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# Style in the Songs of Charles T. Griffes

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STYLE IN THE SONGS OF  
CHARLES T. GRIFFES

KATHRYN R. VAN FOSSAN

A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

1979

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STYLE IN THE SONGS OF  
CHARLES T. GRIFFES

Kathryn R. Van Fossan

201 Pages

May, 1979

Fifty of Griffes's songs were analyzed according to fundamental musical elements in order to delineate his style and determine his position as an American art song composer.

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Of the fifty-nine songs which Charles T. Griffes is known to have written, fifty were analyzed with respect to style in this study; this includes thirty-eight published and twelve unpublished songs.

In order to more adequately deal with the great variety of styles apparent in his work, Griffes's songs were divided into three groups. The formative songs, mostly German, resulted from his student years. The divergent songs resulted from the composer's interest in styles not directly related to serious Western music. The mainstream songs pursued the forward-looking reflections and trends of international, twentieth-century music.

The songs were then analyzed by group according to the following topics: text choice; the basic musical elements of melody, harmony, form, and rhythm; voice-piano relationships and functions; and the composer and the public.

From this analysis the author concludes:

1. Songs of the formative group depended greatly on the late romantic and post-romantic style, particularly with respect to harmony.
2. Songs of the divergent group relied on some borrowed style--oriental, folk song, traditional--which established patterns confining the development of all musical elements to predetermined directions.

3. Songs of the mainstream group, while illustrating influences from contemporary styles (especially impressionistic), most nearly achieved an individualistic, forward-looking style.
4. Due to the largely derivative nature of the first two groups of songs, Griffes's position among the most talented of early twentieth-century American song composers stands most securely upon his progressive mainstream songs.

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K. R. V. F.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Generally remembered as the composer of one or two relatively famous orchestral works, Charles Tomlinson Griffes made a lasting contribution in the field of vocal solo literature. In a brief composing career, basically 1906 to 1918, Griffes completed fifty-nine art songs. Thirty-eight of them have been published to date.

Although Griffes's composing career was short, a wide variety of styles are encountered throughout his art songs. To aid, therefore, in the delineation of Griffes's style, his songs have been grouped into three categories according to the following factors: influences from other sources, possible purposes for their composition, and potential impact on the history of American art song.

Analysis of Griffes's song style begins with discussion of the composer's selection of texts. Four chapters succeeding this discussion are devoted to each of the basic musical elements--melody, harmony, form, and rhythm. Additional chapters deal with piano-voice relations and functions, and with Griffes and the public.

There has been considerable debate concerning Griffes's susceptibility to stylistic influences and his position in the history of American song. The concluding chapter presents several opinions by musical scholars on these questions and pinpoints solutions on the basis of trends developed in the preceding chapters.

Musical examples to which the text refers follow the conclusion. Five of Griffes's unpublished songs are included in their entirety in the

appendix.

Research for the clarification of Griffes's song style stems overwhelmingly from the basic primary sources; all thirty-eight of his published songs and twelve in manuscript have been analyzed in depth for this thesis. A major secondary source used in this study is the descriptive catalogue of Griffes's works written by Donna K. Anderson.<sup>1</sup> Reviews and commentaries of Griffes's songs, particularly those contemporary with his era, have also proved enlightening.

### Grouping Griffes's Songs

The fifty-nine songs which Griffes composed almost defy classification in the usual sense. The typical "early," "middle," and "late" divisions are inadequate in Griffes's case for several reasons. In the first place, such a division presupposes that a late, or mature, style was in fact attained, a fact which for Griffes cannot be convincingly proved. In addition to this, his total song output is so limited that, with such divisions, undue emphasis is placed on each song.

Nor is another three-part division which is frequently used in relation to Griffes totally satisfactory. This system classifies his songs in the following manner: German romantic, impressionistic, and individualistic (sometimes labeled "tending towards atonality"). Such a system places too much emphasis on the influences affecting Griffes's style and minimizes his constant search for stylistic independence throughout all three phases of his development.

A categorization more amenable to the particular circumstances

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<sup>1</sup>Donna K. Anderson, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes: A Descriptive Catalogue" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1966).

of Griffes's career borrows aspects from both the chronological and the periods-of-influence classification systems. Most importantly, however, it adds to them the dimension of purpose and intention: the intention Griffes may have had in composing them and, in retrospect, their possible impact on the history of art song in America. The resulting three divisions can be described as:

Formative: Chronologically, this lasts from his first song in 1901 to the end of his German period of study in 1906. Obviously this is basically what others have called his German period, yet more is at issue during this stage than the particular language or even style involved. This is Griffes's student, or learning, period, during which time he became competent in the styles of past art song masters. But, more importantly, he became attuned to the nature of song itself by learning what its particular requirements are and at the same time facing decisions about his own efforts within that idiom.

The following two divisions run concurrently, beginning with Griffes's first English song in 1911 and ending with his last attempt in the song idiom in 1918.

Divergent: Forever the experimenter, Griffes was constantly investigating colorful or vibrant styles not so closely aligned with the mainstream direction of serious twentieth-century music. Therefore, this division includes songs in a wide variety of styles: oriental, folk, even popularistic. All result from Griffes's unflagging interest in contrasting musical vocabularies. Once such a new, attractive style was introduced to him, he felt compelled to experiment with his own creation using that vocabulary.

Mainstream: Simultaneous with his more divergent compositions are those which remain faithful to mainstream developments in Western music. These

songs demonstrate the development of Griffes's individual style and are the most forward-looking of his song compositions. Of all his songs, they have had most impact on the future developments of American art song, as they point towards the changing musical vocabulary of the twentieth century.

As in most classification systems, there are always some works which seem to fit into either of two divisions, or into neither of them completely. Yet there are surprisingly few possible deviations in the body of Griffes's songs, with only two as borderline cases. For the most part, Griffes's characteristics are evident in each division.

The research of Donna K. Anderson is the basis for the following chronological table of Griffes's songs.<sup>2</sup> Several of the unpublished songs will not be covered in this thesis: short explanations for their exclusion are noted in the table. Each song has been assigned an F for formative, D for divergent, or M for mainstream, depending on the division to which it most closely corresponds. A table outlining the major dates and events of Griffes's life follows the chronological table of his songs.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

TABLE 1  
CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF THE SONGS OF CHARLES T. GRIFFES<sup>a</sup>

Title	Poet	Date Composed	Group	Comments
1. Si mes vers avaient des ailes (If my poetry had wings)	Victor Hugo	1901	F	Manuscript
2. Sur ma lyre l'autrefois (Upon my lyre of yore)	Charles A. Saint-Beuve	1901(?)	F	Manuscript
3. Auf dem Teich, dem regungslosen (O'er the tarn's unruffled mirror)	Nikolaus Lenau	1906(?)	F	Published 1909
4. Auf geheimem Waldespfade (By a lonely forest pathway)	Nikolaus Lenau	1906(?)	F	Published 1909
5. Nacht liegt auf den fremden Wegen (Night on ways unknown has fallen)	Heinrich Heine	1906(?)	F	Published 1909
6. Der träumende See (The dreamy lake)	Julius Mosen	1906(?)	F	Published 1909
7. Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz (Time was, when I in anguish lay)	Emmanuel Geibel	1906(?)	F	Published 1909
8. So halt' ich endlich dich umfassen (At last I hold you) ( <u>Four German Songs</u> , no. 4)	Emmanuel Geibel	1906(?)	F	Published 1970



TABLE 1 (continued)

9. Das ist ein Brausen und Heulen	Heinrich Heine	1906(?)		Manuscript <sup>b</sup>
10. Entflieh mit mir (Escape with me)	Heinrich Heine	1906(?)	F	Manuscript
11. Es fiel ein Reif (A dew fell)	Heinrich Heine	1906(?)	F	Manuscript
12. Auf ihrem Grab (Upon their grave)	Heinrich Heine	1906(?)	F	Published 1941
13. Meeresstille (Calm sea) ( <u>Four German Songs</u> , no.3)	Johann Wolfgang von Goethe	1906(?)	F	Published 1970
14. Mir war als müsste ich graben	Unknown	1906(?)		Manuscript <sup>c</sup>
15. Gedicht von Heine (Poem of Heine)	Heinrich Heine	1906(?)	F	Manuscript
16. Am Kreuzweg wird begraben (They buried him at the crossroads) ( <u>Four German Songs</u> no.1)	Heinrich Heine	1906(?)	F	Published 1970
17. An den Wind (To the wind) ( <u>Four German Songs</u> , no. 2)	Nikolaus Lenau	1906(?)	F	Published 1970
18. Wo ich bin, mich rings umdunkelt	Heinrich Heine	1906(?)		Manuscript <sup>b</sup>
19. Des müden Abendlied	Emmanuel Geibel	1906(?)		Manuscript <sup>b</sup>
20. Zwei Könige sassen auf Orkadal (Two kings sat together in Orkadal)	Emmanuel Geibel	1906(?)	F	Published 1910
21. Elfe (Elves)	Joseph von Eichendorf	1906(?)	F	Published 1941

TABLE 1 (continued)

22. Könnst' ich mit dir dort oben gehn (If I could go with you)	Julius Mosen	1906(?)	F	Published 1941
23. The Water Lily	John B. Tabb	1911		Manuscript <sup>b</sup>
24. Evening Song	Sidney Lanier	pre-1912	D	Published 1941
25. The First Snowfall	John B. Tabb	pre-1912	M	Published 1941
26. The Half-Ring Moon	John B. Tabb	pre-1912	M	Published 1941
27. Phantoms	John B. Tabb	1912(?)	M	Manuscript
28. Nachtlied (Night Song)	Emmanuel Geibel	1912	F	Manuscript
29. La mer (The sea) ( <u>Four Impressions</u> , no.3)	Oscar Wilde	1912	M	Published 1970
30. Pierrot	Sara Teasdale	1912		Manuscript <sup>b</sup>
31. La Fuite de la Lune (Flight of the Moon) ( <u>Tone Images</u> , op. 3, no. 1)	Oscar Wilde	1912	M <sup>d</sup>	Published 1915
32. Symphony in Yellow	Oscar Wilde	1912(?)	M	Published 1915
33. We'll to the Woods, and Gather May ( <u>Tone Images</u> , op. 3, no. 3)	Charles d'Orleans	1914	D	Published 1915
34. Le Réveillon (Dawn) <u>Four Impressions</u> , no. 4)	Oscar Wilde	1914	M	Published 1970
35. Two Birds Flew into the Sunset Glow	Rumanian folk song	1914	D	Manuscript
36. This Book of Hours ( <u>Two Rondels</u> , op. 4, no.1)	Walter Crane	1914(?)	D	Published 1915

TABLE 1 (continued)

37.	Come, Love, Across the Sunlit Land	Clinton Scollard	1914(?)	D	Published 1915
38.	Le Jardin (The Garden) ( <u>Four Impressions</u> , no. 1)	Oscar Wilde	1915	M	Published 1970
39.	Impression du Matin (Early Morning in London) ( <u>Four Impressions</u> , no. 2)	Oscar Wilde	1915	M	Published 1970
40.	Les Ballons	Oscar Wilde	1915		Manuscript <sup>c</sup>
41.	La Mer	Oscar Wilde	1916		Manuscript <sup>e</sup>
42.	Landscape ( <u>Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan</u> , op. 10, no. 2)	Sada-Ihe	1916	D	Published 1917
43.	The Old Temple Among the Mountains ( <u>Five Poems</u> , op. 10, no. 3)	Chang Wen-Chang	1916	D	Published 1917
44.	Tears ( <u>Five Poems</u> , op. 10, no. 4)	Wang Seng-Ju	1916	D	Published 1917
45.	In a Myrtle Shade ( <u>Three Poems</u> , op. 9, no.1)	William Blake	1916	M	Published 1918
46.	Waikiki ( <u>Three Poems</u> , op. 9, no. 2)	Rupert Brooke	1916	M	Published 1918
47.	Phantoms ( <u>Three Poems</u> , op. 9, no. 3)	Arturo Giovannitti	1916	M	Published 1918
48.	Song of the Dagger	Rumanian folk song	1916		Manuscript <sup>c</sup>
49.	So-Fei Gathering Flowers ( <u>Five Poems</u> , op. 10, no. 1)	Wang Ching-ling	1917	D	Published 1917
50.	A Feast of Lanterns ( <u>Five Poems</u> , op. 10, no. 5)	Yuan Mei	1917	D	Published 1917

TABLE 1 (continued)

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51. Sorrow of Mydath ( <u>Two Poems by John Masefield</u> , no. 2)	John Masefield	1917	M	Published 1920
52. In the Harem	Chu Ch'ing-yu	1917(?)	D	Manuscript
53. Djakoan	Javanese folk song	1917(?)	D	Manuscript
54. Kinanti	Javanese folk song	1917(?)	D	Manuscript
55. Hampelas	Javanese folk song	1917(?)	D	Manuscript
56. An Old Song Re-Sung ( <u>Two Poems by John Masefield</u> , no. 1)	John Masefield	1918	M <sup>d</sup>	Published 1920
57. The Lament of Ian the Proud ( <u>Three poems by Fiona MacLeod</u> , op. 11, no. 1)	William Sharp, pseud. Fiona MacLeod	1918	M	Published 1920
58. Thy Dark Eyes to Mine ( <u>Three Poems by Fiona MacLeod</u> , op. 11, no. 2)	William Sharp	1918	M	Published 1920
59. The Rose of the Night ( <u>Three Poems by Fiona MacLeod</u> , op. 11, no. 3)	William Sharp	1918	M	Published 1920

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<sup>a</sup>Donna K. Anderson, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes: A Descriptive Catalogue" (unpublished doctoral dissertation. Indiana University, 1966).

<sup>b</sup>Not included: copy not available at this time.

<sup>c</sup>Not included: copy illegible.

<sup>d</sup>Borderline between mainstream and divergent.

<sup>e</sup>Not included: appears to be a varied transposition of the earlier version (see no. 29).

TABLE 2

CHARLES T. GRIFFES  
A BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL TIME-LINE

- 
- 
- 1884: Born September 17 in Elmira, New York, to Wilber and Clara Tomlinson Griffes. His family was to include two older sisters, one younger sister, and one younger brother. His older sister Katharine gave Charles his first piano instruction.
- 1899: Griffes began piano lessons with Mary Selena Broughton, a teacher at Elmira College. He began his high school training in this year.
- 1903: Griffes departed for Berlin, Germany. At his farewell concert at Elmira College his first two songs, "Si mes vers avaient des ailes" and "Sur ma lyre l'autrefois," were performed. At the Stern Conservatory of Music he began piano studies with Ernst Jedliczka and composition studies with Philippe Rüfer.
- 1905: Griffes left the conservatory to begin composition lessons with Englebert Humperdinck.
- 1907: Griffes returned to the United States and assumed position as Director of Music at Hackley School for Boys at Tarrytown, New York, a position he held throughout his life.
- 1909: Schirmer published the first Griffes's works: five German songs which may have been composed while he was studying in Berlin. Another German song was published in 1910.
- 1915: Griffes's first English songs were published, the Tone Images, Op. 3 and the Two Rondels, Op. 4.
- 1917: Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan were published as Op. 10 and performed by Eva Gauthier on November 1, accompanied by Griffes.
- 1918: First all-Griffes recital was given on February 26 at the MacDowell Club in New York City. Three Poems, Op. 9, and Three Poems by Fiona MacLeod, Op. 11, were published.
- 1919: Premiere of Three Poems by Fiona MacLeod, sung by Vera Janacopulos, accompanied by Griffes. A second all-Griffes recital was given on April 2. Demand for performances of Griffes's works was high in this year.
- 1920: Suffering from empyema, Griffes was taken to the Loomis Sanatorium, Loomis, New York, early in this year. He died at New York Hospital on April 8. Funeral services were held April 10.
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## CHAPTER II

### GRIFFES AND HIS TEXTS

It is true that Charles T. Griffes did not leave us any treatise concerning his opinions on the nature of song. Clues to his philosophy of song composing are given sporadically in Griffes's diaries and letters, but the greatest source of this philosophy must come from study of his songs themselves.

It becomes apparent immediately that selection of an appropriate text was of primary importance. Griffes demanded no less from the poet than from himself. No matter the particular period or topic of the poem, it had to maintain a high degree of integrity. No trite rhymes or empty phrases could stir his creative talent. Griffes was not one of those composers who would choose a mediocre poem and attempt to immortalize it with his musical setting.

From the beginning of his song composing career, then, Griffes relied almost without exception on poems of high literary merit. This fact remains true despite the statement by Edward Maisel that Griffes often insisted "the value of a poem did not determine its suitability to musical setting."<sup>1</sup> In general, if a less than first-rate poet were chosen, Griffes had the ability to select those of his poems which rose above mediocrity in their sentiment and expression.

With his earlier works, Griffes depended mostly on the estab-

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<sup>1</sup>Edward M. Maisel, Charles T. Griffes: The Life of an American Composer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), p. 111.

lished romantic poets and that body of literature which had proved fruitful for Lieder and mélodie composers before him. Thus his first song, "Si mes vers avaient des ailes," was composed to the poetry of Victor Hugo. Eight of the German songs of this period use Heinrich Heine texts. The other poets used are equally or hardly less renowned: Nikolaus Lenau, Emmanuel Geibel, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Joseph von Eichendorf.

As George Conrey has stated, of the German poets inspiring Griffes's songs, only "Julius Mosen is a minor light in the field of nineteenth century German literature."<sup>2</sup> And yet Griffes's choice of particular poems written by Mosen "shows that Griffes had a full appreciation of the poetry and chose the poems for their intrinsic value instead of on the basis of the popularity of the poet."<sup>3</sup>

It is in Griffes's divergent songs that the literary status of the poet involved is of least consequence. Perhaps the statement concerning value and suitability of a poem applied most clearly to these songs. With the exception of Sidney Lanier's "Evening Song" and Walter Crane's "This Book of Hours", the texts chosen in this group are either folksongs of no known authorship (e.g., "Two Birds Flew into the Sunset Glow," the three Javanese songs) or by minor or oriental poets (e.g., Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan).

With his mainstream songs, however, Griffes turned away from the long-established poetry, as well as more exotic texts, and began to seek poets more his own contemporaries. Though usually "lesser known,"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>George Arnold Conrey, "The Published Songs of Charles Tomlinson Griffes: A Stylistic Examination" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chicago Musical College, 1955), p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

these were poets who are beginning to become recognized in the early twentieth century as promising poets. Although "Griffes was much interested in the new American poetry movement,"<sup>5</sup> as his selection of Sara Teasdale's "Pierrot" illustrates, he was not oblivious to major developments in English poetry as well. The works of Oscar Wilde are of even more importance for the mainstream period than are those of Heine for the formative period. His last songs drew inspiration from John Masefield and William Sharp, who wrote under the pseudonym of Fiona MacLeod. Throughout this period of song-composing Griffes sought poets whose search for a new artistic expression paralleled his own.

With such an auspicious list of poets, it is difficult to understand why Griffes might insist against the value of a poem as criteria for its choice for musical portrayal. His indisputably accurate judgment in selecting quality texts cannot be mere coincidence.

Despite any debate concerning the literary status of the poet or the intrinsic value of the poem, one factor in Griffes's selection of text was almost universal throughout his career. Few would argue with the statement that the coloristic possibilities of the poem were the chief determining factor in its selection.

Much has been said about Griffes's attraction to color per se. Marion Bauer remarks that "he was attracted to anything yellow or orange."<sup>6</sup> Some have added that this attraction later led to an association of particular colors with certain tonalities.<sup>7</sup> Still others have

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<sup>5</sup>Maisel, Charles T. Griffes, p. 111.

<sup>6</sup>Marion Bauer, "Charles T. Griffes As I Remember Him," "Musical Quarterly, 29:356 (1943).

<sup>7</sup>Virginia Raad, "L'influence de Debussy: Amérique," in Debussy et l'évolution de la musique au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, ed. Edith Weber (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1965), p. 219.



pointed to the fact that even the literature Griffes enjoyed the most was full of coloristic imagery, as in this selection from Niels Lyhne:

Through the tracery of shadow, each color rose to  
meet the light: white from Edele's dress, blood-red  
from crimson lips, amber from yellow-blond hair,  
and a hundred other tints around about, blue and <sup>8</sup>  
gold, oak-brown, glitter of glass, red and green.

Such comments, true as they may be, tend to force limitations on the relationship of Griffes to color, however, and are so involved in specific detail that the necessary perspective is lost. It is rather in its broadest sense that color became the universal criterion for Griffes's choice of promising poetry. For Griffes, color in poetry encompassed the qualities of: intense human emotion, imagery within the natural world, and ultimately an other worldly mystical force transcending human experience. Rather than focusing on individual aspects of a particular poem that he was considering, Griffes envisioned the opportunities within that poem as a whole for the best possible use of his palette of musical colors.

Yet this importance of color, even in its broadest sense, should not be used as a rationale for categorizing Griffes's work in one particular style. As will be seen, his interest in color permeates his entire career.

Although Griffes's choice of poems with coloristic traits transcends all three categories of his songs, there are tendencies within each category which reveal differing directions. Maintaining trends of the romantic style, the texts of the formative period abound in both natural imagery and compelling emotional phrases.

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<sup>8</sup>Jens Peter Jacobsen, Niels Lyhne (New York: P. F. Collier, 1940), p. 43.

"Der träumende See" consists almost entirely of images describing nature, from the opening line:

Der See ruht tief in blauen Traum,  
von Wasserblumen zugedeckt;

to the final phrase:

ein blauer Falter aber fliegt darüber einsam hin!

As the title betrays, in "Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz" we find an exuberance of emotion seldom encountered so overtly in Griffes's songs. Again the closing phrase illustrates this coloristic trait, emotional this time, extremely well:

o höchstes Leid, o höchste Lust,  
wie seid ihr euch so gleich!

Indeed, so great is the emotional intensity in this poem that it has led one commentator to refer to it as "exalted religious expression."<sup>9</sup>

Most of the songs of the formative category are more subtle in their imagery. Usually they combine both emotional intensity and natural imagery, as in the final phrases of "Könnt'ich mit dir dort oben gehn":

Zu glücklich ist die Nachtigall,  
Die in dem Lindenbaum  
Vor ihrem Haus mit süßem Schall  
Durchklinget ihren Traum!

With "Zwei Könige sassen auf Orkadal" we find the only real exception in this formative category to Griffes's text choices. Though there are occasional coloristic images, it is obvious that this poem is predominantly narrative in character and any emotional or natural images encountered are subordinate to the story itself. Intense emotion may be important to this story of two kings and their conflict, but the

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<sup>9</sup>"Recital of American Songs," record jacket, Nancy Tatum, soprano and Geoffrey Parsons, pianist (London record no. 26053, 1968).

depiction of activity is more crucial in this poem:

Es sprühten die Fackeln, es blitzte der Stahl--  
zwei Könige sanken auf Orkadal.

For the most part, the imagery encountered in the divergent song texts is straightforward and simple; both subtlety and extreme exuberance are mutually avoided. This may be attributed to the fact that so many of the texts are folk-like in character.

Though definitely not of folk origin, "Evening Song" illustrates well the straightforward imagery of this category. Thus we hear soon after the opening:

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,  
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,

Some of the most obviously colorful images are found in "This Book of Hours," wherein the book itself is described as having "burnished letters gold" and "colours manifold". Neither are emotional images ignored: "This priceless book is bought with sighs and tears untold." It must be understood that simplicity of expression does not imply simplicity of intention or lack of substance, as the significance of this outwardly simple text has escaped more than one commentator.

Nothing could be more straightforward than the oriental texts chosen by Griffes for his Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan. Yet their preponderance of colorful and emotional images relates them closely to the other poems chosen by Griffes. Of the oriental songs, "Tears" best illustrates the type of emotional imagery common to the divergent songs:

But that which makes my grief more deep,  
Is that you know not when I weep.

Of the folk songs, "Two Birds" could almost be considered an exception to Griffes's tendency to choose coloristic texts, as it is

basically a narrative. Yet there is an emotional intensity built up by the successive images from one verse to the next:

Two birds flew into the sunset glow. . .

Two maidens down to the harvest go. . .

Two stars remembered the long ago. . .

Two children die in the hut below. . .

The contrast between the imagery of the preceding two categories and the mainstream category is one of kind as well as degree. Not only is the imagery more intense and more prevalent but it also takes on a different character. Coloristic images, though often still from nature, are more abstract in tendency, and the emotional atmosphere has psychological and, in the last songs, mystical implications.

With regard to coloristic imagery, Griffes found his most inspiring texts among the poetry of Oscar Wilde. Such a fact should not be "surprising in a man like Griffes to whom the very sound of words, as to Wilde, was a music in itself."<sup>10</sup> Most obvious of these texts is, as the title itself even suggests, the "Symphony in Yellow." The song consists almost entirely of colorful images, with several novel word combinations and similes:

And like a yellow silken scarf,  
The thick fog hangs along the quay. . . .

And at my feet the pale green Thames  
Lies like a rod of rippled jade.

Such colorful images abound also in the Four Impressions based on Wilde texts. "Le Réveillon" begins with such a phrase: "The sky is

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<sup>10</sup> Donna K. Anderson, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes: A Descriptive Catalogue" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. 129.

laced with fitful red." Besides the ever-present emphasis on color itself imagery is created through unusual juxtaposition of words and through more abstract or unusual illustrations of a natural phenomenon:

And jagged brazen arrows fall  
Athwart the feathers of the night. . .

This increased complexity of the character of the imagery is shown also in "Impression du Matin," which begins with a not so striking phrase, though very colorful:

The Thames nocturne of blue and gold  
Changed to a Harmony in grey. . .

while the final image, though still colorful in character, turns also towards a more complicated, almost psychological, statement:

But one pale woman, all alone,  
The daylight kissing her wan hair  
Loitered beneath the gas lamps' flare,  
With lips of flame and heart of stone.

Whereas the imagery used by Wilde is often sensed as cold or rather detached, the Rupert Brooke poem "Waikiki," though no less complicated in its imagery, is felt as warm and sensuous. There is a stark contrast between the previous examples and the opening phrase of "Waikiki":

Warm perfumes like a breath from vine and tree  
Drift down the darkness.

Yet here, as in the Wilde poems, there is a hint of the most psychological side of human emotions:

Of two that loved or did not love, and one  
Whose perplexed heart did evil, foolishly. . .

Again, interpretation of the significance of the text is becoming increasingly more difficult.

No longer merely a suggestion, in John Masefield's "Sorrow of Mydath" a psychological intensity of emotion prevails throughout the entire song. Gone are the subtle innuendoes of the formative songs or the

simplistic but straightforward images of the divergent songs. Here finally is the confession of the tormented soul: "Weary the heart and the mind and the body of me." This leads to an impassioned outburst of total desperation:

Would that the waves and the long white hair of the spray  
Would gather in splendid terror and blot me away. . .

By his last three songs, Griffes again sought texts with intense emotional imagery, yet the tendency now is toward mysticism, or the inaccessible otherworld. His final song, "The Rose of the Night," bears the following introductory note:

There is an old mystical legend that when a soul among the  
dead woos a soul among the living, so that both may be reborn  
as one, the sign is a dark rose, or a rose of flame, in the  
heart of the night.

Intensity builds towards the climax of the song as this mystical process is described:

As a wind eddying flame  
Leaping higher and higher,  
Thy soul, thy secret name,  
Leaps through Death's blazing pry!

One critic, attempting to prove that "Griffes's musical expression was completely unoriginal," has found fault with Griffes's selection of texts. Of the poems already discussed, Mr. Robinson derides "the mincing gait and forced metaphor of things like Oscar Wilde's "Symphony in Yellow" and "the synthetic South Sea nostalgia of Rupert Brookes's 'Waikiki'."<sup>11</sup> Many others would dispute such remarks. However, to reiterate an earlier point, the importance lies not with the purported literary merit of the texts chosen, but with their ability to inspire the composer with their

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<sup>11</sup>Edward Robinson, "The Life and Death of an American Composer," American Mercury, 30:346 (November, 1933).

colorful imagery or emotional intensity.

Musical expression was, therefore, the ultimate determining factor in Griffes's selection of a poem. With the text chosen, it was then the composer's intention and task to parallel the poetic expression as closely as possible in his musical setting. Through careful choice of melody, harmony, form, and rhythm Griffes had an exceptional ability to capture the essence of his chosen texts. When a true balance was maintained between all the elements, and the validity of one was not sacrificed for emphasis upon another, Griffes attained an excellent fusion of text and music.

In this fusion, the emphasis is on the overall scheme. The task is to balance all the elements involved in order to depict the text in a unified manner. The unique psychological perspective of the poem is the vital core for the creation of each song. On the other hand, Griffes let few opportunities to express textual nuances escape him. He had the ability to carefully weave commentary on such nuances into the general scheme. Thus a continuity of expression was maintained by not interrupting the flow for illustration of every minute detail of the text. Those poetic phrases which he believed required closer attention to nuance were not ignored, yet he remained faithful to the individual spirit of each text. This may be attributed to his keen sense of the necessity of balance.

Universal as this trait is for Griffes, the character it assumes differs between the divisions. Within the formative songs, Griffes tended to concentrate very closely on every detail or slight variation in the text. At times this resulted in a lack of unity. In contrast, in the divergent songs he remained mostly on a general level of expression, with less attention to nuance. It is with the mainstream songs that, while

nuances are closely attended, the continuity is almost always maintained. The following discussion of the elements of Griffes's song style will elaborate more specifically on the composer's search for a vital and genuine expression of his texts.



### CHAPTER III

#### MELODY IN GRIFFES'S SONGS

Study of Griffes's manuscripts has shown that melody was composed first and that the fabric of the song was woven around this initial framework. It is the conclusion of Dr. Anderson, who has completed an intensely detailed study of Griffes's manuscripts, that Griffes "generally composed the vocal line first, and then added the piano accompaniment to complement both the textual and musical implications of the voice part."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, though of primal importance, Griffes seldom concerned himself with the creation of melody for melody's sake. So great was his respect for text that melody had to be integral to the requirements of the text rather than pursuing an independent direction from purely musical necessity. Single words were seldom isolated for obvious tone-painting, though within this body of poetry many such opportunities arose. Precisely because Griffes refused to become entangled in the pictorial characterization of every single aspect of the poem and insisted on a broader perspective, he was able to maintain a continuity and consistency of style.

Melodically speaking, Griffes's respect for the demands of his texts is made manifest in two general ways. First, preconceived melody is avoided. Each new phrase was an individual entity in Griffes's mind and demanded a unique, rather than borrowed, approach to melody. Secondly,

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<sup>1</sup>Donna K. Anderson, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes: A Descriptive Catalogue" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. 158.

the song must remain as faithful as musically possible to the declamation of the text. The rhythms, accents, even pitches of the text provided the underlying shape for Griffes's melodies.

A melody can be considered "preconceived" on either a general or more specific level. On the general level, the structure of the melody may appear to be extraneous to the structure of the present text. In other words, the melody may not be chosen in regard to the particular shape of the text in question. Perhaps the melody had been composed previously, with no specific text in mind at the time, and was now being utilized in a song situation. Or, most commonly, the melody has been chosen for its absolute lyricism rather than its relation to the words. Sometimes a particular style or scale structure has been adopted which establishes limits or regulations as to melodic shape.

More specifically, a melody may be considered preconceived if it follows or continues a pattern already established earlier in the song. Most often this means that a melodic pattern composed to words in another part of the song is now being used for new text later in the song: the melody is repeated to new words. It does not necessarily have to be a melodic pattern which is repeated, however. Perhaps the rhythmic pattern has been established, and the melody must adhere to the pattern for formal unity.

Examples of both general and specific preconceived melodies can be found in Griffes's songs. However, Griffes had an admirable ability to adapt these preconceived melodies to their new situations. In any case, the use of preconceived melodies does not necessarily mean that these melodies do not fit their respective texts; no evaluative judgment is intended. Yet the concept is useful for Griffes's songs, for on those

rare occasions when a melody is discovered which simply does not match its text, that is an indication that the melody may have been preconceived. The conceptual process behind its use may then be examined.

Although Griffes closely followed the declamation of his texts, his melodies can only rarely be called "declamatory." Griffes never considered the translation of the declamation of his text into song to be the equivalent of speaking the text, though the rhythms and intervals used in his last songs more closely approximate this. Griffes's declamation is still "singing," not the sprechgesang of Schoenberg or the sometimes undefined melody of impressionist composers.

Yet Griffes understood that melody cannot constantly be enslaved by the declamation of the text. There are occasions when it seems musically necessary to sacrifice declamation in order to maintain the integrity or unity of the musical setting.

### Formative Songs

There is quite a wide variety of melodic writing in the formative songs. At various times one hears in Griffes's German songs examples of Brahmsian vocal lines that are long-breathed and seem to soar of their own accord. Or there may be an overall Wolf-like respect for text and declamation. Seldom do the melodies seem preconceived, but, if so, they result basically from the specific use of preconceived melody, as in the continuation of a pre-established pattern. Rather, in his formative songs, Griffes tended to approach each line of text as a unique entity: the general lack of melodic repetition indicates the preponderance of through-composed songs in this category.

Of all the formative songs, "Zwei Könige" and "Meeresstille" most closely approximate the true declamatory style. The first of these

remains true to the narrative tradition, with the vocal melody declaiming the words of the text. As would be expected, the melody remains rather simple and mostly syllabic in character, closely following the accents and tone of the text.

The opening phrase of "Zwei Könige" is a very straightforward, almost detached rendering of the beginning of the narrative, which sets the scene (Example 25).<sup>2</sup> Yet gradually as the tale unfolds, the melodic line becomes increasingly agitated. Griffes dramatically set the final phrase of the narrative for unaccompanied voice, again in the lower range as at the first and now più lento. Griffes proved in this song that the declamatory style need not be without its own passion.

Although there is little if any exact repetition of melodic phrases, there is a homogeneous melodic character throughout the entire song. Certain melodic figures or tendencies create a continuity of the melodic line and serve to unify the through-composed formal structure.

Griffes's only Goethe setting, "Meeresstille", illustrates many of the same tendencies as the preceding song, though on a much smaller scale. While not a true narrative, it is also rather declamatory. Rather it has more of a chorale character--sustained and basically static. Again the melody remains simple and straightforward, with little ornamentation. Its opening phrase is even more unassuming than that of "Zwei Könige" (Example 17). Other than the rather steady rhythmic pulse, with an occasional dotted figure when Griffes decided a syllable needed extra emphasis, there are no obvious recurring patterns in the melody. Each melodic phrase

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<sup>2</sup>All musical examples can be found on pages 131 through 168, immediately following the main body of the thesis. For coherence in identification and comparison of the songs and style periods, the examples follow the chronological sequence of the songs.

has been uniquely composed for its particular poetic phrase.


In contrast to the melodic style of the two preceding songs is Griffes's first German song, "Auf dem Teich, dem Regungslosen." Actually, several different melodic styles are encompassed in this song; the changes in style usually correspond with a new sentence of poetry. The expansive, long-breathed opening phrase is reminiscent of Brahms (Example 3). Still lyrical but more declamatory in nature is the beginning of the second phrase (Example 5). So declamatory that it approaches recitative is the opening of the third phrase, accompanied only by sustained chords.

Though these shifts in melodic style may be suggested by changes in the text's mood, there are other instances in Griffes's setting of this text which cannot be so easily defended. Most disputable is the lovely lyrical rising melodic line from meas. 6 to a pianissimo climax on *g#* at meas. 8 on the word "in." Since the necessity of emphasizing this particular word, or even the phrase in which it is found, is not apparent, this could be one example of Griffes's use of lyricism as an end in itself (Example 4).

More successful in melodically fulfilling the text's requirements is the delicate "Könnst' ich." Though still very lyrical in character, the entire first strophe is still a more than adequate rendering of the declamation of the text. The rhythms and accents of the poetic phrase are maintained while none of the lyricism is sacrificed (Example 27). However, the tendency towards an expansive melody, with a character almost extraneous to the text it carries, dominates the second strophe. Again the textual necessity for such a long-breathed, climactic melody is not obvious (Example 28).

This song exhibits two manifestations of specific preconceived

melodic writing which are common to the German songs of this period.

First, though not really strophic in formal structure, the opening melody of the first strophe also begins the second strophe, though the direction after this repetition is totally different. Also, it is a rhythmic motive rather than a melodic motive which becomes the recurring pattern. This  figure, or a variation of it, can be found in several of Griffes's German songs.

Perhaps the most melodically gratifying song in the formative group is "Auf geheimem Waldespfade." The flowing and lyrical vocal lines build naturally from the text and are controlled in their expansiveness rather than forced or exaggerated. Above all, this song illustrates Griffes's capability for uniting a pleasing lyrical melody with excellent declamation (Example 6). This sustained melodic writing gives way by meas. 15 to a more agitated, impassioned utterance (Example 7). This phrase also illustrates Griffes's attempt in this song to capture the emotive content of each poetic phrase in his melodic writing.

On those rare instances in his German songs when a melody is obviously repeated with new text, Griffes varied the return in such a way that it would more closely accommodate its new situation. A very subtle example of this occurs in "Es fiel ein Reif"; there are only two slight changes between the opening melody (meas. 4-8) and its repeat (meas. 43-47).<sup>3</sup> "Am Kreuzweg wird begraben," which will be discussed later, and two songs in manuscript, "Gedicht von Heine" and "Nachtlied," exhibit similar variations in the repeated melody, some more obvious than those in "Es fiel ein Reif."

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<sup>3</sup>This song is Song 2 of the Appendix.

No mention has yet been made of melody in the two French songs, Griffes's first extant attempts in the solo song. Study of these songs is valuable not for the individual importance of Griffes's student works but rather for the light they can shed on the development of Griffes's song style. It is interesting to see how the composer later resolves problems first encountered early in his career.

Primary among the problems found in "Si mes vers avaient des ailes" is an uncertainty concerning the procedure for setting poetic declamation to melody. Perhaps this is due to Griffes's insecurity with the French language, but there are several examples of awkward text settings. From the manuscript it is apparent that the composer had originally divided the word "fuiraient" (meas. 5) into three syllables, as "fu-ir-aient," but then corrected this to the correct two syllable form. Yet his emphasis is still on the first rather than the second syllable. There is also an ambiguity about the proper setting of the final "e", which is generally set as an extra syllable when sung. Thus we have the proper two-note setting for "comme" in meas. 11, but originally only one note for the same word in meas. 27.<sup>4</sup>

It also seems possible that the melody of this song could have been preconceived in the general sense. It is impossible to be certain, of course, but the flow of the melody does not seem to be intrinsic to the shape of the text. It seems instead that the words have been arranged as well as possible along a predetermined vocal line.

What is true for "Si mes vers" is even more true for "Sur ma lyre l'autrefois". Griffes's setting of the French language is even more dis-

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<sup>4</sup>This song is Song 1 of the Appendix.

torted in his second song. The unnaturalness of the setting is manifested in two main problems. First, as in "Si mes vers," there is the ambiguity concerning the final "e", which is apparent already in the first vocal phrase (Example 1). This problem of neglecting to add a syllable for the mute "e" recurs throughout the song, though many instances have obviously been corrected. The second problem concerns the opposite tendency, composing several notes to a syllable. This results in long melismas on single words (Example 2). The fact that Griffes failed to divide all his words into syllables in this song, and that there is an uncertainty as to which note was meant for which syllable, adds to the confusion.

Again it seems as though the melody had been previously composed. Or perhaps the melody stems more from the atmosphere Griffes wanted to create than from the accentual patterns of the words themselves.

Similar problems with preconceived melodies can be found in the German songs of the formative group, though as a whole Griffes was much more successful in setting his German texts. The melody created in meas. 11 of "So halt'ich endlich dich umfassen" becomes the pattern for the three successive phrases from meas. 15 to meas. 20 (Example 12). The continual crescendo and constant reaching for the  $g\sharp$  seem not genuinely suited to the demands of the text and detract from the actual climax (on  $g\sharp$  again) in meas. 25 (Example 13). In "An den Wind" the constraining pattern is established in the accompaniment of the final strophe, which forces the vocal melody into a more unnatural flow.

Yet most of Griffes's German songs illustrate that he has competently dealt with the problems first encountered in his earlier French songs and has arrived at satisfactory resolutions. His German songs are



admirably composed around the text-created-melody ideal in which each poetic phrase is viewed as a unique entity demanding its own melodic treatment.

### Divergent Songs

In contrast to this, the melodies of the divergent songs tend much more strongly to preconceived forms. This is true for at least three reasons, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. There is more of an abundance of formal structures in which melodic repetition is crucial to the nature of the form itself: e.g., strophic, rondo, rounded binary. Secondly, there are more instances in which the creation of pure lyricism seems to have been the critical factor in composing the melody. And thirdly, there is an overriding desire on Griffes's part in most of these songs to compose a melody that would conform to a certain style, be it oriental, medieval, folk, or traditional. So universal is the incidence of preconceived melody for the divergent songs that every song of this group exemplifies at least one, if not two, of these three approaches.

None of the songs of the divergent group is so obviously strophic--in both textual and musical structure--as "Two Birds." The melody of the first strophe (meas. 5-24) is well-chosen to match the metrical flow of the poem. Due to the parallel construction of the four strophes of the text, very few modifications in the original melody are necessary in order to accommodate the new strophes. Griffes preferred to entrust the embodiment of the expression changes from strophe to strophe to variations in the accompaniment rather than the melody. The exception to this is of course the third verse, which was intended as a contrast to

the other three. Its vocal melody begins basically as the original melody (meas. 51), though at a different key level, but changes to its own unique melodic and metrical character by meas. 56. Apparently Griffes could find no accompaniment for this contrasting melody that satisfied him, as eight measures are left incomplete.<sup>5</sup>

Use of preconceived melody in its generalized aspect is also illustrated in this song. As in most of his divergent songs, Griffes intended to compose this song in what he considered was an established style. That is, certain characteristics concerning melody, harmony, and complexity are attributed to a particular style, and in deciding to compose in that style, the composer agreed to limit or confine his creativity within the boundaries delineated by that style. In this case, for his Rumanian folk poem, Griffes chose a haunting melodic pattern based on the harmonic g minor scale, which he associated with the Rumanian or East European folk song sound (see particularly meas. 5-7 and meas. 18-20). The relatively simple melodic structure and the use of repeated melody were also attributed to this style. Perhaps Griffes was unable to complete the third strophe because it was assuming a character too complex for the style he had adopted.

Though contrasting greatly in mood with this folk song, "We'll to the Woods, and Gather May" illustrates similar compositional techniques. Again, the repetition of the original melody is necessary for the delineation of the song's formal structure, in this case either a modified strophic or, more likely, a rondo-type form. The mechanics of this structure will be discussed more thoroughly later, but it is impor-

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<sup>5</sup>This song is Song 4 of the Appendix.

tant to know that repetition of a major portion of the melody of the first strophe plays a great part in the structure of two of the other three strophes (Example 48).

Of course, some manipulation of the text results with so many repetitions of melodic motives, yet Griffes has avoided awkward distortions of syllables or misplaced accents remarkably well. Again this is due in large part to the choice of a poem with stanzas uniform in meter and parallel in structure.

In a way Griffes adopted another style of composition for this song also, though not exotic in any way. In this song, and in its rightful companion "Come, Love, Across the Sunlit Land," Griffes restricted himself to a more traditional style, one common to many of his contemporaries but rare to Griffes. He understood the melodic implication of this style to include a diatonic foundation, with only rare and brief departures from the predictable direction, and lyrical motives which are interesting in their own right. Though not oblivious to the declamatory demands of the text, it is obvious the main concern in "We'll to the Woods" is to convey the spirit of the carefree poem.

The ultimate extent of Griffes's tendency in the divergent songs to lend musical considerations more weight than those of the text is realized in "Evening Song," the composer's first song in English. Although the opening melodic phrases are not particularly unsuited to the poetic phrases they carry, the impression is created that the vocal melody is stretched out across the accompaniment. It quickens or prolongs its movement as the pattern established in the piano dictates. This tendency increases throughout the song so that by the final phrase the vocal melody has been totally subordinated to the logical musical development of the piano accompaniment (Example 29). The expansiveness of the melody in

this song gives the mistaken impression that the search for flowing lyricism is the rationale behind its creation, yet closer study of the structure and direction of the song reveals that the real motivation is the logical completion of the established musical momentum, regardless of the text's demand.

One cannot debate the fact that the results of this technique are sometimes disastrous for the declamation of the text. Since this song is also in an ABA' form, the possibilities for distortion of the text are even greater. The prime example is the final phrase, beginning "Never" (Example 29). The break in the phrase created by the rest (as well as the extreme length of the first word) not only destroys the text's metrical flow but also creates ambiguity in the meaning of the text. All in all, the violations committed in this song cause one to wonder if Griffes was uncomfortable writing in his own language at this time. It is not strange that Robinson was prompted in his less than complimentary article about Griffes to say that Griffes's "feeling for English prosody. . .was distinctly warped, and in some songs the scanning of the lines is positively absurd."<sup>6</sup>

The same cannot be said concerning "Tears," perhaps the most expressive of Griffes's Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan. Although there are occasional distortions, on the whole Griffes managed to successfully combine the sustained, long-breathed phrases with a realistic setting of the text's declamatory demands. Particularly natural in its flow is the melody in the  $\frac{4}{4}$  poco piu mosso section (Example 69).

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<sup>6</sup>Edward Robinson, "The Life and Death of an American Composer," American Mercury, 30:346 (November, 1933).

Yet the very title of this set belies the fact that this song is inspired from a preconceived pattern. As with the others of this set, Griffes includes, directly under the title, the scale pattern which is the basis for this song (Example 67). Both melody and accompaniment conform to this established scale, with an emphasis on melodic and harmonic intervals of a fourth and a fifth (see "grief more deep" in preceding example). That Griffes conceived of the oriental style as also embodying a straightforward simplicity can be seen in the uncomplicated character of the melody; there are no complex rhythmic patterns or vocalisms.

The naturalness of the melody achieved in "Tears" is not matched in the remaining songs of the set, however. Although the declamation of the text is followed fairly well in "The Old Temple among the Mountains," Griffes assumed that a melismatic ornamentation of a few words would add to the oriental flavor (Example 66). Examples of this same technique can be found also in "A Feast of Lanterns." In this song, the repeated patterns established in the voice and the accompaniment, and the five-tone scale melodic limitation, have actually stifled the creative expression possible in the vocal melody. As in most of Griffes's oriental songs, what emerges is a static melody, with little expressive quality, whose sole tasks are to faithfully follow the five or six note scale and to declaim the text as simply as possible (Example 77). Melodies such as these are the only ones in all of Griffes's songs which in any way deserve Robinson's uncomplimentary appraisal:

Thus his melodies, for the most part, lack grace and vitality, and usually degenerate into a monotonous recitative, giving the effect of a prolonged chant or parlando.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

As far as the actual sound achieved is concerned, Griffes's Javanese songs, also in the divergent group, come closer to an authentic oriental expression. This is due to several facts concerning the vocal melody of these three songs ("Djakoan," "Kinanti," and "Hampelas"). First, according to some sources, the melodies used in these three songs are from actual Javanese folk songs which Eva Gauthier had collected and asked Griffes to harmonize.<sup>8</sup> Whereas the Five Poems sound like an American composer's impression of what an oriental melody should sound like, the Javanese melodies have a more authentic-sounding aura. The use of the original Javanese words also adds to the creation of a more oriental sound.<sup>9</sup>

#### Mainstream Songs

In contrast to the divergent songs, there is little use of pre-conceived melody on the general level in the mainstream songs. Whereas with the preceding group every song evolved from Griffes's desire either to assume a particular style or to create melody expressive of demands other than those of the text's declamation, there are surprisingly few instances of such techniques in Griffes's mainstream songs.

As usual, the two borderline songs, "La fuite de la lune" and "An Old Song Re-Sung," prove to be the problematic exceptions to this statement. (This is, of course, the reasoning behind considering them to be borderline between the mainstream and divergent songs). In "La

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<sup>8</sup>A. Walter Kramer, "Charles T. Griffes: Cut Down in His Prime, a Victim of Our Barbarous Neglect of Genius," Musical America, 32:39 (May 22, 1920).

<sup>9</sup>"Hampelas" is Song 5 of the Appendix.

fuite" the difficulties stem mainly from the use of lovely lyrical melodic phrases which seem not particularly suited to the needs of the text. Evidences of this are most prevalent in the opening section (the song is in ABA' form) (Example 40). The flow of the melody seems not entirely natural to the flow of the text. The possibility that this may have been a pre-composed melody seems stronger when one realizes that the original melodic pattern returns in the A' section in the piano this time, and now overshadows the less lyrical vocal melody (Example 42).

Other indications that lyricism may have been the chief determinant in creation of the melody are found in several instances in which Griffes's usual close attention to the metrical patterns of the text is lacking. At meas. 7 the composer shifts meters from the original  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{4}{4}$ . Although this is usually done to accommodate some nuance in the text's rhythm, in this case the shift is not demanded until the next measure, and forces an unnatural accentuation of weak syllables in meas. 7. In the A' section Griffes builds a lovely rising line, with a crescendo, to a climax at meas. 29, yet the word emphasized here is "to" rather than a word with either more content or longer duration. The overabundance of such examples in this song suggests that melody resulted from the desire to satisfy musical imperatives rather than textual demands, except for the possibility that the actual graceful contour and sustained flow of the melody itself were meant to express the peaceful mood of the text.

The situation with "An Old Song Re-Sung" is somewhat different. There is no overall problem with the melody suiting the demands of the text. Instead, the opening melody sounds strikingly familiar. It is almost as though Griffes had adapted an actual sea chantey tune to his own sailor song (Example 85).

The possibility for problems with suiting the text arises from the fact that this song is strophic in form and that the melody stated in the first strophe forms the basic pattern for the other two strophes. Yet, as in the strophic divergent songs, the metrical patterns from one poetic strophe to the next are so similar in construction that few difficulties are actually encountered. And in this particular song, as in no other strophic song written by the composer, Griffes very capably varied the melodic line from strophe to strophe to accommodate both metrical and expressive changes. It is the final strophe which has the most variations, many of them created more for a better setting of the text's expression than from declamatory necessity.

This use of the repetition of melodic motives in some form for unity's sake is indicative of the contrast between the formative and mainstream songs. While such repetition was found to be rather rare among Griffes's early songs, there are few among his mainstream songs which do not recall an earlier melodic pattern, though admittedly its recurrence is sometimes highly transformed.

Such a technique is evident even from the very first song of this group, "The First Snowfall." Rather than the obvious repetitions used in "An Old Song Re-Sung", Griffes preferred a more subtle approach in this song. Of the four phrases of the song, the first three open with a similar contour, both intervallically and rhythmically (Example 30). Griffes very cleverly suspended the reiteration of this pattern in the fourth phrase until the conclusion of the phrase (Example 32). Such variations allow for textual differences without sacrificing the unity achieved through motivic repetition,

As the first of Griffes's mainstream songs, "The First Snowfall"



also illustrates the composer's close attention in this group to the declamatory demands of the text. Melody in these songs springs naturally from the poem and yet maintains a character which is definitely musical and vocal. Only one real difficulty arises in this particular song, and that is the break, created by a sustained note and a rest following, which interrupts a poetic phrase which should somehow be musically connected (Example 31). While interrupting the continuity of thought, Griffes did maintain the phrase balance by following the established pattern.

The composer was able to find more satisfactory solutions for such textual difficulties in his later Four Impressions. In these four Oscar Wilde settings, Griffes has given the most minute attention to preserving both the poetry's metric and expressive qualities. The return of an opening motive in the beginning of the A' section of both "Impression du Matin" and "La Mer" presents no difficulty in textual declamation. In "La Mer," as in most mainstream songs, the melodic pattern is transformed masterfully to embody not only the slight accentual changes but also the contrasting mood of the text. While the opening melody is marked molto tempestoso (Example 35), the recurrence of the melody, slightly altered, is marked tranquillo (Example 38).

Already obvious in the first phrase is Griffes's solicitous care in setting the accentual flow of the text. Though written in 8 meter, occasionally the vocal line will shift to a <sup>6</sup>duple meter in order to make certain syllables more equal in stress. Besides the "white mist" phrase in meas. 3, there are four other such instances in which Griffes felt a more equal emphasis was imperative. At times the composer also found that a more judicious rendering of the metrical pattern could be achieved by the addition of an extra beat to the measure (Example 36).

Above all, this song is an excellent example of Griffes's use of melody to express the character of the text. Almost every phrase can be shown to convey somehow the significance of the words it declaims. The opening image of the drifting mist is embodied in the contour of the melody, as it creates a wave with its descending and ascending motion. For the description of the steel rods "throbbing" in the engine room, Griffes chose an ascending broken Major seventh chord, with an agitated piano accompaniment (Example 37). Yet such portrayals are not incidental or detracting but are well-integrated into the overall scheme.

Never again in Griffes's songs is this melodic embodiment of every nuance of the text employed quite so intensely and so consistently; occasionally in his later songs a melodic phrase is encountered whose contour and movement are particularly content-laden. Such is the case in "In a Myrtle Shade" (Example 71). This example again illustrates Griffes's common technique of changing meters for better text accentuation. One of the most natural melodies composed by Griffes results from another such meter shift at the conclusion of the song (Example 72).

Now more aware of the idiosyncrasies of English diction, which allow for stronger accents and tangible metric patterns, Griffes created vocal melody in this song which is both very lyrical in its own right and mindful of the demands of the poem's declamation. Unlike most mainstream songs, no melodic pattern recurs to unify. However, Griffes did create a continuity of melodic character, based especially on a recurring use of pentatonic melodic phrases (Example 70).

More typical in its use of recurring melodic phrases is "Sorrow of Mydath." In this case, one particular motive occurs at the close of each of the three formal sections (Example 79). Its repetition creates

no special problems with declamation, however, because the same words are also repeated. Except for the first two phrases, which are almost identical, no other melodic repetitions are used, though at times certain figures are reminiscent of earlier motives.

Actually the expressive qualities of melody in this song are much more striking than any use of preconceived melodies. Rather than attempting to embody the character of each poetic image in its contour as do the melodies of the Four Impressions, the melody of "Sorrow of Mydath" succeeds in encompassing the penetrating, total despair of the poet. Most obvious is the use of chromatic vocal glide. This "new melodic technique. . .-- the notated glissando"<sup>10</sup> occurs in the opening phrase and returns for the word "mind" in meas. 9 and, in altered form, for "crying" in meas. 15 and "dreamily" in meas. 42 (Example 78).

Yet the melodic expression of this text relies on much more than an occasional vocal glissando. As the song progresses, the melodic lines become less diatonic and more irregular in character. By the middle of the song it becomes evident that both vocal pitch and rhythm, though notated exactly, are really only an approximation of the line desired. In this song more than in any other he composed, Griffes most nearly approached an actual singing declamation closely resembling the agitated speech from which it takes its inspiration (Example 81). Not at all lyrical, melodic phrases such as this, in their tortured character, embody the torment of the poet.

Melody, then, is one element in Griffes's songs which closely adheres to the criteria delineating the three groups. In the formative

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<sup>10</sup>George Arnold Conrey, "The Published Songs of Charles Tomlinson Griffes: A Stylistic Examination" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chicago Musical College, 1955), p. 138.

group we find Griffes struggling with conflicting approaches to setting a poetic text to a vocal melody. In avoiding the use of preconceived melody, Griffes tended to isolate each phrase or section for individual treatment, thus often destroying melodic continuity. Preconceived melody is, by contrast, very prevalent among the divergent songs, especially in a general sense. Usually a particular style has been adopted which, in dictating certain "givens", allowed little opportunity for more natural melodic creativity. It is in the mainstream songs that vocal melodies in the specific sense are used strategically and judiciously for continuity. At the same time, Griffes succeeded in melodically satisfying both expressive and declamatory demands of the text.

## CHAPTER IV

### HARMONY IN GRIFFES'S SONGS

As important as melody was for the embodiment of the text's expression in Griffes's songs, it was obviously capable of portraying only a single dimension of the musical representation of the literary entity. Harmony was entrusted with providing another important dimension of the text's expression.

Although there is a tremendous variety of harmonic styles in Griffes's songs, these differences ally themselves closely with the three divisions--formative, divergent, and mainstream, so that harmony becomes one of the most evident criteria for the delineation of his songs into these groups. Yet there are overall traits which apply to all three divisions, and for the most part the differences are those of degree rather than kind.

Of these traits, the most universal is that each song is approached individually as to harmony. This means that the particular harmonic style of a song depends above all on the coloristic demands of the text and of the vocal melody, which has usually been composed first. In the desire to match harmonically the text's expression, Griffes provided in almost every song some unusual or unexpected harmonic effect. Despite the specific style undertaken, there is some kind of harmonic experimentation or unexpected shading in almost every song. The degree of unpredictability attained differs greatly from group to group.

Every group shows at least an occasional deviation from traditional harmony. In some instances this is illustrated only by the persis-

tent use of the modified triad, such as with an added sixth. Or the traditional tonal structure may be concealed or even ignored through the use of delayed resolutions, nondiatonic scale structures, or even atonality.

Also not predetermined is the process by which the texture of the harmony will take shape. Although his earlier songs demonstrate a reliance on a homophonic structure, there is a tendency in his later songs towards a linearity of composition, often accompanied by an increased complexity of texture.

### Formative Songs

Since Griffes worked basically within the romantic and post-romantic harmonic tradition in his formative songs, it could be mistakenly assumed that the composer automatically followed the harmonic patterns established by his predecessors. Certainly there are obvious reminiscences of Brahms, Strauss, and even Schumann, but that is not to imply that Griffes's formative songs are totally predictable or in any way lacking originality. While limited to the boundaries of the predetermined traditions, his individual expression is everywhere apparent. The impression is that while he remained within the romantic vocabulary, he composed imaginatively with these established materials.

Most typically these songs exhibit the rich harmonies and ongoing modulations of the later German romantic composers. In many songs the harmonic fluctuation is rather constant due to continual chromatic alteration and enharmonic use of chords. Such a technique, though sometimes permeating the entire song, is often particularly prominent in the central section, as in "Auf ihrem Grab" (Example 16).

A more continuous modulatory process is found in "So halt'ich," in which every resolution becomes the pivotal chord for a new modulation, either as a dominant to a new tonic or through enharmonic transformation. This process never diminishes in intensity until the grand  $B\frac{6}{4}$  chord in meas. 25 and the following cadence, which resolves to the long-awaited B tonic chord.

Although Griffes closely observed the post-romantic style of harmony in these songs, he did allow for an occasional harmonic twist or unexpected combination. Perhaps the French songs are the only exceptions to this trait, as they remain almost entirely within traditional and predictable boundaries. Sometimes this unexpected twist results from a deceptive cadence. In "Es fiel ein Reif" not only is the voice introduced with such a cadence, but also the piano insists on the submediant chord while the voice continues as though in the tonic key, resulting in a clash between the high  $\underline{g\#}$  and the low  $\underline{a}$ .<sup>1</sup>

Quite often the surprise comes from the introduction of a totally unexpected chord, as in the second strophe of "Am Kreuzweg" (Example 21). The emphasis thus placed on the text and its expression is obvious. This is consistent with Griffes's determination to capture the spirit of the text in every way possible. Every such harmonic twist can be somehow related to the composer's desire to emphasize or clarify a poetic image.

This song also illustrates one of the two possible ways that the songs of the formative group attempt to deviate from traditional harmony. Again, as in "So halt'ich," the song opens with an insistent dominant chord which only begrudgingly resolves to the tonic  $\underline{C}$  in meas. 9. Though

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix, Song 2.

not as intensely modulatory in character as "So halt'ich," this song does clearly show the persistent delaying of the expected resolution.

The other possible deviation from traditional harmony can be seen in the opening and closing chords of "Auf geheimem Waldespfade" (Example 6). In this song, the  $\underline{D}^b$  triad with the added  $b^b$  (the sixth) becomes the actual tonic chord, as nowhere in this song does this chord occur without the added sixth. Upton regards this as a foreshadowing of Griffes's later songs:

In the second (published) song, "Auf geheimem Waldespfade," we begin to perceive the shadow of the future thrown across its<sub>2</sub> very first measure, in the tonic chord colored by its sixth.

This technique is even more persistent in "Könnst' ich mit dir" (Example 27).

Yet in no way can it be implied that these two techniques of deviating somewhat from the established tonality--the delayed resolution and the transformation of the tonic chord--are actually attempts at negating the accepted tonality. The real tonal center of every song of this group is never far from being evident, though perhaps momentarily concealed. Mention of these techniques is made here only to point out that already Griffes accepted the possibility of dealing more freely with tonality; the style adopted prevented further experimentation in tonality for these songs.

There are in this group of songs, however, no such foreshadowings of Griffes's later predilection for linear writing. Almost every song in this group is composed around a vertical concept, the most obvious result being block chords, as in "Meeresstille" (Example 17). There are

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<sup>2</sup>William Treat Upton, "The Songs of Charles T. Griffes, Musical Quarterly, 9:317 (1923).



frequent arpeggiations of the harmony in the accompaniment among these songs, yet they perform much the same task as the block chord. They are used mainly to create the effect of a lighter texture rather than to introduce a horizontal effect (see "Könnt' ich," Example 28).

### Divergent Songs

The concept of preconceived harmony, parallel to that of preconceived melody, can be introduced in discussing both the formative and divergent songs. Generally speaking, this preconceived harmony suggests that the particular style of harmony to be used has already been chosen before the composer investigates the individual character of his text. This concept would be especially applicable to the formative songs, even though preconceived melody was not so prevalent, because the reliance on late romantic harmonic patterns is universal. In the divergent songs this concept is equally fundamental. However, as with melody, the particular harmonic style which has been assumed differs between songs.

It is with harmony in the divergent songs that Griffes demonstrates most clearly his attraction to "unusual" styles. Thus, in order to achieve the desired sound, Griffes readily accepted the limiting principles for composing in that specific harmonic vocabulary, be it oriental, modal, or more traditional. Yet, as with the German songs, his use of these styles was not mere imitation but was tempered with his own individual perspective. That Griffes was aware of the dangers resulting from too close an identification with one style is apparent from a letter written by him to Miss Bauer:

but in America people always label you and then you can't get away from it. I don't want the reputation of an Orientalist

and nothing more.<sup>3</sup>

His struggle with such stereotyping was generally successful, as many critics have agreed that "Mr. Griffes could see beyond the confines that hem in such a special cult [as the Japanese songs]."<sup>4</sup> In summary, though accepting the fixed restraints of a particular style, Griffes still maintained his individual creativity within that established style.

As with the formative songs, there is some type of unusual harmonic effect in almost every one of the divergent songs. In the case of the songs written in an oriental or modal style, the entire song was created for its novel harmonic effect. In songs such as the Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan, "In the Harem," and the three Javanese songs, the peculiar oriental chordal combinations are not incidental to the overall character but become the rationale for the song's composition.

Yet even the more traditional songs contain some unusual harmonic effect, though never as thorough-going as in the oriental and modal songs. Perhaps the most harmonically venturesome of the traditional songs is "Evening Song." The constant flux of harmony through modulations and enharmonic alterations in this song is highly reminiscent of Griffes's German songs of the formative period. That the composer discovered such a style unsuitable to his English texts is shown in the fact that he never again returned to this kind of post-romantic compositional style in his songs.

The other traditional songs, "We'll to the Woods" and "Come, Love,"

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<sup>3</sup>Marion Bauer, "Charles T. Griffes As I Remember Him," Musical Quarterly, 29:369 (1943).

<sup>4</sup>Richard Aldrich, "Aid for American Composers," in his Concert Life in New York 1902 - 1923 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1941), p. 629.

are much less complicated in harmonic character. Except for the occasional introduction of an unrelated chord, there is little that is unpredictable in the harmony of these songs. The carefree character of these two poems has been realized in Griffes's use of rather straightforward and unambiguous harmony.

With the modal songs, "This Book of Hours" and "Two Birds," Griffes again tried to elucidate harmonically the spirit of his texts. In "This Book of Hours," "the medieval touch is cleverly realized through the use of modal harmonization, . . . the whole having the tint of ivory and old gold."<sup>5</sup> To achieve this effect, Griffes deviated somewhat from the unexpected tonal progressions and harmonized his melodies in the natural minor (or aeolian) mode. His cadences also avoid the use of a dominant and have more of a plagal sound (Example 52).

It is the East European, or more specifically Rumanian, folk song style which Griffes pursued in "Two Birds." Again he chose a modal basis, this time to capture the spirit of the folk text. Although a g minor key signature is notated, it is actually a dorian mode, not a harmonic or natural minor scale, which is used. The resulting harmonizations create a major subdominant and a minor dominant, which add to the haunting effect.<sup>6</sup>

In neither modal song is the feeling of diatonicism or tonality very remote. The dependence on a particular mode is understood as a slight deviation from the traditional tonal foundation, not as an attempt to destroy the feeling of tonality.

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<sup>5</sup>Upton, "Songs," p. 320.

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix, Song 4.

In contrast, Griffes consciously attempted to avoid a strong tonal feeling in his oriental songs. Each of the Five Poems is based on a non-diatonic scale, usually pentatonic but occasionally with an added tone. Although a definite tonal center seems apparent at times, as the  $\underline{e}^b$  minor of "The Old Temple," there are some songs for which such a tonal center is not just elusive but entirely lacking. Such is the case with "Landscape." The five-note pentatonic scale is closely observed, not only in the melody but in the harmonization of that melody as well (Example 61). A triadic, functional harmony is strictly avoided, with fourths and fifths, and occasional seconds and sevenths, comprising most of the accompaniment (Example 62).

The "restraint" of which Howard speaks concerning Griffes's Five Poems is evident here. "We never feel that the composer has done all he knew how to do; he has chosen for us only the choicest bits of his vocabulary."<sup>7</sup> As usual, Robinson disagrees, considering this group more "like exalted versions of Chop-sticks."<sup>8</sup>

Even more restrained in harmonization are the three Javanese songs. Although some feeling for a tonal center is usually present, the emphasis on non-diatonic scales again creates a nontraditional, non-functional aura. Often the tonal center is made obvious through the constant repetition of an ostinato pattern, which emphasizes one or more notes as a sort of ground or drone (see meas. 1-10 of "Hampelas" in Appendix). As with the Chinese and Japanese songs, there is frequent use of

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<sup>7</sup>John Tasker Howard, Charles Tomlinson Griffes (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1923), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup>Edward Robinson, "The Life and Death of an American Composer," American Mercury, 30:346 (November, 1933).

fourths and open fifths, with no attempt to relate chords into functional<sup>50</sup> progressions (Example 84). Actually, it is pointless to consider some of these accompaniments as real harmonizations, since the piano often merely doubles the vocal line with slight variation.

What this is pointing to is the frequent use of linearity in the divergent songs rather than a dependence on simultaneous composition as in the formative songs. In the oriental songs this often takes shape as the juxtaposition of two or more independent melodic lines, some of which may be ostinato patterns (Example 84). A related use of linearity is the incidence of an occasional countermelody in the accompaniment. In "So-Fei Gathering Flowers" both the vocal melody and countermelody are supported by the continuing ostinato melodic pattern in the left hand (Example 76). The transparency of the lines and the constant repetition of patterns reinforces the feeling of the nonfunctional, static harmony.

This linearity is not nearly as pronounced among the traditional songs, which depend much more on simultaneous harmony. Of them, only "Come, Love" demonstrates similar use of repeated ostinato patterns and the use of a countermelody (Example 55).

Only in "This Book of Hours," however, is linearity developed to the extent that it can be called contrapuntal in the traditional sense. As with the modal basis for this song, Griffes chose the contrapuntal style to create a medieval sound to convey the atmosphere of the text. Hans Nathan selected this song to illustrate that Griffes "showed an interest in linearity. . . .The purity that he attains here, against the raffinement of sound, stems from the tranquil motion of quasi-modal voices, regulated by a contrapuntal setting."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Hans Nathan, "United States of America" in A History of Song, ed., Denis Stevens (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1960), p. 429.

Specifically, this contrapuntal setting is achieved through the use of strict canonic treatment of the vocal melody (Example 53). An identical setting is used in meas. 29-31 for the phrase "of votaries who sought His countenance of old." A variation of this, in which the vocal line is ornamented and imitated but not treated strictly canonically in the accompaniment, is found in the central section (Example 54). In no other Griffes song is the contrapuntal imitation so obvious and consistent as in this song.

### Mainstream Songs

Griffes's use of harmony in the mainstream songs becomes probably the most significant delineating factor in grouping his songs. Whereas a derivative harmonic aspect is evident in both the formative and divergent groups, with the mainstream songs the composer's creative individuality is everywhere apparent. In none of the mainstream songs does Griffes restrict his harmonic expression to the demands of a particular style. When a tendency towards a certain style is suggested, Griffes succeeded in recreating that style into his own individual expression. It is in the mainstream songs that Griffes swept away the restrictions of the past and sought a more progressive harmonic expression.

Of the mainstream group, the two borderline songs again exhibit the exception to this overall statement. There is nothing striking about the opening section of "La Fuite de la lune." In fact harmonically it sounds very traditional. The first two strophes of "An Old Song Re-Sung" are only slightly more venturesome harmonically. Yet the use of less predictable chord combinations based on a whole tone scale (creating augmented triads) in the middle section of "La Fuite" reveals its affinity

with the other mainstream songs (Example 41). Likewise, the striking dissonances and nontriadic chord combinations in the final strophe of "An Old Song Re-Sung" warrant that song's inclusion in the mainstream group (Example 87). That this particular use of dissonance in the upper register is meant to suggest the "chinking" of the "broken glass" is a rather obvious incidence of Griffes's harmonic coloring of the text's expression.

The three Tabb settings have been chosen as Griffes's first mainstream songs because they illustrate a break-through in his compositional style, especially with respect to harmony. For the first time he no longer attempted to match the masters of the past but allowed free rein to his own individuality. All three illustrate the ambiguity of tonality and concise embodiment of the text's expression which earmark the songs of this group.

From the first measure of "The First Snowfall" the contrast with the formative songs is apparent (Example 30). Although the d harmonic minor scale is actually treated as the tonal center, the overlay of the strong a dominant emphasis throughout the song creates a persistent ambiguity, an almost bitonal aspect. It is really only the voice which resolves to the d center, for even at the conclusion the piano insistently emphasizes the a center (Example 32).

That the conflict created by these two centers is highly expressive of the text has been noted by several critics:

Two harmonies are implied: the tonic and the dominant ninth. When performed with the damper pedal depressed (as indicated by Griffes), these harmonies, sounded in descending eighth-note arpeggiations become interwoven as the illusion that .

falling snow creates.<sup>10</sup>

Another kind of harmonic conflict is felt in the second of the Tabb settings, "The Half-ring Moon." Again the opening measure reveals this conflict, the juxtaposition of both major and minor modes of the C/c centers (Example 33). Yet ambiguity of mode is not the only striking harmonic effect; this song also reveals an uncertainty concerning the true tonal center. It could be either the C Major/c minor center with which the song opens or the e minor center to which all resolves in the cadence which closes the first strophe (Example 34). That the C center should be considered the submediant of the e center, not the e center the mediant of the C center, is finally determined in the second strophe, but the vacillation between the e<sup>h</sup> and the e<sup>b</sup> is persistent even to the piano postlude. As with the preceding song, such harmonic effects are created to parallel the spirit of the text, in this case the rather agitated melancholy of betrayed love.

No less venturesome harmonically than the published Tabb settings, "Phantoms" is a worthy companion piece to the two preceding songs. The piano arpeggios, which introduce the song and continue throughout most of this work, could be considered to be constructed from the c whole-tone scale or the d<sup>b</sup> minor seventh with added sixth (b<sup>b</sup>).<sup>11</sup>

A striking dissonance results at meas. 3 from the simultaneous sounding of c in the voice and d<sup>b</sup> in the piano. When the arpeggios are quieted, at meas. 13, the result is no less dissonant, as a succession of

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<sup>10</sup>Daniel Boda, "The Music of Charles T. Griffes" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1962), p.40.

<sup>11</sup>This song is Song 3 of the Appendix.



chords built also on a nondiatonic scale creates the ghostly feeling suggested by the preceding text--"the winds a-mourning go." Nor is this ambiguity quickly resolved at the song's conclusion. From meas. 21-22 the voice appears to have resolved to the key of F Major, but again the piano postlude continues noncommittally. It introduces a  $\underline{c}^b$  (meas. 22) and cadences to F Major through the rather remote  $\underline{B}^b$  seventh, which is heard as the dominant seventh of  $\underline{E}^b$  instead of the subdominant of  $\underline{F}$  Major.

With such an auspicious opening to his mainstream group, it is no wonder that by the time of his Four Impressions Griffes embraced a harmonic style totally removed from his more traditional beginnings. Yet the composer himself considered this a natural turn of events:

It is only logical that when I began to write I wrote in the vein of Debussy and Stravinsky: those particular wide intervalled dissonances are the natural medium of the composer who writes today's music.<sup>12</sup>

Such a description clearly fits this set of four Wilde songs. Though dissonances and nondiatonic progressions are evident throughout most of "La Mer," the central section is a worthy example of Griffes's textual expression through harmonic coloring (Example 36). The pianississimo juxtaposition of augmented, chromatic, and whole tone lines in a swaying movement is well-suited to the text at this point.<sup>13</sup>

Though all four of these settings are replete with such harmonic embodiments of the text, a particularly gripping effect is created in the

<sup>12</sup>Edward M. Maisel, Charles T. Griffes: The Life of an American Composer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), p. 112.

<sup>13</sup>The asterisk in this example indicates the possibility of a missprint. The manuscript of the other version of this song suggests a  $\underline{g\#}$  should be used instead of  $\underline{g^h}$ ; this would be more consistent with the whole tone progression of this upper voice.

final section of "Impression du Matin." The stark chords, the dissonance, coupled with the sustained, pianissimo character, aptly complete the description of the "pale woman" (Example 60).

It becomes evident, then, that many of the mainstream songs are created almost entirely from unusual harmonic effects. Griffes's contemporary critics were not oblivious to this fact and often protested loudly against such "radical tendencies."<sup>14</sup> The Rupert Brooke setting, "Waikiki," seems to have been a frequent recipient of such criticism. Dissonant clashes, parallel chords, and nonfunctional progressions are the rule rather than the exception, though all is handled so smoothly that the flow appears natural (Example 73). Yet such composing led one rather disturbed critic to write:

If this be the music that he has felt from knowing this poem, then indeed is he the American Stravinsky, as he has been dubbed by his disciples in the nether regions of Greenwich Village! To us he seems to have missed the warmth, the languor of the "murmurous, soft Hawaiian sea." There is too much of the experimental handling of chords, of the shifting of plans--in short, one feels that Mr. Griffes is more interested in raveling and unraveling the material of which modern music is made than saying what he has to say straightforwardly.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps this critic was uncomfortable with the avoidance of a tonal center and the constant chromatic shifting, especially evident in phrases such as meas. 16-17 (Example 73). Other critics, in their dislike for this song, were still capable of seeing its expressive qualities. Upton comments "that the song almost instinctively repels," due particularly to "the uncouth character of much of its harmonization." Yet he

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<sup>14</sup>Howard, Charles T. Griffes, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup>A. Walter Kramer, "In a Myrtle Shade, Waikiki, Phantoms," Musical America, 27:40 (March 30, 1918).

can conclude that "this may well be a part of the composer's plan in expressing the psychology of the text."<sup>16</sup> Later critics have been more judicious concerning this song; one even calling it "probably the best song written by Griffes," especially for its "dissonant and haunting background to the Rupert Brooke sonnet."<sup>17</sup>

Whereas with the formative and divergent songs an occasional unusual harmonic effect could be easily distinguished from modifications of tonality, such a distinction is not so simple with the mainstream songs. Thus the particular examples cited above as "striking" effects are not necessarily divorced from the simultaneous deviation from tonality in the same songs. Actually, as has been pointed out, each of these songs is ambiguous towards tonality to some extent. Now it is important to specify what techniques Griffes used to break with tonality in the mainstream songs.

While in the formative songs the modification of the triad through the addition of an added tone in no way disturbed the sense of tonality, the modified triad in the mainstream songs is indicative of a transformation in Griffes's concept of harmony. Usually it implies the use of some scalar structure other than diatonic, or it signifies that chords now progress according to sound rather than function.

"Symphony in Yellow" exhibits perhaps the most obvious use of modified triads, emphasized through their sustained, block presentation, which creates a tolling impression (Example 43). Apparently, these chords, though sounding like a triad with added second and sixth tones, are actu-

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<sup>16</sup>Upton, "Songs," p. 320.

<sup>17</sup>George Arnold Conrey, "The Published Songs of Charles Tomlinson Griffes: A Stylistic Examination" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chicago Musical College, 1955), p. 97.

ally built on a pentatonic scale: B C# D# F# G#. However in this song Griffes uses such a scale very freely, unlike his oriental songs. There is considerable shifting of harmony in the middle section. The A' section reclaims the original scale but with more chromatic vacillation. Again all is undertaken for the most suitable expression of the text. In writing of Opus 3, from which this song comes, Peterkin considered this song "the best of the set, the harmonic scheme envisaging the peculiar atmosphere of the poem in a very apt manner."<sup>18</sup>

Such a handling of chords is highly suggestive of the impressionists, with whom Griffes's name was constantly being associated:

His vivid imagination, his sense of color, his frequent use of a sort of tone cluster effect, creating a subtle, blurred atmosphere, assimilates well with the French school. . .<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps no song illustrates this affinity as thoroughly as "In a Myrtle Shade." As in the preceding song, the free use of a pentatonic scale forms much of the harmonic basis for the song. Similar modified triads result, but an underlying tonality is almost always present, despite the parallel chords and "blurred atmosphere." This is due particularly to the avoidance of grating dissonance and the reliance on functional progressions which are more traditional in nature, such as the frequent use of the dominant. This does not mean that the expected resolutions follow the approach from the dominant, however. The B Major seventh chord of meas. 6 is followed by an a minor chord in meas. 7, and the song is concluded with an unresolved dominant ninth.

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<sup>18</sup>Norman Peterkin, "Charles T. Griffes," The Chesterian, n.s. 30: 162 (March, 1923).

<sup>19</sup>Alice Gerstl Duschak, "Interrelationship of Impressionism and Symbolism," NATS Bulletin (October, 1967), p. 20.

Less impressionistic in its use of the modified triad is the Giovannitti "Phantoms." The grating harmonic clash created by the simultaneous sounding of minor seconds with the triad is one of the most frequent demonstrations that this is Griffes's most dissonant song to date (Example 74). Yet this altered triad is not an occasional harmonic event for variety's sake, as it appears to be in the formative songs. It indicates a new perspective on tonality which permeates the entire song. In his dissertation, Boda explains that "chord progressions are formed from various harmonic combinations of tones from this artificial scale," apparently  $d\ e^b\ f\ g^\# \ a\ b^b\ c^\#$ .<sup>20</sup>

Diatonicism and consonance are consistently avoided, except for brief sections of more traditional and predictable harmony to accompany a more lyrical melody and text (Example 75). Then, in opposition to songs in the other groups which use occasional dissonance for effect, "Phantoms" uses occasional consonance as a contrasting effect for text expression.

Critics were neither oblivious nor sympathetic to such dissonance. Upton, usually more than charitable in his appraisals, considered it "far-fetched" and "a veritable tonal nightmare."<sup>21</sup> To Peterkin, the piano was not "the right medium for these aced (sic) and sometimes merely ugly progressions."<sup>22</sup> Though intending to be uncomplimentary in his assessment, the critic in New Music after the song's first performance most nearly summarized Griffes's new outlook on the possibilities of harmony:

<sup>20</sup>Boda, "Music of Griffes," p. 42

<sup>21</sup>Upton, "Songs," p. 322.

<sup>22</sup>Peterkin, "Charles T.Griffes," p. 164.

If ever there was a poem that clamored for rich and warmly felt music it is this "Phantom." Mr. Griffes writes for it an essay on the validity of the minor second as a factor of beauty in musical art.<sup>23</sup>

This approach towards atonality through the emphasis on chromaticism and dissonance continues with Griffes's later songs. Throughout most of "Sorrow of Mydath," tonality is ambiguous, blurred by chromatic cross relationships and unresolved chords, yet there is a cadential feeling for b minor or even f# minor occasionally in particular at the close of sections. Again Griffes displayed a preference for a plagal approach to cadential resolution. In this song, harmony coincides with melody in its use of approximate rather than actual pitches. Though notated, the dissonant tone clusters give the impression that it is a force of block sound, rather than specific pitches, which is sought for its dramatic effect (Example 80).

Of Griffes's final three songs, the settings of Fiona MacLeod, only the last, "The Rose of the Night," exhibits a thorough-going approach to atonality. With "The Lament of Ian the Proud" and especially "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine," the identity of tonal center is never in doubt. The exception is the contrasting section of "The Lament" in which a more agitated and atonal setting is an attempt to match the hallucinatory aspect of this section of text (Example 89).

It is only the more subdued dynamics of "The Rose of the Night" which make it sound less atonal and clashing in its dissonance than "Sorrow of Mydath." Actually, Griffes's last song is also his most consistently atonal. So nontraditional is it in its harmonic vocabulary that it led the reviewer at its first performance to write:

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<sup>23</sup>Kramer, "In a Myrtle Shade," p. 40.

All of them were modern in the fullest sense of the word, those of Messrs. Prokoffieff and Griffes being "ultra."<sup>24</sup>

The opening emphasis on the diminished octave, negating any strong feeling for tonal center, continues to the final measure of the song and becomes Griffes's "tonic" chord for this song (Example 94). Both melody and harmony avoid the diatonic scale in preference for a more chromatic basis. When Griffes did allow more traditional harmony, he refused to resolve it in the expected way, so that even the more diatonic chords assume an atonal character. Yet most common again is the tone cluster effect, in which the pounding clash is more desired than the specific pitches (Example 96). For Griffes, this undefined tonality must have been the carrier of the mystical, intangible nature of the text.

The preceding example also displays the composer's tendency towards linearity in his mainstream songs. Of this group only "The Rose of the Night" is consistent in its use of a countermelody, which becomes like an ostinato pattern in its persistence (Example 94, right hand figure). Although other songs have an occasional countermelody or canonic treatment of voices, the linearity of this group takes shape as constantly moving simultaneous lines rather than strict imitation. So noteworthy was Griffes's talent for this kind of writing that it led Upton to consider it one of his most outstanding qualities:

More specifically we find in his technique one item of superlative charm--his skill. . .in modelling appropriate and effective contrapuntal passagework for the piano. Here it seems to me he has few equals and no superiors.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>A. Walter Kramer, "Vera Janacopulos Presents New Songs," Musical America, 29:44 (March 29, 1919).

<sup>25</sup>Upton, "Songs," p. 324.

There is some evidence of this technique in Griffes's earlier mainstream songs, in particular the Four Impressions. But it is in his last mainstream songs, especially the MacLeod settings, that this technique becomes a consistent factor throughout the song.

It is in reference to "The Lament" that Griffes's contrapuntal skill is most often mentioned.<sup>26</sup> Though in evidence throughout most of the song, it is at the climax that the linearity is most complex and intense (Example 90). One often finds in Griffes's songs the coincidence of intensified contrapuntal lines and the text's expression of strong emotion. Thus, the coloring of Griffes's text can be accomplished harmonically not only through the shifting of chords but also through the complexity of texture.

Although the approaches to harmony in each of the three groups may differ greatly, the overall concern on Griffes's part in each song was to find the appropriate harmonic vocabulary to match the text's expression. With his romantic texts, his vocabulary was similarly romantic. With his oriental or folk texts, his vocabulary was similarly pentatonic or modal. It was the more contemporary English texts which allowed Griffes more freedom to experiment harmonically, and thus he discovered an expression which closely approached atonality. Yet within this freedom there is the utmost respect for the expressive demands of the text.

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<sup>26</sup>"An Evening of Vocal Entertainments: 1849-1971," program notes for recital of Elizabeth Suderburg, Illinois State University, March 19, 1975.



## CHAPTER V

### FORM IN GRIFFES'S SONGS

For Griffes, the form of his chosen poem was only a starting point for the formal structure of the corresponding song. Generally speaking, Griffes tended towards a line by line, or poetic phrase by poetic phrase, approach. Although there are several songs composed in comparatively strict forms, the predominating stance was one of relative freedom in formal structure. It was not, then, the formal plan of the poem which dictated to Griffes but the individual demands of each new phrase of the poem, regardless of the poet's organization of those phrases.

It is obvious that a wide variety of forms resulted from this attitude on the composer's part. Yet despite their organizational differences, there are some general procedures common to all three groups. Very often, after a stationary opening section (especially with respect to harmony), Griffes introduced a contrasting section. Usually this new section encompassed increased harmonic activity and heightened rhythmic motion, or as one commentator described them, "modulations and changes in tempo."<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, Griffes displayed an open attitude toward the essential nature of climax. Although a climax of some sort was usually seen as necessary for the delineation of form, there were several different ways in which it could be approached, and the climax itself could assume differ-

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Boda, "The Music of Charles T. Griffes" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1962), p. 109.

ing characters. Climax is not always the highest or loudest note reached, nor is it always preceded by building melodic and dynamic motives. Its essence comes from its dramatic impact rather than any traditional formula.

Finally, the composer attempted to maintain a sense of continuity through the use of repetition, though its specific manifestation varied widely. Often it was merely a reminiscence of an opening motive at the conclusion, but it could also take the shape of the reiteration of an entire section. A favorite device was the use of recurring motives. Here Griffes displayed a wealth of motivic invention, as these recurring motives could be melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic in character.

Griffes's insistence on some technique for balancing his songs emphasizes the quality of unity of expression which permeates all styles in which he chose to compose. There is evident in his writing an "almost classical reverence for form; not at all in terms of binary, ternary, and the like, but of symmetry, balance and proportion."<sup>2</sup>

### Formative Songs

The songs of the formative group reveal the extreme of Griffes's line by line approach to text. His German songs in particular are organized on the premise that every new line of poetry should have a new musical accompaniment. Obviously, this led to a high incidence of through-composed songs. The most thoroughly durchkomponiert (through-composed) of his songs is the dramatic narrative "Zwei Könige sassen auf Orkadahl."

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<sup>2</sup>William Treat Upton, "The Songs of Charles T. Griffes, "Musical Quarterly, 9:327 (1923).

The song is based on an "unfolding process of composition,"<sup>3</sup> in which each successive line is more agitated and intense than the last, until the climax is reached in the penultimate line. This ongoing drive is never interrupted by the exact repetition of an earlier motive, although a continuity of melodic writing, already mentioned, does maintain an integrity of expression.

However, it is not true that "all of Griffes's songs are through-composed rather than strophic."<sup>4</sup> In "Am Kreuzweg" a modified strophic pattern is used to accommodate the parallel poetic strophes. Of the four phrases in each of the two strophes, the first and last are essentially the same musically and textually, with the change to major in the final phrase (Example 20 and 22).

However, if a through-composed form is not used, the favorite structure is generally either a rounded binary or ternary. His very first song, "Si mes vers," is a ternary form, with the material of the initial section (meas. 4) returning after the slightly contrasting section (meas. 12-20) in the final section (meas. 21-28).<sup>5</sup>

Despite the particular formal organization, the incidence of a contrasting section is almost universal. With the exception of the process in "Zwei Könige," even the more through-composed songs exhibit this trait. A typical procedure can be noted in "Könnt' ich", though through-composed-binary, in which a rather placid opening section (Example 27) is contrasted from meas. 13 on with a busier arpeggiated figure and more

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<sup>3</sup>Boda, "Music of Griffes," p. 92.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>See Appendix, Song 1.

frequent harmonic modulations (Example 28).

The supreme contrast can be found in "Nacht liegt auf den Fremden Wegen." Apparently Griffes conceived this poem as having two distinct sections, each with separate expressive qualities. The first section (meas. 1-13) creates a very dark and gloomy atmosphere through the use of the c# minor key and a sustained character (Langsam) (Example 8). Though still subdued, the second section (meas. 14 to end) contrasts through more lyrical melodic phrases, higher register in both parts, more harmonic and rhythmic activity (poco più mosso ma non troppo), and especially the use of the C# Major key (Example 9). However, in the desire to contrast textual expressions, Griffes sacrificed unity to a great extent. There is so little attempt to integrate the two sections thematically that they almost appear unrelated. The recall of the opening theme of the second section by the piano in its postlude (meas. 26-27) also tends to isolate this section by unifying it apart from the first section.

Griffes composed "An den Wind" as a series of contrasting sections. The restless opening section (meas. 1-12), set in d minor (Example 23), gives way to a brief lyrical section only two short phrases in length (meas. 13-16), set in D Major (Example 24). Immediately the restlessness and minor mode of the opening section return, only to be followed by an even more intense (appassionata) section using sixteenth-note figures in the piano and building dynamically to a fortissimo climax. Here again the contrasting sections result from Griffes's insistence on a special expressive style to match every variation in the poetry.

In the more rounded or symmetrical songs, the central section contrasts with a relatively static opening and closing section. The peaceful beginning of "Auf geheimen Waldespfade" is followed by a central section

of growing restlessness. This contrast is accomplished through the introduction of triplet figures (often juxtaposed with duple figures), a greater reliance on chromaticism, and more frequent harmonic shifts (Example 7). By the final phrase the original peaceful motive has returned, as much to fulfill the poetic demands as to unify the musical expression.

Griffes's last formative song, "Nachtlied," is basically ternary in design, with an exceedingly lengthy middle section balanced somewhat by an extended piano postlude. Again the opening section is rather static harmonically, with a lyrical but sustained melodic line (Example 46). The contrast at meas. 24 is immediately apparent; dissonant harmony, duple rhythm, and a more angular melody are introduced (Example 47).

Whether or not such contrasting sections are obvious, very often the formal structure of the song will unfold as the drive towards the climax. This drive then can become a primary organizing factor in both through-composed and rounded forms. The traditional approach to a climax is illustrated in "Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz." After the typical wandering and growing momentum of the central section, all is resolved in the attainment of both the highest pitch and the most accented fortissimo (Example 11).

Yet not all climaxes in the formative songs are perceived as triumphant resolutions of the turbulence of the preceding section. An unusual effect is created in "Auf dem Teich" by "reversing normal dynamic procedures at pitch climaxes."<sup>6</sup> Also untypical is the fact that this "reverse climax" occurs early in the song, not as a culmination but more as a preparation


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<sup>6</sup>George Arnold Conrey, "The Published Songs of Charles Tomlinson Griffes: A Stylistic Examination" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chicago Musical College, 1955), pp. 24-5.

(Example 4).

Another kind of "reverse climax" can be found in "Es fiel ein Reif"; this accomplishes much the same feeling of culmination as the climax of "Wohl lag" yet is totally opposite in character. After a contrasting section, the motive of the opening section returns at meas. 43, yet rather than building upward towards high pitch and loud dynamic outburst, the melodic line steadfastly descends to sustain the word "Stern" over a Neapolitan sixth chord (see meas. 47-51).<sup>7</sup> Such different approaches to the nature of climax show that already in his formative songs Griffes was flexible in his concept of climax.

Nor was Griffes rigid in his attitude toward unity in his formative songs. Although he was generally consistent in his demand for unity, the actual techniques he used to achieve this unity vary widely. A favorite method was the use of recurring motives, perhaps repeated exactly or only fairly similar in contour or scope. Very often such motives are melodic, as in "Wohl lag," throughout which the accompaniment continues its ascending and descending arpeggiated triplet figures almost without interruption. In "So halt' ich endlich dich unfangen" the continual recurrence of similar melodic patterns is over-worked and tends to detract from the unified expression being sought.

Yet the recurring motives are often rhythmic rather than melodic in character. The rocking figure created in "Auf ihrem Grab" by a basic  $\frac{12}{8}$   rhythm continues in some form throughout the song, with only brief interruptions in the contrasting section.

The other favorite method of providing a unified structure was

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<sup>7</sup>See Appendix, Song 2.

the repetition, often greatly altered, of some phrase or motive from the opening section of the song. There is hardly any song, even though basically through-composed, which does not allude somewhat to thoughts from the introduction of opening phrase of that song. For some songs it is only a suggestion, as in "Meeresstille," in which the opening block B Major chords recur at the close, only slightly altered. The reminiscence of the piano introduction during the piano postlude is a common technique in the formative songs for rounding out the song.

Of course, in many songs the repeat is much more than a suggestion and creates a rounded binary or even ternary organization. Yet such a repetition was seldom without variation of some kind, to accommodate either new text or changed emotion. Griffes realized that the events of the contrasting or central section had an impact on the repeated section following it, so that its character had to be changed accordingly.

An excellent example of such a transformation can be found in "Gedicht von Heine." The opening vocal phrase is marked both Bewegt und rasch as well as mezzo forte, while it is accompanied by a swift arpeggiated piano figure (Example 18). The tragedy of faithless love, likened to the capricious wind, is revealed in the contrasting section. Masterfully, Griffes, though returning basically the same original motive, transforms the surrounding atmosphere to encompass this revelation (Example 19).

One of the invaluable benefits of studying a composer's manuscripts is that one occasionally discovers clues concerning the composer's creative process. For instance, the original piano postlude for "Es fiel ein Reif" has been struck in favor of a much shorter and simpler conclusion. Apparently Griffes refused to return to an earlier motive unless its reintroduction made sense musically and textually. The original coda

recalls the shift to the major section (meas. 17-20), though it remains in minor. The mere change of mode was insufficient in Griffes's mind to transform the earlier mood, which was inappropriate here, therefore the simpler ending was substituted.<sup>8</sup> This again reveals Griffes's sense of balance, a trait of considerable consistency already in his formative songs.

### Divergent Songs

Griffes assumed a position opposite that of the formative songs in his divergent songs. In this group the through-composed song, or line by line approach, is the exception rather than the prevailing rule. Even the nature of his through-composed technique in these songs differs from that of the former group. Although new poetic lines may be given a different setting, rarely does this setting contrast in contour or expression so intensely with preceding phrases as in the formative songs. Rather there is a similarity from phrase to phrase which creates the impression of one ongoing line from beginning to end, which most closely approaches the technique of "Zwei Könige" rather than the continual changes of the more typical "Auf dem Teich."

Such an ongoing impression is created particularly in the oriental songs, wherein new phrases are similar to preceding ones but are not repetitions. Both vocal melody and accompaniment exhibit this trait in "The Old Temple"; any changes can be analyzed more as variations rather than contrasts to the original statement. The eight-line poem is divided into four sections of two-lines each, with each new section receiving slightly varied treatment, perhaps an added syncopated or arpeggiated figure. Yet

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



these variations, never abrupt, do not disturb the continuous flow for they are not perceived as discrepancies in the established line.

Sometimes a through-composed vocal line has been combined with a rounded form in the accompaniment. Another song from the Five Poems, "So-Fei," illustrates this combination. As with "The Old Temple" the slightly varied phrases give an ongoing continuous impression to the lines rather than a feeling of constant contrast. The beginning of the A' section is heralded by the return of the opening left hand motive. Yet both the voice and the right hand are given different, but not necessarily new, material.

This points to the fact that there is much greater use of fixed or definite forms in the divergent group. Particularly favored is the ternary organization, as described in "So-Fei" above and found in many others in some variation. In this group the composer has most consistently followed the formal structures created by the poets. For example, in "Two Birds" Griffes concluded that the parallel verses of poetry (described earlier) demanded strophic treatment, with a basic melodic strophe and a varied accompaniment comprising three of the four verses.

Perhaps the strictest type of form occurs in "This Book of Hours," which is the first song of Griffes's Op. 4, Two Rondels. As the opus title suggests, a rondo-type principle of thematic organization has been adopted for this song. Formally, two basic motives are alternated systematically in a schematic plan which could be delineated in the following manner:

- a (meas. 1-9) homophonic,  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter, minor
- b (meas. 10-11) imitative,  $\frac{3}{2}$  meter, minor
- a<sub>1</sub> (meas. 12-18) more linear,  $\frac{2}{4}$  meter, minor

- b' (meas. 18-23) imitative,  $\frac{3}{2}$  meter, minor
- a<sub>2</sub> (meas. 23-29) homophonic,  $\frac{2}{4}$  meter, minor
- b (meas. 29-31) imitative,  $\frac{3}{2}$  meter (exact repetition of first "b")
- a' (meas. 32-44) homophonic,  $\frac{2}{4}$  meter, major setting<sup>9</sup>

Figure 1. Thematic organization of "This Book of Hours."

"Come, Love," the second song of this opus, makes use of a more complicated rondo structure. In it, the first and fourth phrases of the first section are reintroduced twice with only slight variation after more contrasting ideas. The second of these contrasting ideas has been developed into a truly distinct section, with a more sustained melody, an arpeggiated accompaniment figure, and a new tonal center.

Yet such a lengthy and obviously contrasting type of section is rare for the divergent songs. Most of these songs have recognizably new sections in their formal structures, but they lack the extreme contrasts of harmony, rhythm, and melodic contour so noticeable in the formative songs. In this group, the "contrasting" sections are actually only brief excursions away from the main pattern and seldom assume great importance in their own right.

With this distinction in mind, then, almost every song of this group can be analyzed as having some sort of section which contrasts with the main section. Perhaps the very shortest, yet truly contrasting, section is the two-measure shift to a triple meter in "Landscape" (Example 64). This presents a real deviation from the sustained style of the rest

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<sup>9</sup>In this scheme, a subscript implies slight variation, while the prime symbol suggests greater variation from the original pattern.

of the song (see Example 63) and is used by Griffes to parallel the poetic image.

A typical use of the contrasting section in the rounded forms can be shown in "We'll to the Woods." After two strophes which are very similar in construction, a new section is introduced. It opens as more of a contrast, with a meter change, a change to duple rhythm in the voice, and a shift to the minor mode. Yet this contrast leads very quickly back to a style very similar to that of the opening strophes. The contrast is seen only as a brief diversion rather than a fully-developed unique thematic idea.

Even the strophically-conceived "Two Birds" contains a contrasting section--the third strophe, which has been mentioned earlier. In this strophe the melody, though similar in contour at first to that of the other three strophes, is set at a different pitch level and becomes more contrasting after the opening. It is the accompaniment, however, which is most noticeably different, as it is arpeggiated rather than chordal.

In the divergent group, Griffes's approach to the climax is usually traditional. Typically it becomes the highest and loudest pitch, generally close to the conclusion of the song and preceded by an ascending crescendo line. Such a technique is common to most styles of this group, even the oriental. The expressive "Tears," from Five Poems, approaches the climax on "you" (meas. 21) in just such a manner (Example 69).

There are none of the reverse climaxes as found in the formative group. Actually, the role of climax in delineating the song's structure is not nearly as important with the divergent songs. There is more emphasis on fixed and definite constructions rather than the ongoing drive toward the climax.

Although the same techniques to unify the formative songs are also used in the divergent songs, the emphasis has changed considerably. Recurring motives are commonly used but appear to be closely tied to the particular established styles being adopted by Griffes. This is especially true for the oriental songs, in which Griffes conceived the style as encompassing the use of persistent motives, which often become ostinato patterns. In "The Old Temple" the two figures in the piano introduction--the two-beat heavy chords and the lontano melody--are reintroduced, often completely unchanged, in the three variations that follow (Example 65). They also return in almost identical form as the piano postlude.

In "So-Fei" a persistent two-measure pattern of the left hand continues almost without interruption throughout the entire song (Example 76). Its contour is only slightly altered even in the contrasting section. The original right-hand melody is not nearly as consistently recurring, but it also has a role in unifying this song.

So persistent are the basic accompaniment patterns of "In the Harem" that Griffes's manuscript abounds with notations for their repetition (Example 82). The original manuscript of "Hampelas" uses the same notation technique, especially for the persistent right hand pattern.<sup>10</sup>

There is more reliance on the use of the repeated sections in the divergent songs than in the formative songs. Also, these repeated sections tend to be less disguised or altered when reintroduced. There is nothing uncertain about the return of the original theme in "We'll to the Woods" at meas. 28 after the contrasting section; the only change is that the piano has assumed this return while the voice remains silent.

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<sup>10</sup>See Appendix, Song 5.

The "Evening Song" illustrates the traditional ternary form with repeat of the opening section. This A' section is even marked Tempo I<sup>o</sup> and is introduced by basically the same accompaniment pattern as the first section. Typically, the repeated section also begins vocally like the first section but is transformed gradually in the drive towards the climax and conclusion.

Griffes's tendency towards preconceived forms in the divergent group parallels his use of preconceived melody and harmony for these songs. Such forms or patterns are seen as inherent in the styles being adopted. It is in this way that the expression of the text has been fulfilled, rather than through the line by line expression sought in the formative songs.

#### Mainstream Songs

In the mainstream songs Griffes tempered the relative extremes of the other two groups. Formally, these songs are neither totally line by line in their conception nor do they so strictly observe fixed or pre-established constructions. The freer through-composed style is most apparent in his earlier songs, especially in both "Le Jardin" and "Le Réveillon" from the Four Impressions.

Yet, though through-composed, both songs exhibit a compositional technique intended to control the ongoing character of the song. There is a dynamic growth toward climactic centers, which creates a rising, peaking, and subsiding impression. Such dynamic waves become the structural basis of the songs rather than the use of the repeated thematic material. Although both songs employ two such waves, the process is particularly crucial to "Le Réveillon," as it also serves to illustrate the text's description of the awakening day. Beginning pianississimo, the song passes

through smaller dynamic waves until the first climactic center is reached at meas. 35 on "light" (Example 50). The dynamics subside only to rise again to an even grander climax at meas. 55 on "flushed" (Example 51). It is evident, then, that even the more through-composed songs are constructed on some underlying structural basis rather than a freely changing flow of the line.

Whereas the use of freer forms is more tightly controlled, the use of more definite forms is actually relaxed. Ternary forms are particularly prevalent in this group, with quite extensive variation in the repeated section. But one also finds examples of the stricter strophic form. Again, variation with the repeated strophe is universal, although in the early "Half-Ring Moon" only one measure of the repeated vocal strophe has been altered. The accompaniment has, however, been more drastically changed.

Even the borderline "An Old Song Re-Sung," obviously strophic in construction, makes extensive changes in the repeated strophes, especially the final strophe. As with the divergent song "Two Birds," Griffes considered that the parallel strophes of the poem necessitated a musically strophic treatment in which he would be free to vary the expression as he found it imperative.

Perhaps the greatest variety in a strophic song is achieved in "Waikiki." So original is Griffes's construction that a brief outline is included here:

Introduction: piano meas. 1-7

a: piano and voice meas. 8-11

b: piano interlude meas. 12-14, voice joins to meas. 20

c: piano and voice meas. 21-31

d: piano and voice meas. 31-39

Interlude: piano meas. 39-45 (identical to Introduction)

a: piano and voice meas. 45-49 (varied slightly for new text)

b: piano and voice meas. 49-54 (voice has melody from piano)

c: no parallel




d: piano and voice meas. 55-63 (varied at beginning, same at end)


Postlude: piano meas. 64-69 (identical to Introduction)

Figure 2. Thematic organization of "Waikiki."

Some forms are used so freely that a definite tag or identification is rather difficult and perhaps misleading. Such is the case with the rather freely-composed "Sorrow of Mydath," which closely approaches the through-composed technique. Yet the persistent repetition of the "over desolate sands" melody, with its following piano accompaniment, creates almost a rondo-type construction (Example 79).

This desire to maintain continuity even in the freer forms is carried over into Griffes's treatment of contrasting sections in the mainstream group also. Although contrasting sections are evident in most of these songs, seldom are the contrasts as abrupt and total as in many of the formative songs. Nor are they merely diversionary in nature as in the divergent songs. Usually the contrast concentrates on one or two elements rather than attempting an entire change.

Thus in the central section of the ternary "Symphony in Yellow" the contrast, which is strongly felt yet is not perceived as unrelated to the preceding section, consists mainly of an increase in rhythmic activity. Whereas the chordal figure of the surrounding sections is basically  or  in structure, it becomes a more active  figure, with an underlying

 pattern, though l'istesso tempo. Basically there is no change in harmonic style or melodic contour apart from the quicker pace (Example 45).

"La Fuite de la Lune," the first song of this Op. 3, also in a ternary form, displays a change of harmonic style in the contrasting section rather than increased rhythmic activity. Whereas its surrounding sections are composed around a more conventionally-conceived harmony, the central section ventures into a more impressionistic harmony based on whole tone figures which result in augmented chords. The accompaniment pattern has also been changed from the flowing line to a repeated chord figure (Example 41).

Sometimes the contrasting element introduced in the central section is continued into the remainder of the song and thus transforms the recurrence of the original section. Such is the case in the middle section of the ternary "Thy Dark Eyes," a section to which Upton referred as a "bit vague and distinctly inferior to the rest of the song."<sup>11</sup> Yet while the opening section relies on rather traditional harmony and a lyrical vocal line, the direction of the contrasting section is toward more venturesome harmony and a more angular melody. But the most important contrast is the increased use of a linear texture. Occasionally the left hand of the piano has broken from the chordal motive in the opening section, but in the central section both hands are given more contrapuntal lines (Example 92). When the opening vocal melody returns for the A' section at meas. 23, it is now accompanied by a linear texture, which intensifies to the climax (Example 93).

Once again, Griffes assumed a more flexible stance toward the

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<sup>11</sup>Upton, "Songs," p. 323.



nature of climax. As the description of the dynamic waves in "Le Jardin" and "Le Réveillon" illustrate, the drive towards climax is again an important structural device. In "Le Jardin" the first climax is approached in a rather traditional fashion, with increased activity, an ascending line, and a dynamic crescendo. The climax itself is the highest note in the song (Example 57).

There are also examples of reverse climaxes. In the "Symphony in Yellow" the unexpected  $d^{\sharp}$  on the word "rod" in the last phrase is felt as a climax, though both very soft and low-pitched (Example 44). Unexpected harmonic shifts are favorite devices for climactic impacts in Griffes's mainstream songs. Such a harmonic climax is hardly ever prepared in a traditional fashion and is usually heard as a surprise. An excellent example of this can be found at the beginning of the last phrase of "La Mer" (Example 39). A similar technique is seen in "Impression du Matin," on the word "lips" (Example 60).

Both of the unifying techniques present in Griffes's other two groups--the use of recurring motives and the repetition of sections--are very important to the mainstream songs. So intent was Griffes in his desire to unify his mainstream songs that very often both methods were used in the same song.

It is with the mainstream songs that a tremendous variety of recurring motives is discovered. There are the melodic figures, as described earlier, in the rondo-like "Sorrow of Mydath." Yet from the first, Griffes displayed originality in employing other than melodic motives as recurring, unifying patterns. Already in "The First Snowfall" a persistent rhythmic pattern, alternating and overlapping from right to left hands of the accompaniment, continues with only brief variation throughout the song.

The original motive is transformed in the second section so much that only the underlying rhythm remains (Example 31).

The recurring motive may even be harmonic in conception, as in the alternating chordal figure of "Impression du Matin." A tolling image is created by the opening piano motive of two alternating chords (Example 58). Again the specific notes may change in the ensuing sections, but the constant tolling image is maintained through interesting variations. Here Griffes restated his intention to return a motive only if it were suitable both musically and textually, for this tolling image begins the final section in an extremely transformed shape (Example 59) to emphasize the cold atmosphere described in the text--"heart of stone."

The harmonic motive could also consist of a single chord, as in "Symphony in Yellow." In its many possible inversions a chord built on a pentatonic scale--B C# D/D# F# G#--becomes the returning motive throughout much of the song (Example 43).

Yet Griffes was not always successful in achieving unity even when recurring motives were employed. In his "Phantoms" (Giovannitti) the technique undertaken in the attempt to unify the song may be described thus:

The coherence of the song is derived from an almost continuous (sic) combination of duple and triplet rhythms and a harmonic reminiscence of the opening chord in the closing measures of the song.<sup>12</sup>

However, there is not the usual consistency in maintaining this recurring pattern; lengthy sections interrupt the opening style with little or no suggestion of the motives which Boda describes (Example 75). Without this consistency of recurring motives, this song becomes a series of unrelated

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<sup>12</sup>Boda, "Music of Griffes," p. 96.

sections in contrasting styles.

Of course many mainstream songs depend on the return of the original section to create a unified setting. Again, this repeated section is almost always varied, sometimes dramatically, to accommodate both the expressive events preceding it and the new text it now supports. In the repeated section of the ternary "La Fuite de la lune," the accompaniment has the original vocal melody while the voice assumes a counter melody, less lyrical but better suited to the declamation of the text (Example 42).

The change in the repeated section of "Symphony in Yellow" is one of mode rather than actual themes, while the return in "Impression du Matin," mentioned above, acquires a totally contrasting mood. Griffes demonstrated that successful textual expression need not be sacrificed in the search for musical unity, nor must unity be sacrificed in seeking the appropriate textual setting.

While the formative and divergent songs again seem to illustrate opposing views on the question of form, in the mainstream songs Griffes managed to achieve a balance which draws from both extremes. The line by line composing of the formative songs was tempered with a more controlled structure based on some unifying technique, perhaps dynamic waves or recurring motives. The preference for more defined forms in the divergent group was relaxed so that expressive changes demanded by the text could be accommodated. The result for the mainstream group is both a tighter musical structure than the formative group and a more responsive textual setting than the divergent group.

## CHAPTER VI

### RHYTHM IN GRIFFES'S SONGS

The fact that Griffes observed textual meter and declamation as closely as possible in order to maintain musical integrity in creating his vocal rhythms has been discussed in Chapter III. Yet apart from this attention to declamatory needs, of all the musical elements Griffes conceived rhythm as most remote from textual demands. On the whole, Griffes responded to the general atmosphere implied by the text in creating rhythmic patterns and thereby considered himself less restrained by established requirements for this element than in others.

Although not tied to the text as closely as the other elements, rhythm evidently was conceived by Griffes as an extremely vital component in the expression of song. As a matter of fact, of all the elements the rhythmic aspect of Griffes's songs remains the most original and most completely developed, no matter the particular style employed. For this reason it seems inconceivable that Robinson could state the following generalization:

The rhythmic content, furthermore, is generally characterless. It rarely rises above elementary metrical patterns, and the intellectual interest is consequently reduced to a stagnant uniformity of aspect.<sup>1</sup>

Griffes consciously avoided the use of so-called "stagnant" rhythm through several rhythmic techniques. Though common to many songs, these techniques assume an original character with each new song.

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Robinson, "The Life and Death of an American Composer," American Mercury, 30: 346 (November, 1933).

One such device was the generation of rhythmic vitality through syncopation or through the use of unexpected metrical patterns. Another favorite rhythmic procedure was the creation of conflict through the juxtaposition of duple and triple figures, particularly between simultaneous piano and vocal parts. Such a conflict was also used in delineating contrasting formal sections.

In many songs, especially the later ones, such a juxtaposition is not limited to duple and triple meters. Increasingly complex simultaneous lines of conflicting rhythmical figurations become a trademark of Griffes's last mainstream songs.

It seems apparent that Griffes considered himself the master of rhythm rather than feeling constrained by the limiting force of established meter. This freedom is evident in another favorite technique, that of shifting meters. Yet even when such changes are not notated, Griffes composed freely across bar-lines and was able to create throughout most songs a fluidity of rhythm which transcended the visual metric barriers.

### Formative Songs

Although there is little that is strikingly unusual in the formative songs as far as rhythm is concerned, Griffes's unflagging interest in rhythmic combinations or expressive rhythmic figures is obvious from the first. Seldom do his rhythms degenerate into predictable metrical patterns with no variety. Basically in his formative songs he sought rhythmic vitality through patterns which continued across bar-lines or which in their combinations created a surprise or conflict.

Syncopation in this group of songs is usually found as a chord figure which is tied into the next measure or beat. Sometimes this pro-

cess results in the accent of an unexpected beat and the failure to stress the expected beat. In "Auf ihrem Grab" such a rhythmic pattern (described in Chapter V) establishes a definite rocking effect.

A similar technique is shown in the accompaniment of "Der träumende See." So expected is the accent on the first beat of meas. 2 that one unconsciously provides it despite the tied-over figure (Example 10).

In Griffes's songs, the transition between duple and triple patterns was accomplished with relative fluidity. The  $\frac{6}{8}$  meter of "Elfe" was particularly convenient for such accentual shifts, which are evident as early as the introduction. Although the accompaniment often maintains this accentual ambiguity throughout the song, the vocal part rather strictly adheres to its pattern of paired triplets.

It was rather common for Griffes to set a duple pattern in the voice against a triple in the accompaniment. In "Entflieh" this procedure creates the rhythmic dynamics for most of the song, with the right hand of the piano assuming a duple figure during the solo accompaniment sections (Example 14). This song also illustrates Griffes's use of rhythmic transitions in delineating formal sections. The shift to a duple pattern in meas. 18 heralds the opening of a contrasting section, with a new set of conflicting rhythmic figures (Example 15).

Perhaps the most consistent use of conflicting duple and triple accentual patterns in this group can be found in the companion to the preceding song, "Es fiel ein Reif." In this song no attempt has been made to disguise this conflict. The piano obviously divides the  $\frac{6}{8}$  meter into two groups of triplets, as proven by the use of dotted eighth-notes on the first and fourth beats in the four measures of the introduction, which establishes the arpeggiated triplet pattern. The vocal pattern is just

as obviously founded on the contrasting accentual possibility, with eighth notes on first, third, and fifth beats. Again Griffes took advantage of the rhythmic conflict to aid in sectional organization, as both piano and voice share the vocal accentual pattern in the more lyrical central section (see meas. 33).<sup>2</sup>

With the formative songs, complexity created by juxtaposition of conflicting rhythmic patterns seldom reaches any greater intensity than that already described. Since this group of songs is not particularly linear in conception, any greater complexity due to simultaneous lines would be fairly impossible. What is seen in these songs, however, is a phenomenon almost parallel to the line by line approach to other elements. With the exception of the occasional duple/triple superimposition, rhythmic events are seen as occurring section by section, or phrase by phrase, rather than simultaneously. This frequently results in shifts in rhythmic figurations, as found in almost every phrase of "So halt' ich" (Example 12 and 13). Again the conception seems to be cumulative rather than integrative. This style is obvious in songs of longer contrasting sections, such as "An den Wind," in which the changing rhythmic character helps to define contrasting sections, as described in Chapter V.

Thus in the formative group rhythmic complexity is not central to the composition but is ancillary in importance. Yet the dependence on homophonic rather than contrapuntal conception in these songs restricts the composer's ability to create simultaneous lines in complicated rhythmic interrelations. What is important, however, is that an interest in rhythmic variety was already generated in Griffes's compositional style,

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<sup>2</sup>See Appendix, Song 2.

and that he was already experimenting rhythmically within the boundaries of the late romantic idiom.

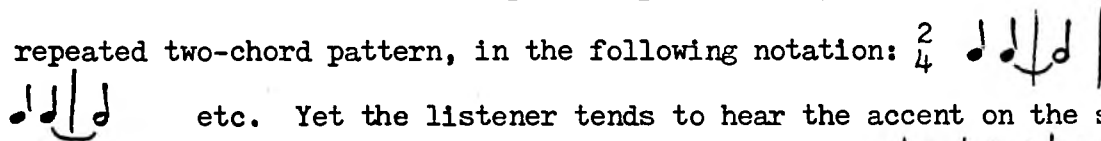
### Divergent Songs

It has been shown already that the manifestations of the individual musical elements in the divergent songs depended ultimately on the idiosyncrasies of the particular styles borrowed. The rhythmic element in these songs in no way contradicts this statement. Thus, the rhythmic character of the divergent songs relies heavily on Griffes's conception of the patterns constituting these styles.

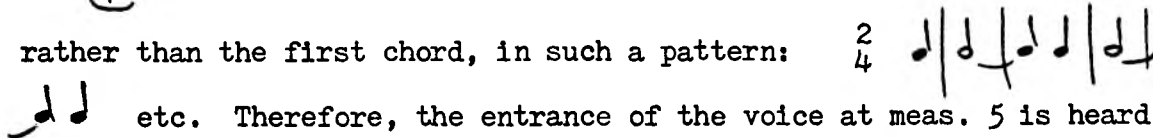
For example, the relatively static rhythm of several of the oriental songs is the product of Griffes's conception of a particular oriental style which is more sustained or controlled. Such is the case with the very sustained "Landscape." So passive is the rhythmic pace that the song almost becomes a still-life in sound (Example 63).

Despite the demands of the stylistic influences, Griffes's favorite rhythmic devices are still evident in the divergent songs. The incidence of syncopated figures is rather limited, however. Syncopation usually takes the shape of a conflict between the perceived accent and the notated accent and occurs most frequently in repeated chord patterns.

This particular device is very apparent in "Two Birds." Throughout meas. 1-16 of the first strophe the piano accompaniment consists of a repeated two-chord pattern, in the following notation:



etc. Yet the listener tends to hear the accent on the second rather than the first chord, in such a pattern:



etc. Therefore, the entrance of the voice at meas. 5 is heard as a rhythmic conflict, since the pick-up note in the vocal pattern is set against what is heard as the accented chord of the piano. In the second



(meas. 25-48) and fourth strophes (meas. 73-end) the expected accentual pattern appears and resolves the earlier conflict.<sup>3</sup> The oriental "Tears" is similar in its use of chord patterns which conflict accentually with what the listener is expecting (Example 68).

This last example points also to another Griffes rhythmic device which is less pervasive among the divergent songs--the duple/triple conflict. Its use is more incidental in this group than in either of the others and occurs most frequently as a brief contrast. In the carefree "We'll to the Woods" the overriding rhythmic pattern is a spirited triplet pulse. The introduction of a conflicting duple figure is used only to herald a contrasting section or the return of the original theme. The duple occurrence is never strong enough to create a major conflict with the prevailing triplet pattern.

As suggested in the preceding chapter, the contrasting section of "Come, Love" includes a shift from the opening duple scheme to an arpeggiated triplet figure. Not only does this new rhythmic design help define the contrasting section but it is combined with the original duple figure to vary the return of the opening section (Example 56). Yet again the texture is so transparent that this juxtaposition is heard more as a temporary device to create interest than as a strong rhythmic conflict.

It is obvious that the divergent songs avoid rhythmic complexity to an even greater extent than the formative songs. Actually the incidence of conflicting rhythmic figures in linear juxtaposition is extremely rare, except in those few cases in which such linearity is associated with the style being borrowed. As stated in Chapter IV, linearity is encountered

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<sup>3</sup>See Appendix, Song 4.

frequently in the oriental songs, especially with the combination of two or more recurring ostinato-like patterns. Yet rhythmically these patterns tend to remain fairly simple, except in the case of the Javanese song "Kinanti." In this song Griffes has given the right hand of the accompaniment a freely flowing melodic line whose rhythmic character is at times rather irregular. This combines with a steadier ostinato pattern in the left hand and an ornamental vocal line which makes use of an oriental melismatic style. The result is often fairly complex (Example 84). Again, however, the transparency of the lines detracts from a strong feeling of complexity.

Of the non-oriental songs the logical exception to avoidance of complexity would be the contrapuntally-conceived "This Book of Hours." Yet even in this more linearly-constructed song rhythmic complexity is incidental rather than central in importance. There is actually only one section which can in any way be considered rhythmically complicated, and that is the imitative section in which the accompaniment has an elaborated line (Example 54). In this song it is the fuller texture (in contrast to the more transparent texture of other divergent songs) rather than simultaneous conflicting rhythmic figures which creates the impression of complexity.

Rhythmic complexity is not a crucial element in the divergent songs. Actually it appears that Griffes has almost sought an austerity or clarity of line in these songs. More complicated patterns may have created confusion in the styles used in these songs, whereas the more simplistic rhythmic figures provide the transparency necessary for the true nature of the borrowed styles to emerge. As with the other elements already discussed, for the divergent songs Griffes imposed upon himself the re-

straints inherent in the styles desired.

### Mainstream Songs

As with the harmonic element, the rhythmic element clearly indicates the separation of the mainstream songs from those of the other two groups. It is with these songs that Griffes released his own creativity and allowed himself a truly individualistic perspective concerning rhythmic challenges. What emerges is on the one hand an incredibly flexible rhythmic flow, yet, on the other hand, one whose malleable nature is constantly under the composer's control. In writing of later songs in this group, Upton states:

In no respect perhaps did Griffes show more marked individuality than in his sensitiveness to rhythmic subtleties.<sup>4</sup>

With the mainstream songs, Griffes's favorite rhythmic devices are used most consistently. Not only are they present in some form in almost every song, but they assume a more central position in the song's expression. The use of syncopation in "The First Snowfall" is evident particularly as a rhythmic dialogue between the two voices of the accompaniment. This echoing effect creates a blurring of the expected accents and a perpetual rhythmic pulse which freely crosses bar-line barriers (Example 30).

Syncopation between voices in "The Lament" also creates an ambiguity of accent (Example 88). The off-beat pattern in the left hand recurs throughout the song, usually accompanied by a conflicting pattern in the other voices. These examples indicate another contrast with the other groups concerning rhythmic treatment. Whereas syncopation in the other songs is basically on a single level, that is, created by a single part,

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<sup>4</sup>William Treat Upton, "The Songs of Charles T. Griffes," Musical Quarterly, 9:328 (1923).

the syncopation in the mainstream songs often occurs as an interplay between two or more voices, in a two-dimensional aspect.

This last example points also to the other favored rhythmic technique in Griffes's songs--the conflict between duple and triple figures. This is one trait which can be found to some extent in almost every mainstream song. "Symphony in Yellow" contains no simultaneous duple/triple patterns, yet a shift to triple meter is used to delineate the contrasting middle section. "The First Snowfall" contains no duple/triple conflict whatsoever, but the subtleties of its rhythmic structure are based on other conflicting principles, as described earlier.

In "The Half-Ring Moon" the juxtaposition of duple and triple figures begins with the introduction of the voice at meas. 3 and continues throughout the entire song. There is a constant triplet pattern in the piano, in the left hand if not both hands, while the voice never wavers from its duple scheme, sometimes joined by the right hand of the accompaniment. This conflict is never actually resolved and parallels closely the major/minor harmonic conflict in this song. The lack of resolution of these two conflicting patterns relates well with the poetic image of incomplete or unreturned love--the "half of a ring" (Example 33).

In many songs the occurrence of duple/triple simultaneous figures is more incidental; seldom is it as thoroughly penetrating as in the preceding song. It becomes a device for clearer declamation and special emphasis in the Four Impressions. The shifting to a duple pattern for more equal syllabic accent in "La Mer" has already been mentioned.

The ultimate development of the duple/triple conflict can be found, not surprisingly, in the very difficult "Phantoms" (Giovannitti). Not only does the voice conflict with the piano, but the two hands of the

accompaniment conflict with each other. Added to this is the notated time signature  $\frac{4}{4} \frac{3}{2}$  at the beginning of the vocal part in meas. 6. What is created is a kind of rhythmic discord which complements the often grating harmonic dissonances, as earlier described (Example 74). The rhythmic complexity of this song is not restricted to these figures, but is manifest in various other metrical shifts and rhythmic combinations of an incredibly complicated nature. This song is indicative of the growing rhythmic complexity which became a trademark of Griffes's later mainstream songs.

It is true that few, if any, elements in the genesis of a composer's style reveal a true continuum; that is, a gradual and steady growth until maturity, with only slight deviations along the way. Such a description is usually not only false but also misleading. Yet of all Griffes's characteristics, complexity of rhythmic composition comes closest to such a gradual continuum. Even more so than harmony, his mainstream songs reveal an ever-increasing use of layers of rhythmic formations in very complicated and difficult structures.

Already in the earlier "Phantoms" (Tabb), Griffes demonstrated a tendency towards a flexible rhythmic flow in which configurations shift continuously. For example, from meas. 5 to meas. 7 the arpeggiated figures vacillate between groups of six sixteenth notes to groups of seven or eight thirty-second notes. This fluidity is maintained throughout the song.<sup>5</sup> Yet at this point in Griffes's development, the two-dimensional complexity created by conflicting rhythmic patterns has not yet been attained. While flexibility is achieved, it is restricted to the one-

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<sup>5</sup>See Appendix, Song 3.

dimensional level.

This flexibility recurs in the Four Impressions, and with it often appear moments of more intense complexity. None of the songs of this set maintains lines which are entirely rhythmically independent, yet many phrases foreshadow the irregular simultaneous figures combined contrapuntally which become more thorough-going in the later mainstream songs. There are several excellent examples in "Le Jardin," one of them occurring, very typically, as the crescendo to the first vocal climax (Example 57).

In "Waikiki," as in its companion piece "Phantoms" (Giovannitti), the conflicting rhythms create a discordant effect parallel to the dissonant harmonic effect produced by the frequent chromatic shifting. By now Griffes has infused the entire song with irregular patterns, so much so that predictable accents are avoided and time signatures altered so frequently that bar-lines and regular accents are totally disregarded. It is clearly evident in writing such as this that Griffes consciously intended to be master of the rhythmic flow. He suspended and resumed the motion under his own direction, rather than succumbing to the predictability of regular, established metrical patterns (Example 73).

It is in the "Sorrow of Mydath" that true linear complexity is encountered, not simply for intensity in a brief section, but as a consistent trait. In much of the song three rhythmically independent lines--voice, right hand piano, left hand piano--are juxtaposed, often in conflicting metrical patterns (Example 78). With the flexibility and fluidity created through irregular figures and combinations, it is not unreasonable to assume that rhythm in this song, as the elements of melody and harmony, is again intended to approximate rather than specify. In any case, the emotional tension demanded by the poem is carefully achieved

by such rhythmic conflict.

Not unexpectedly the ultimate of Griffes's rhythmic complexity is revealed in his last three songs, the MacLeod mystical poems. Even the more harmonically traditional "Thy Dark Eyes" attains a complicated rhythmic structure unencountered in his earlier songs. Added to the frequent shifting to irregular figures on a two-dimensional level is the almost constant conflict created by the combination of a syncopated duple pattern and a triplet chordal figure which could be interpreted ambiguously (Example 91). An extremely intricate intertwining of various independent rhythms evolves.

Similar constructions are common to "The Rose of the Night" as well, particularly when the recurring upper melody of the accompaniment combines with the voice and a contrasting pattern in the lower part of the accompaniment (Example 95). Throughout this song the lines, which combine contrapuntally, assume and maintain their rhythmically independent character.

It is, therefore, the contrapuntal nature of many of the mainstream songs that allows for their extremely complicated rhythmic structure. Griffes discovered that the rhythmic fluidity he sought was most accessible in a linearly-conceived texture, one in which the relative independence of lines allowed the composer almost unrestricted freedom for rhythmic invention.

Thus for the mainstream songs, rhythmic complexity is no longer secondary but is now fundamental to the structure of the songs. This results from the freedom from extraneous restraints which Griffes felt in this group. In the formative and divergent songs a rather established style provided the guidelines, no matter how uniquely or loosely Griffes

applied them to his composition. Yet with the mainstream songs, the highly developed rhythmic structure reveals the individuality of Griffes, apart from any established stylistic traits. It is the rhythmic element, then, perhaps even more than harmony, which illustrates the nontraditional trend of Griffes's song-composing and suggests the forward-looking directions in which his individuality was leading him.



## CHAPTER VII

### VOICE AND PIANO IN GRIFFES'S SONGS: RELATIONSHIPS AND FUNCTIONS

There is a close relationship between the piano and the voice in Griffes's songs. Almost universally there is thematic interrelationship, with motives shared from accompaniment to voice, as well as close similarity in spirit and mood. It was important to Griffes that both parts share in the creation of the desired atmosphere.

Yet, while closely related, each part maintains its individual character, since separate functions were delegated to both the piano and the voice. Basically the voice is the declaimer of the text. In various ways it illuminates the mood and character of the words--through range, rhythm, dynamics, and the intervallic makeup of the melody itself. The fact that the vocal melody was composed first indicates the primacy of the voice for Griffes in the textual expression of his songs. Though obviously not as complicated as the accompaniment, the voice begins as the inspirational spark from which the total work is generated.

It seems clear that Griffes intended the piano to become more involved with the expression of the text than merely underpinning or supporting the voice. The piano is charged with the creation of the atmosphere which envelops the voice, and for Griffes this is accomplished through many avenues--range, dynamics, structural texture, rhythm, and especially harmony. Another basic function of the piano is the disguising of the seams in the formal structure by introducing or concluding sections.

Since the piano and voice on the one hand share thematic character yet on the other hand maintain separate functions, their relationship should be described in terms of their interdependence, since they are neither totally dependent on, nor completely independent of, each other. In this interdependency, the integrity of each part is maintained. That Griffes's accompaniments do at times tend to overshadow the voice cannot be denied, yet it is indicative of Griffes's concept of the nature of song. The voice, or more particularly the vocal melody, is not necessarily the focal point of that song. Instead the voice and its accompaniment share in the creation of the song in such a way that they are partners. The result of this partnership is that at times both parts appear equally involved and at others one partner will seem to overshadow the other. In some songs, the relationship becomes an ever-shifting continuum of involvement with no pre-established proportions concerning relative vocal and piano emphasis.

The extent to which the piano and voice maintain their separate identities and perform their individual functions differs among the three groups. Yet the interdependence of vocal melody and accompaniment is a universal trait throughout Griffes's songs.

### Formative Songs

In the relationship between piano and voice, the truly formative nature of Griffes's earliest songs is very evident. The concept that the voice and its accompaniment should maintain separate identities and yet be intertwined in some way has not yet solidified. Therefore, a certain vacillation between two extremes can be found among these songs.

On the one hand, we find several songs in which the accompaniment

and voice are identical; their thematic structure is exactly concurrent and the setting is rather homophonic. That there are really no separate identities in Griffes's first song, "Si mes vers," is shown in the fact that he easily rewrote it in a piano version. Yet such a lack of separate idiomatic identities is not limited to his first efforts. In both "Meeresstille" and "Am Kreuzweg" the voice and piano are combined in a homophonic, almost chorale-like setting, with the upper voice of the accompaniment doubling the vocal part.

There are also examples of the other extreme, in which simultaneously shared motives are relatively rare. Such is the case with "Wohl lag ich einst," in which the vocal melody and accompaniment pattern seldom coincide with similar motives. Yet the utmost extreme of unrelatedness is never encountered, since Griffes closely paralleled the spirit and energy of the two parts.

Most of the formative songs combine elements of these two extremes, however. In many of these songs instances of occasional doubling may be found as well as examples of more separation of identity. Very often, as in "Es fiel ein Reif," the accompaniment may suggest the vocal melody in a nonsimultaneous pattern, yet it becomes much more developed than a simple underpinning of the voice.

In many other songs, such as "Könnt' ich," sections of doubling by the accompaniment are contrasted with sections of more marked thematic separation. This technique often corresponds closely with the formal contrasts created by harmonic and rhythmic shifts.

There are very few exceptions, however, to the functional separation and performance of the voice and piano. The declamatory nature of the vocal melody, described in Chapter III, has been particularly empha-

sized among the formative songs, possibly due to their stylistic reliance on the late German romantic vocal style.

This declamatory style is exceptionally developed in more narrative songs, such as "Zwei Könige." Yet, without destroying the declamatory function, as a group these songs contain some of Griffes's most lyrical vocal writing. This idiomatically vocal character of the melody becomes almost universally the inspirational momentum for the creation of the accompaniment. It is particularly easy to see how this is accomplished in songs such as "Elfe" (Example 26) and "Auf geheimen Waldespfade" (Example 6), in which the vocal melodies imply tremendous expressive possibilities.

These expressive possibilities are explored in several different ways as the piano accompaniment seeks to fulfill its function of creating the appropriate atmosphere to surround the vocal melody. There is a noticeable emphasis on harmonic methods of expression in the formative songs. Almost every song relies somewhat on shifting modulations and unexpected or delayed resolutions to create the desired atmosphere.

Yet there is also a dependence on the range or tessitura of the accompaniment to suggest a certain aura. Thus the low register at the opening of "Nacht liegt," coupled with the heavy block chords, implies a gloomy or apprehensive character (Example 8). Of course the opposite technique is involved in "Elfe," in which the staccato chords in the upper register help produce the delicate, airy feeling (Example 26). The importance of rhythm is not overlooked in these songs. It plays a crucial role in the emotionally sensitive "Auf ihrem Grab," as explained in Chapter VI.

In the formative songs the piano does not universally perform the

function of disguising seams. In some songs the accompaniment gradually leads from one section to a contrasting section and, very often, gradually back from the contrasting section to a repeat of the opening section or into another contrasting section. An excellent example of this is found in the transitions in "Es fiel ein Reif." From meas. 16 to meas. 23 the piano incorporates the crucial element--e#--of the impending contrasting section into the arpeggiated figure of the opening section and thus makes the appearance of the new idea seem more natural.<sup>1</sup>

In "An den Wind" Griffes attempted a similar technique but the sections are so dissimilar that the accompaniment transitions cannot assume a strong unifying function.

Though such transitions are common in the accompaniments of Griffes's formative songs, very often it seems that the composer denied this unifying function of the piano. In "Auf dem Teich" the piano actually makes the formal seams obvious by announcing, through a sustained chord unrelated to the previous sections, the appearance of a new area of different thematic material. This happens dramatically at least twice in this song, with other minor shifts of similar character (Example 5). Thus for the formative songs the piano always performs the function of introducing and concluding, but its method of fulfilling this function may vary between the opposing techniques of a gradual or an abrupt transition.

Griffes also demonstrated ambiguity in achieving the continuum of expression in the proportion of involvement for piano or voice. There are rare instances in which the accompaniment's expression overpowers the

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix, Song 2.

voice and tends to determine the character of the voice. The most obvious example of this is the concluding section of "An den Wind," mentioned in Chapter III. Yet the melodies in this group are so well-defined and idiomatically satisfying that much of the expression is borne by the voice. Though complete and well-developed in their own right, the accompaniments relate closely to the vocal melody. They serve to round out the texture rather than to explore new expressive avenues of their own instigation. Thus, while voice and piano are interdependent in creating the text's expression, one could conclude that special emphasis is given the voice.

### Divergent Songs

As with the formative songs, there is a contrast in the divergent songs between different approaches to relating piano and voice while retaining separate identities. Yet the situation is not parallel here. One realizes that these approaches are now conscious choices by the composer rather than results of a formative or learning process. Also, the two approaches are not extreme contrasts with this group of songs.

Many songs demonstrate a lack of truly separate identities for piano and voice. Doubling of the vocal melody by the upper voice of the accompaniment is very common yet never forms the entire basis of the accompaniment's structure, as in some formative songs. This basic underpinning by piano is evident in "Tears" but is not consistent throughout, as nonsimultaneous separation of motives occurs through the contrasting section. Two techniques of thematic relation are shown in "This Book of Hours." In the homophonic sections the vocal melody is doubled by the piano, and in the canonic sections the vocal melody is imitated contra-

puntally by the accompaniment.

There are several songs with few or no shared motives between voice and piano, such as several of the oriental songs, particularly "So-Fei," "A Feast of Lanterns," and "Kinanti," Yet in these songs the accompaniment has established ostinato-type patterns which are continually repeated. The vocal melody moves through these patterns but is not totally divorced from the accompaniment in its motives. Rather, there is a basic structure, usually a particular pentatonic pattern, from which both voice and piano derive their character. This creates a close relationship stylistically, if not motivically.

Some songs demonstrate a combination of these two approaches. In "Come, Love" separate identities are maintained through the use of ostinato-type patterns in the accompaniment, while frequent reminiscences of the vocal melody in the accompaniment help create a thematic similarity. The situation in "Evening Song" is more similar to the process in the formative songs, which combines sections of occasional doubling with portions of more marked motivic separation. This is not surprising when one realizes the close harmonic association between this song and the formative songs.

In the divergent songs the declamatory function of the voice is observed fairly strictly. As a matter of fact, it often seems as though the vocal melody is intended only to be the bearer of the text, especially in the oriental songs. There is a relatively uncomplicated character to these oriental melodies. This emphasizes their function as text-carriers rather than mood-creators.

There are other vocal melodies whose lyricism is obviously an inspiration for the accompaniment. This is true particularly in "We'll to the Woods" with its lilting, vibrant melody and spirited accompaniment.

The piano's functions in the divergent songs also seem to be on a less complicated level. Certainly the accompaniment is intended to create the appropriate atmosphere, yet though basically dependent on techniques similar to those of the formative songs, its manifestation is less intricate.

Rhythmic configurations are sometimes used for expression effects, as with the rhythmic vitality of "We'll to the Woods" or the accentual conflict of "Two Birds." Yet harmony again plays a significant role in creating atmosphere. This is accomplished not through the modulations and delayed resolutions of the formative songs but through the particular harmonic structures indigenous to the styles borrowed. The required sound is created, as in the open fifths and pentatonic scales which suggest the oriental feeling, at least to Western ears.

It is especially texture, combining several elements, which is crucial to the expression of the divergent songs. Through the transparency of texture--created by simple lines, an open harmonic style, uncomplicated rhythmic patterns, and often a restrained use of dynamics--the true delicacy demanded by these texts is achieved.

There is little opportunity in the divergent songs for the piano's function of disguising organizational seams to develop to any great extent. Generally there is no abundance of sectional changes or formal seams to disguise, as the initial character of a song usually remains unchanged, with only slight deviations. Rather than disguise seams, the piano is often given the task of blending the original motive with its variation, as in the strophic transitions in "Two Birds."

For the divergent songs the interdependence of voice and accompaniment presents more a picture of a static relationship than a flexible



continuum. This parallels with the still-life quality of many of the songs.<sup>2</sup> The basic process seems to be as follows: the vocal melody has been established and certain formulas (e.g., ostinato patterns) are chosen to suit that melody. Then the two are combined in a structure which is more of a fixed process rather than a continually unfolding development.

### Mainstream Songs

With the mainstream songs, the ambiguity concerning the relationship between piano and voice has been resolved. Now the attempt to infuse both parts with their separate identities and functions and yet construct a definite relationship between them is almost universally successful. Of course, in some songs the piano and voice are more obviously related than others, but the methods of creating this similarity are more subtle than in the other two groups.

There are several instances of doubling of the vocal melody by the accompaniment. Perhaps the most obvious example of this technique is in "La Fuite de la Lune," yet this occurs mostly in the opening section. This points out the difference between doubling in the mainstream songs and in the songs of the other two groups. Seldom in these songs does it occur in a simple homophonic setting, and usually it happens only briefly. Also, usually the doubling is hidden in the texture, so that it becomes much more complicated than an underpinning of the voice. In "Thy Dark Eyes" the identity of one of the piano's voices with the vocal melody is disguised by the complex texture created by several different lines moving simultaneously (Example 93).

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<sup>2</sup>See "Djakoan," Example 83.

In addition to melodic doubling, there are more subtle kinds of motivic identification between piano and voice. In "Le Réveillon" there is rhythmic doubling, as the lower hand of the accompaniment assumes the vocal meter against a conflicting pattern in the other hand (Example 49).

Shared motives, aside from simultaneity, are important to the mainstream songs. This technique is developed extensively in "Waikiki," in which motives previously stated as accompaniment figures become vocal melodies (see Chapter V). Yet again the recall of earlier motives takes an increased subtlety through transformations and variations.

Although there are no examples in this group of exact identification between piano and voice, there are some songs which occasionally tend toward the opposite extreme--total separation of identities. As early as "The First Snowfall" there is evidence of this tendency. From the very beginning piano and voice follow separate patterns, and Griffes only sparingly attempted to close this gap. Yet somehow in this song the two parts have been interrelated sufficiently to avoid destruction of unity.

In "Phantoms" (Giovannitti) the separation actually creates such a conflict that the voice and piano appear overly independent of each other. This is another factor in this song which contributes to its lack of unity. Yet such extreme independence is the rare exception to the overall concern shown by the composer for the piano and voice to maintain individual characters while sharing some similarities of structure.

While both piano and voice fulfill their individual functions in the mainstream songs, the intensity of that fulfillment is quite different from that of the other two groups. Declamation of the text is still emphasized as an important task of the voice, yet it seldom if ever

becomes the overriding vocal function. An excellent illustration of the word-bearer emphasis is found in the final section of "Impression du Matin" (Example 60). Even here, however, the voice conveys the germ of expression which is to be expanded or fulfilled by the accompaniment. Though approached from highly contrasting angles, this latter function of the voice assumes a crucial stature with the mainstream songs. On the one hand we have the lyricism of the vocal melody in "In a Myrtle Shade" which suggests a delicately sensitive setting, while the angular vocal melody of "Sorrow of Mydath" demands a setting which will complete the gripping desperation it suggests.

Consequently, given the expressive demands of the vocal melodies, the piano in the mainstream songs is especially burdened with the expectation of creating the appropriate enveloping atmosphere. No function of voice or piano is more seriously accepted in any group than the expressive task of the piano in the mainstream songs. This acceptance is not only universal for these accompaniments but is the critical factor in the song's musical incarnation. All elements play significant roles in the creation of these expressive accompaniments, with emphasis again on harmonic techniques. Griffes's accompaniments are typically adventuresome with respect to harmony. The impression is created that the composer assumed quite a wide latitude in seeking the harmonic parallel most appropriate for his melodies. Every song, then, achieves an individual harmonic character, from the haunting Tabb "Phantoms" to the otherworldly approach to atonality of "The Rose of the Night."

Since the rhythmic element of the mainstream songs is developed to such an involved extent, it is obvious that rhythm also plays an important part in the accompaniment's expression. The role of rhythmic

ambiguity, which correlates with the textual conflict in "The Half-Ring Moon," has already been discussed. Likewise the rhythmic complexity of "Sorrow of Mydath" and "The Lament of Ian" help create the impression of despair.

As with the divergent songs, much of the established atmosphere is accomplished through textural effects. In contrast to the transparency of the divergent songs, however, the mainstream songs rely on a complex texture. Since the texts of this group are more psychologically intense and the images more involved, there is also a corresponding intensity of texture. This takes shape usually in a more linearly-conceived, contrapuntal structure.

In these songs the piano's function of disguising structural seams is expanded to include a more general involvement in establishing formal continuity. In many songs the piano leads through contrasting sections by foreshadowing shifts of mood or thematic contrasts, as in "La Mer." But sometimes the structural demand of the accompaniment is the announcement of the next section. In "An Old Song Re-Sung" the piano announces each new strophe with repeated introductory chords (Example 86).

The concept of a continuum of involvement between piano and voice is most consistently explored in the mainstream songs. Whereas the proportion of involvement between voice and accompaniment is fairly stationary in the other two groups, a true flexibility in this proportion is found in the mainstream songs. In the same song the voice may take precedence at one point and, most typically, the accompaniment may overshadow the voice in its fervor at another point. This flexibility of emphasis is due to the highly interdependent nature of the two parts. For the

most part in these songs, the vocal melody is strikingly incomplete without the piano. The piano, on the other hand, derives its direction from the voice, and, though highly developed in its own structure, it lacks coherency and significance without the voice.

In this matter the crux of the differences between the three groups is discovered. For the formative songs, the vocal melody is almost complete in and of itself, unlike the incomplete yet directional melody of the mainstream songs. The piano thus derives meaning and structure from the voice; its essence is restrained and almost subordinated by the voice. This is not to imply that the accompaniments of the formative songs are neither fully developed nor interesting in their own right. Yet even the emphasis on homophonic texture in these songs suggests the leadership of the voice in the textual expression.

A more unusual situation is met in the divergent songs. The emphasis is neither on the specific shape of the melody nor the particular structure of the accompaniment. Rather it is the style undertaken which assumes foremost importance. There is the impression that the vocal melody could take any of several choices of directions, and likewise the accompaniment, so long as these directions remain within the boundaries established by the style chosen by the composer. It appears the particular form of the concrete manifestation of voice and piano is immaterial, so long as the desired style is maintained. Thus, at times one may believe either voice or piano is leading, yet in truth the stylistic demands are in control.

Nothing could be more in contrast to the concept behind the mainstream songs. Stylistic restrictions are at a minimum; only the demands of the immediate text dictate to voice and piano. Thus, not only are the

two parts individual in their character but their manifestation is unique to the circumstances at hand. Both piano and voice combine in a complex interrelationship whose primary impetus is the precise musical rendering of the poetic text.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GRIFFES AND THE PUBLIC: THE PERFORMER AND THE AUDIENCE

It is not surprising that a composer such as Charles T. Griffes, whose self-appointed task was to create the most perfect musical embodiment of his chosen texts, should look to the text rather than the performer or audience for his direction. This quality of artistic integrity was not overlooked by the critics, many of whom considered this his most admirable and influential trait.

Thus we have a contemporary of Griffes characterizing the composer as "courageously espousing the new and the untried without artistic compromise to win at the end of his brief thirty-five years a widespread recognition."<sup>1</sup> Others emphasize that in maintaining this integrity he has set over himself an even more demanding taskmaster than the public.

To please the many was not the task this young American had set for himself. His self-appointed mission was to satisfy himself, and that self was a severe critic.<sup>2</sup>

It is little wonder then that a composer so uncompromising in his standards should also be uncompromising in his demands of the performer. From the very first his requirements remained rather high. There is a pervading quality of technical difficulty in his songs which disregards the shortcomings of the average performer.

For the pianist, the difficulties are encountered particularly

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas Moore, "Contemporary American Composer," Saturday Review, 26:22 (May 29, 1943).

<sup>2</sup>John Tasker Howard, Charles Tomlinson Griffes (New York: G. Schirmer Inc., 1923), p. 11.

with the rhythmic complexity so common in his songs. Rhythm is not usually so complicated for the singer, yet other technical demands occur in the shape of angular melodies, taxing vocal ranges, and phrases requiring exceptional breath control or rapid articulation.

Apparently Griffes received complaints from performers concerning the difficulty of his songs. Maisel states that the composer "was inclined to disdain for the priggish misgivings of performers who attempted his songs. Singers must learn too."<sup>3</sup> Griffes's publisher, G. Schirmer, chose not to disguise this element of technical difficulty in Griffes's songs. Instead this element was grasped as a possible asset for selling his works.

. . .singers and pianists of brains and taste who are seeking after the unconventional, with increasing frequency, add weight and zest to their programs by including works by Charles T. Griffes.<sup>4</sup>

The composer made even fewer concessions to the audience who would be hearing his songs. This fact is obvious in his avoidance of popular styles except in extremely rare instances. Several critics have mentioned his supposed disregard of public opinion.

He was a student, an experimenter, a reticent person of extreme earnestness, sincerity and modesty, who worked without regard for the public.<sup>5</sup>

Others suggest that this sincerity affected not only public opinion but also his possible career as a composer. In an article with a sensation-

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<sup>3</sup>Edward M. Maisel, Charles T. Griffes: The Life of an American Composer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), p. 155.

<sup>4</sup>G. Schirmer Co., "Charles T. Griffes: An American of Indisputable Technique and Originality Coming into His Own," Musical America, 31:15 (December 13, 1919).

<sup>5</sup>Marion Bauer, "Impressionists in America," Modern Music, 4:19 (January-February, 1927).



alist title but more tempered content, one critic shortly after Griffes's death described the composer as "ever adhering to the highest ideals, making concessions neither for public favor nor professional eminence."<sup>6</sup>

Statements such as these indicate the nature of the problem Griffes suffered during his career in having his songs accepted by publishers. It was the seriousness and individuality of his compositional style, rather than any deficiencies in his songs themselves, which caused publishing firms to be wary in accepting his songs for publication.

### Formative Songs

Even in his formative songs, the demands of the text take precedence over the performer's demands. Yet this group of songs is basically composed in the late romantic style. Thus, while Griffes did not particularly compromise his integrity in these songs, his individuality was suppressed somewhat for the creation of a style more expected by both performer and audience.

Therefore, his demands of the singer and pianist are not overly uncompromising throughout this group of songs, yet generally an accomplished performer is expected. The technical difficulties in his very first song, "Si mes vers," may be due more to an ignorance of vocalists' capabilities rather than his unyielding search for the most exact setting of his text. In any case, the tessitura of this song hovers around a high a<sup>b</sup>. While the range itself is not prohibitive, many singers find continued articulation at this level both difficult and straining.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>A. Walter Kramer, "Charles T. Griffes: Cut Down in His Prime, a Victim of Our Barbarous Neglect of Genius," Musical America, 32:39 (May 22, 1920).

<sup>7</sup>See Appendix, Song 1.

"Nacht liegt" poses another problem with range. While the opening section dwells in the contralto range, the contrasting section climbs into more of a mezzo soprano range, so that the vocalist must command strength in both pitch areas. In "Auf dem Teich" a similar type of demand is made. Beginning in the lower range, the vocal melody rather rapidly works its way to the soprano level for a climax on the word "in" (Example 4). In addition, as explained earlier, this is a reverse climax, which requires a pianissimo rendering of the high note.

The technical difficulty of "Elfe" was observed by Berton Coffin in his Singer's Repertoire. In dividing the vocal repertoire into various categories of technical demands for the performer, Mr. Coffin chose this song to be included in the category of songs requiring rapid enunciation (Example 26).<sup>8</sup>

While the songs of this group are not necessarily "popular" in style, they do not venture markedly from the established style which audiences had come to expect by Griffes's time. Few songs show a definite plea for audience appeal, yet the story-telling aspect of "Zwei Könige" may have been influenced by the composer's expectations of its impact on the audience. Much clearer in its appeal to audience approval in "Wohl lag ich einst" in its almost showy exuberance. What Howard says concerning this song could apply also to many others of the formative songs in their relation to the public. He considered it "a brilliant song in the Straussian manner, straightforward, with few departures from well-trodden paths."<sup>9</sup> Griffes's earlier songs must have struck his audiences in much

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<sup>8</sup>Berton Coffin, Singer's Repertoire, 5 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1960), 1:56.

<sup>9</sup>Howard, Charles T. Griffes, p. 13.

the same way--brilliantly conceived but not totally unpredictable.

### Divergent Songs

In general, the songs of the divergent group are an exception to the accessibility of Griffes's song style. With these songs, the stylistic demands of the text are of most importance, and it is part of the definition of this group that the styles borrowed are of less complicated construction than the styles of either the formative songs or, particularly, the mainstream songs.

This is not to say that Griffes actually compromised his ideals in deference to performer or audience preferences, but it is true that requirements of performers in these songs are much more accessible to the average singer or pianist. In the oriental songs especially, the vocal melody is extremely simple in construction, with only rare rhythmic deviations from the regular meter and few unusual intervals. The Japanese songs display more rhythmic and melodic variation, however. The typical vocal range for this group is also within the middle range easily sung by an average performer. Of this group, perhaps only "Evening Song" for its sustained phrases and "This Book of Hours" for its more complicated texture can be said to approach the more demanding technical difficulties common to the songs of the other two groups.

There are several songs in this group which seem to conflict with Griffes's overall characteristic of avoiding a more popular style. Despite his disregard for public approval in so much of his song composition, these songs appear to be written with more concern for their audience appeal. Again Barton Coffin, in classifying Griffes's songs, emphasized these exceptions, for of all of Griffes's songs listed, only one

is chosen as appropriate for closing a recital--"Evening Song"<sup>10</sup>--and only one ever appears under the heading of American "Songs of Popular Appeal"--"We'll to the Woods."<sup>11</sup> This is not surprising; one critic described "Evening Song" as "pretentious and shows Griffes' feeling for logical development and pleasing use of rhythmical figuration."<sup>12</sup> Many critics have remarked about the unusually carefree character of "We'll to the Woods": "here we have Griffes in one of his rare moods, joyous, carefree, and comparatively simple."<sup>13</sup> The same could easily be said in describing "Come, Love."

Griffes may well have explained the situation surrounding the emergence of these exceptional songs in a diary entry of May 6, 1912:

I wish I could get one or two real big successes for Schirmer and then they would take my other things which they don't want to risk now.<sup>14</sup>

When these songs, and the others of his Opp. 3 and 4, were finally accepted for publication by Schirmer in 1915, Griffes experienced a great breakthrough in his career, as nothing had been published since 1910. According to Anderson, "it is clear that the silence from 1910 to 1915 was not due to Griffes but rather to his publisher."<sup>15</sup> Yet, it must be said to Griffes's credit that his individuality and self-critical

<sup>10</sup>Coffin, Repertoire, 1:127.

<sup>11</sup>Coffin, Repertoire, 2:108.

<sup>12</sup>Marion Bauer, "Charles T. Griffes As I Remember Him," Musical Quarterly, 29:363 (1943).

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>14</sup>Donna K. Anderson, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes: A Descriptive Catalogue" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. 88.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 111.

compositional skill are still evident even in these more public-oriented songs.

### Mainstream Songs

With the mainstream songs, Griffes isolated himself the most from the demands of both performer and audience. It is here more than in any other group that the composer adhered to his ideal of seeking the most suitable textual expression, apart from either stylistic requirements or preferences of performer and public.

The technical difficulty of the songs of this group is often mentioned by critics analyzing or describing Griffes's songs. Yet, as with rhythmic complexity, this quality increased gradually in a chronological sequence. No particularly taxing requirements are set for the singer or pianist in "The First Snowfall" or "The Half-Ring Moon," yet both songs insist on good control of expressive singing.

By the time of his Four Impressions, the degree of musicianship implied has increased considerably, not simply in the more intricate accompaniments but also in the intensification of the vocal line, through metric variations and angular melodic phrases. Griffes showed his predilection for the high soprano tessitura in these songs again, though the highest pitches are reserved basically for the climaxes. In "Le Réveillon" the composer indicated that he was not unaware of the need to take vocal considerations into account. According to Anderson, he has changed the word on the high b<sup>b</sup> from "streaked" to "flushed" in his search for an easier vowel to sing at that pitch (Example 51).<sup>16</sup>

With his Op. 9 the standard of musicianship required reaches even

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

higher levels. Not only does rhythmic complexity make "Waikiki" and especially "Phantoms" more difficult than his earlier songs, but vocal lines now include more unusual melodic leaps and lack the support of doubling in the accompaniment. In many ways "Phantoms" is Griffes's most difficult song, for in addition to the supreme technical demands, the performer also must somehow create an expressive coherence from this rather disconnected song.

Yet the "Sorrow of Mydath" and the last three songs (Op. 11) have aroused most reaction to Griffes's uncompromising requirements of both singer and pianist. That a mastery of the vocal art is necessary to successfully interpret these songs has been evident since the song's first performance:

Three songs followed in which a splendid interpreter was furnished in Marcia Van Dresser. The finest of these, "The Lament of Ian the Proud," was forceful, while the other two, "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine," and "The Rose of the Night," with their extremely difficult intervals tried sorely Mm. Van Dresser's intonation.<sup>17</sup>

The level of pianistic ability required in these songs is equally prohibitive to the average accompanist. In his descriptive list of vocal music, Sergius Kagen remarks for each of these songs that an accomplished pianist is demanded. For "The Rose of the Night" he emphasizes that the musical and interpretive difficulties require an "excellent pianist."<sup>18</sup> In this last song the composer has even been accused of being unable to "resist the temptation to show off his pianistic abilities."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>"Applaud Griffes Works," Musical America, 29:45 (April 12, 1919).

<sup>18</sup>Sergius Kagen, Music for the Voice: A Descriptive List of Concert and Teaching Material, rev. ed. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 495-6.

<sup>19</sup>George Arnold Conrey, "The Published Songs of Charles Tomlinson Griffes: A Stylistic Examination" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chicago Musical College, 1955), p. 132.

Griffes made as few concessions to the expectations and preferences of audiences as he did to his performers. In contrast to several of the divergent songs, popularity or "audience appeal" is never an influential factor in his mainstream compositions. Perhaps the borderline song, "An Old Song Re-Sung," most nearly approximates an appeal for audience popularity. Admittedly it "is in the tradition of the American he-man song, though it is musically far superior to most of its type."<sup>20</sup> This song maintains its identity with the other mainstream songs particularly through its rather complicated piano accompaniment and through the increased complexity and more irregular melodic patterns of the third strophe.

While Griffes set his artistic standards high, this does not mean that his later songs were unaccepted by his audiences. Not all responded with the criticism that these songs were too ultra-modern or experimental. Some found the emotional intensity and artistic integrity of his Op. 11 very appealing, as did one reviewer after the premiere of this opus:

. . .in "The Lament of Ian the Proud" and "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine" he has sounded a human note. That is the way, Mr. Griffes: don't depart from it, if you would hold our interest as you have in these three songs.<sup>21</sup>

The difference between the three groups concerning Griffes's relation to his public is suggestive of the contrasts between the groups in purpose also. There is no doubt that Griffes chose the late romantic style for his earliest songs not only to master the style of his predecessors but also because this traditional vocabulary formed the backbone

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<sup>20</sup>Philip L. Miller, "A Label Comes Back: Griffes on EMS," American Record Guide, 29:451 (February, 1963).

<sup>21</sup>"Three Poems by Fiona MacLeod," Musical America, 30:40 (May 10, 1919).

of the vocal repertoire of his day. Both publisher and performer found little that was objectionable in songs of this style by genuinely talented composers.

Yet Griffes realized that this was not his individual vocabulary. Unfortunately, the public, and the publishers in particular, were not so quick to accept his more experimental efforts. Many of the songs in the divergent group may have resulted from Griffes's desire to "get one or two real big successes for Schirmer" so that his more adventuresome works might be "risked." Others of the divergent songs resulted from a strong attraction to contrasting, interesting vocabularies--the oriental and the modal in particular. All the while, one has the impression that Griffes has his eye on the public response much more frequently in his divergent songs than in the other two groups.

Of course Griffes desired audience approval of his mainstream songs as well, but in this desire he was unwilling to restructure his personal standards to better suit the expectations of the audience or performer. As has been remarked, Griffes intended in these songs to satisfy only himself. To do so, he insisted on musical integrity, the avoidance of clichés, and the close observance of textual expression. These songs fulfill the composer's need to free himself from the barriers of preconceptions, to struggle with the materials of music in a personal process, and to expand his vision towards creating a truly musical vocabulary.



## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

In considering Griffes's position in the history of music, and in that of art-song in particular, many critics find themselves compelled to discuss the place and position the young composer might have commanded had he lived to reach a solidly mature style. Since nothing can either be proved or gained by this conjecturing, such predictions are both unrealistic and unproductive. This concluding chapter, then, will deal with Griffes's actual achievements rather than what might have been had he lived longer.

Nor does this study attempt to trace the actual impact his songs have had on the growth of the American art song. Such a discussion would require almost as much background in the works of a myriad of other American composers as was necessary for Griffes's songs in this study.

It is necessary, however, to expose the diversified reactions to Griffes's works by critics and commentators of the music world. Their responses usually concern two overall aspects: specifically, the influences on his style from other sources, and, more generally, his status as a composer. How the study of Griffes's songs either refutes or substantiates these various responses is an essential concern which will be approached in hopes of reaching a realistic assessment of the legacy of Griffes's art-song style.

Although there is a basic consensus as to the most significant influences on the composer's style, there has been considerable disagreement among the critics concerning Griffes's relative dependence on those

influences. Most often mentioned as sources for his style are: late German romanticism, French impressionism, and the early twentieth century Russian school, identified particularly with Stravinsky and Prokofiev. The degree to which Griffes relied on these sources, or, conversely, his ability to extricate himself from dependency on these influences, is a point of contention. The response to this question varies across a wide spectrum. At opposite extremes are those who believe his work was either completely derivative or ultra-futuristic in concept. Those with more moderate opinions described the composer as struggling with more or less established styles for an individual expression.

It comes as no shock that Mr. Robinson would ally himself with the extreme which declares Griffes's work as totally dependent on others' styles. According to him this dependence prevented the emergence of an individual style:

. . .he was little more than a paraphraser of innumerable foreign styles, and as a result his own musical speech was stultified almost entirely.<sup>1</sup>

The author of "All-American Night" makes much the same conclusion, although he is also writing generally about American composers of Griffes's time:

Esthetic development has been the rock on which many a good American talent has foundered. It is there, surely, that poor Charles Griffes met ship-wreck.<sup>2</sup>

Other critics have preferred to stress the influence of a particular style, especially the impressionistic, on the composer's career rather than similarly conclude that thereby Griffes did not establish an individual

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Robinson, "The Life and Death of an American Composer," American Mercury, 30:346 (November, 1933).

<sup>2</sup>Paul Rosenfeld, "All-American Night," in his Musical Chronicle (1917-1923) (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923), p. 263.

style. In her discussion of impressionist American composers, Bauer indicates that Griffes remained strongly influenced by impressionism up to his death:

Charles T. Griffes stands apart from these others because, dying in 1920, he was unable to step from his impressionistic period into a further development.<sup>3</sup>

At the other extreme are just as many critics who characterize the composer's career as one of striving for a style which foretold the future of music. The utter conflict between the two extremes can readily be seen by comparing Mr. Robinson's rather biting criticisms above with Mr. Howard's glowing description of Griffes as a composer-prophet:

Charles T. Griffes was one of those prophets who, in their quasi-mystical fashion, seek to tell us of the music of tomorrow; who know that art is not stagnant, and who experiment for us in new fields of expression, ever striving for new combinations of tones and colors which will adequately mirror our modern way of living and our modern way of thinking.<sup>4</sup>

The element of experimentation is frequently mentioned by those who consider Griffes's style individualistic. In comparing Griffes to other American song composers, Upton, hardly less enthusiastic than Howard in the previous example, implies that Griffes was

. . .continually experimenting, . . .dissatisfied with the present, tired of the old ways and means, looking for something different, rather impatient of those who seem too placidly content with things as they are.<sup>5</sup>

It is typical for critics of this extreme to emphasize not only Griffes's individuality but also his persistently uncompromising attitude

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<sup>3</sup>Marion Bauer, "Impressionists in America," Modern Music, 4:19 (January-February, 1927).

<sup>4</sup>John Tasker Howard, Charles Tomlinson Griffes (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1923), pp. 7-8.

<sup>5</sup>William Treat Upton, "Some Representative American Song-Composers," Musical Quarterly, 11:408 (1925).

towards external pressures. In a letter written to Griffes's mother shortly after her son's death, Mr. Sonneck eulogized:

Your son was an artist who held steadfast to his ideals and never allowed himself to follow the lines of least resistance in reaching out for his artistic goal.<sup>6</sup>

Although Howard does mention possible sources for Griffes's style, he singles out the more recent forward-looking developments of the expressionist and Russian schools instead of the by-then more established impressionists. Even so he stresses Griffes's individuality in observing these sources:

In a somewhat remote sense the later Griffes is akin to the later Schonberg--,. . . Schonberg the intellectualist. . . . Griffes has taken what he evidently learned from Schonberg, and more particularly from Stravinsky, and utilized the lesson learned in his own way, and for his own purposes.<sup>7</sup>

Between these two extremes are those critics who recognize the impact made by various sources on Griffes's style yet insist these sources were a springboard rather than a crutch for his own artistic development. After mentioning the style influences most crucial to Griffes's development, the English critic Peterkin then states the typical moderate position:

Unlike some of his younger American confrères, however he was never enslaved by these influences, but was able to extract from them precisely those elements he needed to set free, and express his own personality.<sup>8</sup>

A similar view is stated by a much later writer in "A Tribute to Elmira College." Although he opens by listing the composers Debussy,

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<sup>6</sup>Marion Bauer, "Charles T. Griffes As I Remember Him," Musical Quarterly, 29:361 (1943).

<sup>7</sup>Howard, Charles T. Griffes, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Norman Peterkin, "Charles T. Griffes," The Chesterian, n.s. 30-162 (March, 1923).

Stravinsky, Ravel, and Schoenberg as having considerable impact on the developing Griffes style, his conclusion tends to emphasize more independence in Griffes's relation to such composers:

I should probably say, more accurately, since all of these men were composing more or less at the same time, that Griffes noted their innovations and assimilated those which could contribute to his own personal idiom.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Anderson expresses the moderate's careful evaluation of the particular relationship between influences and individuality:

Griffes was, in the last analysis, a self-made artist. He was neither decisively shaped nor permanently influenced by any one person or any one prevailing musical style--inspired, yes; guided, of course; but never artistically dominated. Griffes' artistic credo was uniquely his own.<sup>10</sup>

What this type of evaluation implies concerning Griffes's position in music history is indicated in Boda's doctoral dissertation. His conclusion maintains the theory that while Griffes's works were not totally independent of strong influences from the past, they were indicative of future musical developments:

In the realm of American music, the compositions of Griffes have created a link between the romantic music of the American composers of a generation earlier, and the modern music of present day composers.<sup>11</sup>

Despite such conflicting evaluations concerning the impact of other styles on Griffes's composing, almost all critics are in agreement on one point--the one influence to which Griffes did not succumb in his

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<sup>9</sup>Frederick C. St. Aubyn, "Griffes, Son of Elmira," Music Journal, 23:31 (March, 1965).

<sup>10</sup>Donna K. Anderson, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes: A Descriptive Catalogue" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), pp. 3-4.

<sup>11</sup>Daniel Boda, "The Music of Charles T. Griffes" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1962), p. 111.

songs was that of Americanism. During the years encompassing Griffes's career, American musicians were extremely conscious of the numerous influences which were not simply available to them but whose power seemed to engulf them and prevent the growth of a uniquely American style. The situation is well described by Mason in his aptly titled "The Dilemma of American Music":

American composers are bewildered by the multiplicity of the traditions which with us subsist side by side, mutually diluting, confusing, or even cancelling one another.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of this predicament, most American composers, including Griffes, illustrate a vacillation between styles, as though the question, "Which style next?", had to be answered for each composition. Another result of this situation was the movement towards the use of "native" American themes or tendencies, such as Indian themes, folk tunes, and jazz rhythms. This composing was very selfconscious, since composers were painfully aware of their dependence on foreign styles and sought to infuse American music with elements of indigenous styles so as to distinguish the American style from the rest of the world's music. In other words, the nationalist tendencies had spread to the United States, where American composers sought to prove their worth on their own merits rather than to borrow constantly from styles of other countries.

Griffes was quite an exception to this nationalist tendency, since in his songs he obviously did not feel the compulsion to become an "American" composer by relying on American themes. Though this avoidance of Americanism by Griffes is generally accepted as fact by music historians,

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<sup>12</sup>Daniel Gregory Mason, "The Dilemma of American Music," in his The Dilemma of American Music and Other Essays (New York: Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 2.

their interpretations of this phenomenon again vary widely. His avoidance of this tendency caused on one hand the criticism that he was therefore not a true "American" composer. Again it is Robinson who assumes the most critical position:

Though he is generally thought to have been one of the most significant American composers, actually--and to a remarkable degree--he drew his inspiration from every country but the United States.<sup>13</sup>

Proponents of the opposing interpretation imply that just such an avoidance of influences, which might limit his perspective rather than widen it, was crucial to Griffes's acceptance on more than a national scale. It was his open-mindedness to trends in the world-wide musical arena which enabled commentators such as Hans Nathan to state the following:

Griffes was the first American-born composer of consequence whose work was closely linked to the international scene of his time.<sup>14</sup>

Just as there is widespread disagreement among critics concerning the strength of influences on Griffes, there is a parallel variety of opinions with respect to Griffes's position in the history of American art song. And yet, while the full spectrum of response is again evident, there is much more weight given to the extreme which considers his work significant than to the opposite extreme.

As a matter of fact, of the critics surveyed, only Robinson is bold enough to state that he considered Griffes's work "really an error." After describing the materials Griffes had chosen as neither "vital" nor "appropriate," Robinson implies that Griffes's "drooping spirit," from his isolation and rootlessness, finally forced him to "relinquish the struggle."

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<sup>13</sup>Robinson, "American Composer," p. 345.

<sup>14</sup>Hans Nathan, "United States of America," in A History of Song, ed. Denis Stevens (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1960), pp. 427-8.

As to the worth of Griffes's compositions, Robinson unhesitatingly concludes that "his music was useless, and there was really no reason why anyone should bother about it."<sup>15</sup>

The most contrasting assessment of Griffes's position comes from his biographer, Edward Maisel. His superlative comments represent the extreme consisting of those critics whose estimation of Griffes places him as one of America's greatest composers:

Probably never again in American will there arise his equal as a composer of art songs.<sup>16</sup>

The composer's innovative spirit is specifically mentioned by another commentator, who again uses a superlative qualifier in describing Griffes:

Discriminating ears had already found in him the freshest voice in American music of his time.<sup>17</sup>

Several critics number Griffes among the most significant American composers. John T. Howard extends this judgment to the international music world:

Today Griffes is recognized as one of the most important figures in American music, his work is accepted as a worthy contribution to the contemporary musical literature of all nations.<sup>18</sup>

Another admirer of the composer, William Upton, in his comparison of American art song composers judged Griffes as holding "first place" among composers of the "modernist group."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Robinson, "American Composer," p. 348.

<sup>16</sup>Edward M. Maisel, Charles T. Griffes: The Life of an American Composer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), p. 335.

<sup>17</sup>"In Memory of Griffes," Newsweek, 39:106 (April 21, 1952).

<sup>18</sup>Howard, Charles T. Griffes, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>Upton, "Some Representative," p. 409.



While the number of such enthusiastic proponents of Griffes's greatness is considerable, an even more common response by critics is more tentative and is qualified by conjectures arising from the composer's rather short career. Adherents of this more moderate position either temper their evaluation of the composer's legacy with predictions of what might have been or assume a more noncommittal stance towards the composer's possible greatness. Typical of the former mode of assessment is Mr. Peterkin's conclusion in the Chesterian shortly after Griffes's death:

One feels that if his development had been allowed to proceed apace, he would certainly have ranked with the best of the younger European composers.<sup>20</sup>

The more noncommittal assessment is usually accompanied by a qualifying phrase which bears a tentative connotation. In Carman's more recent "Song Cycle" series, the qualifying words are "perhaps" and "promising."

Charles T. Griffes was perhaps the most talented and promising of the composers who worked in the first two decades of this century.<sup>21</sup>

This is a common description for the young composer, as it recurs in slightly varied format in Our American Music:

The death of Charles T. Griffes was a cruel loss to American music, for it took away one of our most promising talents.<sup>22</sup>

At times this more tentative position is implied rather than directly stated by music critics. In his work on the vocal repertoire,

<sup>20</sup>Peterkin, "Charles T. Griffes," p. 162.

<sup>21</sup>Judith Elaine Carman, "The Song Cycle in the United States: 1900-1970, Part 1, "NATS Bulletin, 33:24 (October, 1976)

<sup>22</sup>John Tasker Howard, Our American Music: Three Hundred Years of It (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1931), p. 485.

Mr. Kagen gives the familiar qualifying adjective in his introductory statement for Griffes's songs when he calls the composer "perhaps one of America's outstanding composers." But it is the implication from a later statement which truly reveals Mr. Kagen's opinion of the composer's importance. In recommending the composer's works to vocalists, he states that "no American singer can afford to neglect Griffes."<sup>23</sup> This is the more moderate assessment of the composer's impact on the performer's repertoire; thorough study of Griffes's works is not imperative, as with some composers, but an acquaintance with his works is necessary.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from Berton Coffin's compilation, Singer's Repertoire. Many of Griffes's songs are included throughout the volumes devoted to each of the four major singers' ranges, particularly those dealing with soprano and mezzo-soprano ranges. However, no Griffes song appears in Coffin's last volume, Program Notes, which includes commentary on important vocal works.<sup>24</sup> The implication here is that Griffes may be important as an American composer--his songs should appear on the American portion of vocalists' recitals--but he is not really significant to the international musical scene.

There are of course those commentators who adopt the moderate assessment of Griffes's position not through the tentative approach but from a realistic survey of the composer's career and legacy. Because this more objective view has been possible only with the assistance of hindsight, it has been accepted particularly by musical scholars of more recent

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<sup>23</sup>Sergius Kagen, Music for the Voice: A Descriptive List of Concert and Teaching Material, rev. ed. (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 494.

<sup>24</sup>Berton Coffin, Singer's Repertoire, 5 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1960).

times. Some credence must be given to the theory proclaimed by Ellsworth that the assessment of Griffes has swung in pendulum fashion from one extreme to another since his death:

After his death, Griffes was overpraised, credited with being America's first, real "modern" composer, ranked with Prokofiev, Ravel, and Stravinsky. Since the emergence of Charles Ives and the waning of the impressionistic movement, he has been underpraised. He was not "America's first modern composer," but he was one of them. He was not a composer of the first rank, but he very well might have been.<sup>25</sup>

The extremes suggested here have been obvious in the preceding discussion of critics' remarks concerning influences and significance. And although Ellsworth does indulge in the ever-tempting "might have been" remark, he does point to the more careful evaluation of Griffes's legacy which has emerged with most recent scholarship.

Yet critics often have difficulty with phrasing this conclusion. While they agree that his position is neither one of superlative greatness nor total insignificance, there is indecision as to how best this middle ground should be characterized. What often results is a description rather incongruous with Griffes's work, as found in "A Tribute to Elmira College":

Abram Chasins. . .described Griffes' place in American music as a simple place, not grandiose, but filled with harmonious serenity.<sup>26</sup>

Probably the most accurate evaluation of Griffes's work comes from Dr. Anderson, who has made an extensive study of the composer's works. Her acceptance of the more moderate status of the composer is the result of careful scholarship rather than tentative conjecturing. For this reason she realistically admits that Griffes's status is not supreme but empha-

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<sup>25</sup>Ray Ellsworth, "In Memory of a Forgotten American," American Record Guide, 24:8 (September, 1957).

<sup>26</sup>"Tribute to Elmira College," Music Journal, 23:29 (March, 1965).

sizes that it is nonetheless important:

Since that time (Griffes's death) his music has gained critical prestige and has won a small but significant position in the orchestral and solo repertoire of the concert stage as well as in the teaching studio.

She then concludes that Griffes was able to emerge "as one of America's most significant composers."<sup>27</sup>

This variety of response to the work of Charles T. Griffes is understandable and may be due in large part to the tremendous variation in style evident in his career, as emphasized in the preceding analysis of his songs. There are acute differences between the formative, divergent, and mainstream songs with respect to not only the basic elements but also the basic premises on which the styles of the songs are based.

As has been shown, the songs of both the formative and divergent groups are derivative in nature. There is no question in either the composer's or the listener's mind that some established style provides the basic framework for these songs. While the songs of these groups may illustrate the composer's technical skill and an occasional personal ingredient displaying individuality, for the most part the composer is dependent upon the structure of some borrowed style.

Had only the songs of these two groups survived, then many of the criticisms leveled against Griffes could be accepted. The influences of post-romanticism and exotic styles, for example, are quite strong, and his inability to separate himself from their power cannot be denied. Yet it must be emphasized that Griffes consciously borrowed these styles. For various reasons, whether for his education in the genre or for experimentation's sake from attraction to an exotic timbre, the composer chose

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<sup>27</sup>Anderson, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes," pp. 2-4.

to work from these established styles.

But the existence of the songs of the mainstream group changes this picture dramatically. Although various influences, especially impressionistic for the earlier songs, may be more or less evident at times, what really emerges in these songs is a composer's struggle for a vocabulary which is not only personal but is also independent from the pressures and demands of styles of the past. In these songs the composer illustrates not only his technical skill but also his decision to avoid established styles in search of his individual statement in the genre of art song.

It is the mainstream group of songs, then, which allows the present-day music historian to assume a moderate position in the evaluation of Griffes's song-composing status. Admittedly Griffes does not and cannot command a position in the forefront of American composers; his work is too limited and too embryonic in development for an assessment tending towards superlative greatness. Yet the quality of his work, and the direction of his later songs, assures Griffes a respectable position among the most talented American composers of the early twentieth century.

Example 1. "Sur ma lyre l'autrefois," meas. 28

Sur ma lyre l'au-tre - fois

Example 2. "Sur ma lyre," meas. 29-30

moi-rit. tiè loin

Example 3. "Auf dem Teich, dem regungslosen," meas. 2-3

Auf dem Teich, dem re - gungs-lo - sen,  
Oer the tarn's un - ruf - fled mir - ror

pp

Tea.

Example 4. "Auf dem Teich," meas. 7-8

blei - chen Ro - sen in  
pale white ros - es Thro'

*pp*

The musical score for Example 4 shows measures 7 and 8. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The lyrics are "blei - chen Ro - sen in" and "pale white ros - es Thro'". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a key signature of two sharps. The piano part features arpeggiated chords and a melodic line in the bass. The dynamic marking *pp* (pianissimo) is indicated at the end of the measures.

Example 5. "Auf dem Teich," meas. 10-11

Hir - sche wan - deln dort am Hü - gel,  
Stags on yon - der hill are rov - ing,

The musical score for Example 5 shows measures 10 and 11. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are "Hir - sche wan - deln dort am Hü - gel," and "Stags on yon - der hill are rov - ing,". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a key signature of two sharps. The piano part features arpeggiated chords and a melodic line in the bass. The dynamic marking *pp* (pianissimo) is indicated at the end of the measures.

Example 6. "Auf geheimem Waldespfade," meas. 2-4

Auf ge - hei - men Wal - des - pfa - de schleich'ich gern  
By a lone - ly for - est path-way I am fain

*p*

The musical score for Example 6 shows measures 2, 3, and 4. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The lyrics are "Auf ge - hei - men Wal - des - pfa - de schleich'ich gern" and "By a lone - ly for - est path-way I am fain". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a key signature of two flats. The piano part features arpeggiated chords and a melodic line in the bass. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is indicated at the beginning of the measures.

Example 7. "Auf geheimem Waldespfade," meas. 15

*poco cresc.*

und es kla - get  
Hear them whis - pring

*poco cresc.*

Example 8. "Nacht liegt auf den Fremden Wegen," meas. 3-4

*p*

Nacht liegt auf den frem - den We - gen  
Night on ways un - known has fall - en,

*p*

Example 9. "Nacht liegt," meas. 14-15

*poco più mosso ma non troppo*

Sü - sser Mond, mit dei - nen Strah - len  
Ah, sweet moon, with gen - tle ra - diance

*pp*



Example 10. "Der traumernde See,"  
meas. 1-2

Tranquillo, ma non troppo

*p*

Der  
An

*p dolce*

Red. \* Red. \*

Example 11. "Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz," meas. 17-20

*f molto appassionato* *cresc.* *ff*

o höch - stes Leid, o höch - ste Lust, wie seid ihr euch so gleich!  
Oh! high - est joy, to deep - est pain How near a - kin\_ thou art!

*f* *cresc.* *ff*

Red. \* Red. \* Red. \* Red. \*

Example 12. "So halt' ich endlich dich umfassen," meas. 11-12

*mf*

Was nur das Glück ver - mag zu ge - ben,  
 What on - ly Fate has pow'r to of - fer,

*a tempo*

*mf*

*Red.* *Red.*

Example 13. "So halt' ich,"  
 meas. 23-24

*crescendo*

Und nur dein Au - ge schwe - be stil - le,  
 And may your eyes in still - ness hov - er

*crescendo*

*Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

Example 14. "Entflieh mit mir," meas. 4-6

Musical score for Example 14, measures 4-6 of "Entflieh mit mir". The score is in A major (three sharps) and 2/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5, then a half note E5, and finally a quarter note F#5 with a fermata. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with eighth-note chords and a left hand with a single bass note G3. The lyrics "Ent- flieh mit mir und sei mein Weib" are written below the vocal line.

Example 15. "Entflieh mit mir," meas. 18-19

Musical score for Example 15, measures 18-19 of "Entflieh mit mir". The score is in A major (three sharps) and 2/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5, then a half note E5, and finally a quarter note F#5 with a fermata. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with eighth-note chords and a left hand with a single bass note G3. The lyrics "Kommst Du nicht mit, So" are written below the vocal line. The tempo marking "poco rit. e dim." is present above the piano part. The dynamic marking "pp" is present below the piano part.

Example 16. "Auf ihrem Grab," meas. 13-15

— und so schau - rig, Die Vö - gel, die sin - gen so süß und so trau - rig,  
 — and cling - ing; The birds war - ble sweet - ly, but sad — is their sing - ing;

*p* ✓

Example 17. "Meeresstille," meas. 1-6

*Ruhig* *p*

Tie - fe Stil - le herrscht im Was - ser, Oh - ne Re - gung ruht das Meer,  
 Deep - est si - lence rules the O - cean, With - out move - ment rests the wave.

*pp* 5

Example 18. "Gedicht von Heine," meas. 2-3

*Bewegt und rasch* *mf*

Mit schwar-zen Se - geln

Example 20. "Am Kreuzweg wird begraben," meas. 16-17

- sün - der - blum!  
- Sin - ner's Bloom.

Ped.

Example 19. "Gedicht von Heine," meas. 25-26

*etwas langsamer*

Mit schwar-zen Se - geln

*leise aber schwer*

Example 21. "Am Kreuzweg," meas. 24-27

*pp*

Die Nacht war kalt  
The night was cold

*pp*

Ped.

Example 22. "Am Kreuzweg," meas. 34-35

sün - der - blum'.  
 Sin - ner's Bloom.

*pp*  
*Red.*

Example 23. "An den Wind," meas. 3-4

Ich wan - dre fort in's fer - ne Land;  
 I wan - dered forth to dis - tant lands;

*pp*  
*Red.*

Example 24. "An den Wind," meas. 13-14

*mf*  
 Wohl rief sie noch ein freund - lich Wort  
 She may have called a friend - ly word  
*a tempo*

*mf*  
*Red.*

Example 25. "Zwei Konige sassen auf Orkadale," meas. 8-12

*mf*

Zwei Kü - ni - ge sa - ssen auf Or - ka - dal,  
 Two kings sat to - geth - er in Or - ka - dal,

*mf*

Example 26. "Elfe," meas. 5-8

*p scherzando*

Bleib bei uns! \_\_\_\_\_ wir ha-ben den Tanz - plan im Thal \_\_\_\_\_  
 Stay with us. \_\_\_\_\_, We have a soft dance - floor be - low, \_\_\_\_\_

*a tempo*

*pp* *p*

Example 27. "Konnt' ich mit dir dort oben gehn," meas. 1-3

*p teneramente*

Könnt' ich mit dir dort o - ben gehn,  
If I could go with you up there,

*pp legato*

*Ad.*

Example 28. "Konnt' ich," meas. 16-17

Die in dem Lin - den-baum  
Who, from the lin - den, seems

*Ad.*



Example 29. "Evening Song," meas. 33-35

*poco rit.*

Nev - er our lips, —

*poco rit.*

Example 30. "The First Snowfall," meas. 2-4

The Fir - tree felt it with a thrill

Example 31. "The First Snowfall,"  
meas. 13-15

one the shib - bo - leth Of Life

15

Example 32. "The First Snowfall,"  
meas. 16-20

and to one The coun - ter-sign of Death.

20

*dim.*

*ppp*

Example 33. "The Half-Ring Moon," meas. 3

Example 33 shows measures 3 of "The Half-Ring Moon". The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It begins with the dynamic marking *mf passionately*. The lyrics "O - ver the sea," are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp and a common time signature. It starts with the dynamic marking *p* and features a continuous eighth-note pattern in both hands.

Example 34. "The Half-Ring Moon," meas. 9-10

Example 34 shows measures 9-10 of "The Half-Ring Moon". The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The lyrics "pledge of his faith to be." are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp and a common time signature. It features a complex, rapid eighth-note pattern in both hands, with a slur over the final measure.

Example 35. "La Mer," meas. 2-4

Example 35 shows measures 2-4 of "La Mer". The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab) and a 6/8 time signature. It begins with the dynamic marking *f* and a fermata over the first measure. The lyrics "white mist drifts a - cross the shrouds," are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of three flats and a 6/8 time signature. It starts with the dynamic marking *mf* and features a continuous eighth-note pattern in both hands. A "Ped." (pedal) marking is present at the bottom of the piano part.

Example 36. "La Mer," meas. 18-20

*senza affrettare*

Is but a shadow in the gloom;

Ped.

w

Example 37. "La Mer," meas. 23-24

*f più agitato*

Leap the long rods of polished steel.

cresc.

Ped.

Ped.

Example 38. "La Mer," meas. 33-35

*p*

The shattered storm has left its trace

p

3/2

Ped.

Example 39. "La Mer," meas. 44-45

*mf*

yel-low foam Float

*p*

Red.

Example 40. "La Fuite de la Lune," meas. 2-3

*p*

To out - er sens-es

\* Red.

Example 41. "La Fuite," meas. 15-16

*p*

Save for a cry that ech - oes shrill,

Example 42. "La Fuite," meas. 24-26

*più animato* *mf*

And sud - den - ly the moon

*più animato*

*f*

3 3 2 3 4 2 4 1 1

Red. \* Red. \* Red.

Example 43. "Symphony in Yellow," meas. 1-4

*p*

An om - ni - bus a - cross the bridge

*pp*

Red. \* Red. \*

Example 44. "Symphony in Yellow," meas. 45-48

*pp* *rit.*

Lies like a rod of rip-pled jade.

*colla voce*

Red. \* Red. \* Red. \*

Example 45. "Symphony  
in Yellow,"  
meas. 19-20

**L'istesso tempo** (♩ = ♩)

*p*  
Big  
*pp*  
Ped.

Example 47. "Nachtlied," meas. 25

Traum  
*pp*  
2 pedali  
Ped.

Example 46. "Nachtlied," meas. 8-11

*p*  
Der Mond kommt still ge-gang-en  
*pp*  
Ped. sempre una corda  
Ped.

Example 48. "We'll to the Woods, and Gather May," meas. 2-4

*mf*

We'll to the woods, - and gath-er may

\* *Red simile*

Example 49. "Le Reveillon," meas. 28-29

*poco a poco più animato*

jag - ged bra - zen ar - - rows

*p*

*Red*

Example 50. "Le Reveillon," meas. 33-35

*f*

*ff*

long wave of yel - - low light

*simile*

*f*

*ff*

*Red*



Example 51. "Le Reveillon," meas. 53-55

*molto cresc.*

all the branch - - - es Flushed

*simile*

*cresc.*

*ff*

*simile*

*Ped.* 6 \*

*Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

Example 52. "This Book of Hours," meas. 3-9

*mf*

This book of hours Love wrought With bur-nished let-ters gold;

*mf*

5

Example 53. "This Book of Hours," meas. 9-11

Each page with art and thought, And colours man - i - fold.

This musical score for measures 9-11 is written for voice and piano. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/2. The voice part (treble clef) begins with a half rest in measure 9, followed by a quarter note G#4, a half note A4, and a quarter note B4 in measure 10. In measure 11, it has a quarter note C5, a half note B4, and a quarter note A4. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a half rest in measure 9. In measure 10, the right hand plays a half note G#4 and a half note A4, while the left hand plays a half note F#3. In measure 11, the right hand plays a half note B4 and a half note A4, and the left hand plays a half note G#3. Slurs are present over the vocal line in measures 10 and 11, and over the piano accompaniment in measure 11.

Example 54. "This Book of Hours," meas. 19-20

book of hours Love wrought With bur - nished let - ters gold.

*cresc. poco*

20

This musical score for measures 19-20 is written for voice and piano. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/2. The voice part (treble clef) has a half rest in measure 19, followed by a quarter note G#4, a half note A4, and a quarter note B4 in measure 20. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a half rest in measure 19. In measure 20, the right hand plays a half note G#4 and a half note A4, while the left hand plays a half note F#3. In measure 21, the right hand plays a half note B4 and a half note A4, and the left hand plays a half note G#3. Slurs are present over the vocal line in measures 20 and 21, and over the piano accompaniment in measure 21. The instruction *cresc. poco* is written below the piano part in measure 20. The number 20 is written at the end of the piano part in measure 21.

Example 55. "Come, Love, Across the Sunlit Land," meas. 21-23

*f*  
Come, Love, a - cross the sun - lit land,  
*Ped.*

Example 56. "Come, Love," meas. 47

Love, a - cross the  
*Ped.*

Example 57. "Le Jardin," meas. 19-21

down the wind - y gar - den walk  
*p*  
*Ped.*

Example 58. "Impression du Matin," meas. 1-2

Tranquillo ♩ = 60

The Thames

*pp*

*p*

\*Led. The accompaniment entirely veiled by the two pedals

Example 59. "Impression," meas. 30

*lento*

*pp*

*sempre con i due pedali*

Example 60. "Impression," meas. 36-38

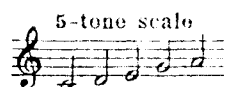
*mf* *molto ritenuto* *p*

gas lamps' flare, With lips of flame and heart of stone.

*pp*

\* Led. \* Led.

Example 61. "Landscape."



Example 62. "Landscape," meas. 1-3

Dolente (M.M. ♩ = circa 80)

4/4 time signature. Treble clef staff has whole rests. Piano part (grand staff) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand plays a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand plays a steady bass line of eighth notes.

Example 63. "Landscape," meas. 17-19

Vocal line: "scar - let leaf! \_\_\_\_\_". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a *poco cresc.* marking. The right hand has a melodic line with a long note, and the left hand has a steady bass line.

Example 64. "Landscape," meas. 23-25

Vocal line: "On - ly o-ver thatched huts fall-ing brief,". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a *pp* marking. The right hand has a melodic line with a long note, and the left hand has a steady bass line. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at the end of the passage.

Example 65. "The Old Temple Among the Mountains," meas. 4-6

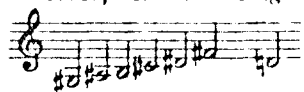


Example 66. "The Old Temple," meas. 18-19



Example 67. "Tears."

6-tone scale, with one foreign note



Example 68. "Tears," meas. 6-7



Example 69. "Tears," meas. 17-24

*Poco più mosso*

*cresc.*

But that which makes my grief more deep, ——— Is that

*p*

*20*

*Tempo 1<sup>o</sup>*

*f* *dim.* *2* *rit.*

you know ——— not when I weep. ———

*f* *mf* *dim.* *pp*

*24*

The musical score is written for a voice and piano. The key signature is A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo marking is 'Poco più mosso'. The vocal line begins with a 'cresc.' marking. The piano accompaniment starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes lyrics: 'But that which makes my grief more deep, ——— Is that' and 'you know ——— not when I weep. ———'. The piano part has dynamics of *f*, *mf*, *dim.*, and *pp*. Measure numbers 20 and 24 are indicated. The score ends with a double bar line.

Example 70. "In a Myrtle Shade," meas. 3-4

Musical score for measures 3-4 of "In a Myrtle Shade". The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "To a love - ly myr - tle bound,". The piano accompaniment features a flowing eighth-note melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. A piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic marking appears in measure 4.

Example 71. "In a Myrtle Shade," meas. 7-8

Musical score for measures 7-8 of "In a Myrtle Shade". The key signature remains three sharps. The time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "Oh, how - weak and wear - y". The piano accompaniment features a flowing eighth-note melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The music concludes with a double bar line.

Example 72. "In a Myrtle Shade," meas. 20-22

Musical score for measures 20-22 of "In a Myrtle Shade". The key signature remains three sharps. The time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "love can-not be bound To an - y tree". The piano accompaniment features a flowing eighth-note melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. A measure number "20" is written above the piano part in measure 20. The music concludes with a double bar line.



Example 73. "Waikiki," meas. 14-17

*p*

Plan - gent, hid-den from eyes, Some - where an eu - ka - le - li thrills

*mf*

15

*f*

Example 74. "Phantoms" (Giovannitti), meas. 6-7

*p*

When in my night, like — gaunt, gray phan - toms,

*pp*

Example 75. "Phantoms," meas. 26-28

and hear thee sing a - gain That old sweet song, —

*pp*

This musical score for Example 75, titled "Phantoms," covers measures 26-28. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are "and hear thee sing a - gain That old sweet song, —". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a key signature of one flat. It includes a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The music is in a 4/4 time signature.

Example 76. "So-Fei," meas. 48-51

Now I hear a song a - ris - ing

50

This musical score for Example 76, titled "So-Fei," covers measures 48-51. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are "Now I hear a song a - ris - ing". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a key signature of one flat. It includes a tempo marking of 50. The music is in a 4/4 time signature.

Example 77. "A Feast of Lanterns," meas. 26-29

in gold and sil - - ver seas,

This musical score for Example 77, titled "A Feast of Lanterns," covers measures 26-29. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The lyrics are "in gold and sil - - ver seas,". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a key signature of three sharps. The music is in a 4/4 time signature.

Example 78. "Sorrow of Mydath," meas. 9-10

musical score for measures 9-10 of "Sorrow of Mydath". The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "mind" and "and the bod - - y of me,". The piano accompaniment includes triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *dim.* (diminuendo).

Example 79.  
"Sorrow of Mydath,"  
meas. 16

musical score for measure 16 of "Sorrow of Mydath". The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line with the lyrics "des-o-late sands." and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a triplet and a sixteenth-note pattern. Dynamics include *rit.* (ritardando) and *p rit.* (piano ritardando).

Example 80. "Sorrow of Mydath," meas. 30

musical score for measure 30 of "Sorrow of Mydath". The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a triplet and a sixteenth-note pattern. Dynamics include *accel.* (accelerando) and *cresc. sempre* (crescendo sempre).

Example 31. "Sorrow of Mydath," meas. 34-35

hair of the spray Would ga-ther in splen - did ter - ror,

*cresc.* *ff poco allargando*

*cresc.* *ff poco allargando*

Example 32. "In the Harem," meas. 17-19

hearts were full, they no-thing said,

Example 83. "Djakoan," meas. 1-4

Musical score for Example 83, "Djakoan," measures 1-4. The score is in 4/4 time. The vocal line (top staff) features a melody with lyrics "Dja- go - wan" and "dja - go - wan". The piano accompaniment (bottom two staves) consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand.

Example 84. "Kinanti," meas. 5-6

Musical score for Example 84, "Kinanti," measures 5-6. The score is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The vocal line (top staff) features a melody with lyrics "ngal - lan i - oeng", "dē - dēk", "na - lang - koeng", and "raspa". The piano accompaniment (bottom two staves) consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand. The word "Ped." is written below the piano part.

Example 85. "An Old Song Re-Sung," meas. 2-4

Musical score for Example 85, measures 2-4 of "An Old Song Re-Sung". The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and the lyrics "I saw a ship a-sail-ing, a-sail - ing, a-sail - ing,". The piano accompaniment also starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. A vertical bar line is placed between measures 3 and 4.

Example 86. "An Old Song Re-Sung," meas. 13-14

Musical score for Example 86, measures 13-14 of "An Old Song Re-Sung". The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a fermata over measure 13 and a first ending bracket labeled "I" over measure 14. The piano accompaniment is marked forte (*f*) and includes triplets in both measures. A vertical bar line is placed between measures 13 and 14.

Example 87. "An Old Song  
Re-Sung,"  
meas. 37-39

*meno mosso* *dim. e rit.*

bro-ken glass was chink-ing as she sank a-mong the wrecks.

*p meno mosso* *dim. e rit.* *p*

Example 88. "The Lament of Ian the Proud," meas. 20-21

*dim.*

A - bout the gray hair of me -

*dim.*

Example 89. "The Lament of Ian," meas. 25-26

*Poco più mosso ed agitato*  $\text{♩} = 100$

*mf*

I know not what it is,

*p*

Example 90. "The Lament of Ian," meas. 40-42

Musical score for Example 90, "The Lament of Ian," measures 40-42. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes the lyrics "O blown, whirl-ing leaf, And the old grief,". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand features arpeggiated chords and melodic lines with triplets and a quintuplet. The left hand provides a harmonic foundation with triplets and single notes. Dynamics include *f* and *f*.

Example 91. "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine," meas. 6-7

Musical score for Example 91, "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine," measures 6-7. The score is in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics "Lamps of de - sire!". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The left hand features a melodic line with triplets and a quintuplet. Dynamics include *p* and *espressivo*.



Example 92. "Thy Dark Eyes," meas. 16-17

Heard but a whis - per, But a lost e - cho  
lost

This musical score for measures 16-17 of "Thy Dark Eyes" features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line, in a soprano or alto register, contains two triplet markings over the words "whis - per," and "lost e - cho". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand features a triplet in measure 16, followed by a five-note arpeggiated figure in measure 17, and another triplet in measure 18. The left hand provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines, including a five-note arpeggiated figure in measure 18.

Example 93. "Thy Dark Eyes," meas. 26

Aye, I would leap

This musical score for measure 26 of "Thy Dark Eyes" features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats. The vocal line, in a soprano or alto register, contains a single note marked with a fermata over the word "Aye," followed by a half note and a quarter note in measure 26. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand features a half note marked with a fermata, followed by a half note and a quarter note in measure 26. The left hand provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines, including a half note marked with a fermata, followed by a half note and a quarter note in measure 26.

Example 94. "The Rose of the Night," meas. 1-2

Moderato (♩ = 66)

*pp* *sempre i due pedali*

Example 95. "The Rose of the Night," meas. 39-40

flame Leaping high - er and high - er,

Example 96. "The Rose of the Night," meas. 49-50

This musical score is for measures 49 and 50 of the song "The Rose of the Night". It is written for voice and piano. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The voice part, in the upper staff, begins with a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic and a long note on the first staff line, with the lyrics "Fire," written below it. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand features a series of chords and triplets, with a *ff* dynamic marking. The left hand includes a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes, with a *f* (forte) dynamic marking. The score concludes with a *ff* dynamic marking on the final notes of both piano staves.

## APPENDIX

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Song 1. "Si mes vers avaient des ailes."

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a piano introduction in B-flat major, 2/4 time, marked *pp*. The piano part features a triplet in the right hand and a single note in the left hand. The introduction concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The vocal entry is marked *sempre mezza voce e dolce* and begins with a measure rest followed by a quarter note. The lyrics are: "Mes vers fuir-aient doux et frê-les vers". The piano accompaniment is marked *a tempo* and features a triplet in the right hand and a single note in the left hand. The score continues with the lyrics: "vo-tre jar-din si- beau-." and "si mes vers a-". The piano part continues with a triplet in the right hand and a single note in the left hand.

pp

L.H. 3

rit.

sempre mezza voce e dolce

5

Mes vers fuir-aient doux et frê-les vers

a tempo

L.H.

vo-tre jar-din si- beau-.

si mes vers a-

Song 1. "Si mes vers," cont.

10

vaient des ai-les, des ai-les - com-me l'oi-seau. Ils

crese.

15

vo-ler-aient e-tin-eel-les vers-vo-tre fo-yer qui-

rit.

Si mes vers a-vaient des ai-les, des-

Song 1. "Si mes vers," cont.

20

ai- les com-me l'e-sprit. Près de vous purs

et fi- de-les ils ac- cou- raient nuit et jour.

25

Si mes- vers a- vaient des- ai- les, des ai- les- com-me l'a-

*poco rit.*

Song 1. "Si mes vers," cont.

30

*mour.*

*a tempo*

*rit. c.p.p.*

R.H.

L.H. 3

Handwritten musical score for "Si mes vers," continuation. The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a whole note, followed by a rest, and then a half note. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand (R.H.) and a left hand (L.H.). The R.H. plays a series of chords, and the L.H. plays a series of chords. The tempo is marked "a tempo" and the dynamics are "rit. c.p.p.". The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 7/8. The score is numbered 30 in a box at the top right.



Song 2. "Es fiel ein Reif."

*Nicht zu schnell*

*sempre legato e pp*

Es

5

fiel ein Reif in der Früh- lings - nacht, Er

10

fiel auf die zar- - ten Blau- blüm - e - lein, Sie

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/8. The tempo/style marking is 'Nicht zu schnell' and 'sempre legato e pp'. The lyrics are in German. The first system starts with 'Es'. The second system starts with 'fiel ein Reif in der Früh- lings - nacht, Er'. The third system starts with 'fiel auf die zar- - ten Blau- blüm - e - lein, Sie'. There are measure numbers 5 and 10 marked in boxes above the vocal lines. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex bass line in the left hand.

Song 2. "Es fiel ein Reif," cont.

15

sind ver-welket, ver-dor-ret.

20

*cresc. e accel.*

*poco più mosso*

*f* Ein Jüng-ling

*f*

The musical score is written for a voice and piano. The key signature is G major (one sharp, F#). The time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 15-18) shows the vocal line with lyrics 'sind ver-welket, ver-dor-ret.' and the piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 19-22) shows the vocal line with a rest and the piano accompaniment, marked 'cresc. e accel.'. The third system (measures 23-26) shows the vocal line with lyrics 'Ein Jüng-ling' and the piano accompaniment, marked 'poco più mosso' and 'f'.

Song 2. "Es fiel ein Reif," cont.

25

hatt' ein Mäd- chen lieb, — Sie flo- hen

30

heim- lich von Häu- se fort,

*cresc.*

*R.H.*

*8va*

*f*

35

*p*

Es wusst'

*dim.*

*p*

Song 2. "Es fiel ein Reif," cont.

40

we-der Va- ter noch Mut- ter.  
*dim. e poco rit.*

*p* Sie sind ge-  
*Tempo I.*

45  
wand- - ert hin 2 und her, Sie hab- en ge-

Song 2. Es fiel ein Reif," cont.

49

habt we-der Glück noch Stern, Sie sind-ver-

55

dor-ben, ge-stor-ben.

60

FINAL CONCLUSION ORIGINAL CONCLUSION

poco rit.

ppp

Song 3. "Phantoms" (Tabb)

*Rather slowly and with tender sadness*  
*With a soft, veiled tone*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

**3**  
Are ye the ghosts of

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

Song 3. "Phantoms," cont.

Handwritten musical score for "Phantoms," cont. The score is written on three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "fal- len leaves, O flakes of snow, —". The piano accompaniment features a repeating rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the bass and chords in the treble, with a melodic line in the treble. Pedal points are indicated by "Ped." and asterisks (\*). A box with the number "6" is present in the third system. The score ends with an asterisk (\*).

fal- len leaves, O

flakes of snow, —

6

Ped.

\*

Song 3. "Phantoms," cont.

Handwritten musical score for "Phantoms," continuing from the previous page. The score is written on three systems, each consisting of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The piano accompaniment features a repeating eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a melody in the right hand, with a large slur covering the first two measures of each system. The vocal line consists of a single melodic line. The first system includes the instruction "Ped." and two asterisks. The second system includes the instruction "Ped." and two asterisks. The third system includes the instruction "Ped." and two asterisks, and is marked with a box containing the number "9". The lyrics "For which through na- ked" are written below the vocal line in the third system.

9

For which through na- ked



Song 3. "Phantoms," cont.

Handwritten musical score for "Phantoms," continuing from the previous page. The score is written in G-flat major (three flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment.

**System 1:** The vocal line begins with the lyrics "trees, the winds a-". The piano accompaniment features a flowing eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a melody in the right hand, with a long slur covering the first two measures. Pedal markings "Ped." and "\* Ped." are present.

**System 2:** The vocal line continues with "mourn- ing go?". The piano accompaniment continues the eighth-note pattern, with a long slur covering the first two measures. A "Ped." marking is present.

**System 3:** The system begins with a boxed number "12" in the left margin. The piano accompaniment continues the eighth-note pattern, with a long slur covering the first two measures. The instruction *sempre diminuendo e poco rit.* is written above the piano part. The system ends with a double bar line and an asterisk "\*" in the right margin.

Song 3. "Phantoms," cont.

Handwritten musical score for "Phantoms," continuing from the previous page. The score is written in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment.

The first system shows the piano introduction with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The piano part consists of arpeggiated chords in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The vocal line is a whole rest.

The second system contains the vocal entry with the lyrics "Or — are ye". The piano accompaniment continues with arpeggiated figures. Pedal points are marked with "Ped." and asterisks (\*) at the beginning and end of the system.

The third system continues the piano accompaniment with arpeggiated patterns. The vocal line has a whole rest. Pedal points are marked with "Ped." and asterisks (\*) at the beginning and end of the system.

The fourth system begins with a boxed measure number "16". The vocal line has the lyrics "an - gels, bear - ing". The piano accompaniment continues with arpeggiated figures. Pedal points are marked with "Ped." and asterisks (\*) at the beginning and end of the system.

Song 3. "Phantoms," cont.

*crescendo*

home the

*Ped.* \*

This system contains the first two lines of the musical score. The vocal line is in G-flat major (three flats) and 4/4 time. The first line has a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. The lyrics 'home' and 'the' are written below the notes. A 'crescendo' marking is above the second line. The piano accompaniment is in the same key and time, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics 'home' and 'the' are written below the piano part. A 'Ped.' marking is below the piano part, and an asterisk is at the end of the system.

host un- seen

*cresc.*

*Ped.* \*

This system contains the second and third lines of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'host' and 'un- seen'. The piano accompaniment continues with a 'cresc.' marking. A 'Ped.' marking is below the piano part, and an asterisk is at the end of the system.

*f* 20

of tru- ant spir- its, to be clad

*f*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.*

This system contains the third and fourth lines of the musical score. The vocal line starts with a forte 'f' dynamic and a measure rest of 20 measures. The lyrics 'of tru- ant spir- its, to be clad' are written below. The piano accompaniment starts with a forte 'f' dynamic. A 'Ped.' marking is below the piano part, and an asterisk is at the end of the system.

Song 3. "Phantoms," cont.

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. It begins with a whole rest, followed by the lyrics "a- gain in". Above the vocal line, the tempo marking *poco rit.* is written. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with the same key signature. It features arpeggiated chords with long, sweeping ties. The tempo marking *poco rit.* is also present above the piano part. A dynamic marking *dim.* is written below the piano part. The system concludes with an asterisk (\*) on the right.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "green?". The tempo marking *a tempo* is written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment continues with arpeggiated chords and ties. A dynamic marking *pp* is written below the piano part. The system concludes with an asterisk (\*) on the right.

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The vocal line features a measure with a boxed number "25" above it. The piano accompaniment includes arpeggiated chords with ties, some marked with *8va---* and *ppp*. A tempo marking *ritardando* is written below the piano part. The system concludes with an asterisk (\*) on the right.

Song 4. "Two Birds Flew into the Sunset Glow."

5

Two birds flew in-to the sun-set

10

glow, \_\_\_\_\_ and one of them was my — love, \_\_\_\_\_ I

15

20

know, \_\_\_\_\_ Ah, had it but flown to my heart, \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a song. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff with bass and treble clefs). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first system starts with a measure rest, followed by a measure with a boxed '5' above it. The lyrics 'Two birds flew in-to the sun-set' are written below the vocal line. The second system starts with a measure rest, followed by a measure with a boxed '10' above it. The lyrics 'glow, \_\_\_\_\_ and one of them was my — love, \_\_\_\_\_ I' are written below the vocal line. The third system starts with a measure rest, followed by a measure with a boxed '15' above it. The lyrics 'know, \_\_\_\_\_ Ah, had it but flown to my heart, \_\_\_\_\_' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, mostly in the bass register.

Song 4. "Two Birds," cont.

The musical score is written for a voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system starts at measure 25, with the vocal line singing "its nest!" and the piano providing a harmonic accompaniment. The second system starts at measure 30, with the vocal line singing "Two maid-ens down to the har-vest go, and". The third system starts at measure 35, with the vocal line singing "one of them is my — own, I know,". The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes in both hands, providing a steady harmonic background for the vocal melody.

25

its nest!

30

Two maid-ens down to the har-vest go, and

35

one of them is my — own, I know,

Song 4. "Two Birds," cont.

40

Ah, had she but come to me here, \_\_\_\_\_ it were

45

best!

50

55

Two stars re-mem-bered the long a-go, \_\_\_\_\_ and

The musical score is written for voice and piano. The voice part is in a single system with lyrics. The piano accompaniment is in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clef). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4. The score includes measure numbers 40, 45, 50, and 55 in boxes. The lyrics are: "Ah, had she but come to me here, \_\_\_\_\_ it were best! Two stars re-mem-bered the long a-go, \_\_\_\_\_ and". The piano accompaniment features chords and arpeggiated figures.

Song 4. "Two Birds," cont.

60

one of them was my— heart's great— woe, If it had

65 70

but for— got— ten and paled— in the west!

75

Two chil— dren die in the



Song 4. "Two Birds," cont.

80 hut be- low, and one, my heart to the grave doth  
(with?)

85

90 go, Ah! had it but ta-ken me with it to

95 rest.

102

This is a handwritten musical score for a song titled "Two Birds," continuing from a previous page. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line on a single treble staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass). The lyrics are written below the vocal line. Measure numbers 80, 85, 90, 95, and 102 are marked in boxes above the vocal staff. The piano accompaniment features chords and arpeggiated figures. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 102.

Song 5. "Hampelas."

5

Ham - pe - las ra - ra - ga - dja - ti,

pa - la ta - ran ba - ba - le an.

Song 5. "Hampelas," cont.

10

l- klas ra-ga reundjeung pati

15

lan-ta-ran ti- ka ha-de- an, lan- ta ran ti-ka ha-de-

an. Ham- pe- las ra-

*sfz*

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a song titled "Hampelas". It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 7/8. The first system starts at measure 10 and includes the lyrics "l- klas ra-ga reundjeung pati". The second system starts at measure 15 and includes the lyrics "lan-ta-ran ti- ka ha-de- an, lan- ta ran ti-ka ha-de-". The third system continues the lyrics with "an. Ham- pe- las ra-". The piano part features various textures, including chords, arpeggios, and a prominent triplet in the second system. Dynamics like *sfz* (sforzando) are indicated. Measure numbers 10 and 15 are boxed in the original score.

Song 5. "Hampelas," cont.

20

ra - ga - dja - ti, pa - la ta - ran ba -

ba - le an. I - klas ra - ga reund jeung pa - ti,

25

lan - ta - ran ti - ka ha - de - an, lan - ta ran ti -

Song 5. "Hampelas," cont.

30

ka ha-de an.