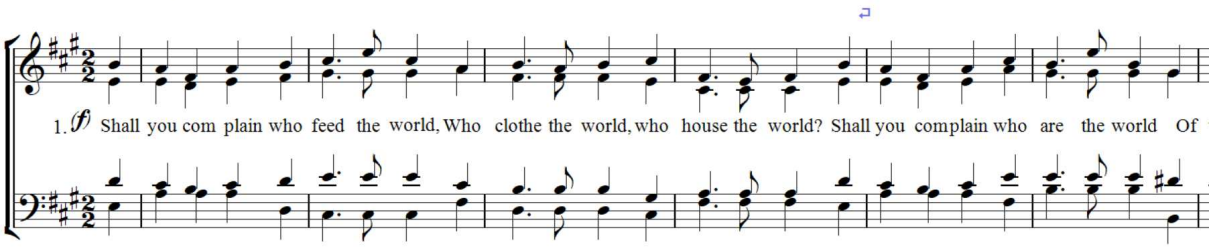
This paragraph neatly surmises Bush's methodology, yet it was written in relation to Bush's operas which suggests that Bush applied these text-setting techniques to genres other than his workers' music. Stevenson goes on, to point out that that the ideas pay homage 'to the pioneer collectors of

[14] It is not clear whether Stevenson had read Bush's early theories on setting socialist texts.
[15] Stevenson, 'Alan Bush: Committed Composer', *Song in Gold Pavilions*, 50.

English folk song: Cecil Sharp, Percy Grainger and Vaughan Williams' and, because of this, Bush was 'indebted' to them. Stevenson was incorrect to think that Bush 'indebted' to folksong collectors for any idea on word setting formulated in the 1930s. As surmised in the previous chapter, Bush had had little interest in British folksong in the early thirties and, in fact, had purposefully avoided the genre. However, the comparison between Bush's workers' music and historical folksong is a reminder that, although Bush was likely the first to theorise these text-setting concepts, in practice they had been in use for many centuries. Therefore, some of Bush's individual theories did not deviate from previous musical practices and thus, were not revolutionary by themselves. However, as this chapter will go on to demonstrate, once Bush's specified techniques of structuring, writing and harmonising workers' songs had been amalgamated only then did a style of music emerge, which differed radically from previous genres.

Two of Bush's earliest workers' songs are 'Song to Labour' (1926) and 'To the Men of England' (1928).[16] Although both songs are classed as workers' songs, they are poles apart in style and, as they were written up to a decade before Bush formalised his theories in 'Notes on a Problem of Workers' Music', they do not completely exemplify his instructions. 'Song to Labour' was written for the London Labour Choral Union in the year of the General Strike and, as with all of Bush's chosen texts, the poem is distinctly socialist.

Fig. 2.1 Bush, 'Song to Labour'.



[16] See Appendix 1 (i) and (ii).

In keeping with his later ideology, the word setting is syllabic which aids the listener however it is harmonised in a simple, traditional four-part setting for SATB, with a strong diatonicism, which reveals little originality. The key moves from A major to the dominant and subdominant, the harmony is triadic with elements of dissonance and suspension (e.g., b.1 and 6). The highest notes of most phrases are set to an unimportant word: 'the' (e.g., b.2,6, 10 and 14). Its even phrasing, of 16 bar verses, shows similarities to the existing repertoire of the socialist choirs of the times, which were often hymn like, as they were in repetitive strophic form with easy melodic lines for musically illiterate singers. Indeed, many union songs of the early twentieth century took the melodies from hymns and old religious music and re-wrote their lyrics to create popular socialist songs: for example, 'Hallelujah, I'm a Bum' is sung to the Presbyterian hymn 'Revive Us Again' and Joe Hill's 'The Preacher and the Slave' is a parody of the Salvation Army hymn 'In the Sweet By and By'. Many new lyrics were also sung to popular tunes of the day, such as 'John Brown's Body' and new lyrics were put to the tune of 'The International'. The absences of ideological consideration and the thereby lack of compositional technique informing the creation of these socialist ditties, resulted in a basic repertoire for socialist singers in which the music itself did little to help advance the cause of the politically incited lyrics.[17]

If Bush and Eisler's work is compared, some of the arrangements of Eisler's workers' songs are just as simple as 'Song to Labour'. This can be seen in a collection of four songs, translated and published by the WMA in London, which included: three texts set by Johannes Becher, 'In Spring', 'Song of Learning' and 'Far-away Song' and the last, 'Song of Peace', had a text written by Brecht. [18] Like 'Song to Labour' the melodies were similarly compact, encouraging concise declamation of text free from ornamentation or artifice. The accompaniments were non-intrusive, yet they were unimaginative. Structurally, they were mostly based on four-bar phrases though some, such as 'Song of Learning' and 'In Spring', had an extra bar added at the end of a phrase for emphasis.[19] The harmony

[17] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 7.
[18] Eisler, *Four Songs by Hanns Eisler*.
[19] 'Far Away Song' is the most regular, made up of unvarying, repeated four bar phrases. See Appendix 1 (vi).

parts of the accompaniments are fully diatonic, consisting of triadic chordal progressions, underpinned by repetitive pedal notes. These grounded the songs' harmonies and rhythms which would have been practical style for amateur choirs. Yet, compared to the more adventurous style of workers' songs, they were much less polemic, lacking in dynamism and individualism, and the full, lush harmonies were inclined to sentimentalism. However, Bush claimed that it was only natural that a new genre of music would be comparatively rudimentary when compared to established styles and that it would take time to design a more sophisticated art form which could affect change:

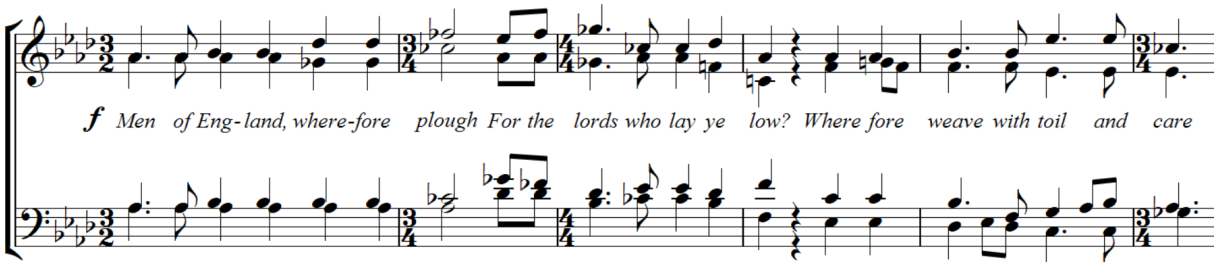
> At first such works of art, designed as weapons in the class struggle may be crude and primitive. But they will share these characteristics with the Early Christian music, the early protestant music and the early expressionist music of the beginning of the 17th century, when compared with the highly cultivated Greek music, Roman Catholic music, and classical style of the respective periods.[20]

Thus, this work is not representative of Eisler's entire oeuvre as, like Bush, his style changed throughout the years.

The next work of Bush's, written in 1928 is 'To the Men of England'.[21] It is based on a poem written in 1819 by Percy Bysshe Shelley and Bush's setting of the text can be considered neither crude, nor primitive. As such, the arrangement is very different to 'Song to Labour' and Eisler's simpler songs. Like the text used in 'Song to Labour', Shelley's work is heavily socialist and Bush arranged it for four-part SATB, but therein the similarities end. This is an emotive, immensely intricate work by Bush which is reflective of his early work as a choral composer in the genre of art-music. There are four through composed verses, dividing the structure of the work into A – A^1 – B – A^2 – Coda, with the 'A' sections being in the key of Ab and the 'B' section (the third verse) is in the key of E.

[20] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 7.
[21] Score sourced from the JBPSC. However, the manuscript in the British Library, London, is dated 'December 1927-January 1928'. See Appendix 1 (ii).

Fig. 2.2 Bush, 'To the Men of England'.



Bush uses modal harmony in a way which premeditates his use of modal scales as the basis of his 'English National Style' in later years. For example, the opening phrase, 'Men of England, wherefore plough' is rooted in Ab Aeolian (b.1 and 2) and it moves to Ab Dorian for the phrase 'for the lords who lay ye' (b.2 and 3). The phrase closes with an F minor chord, the relative minor, which prepares for the transition to Ab major for two bars (b.4-5). It returns to Ab Dorian for the phrase 'and care The rich robes your tyrants' (b.5-7) and closes on the dominant major, Eb major. Throughout the work, Bush often uses chromaticism and dissonance for effect, and to smooth over any more unusual modulations between keys.

In an interview in 1978, Bush reflected on the juncture composers faced between writing highbrow 'art' music and workers' songs:

> Composers wrote music for working-class consumption and performance in a somewhat different idiom from what they wrote their 'professional' concert music'. And it took some of us a long time before we were able to unite those two styles of music – as indeed it took the very great composer Hanns Eisler in the 1930s. His music which was for working-class consumption, was in a kind of modal style, whereas in his other music he used the 12 tone system of Schonberg.[22]

[22] Watson, *Alan Bush and Left Music in the* Thirties, 86.

Bush's attempt to amalgamate the two styles is strikingly prominent in 'Song to the Men of England' as, within this socialist song, he attempts to demonstrate his technical capabilities as an art-music composer. His use of diminished chords and chromatic harmony are reminiscent of his contemporary impressionist composers, such as Debussy and Ravel, whom Nancy Bush states were two of Bush's favourite composers as a teenager.[23] In 1964, Stevenson suggested that the harmonic vocabulary employed in this song was reminiscent of Hindemith and that Bush's music was 'Central European and eclectic'.[24] Bush responded that:

> I did not at the time nor do I now regard my 'Song to the Men of England' as 'Central European and eclectic'. I estimate it as an example of a frequent occurrence in the works of a composer moving towards a national style, but without clear consciousness of the fact or of the way to achieve the aim, a combination of predominantly national (i.e. English) melody with eclectic harmony.[25]

Therefore, Bush believed that his innovative approach to harmony in this work was a part of his evolution as a composer. Whether it can be considered 'Central European' is debatable and yet there is no doubt that this work is, not only modern, but one which was far removed from the classicisms of the nineteenth century. In this way, it was compatible with his instructions for the composition of workers' music which he detailed in 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music'. It is also possible to discern a few other idioms which match his instructions. For example, he emphasises the socialist text in the declamatory sounding fourth verse by exaggerating dynamics and adding strong accents to give an uplifting strength to the music. He also uses the rhythm and rapidly changing time signatures to match the natural rhythms of the words. However, not all the elements of this work are prophetic of his later ideas. For example, there are moments where the rhythm is so exaggerated that phrases become broken and the sentences become more incoherent than had they been written in a more uniform rhythm. As well as this, many of the melodic lines are contrapuntal which make the text less

[23] Bush N., *Alan Bush*, 12.
[24] Stevenson, *Song in Gold Pavilions*, 47.
[25] Bush, letter to Stevenson, 1963. H.A.

discernible: for example, the alto and tenor line move independently to the soprano and bass line for the second half of the first and second verse (b. 8-13 and b. 22-25), and the moving bass and tenor part in verse three reduces the impact of the soprano and alto's word 'Forge'(b.45). As well as this, the overriding issue with the song is that it would have been difficult for amateur singers. This is due to the multiple melodic leaps of open fourths and fifths, the wide-ranging fluid tonality and the independence of each vocal part. It necessitated a rigorous approach to rehearsal, more rigorous than the conventional rehearsal methods of the LLCU, where the workers would 'have the song played through and we [the choir] picked it up somehow'.[26] Bush, in his early years as conductor of the LLCU, 1924-29, decided to try and be more methodical whilst teaching the choir. He 'made them sing unaccompanied… then took each part alone and laboriously went through the first sixteen bars again and again'.[27] Consequentially, only part of the song was learnt, and it came at the cost of a few 'disgruntled' choir members who disliked this form of practice and therefore left the choir.[28] For this reason, this work is not illustrative of the simplicity advocated for workers' songs in later years.

Between 1928 and 1931, there is a marked development in Bush's workers' music. The works written in the 1920s, such as 'Song to Labour' and 'To the Men of England', were part of his trial and error research to find the best style. In 1930, Bush co-edited *Twelve Labour Choruses* with for the ILP and the music was, for the most part the 'turgid four-part setting in the manner of *Hymns Ancient and Modern'*.[29] By 1931, the songs begin to better match those detailed instructions described in 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music'. The first of these works is 'Question and Answer', which was written in 1931 under the shadow of the Great Depression, during the formation of the National Government. This song was written for the millions who became unemployed as a result of the economic situation. The words are by G. R. Atterbury and, as the title suggests, it is a call and response

[26] Bush N., *Alan Bush*, 17.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., 18.
[29] Hurd, *Rutland Boughton,* 176.

song; the instructions at the top of the page state 'The Choir asks the questions, the audience answers'.[30] There are three verses in strophic form and the first verse goes;

> Q. Are the workers badly fed?
>
> A. Yes! most of 'em.
>
> Q. Are the workers badly housed?
>
> A. Yes! most of 'em.
>
> Q. Do their children ever feel the pinch?
>
> A. Yes! most of 'em.
>
> Q. Aren't they always being robbed?
>
> A. Yes! Yes! Yes! All of 'em.

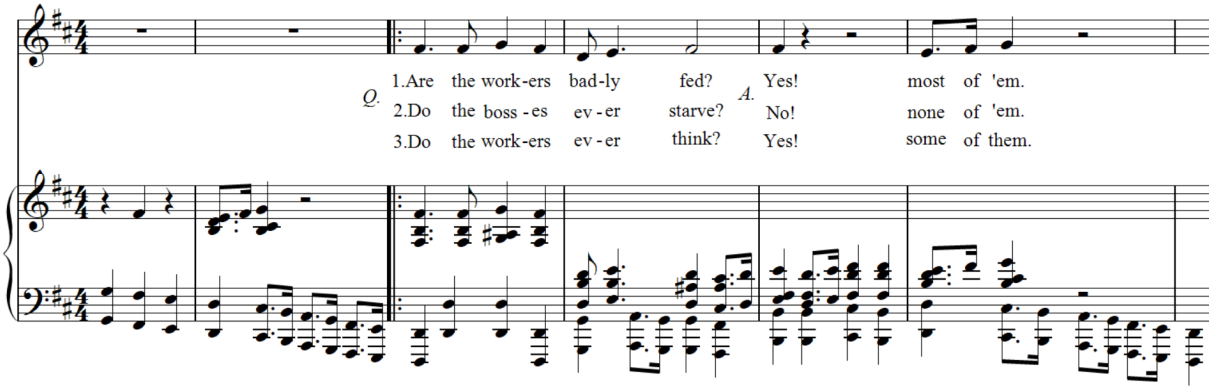
The workers' line is uncomplicated and is entirely suitable for amateur singers, due to the rhythmic and melodic unison of the vocal parts and the fact that the range of the singers is narrow, only covering a major 9th. As well as this, the shapes of all the melodic phrases are identical as they are based on a short, stepwise, motif. This motif is repeated for the second question and answer, transposed up a third for the third question and answer, and again by a tone for the fourth question. The final answer is shouted in *Sprechstimme* style, which seems to fit in with the style of the song, due to the overtly distinguishable and emphatic text-setting throughout. Overall, it is a simple song, which would have been easy for the workers to learn. The simplistic style was acknowledged in the introduction of *The Left Song Book,* in which it was later published:

> Most of the songs are so arranged that they can be sung either in unison with piano accompaniment or in parts for mixed voices with or without accompaniment. Even the part arrangements are easy to learn, and when sung in unison most of the tunes can be picked up very quickly.[31]

[30] See Appendix 1 (iii).
[31] Bush, *The Left Song Book*.

To aid the amateur singers even further, solfege is written above the line, the word setting is syllabic, and there are no added dynamics to contend with. Unlike 'To the men of England', the harmony is diatonic, yet it is not as bland as 'Song to Labour'. A sense of tonal ambiguity is created in the piano accompaniment, as many of the chords are built up from open octaves and fifths, lacking the third of the triad. Often the third is replaced with the seventh of the chord, creating dissonance against the melody line. This accompaniment is independent of the melody and provides the much desired 'vigorous' bass line.

Fig. 2.3 Bush, 'Question And Answer'.



With 'Question and Answer', it is interesting to consider whether the bleak social circumstances facing the British proletariat in 1931 compelled Bush to formulate his theory with greater urgency. Certainly, by 1934, Bush was teaching his theory on the composition of workers' music to his pupils at the Royal Academy. This is demonstrated in Aubrey Bowman's article on Bush. Bowman was a student of Bush at the academy and he states that Bush would give practical advice such as:

> "In this passage I think you have too many notes. Better too few notes than too many!". "This high note is but a repetition of a previous high note. If you are to have a sense of melodic development then you must have either a higher note or a lower one,

> but not the same one!" "The setting of that word could be done better. It's a weak word and it's an unaccented one. You have set it to a strong, high note, thereby giving it an importance it doesn't deserve".[32]

All of these suggestions are reflective of the instructions found in 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music' therefore it is likely that by 1934 Bush had finally formulated his principles on the composition of workers' music. In the same year 'Song of the Hunger Marchers' (1934) was written and it was the first text by Randall Swingler which Bush set to music. It marked the beginning of a very long, working friendship between the men, based on similar shared political and aesthetic ideals and a mutual admiration for each other's artistic talents.[33] Unlike 'Song to the Men of England', which is based on a 19th Century poem, Swingler, as a fellow sympathising Marxist, wrote a gritty poem which included topical issues and current events for Bush to arrange. Bush wrote it for the Hunger Marches, which began in the 1920s and gained momentum throughout the early thirties in order to protest the social welfare cuts, the high levels of unemployment, the lack of new industry and the implementation of the means test. He took part in the National Hunger March of 1934 which consisted of 10 main contingents and 7 sub-contingents, marching from across the country to culminate together at Hyde Park on February 25th.[34] To accompany the march, Bush set this poem of Swingler's:

> [*Verse 1*] We march from a stricken country,
> From broken hill and vale,
> Where fact'ry yarks are empty,
> And the rusty gear for sale.
> Our country will not thrive again,
> Our Strength is not for use,

[32] Bowman, *Time Remembered*, 'A Matter of Talent', 127.
[33] Bush, 'Song of the Hunger Marchers'. See Appendix 1, (iv). The collaboration with Randall Swingler lasted until 1950.
[34] The timetable for the Scottish contingents gave the participants over a month to get to London, as they left Glasgow on January 22nd. This demonstrates the extreme dedication from passionate protestors, who believed their cause to be completely necessary.

The bubble of prosperity

Has never come to us.

[*Refrain*] Then rouse to our tread

When you hear us marching by;

For servility is dead

And the Means Test too shall die!

Though they think our spirit's broken,

Because we're underfed,

We will stamp the Starvation Government

Beneath the workers' tread!

Stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp,

We will stamp the Starvation Government

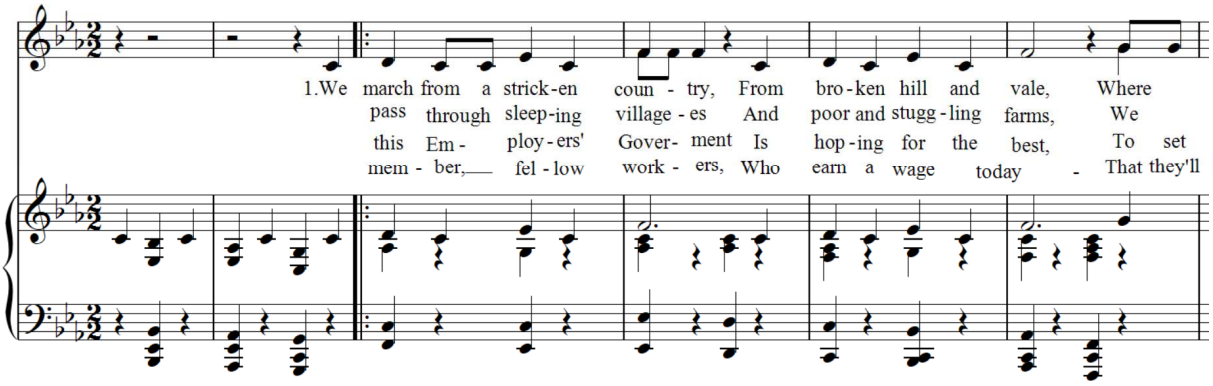
Beneath the workers' tread!

[*cont.*].[35]

Bush set up these blatantly frank lyrics in a way that allowed the song to be sung whilst moving. For example, it has an easy, catchy feel due to its steady rhythmic beat which would have been appropriate as a marching song. The word 'stamp' is onomatopoeic and a direct instruction for the singers to stamp their feet whilst shouting, rather than singing the note. The vocal part is in unison enabling it to be sung *a cappella*. The melodic line comprises of stepwise movements which would be relatively easy for an amateur singer to pitch and obscures much of the song's shifting tonality. This shifting tonality is more apparent in later editions of the piece, which Bush re-worked for performances in musical venues and therefore added a piano accompaniment.

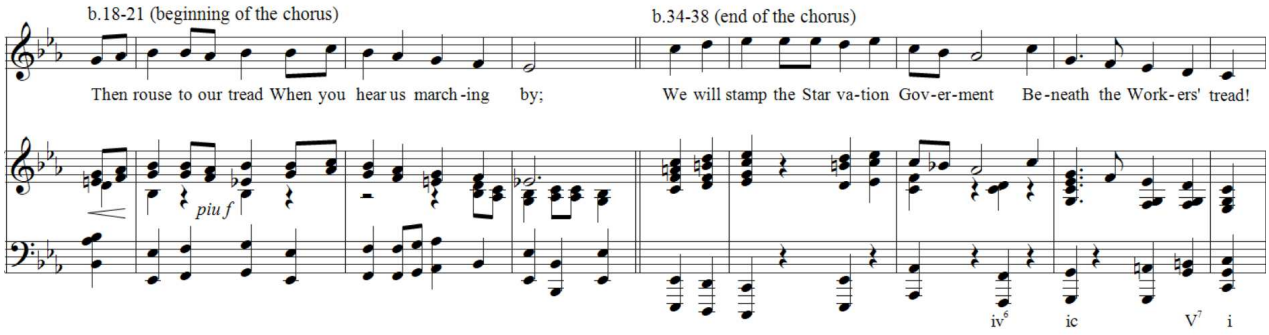
[35] Bush, *Songs of Struggle,* 5-7.

Fig. 2.4 Bush, 'Song of the Hunger Marchers'.



The song opens in C Aeolian mode for the first verse. This modulates to the relative major key for the chorus, Eb major, wherein it moves briefly through the dominant major for two bars (b.23-24). At the end of the refrain, it has a simple cadential progression in C minor (iv^6 – ic – V^7 – i) in order to start the next verse in the original key. This process is both economical and sounds natural.

Fig. 2.5 Bush, 'Song of the Hunger Marchers', b.18-21 and b.34-38.



Within this perceived simplicity, Bush includes unusual elements of dissonance within the harmony to distinguish it from rally songs of the nineteenth century. In a similar manner to 'Question and Answer', towards the end of the refrain the third of the chord is sometimes omitted and replaced with a seventh or added fourth and the use of passing notes gives ambiguity to the harmony. The result is an austere, modern harmony which drives the melody forward whilst ridding it of any sentimentality.

The catchy elements within the melody demonstrates that Bush could write works which would engage both singers and listeners, whilst using unusual tonality in the accompaniment to give the work its individuality. Stevenson comments of these works that were written in the mid-thirties:

> […] the repeated practice of writing these songs, plus the experience of hearing them sung and observing the reactions of the ordinary folk who sang them – what succeeded and what failed – all these factors enabled Bush to strike the balance between originality and popular appeal.[36]

This 'balance between originality and popular appeal' was, in theory, exactly what the 1936 article called for. However, in practice 'Song of The Hunger Marchers' failed to fulfil its potential as a worker's 'marching' song. Even though the melody has a catchy element, to the extent that it rapidly becomes an ear-worm for most trained musicians, apparently some of the singers were overwhelmed trying to learn it whilst on the march. Some of the participants were given sheet music to aid memory, yet not all were musically literate. Therefore Bush encouraged them to memorise it by employing a clarinettist to teach it by ear and increasing the number of rehearsals: 'it is on record that he got marchers out of bed at 7am to take part in choir practice before continuing the march!'.[37] However, for the sake of ease, many of the singers reverted to singing old socialist favourites, such as 'The International', Connolly's 'Rebel Song' and other popular songs including 'Hallelujah, I'm a Bum'.[38] Reportedly, a North East worker from Stockton, Johnny Longstaff, wrote in his memoirs that the workers sang songs such as 'Carrying the Coffin' to the populist tune of 'John Brown's Body' on this same march.[39] As well as this, the president of the WMA recounted:

> Alan once said to me "I wrote all those splendid workers' songs, and when I go on these marches (as I can verify he did, having marched with him a few times) what do they sing?" He glared and spat out "Nellie Dean!". [40]

[36] Stevenson, *Song in Gold Pavilions,* 47.
[37] Miller, 'The Role of Music and Song'.
[38] Hall, *'A Pleasant Change from Politics'*, 103.
[39] <www.theyounguns.co.uk/johnnylongstaff>, accessed January 2020.
[40] Jordon, 'Some Aspects of Style in Alan's Music', 25. H.A.

Although these early attempts to perform 'Song of the Hunger Marchers' were unsuccessful, the value of the song was later realised and as such, it became a mainstay of successive concerts, rallies and pageants.

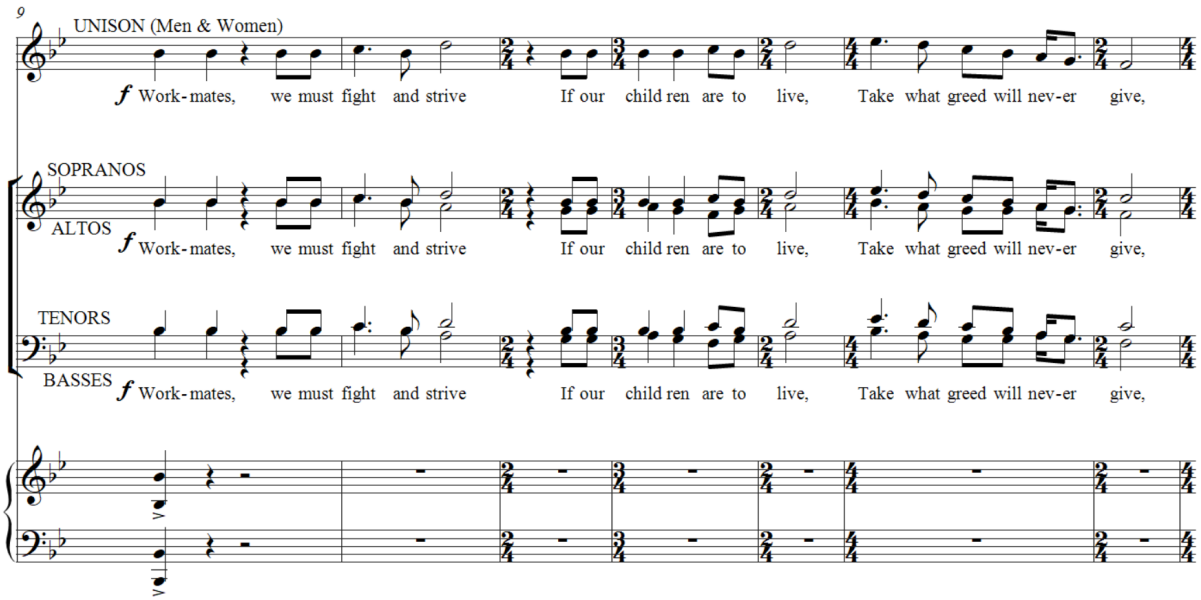
Eisler's other workers' music shows similarities to Bush's later workers' songs, in particular to 'Song of the Hunger Marchers'. These similarities are shown in the three songs written for a collection called 'Three Unison Songs', which were individually called (i) In Praise of Learning (ii) Report on the Death of a Comrade (iii) The Party's in Danger. They also demonstrate a style very different to the 'Four Songs' mentioned previously.[41] This is the result of their rapidly changing meters and uneven phrases lengths in order to emphasise the various texts written by Brecht. They also have a simplicity and transparency within the choral writing which helps propel their socialist sentiments. Another work of Eisler's, the 'United Front Song', on the other hand, has a regular meter, yet the harmonic accompaniment becomes more dissonant throughout, as he incorporates augmented and diminished intervals to create tension. This culminates in a memorable parody of a soldier's march during the chorus.[42] Therefore, whilst Bush's work was variable during this time as he searched for the perfect idiom for workers' music, Eisler's was also just as changeable. The main difference between the two men's work is that Eisler never attempted to amalgamate a modernist harmony with workers' music, such as that found in Bush's 'To The Men Of England' and was more inclined to use a diatonic harmony, with full chordal progressions.

The final work of Bush's to be considered is 'Labour's Song of Challenge' (1936).[43] Because this work was written in 1936, in the same year as 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music', it is expected that it represents the ideal workers' song. It is a setting of another of Swingler's indomitable poems which, within the opening phrase, calls the workers to action: 'Work-mates, we must fight and strive'. In this way, the text is immediately shown to be unsentimental, non-pessimistic and non-

[41] These songs were re-used in different settings, for instance, these three songs were used by Brecht in his play 'The Mother' (1932).
[42] Eisler, 'United Front'. See Appendix 1 (vii).
[43] Bush, 'Labour's Song of Challenge'. See Appendix 1 (v).

resignatory which Bush believed was the perfect idiom for a socialist song. The song is written for unison chorus, SATB and piano. The instructions on the score state 'This song cannot be sung as a unison song, but it is so written as to enable a choir which only sings in unison to sing it with a choir which sings in parts'. At a massed choir event, this part for a unison choir would have allowed amateur choirs the important opportunity to sing this large socialist work, even if they lacked the technical ability to sing in parts. If the vocal idioms of this song are compared to those suggested by Bush in his compositional manifesto, it is possible to see to what extent they reflect his written instructions. Firstly, the use of unison is prevalent throughout the parts. The choir begins singing in unison (b.9-10) and later, whole phrases are treated in unison (b. 22-24). Often the four parts are reduced to two as the soprano and tenor, and alto and bass line double up in octave unison (b.11-13).

Fig. 2.6 Bush, 'Labour's Song of Challange', b.9-15.

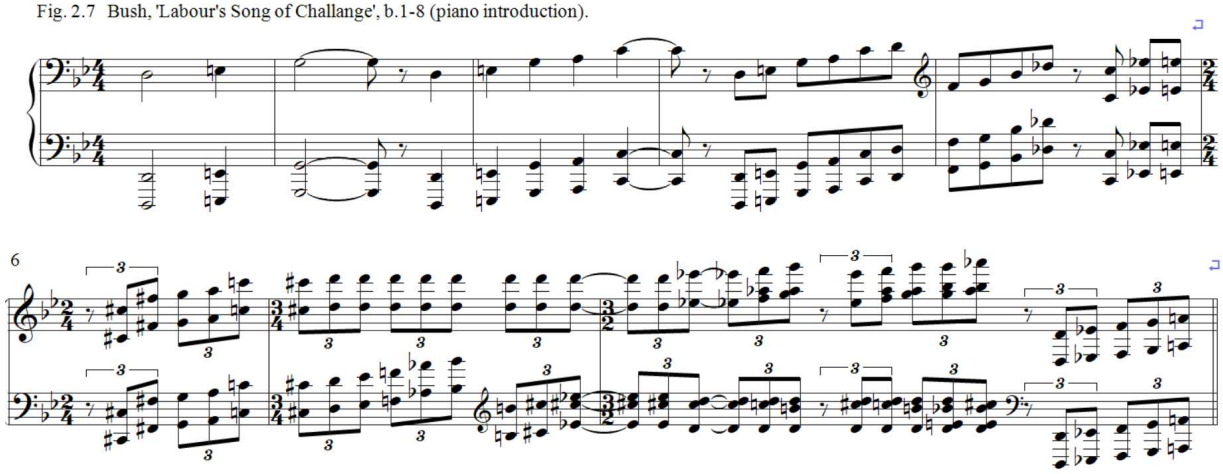


A section of the manifesto concentrates on the placement of the highest note, indicating that it should be three quarters of the way through the work which is 80 bars long. The highest note in the unison part is E natural which occurs twice, once briefly at bar 50 on the word 'prevail' and again at b.61 where it is then repeated in a more drawn-out fashion. Finally, the song is through composed, so each

word is set to a rhythm which mimics its natural flow. For example, the repeated phrase 'Do you forget' is set to a triplet followed by a crotchet (b.29, 32 and 35).

Like many of his other workers' songs, Bush creates a sense of tonal ambiguity in places by avoiding diatonicism to great effect. He regularly omits the third of the chord, instead harmonising with open fourths and fifths which results in an open, bare texture. Indeed, the opening piano introduction is made up of a series of octave-unison ascending phrases which, from b. 6-8, cover all 12 tones. Such an unsettled opening creates tension within the listener and is therefore dramatically engaging.

Fig. 2.7 Bush, 'Labour's Song of Challange', b.1-8 (piano introduction).



As the piano part gains in rhythmic tempo, the unsettled nature of the harmony is resolved as it moves to land squarely in Bb major for the beginning of the choral singing (b.9). Once the vocal parts are introduced, the piano accompaniment becomes much sparser. It does little to fill the texture nor does it add to the ambiguous tonal field as its short interjections are often fiery and rapid: this is the 'vigorous bass line' which Bush calls for in his manifesto. As a song which was appropriate for amateur choirs, which uplifted the sentiments of the socialist text, which had a modern setting and which displayed no sentimental expressionisms, this was a song which perfectly realised Bush's theory on the composition of workers' music.

Many of Bush's contemporaries agree that Bush successfully achieved his aim to write powerful workers' music without excess expressivity. For instance, Ronald Stevenson, in his summary of this music states that 'at their best, they are laconic, pungent and utterly unsentimental'.[44] The extent to which this is a compliment, however, is unclear. Looking at the reviews of Bush's other compositions, it would seem that Bush also applied those methods promoted in 1936 to other genres of music throughout the thirties and forties, in order to elucidate his socialist principles. However, this turned out to be an unsuccessful venture: as the BBC pointed out, Bush's socialist opera *Wat Tyler* was in 'want of expressive melody and harmonic colour'.[45] In a negative comparison with Rawsthorne, it is mentioned that:

> However worthy Alan's works may be, they are rather relentless and unsmiling, and need very careful placing in programmes.[46]

But Bush was aware of their mixed reception. He wrote to Michael Tippett in 1934 about his art-music song-cycle, 'Songs of the Doomed':

> They are really very powerful, never performed needless to say except where I can exert influence. But they did once resound inside the hold precincts of the Royal Academy of Music, and created quite an uproar. Norman Demuth, one of my colleagues there said afterwards: "Well, they certainly created an impression. I cannot say that opinion was divided, because I did not hear anyone say that they liked them; but they were impressed".[47]

Thus, the works were effective in making an impact on the audiences. However, both quotes demonstrate the overriding issue with Bush's theory of writing socialist music. By ridding the songs of sentimentality in order to actively engage the audiences, he in fact limited the songs' appeal and alienated many of the listeners. This is hinted at by Lewis Foreman, who wrote:

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[44] As opposed to popular music, which was a 'nadir of nonsense'. Stevenson, *Songs in Gold Pavilions*, 48.
[45] Warr, letter dated 14th December 1953, BBC W.A.
[46] Wright, letter to his BBC contemporaries, 1945 BBC W.A.
[47] Tippett, letter to Bush, 3rd July 1934, 6. H.A.

> Such works for chorus and piano as Song to Labour (1926), Song to the Men of England (1928), The Road (1929), Question and Answer (1931), Hunger Marcher's Song (1934), Labour's Song of Challenge (1936) and Make Your Meaning Clear (1939), seem to be stuck very much in the aspic of their times, the choral writing clearly by a man who knew how to get the best out of amateur choirs, but somehow lacking the common touch; without that memorability or catchiness, that easy popularity of an Elgar or a Walton, needed to achieve the catchy number for which the enterprise cried out.[48]

This idea, that a 'catchy number' would have been better remembered by those in the Labour movement, is echoed by Constant Lambert in *Music Ho!*. He believed that the success of a socialist song was based on factors other than the way in which a work was technically composed and that, instead, these types of songs should have a greater effect if their melodies were populist in style:

> […] in the case of a song like the *Marseillaise,* the most far reaching of popular songs, the effect is clearly dependent for its major appeal on the music itself and it is significant that the tune, if not actually popular in technical origin, is popular in general allure and non-classical in construction.[49]

Thus, it is interesting to consider if Bush had used romantic idioms and musical clichés whether the songs would have appealed to a wider public and, in effect, spread the socialist message further afield.

In 1938, Bush wrote *The Left Song Book*. This represented a striking departure from previous editions of workers' song books. He had helped edit *Twelve Labour Choruses* in 1924, a volume which was produced by the Independent Labour Party. This early work, *Twelve Labour Choruses,* edited by Bush demonstrates a collection of the choral arrangements of poems and hymns and, aside from the necessary inclusion of 'The Internationale', most of the texts were devolved from markedly traditional English works: the choice of texts at this point in time were by William Morris, William Blake and Tom Maguire, a socialist Irish immigrant of the 1800s. None of the songs had topical lyrics and few would

[48] Bush N., *Alan Bush*, 105.
[49] Lambert, *Music Ho!*, 101.

have directly appealed or related to the working classes at the time. The settings are similar to that of Bush's early 'Song to Labour', in that they were largely hymn like, had strophic four-part settings and were accompanied in a manner which was plainly, tonally diatonic. However, *The Left Song Book* reflects the new musical ventures Bush had been applying to his workers' songs from 1928 to 1938. Bush and Swingler edited the book together and it was published by the Left Book Club. Its publication announced the new purpose of workers' music to everyone involved in the British left wing musical scene and the publisher, Victor Gollancz, recognised the effect such a publication should have, writing in his editorial:

> I want to call attention to this publication, one of the most important that the club has issued […] This year's biggest developments are going to come in the cultural or what might perhaps be called the sociocultural field – theatre, cinema, music etc. From this point of view nothing could be more valuable than a good song book.[50]

The two men further emphasised the importance of the purpose of workers songs, which was to make singing radical, useful songs a more common past time and to provide a means of co-operation amongst the working classes. Here is the extended quotation from the introduction, which was briefly referred to earlier in the chapter:

> Music has been one of the banners at the head of every great progressive movement. For music has the faculty of binding together in a single emotion all those who are united by a common interest and a common purpose. Men marching in unison, riding in buses, or on an excursion, sitting in public bars, often are moved spontaneously to sing, in expression of their feeling of community. The socialist movement then, that movement which aims to make an equal community the basis of social life, is the only movement to-day capable of restoring to music a concrete social basis for its development and of utilising the power of music to the full […] We must sing what we really mean and sing it as though we meant it, or else our singing is only a pleasant way of passing the time.

[50] Bush, *The Left Song Book*.

> Which it will be, of course, but it must be much more as well, if we are to get the true value from our singing, and to develop the art of music in the process.[51]

Therefore, the book was of textual rather than compositional importance. The lyrics had to be topical and relevant to the workers' everyday lives. The contents of the book came out of the collaborative musical endeavours of WMA members who had submitted over a hundred song arrangements for inclusion. For reasons of cost, Bush and Swingler narrowed down the selection and only chose a final 25 to be included in the book. These consisted of an array of workers' songs originating from a wide geographic distance, such as 'Scots Wha Hae Wi' Wallace Bled' from Scotland to Eisler's German 'Einheitsfrontlied'. In this way, the book demonstrated the international remit of the workers' musical movement. There were also new arrangements of topical works and there were songs demonstrating Bush's new style of workers' music compositional techniques as found in 'England Arise'. However, not all the arrangements were new. In order to make the songs of the book as widespread as possible, Swingler and Bush included simple tunes of old-fashioned nursery rhymes and set radical lyrics onto them. For example:

> Prices rise,
>
> Prices rise,
>
> See how they mount,
>
> See how they mount,
>
> They've raised the price of your daily bread,
>
> And given you cruisers and guns instead,
>
> For they know it won't trouble you when you're dead that,
>
> Prices rise,
>
> Prices rise.

[51] Ibid.

This was sung as a round to the tune of 'Three Blind Mice'. Therefore, not all the songs perfectly matched Bush's compositional methods for writing workers' music. This fits with Bush and Swingler's introductory statement, which said:

> [Where] new words for an old tune were wanted, we followed the principle of making the text as concrete and as clearly related to our movement as possible. We must sing what we really mean and sing it as though we meant it.[52]

The inclusion of more fun ditties guaranteed the books' popularity. The book was a success, as was commented in *Left Review* 'in a comrade's house, or worker's club, or where there is a group around a camp fire, this book of songs will be in great demand'.[53]

Overall, Bush's journey to a suitable style of workers' music was paved with errors. He alienated those worker-singers who struggled with the more modern settings and he disaffected those listeners who disliked the simplicity of the 'turgid' settings. However, by 1936 he had successfully written workers' songs which lived up to the theory set out in 'Notes on the Problem of Workers' Music' and included 25 new works suited to the movement in a popular song book. This book proved that it was important for a composer to tread a careful line between works of popular appeal These works were equally engaging, accessible and modern. They formed a new fascinating genre of music: one which was neither of the bourgeois nor was it the product of the British proletariat. Instead, these works laid the foundations for a politically-motivated, left-wing music scene in Britain: the foundations for the emergence of a second culture.

[52] Ibid.
[53] Croft, *Comrade Heart,* 72.

Chapter Three: Pageants and a 'Second Culture'

Was the practical realisation of Bush's musical idiom radical enough to match his rhetoric?

Bush's involvement in the labour movement in the mid-1930s demonstrates a concentrated effort to change the status quo amongst the working classes. Not only did he develop a new genre of music to help politicise the working classes, but he was a driving force behind setting up massive events which he hoped might rally the masses to action. There were three main visual and musical spectacles, including The Pageant of Labour (1934), 'Towards Tomorrow': A Pageant of Co-operation (1938), and the Festival of Music for the People (1939). The extent to which these pageants and festivals realised Bush's musical idioms and supported the emergence of the Second Culture will be considered in this chapter.

The first chapter outlines the five essential concepts which differentiate the second culture from the dominant culture. These are: that a second culture should (1) rally the working classes into political action against inequality or injustice, (2) not be created for individual financial gain, and (3) be written or performed *by* a participating working class, not *for* the working classes to mindlessly consume. (4) It was noted that not all art forms written or performed by the proletariat were appropriate for a second culture when conflicts of financial interest, and subsequent political bias, arose. (5) Finally, the distinction between the dominant culture and the second culture is political not financial thus, if no conflicts of interest arose, it was acceptable for those from a wealthy background to be involved in the creation of the second culture. These concepts need to be looked at in greater detail and within the context of the pageants.

As previously mentioned, Bush came from a privileged background: his personal wealth, which is presumed to have been considerable, was largely inherited from his family. His entrepreneurial grandfather, William Bush, had built a sweet-shop business in the nineteenth century which laid the foundations of the family fortune. He gained a privileged education whilst growing up within a

respectable Edwardian-Victorian household, further consolidating his status as 'upper-class'.[1] Bush was well aware of his privilege and demonstrated, on many accounts throughout his life, financial generosity. He gave large sums to fellow composers, such as Michael Tippett and John Ireland, as well as funding organisations such as the Unity Theatre Trust, WMA and Topic Records.[2] Cynically, this type of philanthropic gesture could reshape the receiver's values, hence why it was important that no conflict of interest arose between the two parties. Yet, most of Bush's generosity was targeted towards individuals and organisations who, at the time, already shared many of the same socialist ideas and beliefs. Indeed, it seems that Bush's generosity was well intended and he simply recognised that 'Making and listening to music are entirely unprofitable occupations'.[3] It may have been this well-off, financially secure background that allowed Bush to work without an incentive of earning large sums of money. The idea of a wealthy member of the establishment writing for the working classes is an uncomfortable notion. It is suggestive of a desire to supplant working class culture which, uncomfortably, indicates an elitist disregard for the values of those people. Contemporary academic, Ian Watson, was convinced that this happened on many occasions during the nineteenth and twentieth century, as he states:

> There is ample evidence of conscious attempts by the ruling class to influence the workers ideologically. While the major part of this offensive was directed through institutions of instruction […] and by means of infiltration into working-class organisations, much was perpetrated through entertainment.[4]

The entire concept of workers' music festivals and pageants fell afoul of this, as the sole aim of such events was to popularise political theory. In this respect, they were no different to the proselytising Fascist rallies that occurred at the time, yet it is unlikely that this concerned Bush.

[1] Bush, *Alan Bush,* 9.
[2] Tippett, letter to Bush, H.A. Dates include 23rd May 1934, [no date though presumed to be December 1935] and [no date though presumed to be early January 1937]. O'Higgins, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland,* 160-170.
[3] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 11.
[4] Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain,* 51-2.

Bush believed he was morally superior by showcasing the 'truthful' version of the workers' history. Yet truth is subjective and, as the events were created with the intention of being politically biased, the resulting programmes were just as heavily propagandistic as the Fascist rallies. Watson continues by considering other negative impacts dominant culture had the working classes, believing that the dominant culture:

> In a double sense […] educates the working people against their own culture. Not only does it discredit or outlaw the second culture […] but in a curiously perverse way it gives workers an inferiority complex about their whole culture.[5]

This admonition of the dominant culture illustrates the importance of using pageants and festivals to engender pride amongst the working-classes. This is reflected in some of the literature written by Bush and by his contemporaries for festival brochures. For example, in a pamphlet written to accompany the 1948 National Colliery Music Festival, the 'Meet the miner' section eulogizes the role of the miner in present day society.[6] This pamphlet is by no means out of the ordinary and it reflects the fact that in 1920s, thirties and forties Britain, the miners, farmers and labourers were seemingly proud of their collective identity as 'the working class'. By today's standards, this lack of individualism makes for uncomfortable reading.[7] Yet collective pride was the best defence against the appeal of

[5] Ibid.

[6] The pamphlet reads: 'The miner has not always occupied a prominent place in the minds of those whose lives depend upon his arduous work. In the past he was relegated to a position far from the top of a list of industrial wage rates. He even had to sing in the streets for a living during long periods of trade depression and consequent unemployment. The shock dealt to the people of Britain by the great freeze-up soon after the mines had passed into public ownership made them conscious as they had never been before in their lives, of the importance of the miner. "We want coal" had been transformed into "we MUST have coal." Something had to be done about it, but what and by whom? What was needed was hard work that could only be performed by specialists: men who understand about mining and who possess the physical strength to endure the sustained effort their calling demands; in short, the miners. By their efforts this country was saved from the worst and it is upon them that recovery now largely depends'. *Harringay Arena - National colliery Music Festival,* JBPSC PSC/1/2/1/73.

[7] The way that the perception of identity moves is an interesting area of contemporary research, and there are many reasons why such a pamphlet would not be acceptable today. One of these is that over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, there was an incentive to move up through the social classes. This occurred as capitalist society and industry marketed the ownership of material goods and riches as being the ultimate goal, thereby incentivising the public to become a part of the middle classes. Because of this, the identity of the 'working class' held less appeal and, as a result, much working-class culture is disregarded.

commercialised music of the dominant culture which aimed 'to establish itself as the culture of *all* social groups'.[8]

Watson believed that the two cultures could 'never exist entirely separately, but necessarily had to undergo a process both of mutual hostility and mutual influence'.[9] Due to this inevitable co-existence he considered if forms of mass entertainment, such as those exhibited by these pageants and festivals, would be a suitable way to prolificate the ideas and beliefs of a revolutionarily alternative second culture. He asks:

> Can forms of mass entertainment act as a vehicle for spreading elements of a democratic and socialist culture? Simply because it is consumed or enjoyed by the working majority of the population, mass commodity culture *can* offer possible forms for alternative cultural practice.[10]

However, although it *was* possible, he argues that there was a major issue in using mass entertainment to propagate a new culture: which is that most forms are presented as a 'non-participatory' or 'consumer' culture. He exemplifies this by listing common platforms of mass entertainment, all of which are 'geared towards one-way consumption', such as: the national bodies of the press, large publishing houses, the media, record monopolies and cinema chains. These, by their very nature, were capitalist institutions which commodified culture, nor could they hope to engender a new culture which encouraged audience participation. Instead, if any form of mass entertainment was to be used to spread new ideas, he believed that it must be participatory, accessible and emphasise the collective side of cultural activity. As well as this, he thought there should be no obstacle between the producers and consumers of such events and that they should oppose all forms of capitalist incentivisation.[11] Therefore, in order to examine the role these events played in the formation of a second culture, the extent to which these workers' music festivals fitted these objectives shall be further considered.

[8] Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain*, 52.
[9] Ibid., 53.
[10] Ibid., 56. Watson's emphasis, not my own.
[11] Ibid.

The three pageants, 'mass entertainment' events, were monumentally large productions. They brought together many civic and national left-wing organisations and were a way for people to share their collective histories with wider working-class communities. The aim of these pageants was to showcase the working classes' histories. In a socialist sense, this meant demonstrating the role of the oppressed majority: to serve those of a powerful minority. Such a display would form an explicit comparison of poor and rich, and their respective wealth and power. This, according to Karl Marx's writings on 'Wage-Labour and Capital', is a powerful motivator for revolution and change.[12] Marx argues that whilst people are surrounded by possessions and ideas that are similar to their own, they have no impetus for change. Only when inequality is overtly displayed by juxtaposing the lives of the poor and rich, could the masses be incentivised to reject cultural norms and adopt a culture which gave them value and a voice. Bush's first experience of such an event was The Pageant of Labour, which took place on successive days between the 15th and 20th October 1934 at the Crystal Palace, London. Bush wrote the music, arranged the lyrics and conducted the performance. Groups of local labour organizations in London were responsible for the various episodes. Various newspaper reports claim that between 1000 and 1500 amateur performers took part, along with a further 200 ballet dancers and a chorus of 100 members from the London Labour Choral Union.[13] The second event that this chapter will consider was 'Towards Tomorrow': A Pageant of Co-operation, which took place at Webley Stadium on the 2nd July 1938. There was only one performance of 'Towards Tomorrow' which lasted for the duration of two hours. It was staged by the London Co-operative Societies and the scenario was created by the well-known writer, Montagu Slater. According to *The Times,* there were

[12] Marx writes 'A house may be large or small; as long as the neighbouring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all the social requirement for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks to a hut. The little house now makes it clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilisation, if the neighbouring palace rises in equal or even in greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls'. Marx, 'Relation of Wage-Labour to Capital'.

[13] [anon.], 'A Pageant of Labour' *The Times*, 16 October 1934.

3000 amateur participants, performing to an audience of 60,000 people.[14] Bush arranged all the music for it and at two points in the proceedings, brought all the participants together to sing two workers' songs, 'Men of England' and 'Men Awake!'. The final event this chapter will consider was called The Festival of Music for the People. This festival differed from the other two as it was a three-part event. The first part was staged in the Royal Albert Hall on the 1st April 1939. This was a pageant called 'Music for the People', and the idea for it stemmed from the 'successful conference' on "Music and Life" which had taken place in the previous year, run by Bush.[15] Bush conducted and directed the pageant, which involved over 500 singers and 100 dancers. The second was a concert in the Conway Hall, which took place two days later, on the 3rd of April. This was the chamber music 'folk' concert, which showcased arrangements of various folksongs by contemporary composers. The third concert presented works by Beethoven, Britten, Bush and Ireland conducted by Lambert, and was staged on the 5th of April at the Queen's Hall.

The sheer size and scale of the productions is illustrated by the vast number of people taking part. Because of the size and the consequent level of organisation such an event would necessitate, it would be easy to assume that such events only occurred on rare occurrences. Yet communities have enjoyed gathering to celebrate and engage with their pasts, through the form of pageantry, for over a hundred years. The first of these dramatic celebrations took place before the First World War and their popularity grew during the interwar period, becoming so widespread during this time that some observers have commented on a 'pageant fever' or that 'pageantitis' had gripped the country.[16] The themes of these events varied greatly, ranging from ancient 10th Century battles that took place at Sherborne Castle (1905), to showcasing the imperial might of the British Empire (1911). It was considered a nostalgic, conservative genre of performance at odds with the aims of the workers' music movement and at odds with the concept of a second culture. Yet Bush believed they could play an

[14] [anon.], 'Wembley Festival of Co-Operation', *The Times,* 4 July 1938. The audience numbers vary in different sources: Joanna Bullivant takes Mick Wallis' figure of 78,000 audience members. Bullivant, *Alan Bush,* 87.
[15] The 'Music and Life' Congress was held on May 28th-29th 1938 at the Queen Mary Hall, chaired by Edward Dent. [anon.], 'Festival of Music for the People' *The Times,* 3 April 1939.
[16] Readman, 'The Place of the Past in English Culture', 170. &. Ryan, '"Pageantitis"', 63-82.

important role in the creation of a workers' music movement. By presenting new and different ideas through different formats, such as that of a pageant, he believed that this could engage more people with the ideas, thereby engendering a bigger response:

> Art can always bring freshness, newness to the most well-worn theme. It can present the most familiar idea in ever novel aspects. In its capacity to stir the emotions it can rouse people to action.[17]

In 1936 Bush wrote 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival' and, like many of his other papers, it was never published. It considers the purpose of left-wing concerts, festivals and pageants and how they should be staged. The main tenet of the paper is that such events should be far removed from the normal procedures and constraints of a bourgeoisie concert hall. On a practical level the pageants were such large events they necessitated a space much larger and more accessible than a concert hall. It would have been impossible to accommodate so many participants in a concert hall, never mind include all the props and excesses, such as motorised displays, that accompanied pageant performances. Ideologically, it was important that the workers could perform in a space which was not harboured with the conventions and traditions of a traditional performance space. Bush explained in a letter to Britten in 1936:

> The circumstances in which a performance takes place play an important part in the effect upon the audience. In the capitalist concert-hall the formalities of the procedure and costume of the players are the insignia of the ruling-classes; the present bourgeois aesthetic of "art for art's sake" will be particularly stressed (even where it contradicts the plainly expressed intentions of the composer these will be excused patronisingly away where they cannot be suppressed from notice) and the attention of the public will be directed especially to the "neutral" artistic and subjective characteristics of the work.[18]

[17] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 11.
[18] Bush, letter to Britten, 11 August 1936, 2.

This ideological removal of upper-class rituals would help the audience better understand the socialist concepts. The removal of such restraints may also impact the participants' performance as they may be inclined to demonstrate more freely their objections to the establishment if they were less concerned about 'performing' in a traditional sense.[19] A freer and more vibrant performance could help 'rouse' the working classes, according to Bush:

> Everything must be done to make the show as lively as possible. All hints of respectability must be resolutely banned. Both performers and audience must feel that they are demonstrating. Demonstrating what? Their understanding of capitalism and determination to end it. Their militancy in the class-struggle. Their solidarity with all fighters in the workers' struggle. Their belief in the power of working-class solidarity to conquer their class enemies and establish the classless society. [20]

Thus, organisers should attempt to hold festivals and concerts which departed as widely as possible from accepted middle-class standards. Such concerts and festivals were not to be judged on pure musical merits but by how far they furthered the cause of the working-class movement as a whole. After all, the point of such events was to:

> Show forth the workers as the standard-bearers of art as well as of social revolution, as the propagators of new art forms and the enthusiasts for the art of previous periods as well as the conscious builders of a new social order.[21]

In order that the pageants would correctly reflect socialist ideals far removed from the normal constraints of a concert hall, Bush believed that the organiser should stick to five principles, five principles which Watson also deemed necessary criteria for a second culture. These were:

> 1) Music should be treated as a part of life, including political life, and not as something to be kept aloof from ordinary affairs. 2) The performers should be encouraged to take part in other activities of the working-class movement 3) Performers and audience should

[19] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 10-11.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 13.

> be brought into as close contact with one another as possible. 4) The audience should be made to take as active a part in the proceedings as is practicable. 5) Conductor and singers or players are members of one group and should behave accordingly.[22]

These principles have little to do with the actual compositional style of music. It seems that Bush was less concerned about how pageant music could incite the workers to action, but rather about how the whole performance of such events could promote socialist ideals. Therefore, he was less specific about how the music for the pageants should be written. In 1936 he wrote that the music for this new genre of workers' music would take time to develop as 'the conditions for the birth of this new art will gradually be provided'.[23] The only stipulation for the music of such events, was that workers' songs should take a central role in the pageants:

> The music of the present day, especially songs of the workers' musical movement itself, must be assured of an important place. Our movement is alive and it must show itself alive to present-day developments in every sphere.[24]

The Pageant of Labour was performed seven times at the Crystal Palace in October 1934. Bush composed the music, the script was written by Mr. Matthew Anderson and it was organized by the Central Women's Organization Committee to the London Trades Council.[25] Bush conducted four out of the 7 concerts, the other three by Tippett.[26] Tippett believed that this was a fair arrangement, stating that 'the whole affair is your doing & if you wanted to do every show I shld'nt [sic] have thought anything abt [sic] it'.[27] The Pageant dealt in a graphic manner with industrial and social changes over 150 years by representing prominent incidents which brought about the trade union, co-operative and labour movements, and the inequal divide between rich and poor:

[22] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 1.
[23] Ibid., 11.
[24] Ibid., 12.
[25] Matthew Anderson was a former left-wing journalist who began writing pageant scripts in the 1930s.
[26] Tippett later stated that he though conducting these events informed him as a composer 'He [Bush] even allowed me to conduct one of the performances; part of my necessary education in the needs of a modern composer'. Stevenson (ed.), *Time remembered,* 9.
[27] Bush, letter to Tippett, 27 February 1934.

> This is the story of how the rich built wealth… It is the story of a people fighting for a share of the riches, the leisure and the culture they had made possible.[28]

There were six main episodes divided into 40 scenes which open in the 1790s. The first three scenes look at the inescapable hardships of poverty and the horrors of child labour child labour through the lives of the 'Fletcher' family, a portrayal of a poor, working class family enslaved by the capital. The pageant moves forward in time, to the Luddite riots and the march of the Chartists on London. Episode Five opens with the trial of the Tolpuddle martyrs, and subsequent scenes of the same episode deal with the launch of the cooperative movement by the Rochdale pioneers, the 1888 Matchgirls' strike, and the succeeding London dockers' strike. The concluding episode brings the audience up to date, by giving a final glimpse of the Fletcher family in 1919 and post-War conditions. The event closes on a prophetic note with a ballet and a release of white doves symbolising peace and prosperity.

Bush described the plans for the pageant in a letter to Tippett on the 23rd of February 1934.[29] It was going to be 'very ambitious' and that 'a truly magnificent' scenario was being organised by a number of Trade Union and Socialist bodies. He acknowledges how anti-contemporary culture it was by stating:

> The scenario is so wildly seditions that I doubt whether it will be allowed by the police; but for God's sake don't go telling your wretched orchestral players that or else they will miss the chance of their lives. I am absolutely thrilled about it.[30]

Aside from the choral parts Bush composed to accompany The Pageant of Labour, he bookended the work with two workers' songs: a version of 'We're Low', a song of the Chartists' movement and 'A Pageant Song', a new workers' song written specifically for the pageant of labour. These songs were moments where all the performers, actors, chorus and dancers sang together, united in unison song, much in the style of Bush's other workers' songs. In a letter to Tippett in July '34, Bush mentions the inclusion of such songs by stating 'Parts of the music are quite exciting' and that the Pageant Song was

[28] Bush, 'The Pageant of Labour', Figure 1.
[29] Bush, letter to Tippett, 23 February 1934.
[30] Ibid.

'a grand melody to be sung in unison by the thousand odd performers'.[31] Such mass songs must have contrasted with the rest of the music written for the pageant, as Eisler had suggested in 1931 that a composer should change his style of writing in order to fit the occasion:

> The style, that is the method of organising the tones, should vary according to the purpose of the music. A song of struggle to be sung by the people in the audience must be constructed differently from a choral work with a theoretical content. So our aesthetic standards are not inflexible but when composing *we take into consideration the revolutionary purpose for which we are writing*.[32]

Whereas the workers' songs demonstrated unity amongst the performers and were simple enough to encourage mass participation, the music written for the chorus was more complex. Although mostly diatonically tonal, the harmonies were dense and the lines moved independently. This, at times may have obscured Matthew Anderson's lyrics for dramatic musical effect. Yet the texts of such lyrics were similar in style to those Bush chose for his workers' songs. They were revolutionary in nature, talking about the realities of everyday life for the working class. For example, figure 6-7 directs 'stage in complete darkness… darkness gradually begins to lighten' to accompany the chorus singing:

> Oh sing of strength to drive the plough,
> Present pain and bliss here-after,
> Of skill to spin and weave and sow,
> Homely joys with infant laughter.[33]

The dramatic nature of the event was increased by contrasting solo items with mass participation, a feat made possible by the staging of the event. The organisers used three parallel stages in the main hall of the Crystal Palace, with two others in front for the ballet, so that everyone could perform together and demonstrate a united form of community action. As well as this, in order that the seditious sentiments of the pageant could be realised, it was noted in *The Times* that Mr Basil Maine,

[31] Ibid., 3 July 1934. O'Higgins, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland,* 54.
[32] Eisler, 'Progress in the Workers' Music Movement', 32. My own emphasis.
[33] Bush, 'The Pageant of Labour', Figure 6-7.

a well-known actor, had been asked to fill the role of the commentator. In this way, he explained the various scenarios to the audience with clarity and his clear pronunciation was further aided by the use of microphones, meaning that the dialogue could 'be distinctly heard'.[34]

Michael Tippett reflected on the Pageant of Labour in much later life, in a piece of writing completed for Bush's 85th Birthday. In it, Tippett considers his pivotal role in the creation of this 1934 pageant, as he thought he was 'to all intents and purposes his [Bush's] assistant'. He goes on to state that:

> The "Pageant of Labour" must clearly be the high-water mark of the movement, which Alan to a considerable extent initiated to provide music with left-wing texts for performance by sympathetically inclined amateur choral societies.[35]

It is debatable whether this pageant was the 'high-water mark of the movement' yet Tippett probably made this comment because it was the only pageant in which he had a notable role. He did not contribute to any future left-wing pageants organised by Bush due to their friendship becoming more fractious in later years. This breakdown of friendship was sparked by Tippett's change in political opinion in 1936, when he became critical of Stalin's interpretation of Marxism as exemplified in the Soviet Union and turned to Trotskyism instead. This posed a problem for Bush, as he believed that in order to successfully host a workers' music festival, the organisers, director, conductors and choir members should all hold the same political ideology. For Bush, the main focus of these events was to spread the message of communism as found in Stalin's Soviet Union, rather than Trotsky's opposing views on Marxism.[36] This divergence of political intention would have ruined the image of solidarity amongst the leaders and organisers so it is no surprise that Tippett's future work with Bush was minimal.

[34] [anon.], 'A Pageant of Labour', *The Times,* 16 October 1934.
[35] This is repeated in two sources. Stevenson (ed.), *Time remembered,* 9. &. Tippett, 'A Magnetic Friendship: An Attraction of Opposites'.
[36] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 3.

Not only should the music demonstrate a united political front, Bush also believed that it should 'be a part of life'. Thus, it was important that such events should be as realistic and as relevant as possible: meaning that any music performed should relate to the workers' situation and the locality of the area. As Bush stated:

> The music should be from or about the district or industry which is being dealt with by the speakers. A folk-song from some other district or a part-song whose text bears no relation to what is being discussed would be out of place.[37]

As well as the songs being relevant, the pageant also included other relevant and realistic elements to avoid any inclination that this was simply a form of fanciful entertainment. This is made clear in the portrayal of the dockers' strike of 1889. The three men who led the original strike in 1889 were asked to perform the same roles in the pageant, even though they were, by the 1930s, in their seventies. Among living characters impersonated were Mr. John Burns, Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Ben Tillett. One of the men, Mr. Ben Tillett, stated:

> This is bringing reality into acting… I am willing to play my role again, and no one could do it better, for my recollection of that great fight is very vivid.[38]

Another realistic element of the pageant was that it gave work to those in need. Bush asked Tippett if the pageant's orchestra could be the Orchestra of Unemployed Musicians. This was an orchestra in South London which Tippett had set up to help cinema musicians who had been made redundant due to the introduction of the 'talkies'.[39] Tippett agreed and in this way the pageant financially supported working-class musicians.

As Bush had theorised, he gained little financially from the pageant. The Pageant of Labour made an income of £1357. 7s. 10d. however it cost £3276. 18s. 9d. to stage, meaning that it made a loss of £1919. 10s. 11d. Bush took a tiny fee to compose the entire work, agreeing to a mere £25.[40]

[37] Ibid., 7-8.
[38] [anon.], 'Dock Strike Echo' *The Nottingham Evening Post,* 7 February 1934.
[39] Matthews, *Michael Tippett,* 23-24.
[40] [anon.], 'Pageant of Labour', H. A.

This was in part due to the sadly lacking audience members, as only 6571 people attended, against the proposed 35000. A reporter for the *Manchester Guardian* euphemistically hinted at the low audience numbers, in this statement:

> Everything could be clearly seen from any seat, the stage being so high, and on the whole the articulation of the speakers was extraordinarily clear and their voices were enlarged without distortion by good amplifiers.[41]

Sadly, the lack of audience members compares unfavourably to the well-attended rallies held by Oswald Mosely and the British Union of Fascists, at the Olympia, two months previously.[42] Yet the reviewers seemed to appreciate the overall aims of such a pageant. Both the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian* commented on the 'unashamedly propagandist' note of the pageant, with the Guardian going on to praise the:

> Dramatic chronicle of the miseries and struggles of the people under industrial revolution, and their gradual climb to a consciousness of their birthright and consequent realisation of the need to organise against the power of the wealthy.[43]

Therefore, although the 1934 pageant had few audience members, had a smaller number of participants and was not a financial success: it may not have been the 'high-water mark' that Tippett believed it was. Yet, it was not insignificant. It did play a role in the creation of a second culture as it brought together left-wing musicians and activists to form a united front. The reviewers and audience members who attended were made aware of the pitiful workers' situation and it reflected many of the ideas, values and theories that Bush was trying to portray in his new workers' musical movement. Many of these ideas were found in later pageants composed by Bush.

'Towards Tomorrow'; A Pageant of Co-Operation was staged in London Wembley Stadium on the 2nd July 1938. It was produced by the London Co-operative Society to celebrate the 16th

[41] [anon.], 'Pageant of Labour', *Manchester Guardian*, 16 October 1934.
[42] *The Guardian*, 'Oswald Mosley's Circus' [accessed November 2019].
[43] [anon.], 'Review', *Glasgow Herald,* 15 October 1934. &. [anon.], 'Pageant of Labour', *Manchester Guardian*, 16 October 1934.

International Co-operative Day. Three thousand performers took part and 60 thousand 'co-operators' attended the presentation, meaning that it was much bigger than the previous *Pageant of Labour*. The vast number of participants indicates the importance of such an event within the new workers' musical movement. Two years previously, in his 1936 article, Bush had stated the importance of uniting large numbers of people in order to create the new movement:

> Performers and audience at a concert-demonstration can be made to feel themselves fellow members of one <u>great</u> movement; fellow crusaders embarked upon the greatest task that has ever confronted mankind. It is this spirit of unity in courageous adventure and this feeling for the grandeur of the undertaking which we [need?] to foster in our movement.[44]

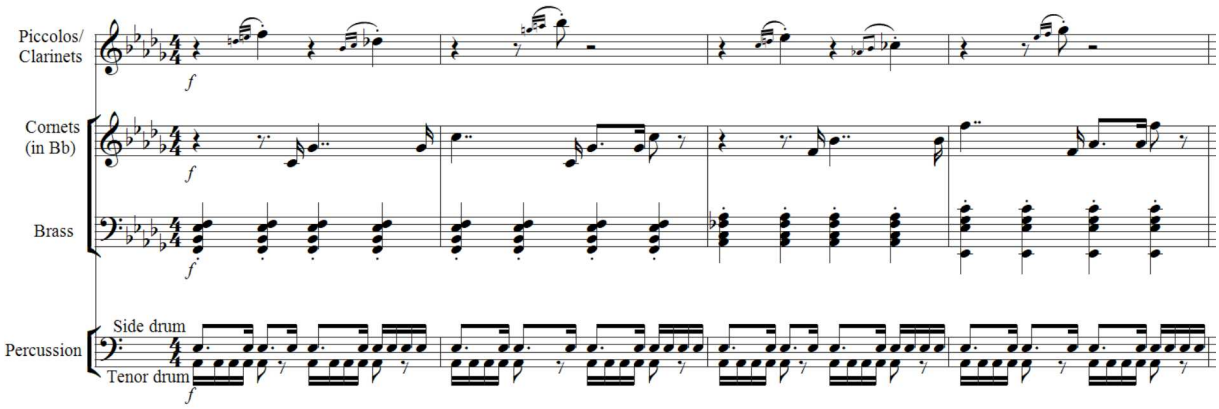
Such a large event most likely created a 'spirit of unity', an idea echoed in Rogers Brubaker's 1939 paper. He argued that a collective identity is not a thing that individuals have but rather something they experience or perform at particular moments: it is not 'an entity but… a contingent event'.[45] If not performed, then such an identity would remain latent, but if many people gathered together, then the identity would manifest itself. In this way, large pageants not only gave pride to the working classes, nor did they simply demonstrate socialist ideals, but they also actively engendered the working-class's identity as a large, unified, force.

Although the Pageant of Co-operation was much larger than the Pageant of Labour, in that it involved many more people, it was comparatively much shorter in length. It only lasted two hours, during which time it described the rise of the Co-operative Movement. The script was written by left-wing playwright Montagu Slater and the pageant master was André van Gyseghem.[46] Gyseghem created a process of 'living pictures' which demonstrated the rise of the mechanised era out of an idyllic pre-industrial England represented by Morris and maypole dancing.[47] This is contrasted with

[44] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 11.
[45] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed,* 18-26.
[46] Montagu Slater later became the librettist for Britten's renowned *Peter Grimes.*
[47] Van Gyseghem, 'British Theatre in the Thirties', 217.

the mechanised, formulaic life that a capitalist economy and war would impose on the free-spirited workers. Bush reflects the latter in the 'Machine Ballet', which is a strict, slow march using brass and percussion to mimic the sounds of industry (see fig. 3.1).

Fig. 3.1 Bush, 'Machine Ballet', score reduction.



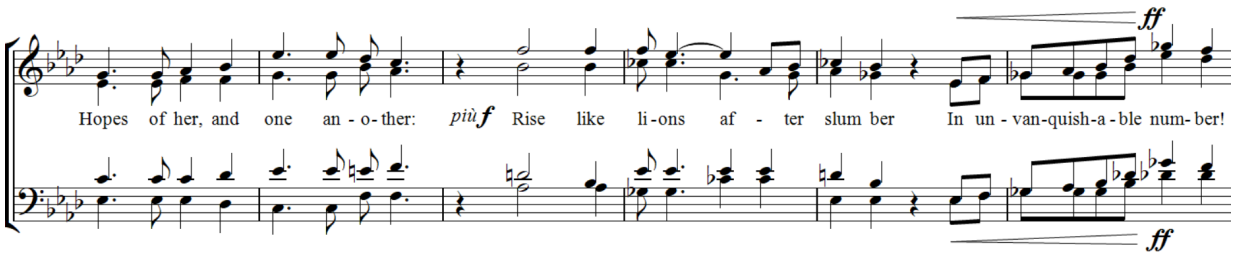
In a similar manner to the Pageant of Labour, the work culminated in a peaceful resolution to the 'Present world conflicts' and this was symbolised by white doves. A positive ending was often touted by Bush, as he thought optimism was a way to incite action whereas negativity hindered motivation.

Alongside the composed score, this pageant made great use of workers songs. For example, during the first interlude which occurred between part one and part two Bush arranged another of P.B. Shelley's works for the workers' choirs to sing, 'Men of England'.[48] Like the work of Shelley's that Bush arranged in 1928, it too begins with the same rallying cry 'Men of England', yet the rest of it has been derived from verses 37 and 38 of the poem 'The Masque of Anarchy'. It is also much less harmonically complex than his 1928 'To the Men of England' and instead, this work falls in line with many of the ideas Bush promoted in his 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music'. It is a four-part work for SATB, accompanied by orchestra. The text is rousing and because of the rhythmic unison and syllabic setting, the lyrics should have been audible to the audience. Although the time signature stays

[48] Bush, 'Pageant of Co-operation No. 3a'.

in common time, the rhythms reflect the natural speech patterns of the words. The words are further emphasised through the programmatic melodic line: any mention of 'sleep' or 'slumber' is accompanied by a falling motif, as opposed to the rising dynamics and melodic line of the phrase 'In un-vanquishable number!'.

Fig. 3.2 Bush, 'Men of England', b.7-12 (choral part).



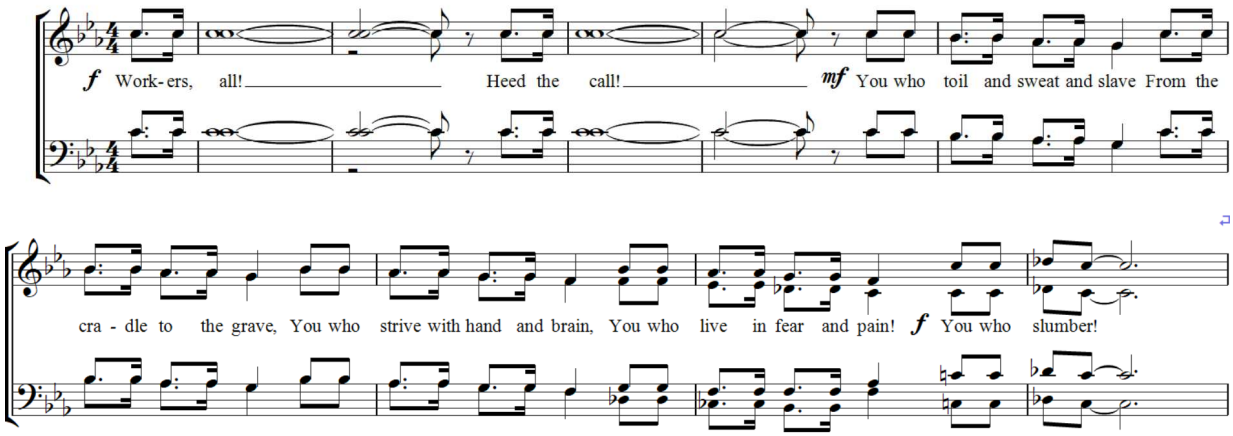
Many of the phrases are repeated with variation, in order to be adequately heard. The last phrase gets special emphasis: 'Ye are many, Ye are many, Ye are many, they are few!'. As Bush had previously suggested for his workers' songs, each phrase has a different high note in order to create new emphasis and keep the listener's attention. The highest melodic note of the whole work accompanies the final word of the work, 'few!'. Similar to other pieces of workers' music written in the years circa 1936, Bush often replaces the third of the chord with the seventh and he uses augmented and diminished intervals to create dissonance. See, for instance, the phrase 'Rise like lions after slumber'.

The Co-operative pageant ended with representatives of all the countries flooding the stage, which became awash with national costumes and flags. This was supposedly, a solid representation of united Peace and Democracy amongst nations, which was further expressed in the final workers' song. All the participants sang 'Men Awake!', a short song based on the words of Harold J. Rome.[49] It is clearly a highly programmatic work, as the words are fully illustrated through the music. It begins

[49] Bush, 'Sheet music for "Pageant of Co-Operation – Men Awake!"'.

with all members of the SATB choir in octave unison, singing 'Workers, all! Heed the Call! You who toil and sweat and slave, From the cradle to the grave, You who strive with hand and brain'. This rapidly shifts into a dissonant harmony for the phrase 'You who live in fear and pain!', only coming together again in unison for 'You who slumber! – wake!', with a falling chromaticism on 'slumber'.

Fig. 3.3 Bush, 'Men Awake!', choral opening.



For the second verse, the bass and tenor take the next line 'Can't you see?' and from this point, the song builds in momentum, dynamics and pitch to the end of the work. The melody slowly ascends, with each repeat of the word 'awake' occurring on a high note. The short rising scale accompanying 'Men! Look up!' leads into a final optimistic section, where the parts join together in close harmony singing 'A world that's free Is yours if you can see, For you've the powers that be! A-wake'. This final 'A-wake' resolves in unison on a C.

The lyrics for both songs, 'Men Awake!' and 'Men of England', were included in the programmes. In this way, not only were the chorus and participants singing the songs, but the audience could be motivated by them too:

> Copies of the words must be available and the audience can then be got to pick up the tune, line by line. Members of the choir can help by standing among the audience and

> leading the singing. Works should be written in which the audience has a special, very easy part, which can be learnt as the performance proceeds. By allotting to the audience phrases which recur or which are repeated immediately after the choir has sung them, or even words which are to be spoken in chorus instead of sung, an active participation of the audience is possible. If a group such as a Youth Group, can be got together previously for one or two rehearsals and can then be scattered among the audience success is assured.[50]

This idea of trying to get the audience to play an active role was obviously a main prerogative of Bush's. It meant performers and audience would utter a pre-written carefully chosen script together, giving the impression of a litany which would psychologically emphasise the value of their 'oath'. The values demonstrated in these songs were representative of the ideas Bush promoted for his new workers' musical movement. The fact that they were further contextualised within such a massive left-wing event and were sung by thousands of people, was a phenomenal accomplishment for Bush and his aim to further the socialist cause.

Soon after a Pageant of Cooperation was staged, Bush helped create 'The Festival of Music for the People'. The 1930s was an era of high modernism which saw the artistic movement of modernism change from being a middle-class notion, to a movement which had a direct influence on working people's lives in design, architecture and the arts. Thus, by 1938 the 'meaning of music' which was a regular subject of academic discussion and Bush's conference 'Music and Life' was not an atypical event. One of the main areas addressed in the conference was the role music played in the lives of the labouring classes.[51] Bush stated that such every-day music should relate to the cause of the workers' movement yet, unfortunately, this was not the present situation, stating:

[50] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 4.
[51] This is exemplified in an article titled 'Music and Life Debated; Experts on what is "contemporary"; Essence Above Style'. H.F., 'Music and Life Debated', *The Sunday Times,* 29 May 1938, 27.

> No people is more richly gifted for music than ours in Britain yet masses of people feel the remoteness of much current music-making from their daily lives.[52]

Therefore, in 1939 Bush set about addressing this situation, by creating a festival which would show 'how significantly and spontaneously music springs from crucial phases of the peoples' life'.[53] This was not to say that the pageant should prevaricate upon the meaning of music. Indeed, Bush makes clear in a much later article (1963) that pageants were not the place for esoteric contemplation.[54] Therefore, the Festival was simply meant to be a celebration of working-class music and, as such, advertising posters for the event bore a William Morris quote: 'Art Made by the People and for the People, A Joy to the Maker and the User'. This was further reflected in the Festival Committee's introductory remarks which were printed in the festival programme:

> At present many obstacles lie in the way of musical production and enjoyment. Masses of people feel the remoteness of much current music-making from their daily lives and suspect it to be a means of distracting attention from the important issues before them.
>
> Uppermost in all men's minds to-day is the thought of PEACE, the question of their FREEDOM as responsible citizens and the problems related to their WORK. What more promising themes than these could musicians have? People do not primarily seek in music a flight from reality. Many look to it for a clear signal, giving courage to attack the difficult situation ahead.[55]

It should be noted that in the very the same programme, there are 14 adverts. Some are bulletins promoting the activities of left-wing music societies, such as the WMA and the LLCU, or advertising 'Essay Competition's. However, even though all the adverts are relevant to a left-wing musical concert, the others were clearly financially incentivised from large businesses, such as an advert for 'His

[52] Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 90.
[53] *Programme for the Festival of Music for the People,* JBPSC PSC/1/2/1/57, 3. See Appendix 2.
[54] Bush, 'What Does Music Express'.
[55] *Programme for the Festival of Music for the People,* JBPSC PSC/1/2/1/57, 3.

Master's Voice', 'Reynolds News', 'Harold Reeves Bookshop' and a cooperative bank. Bush never explicitly mentioned, in his writings, what he thought about advertising, though as these were promoting left wing activities, it is possible that he may have encouraged them. Certainly, the adverts which promoted the LLCU choir and an upcoming WMA 'Contest Festival' were an example of the festival organisers encouraging people 'to take part in other activities of the working-class movement'.[56] Yet such adverts demonstrate the sheer need to raise cash, a principal which Watson believed that went against the growth of a second culture. In order to demonstrate a culture free of capitalisation, he believed such events should not be commodified by such business adverts. Part of the reason for staging the festival was to increase awareness of the fight of the International Brigade in Spain, but also to raise money for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil war. Therefore, the financial incentive was not of independent, personal gain as advised by Bush, rather to promote the socialist cause. As well as this, any income generated was a practical way of covering the costs of these festivals: they were expensive to stage and, consequently, most were not financially successful. The Pageant of Labour was an example of this, as was the Birmingham pageant which had taken place the year previously. It too had been an artistic success, celebrating the city's history from its prehistoric origins to its role as the 'hub of industrial England', yet was also economically unviable, making a loss of £13835. 18s. 10d.[57] The exact financial outcome of the 'Festival of Music for the People' seems to have been omitted from later reports, although the letters between Bush and his colleagues mention the costs of certain aspects thereby making it clear that they were on a limited budget. Therefore, although the money was intended to promote socialist ideals and aid the communist cause, it will be interesting to consider whether this monetary incentive had an impact on the way in which this festival was created and the extent to which such an impact was positive or negative.

The first part of the festival was the pageant, 'Music for the People', the very name of which makes it seem like it would be an event which was both politically committed and yet popular at the

[56] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 1.
[57] Historical Pageants in Britain, 'Pageant of Birmingham', <*http://www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/994/*>.

same time. Indeed, in the *Lancashire Evening Post* an advertisement for the event was titled 'Pageant of Popular Music'.[58] It stated that the pageant was going to show 'the music with which the common people consoled themselves in times of affliction and congratulated themselves in times of success'. Therefore, from the outset, the pageant was promoting itself as a performance of 'popular music' rather than a display of purely politically minded, proselytising music which furthered the workingman's cause. Unlike the previous pageants where Bush composed the music, for this event he conducted the whole event and took on a more directorial role. He asked Swingler to write the scenario for the pageant as, by 1939, the two men had collaborated for five years on a host of successful workers' songs. Swingler's programme took the form of a series of tableau with linked scenes, or episodes, each one accompanied by music. These dealt with early Christians in Imperial Rome, the culture of feudal England, the movements of 'levellers' and 'diggers' among Cromwell's soldiers, and the coming of industrialism to Europe and the great movements for social reform.[59]

[58] [anon.], 'Pageant of Popular Music' *Lancashire Evening Post*, 1 March 1939.

[59] Bush, 'Festival of Music for the People; Scenario'.
Introduction, 'Flourish for Wind Band' by Ralph Vaughan Williams. The pageant is introduced, and the speaker iterates Bush's well-known phrase, that music should not be a drug.
Episode 1 ('Feudal England'), music by Elisabeth Lutyens: a typical bucolic scene of 'Merry England' including morris dancing.
Episode 2 ('The Massacre of the Innocents'), music by Edmund Rubbra and Victor Yates. This compares the biblical slaughter during Herod's reign with the deaths of civilians at Guernica in 1937.
Episode 3 ('Peasants in Revolt'), music by Erik Chisholm. Looks at the Peasant Rising of 1318 and the murder of the revolutionary leader, Wat Tyler.
Episode 4 ('Soldiers of Freedom'), music by Christian Darnton. Demonstrates a progression in time as this episode is based in the year 1649, with the Levellers, the death of King Charles I, and Parliament's increased power.
Episode 5 ('Village Green to Concert Hall'), music by Frederic Austin. British industrialisation and the ruination of rural culture.
Episode 6 ('For a Changing Europe') looks at the French Revolution. The music is mainly by Norman Demuth, but it opens with Grétry's ballet *La Fête de la Raison*.
Episode 7 ('The Prisoners'), music by Alan Bush. This episode deals with the idea of freedom, using the figure of Beethoven as a symbol of the repressed, quoting some of his beliefs on the situation of Europe, such as: 'These great bankers have all the ministers of Europe under their thumb and can make trouble for the governments whenever they please'.
Episode 8 ('Slaves'). This episode features a 'Negro Choir' performing chain-gang repertoire, freedom songs and a cotton-picking song, culminating with Paul Robeson singing 'Keenlin' Low'.
Episode 9 ('The People Advance') music by Elizabeth Maconchy. This compares the early trade unions to more establish ones, by using two songs, 'We're Low' written by a Chartist leader and 'People of England', written in 1880. It tells of the beginning of the Co-operative movement and early trade unions.
Finale/Episode 10 ('For Peace and Liberty') music by Alan Rawsthorne. All the performers come together to explore the ideas of working men's freedom in current day issues. It culminates with everyone singing a popular American song of democracy 'Men, Awake! The Day is Dawning'.

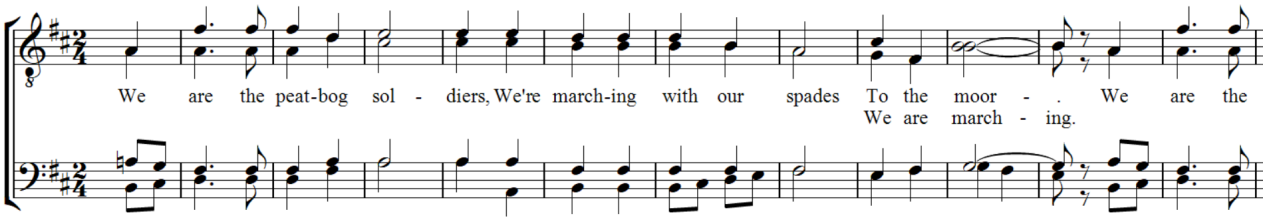
These texts echo many of Bush's ideas: that the working classes should unite, fight the capitalist system, and take action from the music. Therefore, the programme and lyrics were theoretically fitting for such an event.

Each of the 10 episodes were musically arranged by 12 composers of the day.[60] Bush chose an interesting group of composers to write the score as many of them later became members of the famous 'Gluepot Connection'. The 'Gluepot Connection' was a group of musicians who frequented the cornerstone of London's music scene, 'The George' pub on Great Portland Street, and was nicknamed 'The Gluepot' by Sir Henry Wood due to its adhesive effect on its musicians. Most of the 'Gluepot' members had a socialist conscience and were interested in new, modern styles of composition. For example, Lutyens developed her own innovative form of serialism and became known for her exceptional text-setting ability within works which demonstrated objectivity alongside profound emotional qualities. She also described herself as 'always socialist' and 'only briefly a communist' and in 1947 wrote a chamber opera 'The Pit' which was about trapped miners.[61] In a similar way Rawsthorne, who demonstrated an ambivalent approach to conventional tonality in his larger works, included the 'Bandiera Rossa' in his 1939 piano concerto to demonstrate his support for the Spanish Republicans. Lutyens, Rawsthorne and many of the other left-wing composers involved in the pageant wrote music in a 'less terrifying' style of modernism. This, as Calum (Malcolm) MacDonald notes, led to their becoming a 'lost generation' of composers: all born between 1900 and 1918 and who were too modernist for popular appreciation yet too conservative for the international modernist scene.[62] These composers had much in common with Bush as not only was he a member of the 'Gluepot' but also of the 'lost generation'. Therefore, it was logical that these writers should collaborate on such a large-scale work.

[60] The 12 composers were: Frederic Austin, Alan Bush, Erick Chisholm, Arnold Cooke, Christian Darnton, Norman Demuth, Elizabeth Lutyens, Elizabeth Maconchy, Alan Rawsthorne, Edmund Rubbra, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Victor Yates. Bush, 'Festival of Music for the People; Scenario'.
[61] Lutyens, 'Notebooks, Letters, and Papers' B.L., MS Mus. 1841.
[62] MacDonald, 'Lost Generation', *The Listener,* 23 April 1987. Cited in Neil Edmunds, 'William Glock and the British Broadcasting Corporation's Music Policy', 247.

This type of large-scale collaboration between twelve musicians and composers was something Bush advocated in the new workers' musical movement. Several of the songs were such a success that the two Peppin sisters, Geraldine and Mary, recorded them for Topic Records a few months after the pageant. This includes Rawsthorne's 'Left! Left!' and Bush's 'The People Sing'. Another song used in the pageant and later recorded by the Topic male singers was 'The Song of the Peatbog Soldiers'. The original melody and lyrics were conceived 'by prisoners in German concentration camps' and Bush arranged it for unaccompanied male voices (TTBB). Whilst this song demonstrates the simplicity of workers' music, the arrangement of this work is oddly sentimental when compared to Bush's other workers' songs of this era. The harmony is not in any way severe or unusual, instead it fills out triadic chords with a lushness suited to an evocative song. Also, if the arrangement is compared to Eisler's own arrangement of the same song, the harmonies of both are near identical. It seems that Bush, rather than arranging this work into a new workers' song for the pageant, instead simply re-wrote Eisler's piece into a work for four-part male choir.

Fig. 3.4 Bush, 'Song of the Peatbog Soldiers', (chorus).



Yet the detail of 'who-composed-what' would have had little effect on the proletarian sentiments of the song, nor on the overall pageant. Andy Croft, in a recent reflection on the pageant, commented that the pageant 'represented the hugely successful cultural mobilization of the London Left' and that it 'demonstrated the extraordinary reach of the [Communist] Party's ideas about history, music and

poetry'.[63] This sentiment was shared by Edward Carpenter who conducted the last concert of the festival, as he accounted:

> I rose to my feet and applauded. "Very proletarian sentiments from behind!" said the fruity voice of one of the Bishops sitting in the front row… I was exhilarated by the Festival. I felt there was still some hope in and for the People.[64]

Yet these are the two only positive reviews of the pageant. The Music for the People pageant was much less well received than those pageants of 1934 and 1938. Edward Dent, the President of the International Society for Contemporary Music, and friend of many of the composers had an uncharitable reaction, which was:

> Most of it seemed very amateurish and boring, with the usual graceful young men and lumpy (not very) young women bundling about over the arena in folk dances.[65]

It is likely that Bush was undisturbed by such a dysphemistic criticism. His aim was not that the event should be 'graceful' rather it should be more life-like and a little crude: 'All hints of respectability must be resolutely banned'.[66] Another reason for the disorganised nature of some of the episodes was that they included children, yet these were the Basque children, real witnesses of social upheaval which brought authenticity to the production.[67] However, other reports of the pageant even questioned the event's authenticity. A review in *The Times,* subtitled 'An Ineffective Pageant', complained:

> Surely we might have been given some genuine folk-dance besides "Sellengers Round" and an incorrect version of the morris dance "Shooting". [68]

[63] Shuttleworth, *And In Our Time,* 177.
[64] Ibid., 176.
[65] Harries, *A Pilgrim Soul,* 98.
[66] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 10.
[67] The report which commented on the authenticity of the production was just as negative as the other reviews. It finished with 'The musicians contributing to this production cannot, on the whole, have felt very proud of themselves. Much of the music, good in itself, was misapplied: and the whole made such a tasteless mixture that the Dean of Canterbury's words in his address, "music always speaks for the heart", were like mockery'. Capell, 'Jamboree At The Albert Hall' *The Daily Telegraph,* 3 April 1939.
[68] [anon.], 'Festival of Music For the People; An Ineffective Pageant' *The Times,* 3 April 1939.

It went on to call the performance disconnected and stated the ideas were too vague. Because of this, the result of the production, according to the critic, was 'tepid' as 'artistic principles [were] abandoned for the sake of pointing a moral, rewriting history, or making political gestures'. The critic also believed Swingler 'ran away with the entertainment' and that 'there was not enough for the crowd assembled in the arena to do'. *The Sunday Times'* review followed along the same lines, finishing with 'The effect as a whole […] would have been improved by tauter co-ordination'.[69] There were even some reports which ignored the fact that this was a socialist event. A *Daily Telegraph* review called it a performance of 'common and populist music' music and went on to say it was surprising that Bush had made such a 'self-sacrifice' by:

> […] associating himself, as conductor, with Paul Robeson in a song that was like the commonest of revivalist hymns, Alan Bush, the stiffest of our musical highbrows![70]

Therefore, the extent to which this work was a success is unclear. There were elements of the performance that would have appealed to everyone: new and popular music, an interesting script and a theatrical display. Yet the event had little value in terms of contributing to the workers' music movement. Its proletarian elements were unconvincing, and it was clearly a chaotic production.

The second part of The Festival of Music for the People took place in the Conway Hall and was considered the 'folk' concert. The programme was designed to showcase a variety of pieces representing 'the people's music'. It began with the Fleet Street Choir singing Vaughan Williams' and Percy Grainger's arrangements of English folksongs followed by modern versions of Hungarian folksongs, Kodály's 'Mátra Pictures'. In contrast with the full choral works, the next work, Eisler's 'Three Cantatas for Solo Voice', was sung solo. This not only broke up the event, giving that desired 'montage' effect, but the lonely figure of the soprano Anne Wood was a metaphor of working-class strength, standing against isolation and loss. Lastly before the interval, the Fleet Street Choir returned to sing Schoenberg's 'Peace on Earth', with lyrics by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. The inclusion of

[69] H.F., '500 Singers at the Albert Hall' *The Sunday Times,* 2 April 1939.
[70] Capell, 'Jamboree At The Albert Hall' *The Daily Telegraph,* 3 April 1939.

Schoenberg's and Eisler's work presents a narrative of defying fascism, as both men were censored in Nazi Germany. The works after the interval celebrated a variety of music from the Soviet Union. For example, a balalaika orchestra performed 'Popular tunes of the day in U.S.S.R.', then were joined by the return of the Fleet Street choir to sing arrangements of 'Two Mass Songs'.

The extent to which this programme really did reflect 'the music of the people' should be considered. Bush believed historical folksongs were 'of the people' if they had proletarian sentiments and only that type of folksong would be suitable for the workers' musical movement:

> Folksongs which make some mention of oppression or are the songs of people at present especially oppressed by capitalism, songs of revolt from earlier historical periods, any of these types are suitable.[71]

However, the four folksongs which opened this concert fitted none of these requirements. The songs were 'Bushes and Briars', 'The Turtle Dove', 'I'm Seventeen Come Sunday' and 'Marching Tune'. These are songs of the First British Folksong Revival, loved by Baring-Gould, Sharp and Broadwood: meaning they are old, bucolic songs which glorify poverty and innocence, and are generally narrowly representative of working-class suppression. For example, 'Bushes and Briars' and 'The Turtle Dove' are both simple love songs referencing imagery of English countryside. The reason for their inclusion was most likely down to the influence of Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams wrote to Bush three months before the pageant, stating that he disagreed with Bush's definition of 'the people's music' and that *any* form of folksong would be suitable:

> To give a true and just account of the people's music one must represent the people as celebrating in song many things which we doubtless deplore such as battles and kings and coronations & highwaymen and kind squires etc - Unless you include these things in your scheme you are to my mind giving a *false* impression of "the people's music".[72]

[71] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 7.
[72] Ralph Vaughan Williams to Alan Bush, 7 January 1939, cited in Cobbe, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams.*

Thus, Vaughan Williams' 'impression' of 'the people's music' represents the early revivalist notion of folksong: a genre Bush demonstrated antipathy towards. Furthermore, the fact that both songs were arranged and submitted by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Percy Grainger, two well-known elite members of the musical establishment, was also ideologically problematic. They effectively appropriated this style of music and claimed ownership through such means of collection, arranging and performing. The songs were recontextualised to the extent that they differed little to classical music. Indeed, Duncan Hall comments that during the thirties, folk music and classical music often came under a generic label of 'music' and that only 'jazz, popular or comic "musics"' were labelled differently.[73]

These recontextualised 'populist' folksongs were a style which Watson believed hindered the growth of a second culture and they contradict Bush's written aims for the working-class music scene as they could not be used to incite social reform: 'worker-musician [should not] give their public what it likes. They must study what it most needs'.[74] It is, therefore, surprising that they were included in the programmes and their inclusion indicates several things. Firstly, it again shows the need to raise money: both of these songs had been arranged by well-known composers of the day and they held popular appeal. Secondly, it shows that Bush did not have complete control over these proceedings. Although Bush was artistic director of this pageant and had the major role of organising the programmes, it is clear that, at times, his artistic vision was limited by his less politically-inclined and more financially-minded co-creators. Nevertheless, it is possible to believe that as Bush was persuaded to include such folksongs, he used them to his advantage. Folksongs are a symbol which represented the lives of working classes in times gone by, albeit a patronising and flawed representation. Thus, by setting these folksongs within the confines of the pageants, Bush could contextualise these songs as being 'of the past'. He made sure that the undoubtedly old folksongs were, to some extent, juxtaposed by new form of 'workers' music' and in doing so, he demonstrated

[73] Hall, *'A Pleasant Change From Politics',* 114.
[74] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Music Festival', 3.

progression from old to new. Whereas Vaughan Williams' and Grainger's folksongs harked back, Eisler's workers' songs brought the audience urgently up to date. Bush was clear, however, that any type of old music could be included in such programmes only on the proviso that it was accompanied by a description which reaffirmed the music's historic qualities:

> That in performing the music of previous periods an explanation of the social conditions of the time and their influence upon the particular piece of music should be made clear, so as never to miss an opportunity of stressing the historical basis of the art.[75]

This explanation could be spoken, as Bush explains in a different article:

> The items should be introduced and to some extent explained to the audience by someone attached to the choir. This can be done quite informally, or else a carefully prepared speech, even an argument between two members regarding the merits of the piece, could be given. The important thing in such an explanation is to point out the main ideas underlying the particular piece and say something about the general historical and social background of the composer.[76]

Bush also thought that the audiences should be made more aware of the significance of the works by explaining the music in the programme notes. Programmes were not only important in that they helped remind the audience of the socialist connotations of the works, but they helped give better understanding of what was happening on stage. For example, in the programmes describing the Vaughan Williams and Grainger arrangements, each are accompanied by a sentence detailing the origins of the original folk songs, for example:

> Marching Tune (Folk-song from Lincolnshire) Taken down from the singing of Mr. Joseph Taylor, of Saxby-all-Saints, Lincs, 11th April, 1908.[77]

As well as this, there was a sentence for each of Kodály's works which explains the meaning of each song. In this way, the audience gained a better understanding of the prominence of the music. The

[75] Bush, 'Music and the Working Class Struggle', 6-8.
[76] Bush, 'Planning a Workers Festival', 4.
[77] *Programme for the Festival of Music for the People*, JBPSC PSC/1/2/1/57, 8.

brochures were also useful, in that they perpetuated the significance of the songs beyond the walls of the pageant: to the extent that many of the pageant's critics quoted directly from the pageant's pamphlets and leaflets to describe the various scenarios.[78] Therefore the pageant leaflets became a type of souvenir for the audience and participants to take away, becoming physical objects which bore witness to the event and, effectively, making such an event less ephemeral.

Like the pageant, this 'folk' concert also gained a rather negative critique in the *Daily Telegraph*.[79] Although the accuracy of the review is questionable, it is clear that the critic believed that the classically tonal works, those without any modern or foreign influence, were best suited to the concert.[80] For example, he stated that Vaughan Williams' 'English pieces are perfection, while the Hungarian… seems somewhat artificial [due to the lack of accompaniment]'. His best compliment for Schoenberg's work was that it 'makes good sense' but goes on to say that he was more impressed by 'its look on paper' than by its sound. The critic was little more pleased by the overtly socialist works as by the modernist works. He demonstrated cynicism towards Eisler's works and Brecht's *Lehrstücke* (or 'learning-plays') wherein songs and performances were used as education devices to inform both actors and audience about the injustices of capitalism. He seemed to find such songs inappropriate for the concert and ineffective, stating that such pieces could not be understood by the British proletariat unless they 'become more internationally-minded' and continues to state that he would be surprised if a revolutionary 'mob' in Britain would ever sing Eisler's 'You must learn the A B C'. So, although the festival might have tried to represent the people's music, it would seem that this critic believed that the festival failed to portray the music of the working classes or, at the very least, the music of the British working classes.

[78] For example, Capell, 'Jamboree At The Albert Hall' *The Daily Telegraph,* 3 April 1939.
[79] Capell, 'Schoenberg & The People', *The Daily Telegraph,* 4 April 1939.
[80] The critic infers that the running order is different to that which was printed in the festival booklet, as he states that the opening song was by Eisler. As well as this, he says that this 'opening work' by Eisler: '*beg[an]* with the words "You must learn the A.B.C., you must be ready to take over"'. These are two memorable phrases from Eisler's 'In Praise of Learning', a song which was not included in the written programme. However, if 'In Praise of Learning' *had* been included in the programme, it does not begin with the words 'You must learn the ABC', rather it often begins with the line 'Learn now the simple truth, you for whom the time has come at last'. Eisler, 'Three Unison Songs', JBPSC PSC/1/2/4/10.

The third event of The Festival of Music for the People took place in the Queen's Hall. This was a classical concert and as such, may have seemed out of place in a festival that celebrated the 'music of the people'. Yet Bush believed that it was 'the business of worker-musicians as defenders of culture to perform the best music of *all* periods as well as their own music'.[81] Therefore, he believed the labouring classes should have access to styles of music besides workers' music: including more elite, classical works. In 'Planning a workers' music festival', Bush wrote extensively on how to present such items of music. Firstly, he believed that the way in which such classical works of music were to be performed should not change from the norm:

> In performing music of earlier periods a workers' choir will aim always at realising as far as possible the intentions of the composer. A style of performance suited to tendencious works might be quite out of place. Arm and body movements by the singers do not seem to have been desired by earlier composers and would probably therefore distort the intention rather than intensify the effect. Thus a workers' choir will not feel itself duty bound to perform music of earlier periods in any outwardly different way from a bourgeois musical society. Its members should have a deeper understanding of the conditions which brought forth the work and should therefore be able to realise the composer's intentions more fully provided their technique is adequate. The specific character of a Workers' Music Festival will derive therefore from the programme taken as a whole and not necessarily from any individual item.[82]

Therefore, the way in which the programme was constructed was the way in which such a concert would reflect a social conscience. As earlier stated, both Eisler and Bush used variety and montage to create the programmes so, like the folk-concert, Bush thought works which were not as relevant to the workers' situation should be juxtaposed with a more socially significant work:

[81] Bush, 'Planning a Workers' Festival', 11. (my emphasis).
[82] Ibid., 13.

> The performance of an important classical masterpiece should be offset by a modern and tendencious work, best of all by a work specially written for the occasion, one which uses all the available resources, chorus, speaking chorus, dance groups, etc.[83]

Bush hoped this type of 'offsetting' would help the listener retain mental clarity about the workers situation. In the classical concert's programme, the first half opened with Beethoven's *Egmont Overture.* Bush was an advocate of Beethoven's revolutionary politics and this work represents historical left-wing principles, both through its composition and its later role as the unofficial anthem to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. However, as a stand-alone work, the overture is not obviously socialist. Therefore, Bush followed it with the première of Britten's *Ballad of Heroes*, in which a chorus sung radical texts by Swingler and W.H. Auden: for example, the final line is 'To fight for peace, for liberty, and for you!'. The first half of the concert culminated with two movement of Bush's piano concerto, 'Lento' and 'Finale'. The piano concerto had been premiered at BBC Contemporary Music Concert on the 4th March 1938 and it aroused great controversy because of its choral finale. Whereas the 'Lento' is a relatively normal slow movement for piano and orchestra, the 'Finale' makes unconventional use of a Baritone solo and a male voice chorus, singing more of Swingler's radical, communist-inspired lyrics. After the interval, Ireland's *These Things Shall Be* constituted the second half. It sets a poem 'A Vista' by John Addington Symonds which Bush described as 'a heartfelt expression of optimistic humanism'. [84] Bush was not always so positive about the work, as he later recounted in an article that, when Ireland first showed him the preliminary sketches, he was unconvinced. He had 'reservations about the music to which the third and fourth lines of the first stanza had been set; it suggested to me an echo of the late Sir Hubert Parry when not at his most inspired'.[85] Yet, he went on to state how Ireland completed the work with great ingenuity and marvelled at the way Ireland managed to quote the 'famous revolutionary song called "The

[83] Ibid., 11-12.
[84] O'Higgins, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland,* 278.
[85] Ibid., 279.

International"' following the mention of 'paradise'.[86] 'These Things Shall Be' became a famous work demonstrating socialist sentiments and in many ways was a suitable work to round off the concert. This programme, therefore, neatly demonstrated how Bush contrasted works with socialist texts to none-choral orchestral ones, in pieces that were both old and new.

Britten's *Ballad of Heroes* was a significant work in the programme, due to it being a first performance. Britten wrote it 'to honour men of the British battalion, International Brigade, who fell in Spain'. Bush states that this was Britten's 'first introduction to the professional concert world' and that previously he had only had his 'Russian Funeral March' performed for the opening of a cultural event in Westminster Theatre.[87] Britten had been involved with the left-wing music scene since the mid-1930s and in 1936, when he was 22 years old, he wrote a misnumbered ten-page letter to Bush. In it, he said he was:

> […] going through a species of mental spring-cleaning. One arrives at a time of life, I feel, in which after a certain success a decision must be faced. I am now at such a parting of the roads, and although politically at any rate I have started to pull the steering-wheel around I haven't started up the new road […] I feel that the scope of music has suddenly become too narrow – well, the last 50 years. Too introspective – too self consciously original. Every Tom, Dick or Harry in the musical world, who tries to compose, labours to find some watertight 'style' – composed of little mannerisms or idiosyncrasies. […] On the other hand, Eisler's achievement to make make [sic] vital music performable by the comparatively ignorant is no mean achievement. And this is not as common by any means as it might be.[88]

Therefore, the new left-wing music scene made an impact on Britten's outlook at a point in time when he was developing his own compositional method. As previously noted, he shared ideas with Bush on how politically motivated works ought to be composed and staged and began collaborating with

[86] Ibid.
[87] Bush, 'A Tribute to Benjamin Britten', 1.
[88] Britten, Letter to Bush, 2 August 1936, 2-7.

various musicians to create two workers' songs. This included working with Edward Carpenter and Will Sahnow, who was not a professional composer, to write the workers' song 'England, Arise!'. He also collaborated with Bush, William Walton, and Constant Lambert to create 'Four Improvised Movements' in 1936. Retrospectively, Britten's involvement in such political world is often regarded as youthful folly yet, not only did he demonstrate just as sincere passion for socialism as other composers of the day, but it allowed him to study techniques which were divorced from the normal realms of European modernism. Furthermore, his work within the London left-wing scene provided a platform to establish himself as a serious composer in wider musical circles. A critic in the *Observer* believed that this performance was the first one which marked Britten as a legitimate composer, stating 'Until a short while ago many of us felt that he would never be a big composer because he had not quite enough character'.[89] Therefore, the festival had an effect on some of the composers, even if it was not as convincing for some of the critics.

Overall, the critiques of this final concert of The Festival of Music for the People were mixed. The *Ballad of Heroes* was well received in *The Daily Mail*. It gave the work a positive review, stating that it was:

> […] the great success it deserved. This work received a magnificent reading from Mr. Constant Lambert who conducted in a masterly fashion. Mr Walter Widdop sang the tenor solo with superb artistry.[90]

Yet, like the previous two events of the Festival of Music for the People, this third concert had its fair share of less optimistic criticism, especially amongst more left-leaning newspapers. For example, the *Morning Star* commented that the event was 'an interesting affair' as:

> There was a new work by Benjamin Britten, and the "People" showed their lack of enthusiasm in this strange combination of music and political propaganda by leaving a

[89] Britten, *Letters from a Life.* [accessed January 2020]
[90] R. H., '"Heroes" Ballad sung for First Time', *Daily Mail,* 6 April 1939.

> large number of seats unoccupied. Mr Britten is to be congratulated on composing such attractive music to such grim words.[91]

The Times was equally as scathing, focusing on Bush's piano concerto, stating that:

> It was a pity that Mr. Alan Bush did not play the whole of his piano concerto, since a slow middle movement does not launch a work fairly, and the choral Finale in consequence sounded too much like a political document set to music and not enough like the logical conclusion of a concerto. Bush writes a rather drab music, but its strength is its logic, and in this concerto he compasses something more than was evident last night. The male choir were not comfortable with so much cross-accentuation - the words are not always well set - and the conductor left them far too much to fare as they might without guidance. Furthermore, the composer was a too reticent pianist. Mr Denis Noble knows well how to manage the declamatory style, but his voice was now that of a doctrinaire sociologist lecturing in the wilderness.[92]

Thus, the political nature of this third concert was received with a similar level of bemusement to that of previous 1939 festival events. This may have been due to their setting. Unlike the 1934 and '38 pageants, the 1939 festival was staged in normal concert halls: The Royal Albert Hall, The Queens Hall and the Conway Hall, bastions of traditional bourgeois concert-performances. Bush had previously suggested that audience goers would be less receptive to political content within the confines of such establishments. Also, this festival was created with the intention of 'raising funds' so in order to garner wide attention, it was advertised as a seemingly innocuous event which would appeal to 'everyone', featuring 'popular musical traditions'.[93] This again left audience members unprepared for new art-music works with socialist lyrics.

The extent to which The Festival of Music for the People was a success is limited. It would seem that whilst a number of contemporary elite members of the musical establishment

[91] Britten, *Letters from a Life.* [accessed January 2020]
[92] [anon.], 'Festival of Music for the People' *The Times,* 6 April 1939.
[93] *Programme for the Festival of Music for the People*, JBPSC PSC/1/2/1/57, 3.

congratulated themselves on contributing to such a 'radical' and 'proletarian' festival, they failed in their objectives to either appeal to the masses or spread socialist ideology. Their interpretation of 'the people's music' exemplifies a disconnect between the bourgeois musical circles in London at the time, with the style of music common people sang and listened to: such as musical hall songs or workers' songs. Also, because much of this festival did not match Bush's outlines on how to stage a workers' music festival, the political content was devalued and lost amongst the trappings of bourgeois concert performance.

The three events of 1934, '38 and '39 were, theoretically, an extremely important way to spread the ideology of the new workers' musical movement. The gathering of thousands to perform to, and for itself, en masse, demonstrated the strength of the local community. Then, by showcasing the struggles of the working classes through the ages helped educate the working classes about their past in an understandable and coherent way. When Bush included elements of reality within the pageants, such as the Basque children or the men from the dockers' strike, this brought living proof of the struggles into the communities' immediate presence and contextualised local history within a global scale. Because of this, pageants effectively popularised the political theories of communism within working class communities. They engendered solidarity amongst membership and recruited new people to the new workers' movement.

Looking back at Watson's concept of a second culture, the pageant which most effectively contributed towards that culture, which showcased the workers as 'the conscious builders of a new social order', was the Pageant of Co-Operation. It was not financially incentivised, nor was it a part of consumer culture. By rallying tens of thousands of working-class people to action through a participatory performance, it demonstrated that a pageant, effectively a form of mass entertainment, *could* form part of a second culture. However, The Festival of Music for the People demonstrates how music created for the working classes could just as easily be a part of the dominant culture. The reason for this was caused by its ambition to raise money. This resulted in it becoming a type of consumable culture, where Bush's ideological tenets were tempered for financial gain. Yet, between the Pageant

of Co-Operation and the Pageant of Labour, and the hundreds of thousands of people who attended and participated in these two events, these demonstrate that when Bush's theories on workers' music and workers' festivals were properly effected they created a tremendously strong movement which spread radical songs of working class rights far and wide. This was Bush's contribution to the new, alternative, second culture in 1930s Britain.

Chapter Four: Politics and Propaganda; Left wing Music in Wartime

The second culture of the 1930s seemed to be, at the time, an indomitable musical movement. The sheer numbers of participants involved and the power of conviction held by those participants, gave the impression that it could never end. However, World War Two marks a politically turbulent time in British history, when the force of the government and its supporting institutions kept a close watch over the country's cultural activities. This pressure from the government, combined with Russia's unsettled relationship with Britain, meant that even the most ardent beliefs were shaken. This chapter will look at the challenges posed to British musicians during this time and it will consider the extent to which Bush held onto his previous stylisms and ideological convictions, or if he changed them for the purpose of war.

The concept of engendering nationalism during wartime is an important issue which must be addressed in a chapter considering the role of music in wartime. In current academic literature on the subject, although many ideas are still contested, there are some concepts regarding nations, nationalism and national identity which are commonly accepted and many of them were inspired by the work of Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner.[1] Firstly, although the concept of a nation was present before the eighteenth century, it was at this point that the notion of nationalism became present in everyday society, so nationalism is now considered an invention of modernity. Secondly, because nations have been created by mankind, rather than being a pre-existent object, they are dependent on humankind and are in a constant state of flux. This affects the individual's sense of identity because, as this chapter will go on to discover, the identity of the nation changes to reflect topical social and political occurrences. More specifically, the work of Benedict Anderson (1983) and more recently Rogers Brubaker (1996) and Paul Ward (2004) consider the role of culture in creating a feeling of nationhood.[2] In his small but influential book, Anderson was the first to propose the concept of the nation as an 'imagined community'. His intention was not to persuade his readers

[1] Gellner, *Nationalism.* Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780.*
[2] Anderson, *Imagined Community.* Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed.* Ward, *Britishness Since 1870.*

that nations do not exist, nor was he focused on the idea that nations are artificial boundaries created by ruling authorities or historical processes. Instead, he focused on the psychological impression that all nations are imagined communities:

> […] because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.[3]

Anderson's theories relate to this chapter in two major ways. Firstly, they reinforce the fact that, although national identity evokes powerful loyalties, it is not restrictive. Thus, a nationality does not exclude a person's provincial or political status: it was possible for Bush to be both British and a committed communist, his works could be intended for international audiences whilst drawing on British themes, and he could be both an intellectually minded musicologist and compose straightforward workers' music. So, for each individual the perception of national identity may differ and the combination of the different identities may be, as in Bush's case, varied. Secondly, the role that war plays in creating a nation's identity was theoretically important. Both Anderson and Royce believed that when a country was under some form of pressure, such as modernisation, globalisation, colonisation or war, its people often came together.[4] The people would unite both practically and ideologically, to form one holistic national consciousness. This was ideal for a country's government during wartime, as it allowed the country to present a strong united front against the enemy. However, this theory negates the various political factions within a country, especially one which had such opposing views and was as large as the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). As this chapter will go on to explain, the unification of the people under the government's policies during wartime became a major issue for Bush and his communist compositions.

[33] Anderson, *Imagined Community,* 6.
[4] Royce, *Ethnic Identity.*

The series of political events throughout World War Two affected communists across the world. Before the outbreak of war, many British communists were politically inclined to support any conflict which would challenge the rise of the right wing in Germany. Many communists saw it as a retaliation for the Spanish defeat and a chance to destroy fascism once and for all: as the *Daily Worker* stated in a strongly worded editorial that 'It is a war that "CAN" and "MUST" be won'.[5] This rousing spirit was, however, short lived as Moscow's attitude towards the war changed: Stalin and the Comintern Committee decreed that the war was 'imperialist' and therefore should not be fought. The *Daily Worker* spread the news on the 4th of October that 'This is not a war for democracy against Fascism' and many British communists were disheartened by Russia's volte-face. The credibility of the party was diminished further when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, between the Soviet Union and Germany, became known. Thus, many ardent communists were left in political limbo from 1939 until June 1941, disagreeing with the stance of both the British and Russian governments. In 1941 however, the pact was broken, and the Soviet Union was once again seen as a British ally and a powerful opponent to Nazi Germany. Many of those who remained communist party members in 1940 did so quietly, often turning their efforts away from promoting the communist cause to rally against fascism instead. Bush and many of his artistic colleagues were directly affected by these world events. In some ways, he had anticipated that such momentous political events would influence the arts in his 1936 paper 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism'. The first paragraph states:

> Of all the arts music is the one which seems furthest removed from the influence of social and economic conditions. Its abstract character appears to lend weight to the suggestion that its development has proceeded independently from the rest of man's historical progress. Yet it can be shown incontrovertible that the various main periods of

[5] [anon.], *Daily Worker*, 4th September 1939.

> music coincide with well marked social and economic changes. This coincidence is often very close.[6]

As Bush was well known as a communist conductor, teacher and an all-round established figurehead of various socialist musical groups, his oeuvre throughout the war years are a mirror image of the events occurring through Europe. His reputation fell and rose in accordance with the British government's attitude towards communism and this affected not only the quantity, but also the content, of his compositional output.

In 1939, true to his communist leanings, Bush fell in line with the Soviet attitude to shun the war.[7] During these turbulent years most composers living within countries involved in war knew that demonstrating alliance for the local ruling party would be beneficial, as it encouraged governmental funding and commissions. If a composer failed to demonstrate pro-party political agenda, it often resulted in works being denounced and prohibited with composers facing legal action and, in more extreme cases found in the Soviet Union, the death penalty. Although the British Government's approach was less radical than the Soviet Union's, they were, none the less, just as suspicious about artists who did not conform to desired political backgrounds. They were wary about the way in which art could be used to influence a country in an undesirable manner therefore all members of the CPGB were under surveillance and The Ministry of Information (MOI) held security files on many eminent British cultural figures. Bush's anti-war attitude, his openly pro-communist stance and his history of staging large propagandist events, meant that he was considered a major suspect. He had been under surveillance since 1935 yet during the war years this was increased. Whilst the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were allies from 1939 until June 1941, the British government severely disliked and distrusted Bush. This is demonstrated by their extensive files which paint him in a dim light, stating:

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[6] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 1.
[7] See letter to John Ireland, 3rd December 1939: O'Higgins, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland,* 111-112.

> Bush is an ardent communist and supporter of all "Left" organisations; he is an eccentric, arrogant and theatrical individual, who is given to violent forms [of?] expression.[8]

Many of Bush's friends and colleagues were also under scrutiny, though to a lesser extent. This includes writers Randall Swingler, Matthew Anderson, and W.H. Auden, along with composers including Vaughan Williams, Bernard Stevens, and Rutland Boughton. No doubt their collaborative work with Bush on the large left-wing pageants did not aid their innocent status.

As concern grew about the possibility of collaboration and collusion between warring fractions, the government became particularly suspicious of anyone who was in correspondence with foreign Communists. At the beginning of the war, the MOI noted that the Free German League of Culture (FGLC), a body which represented the refugees from Germany and the Austrian Centre, was in regular correspondence with the CPGB. Bush's close friendships with contemporary communist composers came under particularly close official scrutiny, including that with Ernst Hermann Meyer and George Knepler of the FGLC. Due to the suspicion, his relationship with Meyer became extremely secretive.[9] Yet Bush did not let this affect his work, as he went out of his way to provide moral and practical assistance for exiled musicians. His MI5 file records his many attendances at refugee musical events hosted by the FGLC, including one which was devoted to Eisler in March 1941. The MI5 files suggest that Bush began holding meetings, with his foreign communist-composer friends, at his parents' house. At this point, the files on Bush begin to show interest in Alice Bush, Bush's mother, noting that she was a pacifist who organised concerts to raise money for German Prisoners of war. These files suggest that the air raid shelter erected by Alice Bush, costing £600-£700, was being used as a covert meeting place for radical composers.

[8] TNA, MI5 files on Bush, KV-2-3515_2, 'Metropolitan Police, Special Branch report'. 5th February 1941, 13.
[9] An informer of MI5 (code-named 'Conquest') informed occasionally on the relationship between Bush and Meyer. This informer had obviously infiltrated the radical William Morris Musical Society of which Bush was Chairman. The file reports that Meyer was a secrete member of the society, so secrete that the only person allowed to contact him was Bush himself. It concludes that Meyer was 'totally dominated' by Bush. TNA: KV-2/3515_1-3.

Yet, it would seem that Bush cared little for government policy. Instead, he continued to proselytize for the socialist cause event during this hostile period, hosting a few concerts in collaboration with the Workers' Music Association. However, their number and the size of such events was greatly reduced compared to pre-war events. This is commented on by Tippett:

> This movement [the left-wing musical movement] was, more or less, swept aside at the outcome of war, simply because so many other concerns unified the nation.[10]

Bush agreed with him, stating:

> Many [amateur musical societies] went out of business altogether, but a few fought on, prominent among them being the choral and orchestral groups affiliated to the Workers+' [sic] Musical Association, an organisation which has begun to play an important part in the musical developments of the country.[11]

On the 15th December 1939, Bush organised two Christmas concerts at Conway Hall. It was a WMA event and had the combined WMA choirs performing. Nearly all the songs displayed anti-war and anti-fascist sentiments. Although participants may not have felt an allegiance to the communist party during this time, many were happy to support any form of anti-war effort. Therefore, not only did Bush use some of his workers songs written in the thirties, he also wrote new workers' songs with a clear 'anti-war' message. In these songs, 'Against the People's Enemies' and 'Make Your Meaning Clear', he used lyrics written by Swingler. They rally against the use of the workers to fight the 'imperialist' war and are heavily propagandistic. For example, verses one and two of 'Make Your Meaning Clear!' state:

> [verse 1] We will not fight for profits,
>
> We will not die for pay,
>
> Nor let our rulers drag us down,
>
> In ruin and decay.

[10] This is repeated in two sources. Stevenson (ed.), *Time remembered,* 9 and Tippett, 'A Magnetic Friendship', Programme notes for *Alan Bush 85th Birthday Concert,* Friday 10th January 1986, GLC Queen Elizabeth Hall.
[11] Bush, 'Music in Britain in War-Time', 1.

[verse 2] They bid us fight for freedom;

But all they ever gave to Britain's working people,

Is freedom to starve or slave.

Democracy's their catch word,

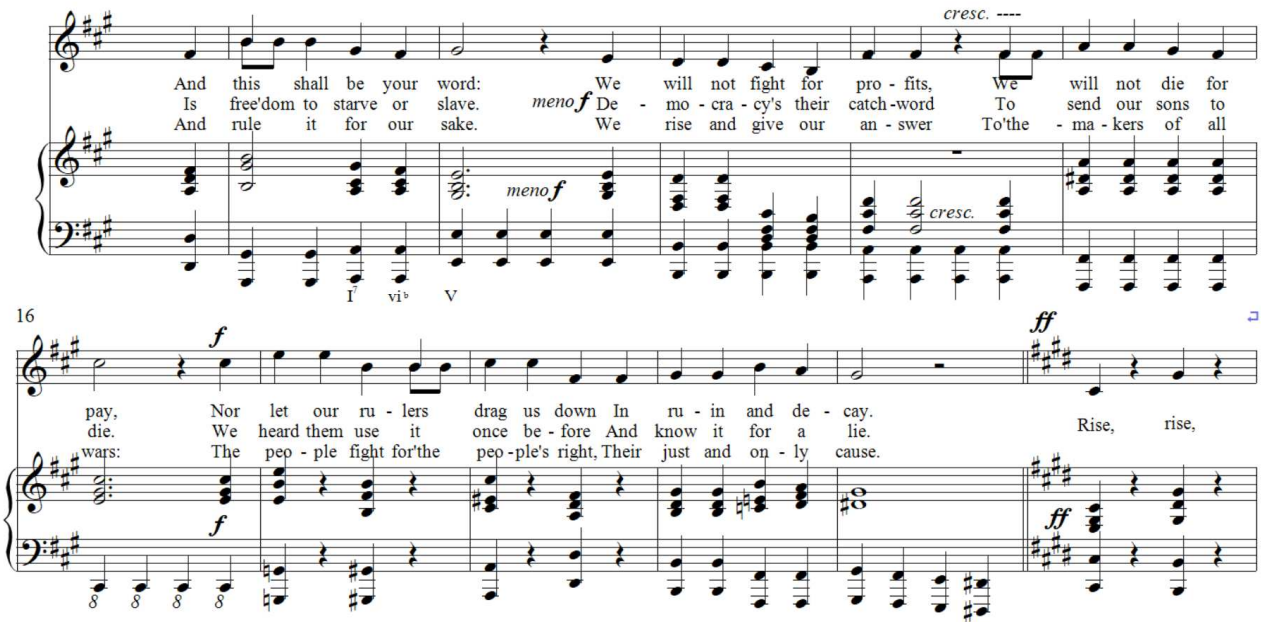
To send our sons to die.

We heard them use it once before,

And know it for a lie.

The way in which 'Make Your Meaning Clear!' has been arranged by Bush makes the most of the Swingler's radical text. Like 'Against the People's Enemies', it is a unison song, both rhythmically and melodically and it is sung within the dynamic range of '*meno f*' to '*ff*'. Because of this, the listener should have been able to hear every word and understand the anti-war sentiments.[12]

Fig. 4.1 Bush, 'Make Your Meaning Clear!', b.11-21.



[12] It was performed in Conway Hall, yet unfortunately the venue's archives do not have any record of this concert taking place.

The anti-war sentiments are reiterated through 'Make Your Meaning Clear!' via repetition in the 16-bar chorus, which is used to break up the three verses:

[Chorus] Rise, rise, rise working people,

And make your meaning clear!

Our foes are the exploiters.

Our battleground is here.

And peace shall end what wars defend,

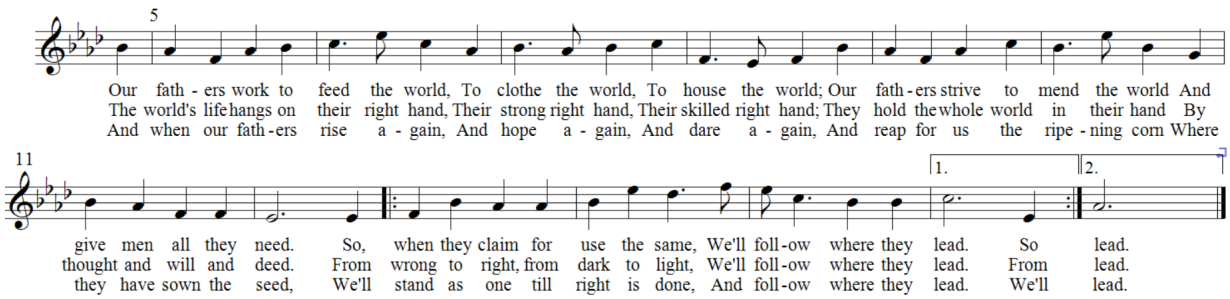
The rule of greed and fear.

The repetition within the work would have made it more memorable for the audience and would have made it easier for the choir to learn the song. This was important because Bush had not previously worked with all the various choirs of the Workers Music Association, therefore he was unaware of their vocal standards. To help the singers understand the music, Bush marked solfege notation into the score above the notes and stated the timing is 'Four Pulse' (common 4/4 time).[13] These are near-perfect workers' songs, which fall in line with Bush's theorised version of workers' music advocated in 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music'. The lyrics are clear in their sentiment and the form is simplistic: both could essentially be considered a pastiche of a folksong. However, Bush's underpinning piano accompaniment adds harmonic interest which is not folk-like and instead results in some tonal ambiguity in places. Although the work opens with a three sharp key signature, the piano introduction is in C# minor. This rapidly transitions to C# Aeolian, implied by a flattened 7^{th} (B natural) at the perfect cadence. Bush states that the singers' melody opens in A major ('Doh is A') and it stays in A for the duration of the verse, apart from the interesting section as noted in fig. 4.1. In this section, there is an imperfect cadence (I^7-vi$^{\flat}$ -V) at b. 11-12 suggesting it passes though E major, followed by B minor (b.13-14) and F# minor (b.14), from where on the harmony becomes increasing unstable up until the end of the verse (see fig. 4.1). This tension is resolved in the chorus refrain, where the melody and accompaniment come together in a strong C#

[13] To view the solfege notation, see the manuscript held in the JBPSC, PSC/1/2/2/001/08.

minor tonality ('Lah is C#'). The unification of accompaniment and voice is such that they move together in an ascending passage to word-paint the lyrics 'Rise, rise, rise'. Many other works written after 1936 also used a similar melodic and harmonic language to 'Make Your Meaning Clear!'. For example, 'Till Right Is Done' (1939) was written as a 'Two-Part Song for Junior Choirs' and has three verses which are repeated to the same 16 bar melody with a variation each time.[14] In this one, Bush makes use of a pentatonic scale to add harmonic interest and avoid tonal sentimentalism. The rapidly moving theme tune only uses five notes, Bb, Ab, F, C and Eb, apart from the anacrusis to b.11 where a G leads the harmony to the dominant, Eb major, at b.12 (see fig. 4.2).

Fig. 4.2 Bush, 'Till Right Is Done', (vocal part).



Bush also believed that the pentatonic scale was a powerful mode for composers of workers' music: because it is one of the most ancient forms of modality, it neatly reflects the image of the working classes' primitive lives. This setting, though harmonically interesting, is not as complex as some other works written during this time, such as 'The Ice Breaks' (1939). 'The Ice Breaks' was another workers' song collaboration between Bush and Swingler and it was included in an anti-war radio play, *Freedom on the Air,* of which the lyrics of act III state:

> It's true there is a war on,
>
> But the war for which we pay,

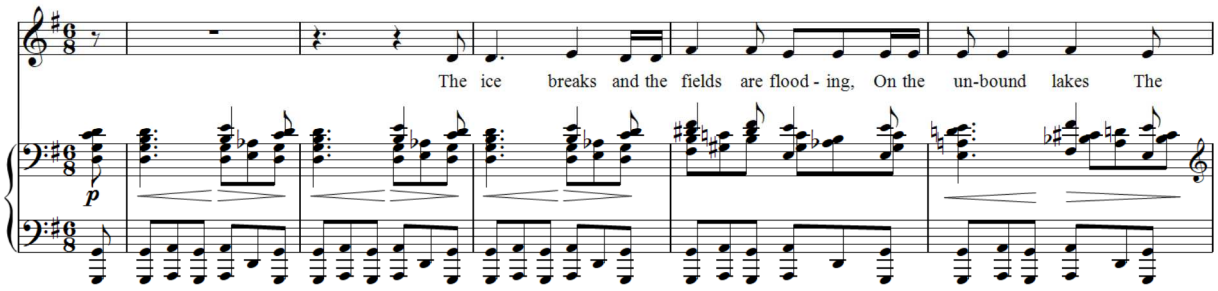
[14] In Craggs', *Alan Bush; A Source Book,* the work is said to be titled 'Till Right Be Done', however the printed music states 'Till Right Is Done'.

Is the war the rich are waging on,

The workers ev'ry day.

'The Ice Breaks' was written for two-part women's voices in complete rhythmic unison. Beneath the powerful melody, the piano's accompaniment is rich: full of momentum and harmonically ambiguous:

Fig. 4.3 Bush, 'The Ice Breaks'.



Such a discordant harmony harks back to the complex piano introduction he composed for 'Labour's Song of Challenge'. Overall, these works demonstrate that although the message of Bush's workers songs had changed since 1936, from being pro-communist to being anti-war, his method of composition had not altered in the intervening years.

One of the main tenets of Bush's workers' music was that it would incite comradeship amongst working people. The fact that music could forge such strong connections between people and give them one single identity, was the reason why the government carefully monitored the works of musicians during wartime. It was a time when the government hoped to bring people together under the same unified ideology and, for this reason, the importance of the British Broadcasting Company rose.[15] The BBC contributed to the British public's sense of national identity,

[15] Anderson proposes that forms of media and the press were elemental in creating a united consciousness. He believed that the unifying effects of the print culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth century constructed the concept of nationalism. Printing, along with Protestantism, resulted in the vernacularisation of texts, making

as listeners up and down the country connected to one another as they heard the same network expressing the same facts, ideas, and opinions. It was, essentially, a form of mass communication across the country.[16]. The corporation became the biggest provider of music to the home front and it gave thousands of working people a new unfettered access to unheard-of musical styles in their homes. Since the thirties, it had become a democratising force throughout the country, as it gave those in isolated rural communities access to urban news and entertainment. For instance, it was common for folk musicians to tune in and learn new melodies by ear from the radio. There are anecdotes of Northumbrian folk musicians, including 'The Three Shepherds' and Billy Pigg, listening to a regional Scottish radio service in order to learn tunes from a programme called Scottish Country Dance Music.[17] The radio did not only aid rural communities: it connected all types of musicians across the country. It is clear from letters between composers and performers that, even though sound quality was always an issue, it allowed musicians to keep up to date with broadcast performances of new works. This is evidenced in a draft letter from Bush to the violinist Max Rostal:

> My dear Max, I am so glad that you told me of the first performance of Bernard Stevens's Concerto. I listened in with great attention. It is difficult to judge a work by radio, but any miscalculation by the hearer is likely to be in the nature of an under estimation rather than the opposite.[18]

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reading and communication within a country more accessible to women and the middle classes, which in turn meant that singular opinions and ideas could be spread throughout the country. This type of media transmission, of singular ideas, is the first stage to creating one homogenised 'nation'. Anderson, *Imagined Community*, 42-48.

[16] The British Broadcasting Company was founded in 1922 by a consortium of radio manufacturers whose purpose was create entertaining programmes and persuade Britons to buy radio sets rather than to provide a public service. However, they appointed J. C. W. Reith as general manager, and he held a more ideological view that the company should play a role in the education of the public by broadcasting 'everything that is best in every department of human knowledge; and to avoid whatever was or might be hurtful'.[16] By the 1930s, the sound quality of the BBC radio service had rapidly improved, and the corporation increased its broadcasting. By the 1940s, nearly all British households had access to a set where it was used for entertainment and new broadcasts.

[17] 'The Three Shepherds' were Will Atkinson (1908-2003), Willy Taylor (1916-2000) and Joe Hutton (1923-1995).

[18] Letter from Bush to Max Rostal, undated (presumable in mid April 1946). It is clearly a draft letter for it is only half finished.

Bush also states that the BBC had the country's most prestigious musicians, critics, and directors at a time when other less established orchestral and choral societies went 'out of existence altogether'.[19] Therefore, if there was to be a cultural drive during the war, the BBC would be at its centre.

The Second World War affected the BBC both practically and ideologically. Practically, many changes were short term: such as having to reduce radio frequency transmissions by ceasing television broadcasting and unifying all the regional broadcasting networks into one Home Service.[20] The service was put under great pressure and as a result, many of its artistic ventures suffered. In an article titled 'Music in Britain in War Time' Bush points out that:

> [In 1939] musical life collapsed entirely in London, and was seriously dislocated elsewhere. At the front of this debacle stood, or rather fled, the BBC. All contracts with out-side artists were cancelled for months in advance. The BBC Orchestra retired to Bristol, and the sole musical fare apart from the orchestral programmes and a few chamber music concerts played by the permanent staff was provided by interminable programmes of gramophone records. The Promenade Concerts were abandoned. In addition to this collapse of the largest music impresario in the country all the London theatres closed, throwing many musicians out of work.[21]

Yet, this aside, the biggest change within the BBC was ideological. It began to be supervised by the government, meaning only programmes authorised by the government, those that reflected their policies and political stance, could be aired. As the BBC funded many composers, its influence dominated the cultural scene in Britain and many artists felt the pressure to fall in line with what it wanted. Therefore, all the artists commissioned by the BBC also had to toe to the party line. Whilst

[19] Bush, 'Music in Capitalism and Socialism', 12.

[20] There also arouse a greater demand for immediate and vivid presentation of the news, as the listeners wished to connect their own sacrifices on the Home Front to the military effort against Germany. Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity,* 11. As well as this, the very style of programming changed, as during the war the BBC adopted 'fixed point' broadcasting. The general manager, J. C. W. Reith, disliked this concept of 'fixed point' broadcasting, or sticking to a regular programme schedule because, in line with the idea that the role of the BBC was to improve and educate the listeners, he wanted to surprise listeners with programmes they might not normally listen to in order to expose them to high culture. Waddell (ed.) W*yndham Lewis and the Cultures of Modernity,* 151.

[21] Bush, 'Music in Britain in War Time', 1.

the Soviet Union was in league with Nazi Germany, Bush's output as a composer certainly suffered. Although he realised that his radical socialist works would be unwelcome, he was surprised to find that the BBC shunned nearly all his work, including his non-propagandist high-art concert music works. He complained in a letter to Herbert Murrill:

> I have not had anything of mine broadcast since the outbreak of war. Of course I realise that my works are somewhat severe in character, but I have, as you perhaps remember, a romantic and very agreable [sic.] Quartet…[22]

The fact that these artists had their freedom of expression restricted and their output was being controlled by such an organisation, is almost certainly immoral. Many academics believe that this type of restriction of artistic freedom can have far reaching negative consequences, as debated by early twentieth century socialist theorists, Antonio Gramsci, and later Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, all of who warned of the effects of cultural hegemony. Nevertheless, the government and the BBC saw this form of control a necessary measure.

In 1939, the Ministry of Information asked the BBC to commission artistic works 'on a patriotic (but not necessarily war like) theme' in order to aid the war effort, and poets and composers such as Vaughan Williams, Roger Quilter, George Dyson and conductor Adrian Boult were employed.[23] Many of the artists asked to write works for the war effort had difficulties finding an appropriate mood to represent the war. Public perception of war had changed since the First World War, so it could not be portrayed in a positive light as listeners would have found Lieutenant Gitz Rice songs, or any type of Rupert Brooke figure, quite unsuitable. Yet the works had to be uplifting to maintain moral. Not only this, but Vaughan Williams was also troubled by the idea of writing for political purposes. He questioned the place of composers and artists in wartime, stating that music 'seems to have no place in the world of alarms and excursions'.[24] He had mentioned in July 1939, in a letter to Bush, that he would not financially support the WMA because '… as you know, I do not

[22] Letter from Bush to Herbert Murrill, dated February 27th, 1941. BBC WA 'File 1a'.
[23] Forman, *The John Ireland Companion,* 94. Letter from Adria Boult to Vaughan Williams dated 2 September 1940. BBC WA, RCONT-1.
[24] Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music*, 84.

care about mixing propaganda and art…'. This belief lies at odds with Vaughan Williams' pre-war efforts to aid the pageants and, as such, he quickly changed his mind when he realised that his work could practically aid the war effort. He was the first musician to be asked by the Ministry of Information for a composition, in August 1940.[25]

If these compositions commissioned by the MOI were to be successful in aiding the war effort, by uniting and raising the public's spirits, then they needed to be widely heard. Therefore, one of the BBC's guidelines for the composers was that, whilst the works ought to be of the concert art music genre, they should also 'appeal on a popular level'.[26] This may have been ideologically problematic to some serious composers in light of the high-versus-low art dichotomy: theorists, such as Adorno, believed that music written for popular appeal was 'the dregs of musical history' and that hostility to mass culture was one of the grounds upon which true 'Art' could distinguish itself.[27] This notion was enjoyed by many bourgeois elitists and became the basis of the avant-garde's ivory tower. Yet Bush and his left-leaning friends, Tippett and Britten, were happy to write popular works.[28] They did not mind if their music was popular as long as it was considered 'great', in that it was well composed and retained the individual voice of the composer.[29] One of the methods all three composers used to navigate the path between serious and popular music, was to use folksong. By 1940s, many composers believed folksong a subject worthy of intellectual study because of the scholarly approach employed by folksong revivalists in the first half of the twentieth century. This meant that even the most elite and aloof composers could turn to folksong without undermining the 'serious' nature of their work. Also, the melodic nature of folk music could conceal some of the more

[25] Cobbe, *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams,* 276. Guthrie, 'Propaganda Music in Second World War Britain', 152.
[26] [anon.] Internal Circulating Memo. BBC WA, File 1a.
[27] Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music,* 29. This was further discussed in Chapter Two.
[28] As seen in Chapter Three, in his lecture *What is Modern Music* (1936) Bush stated that a way in which 'to fight the class struggle through music' was to better the content of commercial arts. Bush 1937-1938/2: Bush A, BA, 1-2.
[29] Vaughan Williams even stated in his essays on National Music that 'all great music has the element of popular appeal, it must penetrate beyond the walls of the studio into the world outside'. Vaughan Williams, *National Music and other Essays,* 67.

formidable tenets of modernist music. On an ideological level, pastoral folksong was a perfect resource for cultural propaganda, filled with images of the rolling hills, green pastures, nature, life, and love: emblems which every British person could identify with.[30] These elements of a collective identity could help inspire nationalism and rouse the people's fighting spirit. In later years, such folksongs provided a psychological retreat from the weariness of war: this in effect inspired nostalgic thinking about a time when Britain was free from sirens and ammunition factories, when gardens were full of flowers rather than vegetables, and food was plentiful.[31] An example of such romanticised use of folksong during wartime is found in a 1941 work, written by Vaughan Williams, to accompany an infomercial film promoting the National Trust.[32] Although these songs were far removed from the everyday lives of the people they were supposed to represent, it was a popular form of music: one which was entirely suitable for the MOI commissions.

Bush, however, was never asked to compose a work for the MOI. In January 1941, he compounded his left-wing political beliefs by signing the People's Convention Manifesto, along with other socialist artists, composers, performers and writers. The People's Convention was a 'people's

[30] Boyes, *An Imagined Village,* 181.

[31] See Wiener, *English Culture,* 76-77.

[32] British Council Film Collection, 'The People's Land'. There are many other examples of this idea being used by the media during the war to raise spirits and bring about awareness of topical issues during the wartime. For example, the BBC used folksong to impress upon the public the importance of agriculture, and to improve the status of farming from the age-old image of 'country-bumpkin' farmers. They did this by introducing the programme 'Country Magazine' in 1942 whose theme song was the nineteenth century folksong 'The Painful Plough' which emphasises the importance of the farmers' work to feed the nation. Many were sceptical about the extent to which this was successful due to it being 'folksey-wolksey' and it did not have 'much to do with the English Countryside of 1942'. Rose, *Which People's War?,* 214-215. The dances and cultural traditions being revived by the English Dance and Folk Song Society were also being used as propaganda abroad. For example, the 1944 film 'Springtime in an English Village' showcases the traditions of the May Queen in the pretty English countryside and was made by the MOI 'to be shown in African countries to show that we British were not a dreadful race of people'. *The Observer*, 21 June 2009. (The film showcases one of two fostered black African girls being chosen to be the May Queen. They dance, in the quintessentially English countryside unsullied by war accompanied by Roger Quilter's *Children's Overture* (1914) which is crafted from 12 nursery rhyme folksongs.), http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/1923. This use of folksong and dance, to propagate bucolic images of the English pastoralism was the very reason leading members of the WMA disliked the way in which the folk scene in Britain was evolving through the 1940s.

government' which was proposed by British communists in an attempt to influence the policies of the ruling UK government. It described itself as:

> A Call to all working men and women: socialists, trade unionists and co-operators; professional and intellectual workers, small shopkeepers, small businessmen and farmers; democrats and anti-fascists; in short, to all workers by hand and brain.

The delegates demanded a government which was truly of the people, which could protect democratic and trade union rights, enhance British ties with the Soviet Union, give independence to British colonies, and bring an end to war, profiteering and nationalisation of major industries. The first meeting of the convention, held in London on 12 January 1941, had a large attendance of 2,234 delegates who claimed to represent over one and a quarter million people. The extent to which it truly represented the people was debated at the time and the proposal caused huge controversy, within capitalist organisations, trade unions and the communist party alike.[33] Obviously, during a time when the Soviet Union was in league with Nazi Germany, the British government did not welcome such a convention. Therefore, the government took action against many of the signatories and those who declined to withdraw their signature from the manifesto were punished and left-wing newspapers such as *The Week* and *The Daily Worker* was banned from print. This affected the Bush family directly, as they held shares in the company which printed *The Daily Worker* and therefore lost money when it was suppressed.[34] The BBC, which was being monitored by the MOI, took a strict line of action on those involved in the convention manifesto and Bush himself was submitted for interview. The BBC's solicitors made it clear that 'any artist who adheres to the People's Convention cannot be offered further broadcasting engagements' unless they remove their signature from it.[35] Bush refused to do this and instead of being commissioned by the MOI to provide war propaganda, he was banned from the BBC on 8th March 1941. This action was not welcomed by everyone at the BBC. Some were concerned at the disruption to the planned broadcast

[33] [anon.] 'The People's Convention and Now…?', 6-8.
[34] TNA *Bush, Alan,* KV-2/3515_2, 13.
[35] Bush, N. *Alan Bush,* 40.

of Bush's *Dance Overture and Piano Quartet* which were to be performed in the coming month. It was also clear that those at the BBC who had previously worked with the composer wished to retain a good relationship with him, not only because he was well respected, but because he also had unparalleled access to USSR music resources at a time when such political connections were invaluable. Herbert Murrill emphasised this in his final point of a persuasive memo:

> He was of great assistance to me in tracing the material of the Khachaturian Concerto, the only set of which is in the possession of the Society for Cultural Relations with USSR.

Vaughan Williams wrote a letter to *The Times* in support of Bush, stating that he 'wish[ed] to protest against the victimization of private opinion'.[36] He threatened to withhold his own commissioned, patriotic work 'England, My England' and returned his engagement fee to the BBC. This effectively attracted the attention of the public and of Winston Churchill, who stated that the ban was 'mistaken'. The BBC issued an apology on the 14th of March 1941, stating that there would be 'no withholding of engagements' and that Bush would 'not be debarred' from broadcasting in the future.

In June 1941, Germany broke its pact with Russia, meaning that Russia was now considered a British ally. To celebrate this, the government, and by extension, the BBC set about on a campaign of goodwill towards the USSR. Some composers were not happy about this turn of events, nor the fact that they had to begin proselytizing for the communist cause. Indeed, the notoriously belligerent composer and critic, Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji made his thoughts clear in a letter written in 1944 to Bush's close colleague, Bernard Stevens, that:

> I have no care at all for the forward march of the masses, the function of music to depict the social revlution [sic] etc.etc.etc. à la Alan Bush and other ideolomanics [sic]. But there it is I HAVE no care for all that and have not the smallest intention of trying to

[36] Vaughan Williams, *The Times,* 8 March 1941.

> cultivate any! And as music is so often these days merely a faint perfume to conceal- so inadequately the stench of an idiotic ideology, I'll have none of it![37]

By October 1941, the BBC began to see Bush in a much more favourable light and even began to recognise his value as a font of knowledge on the Soviet Union. A memo was sent around the BBC offices by the Overseas Music Director:

> To whom it may concern. This is to state that Alan Bush is a distinguished musician and composer, whose concerts with his String Orchestra are always of a specialised nature and particularly interesting from the cultural point of view on this account. He has also taken the trouble to make himself an expert in all matters relating to the development of music in the U.S.S.R., and he is regarded as an authority on this subject.[38]

By the 14th November 1941, Bush's relationship with the BBC had seen a dramatic turnabout. They even requested that Bush be given special leave from military service to help them in their efforts to find some recordings of Soviet music: [39]

> We are anxious to gather all the authentic information we can with regard to the Soviet music records etc. at present available in the country. Alan Bush […] is the best authority in Britain, and it has become necessary to have a careful catalogue and annotated list of all the gramophone records of Soviet music at present in the possession of the S.C.R. in London. We have carefully looked into the question, and there is no doubt that Mr. Bush is the only possible person to undertake this; all the more so, because he knows the origin of the records and has been acquainted with them and with the music concerned in his various visits to the Soviet Union before the war.[40]

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[37] Letter from Sorabji to Stevens, 1944. BA, Add MS 69025.

[38] Bush conducted the London String Orchestra in 1939 and believed that this was 'practically the sole musical event' in the first year of the war. BBC Memo, 22nd October 1941. BBC WA, File 1a. Bush, 'Music in Britain in War-Time, 1.

[39] Bush was called up in 1941. As he was against the war, he avoided taking part in physical combat, instead requesting to be a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

[40] Letter to 'Adjutant, R.A.M.C., No.1 Depot & Establishment, Boyce Barracks, Crookham, Hants.' from 'Overseas Music Director' Dated 4th December, 1941. BBC WA, File 1a.

Bush's familiarity with the Russian music scene during this era led to a short article in the *Penguin Music Magazine* titled 'Soviet Music in War Time'.[41] This is mostly filled with information determining how well the state looked after composers, how it commissioned new works, and staged expensive opera productions during the war. His detailed knowledge, such as how many thousands of rubles were spent on front line concerts, was a good reason for British organisations to work in partnership with him, rather than against him. Wiggins explains how Bush had come to amass such knowledge and dated it back to 1938 when Bush had applied to VOKS for invitations for himself and other British composers and musicologists to visit the USSR.[42] On these visits, Bush became involved in the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the USSR (SCR) and developed a long-lasting friendship with Grigorii Shneerson. Through these channels, and his energetic correspondence with Shneerson, Bush became a facilitator for the promotion of musical exchange between Britain and the USSR. Therefore, Bush was commissioned by the MOI through the BBC to write a work which inspired Russian nationalism.[43] This work had to be 'for our Military Band a short Fantasia of Soviet Songs, and also a March based on a couple of [Russian] songs'. The BBC were precise in their stipulations, stating that 'The Fantasia will run from 7-8 minutes and the March [should run for] about 3', and that they should be compositions on Soviet Themes drawing on traditional and popular Russian folksongs.[44] Bush was the only composer commissioned by the MOI who was specifically asked to use Russian folksongs in his work. A couple of months previously, in September 1941, Ireland had stated in a letter to Bush that he was considering using the Russian 'Internationale' socialist anthem in his commissioned work *Epic March*:

[41] Bush,'Soviet Music in War Time', 35-40.

[42] Wiggins, 'Story of a Friendship'.

[43] Bush's good relationship with the BBC only lasted for about a year which can been seen in a letter which Bush wrote in 1943 to Arthur Bliss at the BBC 'On the whole I do not think that the BBC has given me ery [sic] much encouragement for a long time now. I realise that some of my works are somewhat recondite and others raise grave difficulties or one sort or another… [Some] have been broadcast, some several times, but none for a very long time.' Letter from Alan Bush to Arthur Bliss on 28.8.1943. BBC WA File 1a.

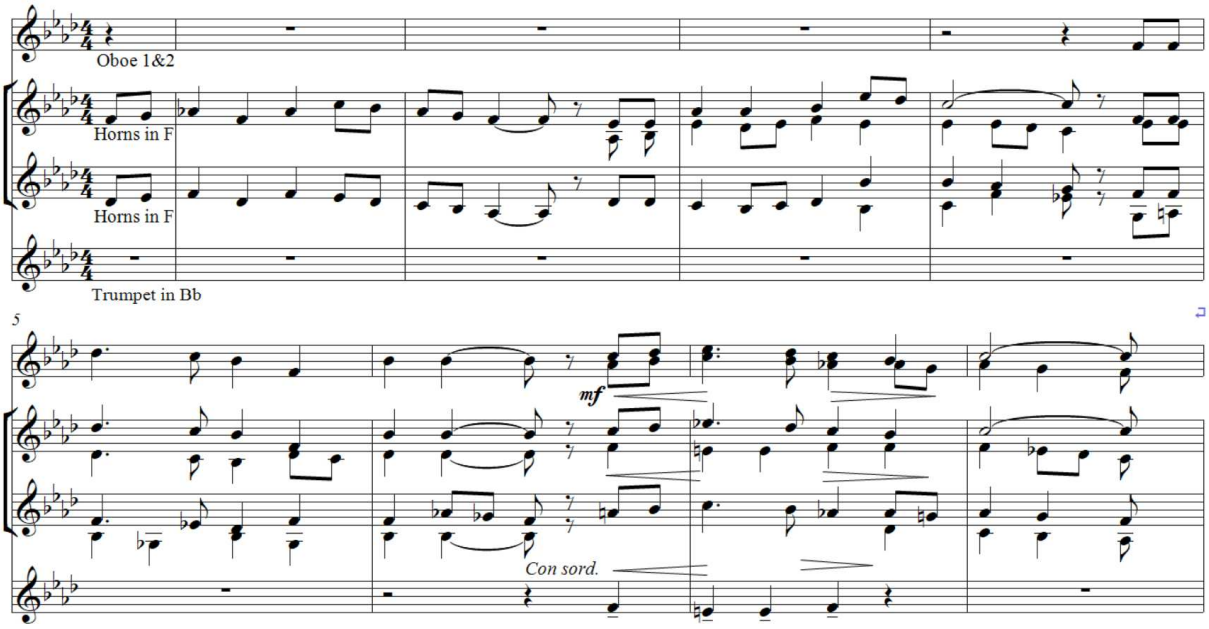
[44] K.A.Write 'BBC Internal Circulating Memo', 14.11.1941. BBC WA File 1a. Bush was to be paid a fee of twenty guineas for the 'Fantasia of Soviet Songs' and ten guineas for the march.

> As the U.S.S.R. is now our gallant Ally, I do not see how anyone can object to my quoting the Internationale- do you?[45]

His concern was not unwarranted, yet Bush had no stipulations about basing *Fantasia on Soviet Themes* on five Russian folksongs.[46] Each song underpins the musical arrangement of one of the five combined movements, the first three of which are marked in the score as being: 'Partisan Song (revolutionary folksong of the wars 1917-21)', 'A Collective-Farmed Song' and 'Who Can Till Me? (KTO ERO ZHAET)'. Bush gives the folksongs precedence throughout the work, in a similar manner to the vocal lines of his workers' songs, by stating them in full and repeating them with variations. Also, in a manner similar to his vocal arrangements, he expands the accompanying instrumental texture towards the end of each song to add a sense of growing strength to the main theme. Most sections open with a solo or unison statement of the theme tune: the clarinets and bassoons open 'A Collective-Farmed Song' (movt. 2, b. 1) with a full, unison statement of the song, and the clarinet and oboe play in unison 'Who Can Till Me?' (movt. 3, b.1). These thin textures are built up to a cumulative, powerfully *fortissimo* finish in each movement. Although the harmonisations of the folksongs are tonal, in the Introduction and Coda Bush explores distant keys through motivic fragments. The horns begin, in militaristic style, with 'F, D, G--' which is echoed, then answered by various instruments' ascending and descending flourishes until the beginning of the first movement. This is based on the folksong 'Partisan Song'. As with all of the folksongs, Bush is careful not to distort 'Partisan Song's melody, so the first movement opens with the first horn playing the theme in full (see fig. 4.4):

[45] O'Higgins, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland,* 137. *Epic March* was one of the works commissioned by the BBC for the MOI. BBC WA 'Note on a Scheme for Commissioning of Patriotic Songs'
[46] The rapid changes in political opinion meant that it was unwise to be too overtly one-sided. Ireland's reference of the 'Internationale' in *These Things Shall Be* caused public upset in the fifties when it was less acceptable to be a communist. Longmire, *John Ireland,* 149-151.

Fig. 4.4 Bush, *Fantasia on Soviet Themes*, movt. 1 'Partisan Song'. (Score reduction).



The first horn is joined on the melody by the oboe in b.4. Whilst the other horn players add a rich and engaging harmonic accompaniment to the tune, this is sometimes interrupted by interjections of dissonant chords: such as the second horn and muted trumpet with their E natural in b.6-7. After the horns, the strings instantly play a rousing rendition of the theme, then it is passed to the woodwind whereupon it is broken down into a series of rising flourishes, which link it straight into the following movement's folksong.

Everything about *Fantasia on Soviet Themes* is construed to enhance the natural quality of the songs. This, combined with Britain's positive disposition towards the Soviet Union, meant that the work was a political success. Rachel O'Higgins states that Sir Henry Wood liked the fantasia and that it was suggested it should be included in the summer Prom season of 1944.[47] However, goodwill for Bush's work was not shared by everyone at the BBC. Kenneth Wright stated to Julian Herbage that:

[47] O'Higgins, 'Alan Bush Trust', *<http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles/article_rohiggins3.asp?room=Articles>.* In a letter dated 2nd March 1945 Bush tells Hely Hutchinson that *Fantastia on Soviet Themes* was programmed to be performed at the

> I take it you will consider the possibility of performing these in in [sic.] Victory Week. […] I am not presuming this but they might be a good gesture (ie. tribute by a British composer to Russia).[48]

However, the reply was:

> I have looked at the attached score and it doesn't seem much more than a competent carried out selection on some rather unequal tunes. The Partisan Song has breadth and vigour and [something] could surely be made of it. On the other hand the 'Story of Youth' bears a suspicious resemblance to 'Here's to good old Whisky'. Unfortunately the weakest tunes seem to have the most say.[49]

Herbage was quite correct to state that 'Story of Youth' has many similarities to that British folksong, and it was this attitude which means that the work continues to divide opinion today. The *Gramophone* magazine describes it as 'a tuneful medley of no great consequence' and *Fanfare* continues with statements such as 'somewhat clunky… which could be viewed as an embarrassment'.[50] On the other hand, the left-wing newspaper *The People's Daily Morning Star* is positive about the work and states that previous mixed reviews 'don't reveal the emotional connection provided by this simple medley of Soviet songs'.[51] Overall, the word simply toed the line. It did not have the strength of expression found in Bush's earlier modernist pieces and workers' songs.

A year later, Bush wrote 'Freedom on the March' written to mark the 2nd anniversary of the Nazi invasion of the USSR. Scored for solo voice, mixed chorus and symphony orchestra, it set a new text by Swingler and was first performed in June 1943. Yet, like *Fantasia on Soviet Themes* it too garnered a mixed reception. Unlike the Russian folksongs, many found Swingler's texts too radical,

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Proms on the 27th July 1944, however 'the concert had to be abandoned owing to the flying bombs'. Letter from Bush to Hely Hutchinson, 2nd March 1945. BBC WA File 1b.

[48] Footnote on a letter from Deputy Director of Music to Mr Jlian Herbage dated 7.9.1944. BBC WA File 1b.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Achenback, 'A Bush: Africa, Op 73'. Snook, <*http://www.arkivmusic.com/classical/album.jsp?album_id=1079831.*>

[51] Matthews, <*https://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-978e-Album-review-Africa-for-Piano-and-Orchestra-Symphony-2-Nottingham-Fantasia-on-Soviet-Themes-by-Alan-Bush#.WQOVw8a1vIU*> .

as the BBC stated 'Neither the sentiment of the words, nor the tune will do at all'. Walton and Ireland were also generally dubious about the more simplistic musical style, with Walton quipping 'Freedom, not to mention the workers, deserve something better than this'.[52]

Another politically motivated 'serious' work which Bush had aired by the BBC between '41 and '45, was *Esquisse: Le Quatorze Julliet* (1944). It was commissioned by Felix Aprahamian to commemorate the French Resistance of 1944 and demonstrate solidarity with France. In this work, Bush also chose to use two traditional folksongs. One of these dates from the 18th Century and was associated with the French Revolution, 'La Carmagnole', and the other predated the revolution, 'Ça ira'.[53] Both of these were anarchist songs and as such, had been included in the collaborative publication *The Left Song Book* of 1938. McKinley states that

> 'the anarchists sang and used 'la Carmagnole' in a variety of ways… as an expression of solidarity, as a form of protest, and as a threat'.[54]

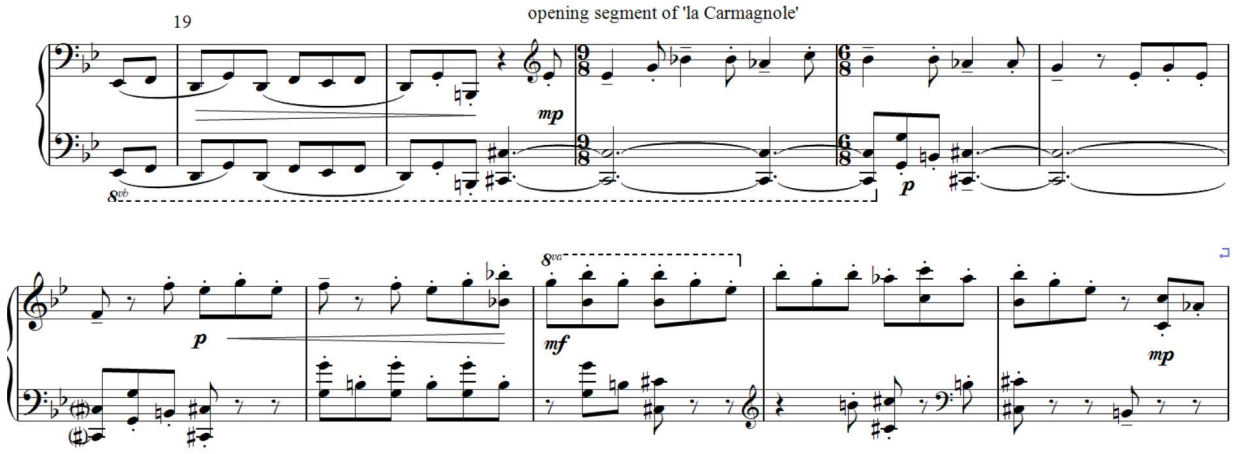
Bush's ability to re-use the same material to express a wide variety of emotions is shown throughout the piano arrangement, yet it is interesting that he chose two folk tunes which were originally used for multiple purposes. As McKinley states of 'Ça Ira';

> 'Ça Ira' was a flexible folk song. Its jaunty tune and malleability allowed the song to be adapted by the ever changing winds of revolution… from the dream of a peaceful and unified transition to a bitter and violent struggle, 'Ça Ira' adapted with it'.[55]

Bush divides the work into four sections. The first section, *Allegro Vivace* opens with small motivic fragments in an ambiguous Bb - Eb major modality which build up through a series of intervallic passages to a short extract of 'la Carmagnole' at b. 21.

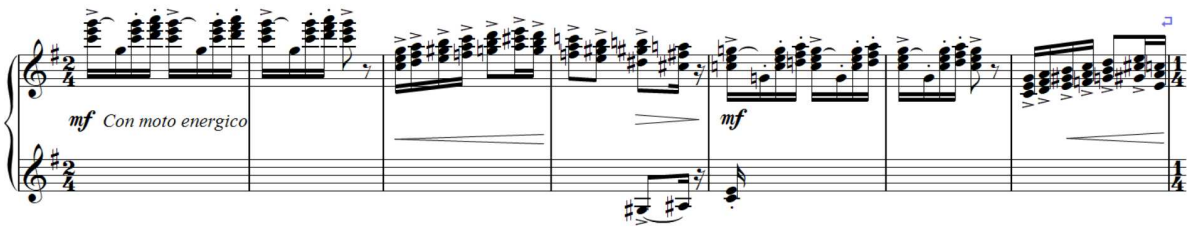
[52] BBC WA File 1b.
[53] Craggs *Alan Bush,* 60.
[54] Alexander McKinley, *Illegitimate Children of the Enlightenment* , 143.
[55] Ibid., 137.

Fig. 4.5 Bush, *Esquisse*, b.19-28.



This extract of the melody repeatedly reappears above the bass line which is based upon the jumping intervals of fourths and fifths found in the tune. Section two marks the full realisation of 'la Carmagnole' where it pops out two octaves above the left-hand accompaniment and is repeated twice. The 3rd section switches the work's melodic voicings, as the tune is sounded in the bass and the rolling accompaniment is put into a higher tessitura with its staccato triplets mimicking the bouncy melody below. This third section ends with a 'cantabile' rendition of the intervallic line based on the notes of 'la Carmagnole'. Bush uses rhythmic augmentation and arranges it contrapuntally to give it a weighted, heavy feel. 'Con Moto Energico' marks the fourth and final section, and there is a full rendition of the quick and lively tune 'Ça Ira' which is harmonised with parallel chords (see fig. 4.6):

Fig. 4.6 Bush, *Esquisse,* 'Con moto energico'.



This dry, open harmony counteracts any maudlin sentiments provided by the folksong. Overall, it is a neat, optimistic work, entirely suited to the BBC's programme. It is possible to discern elements of Bush's writing in the arrangement, yet unlike the other two works, this one was not as divisive: it displays socialist elements without being so militantly propagandistic, it was easy to listen to, was arranged in an interesting manner, and generally held widespread popular appeal.

Bush's workers' music also reflects the change in British politics from 1941 onwards. Instead of writing anti-war songs as he did at the beginning of the war, he began composing anti-fascist, pro-war songs. This is most clear in *Britain's Part* (1942) which uses Bush's own words. The speaker recites:

> Our army barely escaped [Hitler].
>
> The crashing of our buildings awoke us.
>
> The cries of our men, women, and children roused us.
>
> …
>
> Suddenly the Nazi hordes turned and struck at the citadel of freedom itself.
>
> The Soviet Union rose as one.
>
> Men, Women and children were guided by one single thought:
>
> Everything for the front![56]

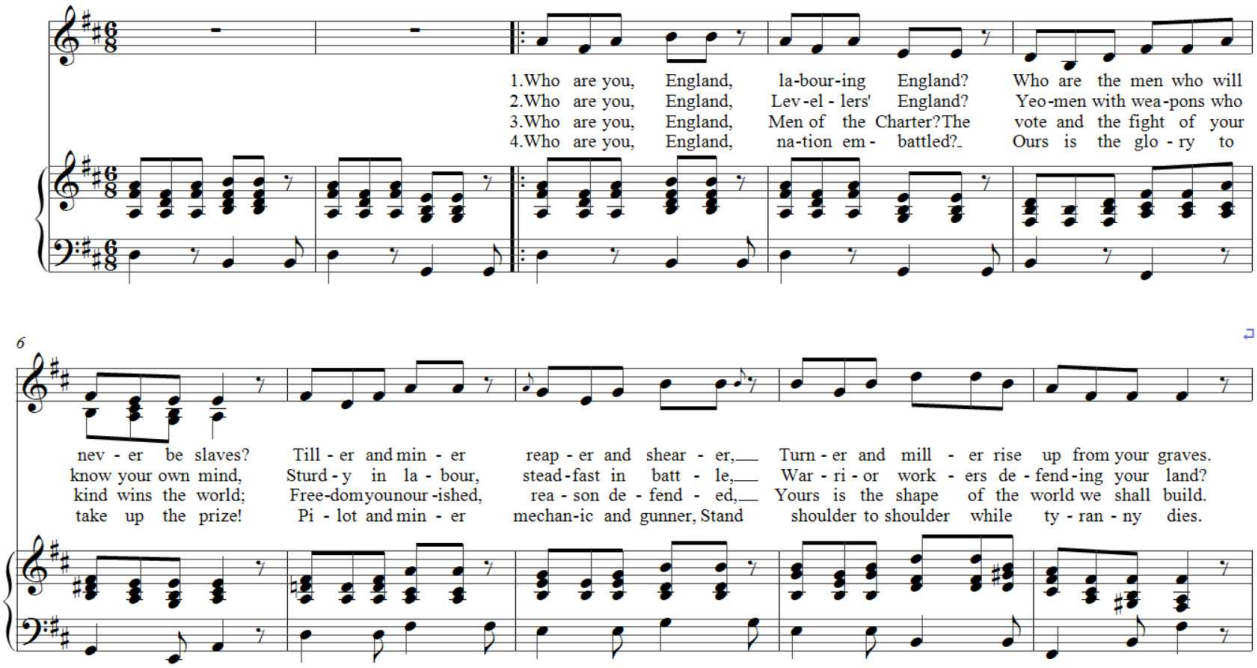
In 1942, the Workers Music Association also showed its appreciation for the Soviet Union's entry into the war by publishing a pamphlet of nine 'Red Army Songs' which had the subheading 'To our Heroic Soviet Allies'. This is a combination of popular Russian songs and more traditional folksongs including 'Partisan Song' and 'The Internationale'. Although it is unknown who arranged these songs, most of them are arranged in a manner very similar to Bush's workers' songs: with a rhythmically unified vocal line accompanied by piano.[57] At the same time, the WMA also printed a collaborative

[56] Bush, *Britain's Part.*

[57] It may be assumed that the second 'Volga Song' was not arranged by Bush as it vastly differs from Bush's workers' songs and the other song settings as the text seems to take secondary importance to the decorative arrangement of split vocal parts.

work between Bush and Swingler, titled 'The Great Red Army'. The Great Red Army and Britain's Part are representative of his ideal workers' songs: varying rhythmic features to match the flow of the lyrics, an interesting harmonic accompaniment to a simple melodic line, and a through composed, non-repetitive setting. However, this cannot be said of all his workers' songs written at this time. Two of Bush's penultimate workers' songs 'Day of Freedom' (1944) and 'Song of the Commons of England' (1944) were much more simplistic in their accompaniments. They are easy, pedestrian song settings which would not have been out of place in the 1910s and twenties. For instance, 'Song of the Commons of England' is in strophic binary form, meaning that each phrase is repeated without variation (see fig. 4.7). The lyrics are not emphasised in any special way as the rhythm is consistent throughout, resulting in poor text setting. The chordal sequence is simple, only switching between D major and B minor, resulting in a dull harmony.

Fig. 4.7 Bush, 'Song of the Commons of England'.



If one simply considers the text and melody, it is possible to see the continuation of *some* of the musical styles that Bush promoted in the 1930s: the simplistic melodies were suitable for musically illiterate people and the jingoistic lyrics by Miles Carpenter were an appropriate choice for a socialist workers' choir at the time.[58] But the musical accompaniments of songs from this era vary. Whereas some have modern harmonies others, such as 'Song of the commons of England', have unnoteworthy, pedestrian accompaniments which did not conform to the promotion of a 'new' style of workers' music, as advocated in 'Notes on the Problems of Workers' Music'.

In summary, the political turbulence of the war had affected the momentum of the socialist musical scene, the scene of the second culture. The extrovert nature of the left-wing movement in the 1930s, with its overtly pro-communist leanings, had lain dormant for a couple of years due to Britain's political relationship with Russia. When this situation changed for the better, in 1941, the movement could have been revived with the support of the British government and, to some extent, it was. However, the musical movement of the second culture defined itself as being in opposition to the dominant culture of Britain and it thrived on opposition to the establishment. Therefore, when the government adopted elements of it for its own propagandist purposes, much of its verve was weakened. Bush's works reflect this: his output of workers' songs was reduced and there were fewer left-wing events. Some of his workers' songs written after 1941 are much simpler in compositional style compared to those written in the late 1930s and they were reflective of the hymn-like songs sung by the working choirs in the twenties. Bush also stopped theorising about workers' songs: his last paper concerning worker's music was written in 1937, 'Music & Marxism'. The short paper 'Music in Britain in War Time' (1942-'43) barely acknowledges workers' music and the only paper written succeeding this is 'Problems of Soviet Musical Theory' (1949). In 1975, Bush reflected on his

[58] Firstly, Miles Carpenter's lyrics list the people's different trades which effectively unites them under the banner of 'workers': 'Tiler and miner, reaper and shearer, turner and miller'. Secondly, they are the lyrics of a protest song: 'shoulder to shoulder while tyranny dies'. Thirdly, the text stresses comradeship between Britain and Russia: 'Britain and Russia[n] in brotherly action'. As well as this, it also had imagery of war: 'We are the blood and the bones of our country'.

waning workers' music during the war years in the paper 'The Ballad of Freedom's Soldier'. This paper begins by describing his workers' music of the 1920s and thirties, as:

> […] compositions which directly related to aspects of the life of the working people, out of whose labour the owners reaped their profit in times of prosperity and who bore the burden of the economic crisis when it was unloosed upon us all.[59]

Yet Bush goes on to admit that:

> The war of the United Nations against Hitler interrupted my creative efforts, and I served four years in the British Army.[60]

It appears that the free time Bush had, was not spent on the development of workers' music. Instead, when he was relieved from army duties, he was asked to write serious works for the British establishment. These works were written for advanced orchestras and used historical revolutionary folksongs to lightly purvey some watered-down left-wing sentiments through the medium of right-wing establishments. Bush may have believed that these serious works were another form of left-wing music written for the people, yet it was a style far removed from that promoted in his articles on workers' music, the style which created the groundwork for the second culture of British music.

Therefore, Bush's output was highly influenced by the turbulent politics of the Second World War, in particular, the relationship of Britain to Russia. At the beginning of the war, Bush continued writing workers' songs like those extolled in 1936. These were left-wing socialist songs intended to be sung by 'the people', the aim of which was to unite the voices of the working classes against the elitist war. These were obviously not endorsed by the government and this radical political stance meant that Bush's more serious works also began to suffer as the government wished to unite everyone under the same political opinion. Yet July 1941 was a turning point. His strict attitude to musical composition of the twenties and thirties began to wane, as his workers' songs and his serious works both begin to change. When the British and Russian governments became allied, Bush

[59] Bush, 'The Ballad of Freedom's Soldier', 3-4.
[60] Ibid.

began writing for the right-wing establishment, the BBC: these new 'serious' works gained airtime and were heard by large audiences. They toed to the party line as they attempted to combine left-wing sentiments into art music yet, as the BBC bemoaned, they lacked the interest of his earlier works. The result was a weakly sycophantic style. His attitude towards workers' music waned, though it is uncertain whether this was from a lack of available time to compose or due to a change of heart. Overall, from 1939 to '45, it appears that the strongly defiant second culture of music which had grown through the thirties seemingly vanished. It will be interesting to consider whether the second culture managed to make a comeback after the war and if Bush returned to his previous musical stylisms, or if the transformational war years had an enduring impact on the future British left-wing music scene.

Chapter Five: Postwar Socialism and New Beginnings

As the pressures of war intensified over the course of World War Two, art-music composers and members of the establishment began to question the real purpose of entertainment. As previously illustrated in Chapter Four, there were many people who began to recognise the practical uses of music, in that it could unite people, make money, and proselytise the political opinions of the day. Like many other artists at the time, Alan Bush recognised the advantages of writing music with a purpose and thus adapted to the times: writing partisan works which matched current attitudes and governmental agenda. Yet, for Bush, the practical role that music could play in the everyday lives of the people was an idea which had plagued him long before the start of the war: this was the central issue which had driven the growth of workers' music since 1936. This chapter will therefore consider the extent to which Bush's compositional output differed in the postwar era, compared to pre-war works, and whether any differences contributed to the growing British left-wing musical landscape of the 1950s.

After the war, in 1948, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) (CPSU(B)) began to address the issues of 'meaningless' music, specifically targeting the nugatory traits of modernist art-music which had been growing in popularity across the country. On 20th February 1948, they released an article titled 'Muradeli's Opera: the Great Friendship. Decision of the Central Committee, C.P.S.U. (B.)'.[1] It was a short article which followed on from the notorious Zhadanov Decree that had been issued ten days earlier by the same central committee, presided over by Andrei Zhdanov. Whereas the earlier decree had generally condemned the works of leading modernist composers (Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Shebalin, Popov and Miaskovsky), this article criticised various aspects of the 'discordant and disharmonious' opera by Muradeli. It bemoaned the fact that The Committee on Arts, led by Khrapchenko, and the Organisation Committee of the Union of Soviet

[1] Revolutionary Democracy <*https://revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv12n2/muradeli.htm*> .

Composers, led by Khachaturyan, had alienated the people of the Soviet Union from musical culture by not encouraging the style of socialist realism. The lack of socialist realist tendencies in contemporary compositions meant that new works, as exemplified by Muradeli's opera, did not draw:

> […] on the wealth of folk melodies, songs, tunes and dance motives that are so abundant in the folk creations of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., and in particular among the people of the North Caucasus, where the action of the opera is laid.[2]

This, according to the article, resulted in a 'historically false and artificial' story. It notes that Muradeli's 'desire to achieve a falsely conceived "originality"' through formalistic techniques resulted in an aesthetically drab impression. But more importantly, it was ideologically problematic that such a modernist style 'glorified' subjectivism, constructivism, and extreme individualism: traits that the committee believed were decadent and 'undemocratic'. Therefore, in summary, the Central Committee resolved to 1. Condemn formalistic and antipopular trends of Soviet music 2. Encourage realism in music 3. Encourage high-quality works of musical art, and 4. Endorse legislation in order to enforce such measures.

Bush responded to this article by the CPSU(B) in some written papers: 'A Remarkable Document' (1949), 'Problems of Soviet Musical Theory' (1949-50) and in later years, 'Music is For the People' (c.1957).[3] In these articles, Bush summarised the contents of the CPSU(B) paper and explaining its significance, in that it was:

> […] the first occasion for about four hundred years on which a committee, imbued with a theory of human society, in this case that of Marxism, has expressed an opinion on the development of music.[4]

Yet Bush goes on to compare such a document to the music scene in Britain at the time. He complained that the British attitude towards the CPSU(B) article was generally negative, as demonstrated through

[2] Revolutionary Democracy <*https://revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv12n2/muradeli.htm*>
[3] Bush, 'A Remarkable Document', *The Anglo-Soviet Journal.*
[4] Ibid.*,* 1. Bush, 'Music is For the People'. Bush, 'Problems of Soviet Musical Theory', *The Modern Quarterly.*

the 'smearing' and vulgar language of Alexander Worth who was a writer for Turnstile Press.[5] It is true that the state of music in postwar Britain was far removed from, and almost completely antithetical to, the ideas postulated in the article. At that time, the Arts Council of the British government had the slogan 'Few, but roses' which illustrated the elitist, austere ambitions of the British council which focused on excellence on a 'limited scale' at the expense of 'lower' forms of culture.[6] Bush believed that the British government should 'wince with shame' at its elitist attitudes, recognising that it was 'not interested in forging closer ties between artist and the people' because it did not believe that 'art comes from the people and must also be for the people'.[7]

> It takes a socialist government, imbued with a scientific, Marxist understanding of art and its relation to human life and society to give the kind of support which will bring to the people art which expresses their deepest aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their struggles and victories, in a form which they will accept and enjoy.[8]

Bush, therefore, had the utmost respect for all the advice of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and believed that a similar radical change should occur in the British art music scene. He, along with Hanns Eisler and Bernard Stevens, attended the Prague Congress in May 1948, as organised by the Syndicate of Czech Composers (SCC). The congress was attended by over seventy composers from the Soviet Union, Eastern Bloc and other such countries and it reflected many of the same principles as laid out in the Central Committee's papers. It called on composers to address the gap between serious and popular music, in that they should employ accessible musical idioms, avoid avant-garde techniques and, most importantly, should draw on the established cultures of the composer's own country to create a 'national' musical style. The congress resulted in a manifesto, which all the composers signed, agreeing to implement these socialist realist features in their own music.

[5] Bush, 'A Remarkable Document', *The Anglo-Soviet Journal,* 2.
[6] The Arts Council of Great Britain, '6th Annual Report 1950-51', 34.
[7] Bush, 'Music is For the People', 3.
[8] Ibid.

It was possible to see how Bush's musical style began to change over the course of the war yet 1948 was the turning point. This was the year when Bush addressed the changes which had begun to take place in his compositional style and, as a matter of principle, committed to write in an English 'national' musical style. He began by radically renouncing his previous use of formalism and rejected any previous works which demonstrated any serialist compositional techniques. This included his iconic use of 'total thematicisation', a method Bush devolved from the twelve-tone waltz in Schonberg's Opus 23 where the material for a work was completely derived from one single thematic germ. As mentioned in the Introduction, he had used this method in *Relinquishment* (1928) and *Dialectic* (1929) and continued until as late as 1940, in his Symphony No. 1 in C (1939-40). He replaced such methods of modernism with a style more suited to the CPSU(B)'s idea of an appropriate style. This resulted in Bush taking the more straightforward approach of composition found in his workers' music and applying it to his art-music which produced a simpler, more populist style of serious music. Because of this, Bush's work was no longer split between two genres; no more was there a disparity between Bush's 'deliberately simple and direct' workers music and the 'highly sophisticated, complicated, intellectual' art music.[9] The new style was a supposedly democratic form which would appeal to both the working classes and the establishment.

This was the basis upon which Bush began writing his English realist music. One of the earliest and most prominent works in this newly committed style was his *Nottingham Symphony* of 1949. This symphony, Bush's second, was commissioned by the Nottingham Co-Operative Society (NCS) to act as a centrepiece in its celebrations commemorating the quincentenary of its Royal Charter of Freedom.[10] The NCS was a trading organisation associated with the labour movement and Bush was pleased that the work was being commissioned by a co-operative, rather than via old-fashioned private patronage, as he thought it a step towards a fairer and more democratic system. He composed the work in less

[9] Mellers, 'A Note on Alan Bush and the English Tradition'.
[10] M.C., 'Symphony About Nottingham', *The Daily Telegraph.*

than three months, having spent four days researching the history and mythology associated with Nottinghamshire. The work is made up of four movements, each one based on a different aspect of the Nottingham people's histories. The first movement 'Sherwood Forest' is based on Robin Hood's fight against the wealthy and oppressive privileged elite, the second 'Clifton Grove' evokes a peaceful local trysting place, the third 'Castle Rock' depicts the 1832 protest in Nottingham against the Duke of Newcastle's stance on the 1832 Reform Bill, and the fourth and final movement 'Goose Fair' portrays the city's annual fair. This way of researching and writing a work based on socialist history is reminiscent of the scenarios of the 1930s pageants. Bush certainly intended the content to be left-wing stating the work should showcase the people's 'struggles in the middle ages and in the period of the industrial revolution'.[11] Ireland was full of praise for the work, stating in a letter to Bush that:

> […] while it is strong, virile, and agile – and splendidly made, so far as I could judge – it does not disdain beauty of sound and tenderness of feeling. In fact, even on such an imperfect hearing, I regard it as a landmark in British music, on which you are to be warmly & whole-heartedly congratulated.[12]

He went on to say that it differed from other works written to 'épater les bourgeois' and instead, that it added 'to the heritage of true Art, which is & has been always for the people, and in terms the people can understand'.[13]

Bush had consciously tried to make the symphony as accessible and 'realist' as possible by avoiding 'those ingredients in the music of the last forty years which have repelled the public'.[14] As he stated in the *London Philharmonic Post,* this meant replacing the atonal aesthetic of his serious music with 'for the most part scales and intervals characteristic of our own English folk music'.[15] Bush saw modal music as being a quintessential element of English music. In later life when teaching at workers'

[11] Bush, *The Nottingham Symphony.*
[12] O'Higgins, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland,* 219. Ireland's own emphasis.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Bush, 'The Composer and His Audience', *London Philharmonic Post.*
[15] Ibid.

music association summer schools, he taught the principles of the Ionian, Aolian, as well as the plagal and authentic versions of the Mixolydian and Dorian scalic modes by looking at various folksongs.[16] Therefore, there is extensive use of the Mixolydian, Lydian, Ionian and Phrygian modes throughout *The Nottingham Symphony.* For example, the second and fourth movements begin in E major^{b7} and G major^{b7} respectively, demonstrating the Mixolydian mode. As well as this, the third movement opens with a C minor key signature for the cello's bass line, but the repeated use of Db suggests C Phrygian. The localism and programmatic nature of the work was explainfed in the extensive programme notes which were printed for its first performance. These explained thematic elements to the audience, such as the melodic and rhythmic motifs in the first movement depicting galloping horsemen and the pastoral characteristics of the second movement. To accompany the depiction of the legends, Bush intended to enhance the 'Englishness' of the work by incorporating actual folksongs from the regional area. In the BBC written archives, there is a letter dated January 1949 from Bush to the BBC's director asking about two local folksongs which had featured on a BBC Birmingham program titled 'Musical Nottinghamshire'.[17] These two folksongs were 'Thorneymoor Woods' and 'When Shawes are Green', however for some unknown reason, Bush chose not to include them in the final work. In 1963 Schafer asked Bush if folk music was an important part of his music since the 1948 manifesto and Bush replied:

> It isn't necessary to use folk music. It would be an absurd misunderstanding of the whole theory of Socialist Realism to assume that it consisted solely in the symphonic development of folk songs.[18]

[16] This he later taught at the WMA Summer School. See paper: Bush, 'Modes', B.I. In a very similar teaching note, he lists the various modes, and associated folksongs:
'Ionian Mode (major scale). 1. Johnny Todd 2. Isle of Dreams (Gaelic) 3. On the Moor (Icelandic Round)
Dorian Mode. 4. Scarborough Fair 5. Come All You (American Ballad) 6. Lullaby (Italian)
Mixolydian Mode. 7. Lord Bateman 8. Rothesay O
Aeolian Mode. 9. The Little Turtle Dove 10. Pretty little Horses (Creole Lullaby).'
[17] Bush, Letter to Director of Music, 29 January 1949. BBC W.A. Rcont 1. 'Composer: Alan Bush' File 2: 1948 - 1955.
[18] Schafer, *British Composers in Interview,* 60.

However, some would disagree, believing that folksong is a key to nationalism. This idea has been an established idea since the beginning of the twentieth century.[19] Even before the war, in the mid-1930s, one of Bush's closest friends and musical allies, Ernst Herman Meyer, stated that other countries were using folklore in order to create a new type of national culture. In an article Meyer praises the USSR's systematic trips to collect folksongs from remote regions because he believed that this research had the ability:

> […] not only to preserve the huge treasure of infinitely interesting material, but also to further the national independence of the individual countries and races, to encourage [the Soviet State] to develop a new culture of their own, based on the tradition of popular music.[20]

Yet, not long before this, Constant Lambert had pointed out that there was a difference between the English and the Russian folksongs, in that he believed English folksongs, unlike Russian and Catalonian, were not suited to recontextualization. He stated:

> Folk songs in England are not a vigorous living tradition, as they were in Russia, nor have they the power to graft a foreign influence on to themselves while retaining their own individuality, like the Catalan sardanas which have added to their primitive basis sophisticated and foreign elements without losing their essentially Catalonian qualities.[21]

Regardless of Lambert's point, Bush went on to include folksongs in many of his compositions until he died in 1995: this includes large-scale symphonies, operas, choral and instrumental works. In 1954 Bush wrote his second opera, the *Men of Blackmoor* with Nancy Bush as librettist. Alan and Nancy Bush visited a Northumbrian coalmine in preparation for their work on their opera.

[19] For example, see Sydney Grew's 'National Music and the Folk-Song'. This article was written in 1921 and begins by stating 'The nationalist says that British folk-music must be made the basis of British art (i.e., symphonic) music. He says that the composer must consciously and deliberately adapt folk-music to artistic ends, that he must write in the folk-song idiom, and that he must indeed imitate folk-music to the end that his music may acquire "national" characteristics'. Grew, 'National Music and the Folk-Song', 172.
[20] Meyer, 'Contemporary Musical Research', 3.
[21] Lambert, *Music Ho!,* 120.

> Alan and I paid a visit to Newcastle to see the mining country and saw one of the pits, which had a machine for operating the winding of the cages built in 1860 and still in use. Such a machine, in smaller and more primitive form with levers working the valves could have been at the pithead at the imaginary village of Blackmoor. We also found some extremely interesting material in the city library of Blackgate […].[22]

They visited Newcastle and the North East on a number of occasions, in order to gain an understanding of local tunes and the area's history.[23] This research was likely inspired by the enthusiasm of Albert Lloyd, with whom Bush had, by this time, a strong working relationship. Lloyd often visited the Black Gate Museum, the headquarters and library of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, when he was in the North East. These visits were partly for research but also because he was a friend of the Newcastle academic librarian and folk music scholar, Frank Rutherford. The museum would have been the perfect resource for Alan and Nancy Bush's research as it holds books, historic archives, manuscripts and songbooks pertaining to local culture.

As such, the *Men of Blackmoor* was based on real events, the strikes of Northumbrian miners in the Tyne and Wear district in the 1830s. This was a time of great unrest in this mining district as, following on from three strikes and fearful of further wage concessions, mine owners began to employ blacklegs to break the strikes. Thus, the opera considers the financial hardships of striking and the anger felt by a community towards blacklegs. It dramatically culminates with the men of Blackmoor breaking the ventilating machinery, in order to frighten the strike-breakers out of the mine, and the final section closes with a defiant chorus of men awaiting trial. The language Nancy chose for the work had elements of the local vernacular, as she made a note of certain phrases at the bottom of the manuscript:

> 'Brought to Bank'- brought to the surface of the pit.

[22] Bush, *Alan Bush,* 73.
[23] Bush comments on future planned visits to the North East in a letter to Jack Armstrong. Bush, Letter to Jack Armstrong, H.A., 22 April 1953.

'Choke-damp' – deadly gas in the pit which kills by suffocation.

'Corve' – large basked for conveying coal from the coal face to the surface.

'The corve's laid out' – a corve which is rejected because it includes a certain amount of stone. Fines were payable by the hewer.

'Keel' – flat bottomed boat for carrying coal down the river.

'Splint' – poor quality coal. 'Trapper' young boy employed to open and shut ventilation doors in the pit.

'Viewer' – manager of a colliery. 'Drift' – gallery in pit driven for purposes of exploration.[24]

Thus, much scincerity went into making the work as authentically Northumbrian as possible. Most signficantly about this work, however, was Bush's use of folksong. Whilst in Newcastle, he studied various local folksongs, and included one 'Sair Fyel'd, Hinny' in the opera. 'Sair Fyel'd, Hinny' is a lament which marks the passing of age and departure and, in literal terms, it describes the felling of an ancient tree.[25]

[Chorus] 'Sair fyel'd, hinny,

Sair fyel'd now;

Sair fyel'd, hinny,

Sin' I ken'd thou.

-

[Verse 1] 'Aw was young and lusty,

Aw was fiar and clear;

Aw was young and lusty,

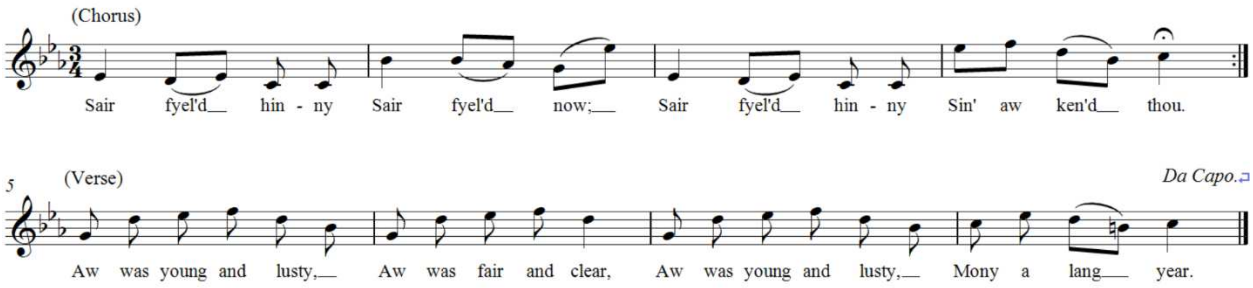
Mony a lang year.

[etc.]

[24] Bush, Nancy. 'Men of Blackmoor', *Libretto,* JBPSC PSC/1/2/2/249.
[25] Bruce and Stokoe, *Northumbrian Minstrelsy,* 92.

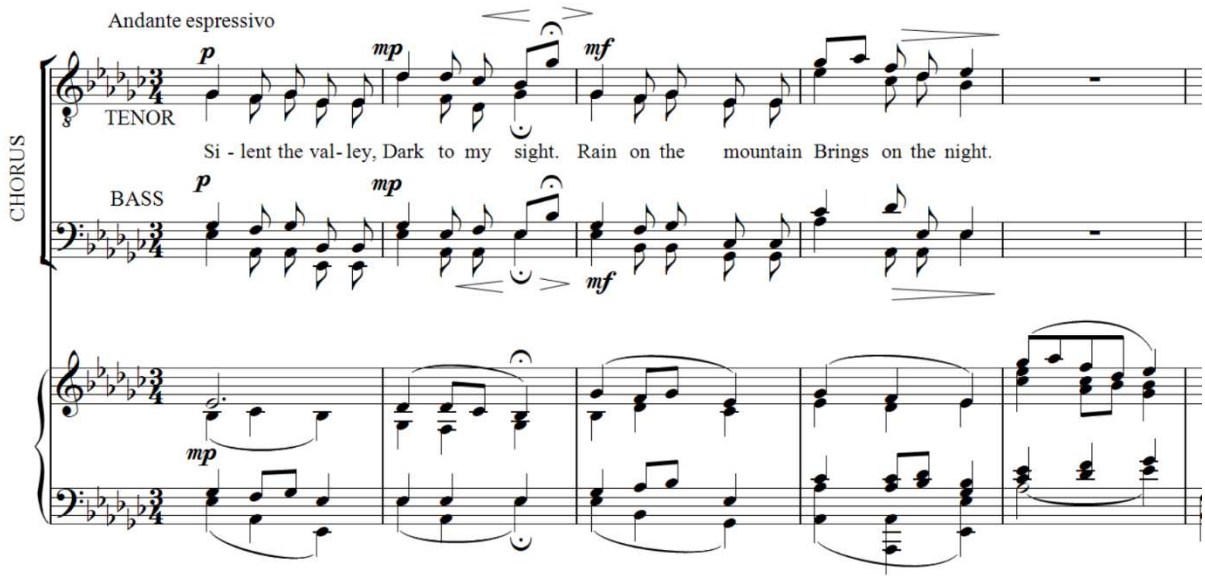
This song was part of the Northumbrian Minstrelsy collection, an infamous collection more recently reputed for its heavy-handed editing by upper-class ethnomusicologists, Bruce and Stokoe, in the 1880s. Its Geordie dialect and unusual melodic line most likely intrigued Bush. It is a beautiful melody which has an unsettled tonality (see fig. 5.1). In the Bruce and Stokoe collection, the melody rotates between C Aeolian for the chorus, then moves to the dominant G for the verse, yet this is G Phrygian Pentatonic scale. The final bar resolves in C harmonic minor with a sharpened 7th.

Fig. 5.1 Bruce and Stokoe (ed.), 'Sair Fyel'd, Hinny'.



Bush quotes the folksong in full in Act 1 Scene 1 (see the chorus in the tenor line in fig. 5.2). It begins in Eb Aeolian, rotating to Bb Phrygian for the verse and resolving in Eb harmonic minor. It is first heard in the chorus, with the expression 'Andante expressivo' and here, Bush matches the presentation of the melody to Bruce and Stokoe's version, in that he leaves many of the quavers unbeamed.

Fig. 5.2 Bush, *Men of Blackmoor*, Act 1 Scene 1.



The new lyrics which Nancy wrote to accompany the tune are suitably despondent:

[To the chorus] Silent the valley,

Dark to my sight.

Rain on the mountain

Brings on the night

-

[To the verse] Cloudy be the mountain,

Dark the day or clear,

Working day or idle,

All have I known here.

The song continues to describe the mourning of youth, and the passing of time, which is an analogous theme to the original folksong. For example:

[To the chorus] When I was lusty

Then I laughed and said:

Strength of my arm

Earns my daily bread.

-

[To the verse] Time alone has taught me,

Work's the easier part

Waiting here and watching

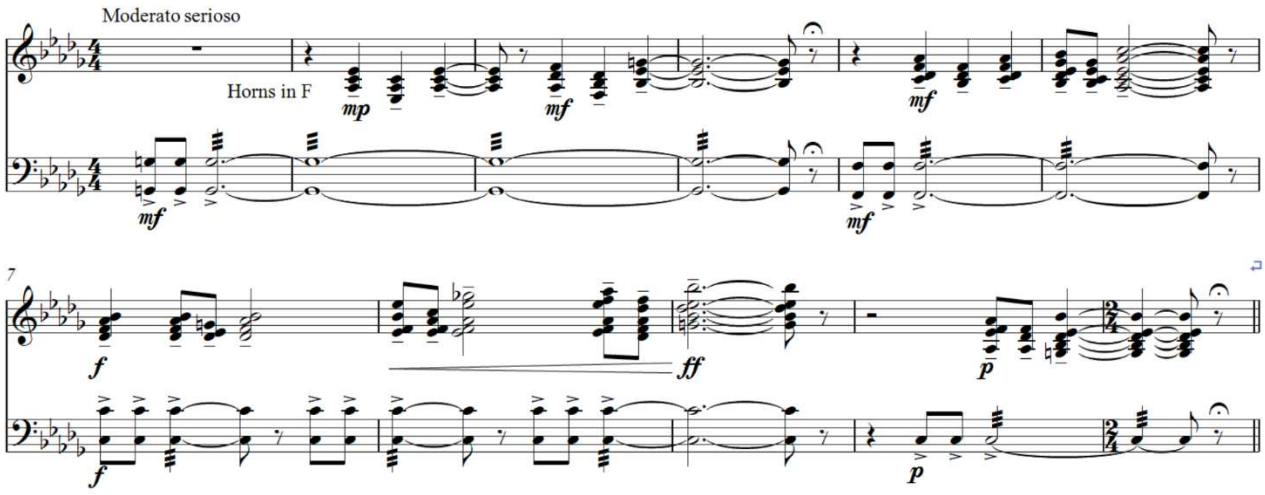
Wearies out the heart.

This song is sung in full to the original tune yet, as indicated above, instead of putting it in strophic form, Bush arranges the lyrics in a through composed manner. Overall, it is a subtle inclusion: the song is woven into the orchestral texture, there is no indication in the score of the folksong, nor did Bush create a written reference of the tune in any of his writings. In this way, it is unlikely that the listener or performer would notice the origins of this melodic fragment unless they had prior knowledge of 'Sair Fyel'd, Hinny'. Even the programme only contains a single line, explaining the setting of each scene.[26]

Although the song was applied with great subtlety it seems to have acted as a catalyst for the melodic fragments of the rest of the work. Not only are motivic sections of the song fragmented and repeated, but the characteristically wide melodic intervals of the north eastern folksong are continually used throughout the work. This is apparent in the first opening section of the singers, where a quasi-jig rhythm is created via the use of triplets. Therefore, there is a distinctly northern 'flavour' to the work. This is not to say that the work was confined to local idioms as these parochial elements are contrasted with grander gestures. For example, this opening sung section is preceded by a model of post-romantic concert music with the horns opening the opera for atmospheric affect (see fig. 5.3). This makes a sharp contrast with the humble origins of the north-eastern folksong.

[26] 'Collection of leaflet and programmes for concerts of Alan Bush's work', JBPSC PSC/1/2/1/36.

Fig. 5.3 Bush, *Men of Blackmoor,* Act 1 Scene 1 (opening) score reduction.



The research that Bush carried out for the *Men of Blackmoor* fed into some of his later compositions. For instance, he wrote 'The Cheviot Piper' as a part of the *24 Preludes for Piano* (Opus 84) in 1976 and he based each prelude on a specific mode. Number 15 made up the basis of a piano work called 'The Cheviot Piper' and it is in G Lydian diatonic mode which is theoretically well suited to the scale of a Northumbrian piper. As well as this, in 1983 Bush wrote another work for piano, titled 'A Song from the North' (Opus 97) which he based on a Calling-On song used by the Tommy of the Earsdon rapper dancers in Northumberland. Yet not all the works Bush wrote after the *Men of Blackmoor* were based on specific Northumbrian folk tunes. This is shown by the 'Cheviot Rant' in *Suite in English Style* for string ensemble (Opus 79, 1974). A rant is a local version of a 4/4 reel, yet it is much slower, has a lolloping rhythmic pulse and is danced to with a specific step. However this work, like 'Tyneside Reel' from *6 Short Pieces For Piano* (Opus 99, 1980-83), does not accurately reflect the title's rhythm. For instance, rather than 'Tyneside Reel' being in common reel 4/4 time, it has a compound rhythm which alternates between 9/8 and 6/8. The title therefore is used to denote a 'folk'-like impression of the work as it leaps about in the style of a Northumbrian folk tune, rather than reference a specific dance or tune.

The most notable work inspired by Bush's research for the *Men of Blackmoor* was *Northumbrian Impressions* (Opus 42), which he wrote in 1953. Whilst in Newcastle, Bush heard a Northumbrian smallpiper busking which inspired him to write a work for Northumbrian pipes and piano.[27] Bush wrote the work whilst in correspondence with Jack Armstrong and his inquiry into the workings of the instrument was through. The resulting piece reflects his understanding of this unusual instrument as it is well suited to the instrument's sound, volume, drone usage, its melodic range and its unique style of articulation.[28] It is a typical sonata, with three movements 'Prelude', 'Lament' and 'Dance'. The piper's melodic line drives the work and even within the limitations of the instrument's range, it retains harmonic interest by moving through various scales. Jack Armstrong was concerned that Bush may have disliked the drones:

> Dear Alan, It was grand to hear from you again, and to know you were not "put off" the pipes by those awful things called drones. I shall be delighted to have your music for the pipes, which I'm sure will be good, and something different to the usual run of tunes.[29]

Yet Bush was not concerned by having a static, consistent note running through the work. Instead, he enhanced it in the sparse piano accompaniment, by creating long pedal notes in the bass of the first two movements. These mimic the D drone of the first movement and the G drone of the second and emphasise the modal nature of the work.

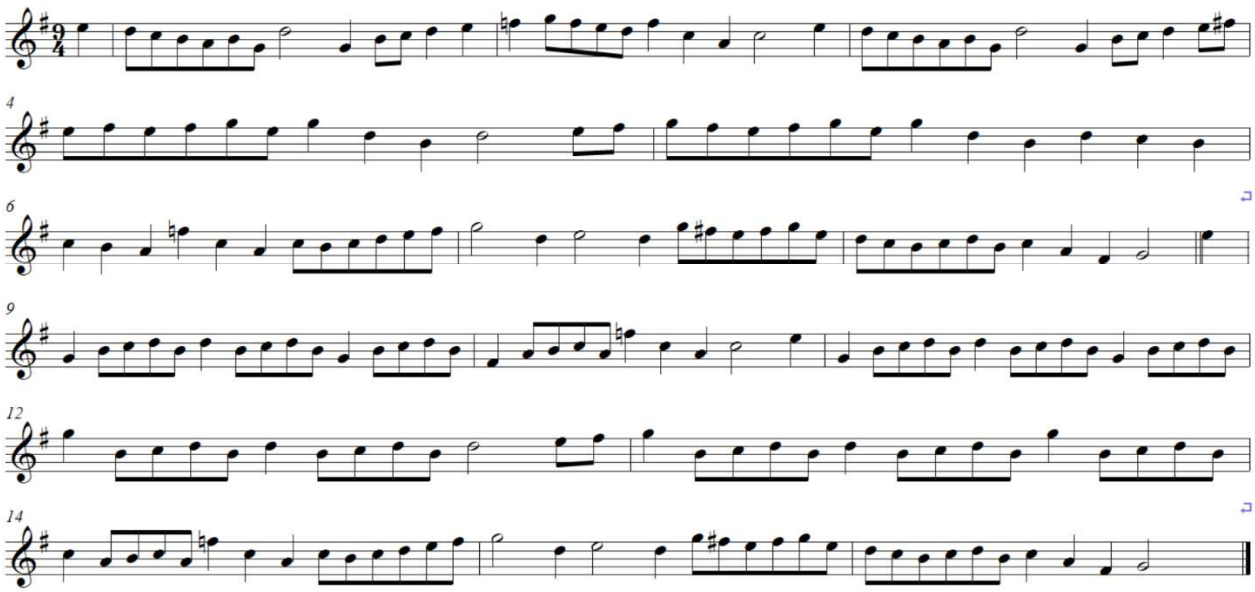
> I hope they are playable, first of all. I have suggested the drones, a different one for each piece. The third one I have left largely unphrased, as it is meant to be played in the traditional style of the type of dance and you know that much better than I do. If there

[27] Some articles state that Bush heard Jack Armstrong playing, yet this seems unlikely from the nature of future correspondence. Circumstantial evidence suggests it was most likely the late Neil Smith.
[28] For instance, there is a note on the manuscript which reads 'Drones encased in a cylinder and a slide alters the length of vibrating column of air'. Bush, *Northumbrian Impressions,* MS. (currently in the possession of Chris Calvert).
[29] Armstrong, Letter to Bush, H.A., 24 April 1953.

> is anything very awkward or ineffective, please say so, and I will see what I can do to modify it.[30]

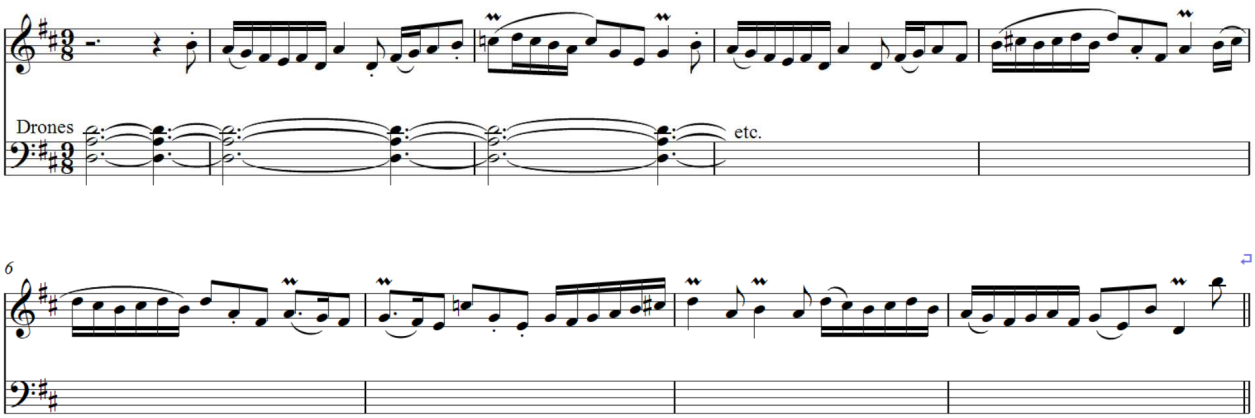
The third movement, 'Dance' is based on the folksong 'The Mitford Galloway'. There are many different versions of this slip jig and it sometimes goes by the name 'Rantin' Roarin' Willie', or 'Rattling Roarin' Willie' in Scotland. However, the melody which Bush used was most similar to the one found in Bruce and Stokoe's *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* thus, considering Bush's use of this collection for 'Sair Fyel'd, Hinny', it is likely that he used it to reference this tune too. The main differences between the two versions are that Bush transposed the tune from its original G to D, so that the piper could play the flattened 7th, and wrote the tune in 9/8 rather than 9/4 so it was easier to read. He also altered the rhythm in places to add a natural bounce (e.g., b. 6-7), and included ornaments and articulations suited to the instrument (see fig. 5.4 and fig. 5.5).

Fig. 5.4 Bruce and Stokoe (ed.), 'Rantin' Roarin' Willie, or The Mitford Galloway'.



[30] Bush, Letter to Jack Armstrong, H.A., 22 April 1953.

Fig. 5.5 Bush, *Northumbrian Impressions,* 'Dance' (movt. 3), version for Northumbrian pipes.



Armstrong received the score on the 11th May 1953 yet despite a further polite letter from the composer on the 23rd of June, he still had not made any comment on the work. Bush never received a reply from the piper, as evident from a much later query on the 30th October. By August, Bush began to enquire about the possibility of finding an oboist to perform the work instead as he commented 'Jack is rather a dilatory person, as well as being very hard worked as a dance band director, and has not yet set about practising the suite'.[31] It may be assumed that Jack Armstrong never played or commented on the work because he was daunted by such a detailed piece and perhaps believed it to be outside his ability. Although Armstrong was a well-known piper, this composition was far removed from his usual repertoire of steady traditional tunes and sentimental waltzes. Thus, the work was transposed for oboe and slightly re-arranged to suit the instrument, with a wider melodic range in the slow movement and the addition of dynamics. It was later performed by oboists Joy Boughton and Roger Lord. Yet Bush never relinquished the prospect of having the work performed by its intended

[31] Bush, Letter to the 'Head of Music Programmes (Sound), BBC', H.A., 15 August 1953.

instrument and over a decade later he sought out the Duke of Northumberland's piper, Richard Butler, who went on to perform the work at a prestigious concert in London. As Bush said:

> Richard Butler played my Northumbrian Impressions really very well indeed, the audience was extremely enthusiastic at the concert. I don't think that this instrument had ever been heard before in the Wigmore Hall.[32]

Bush's interest in the musical culture of the British Isles led him to arrange Scottish folksongs. In 1981-82 he arranged six Scottish folksongs for piano all taken from the collection which had historically inspired Beethoven's interest in folksong arrangements: George Thomson's *The Select Melodies of Scotland* (1822). These were 'Sweet Molly', 'Duke of Perth', 'Tullochgorum', 'Strathspern', 'Marquis of Huntley's Farewell' and 'Stumpie'. The collection was titled *Scots Jigganspiel* as Bush believed this was 'the correct Scottish expression for what in correct English would be "Scottish Dances"'.[33] At the same time, he composed 'Song and Dance' (1981-82) for junior string orchestra, the 'Song' of which was based on the Scottish folksong to which Robert Burns wrote the poem 'The Collier Bonnie Lassie', and the 'Dance' was based on the folksongs 'Dance to Your Shadow' and 'The Islay Reaper's Song'.

These compositions demonstrate Bush's use of the 'people's music' to create a style of English realism. His attention to the style of local music and his appreciation of the cultural origins of the folksongs is reflective of his sincere ambitions for this music. However, although his intentions and ideologies may have differed from pre-war romantic composers, of which Bush had previously despised, the resulting compositions barely differed. Few of the folksongs demonstrate socialist tendencies and they were the songs of middle-class collectors (Bruce, Stoke, Thomson etc.). He then set them in lush, tonal arrangements and performed them in bourgeois classical concert halls. Thus, the resulting compositions are not 'of the people'. It may be assumed that Bush believed the origins of the folksongs, the origins often being deprived areas in the North, were sufficiently left-wing to

[32] Bush, Letter to Ernest Warburton, 4 February 1980.
[33] Ibid., 9 January 1982.

maintain that this *was* music of the people. However, the folksongs were recontextualised to the extent that they were unrecognisable (see *Men of Blackmoor*) or were arranged and organised in such a way that even the people who had some form of cultural 'ownership' over the 'original' folksongs were deterred from performing them (see *Northumbrian Impressions*). Therefore, the music which Bush wrote from 1948 onwards, with its Soviet Realist ideology, was far removed from the concept of workers' music or the music which had engendered the second culture in the 1930s. What makes this style of music even worse is that the socialist façade of these later compositions has the quality of the 'Emperor's New Clothes': their grand and intellectual nature defies the people of the working classes to dispute the true and authentic nature of such music.

Bush nigh-on stopped composing workers' music after he singed the Prague Manifesto, instead turning his attention to the new style of English realism and simple arrangements of folksongs. Yet the lack of 'workers' music' did not mark the end of the Workers' Music Association (WMA). As explained in Chapter One, Bush founded the Workers' Music Association in 1936 as an umbrella organisation created to coordinate and promote the various branches of socialist music institutions across the country. It reunited the disparate scene, bringing under its remit five orchestras and over 40 left-wing choirs, such as Hendon Left Singers, the Clarion Singers, the London Labour Choral Union, and the London Co-operative choir.[34] At this time, Bush's interest in folk music was limited as he was more focused on the political content of music. This is not to say that he completely ignored it: Nancy Bush stated that in 1938, she and Alan met up with two prominent folklorists, John and Alan Lomax, whilst in New York:

> […] we also spent an interesting afternoon with Aaron Copland. Near Washington we visited Charles Lomax [sic.?] the folk-song collector, and in the evening his young son Alan gave a concert of song with guitar in a style which was to become so popular all over

[34] [anon.], 'The Minority of the W.M.A.', PSC/1/2/1/15.

> Europe and America about twenty years later. In 1956 Alan Lomax came to London, by then a famous folk-singer and collector in his own right.[35]

It seems from this extract, that Nancy misremembered the names of the people she me, as John Lomax was the father of Alan Lomax, not Charles Lomax. It also indicates that she and Alan may have met up with Charles Seeger too, father of Pete Seeger, as this would explain the use of the name 'Charles'. This careless recollection is demonstrative of Nancy and Alan's apathetic view of folk music at the time.

As the sole founder of the association, Bush became its first president in 1941 and demonstrated complete dedication to the role as editor, conductor, writer, publisher, and organiser. By the mid-1940s the WMA had extended its responsibilities to include the musical factions of 17 co-operative education committees under its leadership. In this way, the WMA intended to advance music education within working class communities.[36] Much of the WMA's output during the 1930s and forties is reflective Bush's own work of the period: overtly political and musically eclectic. For instance, if the objectives of the WMA from the early forties are considered:

> 1.To present to the people their rich musical inheritance
>
> 2.To utilise fully the stimulating power of music to inspire the people
>
> 3.To stimulate the composition of music appropriate to our time
>
> 4.To foster and further the art of music on the principal that true art can move the people to work for the betterment of society.[37]

With the exception of the first ambition, these aims of the association are nearly identical compared to Bush's ambitions for workers' music. The large influence Bush had on the organisation at this time can be seen in other ways. For instance, the vice presidents listed during this era were friends and colleagues of Bush's, including people like Hanns Eisler, Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copeland, as well as the singer, Paul Robeson. Those people who were invited to take a role in the running of the WMA

[35] Bush, *Alan Bush,* 41-42.
[36] [anon.], 'The Minority of the W.M.A.' PSC/1/2/1/15.
[37] These aims were formulated during the war years and were published on the cover of a WMA publication to encourage membership. Lloyd, *The Singing Englishman,* preface.

were also paid-up members of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). This reflects Bush's desire, as stated in Chapter Three, that such an organisation and its events should be organised by people with the same political beliefs. The influence of fervent communists, such as Bush, on the WMA at this time has not been forgotten, as Harker wrote:

> In fact, the history of the Second Folksong Revival […] was closely involved with the cultural policy of the CPGB. The strategy was to popularize selected and modified elements of the musical culture of British workers in order to counterbalance the records from US industry, which were understood to be having deleterious effects on the culture of contemporary working-class youths.[38]

There can be no doubt that Harker believed this communist 'strategy' was led by the WMA. Bush remained as president of the association for the rest of his life, yet that is not to say that the central views of the organisation remained unchanged throughout the twentieth century. It may have begun by reflecting the fervent Marxist views shared by Bush and many other artists in the 1930s, but by the late fifties, it had a new outlook.

In 1937, though barely a year old, the WMA recognised a need for new publications of suitable left-wing musical material. Therefore, it began serving as a publishing house for the labour choirs, providing them with new songs that demonstrated revolutionary and anti-bureaucratic sentiments. Many seminal works came out of this endeavour. Of this, on the 9th April 1937, the *Daily Herald* commented:

> The Workers' Music Association and the London Labour Choral Union are between them building up quite respectable (perhaps respectable is hardly the right word) library of propaganda music.[39]

[38] Harker, *Fakesong,* 250.
[39] BNA, *Daily Herald*, Friday 9th April, 1937.

The Singing Englishman (1944), written by Lloyd, was a major publication by the WMA. Lloyd suggests it owed its popularity to the lack of other left-wing folk music works on the market at the time, as he admitted in his foreword that the work was 'sketchy' but hoped it would 'help fill a gap until the real thing comes along'. In the year prior to *The Singing Englishman*'s publication, the WMA's newly formed *William Morris Musical Society,* chaired by Bush, printed a paper titled 'The Revolutionary Origins of English Folksong'.[40] Both this paper and *The Singing Englishman* reflected the belief that the revival of interest in folksong was too integrated with bourgeois capitalism and were critical of other available introductions to folksong for their right-wing tendencies: such as Cecil Sharp's *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions* (1907) and Frank Kidson and Mary Neal's *English Folk-Song and Dance* (1915). Instead, they celebrated the revival of 'industrial' folksong and 'workers' [folk]song'.[41] Although it must be noted that there are problematic errors in both of the WMA works, Brocken believes the WMA was simply endeavouring to eradicate the 'misunderstandings' about folk music by contextualising them in the 'times and circumstances they were made up in'.[42] Due to the success of *The Singing Englishman*, the WMA later asked Lloyd to re-write it into *Folk Song in England* which is still popular, even today. In 1952, the WMA also commissioned Lloyd to produce *Coaldust Ballads* which consisted of 20 songs for separated male-voice or women-voice choirs. Lloyd appreciated the efforts of the WMA and believed that the organisation's efforts were for a good cause. He implied that the WMA was a bastion of English folk music in the introduction to *Folk Song In England,* stating:

> In America, late in the Depression and early in the War years, traditional song and its topical imitations were coming into vogue, particularly among young radicals, as a consequence of the stresses of the time, and the rumble of newly-found or newly-made 'people's songs' was rolling towards us across the Atlantic. The Workers' Music Association, that admirable but over-modest organization, sensed that similar enthusiasm

[40] Arthur, *Bert,* 130.
[41] Lloyd, *Folk Song in England,* 297-387.
[42] Brocken, *The British Folk Revival,* 20.

> might spread in England, and they were eager to help in the rediscovery of our own lower-class traditions. They commissioned me to write a brief social-historical introduction to folk song, titled: *The Singing Englishman.* […] The W.M.A.'s presage was justified; the folk song revival swept in, and against all pessimistic forecasts the enthusiasm endured throughout the years.[43]

Bush was responsible for arranging and transcribing most of the printed music. For instance, he arranged four of the *Coaldust Ballads* in a simple manner, 'The Blackleg Miners', 'The Collier's Rant', 'Miner's Doom' and 'Miner's Life'. Yet the WMA publications were careful to note the collaborative nature of such works. For instance, the WMA *Pocket Song Book* (1948) had the introduction:

> The majority of songs in this volume were chosen by plebiscite among the members of the Workers' Music Association to provide for community singing in the larger labour movement in this country.

The impact of these publications was far ranging and had a direct impact on the music sung by the working classes and the emerging folk music scene of the time. Lloyd's *Come All Ye Bold Miners* is still considered a 'Bible' of folksong by musicians and entertainers in the north east. Johnny Handle, accordionist of the 'High Level Ranters' has a great appreciation for Lloyd's book and states that it influences his writing even today. Soon after, Ewan MacColl had his version of 'The Collier's Rant' printed in *The Shuttle and Cage* and the piece took on a new lease of life in the folk club movement. Yet some people found the publications of the WMA a bit dictatorial. Such song books told the working classes what they *should* be singing, that is, they were told to avoid the popular music of the day and only sing such repertoire as appeared in these editions. Dave Arthur comments on this, saying:

> In rescuing folk song from the bourgeoisie, Bert, MacColl, and others tried to impose their own ideas on the music and developed their own rules of performance, definition and historical relevance, and were not averse to bending the evidence to fit their vision of

[43] Lloyd, *Folk Song in England,* 5.

> what a proletarian music should be. And if the proletariat didn't know what was good for them, it was okay because Bert and the rest could tell them, or in Bert's case 'show' them by example and the seeing of material. In MacColl's case it was more blatant; you did what he said or you were beyond the pale.[44]

Much of Lloyd's work on folk song was developed in tandem to the activities of the WMA. Like many other left-wing intellectuals in the 1930s, Lloyd did not travel to Spain to fight in the Spanish Civil war. Instead, in between working at sea on whaling ships, he threw himself into the artistic organisations which demonstrated support for the republican cause therefore, when he lived in London, he joined the WMA. He sang in one of Bush's choirs, the WMA Singers and became involved in the staging of some of the pageants, including 'Towards Tomorrow': A Pageant of Co-operation' (1938). Bush and Lloyd went on to develop a lasting friendship. It is plain from the plethora of correspondence between the two men that they had a strong mutual respect for each other's knowledge on British working-class music. Between them, they shared knowledge of folksong, as Lloyd had a vast repertoire of British songs which became useful to Bush, and Bush likewise sent him lesser-known European folksongs. They discussed the ways in which the WMA choirs should perform the songs and Bush often questioned Bert on how he ought to arrange certain folksongs for the choirs to sing. For instance, Bush received this letter from Lloyd in 1945 stating:

> At the WMA executive meeting on Saturday I saw a few sheets of the set of Zakharov songs which have been, or are about to be, run off. It is nice that they are ready so quickly. But to my mind <u>The Steppe</u> has not had its words fitted to the best advantage. I had translated it closely. But unfortunately I never saw your arrangement so I wasn't able to fit the words to it myself. I had to sing them over the phone to Will, to demonstrate how they fitted; and either the process didn't work too well, or else the words were later rearranged because I thought they would sing better. I feel the song loses a lot of its lonely

[44] Arthur, *Bert,* 136-37.

> and desolate character without its long "Ehs". And the heavy emphasis, the punch if you like, which came at the end of the "Eh" (on the words Volga steppe, for instance) in my appended re-arrangement, was one of the things which were remarkable in the original.[45]

The letters also detail the collaborative activities of Bush and Lloyd over the course of the 1940s and fifties. For example, in 1946 they staged 'The Living English Pageant' together and, unlike Bush's previous extravagances, this was only a sung pageant. It was performed by the massed choirs of the London Co-Operative Society on the 26 October and was a part of the Folk Song and Dance Festival. Bush arranged songs selected by Lloyd for a small instrumental ensemble, the mixed chorus of the Co-operative choirs and children's chorus. Many of the songs selected by Lloyd were later used by Bush to headline a concert on the 22nd March 1948 and, following much correspondence, the year after the *Coaldust Ballads* was released Bush went on to arrange *10 English Folksongs,* as suggested by Lloyd.[46]

These endeavours demonstrate Bush's growing interest in folksong. Obviously, Bush's original interest stemmed from his ambition for a new style of English realism and yet, as shown in his correspondence with Lloyd, Bush's interest in such songs went further than simply finding music to arrange for orchestras in the style of socialist realist works. Percy Grainger stated to Henry Cowell in 1916: 'The fact can hardly be too often emphasized that it is largely the 'hyper-modern' men who prove to be the most susceptible to the lure of "primitive music".'[47] It may seem obtuse that progressive modernists, such as Bush or Grainger, should became so concerned with finding, documenting and working with old, traditional songs, as the idea of a *modernist folksong* could be considered an oxymoron.[48] However, these two disparate ideals are actually two complementary halves of one thought. Folksong represents the *historic day-by-day* musical production of working-

[45] Lloyd, Letter to Bush, H.A., 2 September 1945.
[46] Bush, Letter to Lloyd, H.A., 8 January 1948 and Bush, Letter to Lloyd, H.A., 5 October 1951.
[47] Robinson, 'Percy Grainger and Henry Cowell', 1.
[48] Robinson (ed.), *Grainger The Modernist,* 95.

class people and this should continue, as society attempts to find a musical expression *for today and for the future*.

By the early fifties, the WMA began to show some ideological changes, morphing from its stringently held political focus of the thirties into a less radical, folk-music centric organisation. The organisation and its subsidiary branches, such as Topic Records, began successfully capturing the public's contemporary mood via a new output of recordings, and publications. This was a new era for Topic Records as Bill Leader states that previously it only republished songs 'from Unity Theatre, that had started in the same year as WMA. It was leftish, but not very focused'.[49] It began in 1939, as a branch of the WMA. At this time, it was small scale, dispensing a few recordings of Soviet and political music on disc gramophone records via mail order. Topic Records expanded later in 1955 when it bought its own recording machine and from this point onwards, it did much to drive the Second Folksong Revival. Another indication of the WMA's changing ideology was the introduction of folk clubs. Admittedly, many of the early clubs accepted any type of music, as John Foreman states: '"Folk" became a sort of record-seller's category'.[50] Yet folk clubs were a place for people to gather and make music and as such, this allowed previously un-heard singers, such as Shirley Collins, Redd Sullivan and Martin Winsor, to become involved in this new music scene. The other branch of the WMA which began to make a real ideological difference to the musical movement of the time, was the publication of *Sing* magazine. In 1951 *Sing* was initiated by The London Youth Choir and the WMA began publishing it as a bi-monthly song magazine. It had a wide-ranging influence, as it took many of its songs from books and articles previously published by the WMA, then went on to spread them the length and breadth of the country in magazine format. Bush gave a formal introduction to the first magazine, stating:

[49] Bean, *Singing From the Floor,* 248.
[50] Ibid., 3.

> It is excellent that a regular song magazine has been started. This will enable topical songs to become quickly available to the movement and will thus supplement in an invaluable way the publications of the Workers' Music Association and the Topic Records. All success to the new venture. Alan Bush.[51]

However, it seems that once Topic Records and *Sing* were set up and running, Bush had little to do with the everyday activities of these organisations. Yet his political ambitions within the WMA were ever present and as such, were keenly felt by those in the organisation in the thirties, forties, and fifties. In the 1960s, the label came under financial difficulties and there was a marked attempt by those at the head of Topic to attempt to distance themselves from Bush's communist principles. By 1963, it had separated from the WMA and had registered as its own company.

It would be absurd to suggest there was a 'communist takeover' of British folk music from the 1930s to fifties. Yet it is also a distortion not to recognise the impact the 'old left', or the individuals and groups who formed a part of the communist-dominated radical milieu of the 1930s and forties, had on the early popularisation of folksongs in Britain. The Second Folksong Revival's central institutions, the Workers' Music Association, Topic Records and *Sing* magazine, were created because of Bush's political principles. Such organisations would not have existed, or would have taken longer to emerge, if Bush had not founded the organisation in 1936. Because of this, academics have in recent years argued that 'the intervention of the Communist Party and its fraternal organizations was absolutely crucial to the Second Folksong Revival' and that 'the history of the Second Folksong Revival … was closely involved with the cultural policy of the CPGB'.[52] In this way, the Second Folksong Revival has been conceptualised as a two-part model, with the CPGB and its representatives of people, including Bush, making up the core, from which it then co-ordinated all other activities.

[51] *Sing*, PSC 1/2/3/09, 10.
[52] Harker, *One for the Money,* 151 and Harker, *Fakesong,* 250. Brocken, *The British Folk Revival*, 25-43, offers a similar analysis.

It seems then, that Bush's workers' music really did bring about a true 'revivification of art'. The principles he laid out for his workers' music in 1936 led to the second culture of music, one which established itself as being anti-establishment and anti-capitalist. This second culture managed to show the truth of the workers' situation to the masses, yet without being controlled by large scale commercial organisations. The same principles underpinned The Second Folksong Revival. The concept of a 'revival' is that there is a resurgence and revitalisation of something that had already pre-existed. The Second Folksong Revival brought back the concept of folksong, 'the music of the people' from the bourgeois constraints of the early twentieth century, and instead revived it into a musical form which was connected to and was relevant for the everyday lives of contemporary working-class people. Bush placed himself right at the centre of this revival as leader of the WMA and though on a practical level he only contributed a small amount to the revival of British folksong, from an ideological point, he influenced every organisation associated with the WMA. Thus, the idea that Bush's work had a role in the creation of the Second British Folksong Revival has weight.

Conclusion

'Music was never simply music: songs were never simply songs' - Harker[1]

Alan Bush's life was remarkable. His dedication to the left-wing cause never wavered, correctly gaining him the reputation of the most dedicated Stalinist in 20th Century British cultural history. Yet his work often suffered as a result of his political ideologies. Critics and academics compare the complexity of his highly individualistic, pre-1948 modernist compositions with his workers' music: songs which, in the worst sense, encouraged uneducated masses to spout political dogma. This thesis has attempted to challenge this perception of Bush's music and prompt readers to reconsider the position of his work in the history of twentieth-century British music.

> The world situation, the terrible Spanish crisis, the war preparations of the National Government and the constantly increasing dangers of fascism here in England are matters which absorb my attention increasingly.[2]

This was Bush's bleak impression of the world in the 1930s. It was a time of increasing hardship for the poorest of society as they faced mass unemployment, substandard healthcare, low wages, and the ever-widening gulf between the rich and poor. There was a need for these issues to be addressed and Bush, as a fervent communist, set about finding a new style of music which he believed could address such issues. He shunned the idea of using folk music as a politicising force in the 1930s because the folksongs available at the time were inappropriately those of the First Folksong Revival. These could not suitably engender radical, anti-establishment sentiments, not only because of their historic links to bourgeois collectors, but because they illustrated the contentment of the working classes, they defused social resistance. Thus, Bush derived inspiration from the left-wing scene in Germany and developed his own style of music to engender revolution: this was workers' music. Once

[1] Harker, *Fakesong,* Editorial Preface.
[2] Bush, Letter to Marguerite [anon.], H.A., 10 March 1937.

established in 1936 the style was successful, in that it promoted the rights of the working classes and was accessible to all. Bush's aims and ambitions for such a music, however, were part of a much broader effort to reinvent musical culture and the music making individuals within it. He created pageants, festivals, concerts, marches and even founded a new organisation, in order to create a new left-wing culture. Although these ventures were not always a success financially, ideologically or musically, in general the size of such events engendered support for the movement. Thus, the principles that Bush laid out for his workers music directly led to the creation of a new, pre-war, left-wing musical movement in London. As Ian Watson postulated, this marked the beginning of a second culture. This was a culture which defined itself as in opposition to the bourgeois and capitalist culture of the elite, the dominant culture.

The strongly defiant second culture, which Bush had nurtured over the course of the 1930s, waned over the war years due to a lack of time and decreased support. Bush continued composing and arranging workers' music in war time, yet the political message of this music alternated in accordance with the British Communist party's stance on the war. Bush's compositional style also began to change. Prior to the war, his work had always demonstrated a clear aesthetic divide between serial modernism in his serious compositions and a more accessible idiom for the workers' music. Yet after 1941, as Bush took on BBC patronage, he politicised and simplified his serious works in order to suit the Government's left-wing agenda. Later, Bush developed this style in the belief that it was the true, democratic way forward and used it to create a type of socialist English realism. Although these new works were underpinned by communist ideology, unlike his workers' music, on a practical level they contributed little to the left-wing cause and belonged in the confines of bourgeois musical establishment. As such, they did not reflect the values of a second culture.

> 'Only when the workers realise and protest against their exploited condition *can they evolve their own culture*'.[3]

The Workers' Music Association, which Bush founded in 1936 in order to promote the principles of his workers' music, came into its own after the war. It grew from the organisation of the thirties, which supported left-wing choirs stage performances of workers' music, into an organisation which supported the development of a new form of left-wing music: folksong. This new direction was steered by the collaborative efforts of A.L. Lloyd and Bush and resulted in the publication of many seminal works. Since the publication of *Folk Song In England,* many critics have judged Lloyd's puritanical mediation of folksong. Harker, for instance, condemns Lloyd's dismissive attitude to Bob Dylan and Donovan, comparing him unfavourably with the likes of early 'Sharpist' revivalists.[4] Yet this negative appraisal negates the fact that Lloyd's publications enthused a whole new generation of folk singers and song writers who, without the access to such works, would have remained unheard. Singers such as Shirley Collins, Martin Carthy, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger are all linked in some way to the activities of the WMA, be it through performance, recording, or publishing. Thus, this was the evolution of workers' music Bush had dreamed of in the thirties: the people had evolved their own culture.

It would be incorrect to suggest that Bush's impact on the creation of the Second British Folksong revival was welcomed. The brutal effects of communism in the 1960s meant many were, understandably, keen to distance themselves from such an ideology. Bush's position as an elitist modernist composer is also contentious: any engagement with folk music from a person of such standing instantly smacks of 'top drawer' Fabianism. Yet the principles he laid out in 1936 which led to the development of a second culture, match the musical principles of the Second British Folksong

[3] Bush, 'Notes on the problems of workers music', 2. My own emphasis.
[4] Harker, *Fakesong,* 248-251.

Revival: proletarian, anti-capitalist and anti-establishment. Had Bush not set about creating a workers' music culture in the thirties, the landscape of folk music today would look quite different.

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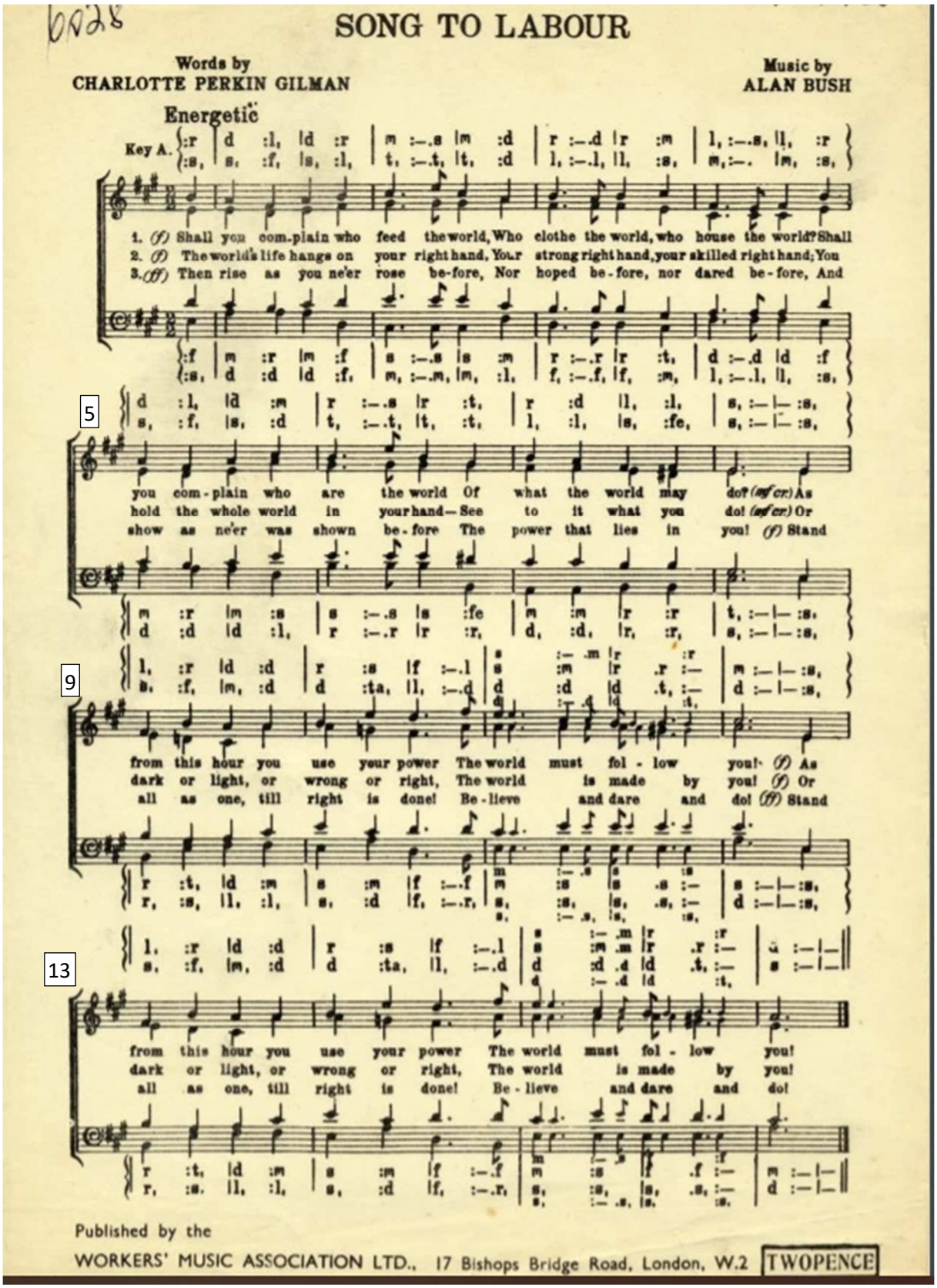
Appendices

1. Workers Songs

(i) Bush, 'Song to Labour', 1926.



SONG TO LABOUR

Words by
CHARLOTTE PERKIN GILMAN

Music by
ALAN BUSH

Energetic

Key A.

1. (f) Shall you com-plain who feed the world, Who clothe the world, who house the world? Shall
2. (f) The world's life hangs on your right hand, Your strong right hand, your skilled right hand; You
3. (ff) Then rise as you ne'er rose be-fore, Nor hoped be-fore, nor dared be-fore, And

5

you com-plain who are the world Of what the world may do? (ref cr) As
hold the whole world in your hand— See to it what you do! (ref cr) Or
show as ne'er was shown be-fore The power that lies in you! (f) Stand

9

from this hour you use your power The world must fol - low you! (f) As
dark or light, or wrong or right, The world is made by you! (f) Or
all as one, till right is done! Be-lieve and dare and do! (ff) Stand

13

from this hour you use your power The world must fol - low you!
dark or light, or wrong or right, The world is made by you!
all as one, till right is done! Be-lieve and dare and do!

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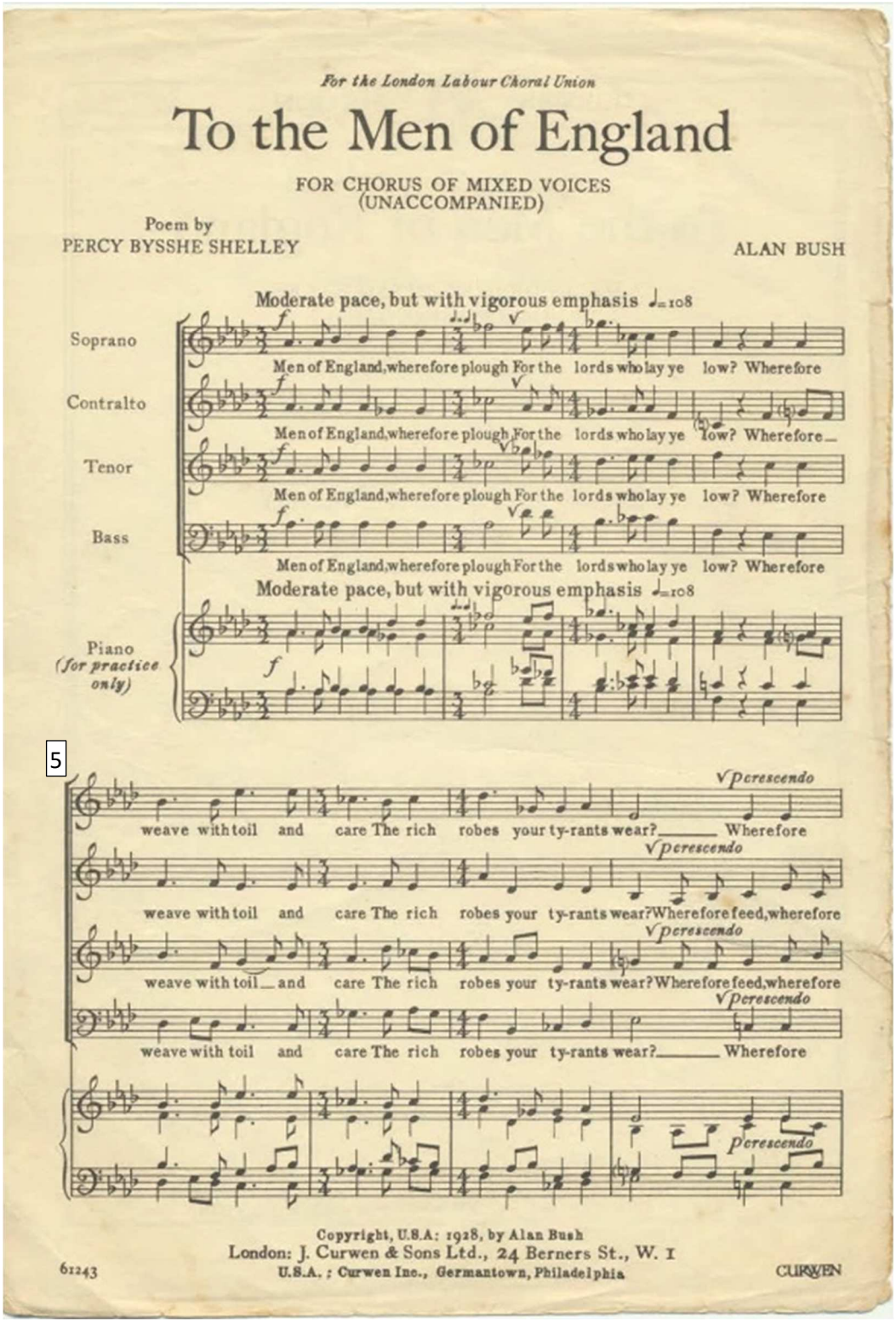
(ii) Bush, 'To the Men of England', 1928.



For the London Labour Choral Union

To the Men of England

FOR CHORUS OF MIXED VOICES
(UNACCOMPANIED)

Poem by
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ALAN BUSH

Moderate pace, but with vigorous emphasis ♩=108

Soprano: Men of England, wherefore plough For the lords who lay ye low? Wherefore

Contralto: Men of England, wherefore plough For the lords who lay ye low? Wherefore

Tenor: Men of England, wherefore plough For the lords who lay ye low? Wherefore

Bass: Men of England, wherefore plough For the lords who lay ye low? Wherefore

Moderate pace, but with vigorous emphasis ♩=108

Piano (for practice only)

5

Soprano: weave with toil and care The rich robes your ty-rants wear? Wherefore

Contralto: weave with toil and care The rich robes your ty-rants wear? Wherefore feed, wherefore

Tenor: weave with toil and care The rich robes your ty-rants wear? Wherefore feed, wherefore

Bass: weave with toil and care The rich robes your ty-rants wear? Wherefore

Piano: *perescendo*

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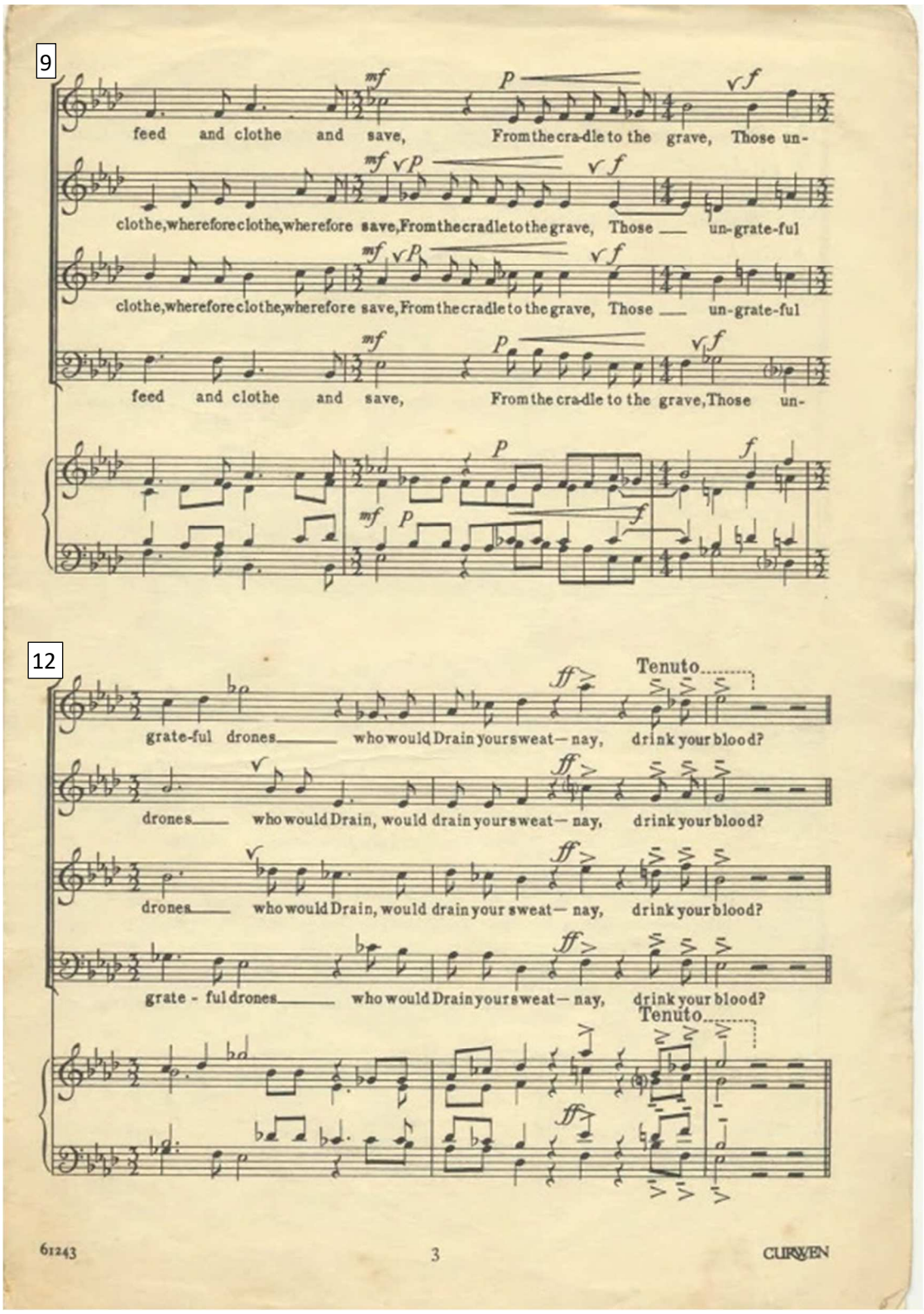
9
feed and clothe and save, From the cra-dle to the grave, Those un-
clothe, wherefore clothe, wherefore save, From the cradle to the grave, Those — un-grate-ful
clothe, wherefore clothe, wherefore save, From the cradle to the grave, Those — un-grate-ful
feed and clothe and save, From the cra-dle to the grave, Those un-
12
Tenuto
grate-ful drones — who would Drain your sweat — nay, drink your blood?
drones — who would Drain, would drain your sweat — nay, drink your blood?
drones — who would Drain, would drain your sweat — nay, drink your blood?
grate - ful drones — who would Drain your sweat — nay, drink your blood?
Tenuto
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3
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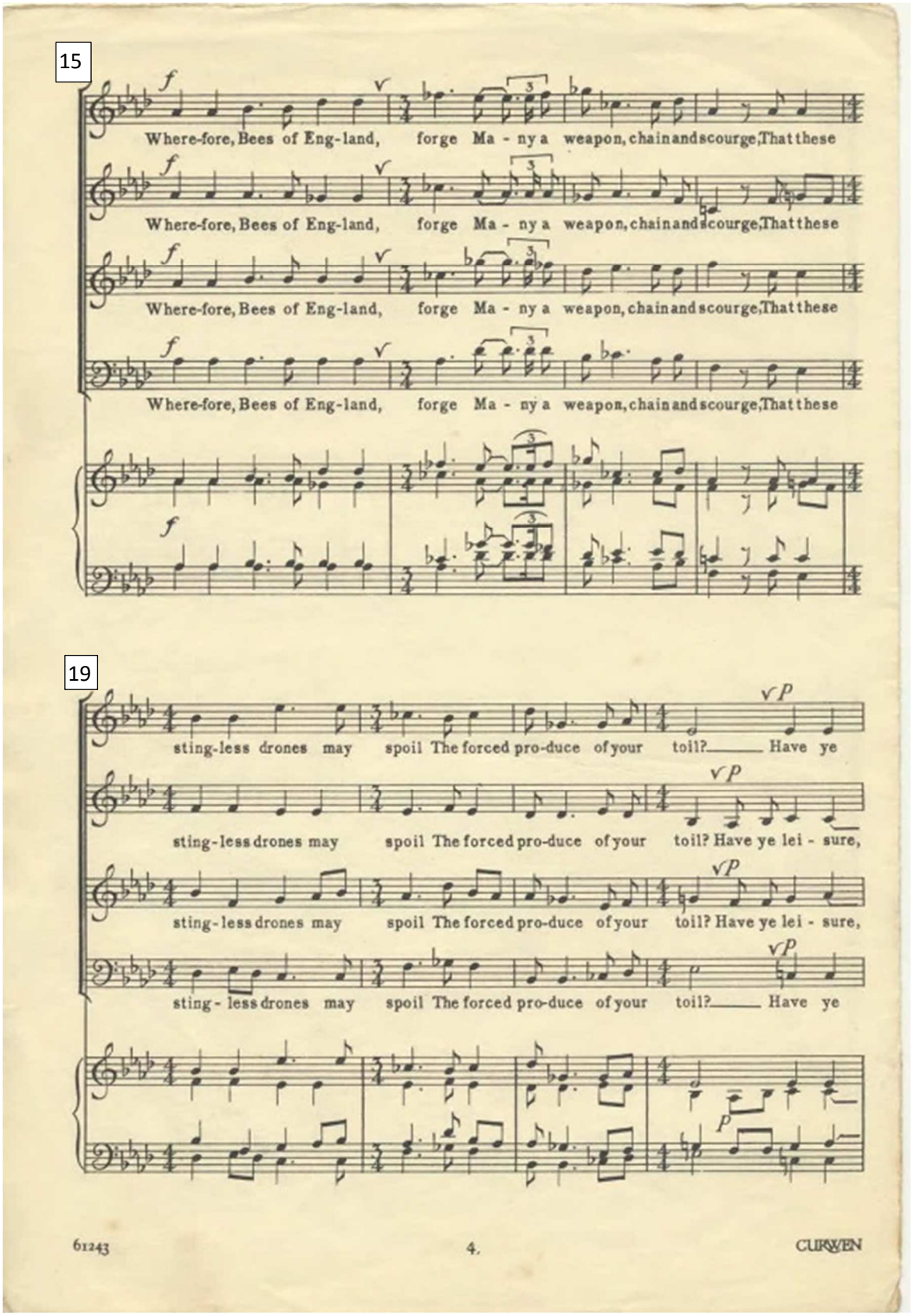
15
Where-fore, Bees of Eng-land, forge Ma - ny a weapon, chain and scourge, That these
Where-fore, Bees of Eng-land, forge Ma - ny a weapon, chain and scourge, That these
Where-fore, Bees of Eng-land, forge Ma - ny a weapon, chain and scourge, That these
Where-fore, Bees of Eng-land, forge Ma - ny a weapon, chain and scourge, That these
19
sting-less drones may spoil The forced pro-duce of your toil? Have ye
sting-less drones may spoil The forced pro-duce of your toil? Have ye lei - sure,
sting-less drones may spoil The forced pro-duce of your toil? Have ye lei - sure,
sting-less drones may spoil The forced pro-duce of your toil? Have ye
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4.
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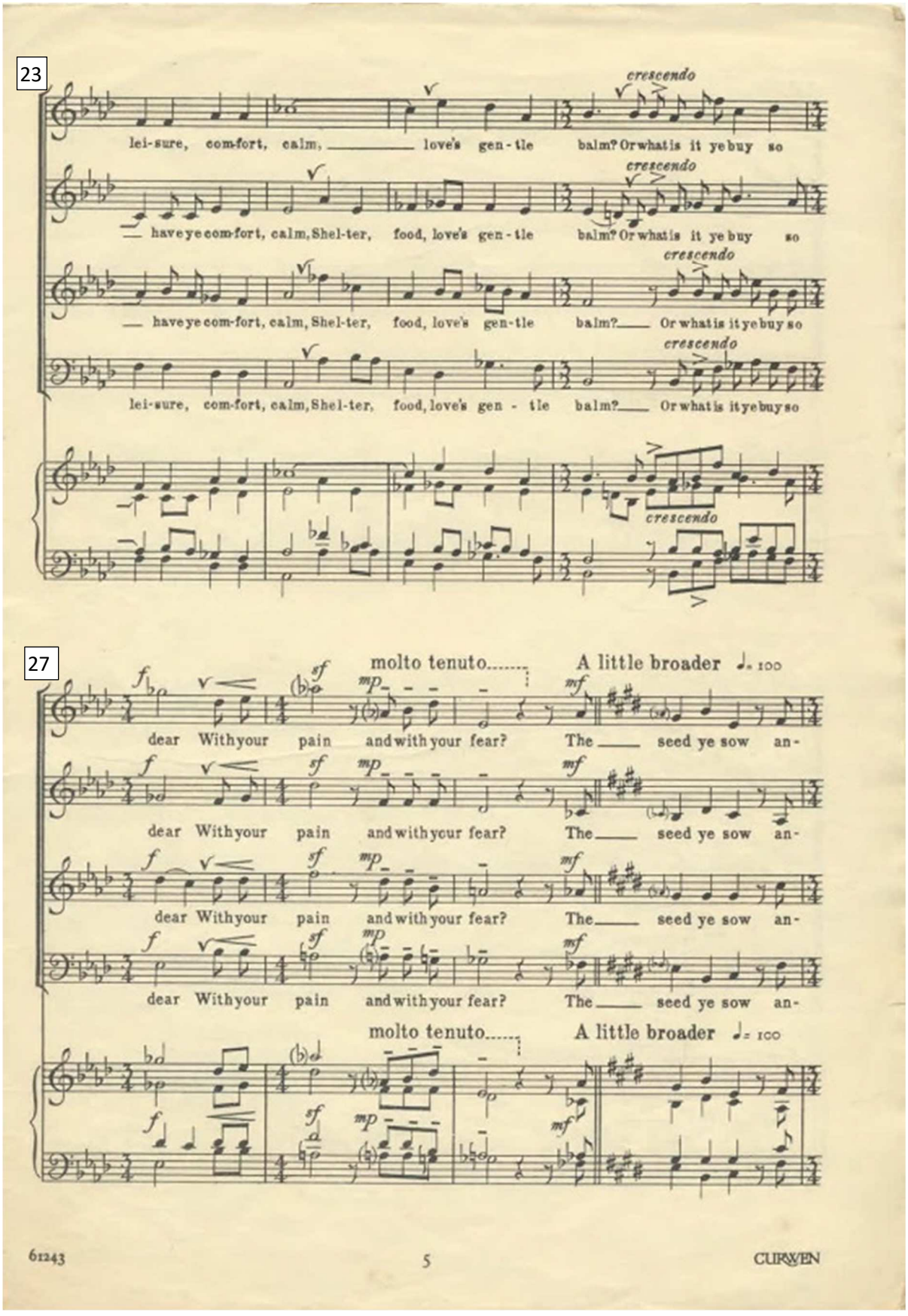
23
crescendo
lei-sure, com-fort, calm, love's gen-tle balm? Or what is it ye buy so
have ye com-fort, calm, Shel-ter, food, love's gen-tle balm? Or what is it ye buy so
lei-sure, com-fort, calm, Shel-ter, food, love's gen-tle balm? Or what is it ye buy so
27
molto tenuto
A little broader ♩= 100
dear With your pain and with your fear? The seed ye sow an-
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5
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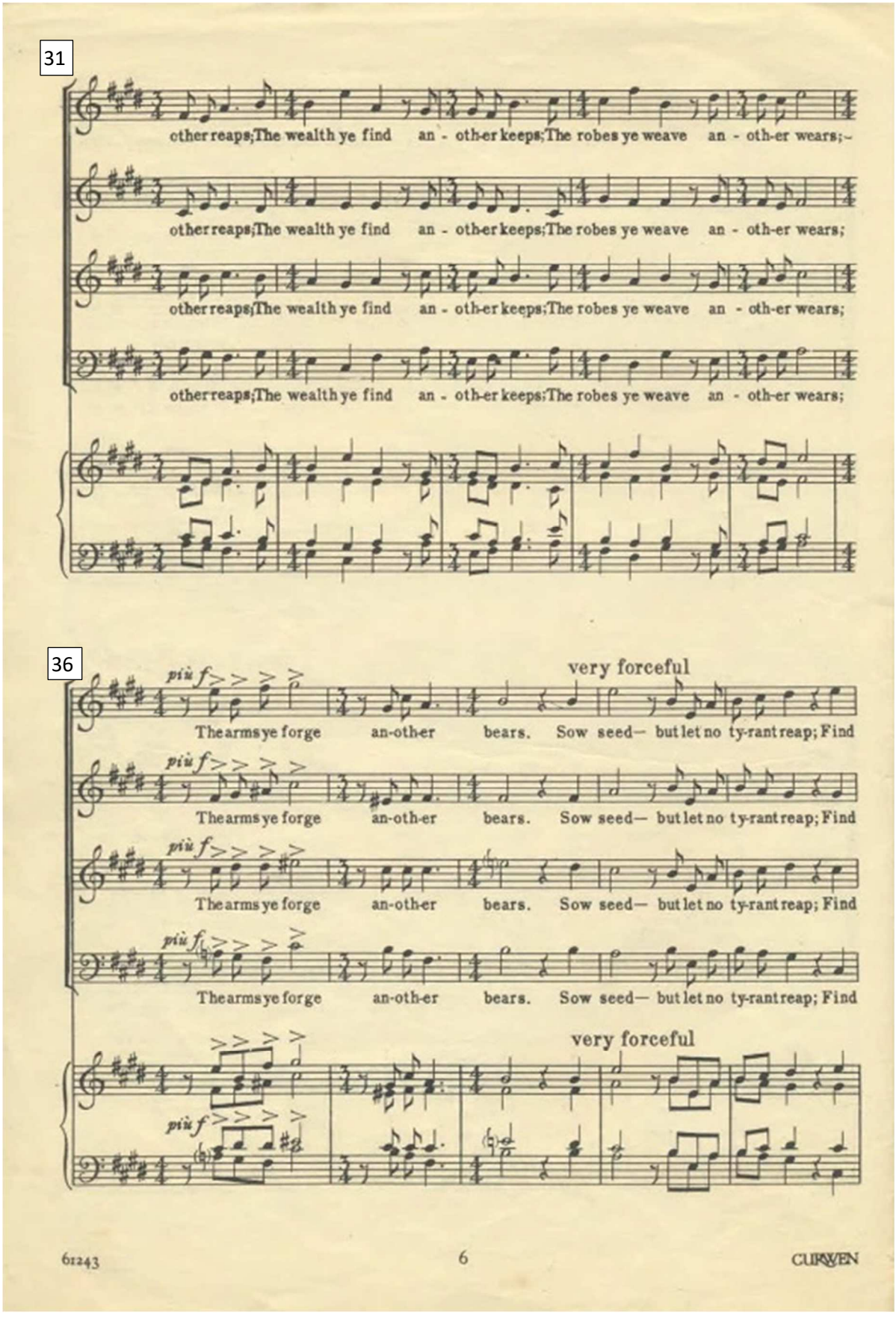
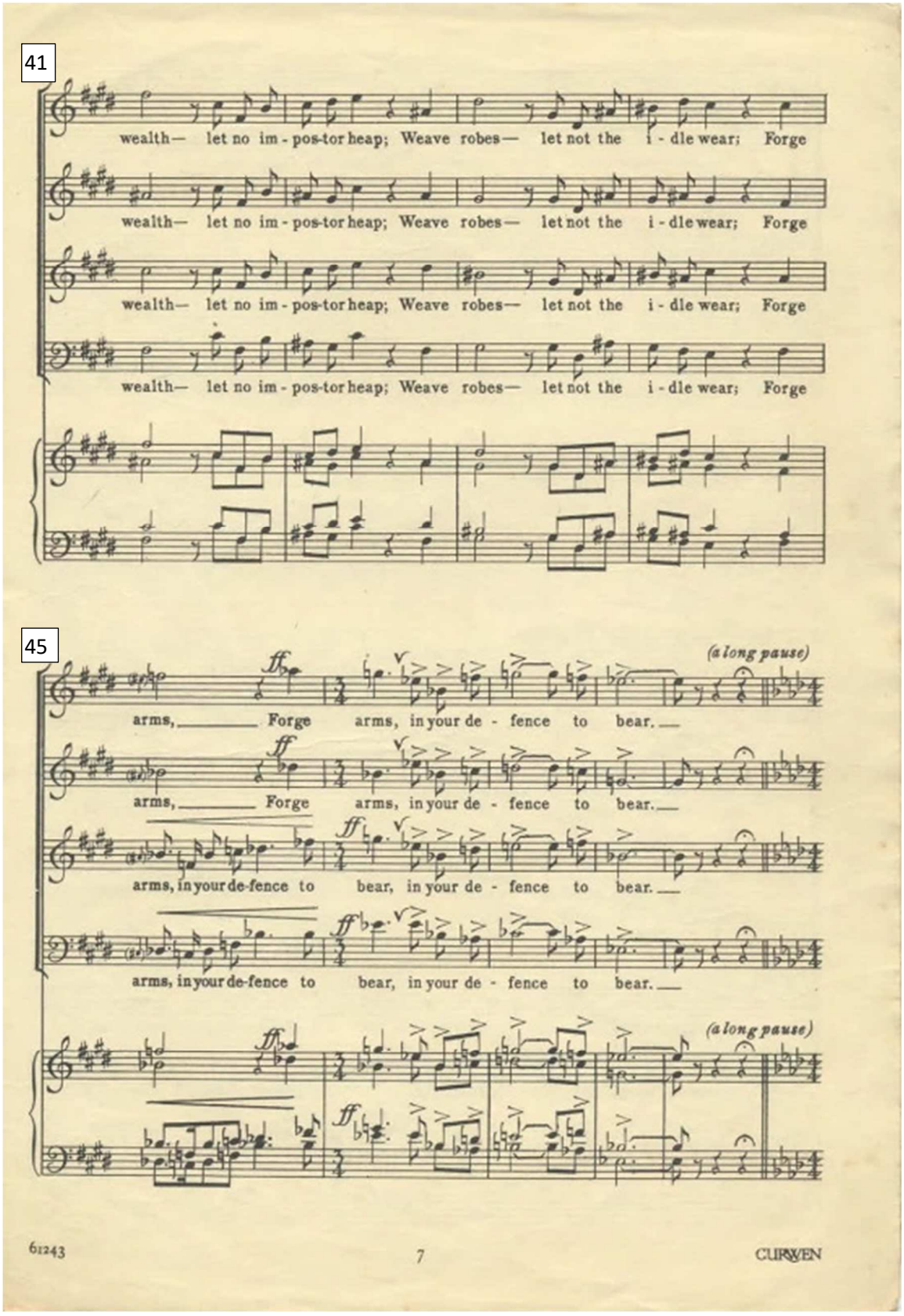
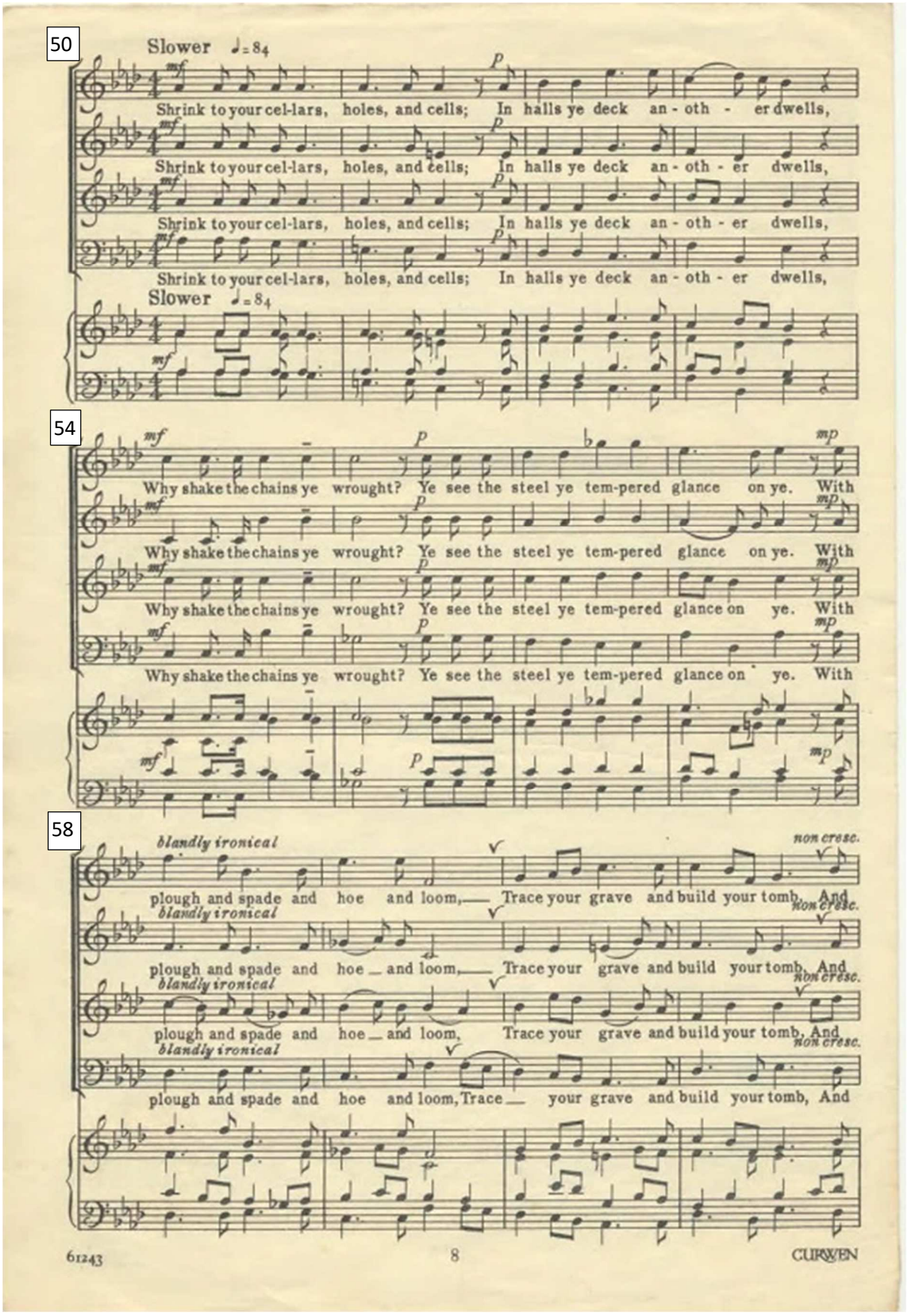

31
other reaps; The wealth ye find an - oth-er keeps; The robes ye weave an - oth-er wears;
other reaps; The wealth ye find an - oth-er keeps; The robes ye weave an - oth-er wears;
other reaps; The wealth ye find an - oth-er keeps; The robes ye weave an - oth-er wears;
other reaps; The wealth ye find an - oth-er keeps; The robes ye weave an - oth-er wears;
36
più f
very forceful
The arms ye forge an-oth-er bears. Sow seed— but let no ty-rant reap; Find
The arms ye forge an-oth-er bears. Sow seed— but let no ty-rant reap; Find
The arms ye forge an-oth-er bears. Sow seed— but let no ty-rant reap; Find
The arms ye forge an-oth-er bears. Sow seed— but let no ty-rant reap; Find
very forceful
più f
più f


41
wealth— let no im - pos-tor heap; Weave robes— let not the i - dle wear; Forge
wealth— let no im - pos-tor heap; Weave robes— let not the i - dle wear; Forge
wealth— let no im - pos-tor heap; Weave robes— let not the i - dle wear; Forge
wealth— let no im - pos-tor heap; Weave robes— let not the i - dle wear; Forge
45
(a long pause)
arms, Forge arms, in your de - fence to bear.
arms, Forge arms, in your de - fence to bear.
arms, in your de-fence to bear, in your de - fence to bear.
arms, in your de-fence to bear, in your de - fence to bear.
(a long pause)
61243
7
CURWEN


50
Slower ♩= 84
Shrink to your cel-lars, holes, and cells; In halls ye deck an - oth - er dwells,
Shrink to your cel-lars, holes, and cells; In halls ye deck an - oth - er dwells,
Shrink to your cel-lars, holes, and cells; In halls ye deck an - oth - er dwells,
Shrink to your cel-lars, holes, and cells; In halls ye deck an - oth - er dwells,
Slower ♩= 84
54
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see the steel ye tem-pered glance on ye. With
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see the steel ye tem-pered glance on ye. With
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see the steel ye tem-pered glance on ye. With
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see the steel ye tem-pered glance on ye. With
58
blandly ironical
non cresc.
plough and spade and hoe and loom, Trace your grave and build your tomb, And
blandly ironical
non cresc.
plough and spade and hoe and loom, Trace your grave and build your tomb, And
blandly ironical
non cresc.
plough and spade and hoe and loom, Trace your grave and build your tomb, And
blandly ironical
non cresc.
plough and spade and hoe and loom, Trace your grave and build your tomb, And
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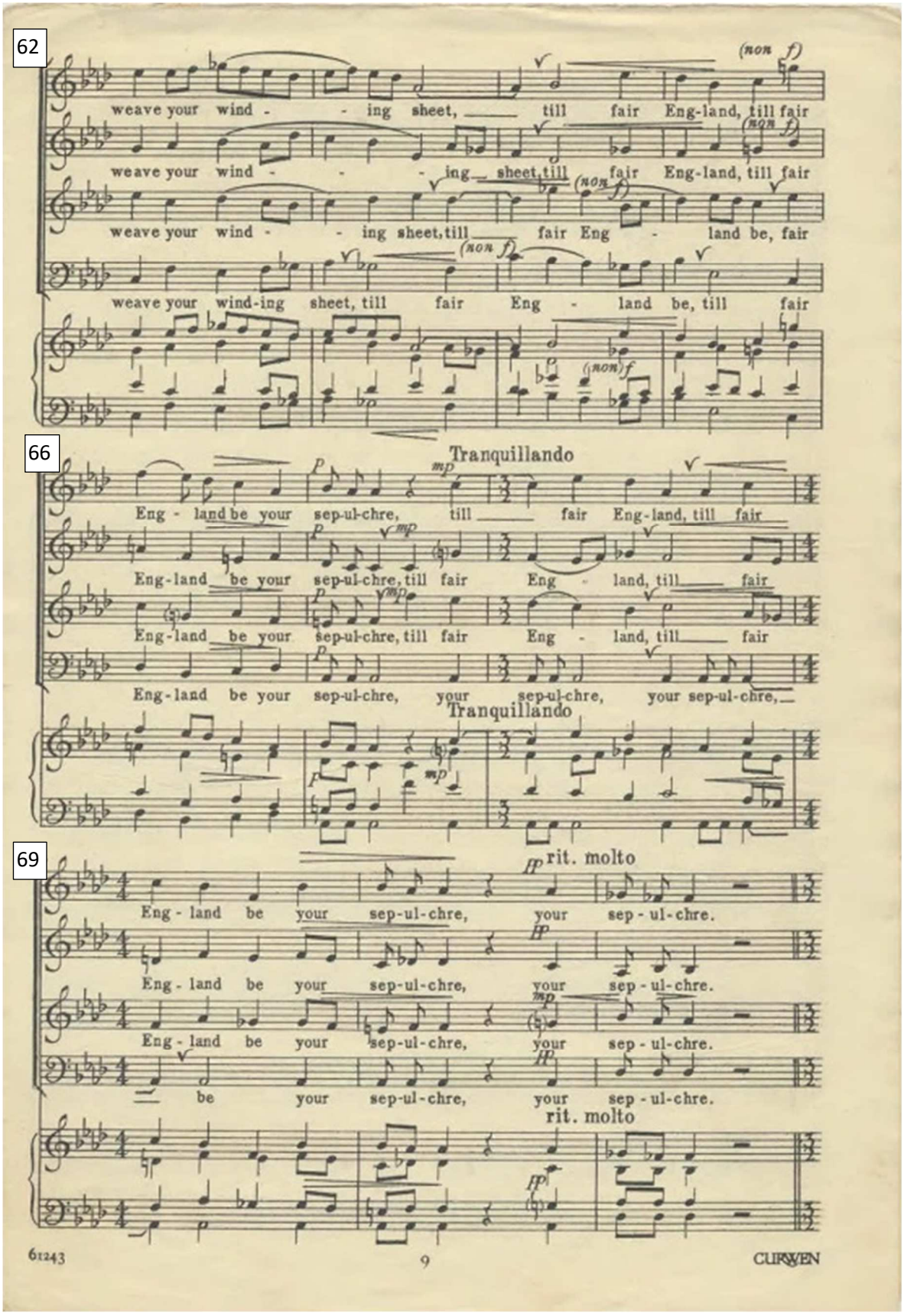
8
CURWEN


62
weave your wind - - ing sheet, till fair Eng-land, till fair
weave your wind - - ing sheet, till fair Eng-land, till fair
weave your wind - - ing sheet, till fair Eng - land be, fair
weave your wind-ing sheet, till fair Eng - land be, till fair
66
Tranquillando
Eng - land be your sep-ul-chre, till fair Eng-land, till fair
Eng-land be your sep-ul-chre, till fair Eng - land, till fair
Eng-land be your sep-ul-chre, till fair Eng - land, till fair
Eng-land be your sep-ul-chre, your sep-ul-chre, your sep-ul-chre,
Tranquillando
69
rit. molto
Eng - land be your sep-ul-chre, your sep - ul-chre.
Eng - land be your sep-ul-chre, your sep - ul-chre.
Eng - land be your sep-ul-chre, your sep - ul-chre.
be your sep-ul-chre, your sep - ul-chre.
rit. molto
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9
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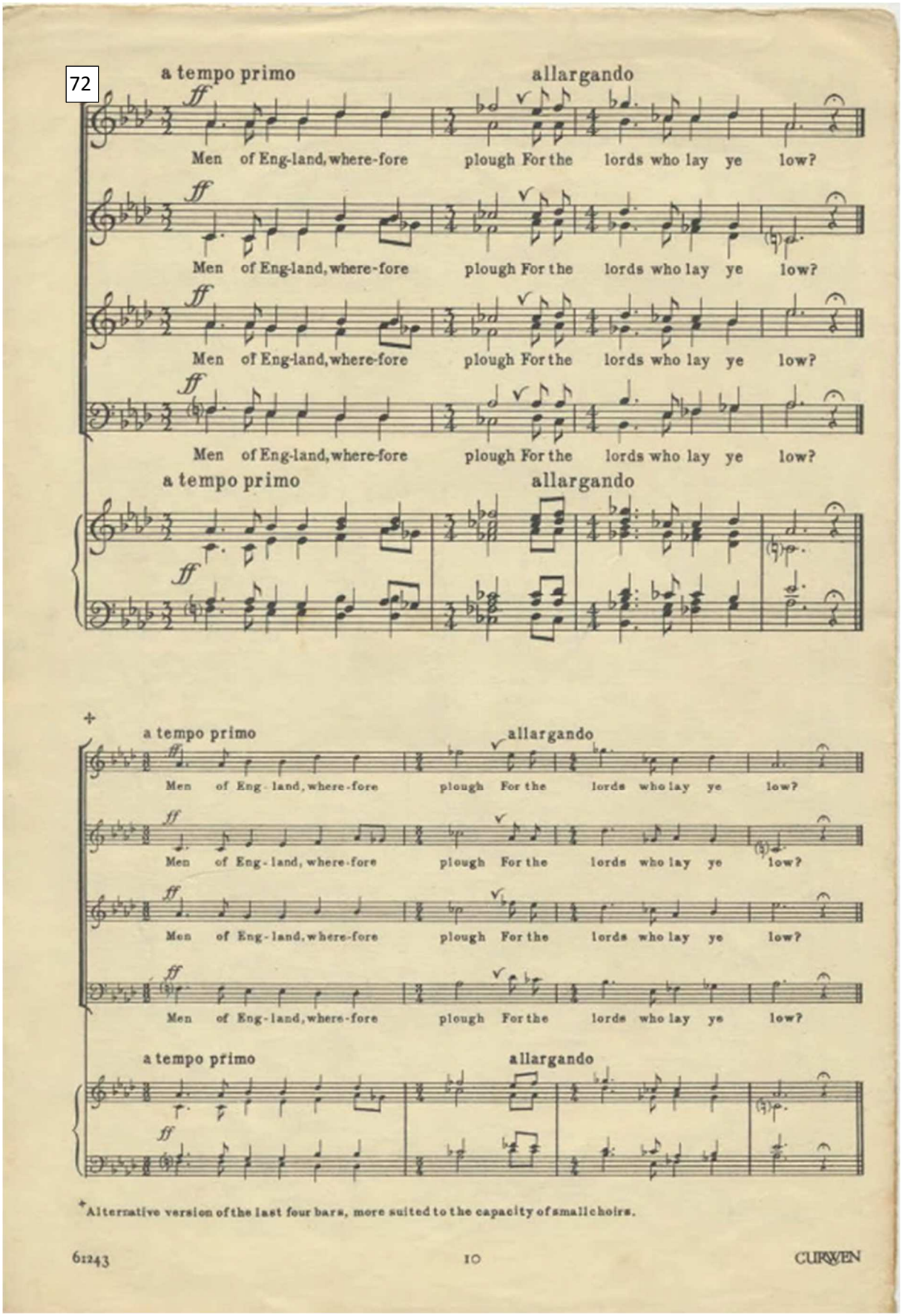


+Alternative version of the last four bars, more suited to the capacity of small choirs.

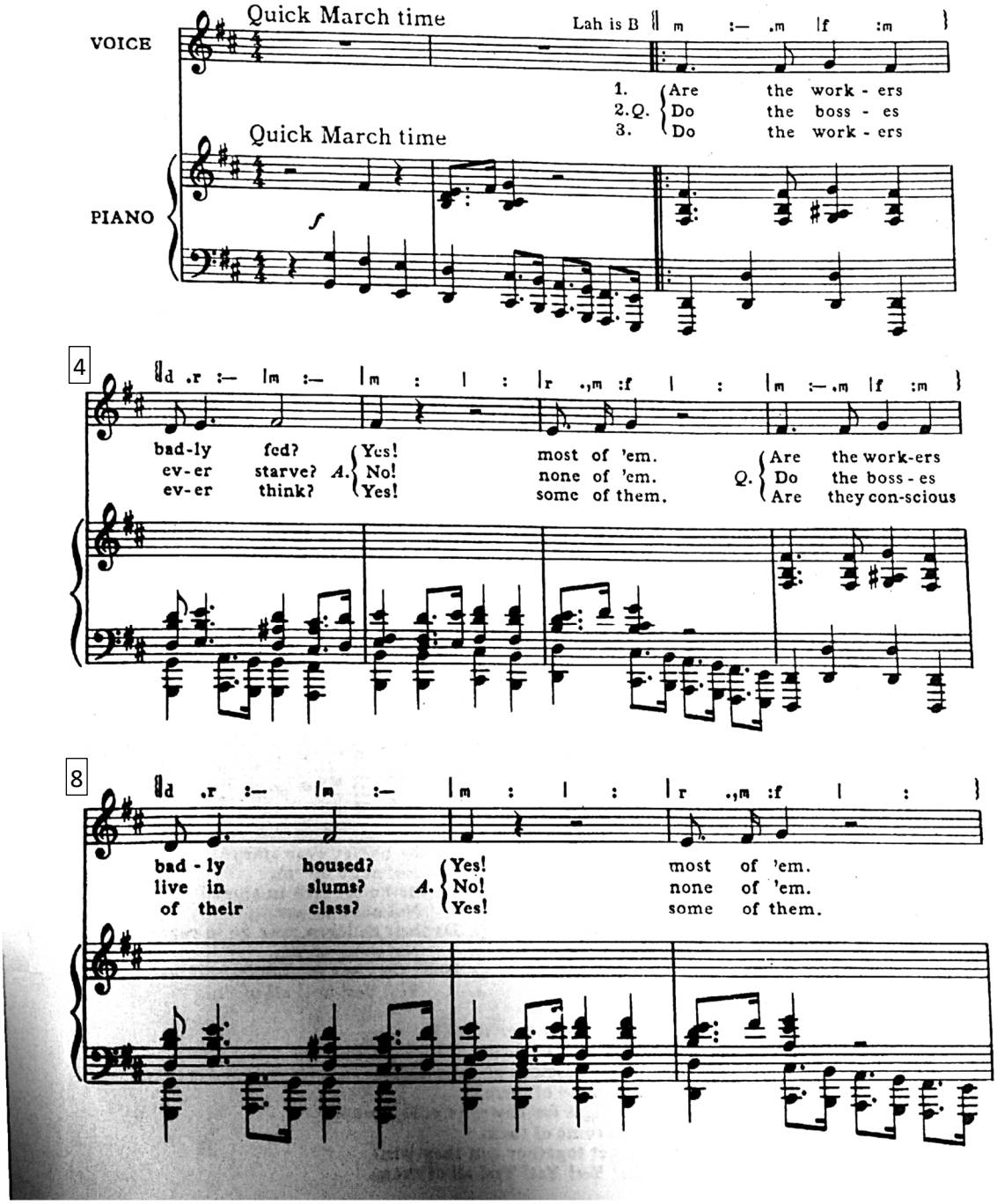
(iii) Bush, 'Question and Answer', 1931.

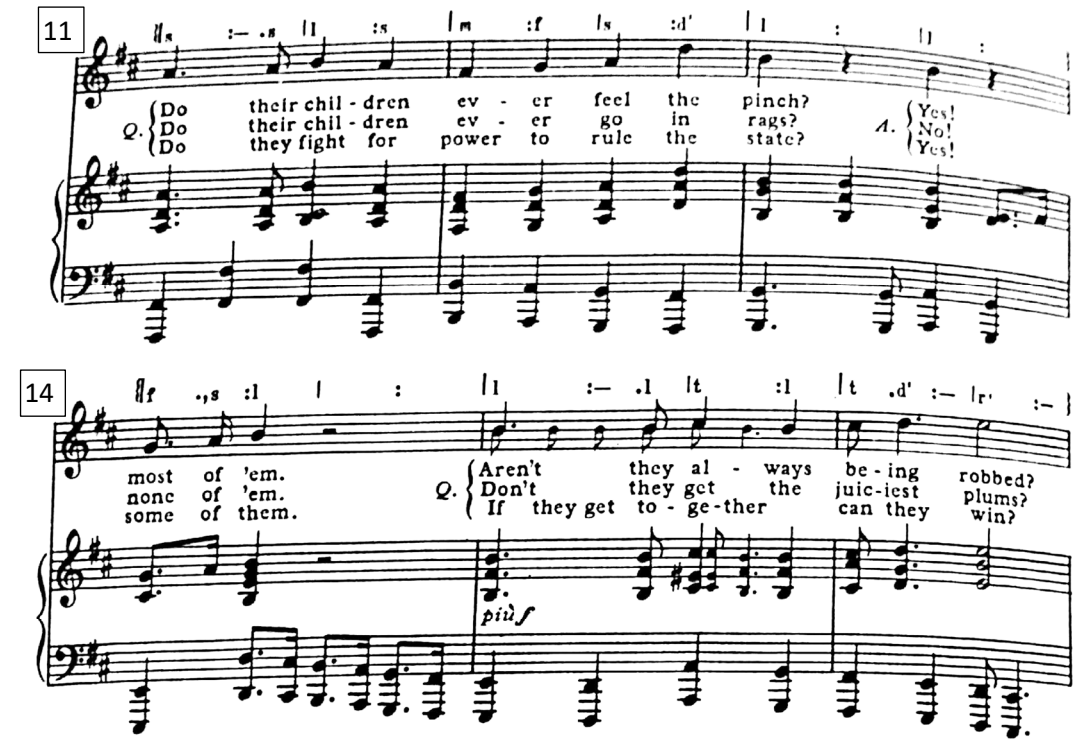
QUESTION AND ANSWER

(The Choir asks the questions, the audience answers)

Words by
G. R. ATTERBURY

Music by
ALAN BUSH





1

Q. Are the workers badly fed?
A. Yes! most of 'em.
Q. Are the workers badly housed?
A. Yes! most of 'em.
Q. Do their children ever feel the pinch?
A. Yes! most of 'em.
Q. Aren't they always being robbed?
A. Yes! Yes! Yes! all of 'em.

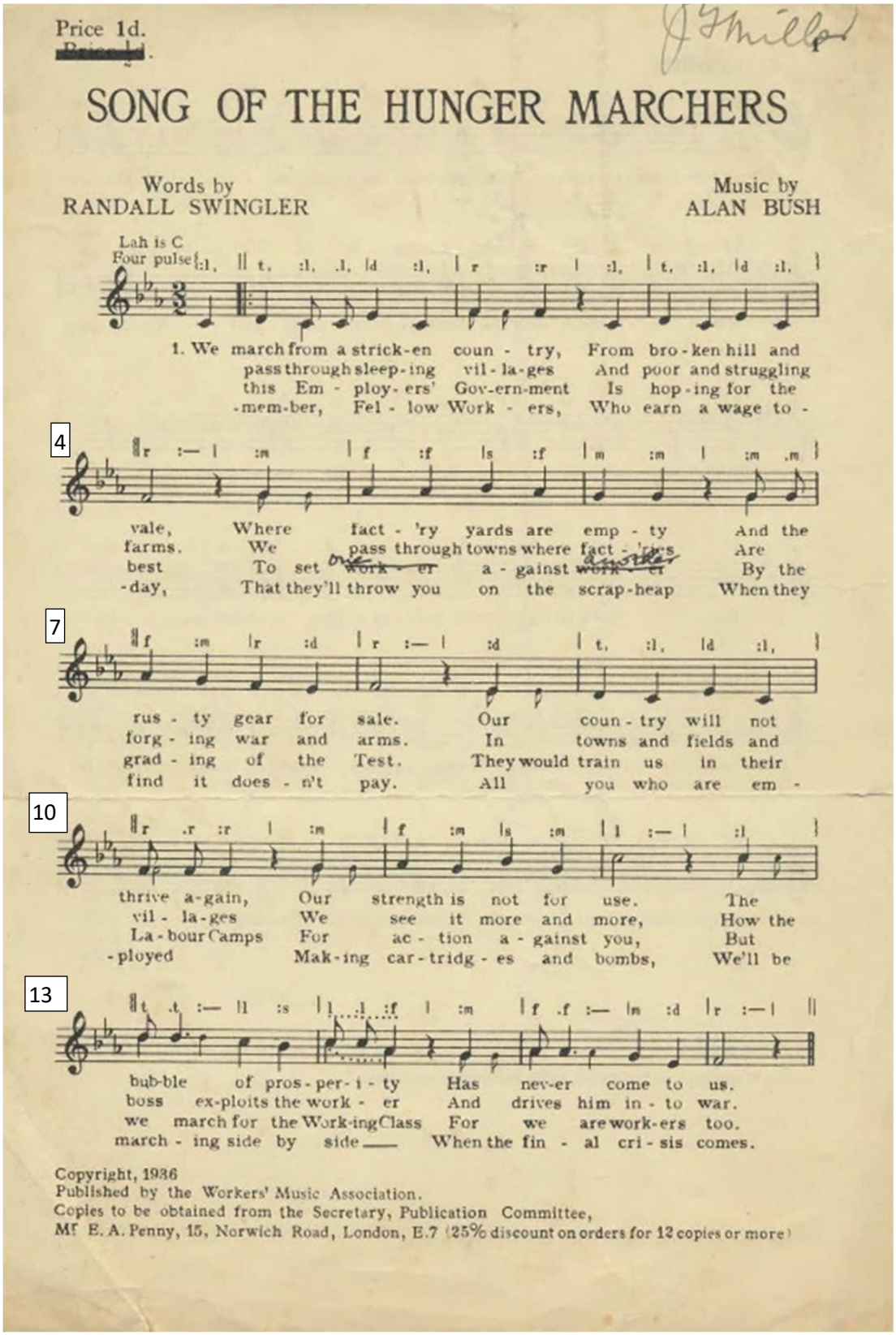
2

Q. Do the bosses ever starve?
A. No! none of 'em.
Q. Do the bosses live in slums?
A. No! none of 'em.
Q. Do their children ever go in rags?
A. No! none of 'em.
Q. Don't they get the juiciest plums?
A. Yes! Yes! Yes! all of 'em.

3

Q. Do the workers ever think?
A. Yes! some of them.
Q. Are they conscious of their class?
A. Yes! some of them.
Q. Do they fight for power to rule the state?
A. Yes! some of them.
Q. If they get together can they win?
A. Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! all of them.

(iv) Bush, 'Song of the Hunger Marchers', 1934.



Price 1d.
~~Price 1d.~~

SONG OF THE HUNGER MARCHERS

Words by
RANDALL SWINGLER

Music by
ALAN BUSH

Lah is C
Four pulse

1. We march from a strick-en coun - try, From bro-ken hill and
pass through sleep-ing vil-la-ges And poor and struggling
this Em - ploy-ers' Gov-ern-ment Is hop-ing for the
-mem-ber, Fel - low Work - ers, Who earn a wage to -

4

vale, Where fact - 'ry yards are emp - ty And the
farms. We pass through towns where fact - ~~ries~~ Are
best To set ~~one~~ ~~work - er~~ a - gainst ~~another~~ By the
-day, That they'll throw you on the scrap-heap When they

7

rus - ty gear for sale. Our coun - try will not
forg - ing war and arms. In towns and fields and
grad - ing of the Test. They would train us in their
find it does - n't pay. All you who are em -

10

thrive a-gain, Our strength is not for use. The
vil - la-ges We see it more and more, How the
La - bour Camps For ac - tion a - gainst you, But
-ployed Mak-ing car-tridg - es and bombs, We'll be

13

bub-ble of pros-per-i - ty Has nev-er come to us.
boss ex-ploits the work - er And drives him in - to war.
we march for the Work-ing Class For we are work-ers too.
march - ing side by side — When the fin - al cri - sis comes.

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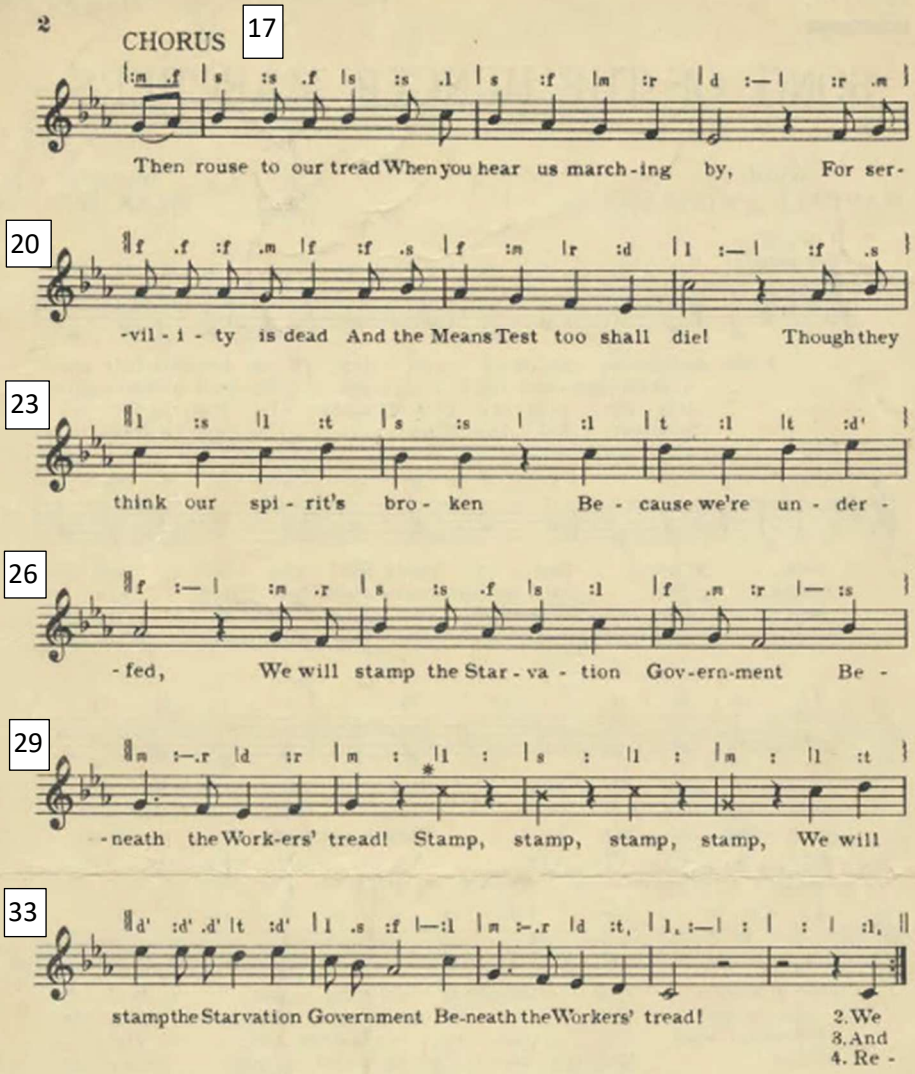
Copies to be obtained from the Secretary, Publication Committee,
Mr E. A. Penny, 15, Norwich Road, London, E.7 (25% discount on orders for 12 copies or more)

2

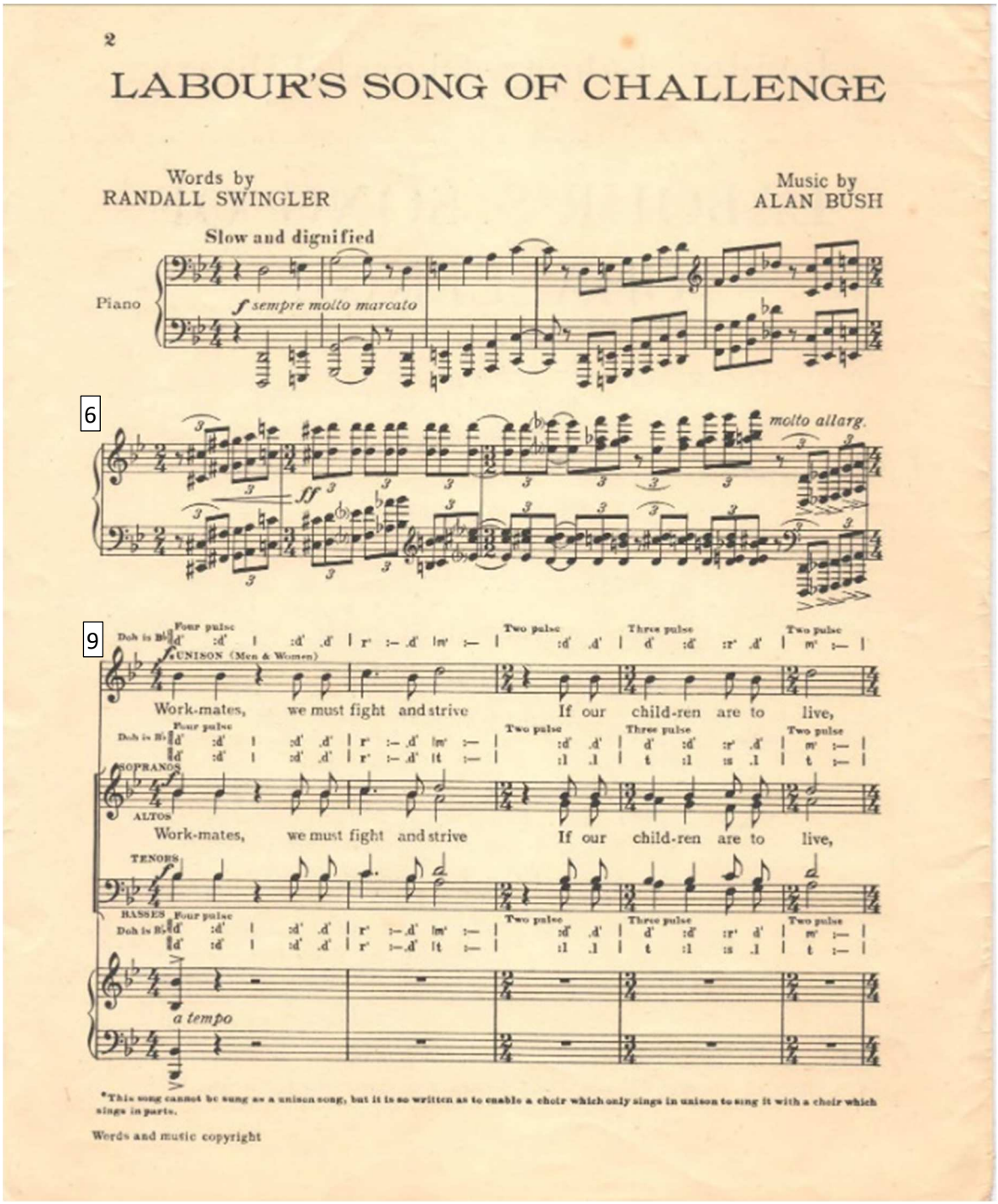
CHORUS



NOTE.- When sung on the march half a bar goes to each step.

*These four notes should be more shouted than sung.

(v) Bush, 'Labour's Song of Challenge', 1936.



2

LABOUR'S SONG OF CHALLENGE

Words by
RANDALL SWINGLER

Music by
ALAN BUSH

Slow and dignified

Piano

f sempre molto marcato

6

molto allarg.

ff

9

Four pulse — Two pulse — Three pulse — Two pulse

UNISON (Men & Women)

Work-mates, we must fight and strive If our child-ren are to live,

SOPRANOS

ALTOS

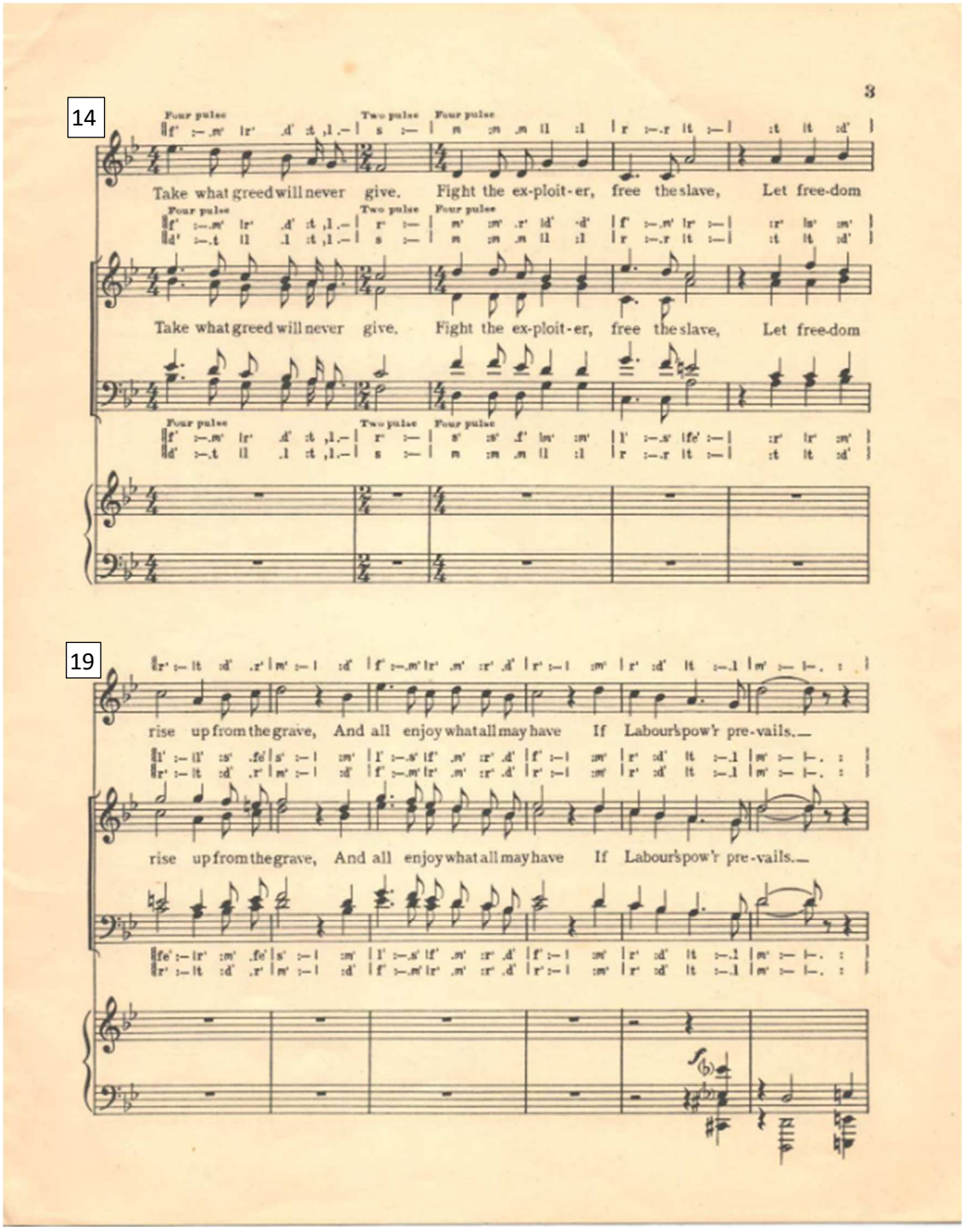
Work-mates, we must fight and strive If our child-ren are to live,

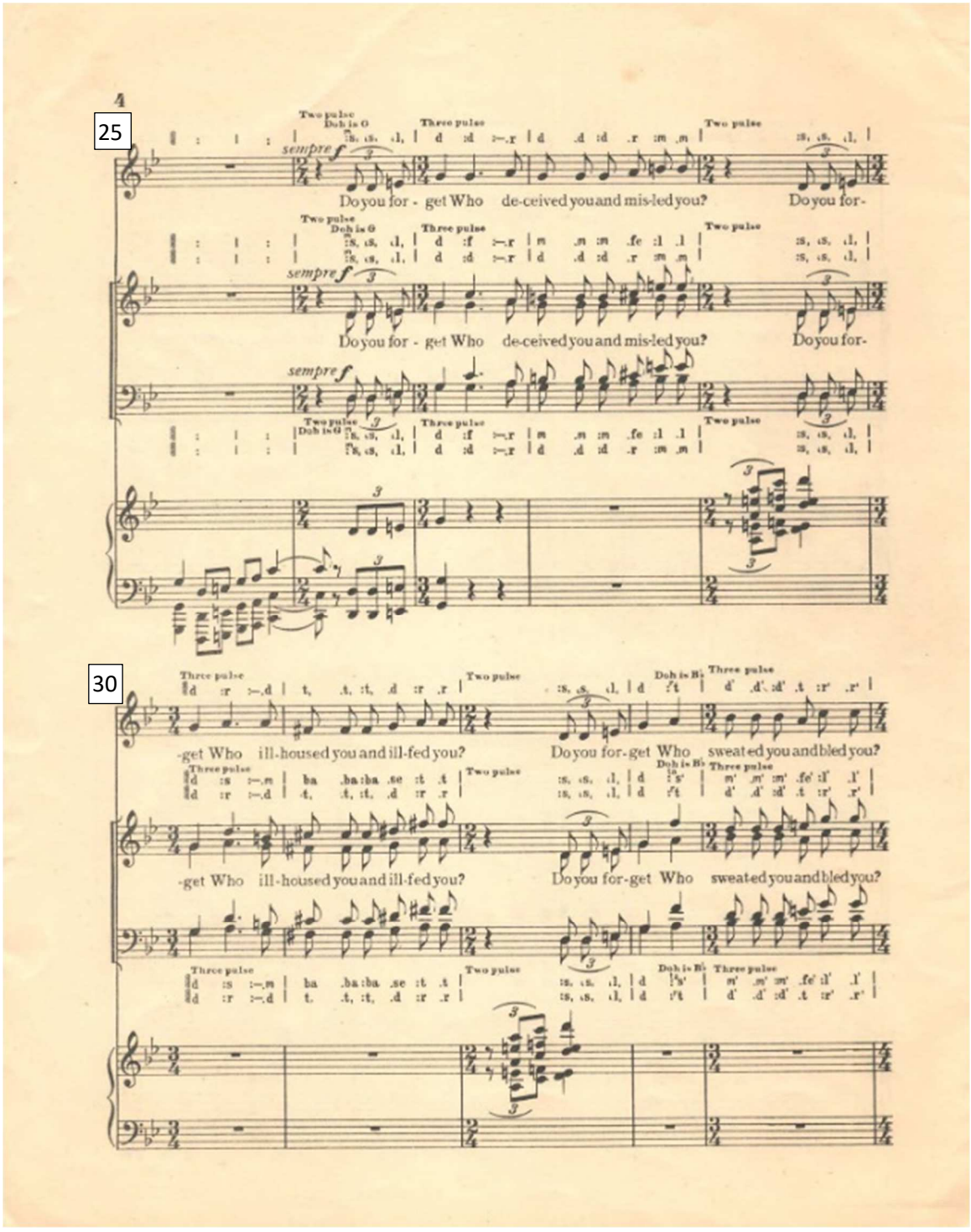
TENORS

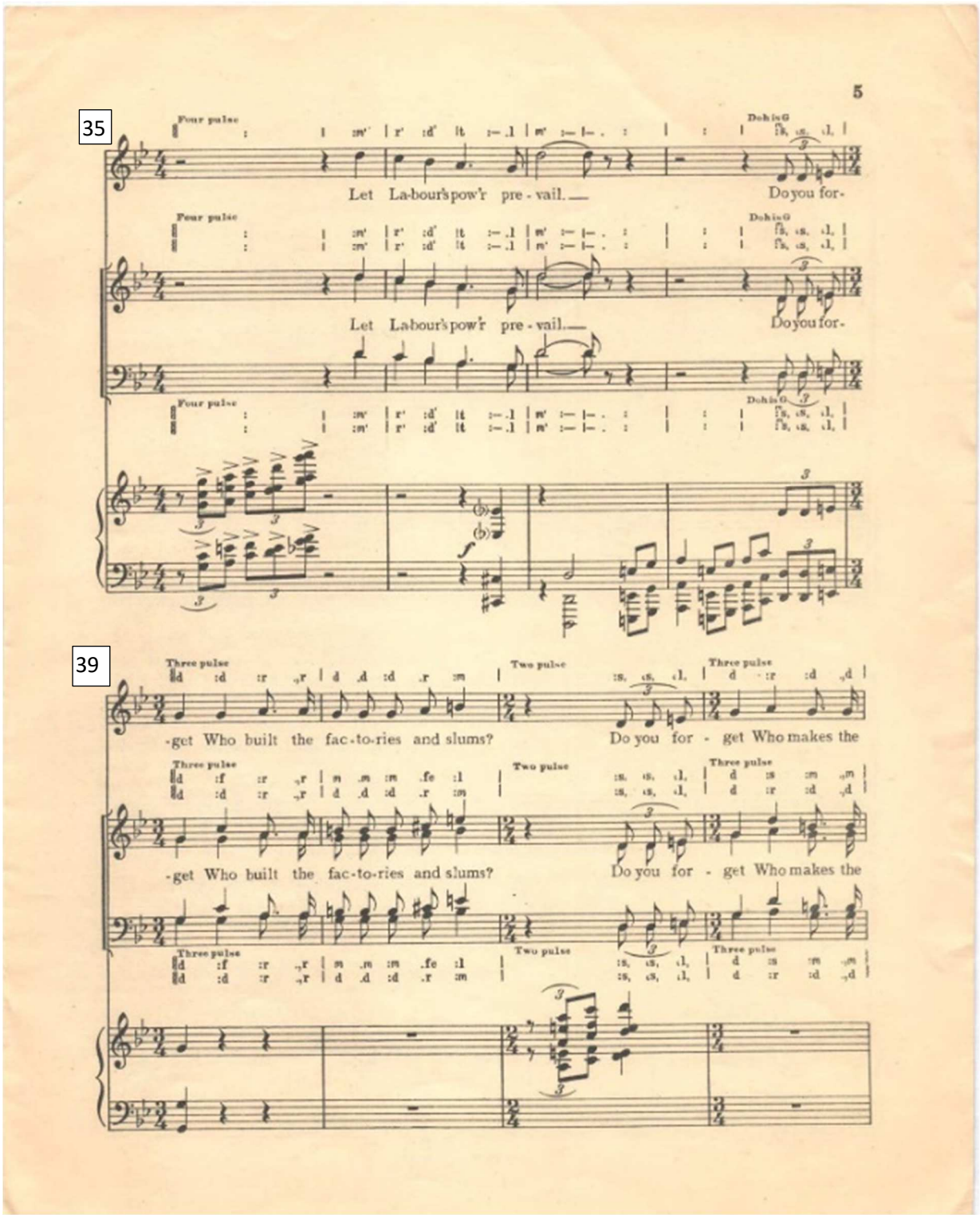
BASSES

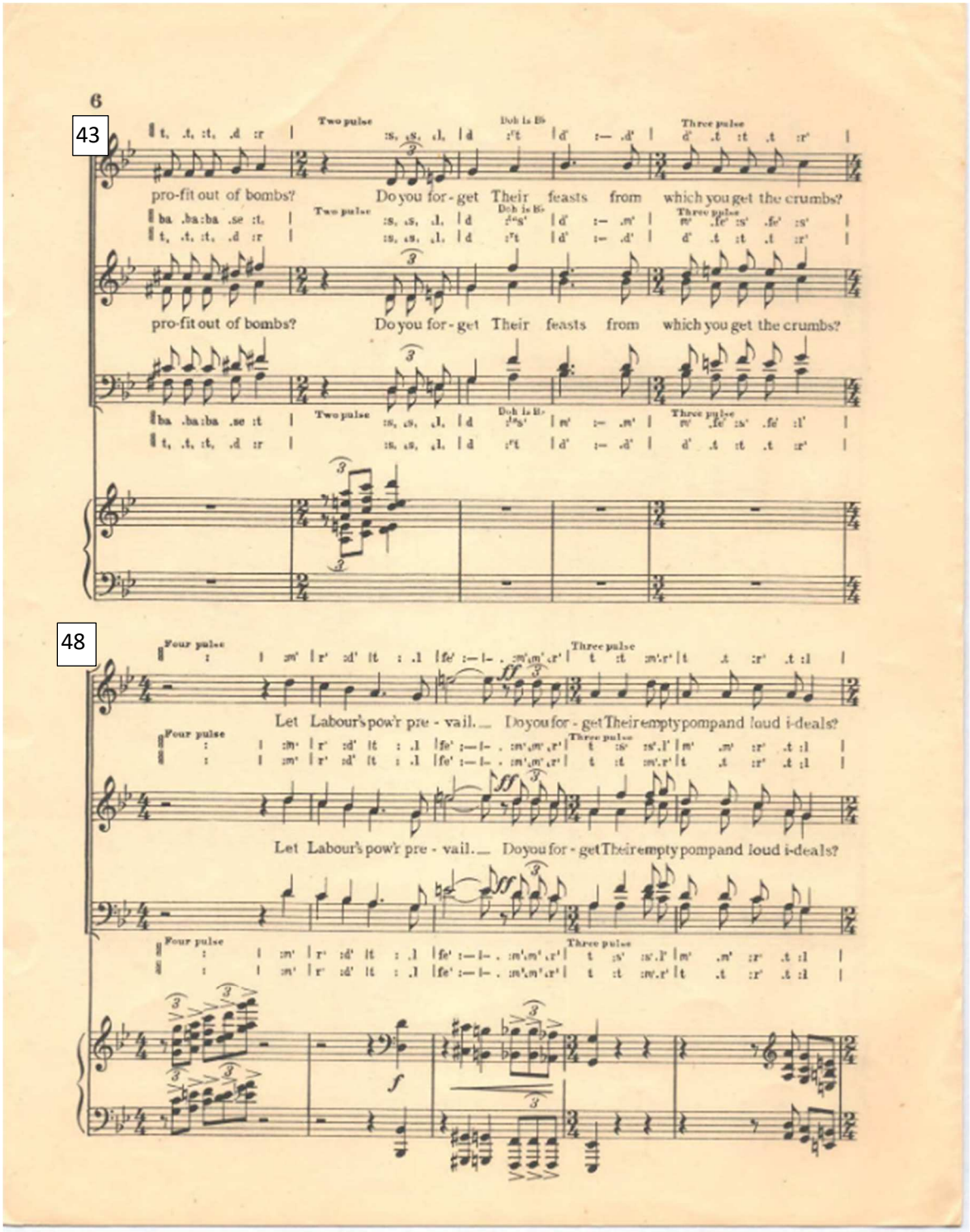
a tempo

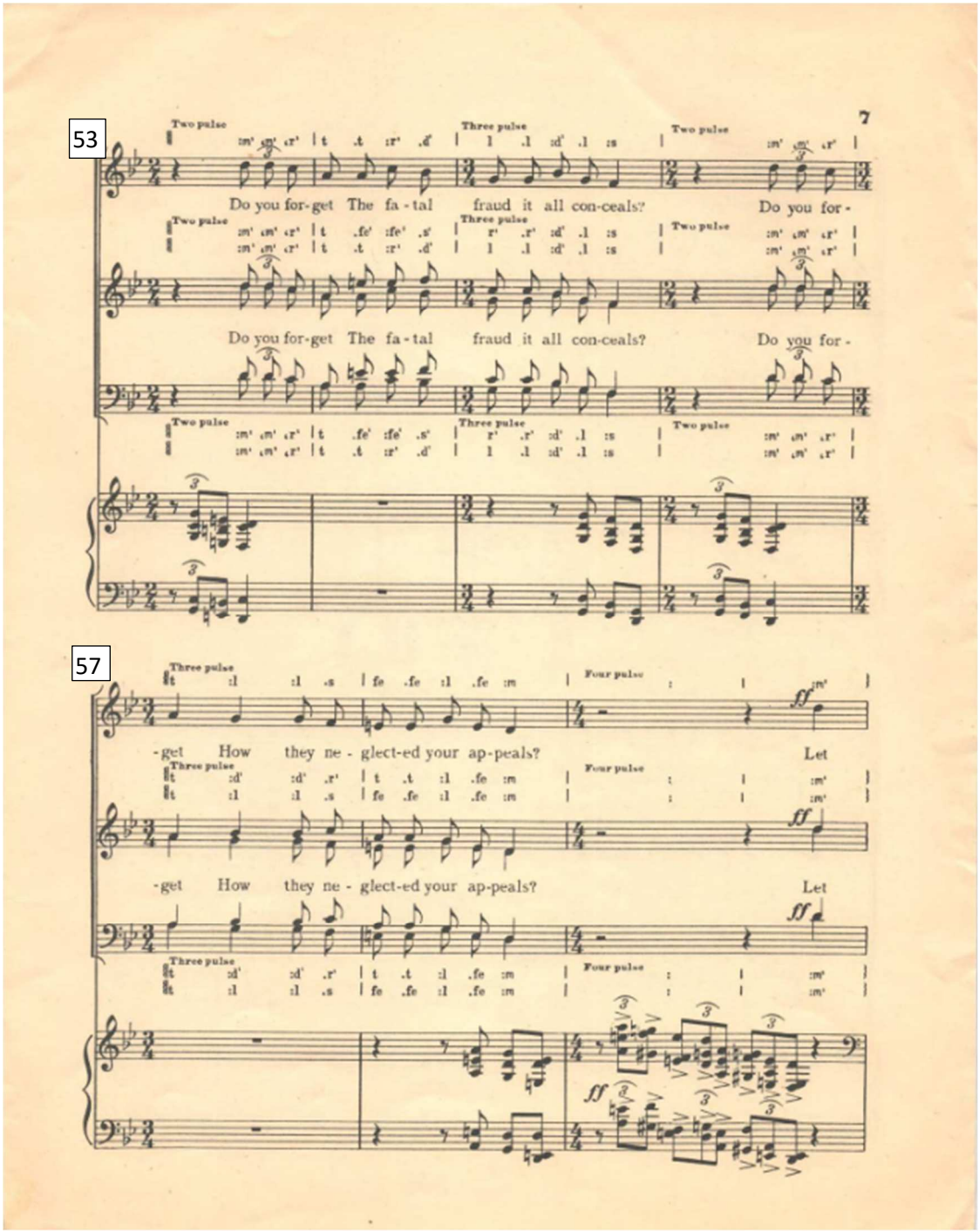
*This song cannot be sung as a unison song, but it is so written as to enable a choir which only sings in unison to sing it with a choir which sings in parts.

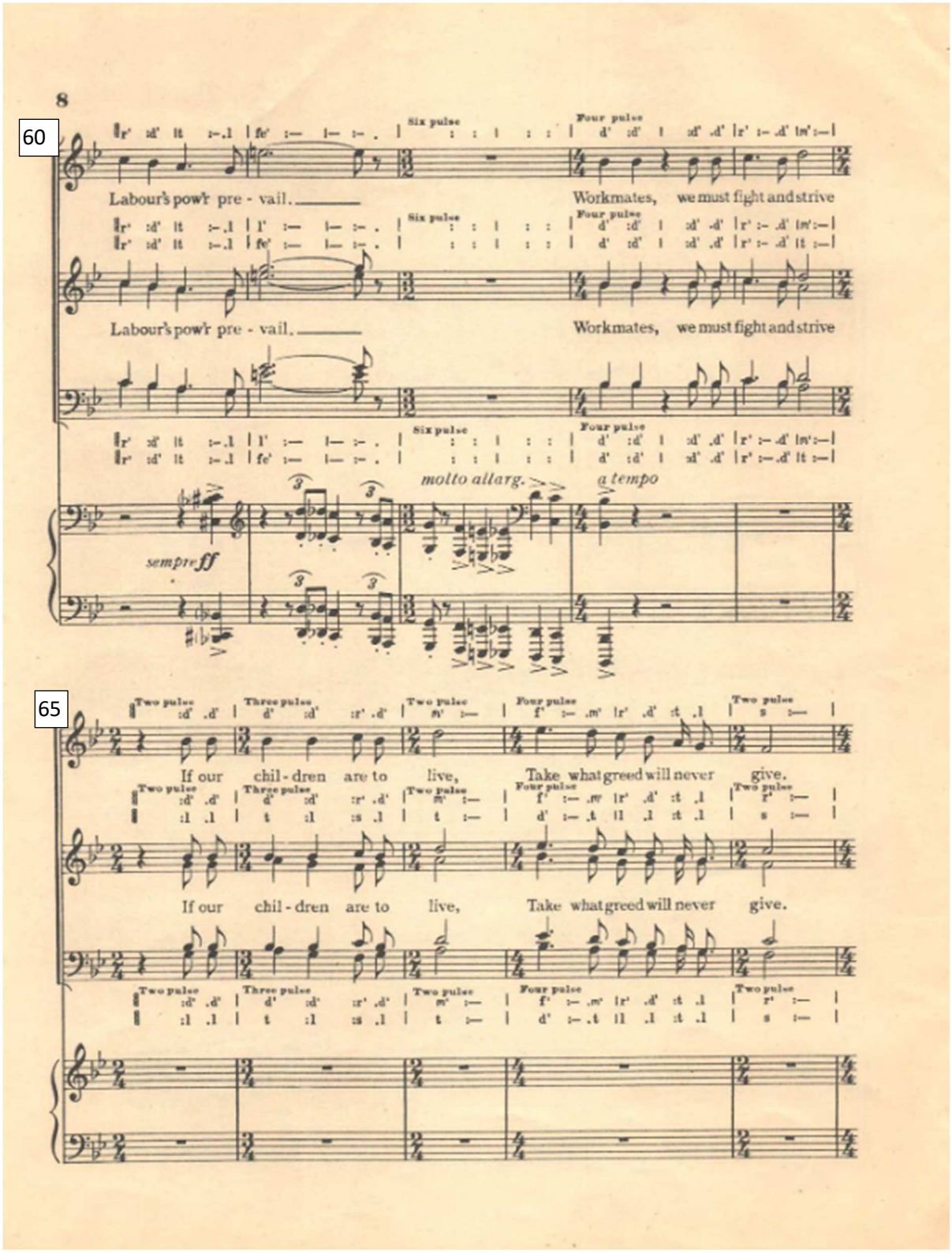

14
Four pulse
Two pulse
Four pulse
Take what greed will never give. Fight the ex-ploit-er, free the slave, Let free-dom
Take what greed will never give. Fight the ex-ploit-er, free the slave, Let free-dom
19
rise up from the grave, And all enjoy what all may have If Labour's pow'r pre-vails.
rise up from the grave, And all enjoy what all may have If Labour's pow'r pre-vails.

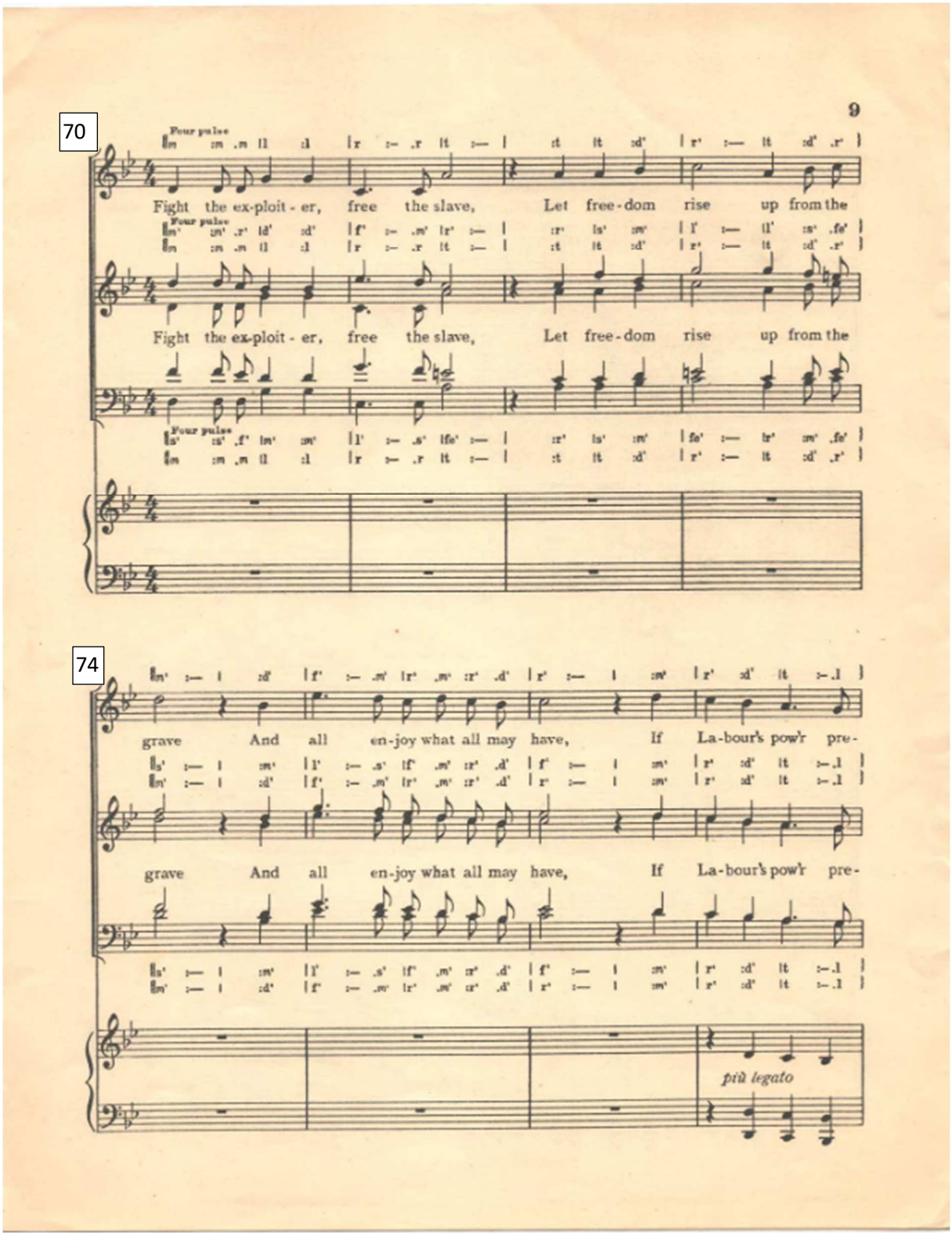

4
25
Two pulse
Doh is G
Three pulse
sempre f
Do you for - get Who de-ceived you and mis-led you?
Do you for-
30
Three pulse
Two pulse
Doh is B♭
-get Who ill-housed you and ill-fed you?
Do you for-get Who sweated you and bled you?

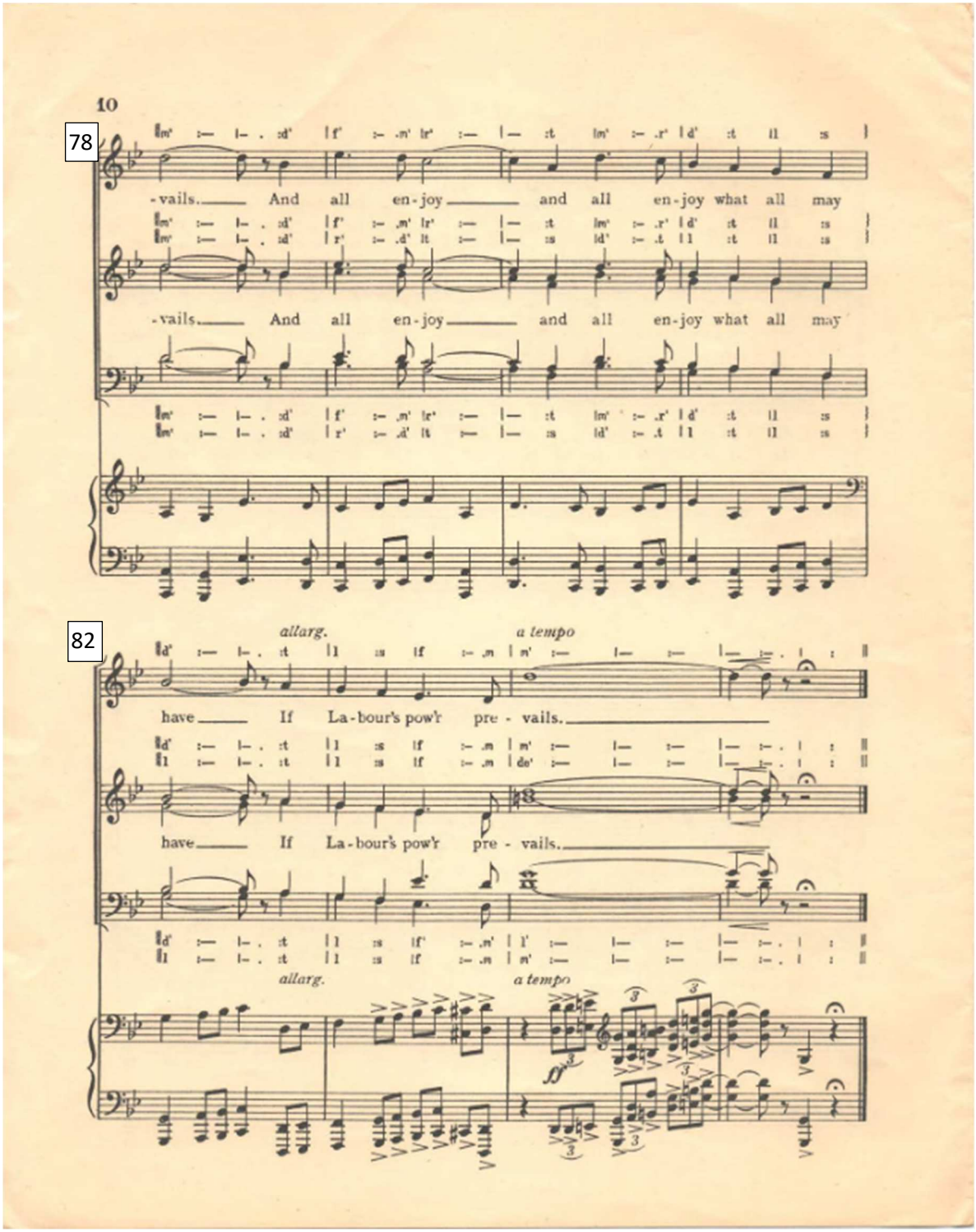

35
Four pulse
Dohis G
Let La-bour's pow'r pre - vail.
Do you for-
Let La-bour's pow'r pre - vail.
Do you for-
39
Three pulse
Two pulse
Three pulse
-get Who built the fac-to-ries and slums?
Do you for - get Who makes the
-get Who built the fac-to-ries and slums?
Do you for - get Who makes the


6
43
Two pulse
Doh is B♭
Three pulse
pro-fit out of bombs? Do you for-get Their feasts from which you get the crumbs?
Two pulse
Doh is B♭
Three pulse
pro-fit out of bombs? Do you for-get Their feasts from which you get the crumbs?
Two pulse
Doh is B♭
Three pulse
48
Four pulse
Three pulse
Let Labour's pow'r pre-vail. Do you for-get Their empty pomp and loud i-deals?
Four pulse
Three pulse
Let Labour's pow'r pre-vail. Do you for-get Their empty pomp and loud i-deals?
Four pulse
Three pulse

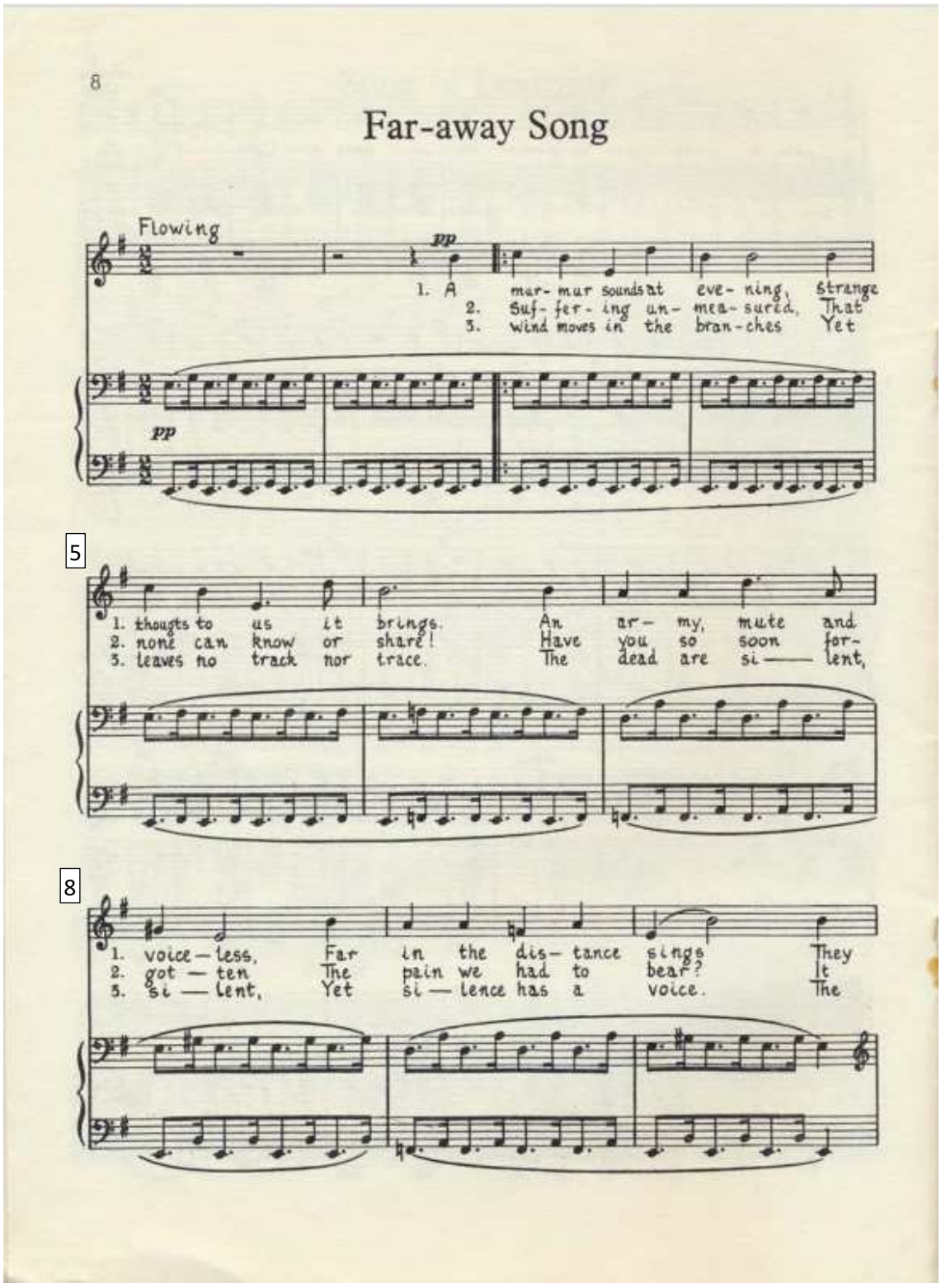

7
53
Two pulse
Three pulse
Two pulse
Do you for-get The fa-tal fraud it all con-ceals? Do you for-
Do you for-get The fa-tal fraud it all con-ceals? Do you for-
57
Three pulse
Four pulse
-get How they ne-glect-ed your ap-peals? Let
-get How they ne-glect-ed your ap-peals? Let

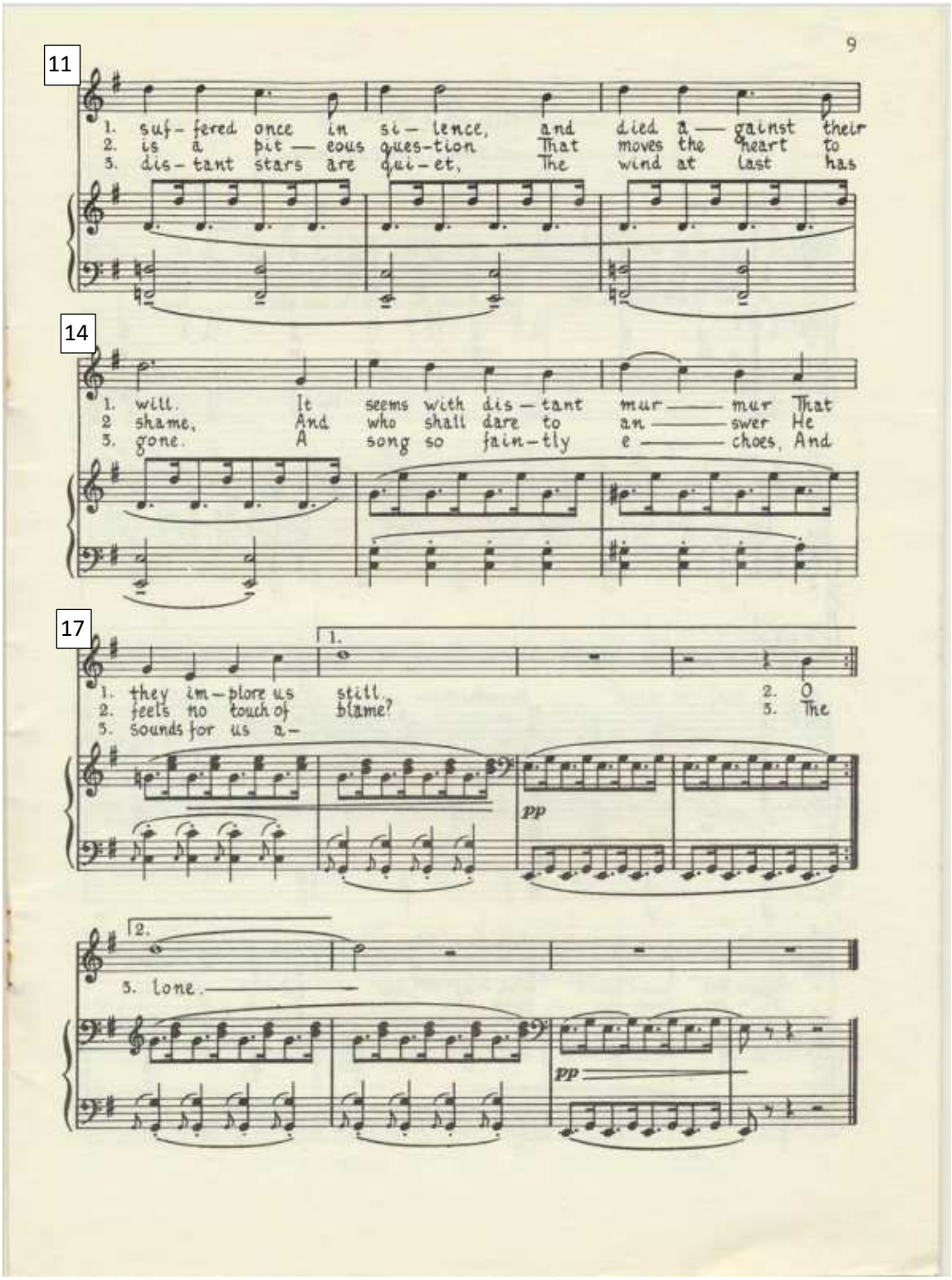

8
60
Labour's pow'r pre - vail.
Workmates, we must fight and strive
Labour's pow'r pre - vail.
Workmates, we must fight and strive
molto allarg.
a tempo
sempre ff
65
If our chil - dren are to live,
Take what greed will never give.
If our chil - dren are to live,
Take what greed will never give.


70
Four pulse
Fight the ex-ploit - er, free the slave, Let free - dom rise up from the
Four pulse
Fight the ex-ploit - er, free the slave, Let free - dom rise up from the
Four pulse
74
grave And all en-joy what all may have, If La-bour's pow'r pre-
grave And all en-joy what all may have, If La-bour's pow'r pre-
più legato

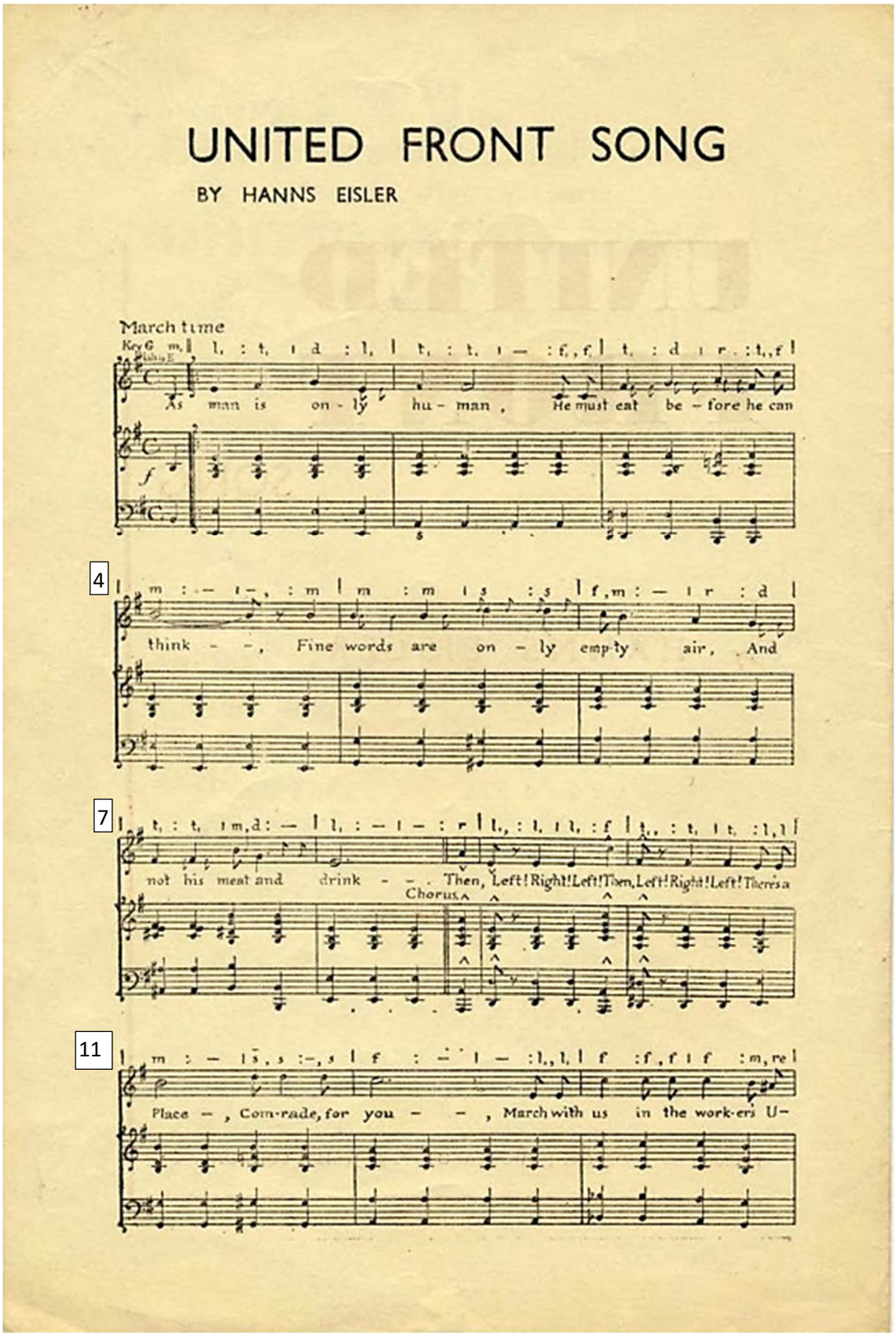

10
78
-vails. And all en-joy and all en-joy what all may
-vails. And all en-joy and all en-joy what all may
82
allarg.
a tempo
have If La-bour's pow'r pre-vails.
have If La-bour's pow'r pre-vails.
allarg.
a tempo
ff

(vi) Eisler, 'Far-away Song'




11
1. suf- fered once in si- lence, and died a- gainst their
2. is a pit- eous ques-tion That moves the heart to
3. dis- tant stars are qui- et, The wind at last has
14
1. will. It seems with dis- tant mur- mur That
2 shame, And who shall dare to an- swer He
3. gone. A song so fain- tly e- choes, And
17
1.
1. they im- plore us still,
2. feels no touch of blame?
3. sounds for us a-
2. O
3. The
pp
2.
3. lone.
pp

(vii) Eisler, 'United Front Song'



UNITED FRONT SONG

BY HANNS EISLER

March time

As man is on - ly hu - man, He must eat be - fore he can

4

think - -, Fine words are on - ly emp-ty air, And

7

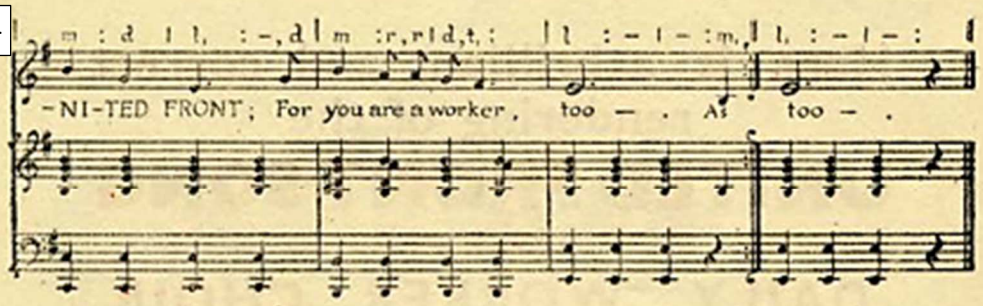
not his meat and drink - -. Then, Left! Right! Left! Then, Left! Right! Left! There's a

Chorus

11

Place - , Com-rade, for you - -, March with us in the work-ers U-

14



As man is only human,
He must eat before he can think
Fine words are only empty air,
And not his meat and drink

CHORUS:

Then, Left! Right! Left!
Then, Left! Right! Left!
There's a place, Comrade, for you
March with us in the workers' UNITED FRONT
For you are a worker, too.

As man is only human,
He'd rather not have boots in his face,
He wants no slaves at his beck and call,
Nor life by a master's grace.

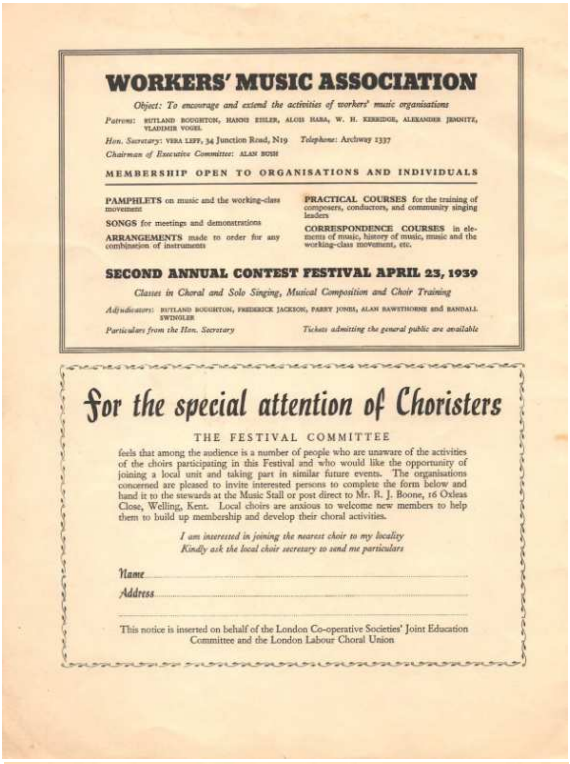
CHORUS

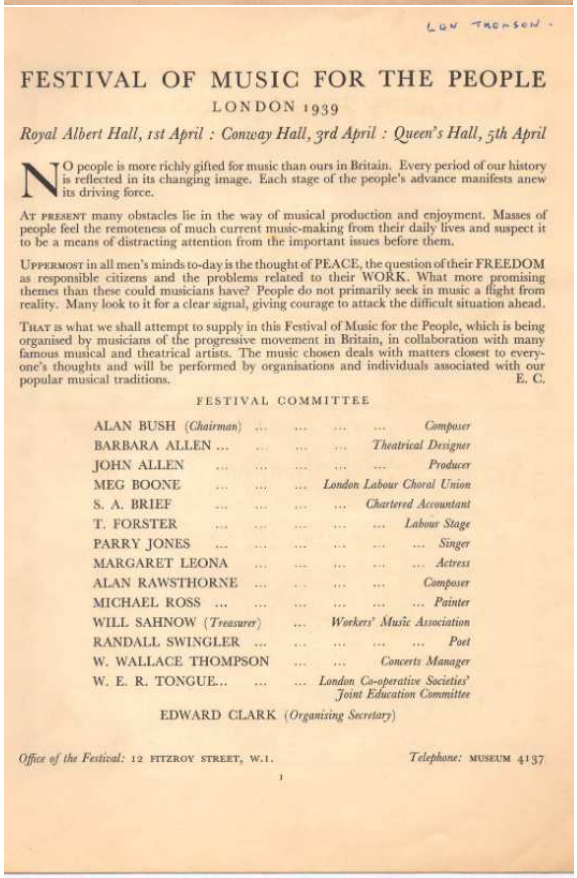
And since a worker's a worker,
No class can free him but his own,
"The emancipation of the working-class
Is the task of the workers alone."

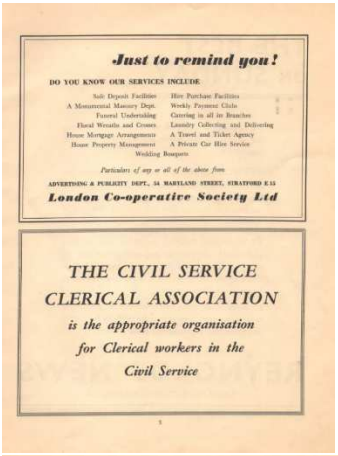
CHORUS

Text adapted from the German of Bertold Brecht by N. C.

2. *Programme for the Festival of Music for the People*







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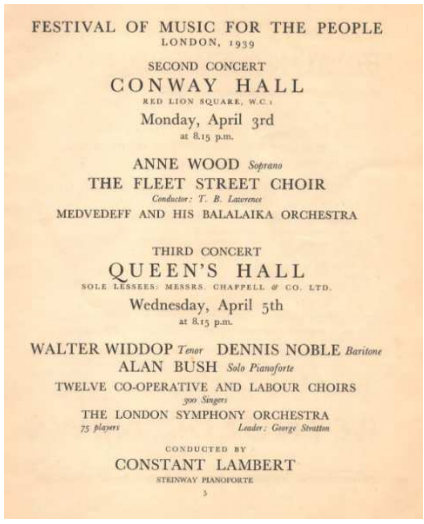


FESTIVAL OF MUSIC FOR THE PEOPLE
LONDON, 1939

SECOND CONCERT

CONWAY HALL

RED LION SQUARE, W.C.1

Monday, April 3rd

at 8.15 p.m.

ANNE WOOD *Soprano*

THE FLEET STREET CHOIR

Conductor: T. B. Lawrence

MEDVEDEFF AND HIS BALALAIKA ORCHESTRA

THIRD CONCERT

QUEEN'S HALL

SOLE LESSEES: MESSRS. CHAPPELL & CO. LTD.

Wednesday, April 5th

at 8.15 p.m.

WALTER WIDDOP *Tenor* DENNIS NOBLE *Baritone*

ALAN BUSH *Solo Pianoforte*

TWELVE CO-OPERATIVE AND LABOUR CHOIRS

300 Singers

THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

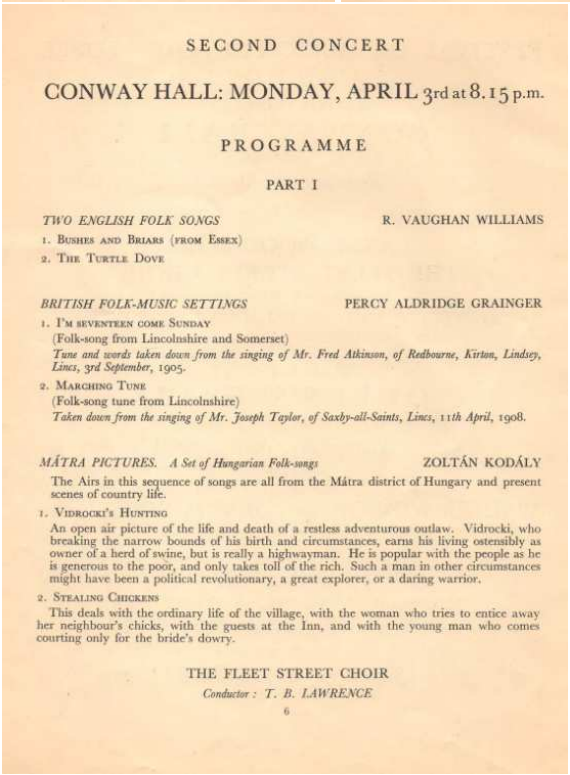
75 players *Leader: George Stratton*

CONDUCTED BY

CONSTANT LAMBERT

STEINWAY PIANOFORTE

3



SECOND CONCERT

CONWAY HALL: MONDAY, APRIL 3rd at 8.15 p.m.

PROGRAMME

PART I

TWO ENGLISH FOLK SONGS — R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

1. BUSHES AND BRIARS (FROM ESSEX)
2. THE TURTLE DOVE

BRITISH FOLK-MUSIC SETTINGS — PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER

1. I'M SEVENTEEN COME SUNDAY
(Folk-song from Lincolnshire and Somerset)
Tune and words taken down from the singing of Mr. Fred Atkinson, of Redbourne, Kirton, Lindsey, Lincs, 3rd September, 1905.
2. MARCHING TUNE
(Folk-song tune from Lincolnshire)
Taken down from the singing of Mr. Joseph Taylor, of Saxby-all-Saints, Lincs, 11th April, 1908.

MÁTRA PICTURES. A Set of Hungarian Folk-songs — ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

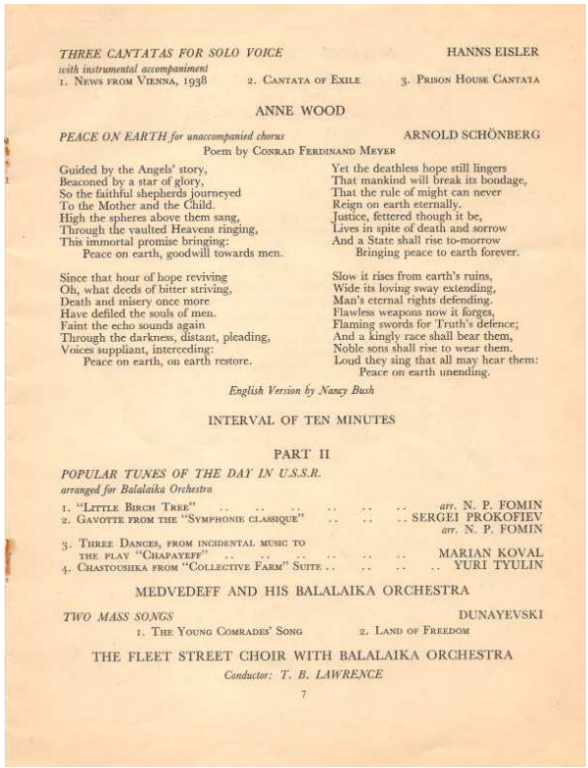
The Airs in this sequence of songs are all from the Mátra district of Hungary and present scenes of country life.

1. VIDROCKI'S HUNTING
An open air picture of the life and death of a restless adventurous outlaw. Vidrocki, who breaking the narrow bounds of his birth and circumstances, earns his living ostensibly as owner of a herd of swine, but is really a highwayman. He is popular with the people as he is generous to the poor, and only takes toll of the rich. Such a man in other circumstances might have been a political revolutionary, a great explorer, or a daring warrior.
2. STEALING CHICKENS
This deals with the ordinary life of the village, with the woman who tries to entice away her neighbour's chicks, with the guests at the Inn, and with the young man who comes courting only for the bride's dowry.

THE FLEET STREET CHOIR

Conductor: T. B. LAWRENCE

6



THREE CANTATAS FOR SOLO VOICE — HANNS EISLER

with instrumental accompaniment

1. NEWS FROM VIENNA, 1938 2. CANTATA OF EXILE 3. PRISON HOUSE CANTATA

ANNE WOOD

PEACE ON EARTH for unaccompanied chorus — ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG

Poem by CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER

Guided by the Angels' story,
Beaconed by a star of glory,
So the faithful shepherds journeyed
To the Mother and the Child.
High the spheres above them sang,
Through the vaulted Heavens ringing,
This immortal promise bringing:
Peace on earth, goodwill towards men.

Since that hour of hope reviving
Oh, what deeds of bitter striving,
Death and misery once more
Have defiled the souls of men.
Faint the echo sounds again
Through the darkness, distant, pleading,
Voices suppliant, interceding:
Peace on earth, on earth restore.

Yet the deathless hope still lingers
That mankind will break its bondage,
That the rule of might can never
Reign on earth eternally.
Justice, fettered though it be,
Lives in spite of death and sorrow
And a State shall rise to-morrow
Bringing peace to earth forever.

Slow it rises from earth's ruins,
Wide its loving sway extending,
Man's eternal rights defending.
Flawless weapons now it forges,
Flaming swords for Truth's defence;
And a kingly race shall bear them,
Noble sons shall rise to wear them.
Loud they sing that all may hear them:
Peace on earth unending.

English Version by Nancy Bush

INTERVAL OF TEN MINUTES

PART II

POPULAR TUNES OF THE DAY IN U.S.S.R.
arranged for Balalaika Orchestra

1. "LITTLE BIRCH TREE" .. .. *arr.* N. P. FOMIN
2. GAVOTTE FROM THE "SYMPHONIE CLASSIQUE" .. .. .. SERGEI PROKOFIEV *arr.* N. P. FOMIN
3. THREE DANCES, FROM INCIDENTAL MUSIC TO THE PLAY "CHAPAYEFF" .. .. MARIAN KOVAL
4. CHASTOUSHKA FROM "COLLECTIVE FARM" SUITE .. .. YURI TYULIN

MEDVEDEFF AND HIS BALALAIKA ORCHESTRA

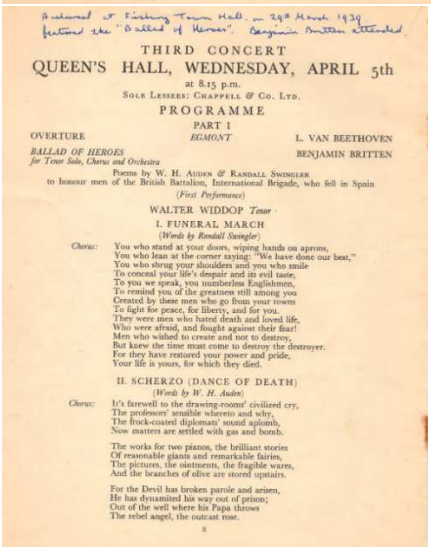
TWO MASS SONGS — DUNAYEVSKI

1. THE YOUNG COMRADES' SONG 2. LAND OF FREEDOM

THE FLEET STREET CHOIR WITH BALALAIKA ORCHESTRA

Conductor: T. B. LAWRENCE

7



Rehearsal at Finsbury Town Hall on 29th March 1939 featured the "Ballad of Heroes". Benjamin Britten attended.

THIRD CONCERT

QUEEN'S HALL, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5th

at 8.15 p.m.

SOLE LESSEES: CHAPPELL & CO. LTD.

PROGRAMME

PART I

OVERTURE *EGMONT* — L. VAN BEETHOVEN

BALLAD OF HEROES *for Tenor Solo, Chorus and Orchestra* — BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Poems by W. H. AUDEN & RANDALL SWINGLER
to honour men of the British Battalion, International Brigade, who fell in Spain
(First Performance)

WALTER WIDDOP *Tenor*

I. FUNERAL MARCH
(Words by Randall Swingler)

Chorus: You who stand at your doors, wiping hands on aprons,
You who lean at the corner saying: "We have done our best,"
You who shrug your shoulders and you who smile
To conceal your life's despair and its evil taste,
To you we speak, you numberless Englishmen,
To remind you of the greatness still among you
Created by these men who go from your towns
To fight for peace, for liberty, and for you.
They were men who hated death and loved life,
Who were afraid, and fought against their fear!
Men who wished to create and not to destroy,
But knew the time must come to destroy the destroyer.
For they have restored your power and pride,
Your life is yours, for which they died.

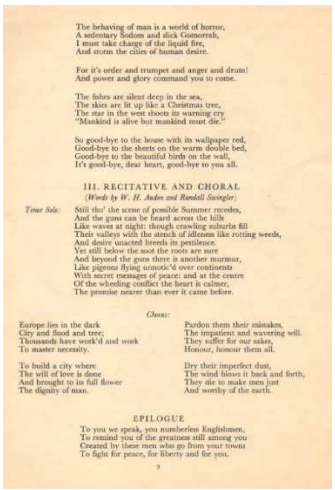
II. SCHERZO (DANCE OF DEATH)
(Words by W. H. Auden)

Chorus: It's farewell to the drawing-rooms' civilized cry,
The professors' sensible whereto and why,
The frock-coated diplomats' sound aplomb,
Now matters are settled with gas and bomb.

The works for two pianos, the brilliant stories
Of reasonable giants and remarkable fairies,
The pictures, the ointments, the fragible wares,
And the branches of olive are stored upstairs.

For the Devil has broken parole and arisen,
He has dynamited his way out of prison;
Out of the well where his Papa throws
The rebel angel, the outcast rose.

8



The behaving of man is a world of horror,
A sedentary Sodom and slick Gomorrah,
I must take charge of the liquid fire,
And storm the cities of human desire.

For it's order and trumpet and anger and drum!
And power and glory command you to come.

The fishes are silent deep in the sea,
The skies are lit up like a Christmas tree,
The star in the west shoots its warning cry
"Mankind is alive but mankind must die."

So good-bye to the house with its wallpaper red,
Good-bye to the sheets on the warm double bed,
Good-bye to the beautiful birds on the wall,
It's good-bye, dear heart, good-bye to you all.

III. RECITATIVE AND CHORAL
(Words by W. H. Auden and Randall Swingler)

Tenor Solo: Still tho' the scene of possible Summer recedes,
And the guns can be heard across the hills
Like waves at night: though crawling suburbs fill
Their valleys with the stench of idleness like rotting weeds,
And desire unacted breeds its pestilence.
Yet still below the soot the roots are sure
And beyond the guns there is another murmur,
Like pigeons flying unnoticed over continents
With secret messages of peace: and at the centre
Of the wheeling conflict the heart is calmer,
The promise nearer than ever it came before.

Chorus:

Europe lies in the dark
City and flood and tree;
Thousands have work'd and work
To master necessity.

To build a city where
The will of love is done
And brought to its full flower
The dignity of man.

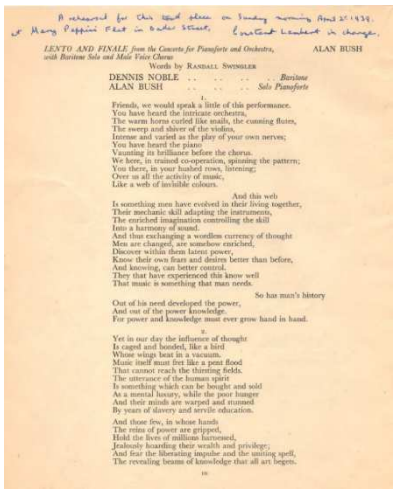
Pardon them their mistakes,
The impatient and wavering will.
They suffer for our sakes,
Honour, honour them all.

Dry their imperfect dust,
The wind blows it back and forth,
They die to make men just
And worthy of the earth.

EPILOGUE

To you we speak, you numberless Englishmen,
To remind you of the greatness still among you
Created by these men who go from your towns
To fight for peace, for liberty and for you.

9



Rehearsal for this took place on Sunday morning April 2nd 1939 at Mary Poppins Flat in Baker Street, Constant Lambert in charge.

LENTO AND FINALE from the Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra, with Baritone Solo and Male Voice Chorus — ALAN BUSH

Words by RANDALL SWINGLER

DENNIS NOBLE .. .. .. *Baritone*
ALAN BUSH .. .. .. *Solo Pianoforte*

1.

Friends, we would speak a little of this performance.
You have heard the intricate orchestra,
The warm horns curled like snails, the cunning flutes,
The sweep and shiver of the violins,
Intense and varied as the play of your own nerves;
You have heard the piano
Vaunting its brilliance before the chorus.
We here, in trained co-operation, spinning the pattern;
You there, in your hushed rows, listening;
Over us all the activity of music,
Like a web of invisible colours.

And this web
Is something men have evolved in their living together,
Their mechanic skill adapting the instruments,
The enriched imagination controlling the skill
Into a harmony of sound.
And thus exchanging a wordless currency of thought
Men are changed, are somehow enriched,
Discover within them latent power,
Know their own fears and desires better than before,
And knowing, can better control.
They that have experienced this know well
That music is something that man needs.

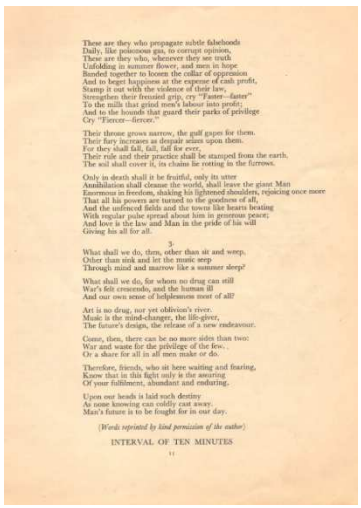
So has man's history
Out of his need developed the power,
And out of the power knowledge.
For power and knowledge must ever grow hand in hand.

2.

Yet in our day the influence of thought
Is caged and bonded, like a bird
Whose wings beat in a vacuum.
Music itself must fret like a pent flood
That cannot reach the thirsting fields.
The utterance of the human spirit
Is something which can be bought and sold
As a mental luxury, while the poor hunger
And their minds are warped and stunned
By years of slavery and servile education.

And those few, in whose hands
The reins of power are gripped,
Hold the lives of millions harnessed,
Jealously hoarding their wealth and privilege;
And fear the liberating impulse and the uniting spell,
The revealing beams of knowledge that all art begets.

10



These are they who propagate subtle falsehoods
Daily, like poisonous gas, to corrupt opinion,
These are they who, wherever they see truth
Unfolding in summer flower, and men in hope
Banded together to loosen the collar of oppression
And so beget happiness at the expense of cash profit,
Stamp it out with the violence of their law,
Strengthen their frenzied grip, cry "Faster—faster"
To the mills that grind men's labour into profit;
And to the hounds that guard their parks of privilege
Cry "Fiercer—fiercer."

Their throne grows narrow, the gulf gapes for them.
Their fury increases as despair seizes upon them.
For they shall fall, fall, fall for ever.
Their rule and their practice shall be stamped from the earth.
The soil shall cover it, its chains be rotting in the furrows.

Only in death shall it be fruitful, only its utter
Annihilation shall cleanse the world, shall leave the giant Man
Enormous in freedom, shaking his lightened shoulders, rejoicing once more
That all his powers are turned to the goodness of all,
And the unfenced fields and the towns like hearts beating
With regular pulse spread about him in generous peace;
And love is the law and Man in the pride of his will
Giving his all for all.

3.

What shall we do, then, other than sit and weep,
Other than sink and let the music seep
Through mind and marrow like a summer sleep?

What shall we do, for whom no drug can still
War's felt crescendo, and the human ill
And our own sense of helplessness most of all?

Art is no drug, nor yet oblivion's river.
Music is the mind-changer, the life-giver,
The future's design, the release of a new endeavour.

Come, then, there can be no more sides than two:
War and waste for the privilege of the few..
Or a share for all in all men make or do.

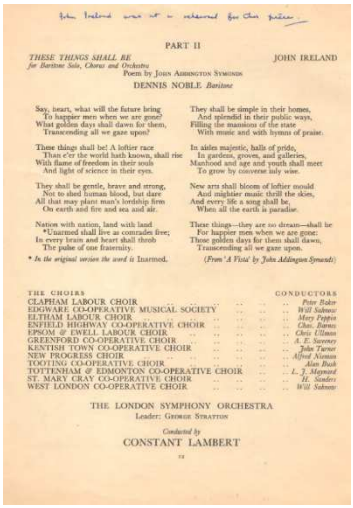
Therefore, friends, who sit here waiting and fearing,
Know that in this fight only is the assuring
Of your fulfilment, abundant and enduring.

Upon our heads is laid such destiny
As none knowing can coldly cast away.
Man's future is to be fought for in our day.

(Words reprinted by kind permission of the author)

INTERVAL OF TEN MINUTES

11



John Ireland wrote it — rehearsed for this festival

PART II

THESE THINGS SHALL BE — JOHN IRELAND
for Baritone Solo, Chorus and Orchestra
Poem by JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS
DENNIS NOBLE *Baritone*

Say, heart, what will the future bring
To happier men when we are gone?
What golden days shall dawn for them,
Transcending all we gaze upon?

These things shall be! A loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known, shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of science in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave and strong,
Not to shed human blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth and fire and sea and air.

Nation with nation, land with land
*Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every brain and heart shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.

* *In the original version the word is* Unarmed.

They shall be simple in their homes,
And splendid in their public ways,
Filling the mansions of the state
With music and with hymns of praise.

In sátes majestic, halls of pride,
In gardens, groves, and galleries,
Manhood and age and youth shall meet
To grow by converse laly wise.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould
And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life a song shall be,
When all the earth is paradise.

These things—they are no dream—shall be
For happier men when we are gone;
These golden days for them shall dawn,
Transcending all we gaze upon.

(From 'A Vista' by John Addington Symonds)

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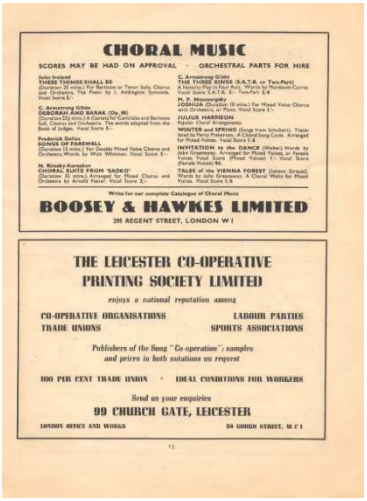

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