'THE SECOND DEATH':
THE MAKING OF AN OPERA

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P R E F A C E

I have chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together, which will be much for him to do that hath not power over both.

Thomas Campion: Address 'To the Reader', Two Booke of Ayres, 1613

When Orpheus looked back, Eurydice vanished ... I've often thought that this fable was intended as a warning to artists to keep their eyes (and ears) on the job in hand and not to question how it is done: 'Sutor, ne supra crepidam judicaret!' Yet who can blame Orpheus for his curiosity? The workings of the creative mind have always been a mystery and continue to provoke curiosity in us all. Perhaps the real lesson is this: don't theorise about the way you create; have faith in your intuition; leave the theorising to others. Because they intuitively follow this advice, composers have acquired the ability to cover their tracks or, to use a more modern metaphor, erase the tape. By the time a piece of music is completed, the composing processes - involving choice of ideas, changes of mind and a high measure of serendipity - are forgotten. Even if the composer holds on to every scrap of paper, the initial ideas will often have become unrecognisable in the cold light of the completed composition.

Composers are not always the best expositors of their own music: they are too close to it. An objective, sympathetic critic can often shed more illumination on a composer's working methods than he himself, particularly the how and what. But there are some aspects of the composing process which not even the most astute critic can reveal. Only the creator himself can reveal the why. The difference between what critic and composer have to say is the difference between Biography and Autobiography; the ideal is to have both. This dissertation is - and can only be - Autobiography. An objective scholar can tabulate and enumerate, giving the pros and cons. I cannot be so objective, for, as the composer involved, I have already made my artistic choices.
I am already too biased to be a reliable witness. I am explaining how and why I wrote *The Second Death*, as it seems to me. It may well be that some of my ideas and explanations are far-fetched, irrelevant and even wrong-headed. That is the risk — and prerogative — of the autobiographer. I have therefore interpreted the purpose of this dissertation as being a pendant to my main submission: my opera, *The Second Death*. I write as a composer, not as a musicologist; my viewpoint is that of a creator, not an analyst; the result is a subjective commentary rather than an objective analysis.

The basic thesis of this dissertation is a discussion of my own ideas on the fusing of words and music, with particular emphasis on the problems of framing a suitable language for musical setting in a dramatic context. The ideas expressed in Chapter One are very much my personal assessment of the situation. Many of my views are disputable — I am sure that some composers will regard them as those of a traitor to the cause, at best those of a 'poet's advocate' — but they are the considered views, formed from long experience, of a practising poet-composer.

The division between libretto and music is, in the end, an artificial one, particularly in my own case where I have written both. Though the libretto of *The Second Death* was written before I wrote a note of music, the ideas for the music — like an undefined, ragged cloud high up in the sky of consciousness — were already present; and when I began writing the music, the two arts became inextricably intertwined. However, it is almost impossible to talk about 'words' and 'music' at the same time, and in order to explain lucidly how the completed work came about, I have found it essential to disentangle them. Therefore I have given them separate chapters: the text Chapter Three and the music Chapter Four. Nevertheless, the nub of my thesis is that, as far as my own vocal music is concerned, whether songcycle, choral cantata or opera, words and music are of equal importance. My aim has been, to borrow the words that great composer-poet, Thomas Campion, "to couple my words and notes lovingly together" so that, if you take one away, the other will be "mortal sick".

Chapter Four is intended to be no more than a short guided tour of the musical imagery of the opera. A thorough-going analysis has not been my intention. As Voltaire wrote, "Le secret d'ennuyer est ...
de tout dire." Chapter Two, very short compared with the other chapters, is intended as the necessary bridge between the 'theory' of Chapter One and 'practice' of Chapters Three and Four.

* * * * * * * *

A composer's debts are many and various. Without the inspiration and example of composers and librettists, past and present, I would not have been capable of embarking on such a large-scale and time-consuming project. These debts receive their acknowledgment within the pages of this dissertation as well as in the opera itself. There are two people to whom I wish to express special and direct thanks: Anthony Pither, my supervisor, whose advice and criticism have been of immense value; and my wife, who prepared the typescript and without whose quiet encouragement the opera would never have been written.

Trevor Hold
March, 1988
CHAPTER ONE : WORDS-FOR-MUSIC

1. 'FOR A DITTY OR WITHOUT A DITTY…'

I say that all music... is made either for a ditty or without a ditty.

Thomas Morley: A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke, 1597

Is there a fundamental difference between writing vocal music and instrumental music? Some would deny it: in vocal music, yes, there are singers to write for and words to be sung, but the composer goes about composing in exactly the same way as he would in an instrumental piece. To many composers, however, the very fact that there are words to be set gives a completely different perspective to composing methods. The difference between these two attitudes can be tested in a fairly simple way. Take any song and perform it with the vocal-line replaced by an appropriately pitched instrument. In some cases the result will be artistically effective - for example, Schubert's An die Musik or Fauré's Après un Rêve, both of which exist in instrumental versions. To do this, on the other hand, to the songs of Gerald Finzi or Hugo Wolf would produce, in most cases, a slightly ludicrous effect. The composer of vocal music has access to techniques which the instrumental composer has not: and these techniques have come about from the very act of setting words to music.

For composers of vocal music, the words are not just a peg on which to hang a melody, but the very reason for that melody. Because the words set have a logic and meaning of their own, they will determine the shape of the melody, often producing unexpected results. Take, for instance, the following passages from Britten's setting of Blake's
poem, 'O Rose, thou art sick', from his Serenade, Opus 31 (EX. 1 (a) and (b)):

Despite the fact that both passages are highly motivic (sharing the same falling semitone as a basic constructional motive) and ignoring the difference of compass, it is not difficult to determine that (a) is an instrumental line and (b) a vocal one (i.e. setting words). (a) could have words fitted to it and be sung (by a singer with an extraordinary vocal range), but the result would sound awkward and ungainly. (b) could be played on an instrument, but would not make anything like the sense that it does with the appropriate words. The words have determined the shape and line; the repetitions of notes,
for example, would sound finicky and unnecessary on an instrument.

The crux of the matter is this: in music where words are set, there is, before a note of music is written, already a logical structure present, formed by the pattern of words. Except in the most extreme nonsense-verse, this pattern of words will articulate ideas, situation and mood. If the words chosen for setting are poetry, there will also be a clear-cut formal structure, articulated by line-length, stanza-shape and poem structure, aided and abetted by poetic devices such as rhyme, assonance and alliteration. There will, in effect, be a framework present before a note of music is penned.

The composer may well decide to ignore this framework. Some, like Michael Tippett, may advocate that the poetic framework should be destroyed.¹ Often the formal structure of the poem will be submerged or transformed, as, for example, when a composer sets an essentially poetic form such as the sonnet. But when a poet has deliberately written words-for-music - i.e. a lyric or a libretto - and gone out of his way to supply musico-poetic features, such as repeated phrases, refrain lines, etc., it would be obtuse of the composer not to match the poem's shape in musical terms. The reason a composer chooses to set a poem is not just for what it says, but for the way in which it is said. And the shape of the poem is intrinsically bound up in the way-it-is-said.

To me, as a composer, this distinction between music for voices and music for instruments is crucial. My vocal-writing, though sharing many features in common with my instrumental-writing, is different in kind, and cannot be divorced from the context of the poetry which has brought it into being. In setting words to music, I have two aims: to set the text giving full consideration to 'just note and accent' of individual words and phrases, and to the logic and shape of the verse; and to place the vocal-line in a coherent musical framework, with due consideration for the logic of the music. These aims can be conflicting, but a res media is not impossible to achieve. The

¹ See his 'Conclusion' to A History of Song, ed. Denis Stevens, 1960
art of songwriting - and by extension the art of all vocally-based
music: solo song, choral-music, opera - is essentially one of artistic
illusion. It is like a person walking towards his reflection in a
looking-glass: to the point where he almost touches his reflection.
The two images meet - almost, but never quite. So it is with vocal-
music: the words and the music can, in a masterpiece such as Dowland's
'In darkness let me dwell' or Britten's Serenade, blend until we cannot
distinguish one art from the other: blend, but never mix. It is the
masterly illusion of a master conjuror. But so, it can be said, is
all art ...

... keeping these rules ... you shall be perfectly
understood of the auditor what you sing, which
is one of the highest degrees of praise which a
musician in dittying can attain or wish for.

Morley: ibid

2. 'WORDS-FOR-MUSIC': SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A VEXED QUESTION

When words and music are joined we have a double perspec-
tive on the meaning. Words are common conveyors of facts
and thoughts; music carries feeling and intuitions, but, of
course, words in their poetic function do that too.
It is their poetic content which can be so intimately allied
with music.

Robert Donnington: 'Words and Music'
in Michael Tippett; a Symposium (1965)

A word like 'cow-parsley', however pretty the picture it
conjures up, is obviously unfitted for singing.
Anon. critic discussing a performance
of Vaughan Williams' 'Silent Noon',
Manchester Guardian, 8/3/05

As perhaps you know we composers are an unconscientious
crowd and are much too apt to use the great poets as
mere pegs on which to hang our silly little tunes.

Vaughan Williams in a letter to
Philip Henderson, quoted in Michael
Kennedy: The Works of Ralph Vaughan
Williams (1964)

It is true that music and poetry are both temporal arts, throwing the attention always forward. But in reading a poem one can stop and look back, whereas in hearing a song one must be carried along with the music or else stop listening altogether.

Cecil Day Lewis: The Lyric Impulse
(1965)

The relationship of words and music is a subject over which many learned pens have spluttered ink in rage. Though the observations which follow are made with particular reference to the song-lyric, the basic ideas are pertinent to my thesis, and I shall elaborate my references to opera and opera-librettos in Chapter Three. There are basically two schools of thought on the matter: on the one hand, those who believe that 'words-for-music' is a specialised craft and that composers are only entitled to set to music poetry which has specially been framed for musical setting; on the other, those who believe that the idea of 'words-for-music' is a myth and that composers are morally justified in setting to music anything that takes their fancy. The most authoritative spokesmen for the two sides in recent times have been Victor Clinton-Baddeley - in his book, Words for Music (1941) - and Gerald Finzi - in the hitherto unpublished Crees lectures, The Composer's Use of Words, which he gave at the Royal College of Music in the summer of 1955. Finzi's attitude is forcibly summed up in a letter to Howard Ferguson written some years earlier:

I do hate the bilge and bunkum about composers trying to 'add' to a poem; that a fine poem is complete in itself, and to set it is only to gild the lily ... Obviously a poem may be unsatisfactory in itself for setting, but that is a purely musical consideration ...

Letter to Howard Ferguson, December 1936, quoted on sleeve-note to Finzi's Intimations of Immortality, Lyrita SRCS 75, 1975
Clinton-Baddeley's views - which more closely coincide with my own - can be summarised: that at one time poets and composers understood each other's art; that subsequently their paths diverged, with poets failing to master the art of writing words-for-music, and composers choosing unsuitable texts for musical setting. Both men have argued their cases with cogency and passion and anyone coming afresh to the subject is likely to be persuaded by either. It is only when they are read side by side that it will be realised how conflicting the two viewpoints are.

Broadly speaking, it would seem to be the poets who advocate a special craft of words-for-music, the composers who do not. Clinton-Baddeley's views are shared by Thomas Campion, John Dryden and, in our day, W H Auden and Cecil Day Lewis. Finzi's views have been echoed by Britten and Michael Tippett. Though the argument is unlikely to be resolved, one thing is clear. The composer who sets to music poetry that was never intended for this purpose is likely to be branded by the poet as an arrogant philistine. Song is the wedding of the two arts of Poetry and Music. How can such a union be healthy when poet and composer are at loggerheads?

* * * * * * * *

There are four possible ways by which a song can come into being: the songwriter can write both words and music; the poet and the composer can collaborate directly with each other; the composer can set a poem to music which he has come upon in his reading; the poet can write words to a tune which he has come upon in his listening. I think we

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3 See the Addresses to his Readers in A Book of Ayres, 1601, and Two Books of Airs, c1613
4 Prefaces to Albion and Albanius, 1685, and King Arthur, 1691
5 Introduction to An Elizabethan Song Book, 1957
6 Introduction to A Book of English Lyrics, 1961
7 See his Prefaces to the librettos of Peter Grimes, 1945, and The Rape of Lucretia, 1946
must start from the premise, in art-song at least, that the words come first, the music afterwards. Poets who have written lyrics to existing music, such as John Gay, Robert Burns and Thomas Moore, were working with very simple and limited musical material. The last of the above possibilities does not therefore directly concern us, though, as will be shown later, it is an invaluable discipline for the would-be lyric-writer. The three remaining possibilities represent a descending order of ideal.

Of the many advantages of writing both words and music, one of the greatest is that you can adjust the former to fit the latter as the work progresses. The two arts meld into one as near as is possible. But a swift glance through the history of music will show that the poet-composer is a very rare bird. Those with these dual talents have either functioned at a very modest level, as in the case of the medieval troubadour, or displayed more skill in one art than the other, as in the case of Michael Tippett. Tippett, who has written librettos for four operas and two large-scale choral-works, is an artist whose musical imagination far outstrips his literary. His texts are often a hindrance rather than a help to his music, an embarrassment that the listener accepts for the sake of the music. In the field of serious music, those blessed with an equal talent in both arts can be numbered on the fingers of one hand: Guillaume de Machaut - Thomas Campion - Richard Wagner - Arrigo Boito. In the field of light music there are more examples, ranging from Charles Dibden and Stephen Foster to Noël Coward, Cole Porter and Stephen Sondheim. A rare example in recent times of a serious artist, highly skilled both as poet and composer, is Ivor Gurney. In addition to songcycles and solo songs, he published in his lifetime two highly regarded volumes of poetry, Severn and Somme (1917) and War's Embers (1919). Unfortunately there seems to be only one instance of him bringing his talents together: Severn Meadows, a little masterpiece which hints at what he might have achieved had circumstances permitted.

It would appear, then, that the idea of the poet-composer, though ideal, is idealistic. In its stead, the preferred option is direct collaboration between poet and composer. The advantages are many and obvious. As with choosing clothes, the tailor-made gives a better fit than something bought off-the-peg. And if the suit doesn't fit, you can send it back for alterations. Until Dryden's day, this was the normal
procedure. The Elizabethan poet could scarcely be indifferent to music. Shakespeare, Jonson, Fletcher, Dekker, though none of them skilled in music like Thomas Campion, were fully aware of the composer's needs and of the technical requirements of words-for-music. During the seventeenth century, however, for reasons which Pattison and Clinton-Baddeley clearly explain, a rift began to grow between poet and composer. Each went his own way, developing his art independently. Since Campion's death, there have been very few musically-literate English poets: John Milton (whose father, John Milton Senior, is represented in the madrigal collection, The Triumphs of Oriana); William Blake (who composed airs for his own poems); Thomas Moore and Edward FitzGerald (both of whom had musical training); John Clare (who could play the fiddle and 'prick down' tunes); Gerard Manley Hopkins (who, like Blake, was skilled enough to write tunes to his own poetry); Thomas Hardy (born of a musical family, could play the fiddle and often modelled his lyrics on existing tunes); Walter de la Mare (a boy chorister at St Paul's); James Joyce and Cecil Day Lewis (both of whom were talented amateur singers). But for most poets, the technical side of music is an utter mystery. Composers too are usually blissfully unaware of the poet's craft. Except in the special field of opera, today's poets and composers rarely collaborate. The poet, who has no practical need and no moral obligation to join forces with the composer, can ignore the matter entirely. But what of the composer, who needs the poet's cooperation unless he is to restrict himself entirely to abstract instrumental music? Stranded by the poet and left to his own devices, he has taken one of two courses, both of them artistically undesirable. He has turned either body-snatcher, digging up buried lyrics from a past age, or cat-burglar, purloining lyrics which the poet did not intend for music.

The first of these actions has had a debilitating effect on English songwriting. By constantly resorting to the song-lyrics of the past, particularly that trove of lyrics from Elizabethan plays and song-books,

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9 *Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance*, 1948

10 A musical training does not guarantee an ability to write good song-lyrics any more than a lack guarantees a debility; neither W S Gilbert nor A E Housman was 'musical'.
English song has acquired something of a time-split personality. Such ghostly collaboration can rarely produce vital, living art. At best it will result in the pleasantly ornamental, something decorative but, in the final count, irrelevant. Except perhaps for Britten's early collaboration with W H Auden, On this Island, there is nothing in twentieth-century English song to compare with Poulenc's settings of Eluard and Aragon in this respect. Poulenc's songs achieve their vitality and power because poet and composer are making use of contemporary situations that have concerned them personally and directly. They will live long after our fatuous attempts to resuscitate Colin and Amaryllis have disappeared into the dust of the library shelves.

The second of these actions is little more than artistic vandalism. Because the poems he has chosen were not conceived for music, the composer has been forced to destroy their poetic structure so that he can rebuild a viable musical structure. I use the word 'destroy' with care: it is the very one used by Tippett in an often-quoted passage on the subject:

"Response to situation is the primal gift of the song-writer. Then comes the ability to destroy all the verbal music of the poetry or prose and to substitute the music of music."  

With such high-handed attitudes, who can blame the poet for regarding the composer as an artistic philistine, to be avoided rather than co-operated with?

* * * * * * * *

There are some who consider that words-for-music cannot be regarded as a serious art: that words to be sung must, by the nature of things, be less substantial than other forms of poetry; that the subject-matter for lyrics is limited. If profundity is equated with irony, equivocation, complex trains of thought - all of which are devices for peeling away the emotional layers of a situation like an onion - then the lyric cannot be profound. But are such devices, admittedly so common a feature of the poetry of the last fifty years, essential to a serious poem? I think not. The most effective songs of Shakespeare, Jonson, Tennyson and Yeats are no less 'serious' than their non-lyric poetry. As for...
subject-matter, though in practice most lyrics are confined to the subject of Love, with Nature, Death, Drink, God and Patriotism coming well to the rear, there is in theory no subject outside their scope. It is usually the poet who has confined the subject-matter, not the nature of the lyric. The difference between the lyric and other forms of poetry lies in the manner in which the ideas are presented and the language in which they are clothed. At the heart of any collaboration between poet and composer is the 'stanza-strophe' relationship. This means that the poet's task is not simply to supply words and ideas but also to suggest formal shapes for the music. Over the years, my own aim as a poet has been to create a contemporary language capable of expressing contemporary ideas and images which is at the same time conducive to musical treatment. It is difficult not to sound dogmatic when writing about such a subject, but if I were asked by a would-be lyric-writer for advice, I would lay down the following guide-lines. For convenience I have divided them into 'aesthetic' and 'technical' considerations; in practice, these are inevitably interconnected.

Aesthetic considerations

1. Words-for-music should remain open-ended, 'incomplete'. They should suggest rather than state, hint at rather than explain. As Philip Larkin once observed, poems that are "self-sufficient as eggs" are hardly likely to be suitable for musical setting. "The finished words of a song are only half a song," The other half is the composer's responsibility. This very incompleteness can act as a strong bait to the composer:

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes.

12 Throughout this chapter, the word 'lyric' = 'song-lyric': words deliberately intended for singing.
13 Review in The Times Literary Supplement, 27/2/81
14 Clinton-Baddeley: Words for Music, 1941, p.44
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange:
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.
"Ding-dong."
Hark! now I hear them - "ding-dong bell".

2. "As Poetry is a Rise above Prose and Oratory,
so is Musick the exaltation of Poetry."15

Music is a theatrical experience. Words-for-music have to be fashioned accordingly. It is noticeable how often they begin with theatrical gestures: exclamations, commands and questions. Colloquial, conversational poetry and poetry with a 'low profile' which relies on the understatement will not be effective. What composer in his right mind would consider setting Robert Browning's The Lost Mistress or Philip Larkin's At Grass? ...

3. "The business of the lyric is to make words sing and dance, not to make them argue, moralise, or speechify."16

As Charles Kingsley once pointed out,17 the lyric-writer should be singing like the birds, not thinking and talking about them. Music cannot deal with complex or involved language. It needs to go straight to the heart of the matter. It follows that didactic, ruminative and satirical modes-of-thought are alien to the lyric. Poetic irony is quite beyond its comprehension. Take, for example, one of the most frequently set poems from Housman's A Shropshire Lad, 'Is my team ploughing':

'Is my friend hearty,
Now I am thin and pine,
And has he found to sleep in
A better bed than mine?'

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15 Purcell: 'Dedication' to Dioclesian, 1690
16 Day Lewis, ibid., p.11
17 'A Charm of Birds', Prose Idylls, 1873
Yes, lad, I lie easy,
    I lie as lads would choose;
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,
    Never ask me whose.

Has any composer managed to capture the correct tone-of-voice required for that final stanza? Is it elegiac (as Butterworth would have us suppose) or hysterical (as Vaughan Williams' music maintains)? Surely it is tongue-in-cheek, relying for its irony on the fact that it comes unexpectedly at the end of an elegiac poem? But how can music deal satisfactorily with such an abrupt and subtle change of mood? Take another example, Hardy's The Self-Unseeing:

Here is the ancient floor,
Footworn and hollowed and thin,
Here was the former door
Where the dead feet walked in.

She sat here in her chair,
Smiling into the fire;
He who played stood there,
Bowing it higher and higher.

Childlike, I danced in a dream;
Blessings emblazoned that day;
Everything glowed with a gleam;
Yet we were looking away!

Can a composer be expected to uncover the subtle layers of thought and allusion within this deceptively simple lyric? Gerald Finzi's setting, in Before and After Summer, merely touches the surface of Hardy's thinking: it trivialises the poem.

4. Music takes longer to establish a mood than poetry. It does not possess poetry's chameleonic ability to change rapidly from one idea/unless, as in Shakespeare's 'Crabbed Age and Youth', these changes are part of the lyrical experience. There is certainly no place for the vacillations and intellectual reservations of a Hamlet or a Prufrock, for the "To be, or not to be" or the "If and Perhaps and But". Far
more than poetry, music is conditioned by the factor of time passing.
The poem-on-the-page can be re-read; once the song is over, the lyric
has flown.

Technical considerations

A fundamental problem common to all vocal music, whether opera, oratorio
or solo song, is the audibility and comprehension of words when they
are sung. For this reason words-for-music have special technical
requirements.

1. **Pace and length**

   "In music ... the movement is the expression; in poetry
   it is but a very small part of it."\(^{18}\)

Generally speaking, a light-hearted, bantering song will need more
words than a sad one. This, coupled with the fact that "music makes
its impression more slowly than poetry"\(^{19}\) means that the short, witty
epigram is almost impossible to set to music effectively. A quick-paced
song requires a language of a fairly racy nature, which makes
use of repetition, of refrains and semi-refrains, of nonsense syllables
even. Words that need to be lingered over and extreme compression
of thought should be avoided. Failure to supply enough words, on the
other hand, could tempt the composer to make unsuitable repetitions
of his own. For a slow-paced song, however, every word must make a
vivid impact. The poet should compress his ideas, using a few, strongly-emotive phrases. The Elizabethans understood this perfectly: look
at such light-hearted, quick-paced lyrics as 'Fine knacks for ladies'
and Campion's 'Fair, if you expect admiring' and compare them with
sad, slow-paced lyrics such as 'Slow, slow, fresh fount' and 'Take,
O take those lips away'. Looked at from another viewpoint: the more
the poet compresses, the more the composer will expand; the more the
poet expands, the more the composer will compress.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{18}\) Auden, *ibid.*, p.ix

\(^{19}\) Pattison, *ibid.*, p.142

\(^{20}\) See Henry Raynor: 'Words for Music', *The Monthly Musical Record*,
No.88, Sept/Oct 1958, pp.174-182. This is one of the best-argued
essays on the topic since Clinton-Baddeley.
2. Vocabulary and syntax

Certain technical features are shared by all types of lyric, whether they are slow and sad, or fast and gay: look at the following, taken from three different centuries:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
    As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Because thou art not seen,
    Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
    Then, heigh-ho!, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

    Shakespeare: As You Like It

The spendour falls on castle walls
    And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
    And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle: answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

    Tennyson: The Princess

O the slums of Dublin fermenting with children
    Wander far and near
The growing years are a cruel squadron
And poverty is a rusty cauldron
    Wander near and far.

    Louis MacNeice: Slum Song

What have they in common? Simple, uninvolved imagery, simple sentence-structure, with strong nouns and vivid verbs; clear, open vowel sounds; short words. In each of them there is a simplicity and directness of statement. This suggests that there are several points to be borne
in mind when writing for musical setting.  

(i) Avoid similes, unless they are short and to the point, as in 'My love is like a red red rose'. Because they are often cerebral, metaphysical conceits, they disturb the basic mood of the lyric. What is more, the long, looping 'Miltonic' type of simile will lose its identity long before the music has reached its tail. One exception is what might be termed the 'cumulative' simile, as found in such lyrics as 'Like to the damask rose', 'Music when soft voices die' and 'Have you seen but a white lily grow'. Here it is the composer who must take care not to be led astray by the simile from his real subject-matter. 'Music when soft voices die' is not a song about music ...  

(ii) Avoid what Telemann called "dangling phrases": parentheses, secondary clauses, qualifying phrases, etc. In adding detail they detract from directness and furnish the song-lyric with the kind of completeness which it does not need. It is far more effective to have several short sentences than one long, complicated one. However fine they are in other respects, Beddoes, Dowson and Yeats often fail as lyricists because of their penchant for the long, involved sentence:

```
How many times do I love thee, dear?
Tell me how many thoughts there be
    In the atmosphere
    Of a new-fall'n year,
Whose white and sable hours appear
The latest flake of Eternity:
So many times do I love thee, dear.
```

Bèddoes: 'How many times do I love thee, dear?'

(Henry James, needless to say, would not have known where to begin ...)

(iii) Aim for strong nouns and vivid (i.e. active) verbs. These are the vital organs of any sentence. On the other hand, be sparing

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21 W H Auden gave some useful advice on this subject in the introduction ('Words and Notes') to An Elizabethan Song Book, pp.ix-x. It is a great pity that he did not always heed it himself.  
with adjectives and adverbs. Music can contribute their function far more effectively:

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain-tops that freeze,
    Bow themselves when he did sing.
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung, as sun and showers
    There had made a lasting spring.

Shakespeare/Fletcher: King Henry VIII

When Lawyers strive to heal a breach,
And Parsons practise what they preach;
Then Boney he'll come pouncing down,
And march his men on London town!
    Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum,
    Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lay!

Hardy: The Sergeant's Song (1803)

(iv) Aim for clear, open vowel-sounds: not an easy task in our consonant-dominated language. It must be remembered that most consonants are incapable of sustaining sound. Too many consonants tumbling over one another produce a ludicrous effect, as Robert Browning often failed to realise:

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

/To whom

23 The same caution applies to conjunctions and other linking words. 'However,' 'therefore,' and 'nevertheless' are not only awkward to set but are often musically redundant. Music itself will provide the continuity that poetry has to spell out.

24 The case of Browning goes to show that a love and knowledge of music do not guarantee the ability to write good song-lyrics. How otherwise could the author of Abt Vogler and A Toccata of Gallupi's have managed to perpetrate such a lyric?
To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool’s side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll’s damned troopers shot him?

Robert Browning: *Give a Rouse*

For a similar reason, words with a preponderance of 's' sounds should
be avoided. They are particularly troublesome at the beginnings and
endings of words. Clinton-Baddeley gives a splendid example:

"Send sweet sleep to ease my sighing."

and comments: "It sounds like the pleasant hum of a bee when spoken,
but when sung it makes a noise like a syphon." A useful tip for
the English lyric-writer is: never use a plural when a singular will
do.

(v) And never use a long word when a short will do. Though per­
fectly agreeable in Italian, polysyllabic words in English sound ungainly
or ridiculous when sung. This is possibly because they so often de­
scribe abstract qualities and concepts. The only effective place for
such words, it would seem, is in burlesque and facetious verse, such
as W S Gilbert’s lyrics for the Savoy Operas. A glance at the so-called
'songs' in W H Auden’s *Collected Shorter Poems* will demonstrate what
I mean:

O but the unloved have had power,
The weeping and striking,
Always: time will bring their hour;
Their secretive children walk
Through your vigilance of breath
To unpardonable Death,
And my vows break
Before his look.

Auden: 'Let a florid music praise'

3. *Stanza shapes*

If music cannot cope with great complexity of thought, then it thrives
on complexity of form. You have only to glance through an anthology of lyrics from the Elizabethan song-books to realise that variety of metre, of rhyme-scheme, of line-length and of stanza-shape was not fortuitous but an essential ingredient of lyric-writing. The irregularity and asymmetry which it created added scope to the composer's imagination and helped him avoid melodic squareness. It follows that 'tight' verse-forms, such as the sonnet, heroic couplet and blank verse, with their regular stresses and regular line-length, are unsuited to musical treatment. They are fundamentally unlyrical and much better fitted to the poetry of satire, argument and introspection.

For musical purposes, the stanza should be regarded as a self-contained unit. To run a sentence through from one stanza to another is clearly idiotic and makes nonsense of the stanza-strophe relationship which is at the heart of songwriting. Likewise, the lines within a stanza should be regarded as units. With a variety of line-length, enjambement should be unnecessary. It is worth observing here that short stanzas, of two-, three- or four-lines, can cause a composer difficulty, especially when the length of line is short. They do not allow him to get into his stride or gain momentum. Purcell reassembled the four short quatrains of Dryden's 'Fairest Isle' into two strophes of music. Warlock goes even further with Bruce Blunt's The Fox: he reassembles six very brief stanzas into three irregular strophes.

4. Rhythm and metre

Though a regular metre can be of help to a composer, it is not always desirable. Take, for example, Campion's 'Fair, if you expect admiring':

Fair, if you expect admiring;
Sweet, if you provoke desiring,
    Grace dear love with kind requiting.
Fond, but if thy sight be blindness;
False, if thou affect unkindness,
    Fly both love and love's delighting.
Then when hope is lost, and love is scorned,
    I'll bury my desires,
And quench the fires
That ever yet in vain have burned.

What is the scansion of the final lines of the stanza? They seem to
defy metrical logic. Listen, on the other hand to Campion's setting of the lyric and any awkwardness disappears:

Ex.2 Campion: 'Fair, if you expect admiring'

The Elizabethan poets realised that flexibility was possible within the verse-line and wrote accordingly. There is no logical reason, except an ill-conceived desire for symmetry, why iambic metre should not mix freely with anapaestic, trochaic with dactylic. The monosyllabic foot, so awkward in spoken English verse, is perfectly at home in a musical context. What is required are the metrical ideas put into practice, for quite different reasons, by Coleridge, in Christabel, and Hopkins, in the poems in which he uses 'sprung rhythm'.

The reason is not hard to find. The organisation of sound into rhythm is fundamental to both arts:

"Words move, music moves
Only in Time."

T S Eliot: Burnt Norton

Without this basic fact, no liaison between the two would be possible. Unlike poetry, music admits to a wide variety of durations within a basic metrical pattern; moreover, it has the capability of avoiding direct contact with the basic stress. This is why words written for musical setting not only do but should have a metrical irregularity when read off-the-page. Such features will readily be appreciated by a study of the lyrics which have been purposely written to existing tunes, such as Gay's lyrics for The Beggar's Opera. In these cases, the metrical irregularities have been produced by the flexibility of rhythm of the original tunes. Hopkins himself put his finger on the matter when he cited a familiar nursery-rhyme as an example of the

26 John Masefield's Sea Fever is an excellent example.
kind of thing he was advocating in 'sprung rhythm':

"Ding, dong, bell;
Pussy's in the well;
Who put her in?
Little Johnny Thin ..."  

5. Rhyme

Rhyme is often assumed to be a sine qua non in a lyric. It is, however, more a habit of thought than a necessity, and a habit which poets seem loth to throw off. The few examples in English literature of rhymeless lyrics - for example, Campion's 'Come let us sound with melody' - seem to me to be eminently successful. The splendid rhymeless lyrics which interpolate the narrative of Tennyson's The Princess, such as 'Now sleeps the crimson petal', have received repeated attentions from composers. Rhymes for the sake of rhyming are quite unnecessary and can prove a bugbear to the composer, as Mozart realised. Internal assonance is a quite different matter and is as integral to the lyric as to any other form of poetry.

6. Refrains

The importance of refrains and refraining lines in words-for-music cannot be overestimated. Music is an art which thrives on repetition. Poetry, on the other hand, can function perfectly well without it. Pattison has called the poetic refrain "one of the oldest and most universal concessions of the poet to the composer." Refrains can take a variety of guises. They can be placed anywhere in the stanza, not necessarily in their traditional position at the end. They can vary in length from a short line to what is virtually a mini-stanza, as with the burden of the medieval carol and chorus of many seventeenth-

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27 Letter to R W Dixon, 5 October 1878
28 See his letter to his father, 13 October 1781: "Verses are indeed the most indispensible element for music - but rhymes - solely for the sake of rhyming - the most detrimental".
29 Pattison, ibid., p.155
and eighteenth-century songs. They can be exact or varied, sense or nonsense, to suit the context:

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
- Every nighte and alle,
Fire and fleet and candle-lighte,
- And Christe receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past,
- Every nighte and alle,
To Whinny-muir thou com'st at laste;
- And Christe receive thy saule.

Anon: A Lyke-Wake Dirge

My ghostly fader, I me confess,
First to God and then to you,
That at a window, wot ye how,
I stale a kosse of gret sweetness,
Which don was out avisiness -
But it is doon, not undoon, now.

My ghostly fader, I me confess,
First to God and then to you.

But I restore it shall, doubtless,
Agein, if so be that I mow;
And that to God I make a vow,
And elles I axe foryefness.

My ghostly fader, I me confess,
First to God and then to you.

Charles d'Orleans: 'My ghostly fader'

Dear Lizbie Browne,
Where are you now?
In sun, in rain? -
Or is your brow
Past joy, past pain,
Dear Lizbie Browne?

Thomas Hardy: To Lizbie Browne
My dove, my beautiful one,
Arise, arise!
The nightdew lies
Upon my lips and eyes.

The odorous winds are weaving
A music of sighs:
Arise, arise,
My dove, my beautiful one!

I wait by the cedar tree,
My sister, my love.
White breast of the dove,
My breast shall be your bed.

The pale dew lies
Like a veil on my head.
My fair one, my fair dove,
Arise, arise!

James Joyce: Chamber Music, no.xiv

7. Stanzas and strophes

My observations so far have been based upon facts of history and long-hallowed practice. The ideas that follow are more speculative, though based on my own practice.

As I have already suggested, the stanza-strophe relationship is at the heart of any collaboration between poet and composer. This means that the poet should supply not only the words and ideas, but also suggest the formal shape of the music. In Campion's day there was virtually only one song-form: the simple strophic, or 'single', song. The poet wrote his verse to a particular stanza-shape which was adopted for all subsequent stanzas. The composer composed music to fit this and subsequent stanzas. Many poets today, when asked to write a lyric, continue to adopt this old-fashioned recipe, and compose a poem which consists of terraces of similarly-shaped stanzas. What does the composer do, presented with such a simplistic structure? More often than not he will weld the stanzas into a more sophisticated structure of his own inventing. Where, then was the point in the poet creating such
careful symmetry? No serious composer today would contemplate using simple strophic form, except perhaps for a hymn-tune.

The would-be lyricist would do well to study the musical forms which today's composer is likely to favour. In doing so, he will realise that there is a wealth of possibilities for his invention to work on. Amongst the 'strict' forms in use today, for example, are the varied strophe (A1 A2 A3); ternary form (A B A); rondo form (A B A C A ...); bow form (A B C B A) - all of which can be varied and expanded by the use of refrain. Other possibilities include alternating stanzas (A B A B...); the accumulating, or expanding stanza (i.e. following the principle of "This is the house that Jack built"); and the use of a concluding 'envoy' (a device highly suited to music which thrives on such things as introductions and codas). In addition to these strict forms, there are, of course, free verse shapes, which offer unlimited scope. Indeed, many of the most effective twentieth-century lyrics are in free verse-forms.

Some might consider such devices cramping to the poet's imagination. But are they any more so than the intricate refraining form of the villanelle or the sonnet's "narrow room" or, for that matter, the regularly-terraced stanza? Such technical limitations can often release rather than restrict. In any case, most of the forms mentioned above have already been used, deliberately or by chance, by poets. The lyrics of many of Dowland's songs have irregular features due to the fact that they were adapted to existing dance-music patterns: 'Can she excuse' (A A B) matches the three strains of its original galliard. Ben Jonson's A Hymn to God the Father (A B B) was written to an existing pavan by Alfonso Ferrabosco II. Tennyson's 'Now sleeps the crimson petal' consists of two quatrains enclosing three couplets. W S Gilbert's The Merryman and his Maid makes effective use of an expanding stanza pattern. One of the most imaginative of modern lyric-writers in this respect is Thomas Hardy. His dialogue poem, Memory and I, uses alternating stanza shapes; Shortening Days at the Homestead calls for - and duly receives from Gerald Finzi - a setting consisting of two contrasting strophes. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that W B Yeats, who gave much thought to the subject of words-for-music, rarely deviated from traditional 'terraced stanza' form. 30

30 See Words for Music Perhaps, 1931
In suggesting not only the content but also the form of the final song, the poet can again take a more vital role in its creation. It is therefore somewhat surprising that poets have failed to seize the opportunities offered to them. Glancing at the so-called 'song-lyrics' written in the last 250 years, it is hard to believe that the art of music has evolved at all since the sixteenth century. Many of the fundamental skills of lyric-writing have been mislaid or forgotten. Those that have been remembered are as out-of-date as doublet and hose and should be placed in the museum as quickly as possible.

Clearly not all lyrics are born to be songs. Some, however, will cry out for music from conception. If they do, then they should be encouraged from the start. Just as you would train a musically-talented child to play a musical instrument, so you should train a likely lyric towards music. But how is the young and inexperienced lyric-writer to acquire his skills in practice? There is no simple short-cut, but, as with any skilled craft, the best advice is to follow the example of the masters. Shakespeare, Burns, Clare and Hardy - four of the finest lyricists in the English language - all learnt by the same method: they fitted verses to existing tunes. By following this time-hallowed practice, the lyricist can acquire the 'feel' of lyric-writing not possible in any other way, and perhaps avoid making mistakes when he comes to direct collaboration.

3. A WORD ABOUT PROSE

Dryden (apud Purcell) in the Dedication to Dioclesian suggested that music is the exaltation of poetry, just as poetry is "a rise above" prose and rhetoric (see p. 14). This comment embodies an unspoken warning to composers about the use of prose in musical setting. My own observations so far have suggested that, because of the innate histrionic quality of music - the very act of singing is a dramatic act - words-for-music must acknowledge this fact. Low-key, conversational poetry, the poetry of understatement, is ineffective. How much more so, then, is low-key, conversational prose. Prose is the ideal medium for conveying factual information. Good prose style requires directness and clarity of statement. Many of the techniques which give the emotive depth to the language we call 'poetry' are not required. More than this, they are often deleterious to good prose: assonance
(by accident or design), alliteration, regular metrical patterns, metaphor and simile in all but their simplest forms. If prose is to be used for musical setting, it must be a special kind of prose, using poetic elements—the "prose-poetry" to be found in The Book of Psalms and The Song of Solomon in the King James Bible.

In actual practice, very few composers choose to set prose rather than poetry, which rather proves my point. Notable exceptions in an English context (excluding settings of biblical texts) are Michael Tippett's Boyhood's End (1943), Alan Bush's Voices of the Prophets (1953) and Priaulx Rainier's Cycle for Declamation (1953). Both the Bush and the Rainier are settings of 'prose-poetry'. Bush includes in his anthology of texts a passage from John Milton's oration Against the Scholastic Philosophy (as well as a passage from the sixty-fifth chapter of The Book of the Prophet Isaiah); Rainier sets passages from the Devotions of John Donne. Listeners hearing these words sung would probably not realise that the texts were prose. The Tippett cantata—a setting of an extract from W H Hudson's prose autobiography, Far Away and Long Ago—is a quite different matter. It is quite clear that the text is prose and that Hudson never intended or expected his South American reminiscences to be set to music. Otherwise he would certainly have done something about the bald factual information and 'dangling clauses' in Tippett's chosen extract. There is one particular passage in Tippett's setting which makes me squirm with embarrassment:

To climb trees and put my hand down in the deep hot nest of the bienteveo and feel the hot eggs—five long pointed eggs with chocolate spots and splashes at the larger end.

That final, 'dangling' phrase illustrates exactly what is not needed in words-for-music. I cannot understand why the composer did not omit it: it is nothing more than factual clarification of what has gone before, nothing to do with the main thread of emotion, and quite incapable of inducing any emotion except ridicule. It is perfectly in place in W H Hudson's prose, but 'prosey' in the extreme in a musical context.

For an excellent guide to and discussion of good prose-writing, see The Reader over Your Shoulder, 1943, by Robert Graves and Alan Hodge.
context. Tippett's reason for not omitting it cannot have been his over-respect for the sanctity of the printed word, for in Boyhood's End he frequently repeats, alters and, in one instance, omits parts of the text. Factual information can be conveyed in music - indeed, in an operatic context it must be - but the vehicle for conveying such information must be the musical counterpart to prose - i.e. recitative, where the musical element is at its lowest voltage and where the words are left to speak for themselves.

4. WORDS-FOR-MUSIC IN AN OPERA LIBRETTO

The foregoing observations, though primarily directed at solo song, are equally applicable to the opera libretto. Opera has been fortunate in that it has always been accepted that the text for it should be specially written: the opera libretto and the opera librettist are hallowed institutions. Until the nineteenth century, it was normal practice for the composer - by no means always a literary, if indeed literate, person - to go to a professional writer for his libretto. In more recent times composers have often managed to be their own librettists, sometimes with dire results. Because of this continuing tradition, librettists have always been aware of the special requirements of words-for-music and have fashioned their librettos with music in mind. I have already emphasised that the heart of any collaboration between poet and composer is the stanza-strophe relationship. This principle can also guide larger structural considerations, so that, in a work like an opera, the dramatic structure can condition the shape of the musical structure, and structure of the entire drama reflect, and be reflected by, the musical structure of the opera. This is to say, that the musical form should be inherent in the dramatic form.

An opera is not an outsized lyric. There are naturally several features in an opera libretto extra to that of a lyric poem. First and foremost is dramatic timing, something very difficult to define, but sine qua non any dramatic work, whether play or opera, will fail. As Bayan Northcott has written:

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32 See my article, 'Blest Pair - II', Composer, 35, Spring 1970, p.28
Ultimately the reason most operas fail is surely to do with 'pacing': that instinct which Mozart, Wagner, Verdi and Britten shared for fusing music and drama in a way that transcends the limitations of masque and ritual on the one hand and mere sung play with background music on the other to attain a theatrical dynamic all its own.

Every writer of drama - stage play or opera - has to face the problem of how to supply, quickly and unobtrusively, the basic information about characters and situation, and to keep his audience apprised of the narrative of events as the drama unfolds. A stage play will often have to cover several years of 'dramatic' time in less than two hours of 'real' time. In a stage play, this information can usually be delivered subtly and unobtrusively through stage dialogue. In an opera there is a problem: didactic information of this kind is invariably of a low emotional charge. Music in such circumstances cannot help: it can only hinder. The same goes for intellectual argument and discussion. Such information is best delivered in direct speech. I discuss the musical implications of this, in the context of The Second Death, later on. Suffice it to say here that an opera libretto must incorporate several different kinds of 'language', ranging, at one extreme, from 'naturalistic' dialogue, where basic information is required or arguments aired, to the 'artificiality' of the operatic ensemble, where several characters deliver different texts simultaneously.

In between these extremes, the librettist must cater for reflective soliloquies - solo arias - and more emotionally reflective dialogue - duets - and, if a chorus is required, the universal 'we' statements of crowd and onlookers.

Textual Chemistry', The Independent, 6/5/87
I think it is fair to say that, for most composers today who are interested in setting words to music, the ultimate goal is opera. This was not always the case, in Britain at least. Many British composers of the early twentieth century inherited Samuel Johnson's definition of opera as "an exotic and irrational entertainment" or Hubert Parry's equally abstemious indictment: "Opera is the shallowest fraud man ever achieved in the name of art". Though I wrote a full-length opera early on in my career, I inherited some of the prejudices of Johnson and Parry. I appreciated the operas of neither Mozart nor Wagner and had a positive dislike of Italian opera from Bellini to early Verdi. It was a growing acquaintance with twentieth-century opera, particularly those of Berg, Britten, Janáček and Tippett, and my discovery of the two late masterpieces of Verdi, Otello and Falstaff, that opened my eyes and ears to the form. These works convinced me that opera could be a relevant musical form in the late twentieth century.

I eventually made my way to opera through solo song. From 1964 onwards, much of my output had been vocal music, particularly songcycles. In several of these songcycles there is a strong dramatic and visual element, influenced greatly by the example of Janáček's The Diary of One Who Vanished: I mention in particular For John Clare (1964), The Song of the Green Man (1974), Glasgerion (1977) and Ophelia (1979). In each case, when composing the music I had in my mind's eye a dramatic situation. In The Song of the Green Man I envisaged a 'fugitive-in-time' crossing a countryside which he half remembers from his past, visiting places which I could actually pinpoint on a map. In For John Clare, I saw the poet, Clare, in his old age, seated in the garden

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1 Dictionary, 1775
2 Notebooks, 1918, quoted by Graves: Hubert Parry, II, 1926, p.213
3 The Parish Clerk, submitted for finals of B.Mus. degree, University of Nottingham, 1961
of the asylum where he had been incarcerated, reminiscing in confused fantasies of his childhood and youth. (When the work was first performed, I remember being somewhat disappointed that the tenor soloist was not dressed as Clare ...)

Between my student opera, The Parish Clerk, and The Second Death, I wrote several short 'theatre-pieces': The Falcon (1971), a dramatic work for church performance, influenced in its format by Britten's Church Parables; The Two Nativities (1979), a setting of the second Shepherd's Play from the Wakefield Mystery Cycle; as well as two short 'operas' for children, The Pied Piper (1973) and Any More for the Ark? (1976). Of these, The Falcon is the most pertinent to The Second Death in that it shares a similar situation (a time-warp) and was completely original in conception - that is to say, I conceived the plot, libretto and music.

Before tackling so large-scale a project as a full-length opera, a composer understandably has to be absolutely sure of his subject-matter. The work had to be the culmination of my own artistic and philosophical ideas, and I spent several years deciding on the right subject. At one time or another I considered Shakespeare's The Tempest and a dramatisation of the life of the poet John Clare. In 1977 I began sketching a libretto for the latter, but gave up when I realised that I could not fashion a libretto with enough drama in it. Though The Tempest was very enticing, it had been turned into an opera by several previous composers and I was keen to find an original story. Another possibility was the adaptation of a novel by H E Bates, Love for Lydia, or one of the wartime novels, A Moment in Time, The Purple Plain and Fair Stood the Wind for France. In the end I decided that musical dramatisation could add little of significance to the originals and I put them aside. It is, however, no coincidence that the 'Fable' of The Second Death is set in wartime Britain and has a strong Batesian atmosphere. (Moreover, I feel sure that the dance scene (I.v.) is a subconscious transmutation of the concert at the Sanatorium in Love for Lydia, Part Four, Chapter I.) My eventual choice of subject, however, was to be a consolidation of themes already explored in different ways in my earlier music.

From childhood I have been fascinated by the concepts of 'Time' and 'History'. My own thinking has been strongly influenced by literature
on the subject, from childhood books, such as E Nesbit's *The House of Arden*, Alison Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* and Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden*, to J W Dunne's *An Experiment with Time* and T S Eliot's *Four Quartets*. The latter is an important key to both *The Falcon* and *The Second Death*. Both the songcycle, *The Song of the Green Man*, and opera, *The Falcon*, explored the idea of 'Time-warp' and 'Time-travelling'. *The Song of the Green Man* is a dramatic songcycle of 15 short songs. The central character is only vaguely defined. At no point is his identity revealed; moreover, he himself doesn't know who he is, how he came here, or why he is here. He could be a fugitive from the law (improbable), someone suffering from memory-loss or a nervous breakdown (possible) or (most probable of all) a fugitive from a previous century. "Lost in a turning of Time", he is making a symbolic journey, without maps, through a half-remembered landscape, hunting for a key to establish his own identity. *The Falcon* is a modern morality play, with two interlinked themes of Time and Belief. The three scenes are set at three points in time:

(Scene 1) the winter before the Peasants' Revolt (1381)
(Scene 2) the early years of Cromwell's Protectorate (1651)
(Scene 3) the present day.

In each scene there are two characters, sung by the same two singers, tenor and baritone: in the first, an ailing knight and a priest (a thinly-disguised John Ball); in the second, a Cromwellian soldier and a priest; in the third, a young man of agnostic turn-of-mind and, again, a priest. This ubiquitous cleric acts as a link between scenes and across Time, as does the setting: the church in which the opera is staged. The characters discuss and argue basic problems of faith and conduct, problems which are restated, in different terms for different times and situations, in each of the scenes. Often the same words and phrases are echoed from one scene to another in an ironical way, a dramatic ploy which I used even more extensively in *The Second Death*. One problem that I encountered in writing *The Falcon* was that alluded to in Chapter One: the ineffectiveness of music in conveying philosophical statements or argument - or even bald, narrative facts - unless justified by a dramatic context. This was something that I had to solve in *The Second Death*.

Despite the composition of these two large-scale works - *The Song of*
the Green Man lasts approximately 45 minutes, The Falcon an hour - I felt that there were still aspects of the subject which could be explored in a dramatic context. At first I turned to books on the subject of Time for possible sources of plot. Though they had great potentialities, I had to reject The House of Arden, A Traveller in Time and Tom's Midnight Garden because all three were conceived from a child's viewpoint. The same applied to Oliver Onions' The Story of Ragged Robyn and Alan Garner's Red Shift. J B Priestley's trilogy of 'Time-plays' were too wordy and philosophic for musical treatment. All of these works, however, influenced the libretto directly or unconsciously. I cannot now recollect what gave me the initial ideas for The Second Death, but I do know that it covered practically all the points that I was looking for: a dramatic situation brought about by a 'Time-shift'; two planes of action which are juxtaposed and, at certain points, superimposed; two different periods of history, with the full theatrical potential of period-costumes and sets and the musical possibilities of different 'musics'; and a hint of the supernatural which satisfied a personal penchant for ghost stories. In the latter, I was indebted to Britten's example in The Turn of the Screw, a favourite work and one that influenced not just the subject matter but also the musical construction of the The Second Death. Just as The Turn of the Screw is far more than a ghost story - it is 'about' blighted innocence and presumptuous interference amongst other things - so The Second Death is more than just a vehicle for a time-travelling joy-ride. To put it simply, its themes are obsession, and rigidity of belief and principle, and the tragic results that these can have on human relationships.
CHAPTER THREE : THE LIBRETTO

1. INTRODUCTION

The fact is simply that the Civil War of the seventeenth century ... has never been concluded. The Civil War is not ended: I question whether any serious civil war ever does end. Throughout that period English society was so convulused and divided that the effects are still felt.

T S Eliot: Milton (1947): the Henriette Hertz Lecture delivered to the British Academy, 26 March 1947

The earliest note that I have about the opera is dated 22 January 1978:

"Man (20thC) who has the 'eye'. Migraine headache/nightmares. Sees 'visions' - from a previous experience/time ... Sees clearly a situation unfolding in the past (mid 17thC) whose tragic outcome he knows but cannot prevent ...

17thC story. (Time: Civil Wars)
Young man (?craftsman ?cobbler/mason i.e. useful profession ...) in love with girl - he a Roundhead, she a vicar's dau. Her brother v. fanatic Cavalier. She caught between the two loyalties. He feels need to rejoin regiment. Torn between his love for her and his strong beliefs. Finally besieged with regiment in church tower - and burnt to death.

Present day man - becomes obsessed - tries to find documents. Finds DIARY ...? One of his forebears ...? Must be some sub-plot which - if not directly reflecting 17thC situation - must have some bearing on it. ?Tragedy unfolding in front of his eyes. But in his obsession fails to see it. Friend (brother-in-law) and he are working on some project - to go abroad. He kept back
few days, trying to solve problem - br.-in-law dies in plane-crash."

I quote this note in extenso, in all its naivety, warts and all. Such crude beginnings are typical of the strange routes of inspiration. As will be noted, however, a surprising number of ideas were adopted and developed:

(1) the bilateral plot with its seventeenth- and twentieth-century settings.
(2) the triangular relationships in the seventeenth-century story.
(3) the 'nightmare' visions and growing obsession of the man in the twentieth-century story.
(4) the two 'deaths': by burning in a besieged church and in a plane-crash.

Ideas that were altered or replaced were:

(1) the character of the young man in the seventeenth-century story. Looking back, I may have had in mind Oliver Onions' supernatural novel, The Story of Ragged Robyn (1945), in which the love between two young people of unequal social standing is the basic ingredient of the plot. When I worked on the story in more detail, I decided that the two lovers needed to be of equal social standing. The man became 'Richard', the girl 'Beth' and her cavalier brother 'Tom' - not just a brother but (most importantly) her twin.

(2) the need for an effective sub-plot in the twentieth-century story was crucial, and one that caused a great deal of thought. The problem was solved in what now seems to be an obvious way: by the use of parallels and symmetries between the two stories. Already this fundamental mirroring idea is present in the original note: flaws of human character which lead indirectly to violent deaths. This was deliberately expanded when the libretto came to be written. The 'friend' (brother-in-law) idea was scrapped, and the '20thC' man ('Ashby') is engaged to be married (to 'Diana'). Their love-affair and gradual estrangement is paralleled with that of Richard and Beth even down to identical words at times. This symmetrical parallelism also worked in other ways. Ashby's nightmares became reflected in Beth's nightmares. Two crucial
explanations had to be provided: the justification for Ashby's nightmares and an explanation of his dreams. The first was solved by setting the story during World War Two: Martin Ashby, convalescing in an R.A.F. hospital after being severely burned during a reconnaissance flight, is subject to strange and vivid nightmares. The dreams were explained by the fact that the temporary hospital where he is convalescing happens to be the ancestral home of the Parr family from the seventeenth-century story.

(3) In both stories, other characters were 'spirited up' to justify the story and give the main characters credibility - in the seventeenth-century story: Sir George Parr, father of Beth and Tom, who acts as a moderating voice between Tom and Richard and as a fatherly adviser to Beth; and Hannah, Beth's maid and confidante, who represents the 'woman-in-the-street'. In the twentieth-century story: Heyford, Ashby's doctor, who personifies solid common sense amidst Ashby's fantastical visions; and the rector, Malin. Malin would appear to be a descendant of Richard Malin in the seventeenth-century story, but this relationship is left unexplained, for sinister and ironic purposes. Malin is a keen amateur historian which makes him a link between past and present. It is he who, almost by chance, supplies Ashby with the key to his nightmare visions.

When the libretto was eventually written I gave the two stories different titles in order to differentiate them: THE DREAM for the seventeenth century, and THE FABLE for the twentieth century. In its final form, the libretto can be summarised as follows:

2. SYNOPSIS OF PLOT

The opera tells two stories which unfold in parallel with each other. Both are set at Cottenhoe, a country house in Northamptonshire: one - THE DREAM - during the Civil Wars; the other - THE FABLE - during the Second World War. What links the narratives together is a 'time-slip'.

THE FABLE takes place during the year 1941. MARTIN ASHBY, a group
captain in the R.A.F., has been severely wounded and burned and is now convalescing at Cottenhoe House, which has been temporarily requisitioned as a wartime hospital. He has been experiencing a series of horrifying nightmares, in which he dreams he is being burnt alive. His doctor, HEYFORD, and his fiancée, DIANA, try to explain that these are the natural outcome of his recent experiences - his own crash and seeing his comrades go down in flames. Each dream ends with the same vivid images - smoke, flames, being burnt alive - but with each dream, more and more of the picture is being filled in. To the consternation of Diana and Heyford, he insists that these dreams are omens of an impending catastrophe which he must prevent. He is certain that the action takes place here at Cottenhoe, but that the setting is an earlier period of time. If so, reasons Doctor Heyford, how can he do anything about it? Ashby persuades the doctor to let him speak with the local rector, MALIN, who is an authority on the history of the locality.

As soon as he enters the rectory, he recognises it as the setting of his dream. Malin explains that the rectory was originally the manor-house, the home of the PARR family until the Civil Wars when tragedy overtook them. The present Cottenhoe House was not built until many years later. As Ashby reads through old family papers he falls asleep and dreams he sees the Parrs. The missing pieces of the jigsaw fall into place. He is even more determined to try and save them from catastrophe. Diana meanwhile feels that Ashby has become obsessed with his 'dream vision' to the exclusion of everything else. She decides reluctantly to accept a posting overseas. A few days later news reaches Cottenhoe that the plane she was travelling in has been shot down in flames over the Channel with no survivors.

THE DREAM, unfolded in Ashby's own dreams, takes places over a period of four years during the Civil Wars (1641-45). It tells of the Parrs, a family which has owned the manor of Cottenhoe for several generations. BETH and TOM are the twin children of SIR GEORGE and his late wife. RICHARD is the son of close family friends, the MALINS (ancestors, perhaps, of the future rector). Richard's parents died when he was a child and he has been brought up at Cottenhoe with Beth and Tom. He and Beth are planning to marry, but war breaks out. This affects all their lives. Richard sides with the parliamentary cause, Tom with the royalists, and Beth and her father are torn between the two. Eventually Tom and Richard meet each other on the battlefield. Tom and
his men are besieged in a church tower and refuse to surrender. Richard is forced to burn the church down. In the period leading up to this catastrophe, Beth has been experiencing violent nightmares in which she dreams she is being burnt alive.

As will be seen, there are strong parallels between the two narratives. In both, a couple are about to marry when war breaks out; in both, the couples are estranged; in both, one character is killed in violent circumstances. Moreover, both of the main characters, Martin and Beth, have been experiencing similar, disturbing nightmares. Both believe that the dreams portend catastrophes. What they do not understand is that, like Alice and the Red King, they have been inhabiting each other's dreams:

"He was part of my dream, of course - but then I was part of his dream, too!"

Beth has been dreaming of Diana's death, Ashby of Tom's.

The opera can be seen on one straightforward level as a ghost story: of a man and a woman who are experiencing 'time-slips', one witnessing events which took place three hundred years earlier, the other, events which will happen three hundred years later. On another level it is concerned with different forms of obsession. In the case of the FABLE, a man's obsession with an impossible idea - that he can interfere with and re-dress time-past, which in the end irretrievably injures his personal relationships with friends and fiancée. In the DREAM, it is another kind of obsession: religious intolerance and political stubbornness, again at the expense of personal relationships. Whereas the DREAM is a straightforward narrative, tracing the fate of an English family caught up and destroyed by civil war, the FABLE is a more complex, psychological drama; the action is literally what goes on inside Ashby's head.

3. FORMAL STRUCTURE

As I advocated in Chapter One, the libretto of a musical work should suggest its musical structure, and this is what I have endeavoured to do in The Second Death. Having decided on a plot with two narratives placed at different points in time, how can it be presented coherently and, at the same time, provide plenty of scope for musical
treatment? I decided on three acts. In Acts One and Three, the two time-periods are juxtaposed scene by scene. The FABLE is told in I.i, I.iii and I.v, and in III.i and III.iii. The DREAM is told in I.ii, I.iv and I.vi, and in III.ii, III.iv and III.v. The dramatic purpose of this is clear: only gradually does the audience become aware of what is going on and of the connection between the two plots. The method of narration is different too. The DREAM unfolds chronologically scene by scene, frame by frame, year by year of the Civil War. In the FABLE, though, we are always concerned with the relationship between Ashby and Diana, the progress of everyday events is secondary to what is going on in Ashby's mind. Act Two is a 'Dream Vision' in which the two worlds of DREAM and FABLE collide. Ashby 'sees' the inhabitants of an earlier time, though they cannot see him. By Act Three, because of what has taken place in Act Two, the audience will be aware of what is going on, though will probably not (ideally should not) be prepared for the denouement: Diana's death and Beth's apocalyptic final 'vision' on which the opera closes.

The other important dramatic element is the use of the symmetries already referred to. Several events happen twice, in different time-zones, though in different ways: two 'nightmares', two deaths, two lovers' partings, two scenes in the rose-garden round the sun-dial, etc.. These symmetries are underlined by the titles given to the scenes: 'Nightmare (1)'/ 'Nightmare (2)'; 'The First Death'/ 'The Second Death', etc.. These symmetries have been deliberately made 'irregular' - if 'irregular symmetries' is not a contradiction in terms! - in the way they occur during the opera. The whole formal scheme is summed up in FIGURE 1 (p.41).

Unifying the entire drama is the place. Despite difference of characters, time and situation, the place remains recognizably the same throughout (as it had been in The Falcon) with the sun-dial acting as a symbol of this permanence-within-impermanence:

"Time past cannot be recalled:
Time lost cannot be won again."

ACT ONE

Throught this long act - which lasts as long as Acts Two and Three
ACT ONE

Scene 1  Scene 2  Scene 3  Scene 4  Scene 5  Scene 6
Nightmare(1)  The Toast  Obsession  A Sprig of Thyme  The Dance  The Rose-Garden(1)
I  II  I  II  I  II

ACT TWO

'... Time Present and Time Past ...'

Scene 1  Scenes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7
I  I/II: intermingling of time-zones

ACT THREE

Scene 1  Scene 2  Scene 3  Scene 4  Scene 5
The Rose-Garden  The Crowned Knot  The First Death  Nightmare(2)  The Second Death (2)
I  II  I  II  II

FIGURE 1
put together\(^1\) – the aim was for as much variety as possible in length and shape of scenes.

**Scene 1, Nightmare(1)**, is very short to the point of being laconic, but presupposes a long orchestral introduction. When Ashby's terrified description of his nightmare is cut off in mid-sentence, the preludial music must surge in again.

**Scene 2, The Toast**, a medium-length scene, presents three of the main characters of the DREAM. It falls into two equal parts: (1) dialogue between Sir George and Richard, and (2) dialogue between Richard and Beth. The intention was to provide two different but balancing musical sections.\(^2\)

**Scene 3, Obsession**, another scene of medium length, is a trialogue between Ashby, Diana and Heyford, ending with a brief ensemble.

**Scene 4, A Sprig of Thyme**, is a medium-length scene and, like Scene 2, in two parts. It begins with Beth singing the folksong, 'A Sprig of Thyme', followed by gentle, bantering dialogue between Beth and Tom. Halfway through, Sir George enters with Hannah bringing the news of the King's arrest of the five members of parliament – and thus the 'act of war' – and the scene ends with a fugal ensemble for all four characters.

**Scene 5, The Dance**: a long scene, set at the hospital dance. The libretto suggests that dance-music (heard in the opening prelude) is to thread the entire scene. Indeed, the characters refer to the background music throughout. The 'dance scene', of course, has a long and hallowed tradition, notably Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Act I Finale) and Britten's *Peter Grimes* (Act III, scene 1).

**Scene 6, The Rose-Garden(1)** is the longest scene of the opera. It

\(^1\) The approximate timing of the acts is: Act One – 50'; Act Two – 23'; Act Three – 25'.

\(^2\) This two-part structural idea is used to brilliant effect by Britten in *Peter Grimes*, II.i. 'Part one' covers the time that the church service is in progress: hymn-responses-gloria-benedicite-credo; 'part two' from the point when Peter strikes Ellen.
begins with four 'encounters', between different pairings of characters - Sir George and Tom; Hannah and Richard; Richard and Tom; Sir George and Beth - followed by a large ensemble for all five characters of the DREAM and a brief epilogue ('farewell') between Richard and Beth (i.e. the fifth and final 'encounter' between the two most important characters).

Already, it will be observed, the scenes of the DREAM are far more 'formally' constructed than those of the FABLE: an intentional differentiation which would be underlined in many ways by the music.

ACT TWO

Act Two has a quite different structure. The first act had been concerned almost equally with eight characters: five in the DREAM, three in the FABLE. Act Two is concerned basically with two characters: Beth and Ashby, the two main characters from each time-plane. The sub-title - '... Time Present and Time Past ...' - explains it in a nutshell. The two planes of action are fused, frozen into a kind of limbo; Time spills from one century into another. Unlike Act One, with its clearly defined, 'fenced off' scenes, the scenes of Act Two flow into one another. To achieve this I adopted the film-technique of 'dissolve' - an idea which Michael Tippett used so successfully in The Knot Garden. Scenes do not end but fade into one another. Except in Scene 1, the characters from the two time-planes are visible on stage all the time, though lit with different intensity. For example, at the beginning of Scene 2, after Revd. Malin has left the room, Ashby sits down in a chair to read Beth's diary. As he reads from it, the faint outline of Beth writing the diary can be discerned across the room. Beth's voice gradually takes over the reading as Ashby's fades away. Beth is now spotlighted whilst Ashby's outline fades. Similarly, after Beth's short aria, "O the sweet days of the past!", the scene dissolves back to Ashby for his arioso, "Who are you?" (Scene 3) and as he reaches out his hand towards Beth, "Speak to me! Speak to me!", there is a dissolve to Beth. Throughout, Ashby can see Beth, but is unable to communicate with her. Beth, on the other hand, is unaware of Ashby, though at the end of the scene becomes suddenly aware of his 'ghostly' presence.

The even-numbered scenes, where Beth is spotlighted, carry forward the Civil War narrative. We are told of the progress of the war, par-
particularly as it concerns Tom (Scene 4) and Richard (Scene 6). The act ends with Ashby, who is growing infatuated with Beth, trying to break down "the curtain that divides us". He shouts out her name: "Beth looks up suddenly from her sewing, sees Ashby and screams."

(I don't think that Beth actually sees Ashby, merely senses his presence, but in the histrionic situation of the theatre, one cannot be over-subtle.)

Scene 1, as I have already indicated, stands apart from the rest of the act. In dramas that are tragic in essence, there must be some light relief, some break in the tension. Beethoven places his comic relief at the beginning of Fidelio, and by doing so intensifies the ensuing drama. The DREAM begins in a relatively light-hearted mood (I.i) but grows more solemn and intense as the drama unfolds. 'Tom' I have tried to give a light touch, in both character and music, but even his natural sang-froid is submerged by events. The FABLE, however, is solemn-serious throughout, and for this reason I introduced Malin, an eccentric, history-obsessed parson, and the only character who can possibly be labelled 'comic'. He is no arbitrary invention though. He it is who inadvertently supplies the key to the Pandora Box of the plot and has the difficult task of breaking the news of Diana's death to Ashby (III.iii). He also symbolises 'Time-History' through his academic interests. II.i is his scene, and the grotesqueries of his character and music act as a foil for what is to come.

ACT THREE

Act Three follows the same plan as Act One: scenes alternating between FABLE and DREAM. Scenes 1 and 2 are fairly long, 3, 4 and 5 extremely brief, as the drama precipitates towards its end.

Scene 1, The Rose-Garden(2), is a deliberate reflection of I.vi, with the sun-dial and its pertinent motto acting as a central focus. The last part of the scene reflects almost word-for-word the 'farewell' between Beth and Richard in I.vi, with the music redirected into Ashby/ Diana tonalities. 3

Scene 2, The Crowned Knot, sees the final, tragic confrontation between

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3 See Chapter Four, page 55
Tom and Richard: the coming-together of two irreconcilable personalities and the inevitable consequence. Only the two protagonists are on-stage, but their words are echoed in a ghostly fashion by an off-stage 'chorus' of women's voices: Beth, Hannah and - linking hands across the centuries - Diana. The scene ends with the subterranean rumblings of the Nightmare music from I.i which, at its climax, is abruptly cut off.

Scene 3, The First Death, is something of an experiment. It is the scene where the news of Diana's death reaches the hospital at Cottenhoe. To make it as chilling and eerie as possible, I placed the characters involved - Malin and Heyford - off-stage. They speak, not sing. The emotional impact cannot be appreciated from reading the libretto, for my intention was for the music to take over. The laconic, almost telegraphic dialogue is embedded in an 'ethereal' transformation of the dance-music from I.v.  

Scene 4, Nightmare(2), as its title suggests, is the 'seventeenth-century' reflection of I.i and, as in previous 'reflected scenes', much of the dialogue is repeated word-for-word. In this scene, Beth wakes up screaming from a nightmare and is calmed by Hannah. It leads straight into

Scene 5, The Second Death. Beth is now sleeping calmly. Again voices - those of Hannah and Sir George - are heard off-stage, as Sir George brings the news of Tom's death. The opera ends with Beth waking from her sleep and calling out Martin's name: a person, of course, whom she has never seen and should not even know about ... 

4.  'INCOMPLETENESS' IN AN OPERA LIBRETTO

I have already referred to the 'incompleteness' which is essential in any text intended for musical setting. What is the point of adding music to a text which is complete in itself, as 'self-sufficient' as Larkin's egg? Incompleteness is a most difficult thing for the librettist to achieve - it is like asking a painter to fill in only half his canvas - but it is essential if music is to make its effect. Even the most

\[4\] See Chapter Four, page 55
\[5\] Chapter One, page 13
experienced librettist will find it difficult to calculate exactly what to include and what to omit. Eric Crozier has written illuminatingly about this problem in reference to the opera Billy Budd, for which he and E M Forster were Britten's co-librettists. The original draft which they submitted to Britten was a straightforward dramatisation of Melville's novel:

This had served its purpose by providing the composer with material to stimulate his musical invention. Now we had to adapt our text accordingly, and to translate what was still more or less a play into a libretto.

Crozier goes on to distinguish between straight play, poetic drama and opera libretto:

A play is usually written in rational and logical language. It speaks from the author's mind to the minds of his audience: it aims to make everything explicit. Poetic drama, on the other hand, uses more heavily-charged and evocative language: it discards many of the realistic details of the naturalistic play: it speaks to the heart, and may leave much unsaid. Poetic drama is more concerned with expressing fundamental human passions and emotions than with illustrating the superficial aspects of human behaviour: it is, for that reason, more universal in its scope, and less likely to be popular with mass audiences. A good opera libretto has the same force and directness as poetic drama. It ignores trivialities of behaviour and concentrates upon deeper motives. Unlike poetic drama, however, it needs a spare, simple and singable language, without the elaboration of images upon which the poet relies for his complete expression. By definition, a libretto is incomplete. It exists only as a springboard for music. If it reads uncommonly well, and seems almost a play or a poem in its own right, it is probably trying to usurp the composer's function and will seem over-elaborate and ornate when sung.

Crozier and Forster had to revise "almost every line" of their first

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6 'Writing and Opera', in Aldeburgh Anthology, ed. Ronald Blyth, 1972, pp. 199-202
7 ibid. p.201: my italics
8 ibid. pp.201-202
version of Billy Budd. They shortened many scenes, tautened the dramatic conflict, provided new words where the composer needed opportunities for "lyrical expansion" - they even removed one of their original characters altogether. But this was by no means the end of their task. What every librettist will discover is that his libretto is only complete when the music is finished:

Invariably, during the composition of an opera, the composer requires further alterations to be made. As his own ideas crystallise, the text must be adjusted to suit them. The librettist's job then is to provide such adjustments as swiftly and as willingly as possible. His telephone may ring at any time with an urgent appeal for a couple of extra verses, or for six new lines for a particular character to sing in an ensemble.

Now if Crozier, the veteran of two previous operas for Britten - Albert Herring and Let's Make an Opera - as well as the cantata, St Nicholas, had still to feel his way, 'playing it by ear', what of a newcomer?

In my libretto for The Second Death I followed a similar route to Crozier and Forster, except that I was working not from a pre-existing novel but an original idea. The first step was to construct the scaffolding for an effective theatrical drama. The first draft was an initial cock-shy. The second - like Crozier/Forster's - was little more than a stage-play. The third, which became my working libretto, was already something quite different from a stage-play. The final version - see Appendix - was even more finely-honed for musical setting: because it had actually been set. What did not alter during these revisions was the basic structure. The three-act format and the disposition of scenes within those acts were part of the original inspiration for the work and remained constant throughout the drafts. What was modified was the tone-of-voice and the language. All revisions that I made were, in fact, musically-motivated. They can be summed up as follows:

1. The earlier versions tried to say too much. 'Delete as prolix' was the implied marginal scribble.
2. The wrong sort of words. What was said was said too prosaically, particularly in the 'recitative' sections.

They had already fused together several minor figures in the original novel into a single character.

ibid., p.202
3. Too few words. I wanted any extended musical sections (i.e. lyrical and arioso) to flower naturally out of the context of the drama. I had allowed opportunities for this, but not enough.

Below is a passage (A) from the original draft and (B) from the final version of I.iii which shows the kind of revision undertaken.

(A) (i) **DOCTOR** Look, Captain Ashby, let us go over the dream again from the beginning.

(ii) **ASHBY** From the ending, you mean. It hasn't yet reached its beginning. The events are being told back-to-front - like a film being run backwards. With each dream I see more detail, learn more facts. What never changes is the ending: it ends in exactly the same way.

(iii) **DOCTOR** With the inferno.

(iv) **ASHBY** Yes. The flames, the smoke. I wake up feeling that I am choking to death.

(v) **DOCTOR** It would seem to me that this sequence of dreams is an inevitable outcome of your recent experiences. No man can expect to escape untouched from the ordeals you've been through. Don't you see? You've been under extreme pressure and strain, both physical and mental. Several of your friends have been killed - some shot down in flames before your eyes; you yourself received multiple fractures to your leg and severe burning. Here, don't you see, is the source of your inferno. Your experiences have unlocked dark fantasies deeply embedded in your subconscious mind.

(vi) **DIANA** O, Martin, my love, the doctor is right. You have been through a terrible ordeal. These nightmares will go in the end.

(vii) **ASHBY** I agree with you, doctor: 'unlocked' is exactly the right word. But it is more than subconscious fears that have been unlocked. Somehow these ex-

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11 Each change of character has been numbered in order to facilitate cross-reference.
periences have caused a door to be opened onto some­thing even more strange.

(viii)DIANA What do you mean, Martin?

(ix) DOCTOR I don't understand, Captain Ashby.

(x) ASHBY A door long locked - I find it difficult to explain ... It is as though a tragedy were unfolding before my eyes - not mine, but someone else's. It is as though I were a privileged spectator to these events, but a frustrated one too, for I cannot prevent the tragedy - or can I? This is what bothers me. If only I knew the whole story, perhaps I could prevent it ...

(xi) DOCTOR Go on, Captain Ashby.

(xii) ASHBY I can see it all so vividly:
A large house: a manor-house, I think;
A family: they are at conflict with one another;
Two lovers: there are tears, they are parting;
Another man, dressed as a soldier;
Now comes a second man, another soldier;
We are in a large, high-roofed building: a tower, a church;
The men are arguing; there are shots -
More arguments - shouting - smoke - fire;
We are trapped ... The rest you know.

* * * * *

(B) (i) HEYFORD Look, Captain Ashby, let us go over the events of your dream from the beginning.

(ii) ASHBY From the end, you mean. It hasn't yet reached its beginning. The events are being told back to front, like a film run backwards. What never changes is the ending. It is always exactly the same.

(iii) HEYFORD The inferno? ...

(iv) ASHBY Always the inferno.

(v) HEYFORD But don't you see? These dreams result from your recent experiences. Don't you see? You've been under great pressure and strain: friends killed -
shot down in flames before your eyes; you yourself severely burnt and injured. Here is the source of your inferno! No-one can escape unscathed from such ordeals.

(vi) DIANA Martin, my love, the doctor is right. These nightmares will soon disappear. Have patience!

(v contd.)

HEYFORD These experiences have woken hidden fears in your mind; Aroused the sleeping kraken from the deeps; A door to your unconscious mind has been unlocked; But there's nothing to fear ...

(vii) ASHBY "Unlocked"? "Unlocked", you say? There I would agree with you. Somewhere a door has been opened in my mind Onto something rich and strange, Rich and strange ...

(ix) HEYFORD I don't understand you, Captain Ashby.

(viii) DIANA What do you mean, Martin?

(x) ASHBY A door long locked ... I find it difficult to explain. It is as though a tragedy were unfolding before my eyes - Not mine, but someone else's. I am a helpless spectator On events beyond my control. For I cannot prevent the outcome - Or can I? This is what troubles me. If only I knew the whole story, Perhaps I could prevent it.

(xii) I see it all so vividly: A house: a manor-house, I think; A happy family, but now in conflict; Two lovers in a garden, The man dressed like a soldier; They are saying goodbye; The girl is in tears ...
Now we're in another building:
A tower - a church;
Two men are arguing, threatening, shouting;
Now there are shots - smoke -
The tower is on fire!
He is trapped! He is trapped! He is trapped! ...
The rest you know.

The most noticeable difference between the two versions is that (B) is considerably shorter, the language more laconic and less naturalistic. It is more 'poetic', more 'lyrical'. Minor amendments apart, the major alterations in (B) are:

(ii) Omission of unnecessary information ("With each dream ... more facts") and a more 'singable' final sentence.

(iii) and (iv) More laconic exchanges.

(v) and (vi) 'Refrain-lines' ("But don't you see? ... Don't you see?") utilised more forcibly. The whole section made much briefer and to-the-point (the original was extremely prosaic and factual). A more 'poetic' sentence-balance and a more theatrical build-up to the final line. Because Heyford's original speech was far too long (and boring) I interrupted it with Diana's interjection (vi). This meant, too, that Heyford's image of doors being 'unlocked' could be expanded and taken up immediately by Ashby in (vii). Note that the second half of Heyford's speech is lined-out as free-verse and is of a more 'poetic' character, enabling the libretto to move more easily into the poetry of Ashby's 'aria' ((x) and (xii)).

(vii) Again the prosaic original is made more lyrical (and therefore more apt-for-music) and the hint of "something even more strange" is followed through with the direct quotation (from Shakespeare's The Tempest).

(vii) and (ix) What an opera can do so much more effectively than a straight play is to 'overlap' the words of different characters without causing confusion. (The ultimate in this, of course, is the operatic ensemble.) In (B) I have overlapped Diana's and Heyford's words with
Ashby's dreamy repetition of the words "rich and strange".

The reverse has happened to (v)/(vi): the doctor's interjection (xi) has been omitted to give Ashby a longer uninterrupted run in his aria. Notice how the sentences of (A) have been considerably abbreviated. The 'soliloquy' reads extremely abruptly and laconically, but this kind of short, snappy sentence sets to music well. The language is tightened up and the images are presented more obliquely. The basic mood is sustained - the 'doubts' and 'questions' are all part of a basic uncertainty on Ashby's part - and leads to a natural musical climax with the repetition of the phrase, "He is trapped!" and the throw-away 'coda': "The rest you know".

On several occasions, ideas for improving the libretto came during composition of the music. For example, at the end of the scene quoted above, I redrafted the original dialogue as an ensemble for the three characters onstage, Diana, Ashby and Heyford. One of the most extensive revisions was at the beginning of I.v ('The Dance'). From the outset I envisaged that the scene would be underpinned by the sounds of dance-music coming from a neighbouring room. It was not until I began composing the music that I hit on the idea of using three different dance measures heard one after the other. This required extensive re-writing of the original unstructured dialogue.

5. SOURCES OF THE LIBRETTO

1. The title comes from The Book of Revelation, 21:8:

   But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and the murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

2. Libretto (and score) are prefaced by three epigraphs:

   (i) An ancient sun-dial motto which is inscribed on the sun-dial in the Rose-garden, and which is quoted
by Richard and Beth (I.vi) and later by Diana (III.i):

"Time past cannot be recalled:  
Time lost cannot be won again."

(ii) A quotation from T S Eliot's *Burnt Norton* (first poem in his sequence *Four Quartets*):

"Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future  
And time future contained in time past."

Eliot's *Four Quartets* is probably the most important literary influence on the work. The images of the Rose-garden and the Crowned Knot (of Fire) recur as motives throughout the poem and Time is its fundamental theme, particularly in *Burnt Norton* and *Little Gidding*.

(iii) A quotation from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*:

"He was part of my dreams, of course - but then  
I was part of his dreams, too."

All three, in their different ways, are pertinent glosses on the opera, summing up its essence.

3. During the course of the opera, quotations are made from four other sources:

(i) In I.iv, the folk-poem, 'The Sprig of Thyme', with its punning uncertainty between thyme/time.

(ii) In II.i, a quotation from Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem, *Sudden Light*:

"I have been here before,  
But when or how I cannot tell:  
I know the grass beyond the door,  
The sweet keen smell . . ."12

---

12 J B Priestley used the first line as the title for one of his 'Time-plays'.
(iii) In II.ii, Revd. Malin quotes a poem to Ashby purported to have been written by Tom, beginning "Heart's-ease, a herb ..." It is in fact an anonymous seventeenth-century poem, *On His Mistress' Garden of Herbs*, printed in *Westminster Drollery II*, 1672. It thrives on ironical puns on flower-names: 'heart's-ease', 'rue' and 'thyme'.

(iv) Tom's letter, read out by Sir George in II.iv, contains a direct quotation from *The Diary of Richard Symonds* (Camden Society, 1859, ed. C E Long). Symonds served in King Charles I's Life-guard and fought at Cropredy Bridge and Naseby.

4. In addition to these direct quotations, the libretto is indebted to ideas from the following works:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H E Bates</td>
<td><em>Love for Lydia</em> (1952) and the wartime novels, particularly <em>A Moment in Time</em> (1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J W Dunne</td>
<td><em>An Experiment in Time</em> (1927)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Garner</td>
<td><em>Red Shift</em> (1973)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Nesbit</td>
<td><em>The House of Arden</em> (1908)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oliver Onions</td>
<td><em>The Story of Ragged Robyn</em> (1945)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phillippa Pearce</td>
<td><em>Tom's Midnight Garden</em> (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myfanwy Piper</td>
<td><em>The Turn of the Screw</em> (1955)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(after Henry James)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J B Priestley</td>
<td>The 'Time Plays': <em>Dangerous Corner</em> (1932), <em>Time and the Conways</em> (1937) and <em>I Have Been Here Before</em> (1937)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison Uttley</td>
<td><em>A Traveller in Time</em> (1939)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. INTRODUCTION

[Music] can add nothing to the precision of the poet's thought. On the contrary, it almost invariably softens the outline. What music is concerned with is the man behind the events, with the tone of voice behind the words.

A H Fox Strangways, on Vaughan Williams' On Wenlock Edge, in Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, 1930

An opera is not an outsized lyric, any more than a mural painting is an expanded miniature. Every dramatist, whether writing straight play, poetic drama or opera, has to face the problem of how to supply, quickly and unobtrusively, basic factual information about his characters and the situations they are in, and subsequently to keep his audience apprised of the narrative of events as the drama unfolds. In the stage play, the experienced dramatist will deliver this information in general conversation between his characters. In an opera, there is a greater problem: didactic information of this kind, usually of a low emotional drive, is best delivered in direct speech. Music cannot help — only hinder. The composers of eighteenth-century opera buffa, nineteenth-century singspiel and operetta and early twentieth-century musical skirted round this problem by having such material spoken. This itself created problems. Once the singing stops and speech begins, the magic thread is broken and is very difficult to pick up again. This drawback also applies to melodrama, but at least in melodrama the orchestra sustains the musical thread even though the singing has stopped. The classical use of recitative, whilst keeping the musical thread going, is musically a bald device. For these reasons, I have, in The Second Death, adopted a mixture of arioso and recitative as the main narrative procedure.
It will be noted that this opera - one of whose themes is 'obsession' - grew out of an almost personal obsession with Time and History. Though I have always been attracted to the use of allegory, myth and fable in opera - with a particular admiration for Tippett's first three operas - I prefer a verismo style. Perhaps this is not as paradoxical as it seems. The best ghost-stories are those with a solidly real background. I felt exactly the same about the operatic treatment of the subject. The two stories are told in 'realistic' fashion. It is only when the planes of time interact - as in Act Two - that we enter a world of magical 'unreality'. For this reason The Second Death is essentially a dialogue - as opposed to an ensemble - opera, in the tradition of Debussy's Pelleas and Melisande, with few duets or trios and even fewer ensembles. Much of the music is continuous, musically-pointed arioso dialogue, where the singers declaim the text verismo. The orchestral accompaniment supplies the main musical structure and musical motivation. Occasionally, at crucial points in the action, there are arias (e.g. Ashby's aria in I.iii, "A door long locked") and, on two occasions, 'songs' (Beth's folksong in I.iv and Malin's performance of Tom's 'poem' in II.i). The few ensembles come at crucial points in the work, usually at the ends of scenes (e.g. I.iv and I.vi).

The basic 'types' of music I have used are:

1. for straight dialogue, where basic narrative information or argument is required: free recitative, which occasionally flowers into 'arioso'.
2. for reflective soliloquies: arias.
3. for emotionally-charged dialogue: duets.
4. for emotionally-charged summaries, for all characters on stage: ensembles.

Being a private, domestic drama, there are no onlookers to the action in either story; therefore there was no artistic reason for a chorus. This could only have been artificial and obtrusive. Like Pelleas and Melisande, the most dramatic moments are often marked by the quietest, rather than the loudest, music.

2. GENERAL NOTES ON MUSICAL STYLES, TECHNIQUES

The musical techniques that I have used spring from those in previous songcycles and instrumental works. They reveal an eclectic, if not
magpie, mind, but suit my particular purpose well enough. The composers from whom I have learnt the most about the writing of opera are Verdi (particularly Falstaff), Janáček and Britten. I have always admired the deceptively easy way that Verdi glides from recitative to aria in Falstaff, his faultless timing and the naturalism of his dramatic method. Britten I admire particularly for his imaginative handling of English prosody and clear-cut musical construction allied to direct musical expression. But it is perhaps Janáček to whom I feel the strongest affiliation, in the way I construct the music of the opera from tiny mosaic patterns. I use elements of serialism and of traditional tonality. The music veers from the fully (12-note) chromatic to the simple modal. It is thus able to accommodate the simple tonal and modal references to 'The Sprig of Thyme' folksong, in I.iv, Malin's pastiche 'lute-song', II.1, and twentieth-century dance-music, I.v.

One of the basic pre-compositional structures I have used is the grouping of unrelated triads. I first used this procedure in my songcycle, The Image Stays (1974). It is a modification of the twelve-note serial method, and was originally suggested to me by William Alwyn's 3rd and 4th Symphonies (1956 and 1959 respectively). In both works, Alwyn uses two tonally unrelated modes which, between them, form a 12-note chromatic 'set'. In The Image Stays, I used this idea systematically for the first time. Here the set comprises four unrelated triads:

Ex. 1 The Image Stays, set

```
DbM  Ebm  Gm  Am
```

In the songcycle River Songs (1978) I formulated another 12-note modal set:

Ex. 2 River Songs, set

```
Abm  Dbm  Cm  Dm
```

1 I used this set again in my Symphony (1977)

2 As far as I have been able to ascertain, these are the only possible sets of major and minor triads possible except by transposition - i.e. they are 'limited modes', to use Messiaen's terminology.
In the songcycle Ophelia (1979) I adopted a third 12-note modal set of four unrelated triads, but comprising this time one each of major, minor, augmented and diminished:

Ex. 3 Ophelia, set

In all cases, these sets were used as a quarry for melodic and harmonic ideas. I don't want to labour the reasons why I used these sets, except to say that their blend of chromaticism and tonal references suited my purpose, and that paradoxically the innate restrictions imposed gave me freedom of invention.

3. ANALYSIS OF 'THE SECOND DEATH'

As I have already said, it is the orchestra which bears most of the 'motive' work of the opera. I have an aversion, particularly in works of a dramatic nature, to 'highly-organised' vocal-lines, where devices of musical unification, such as motive, note-row and set, are emphasised at the expense of word-setting. My prime concern in setting words has been to perfect a style of vocal-writing which places emphasis on the inflections and rhythms of natural speech. This has resulted in a vocal-line which is flexible and asymmetrical - in effect a 'prose' as opposed to 'poetic' style. In this respect it is far closer in spirit to the vocal style of French composers such as Debussy (Chansons de Bilitis, Proses Lyriques and Trois Ballades de François Villon), Ravel (Histoires Naturelles) and Canteloube (Triptyque) than traditional English practice. Perhaps the closest analogy in English song is the use of the air-over-a-ground by Purcell, where the cogent underlying structure of the ground bass allows the composer to invent a free, almost rhapsodic vocal-line. One of my favourite devices is what I call 'pennillion' technique, whereby the vocal-line is floated above a fully-structured accompaniment (complete in itself) like a freely-evolving descant, to give the impression of extemporisation. (A good example in The Second Death is Beth's duet with her father, "I'm torn between two loves" in I.vi) In achieving this flexible, asymmetric vocal-line I have avoided overt use of motives. Such devices, I feel, attract attention to the music at the expense of the words, and the
naturalness of declamation is something which I set great store by. In *The Second Death*, except in such pastiches as Malin's lute-song (II.i) and Beth's folk-song (I.iv), where specific song-styles are being alluded to, my vocal-lines follow a free rhapsodic pattern. Taken out of context, Ashby's aria (I.iii [49]-[51]) or Malin's aria (II.i [12]-[15]) can appear spineless and lacking in structure. They make 'poetic' sense, in that they express the spirit and emotion of the texts, but they do not make full 'musical' sense, in that they possess a musical independence. They rely for their full impact on their accompaniment. And as I have said, it is the orchestral accompaniment in *The Second Death* which bears the burden of structural unification - of motive, figuration, etc. The singers are thereby freed to sing out their drama as naturally as possible. One compensates for the other.

Occasionally these motives are 'developed' in the traditional meaning of the term - for example, the motive $x$, associated with Beth's 'fated love', undergoes an enormous number of guises - but more usually they recur in their original forms: that is to say, remain 'static', either literally so (e.g. the 'supernatural' motives (ii), (iv) and (vi): see pp.68&70) or frozen into an ostinato (e.g. the 'treason' motive, (vii): see page 71). As in all my music, ostinatos - of all kinds: harmonic, rhythmic, melodic and combinations of all three - play an important role in the musical construction. And in place of the traditional development of ideas, I have used a technique analogous to the ostinato, namely 'mosaic' construction, whereby various short motives and ostinatos recur at pertinent points throughout the work in different juxtapositions and superimpositions. This is effective only because of the solid ground-structure of the libretto. Just as the placing of motives in the orchestral accompaniment 'frees' the vocal-line, so the intrinsic formal pattern of the libretto 'frees' the music from having to over-emphasise the work's shape.

In *The Second Death*, the 'sets' of unrelated triads are used dramatically. Each of the nine characters is identified by a different triad (and therefore tonal centre). The leading character, Martin Ashby, has two triads (see FIGURE TWO). These chords, or their corresponding tonal centres, are heard whenever the character is in evidence (i.e. prominent on stage, or off-stage but alluded to). When all five characters of the DREAM come together in the ensemble at the end of I.vi,
they sing against the background web of a huge chaconne, which includes their five 'personal' triads:

Ex. 4

[Very slow and solemn: d = c 66]

Conflict between characters is expressed by conflict between these triads, which in turn generates the musical conflict of the drama. Several of the characters are represented by specific musical timbres - e.g. Beth by the oboe or cor anglais. In addition, certain rhythmic and/or melodic and/or textural motives are associated with the various characters:

SIR GEORGE (BASS): has music of a confident, slightly military air, as at the opening of I.ii (a scene in which he predominates):

Ex. 5

Opening, I.ii

N.B. Richard, the main cause of conflict in this scene, is represented not by his triad but (more forcibly) by the ever-present D-flat bass pedal.
FIGURE 2
THOMAS (TENOR): has music of a florid, fanciful nature as befits the 'metaphysical fancies' of his poetry. He is the only singer whose vocal-line is ornate and melismatic: best heard perhaps in the following two passages from I.iv:

Ex. 6a

I.iv, [58] + 1

Ex. 6b

I.iv [69]

and in the final scene of the opera, 'The Second[i.e. Tom's]Death', where the muted horns sound the bare fifth, C, which eventually incorporates the missing major third to identify Tom beyond doubt. Tom's 'song', sung by Malin in II.i is, it should be noted, in F major. (Notice too, I.iii [113], where Ashby is referring to Tom in his account of his dream.)
BETH (SOPRANO): has a cantabile, rather melancholy vocal-line, characterised instrumentally by oboe or cor anglais. Her character is best appreciated in the folksong, 'The Sprig of Thyme' (I.iv) and her aria, "O the sweet days of the past" (II.ii):
RICHARD (BARITONE): has a 'studied' (in musical terms, that is to say contrapuntal) music, which grows more so as the opera progresses. He is represented instrumentally by cello and horn. His characteristic motive of rising fifths can be heard at the very outset of the opera:

Ex. 8  I.i [2] (percussion omitted)

and his dominating presence is represented by the obsessive C-sharp tonality in the chaconne in I.vi. The latter scene ends with bleak C-sharp octaves in basso, despite Beth's 'consoling' E-flat major chords beforehand:

Ex. 9  I.vi, ending
HANNAH (MEZZO): being a less important figure, needs less definition. 
She has no defining instrument, and though B-major is 'her' tonality, 
this only appears in passing and in conjunction with the triads of 
other characters. She is best heard in her scenes with Richard (I.vi [125]) and Beth (III.iv [62]).

ASHBY (HIGH BARITONE): in keeping with his leading position in the 
drama, has two triads allotted to him: E major and F-sharp minor, 
the latter specifically associated with his 'obsession'. His vocal-
line is ornate, melismatic - though in a different way from Tom's - 
and growing ever more so as his obsession takes hold of him. His 
characterising instrument is the clarinet. His angular upwardly-
striving theme is heard (like Richard's) in the opera's prelude and 
reaches full characterisation in his aria, "I see it all so vividly", 
in I.iii:

Ex. 10 I.iii [49] (inner parts omitted from accompaniment)
DIANA (SOPRANO): her character is warm and romantic, her triad B-flat major, her defining instruments flute and viola. Her character is heard to its full in the 'Halcyon Days' music (N.B. in rich B-flat major tonality) which is first heard in I.v [96] and reaches its full flowering as the prelude to Act Three:

Ex. 11  

Prelude, III

HEYFORD (BASS-BARITONE): this down-to-earth, matter-of-fact doctor (who is, perhaps?, half in love with Diana) is characterised by intonation, trombone or horn, and C minor tonality: heard at its starkest in I.iii where Ashby is referring directly to him:

Ex. 12  

I.iii [37]
MALIN (TENOR): like Hannah, a peripheral figure in the drama, is the only character with 'comic' pretensions. His eccentric, quirky character is represented by eccentric, quirky music—and the bassoon—and fussily contrapuntal (i.e. 'academically fugal') textures:

Ex. 13

Just as important as these individual musical characterisations are the relationships set up between the various characters. Throughout the opera the tension between characters is reflected in the conflict of unrelated triads. These bitonal conflicts produce the essential musical drama of the opera. Examples are so many (and so obvious) that it would be pedantic to enumerate them all. Some of the most notable examples are:

1. I.v: between Ashby and Diana, where the basic bitonal conflict of E major/B-flat major is heard throughout.

2. I.ii-vii: Ashby and Beth, E major/E-flat major. (See also the interlude between III.iv and III.v where Ashby's clarinet and Beth's oboe interweave erotically.)


These bitonal conflicts are particularly noticeable in the purely instrumental preludes and interludes, where more than one character is referred to (e.g. the 'flights' of triads in I.iii [44] and [47]).

As well as these musical ideas associated with individual characters there are also several motives which symbolise abstract ideas and concepts. The F-sharp minor triad representing Ashby's obsession has already been alluded to. Not unexpectedly it dominates I.iii, the
'Obsession' scene. Other important motives, which recur throughout the opera, are:

(i) the 'Inferno' motive: a quick figure, flickering like a flame, full of tritone intervals. It dominates the two 'Nightmare' scenes, I.i and III.iv:

Ex. 14

(ii) The 'supernatural'/ 'déjà vu' motive, which occurs whenever a character experiences a 'time-shift', usually with the celesta in evidence; e.g. II.i when Malin declaims the Rossetti poem (see also I.ii [29] and I.iii [114]):

Ex. 15 appears on p.69

(iii) The 'Love' motive, as expressed between Richard and Beth: widely-spaced, richly-scored chords, made up, of course, from their respective triads. It is heard as they embrace (I.ii [33]) and later as they are about to part (I.vi, 5 before [47]):

Ex. 16 appears on p.69
Ex. 15

Very slow: \( \frac{4}{\text{c 112}} \) (dreamily)

I have been here before,

But when or how I cannot tell.

---

Ex. 16

Quicker still: \( \frac{4}{\text{c 104}} \)

---
This texture is reflected, with different pitches and chordal combinations, as Ashby and Diana say farewell in III.i (3 after [24]).

(iv) 'Ashby's dream': F-sharp minor and C minor triads (i.e. Ashby's obsession motive and Heyford's triad):

Ex. 17

![Ex. 17](image)

(v) 'The Sprig of Thyme'. Beth sings an adaptation of this traditional English folksong at the beginning of I.iv and its simplicity and poignancy come to symbolise her tragedy in the same way as the little tune, 'Malo, malo' in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. (See II.iv where she sings it at the request of her father.)

(vi) 'Childhood memories': first heard in I.ii [18] where it symbolises Cottenhoe. It reappears in I.iv [71] in Tom's short arioso when he refers to their happy childhood:

Ex. 18

![Ex. 18](image)
(vii) 'Treason' (fig. 71): one of the most important 'abstract' motives in the opera. It first appears in I.iv when Sir George brings news of the arrest of the five members of parliament and is made explicit a few moments later when Tom sings, "But this is treason!":

Ex. 19 I.iv [77]

and it dominates the ensuing fugal finale. It also appears obsessively throughout the 'Crowned Knot' scene (III.ii). (See also I.vi at [130])

(viii) 'Vera Lynn'. Just as the folksong, 'The Sprig of Thyme', is used as a popular reference in the DREAM, so a pastiche popular song, reminiscent of those sung by Vera Lynn during WW2, acts as a reference in the FABLE. It appears, naturally, as the background

"Extraordinary how potent cheap music is." (Noel Coward, Private Lives)

I have long been aware of this potency. Since Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder (1970), I have made use of, or references to, popular music in several of my works.
music in I.v ('The Dance') where it is transformed from lancers [89] to waltz [100] to quickstep [104]. It is heard in a ghostly, distorted version during III.iii ('The First Death') when it achieves its poignant apotheosis:

Ex. 20

(iii) But by far the most important motive is the one that symbolises the two strata of Time in the drama. The sounds of the celesta are prominent in its scoring. It consists of two chords, using elements from the triads associated with Ashby and Beth:

Ex. 21
These chords literally turn the clock forward or back in the 'double-time' scenes of Act Two:

Ex. 22a
They also form the basis of the long prelude to II.ii. Here various motives associated with (a) Ashby (clarinet roulades) and (b) the characters of the DREAM, are heard above slowly-alternating 'Time-chords'. At the final climax of the opera these chords (and the clarinet roulades) are heard in conjunction with Beth and Richard's love-music:

(see also II.vi at [62] where they are used in falling sequence.)
Following the suggestions in the libretto, the 'musics' of the DREAM and the FABLE are clearly differentiated so that they can be immediately recognised. They also act as mirrors for each other. The DREAM contains echoes of seventeenth-century musical idioms, though there is nothing overtly pastiche except perhaps for Malin's 'lute-song' (II.1: but notice, it is Malin, the twentieth-century historian, who is committing the pastiche ...). Dorian and lydian modes predominate and the tonalities tend towards the flat keys. The FABLE contains echoes of popular songs and dance music of WW2. The music is more highly motivic and much use is made of the alternating tone-semitone mode\(^5\), particularly in Ashby's music. The tonalities tend towards the sharp keys. The

\(^5\) Messiaen's '2nd Mode of Limited Transposition'. 
scoring of the 'music' too is distinctive. In general the orchestration of the DREAM is lighter than that of the fable, string-dominated with infrequent use of brass and percussion; no piano, but prominent use of the harp. The FABLE, on the other hand, uses brass far more thoroughly as well as a large variety of percussion instruments including wood-blocks and vibraphone, and the harp's role is taken over by the piano. One instrument plays a special role in the opera: the celesta. As has already been pointed out, it occurs at points of \textit{deja vu} or 'time-shift', and is frequently associated with the 'Time-chords' (see Exs. 21-23). Not unexpectedly it plays a crucial role in Act Two.
POSTSCRIPT

In my commentary on the music of *The Second Death*, I may have emphasised the musical unity of the work at the expense of its emotional impact and given the impression that it is a super-organised artefact which gives no scope for purely human drama. This conscious structuring — some might say these self-imposed restrictions — may seem to be an unnecessary 'caging' to the imagination. All I can reply is that "it ever were so" in my music. Like Stravinsky and several other composers, I need these self-imposed restrictions to enable my imagination free rein. One thing compensates the other. The toughly-unified accompaniment is compensated by a freely-evolving vocal-line; the tight use of motives by flexible mosaic-like forms. It could be argued that, though the chord- and key-structures are of great importance to me as the composer, they might not be of audible significance to the listener. Clearly I cannot anticipate the aural reactions of others, but these structures are certainly aurally perceptible to me as a listener. But beyond all this technical analysis, *The Second Death* must be judged as a drama. I would like to think that what I set out to do — to tell two human stories linked across three centuries — has been successful. And that the method of telling it — by leading the audience from deliberate obscurity in the first act, where the two stories are unfolded side by side, scene by scene, through the gradual illumination of Act Two to the inevitable (though not necessarily obvious) tragic conclusion of Act Three — has been dramatically successful. To me, and I hope my future audience, Beth's screaming out of Martin's name at the final curtain should be a spine-chilling moment: unexpected as it is inevitable.
APPENDIX : TEXT OF THE LIBRETTO

THE

SECOND DEATH

an opera in three acts

by

TREVOR HOLD
"Time past cannot be recalled:
Time lost cannot be won again."

Old Sun-dial motto

"Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past."

T S Eliot: Burnt Norton

"He was part of my dreams, of course - but
then I was part of his dreams, too."

Lewis Carroll: Through the Looking-Glass
THE CHARACTERS

1. From the Past ('The Dream')
   SIR GEORGE PARR  squire of Cottenhoe  Bass
   BETH  his daughter  Soprano
   THOMAS  his son, twin to Beth  Tenor
   RICHARD MALIN  a family friend; in love  Baritone
   with Beth
   HANNAH  Beth's maid  Mezzo-Soprano

2. From the Present ('The Fable')
   MARTIN ASHBY  a Group Captain in the RAF,  High Baritone
      wounded in action
   DIANA  his fiancée, a secretary at  Soprano
      a wartime ministry
   DOCTOR HEYFORD  doctor at the RAF conva-
      lescent hospital, Cottenhoe  Bass-Baritone
   REV. MALIN  rector of Cottenhoe  Tenor

THE ACTION

The action of The Dream takes place at the manor house, Cottenhoe, the home of the Parr family, before and during the Civil Wars (1641-45). The action of the Fable takes place at Cottenhoe during the Second World War (1941). Cottenhoe House has been requisitioned as an RAF convalescent hospital. What had previously been the manor house is now the rectory.
ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: NIGHTMARE (1). The convalescent hospital, Cottenhoe.
Time: early 1941.

(Dr. Heyford enters the room as ASHBY wakes from a nightmare.)

ASHBY Fire! Fire!
I'm burning! burning!
Put the flames!
Put out the flames!
[ I cannot breathe, cannot breathe, cannot breathe!...

HEYFORD Captain Ashby! Captain Ashby!
Wake up, Captain Ashby!

ASHBY (bewildered) Where am I?

HEYFORD You're quite safe.
You've been dreaming again.

ASHBY I've had a most terrible nightmare,
Vivid in every detail.
I was trapped in a room,
An upstairs room.
The house was on fire,
The room full of smoke.
Then flames came leaping up through the boards.
There was no escape,
I couldn't breathe!
Smoke, smoke, choking smoke!
I was being burnt alive! ...
SCENE TWO: THE TOAST. Cottenhoe Manor. Time: early 1641

(Sir GEORGE PARR enters with RICHARD MALIN.)

SIR GEORGE And so you'll stand for parliament?
Set your cap at the law?
Well, rather you than me, Richard.
I've had my fill of politics.
Now I'm for the quiet life
Amongst my trees and books.

RICHARD Don't think that I dislike the country life!
I love Cottenhoe and all it stands for.
My happiest childhood memories lie buried here.
But, as you know,
It has always been my ambition
To become a lawyer and stand for parliament.

SIR GEORGE Your father would have approved, I know,
But what does Beth think of it?

RICHARD Beth and I have discussed it many times.
I think she approves.

SIR GEORGE Even if I had a calling for the law,
This would not be the time I'd seek election to parliament.

RICHARD The King has behaved with great arrogance.
The Commons are rightly aggrieved.

SIR GEORGE At times like this we must all work together.
We have far greater enemies lurking on our doorstep.
Only this morning I heard that Scottish troops
Had crossed the border in the north.
But we shouldn't be talking politics.
Nothing causes friends to fall out more. (Enter BETH)

Why, here is Beth now.
Come and join us, my dear!
Richard has been telling me of his plans to become a lawyer.
(SIR GEORGE) Let me warn you, dear Beth, about such men!
They shut themselves in their studies smoking their pipes,
Tell you they're busy working at their books,
When all the time they're reading the gazette
Or planning the next day's sport.

BETH I shouldn't allow it
If I were a lawyer's wife.

RICHARD She'd have me in the kitchen shelling peas:
That's more the picture!

SIR GEORGE I wish you both the greatest happiness.
If marriage gives you half the joy it gave to me
Then you'll be fortunate indeed.
I know your mother would have approved, Beth.
Her dearest wish was for you and Richard to marry
And so to seal the knot between our two families,
The Malins and the Parrs.
But I grow maudlin - like an old gentleman!
And I'm jumping my hedges too quickly!
Why, you're only just betrothed!

RICHARD I'm sure my parents would have agreed with all you say.
I couldn't have found a more loving wife,
Nor Beth a more fortunate husband!

SIR GEORGE Let us drink a health to that!
Here, let me pour out a glass.
To Richard and Elizabeth:
May yours be a long and happy marriage.
To the Parrs and the Malins!

BETH AND RICHARD To the Parrs and the Malins!

SIR GEORGE May our friendship be sealed for ever!

BETH AND RICHARD May our friendship be sealed for ever!

(They toast each other)
SIR GEORGE  But I must go!
My horses are waiting,
My groom will grow impatient
And that will never do!
I'm sure you've many things to talk about -
I'll leave you alone.

(SIR GEORGE goes out. As BETH turns to RICHARD, her
glass slips from her hand.)

BETH  O, how clumsy I am!

RICHARD  Here, let me help.
Why, it's nothing:
A mere splash,
Like a tiny flame. (BETH gasps and turns pale.)
What's wrong, my love?
It's so unlike you
To be upset by such a thing.

BETH  It's nothing:
I suddenly felt faint.
Richard, do you ever have the feeling
That you've seen something twice?
That the grass beyond the door in a strange house
is familiar?
It is like a cold hand touching you on the shoulder ...
It will be all right, Richard?
I mean, you and I ...

RICHARD  Of course it will.
Why do you suddenly say that?

BETH  These are such unsettled times -
This unrest ...

RICHARD  There will always be unrest, as long as we're human beings.
It's part of our condition.

BETH  Now you're beginning to talk like a lawyer!
RICHARD

If it cheers you up, I always shall.

(He embraces her.)
You're such a strange girl, Beth;
So unlike Tom.
No-one would ever think that you were twins.

BETH

O, but Tom and I are very much alike.
We both have vivid imaginations.
Tom weaves his fancies into poetry ...

RICHARD

Whilst you - you spin them round in your head!
And I love you for it.
Come, give me a kiss.

BETH

What here?
The servants might come in.

RICHARD

Let them come!

BETH

It's growing dark.

RICHARD

Now you're changing the subject!

BETH

I'll light a candle.

RICHARD

No - let it be dark.

SCENE THREE: OBSESSION. The convalescent hospital, Cottenham. Time: 1941

(ASHBY is visited by DR. HEYFORD and DIANA.)

ASHBY

If the dreams were not so consistent, so real, I
wouldn't take any notice. But everything is so
vivid, each detail so clear, that it must - I
know it sounds ridiculous - that it must be some
kind of portent. Doctor Heyford thinks I'm mad,
of course. He thinks my injuries have affected
my mind as well as my body.

HEYFORD

He thinks nothing of the sort, thinks nothing of
the sort. All he is saying is this: that dreams
can often recur; and are often vivid and consist-
tent in detail. But to read too much significance ...
AHSHBY

Ah, there you are Diana! He doesn't believe a word
I say!

DIANA

Doctor Heyford is only trying to help. As a doctor
he sees such things in a different light.

HEYFORD

Look, Captain Ashby, let us go over the events
of your dream from the beginning.

ASHBY

From the end, you mean. It hasn't yet reached
its beginning. The events are being told back
to front, like a film run backwards. What never
changes is the ending. It is always exactly the
same.

HEYFORD

The inferno? ...

ASHBY

Always the inferno.

HEYFORD

But don't you see? These dreams result from your
recent experiences. Don't you see? You've been
under great pressure and strain: friends killed-
shot down in flames before your eyes; you yourself
severely burnt and injured. Here is the source
of your inferno! No-one can escape unscathed from
such ordeals.

DIANA

Martin, my love, the doctor is right. These night­
mares will soon disappear. Have patience!

HEYFORD

These experiences have woken hidden fears in your
mind;

Aroused the sleeping kraken from the deeps;
A door to your unconscious mind has been unlocked;
But there's nothing to fear ...

ASHBY

"Unlocked"? "Unlocked", you say?
There I would agree with you.
Somewhere a door has been opened in my mind
Onto something rich and strange,

[Rich and strange ...]

HEYFORD

I don't understand you, Captain Ashby.

DIANA

What do you mean, Martin?
ASHBY

A door long locked ...
I find it difficult to explain.
It is as though a tragedy were unfolding before my eyes -
Not mine, but someone else's.
I am a helpless spectator
On events beyond my control.
For I cannot prevent the outcome -
Or can I?
This is what troubles me.
If only I knew the whole story,
Perhaps I could prevent it.
I see it all so vividly:
A house: a manor-house, I think;
A happy family, but now in conflict;
Two lovers in a garden,
The man dressed like a soldier;
They are saying goodbye;
The girl is in tears ...

Now we're in another building:
A tower - a church;
Two men are arguing, threatening, shouting;
Now there are shots - smoke -
The tower is on fire!
He is trapped! He is trapped! He is trapped! ...
The rest you know.

DIANA

But who are these people?

ASHBY

That is something I cannot determine.

HEYFORD

Could you describe them to us?

ASHBY

They are dressed in strange clothes,
As though they were from another age ...
ASHBY
I believe the tragedy is still taking place,
Here and now at this very moment,
And I shall do all I can to prevent it.
I believe that those taking part are still alive
And I shall do my best to help them,
To help them ... 

DIANA
O Martin, don't let these dreams become an obsession,
Don't let them dominate your life.
I want you well again,
In mind as well as in body.
Listen to me! I am your friend,
I am your friend ...

HEYFORD
You must trust me as your doctor.
These dreams are no more than a poison in your bloodstream:
They'll soon run their course and disappear.
You must trust me as your doctor,
Trust me, trust me ...

SCENE FOUR: A SPRIG OF THYME. Beth's room, Cottenhoe Manor.
Time: early spring, 1642.

(BETH is alone sewing. As she sings quietly to herself, TOM enters unobserved.)

BETH
"Once I had a sprig of thyme.
It prospered by night and by day
Till a false young man came a-courting to me,
And he stole all this thyme away ..."

TOM
Splendid!

BETH
0 Tom! You made me jump! (She quickly hides a letter under her work-basket.)

TOM
0 what a delightful song. The nightingale has pricked his breast upon the thorn in sheer despair, for you have stolen his best notes!
BETH You fool! What nonsense you talk! Now, unless you have something important to say, leave me alone to get on with my sewing.

TOM I can tell when I'm not wanted! But before I go, I'm determined to find out what you're hiding under your basket!

BETH Nothing!

TOM Nothing? Nothing? Then it won't matter if I take it! (He deftly picks up the letter.)

BETH Tom! Give it back at once! It's no concern of yours.

TOM But it's nothing – you told me so.

BETH You tease! Give it back! (BETH tries to wrest it from him, but TOM holds her aside and reads it.)

TOM Ah, as I thought: nothing but sweet nothings! "My dearest Beth, I thank you for your letter which reached me this morning ..." Oh how prosaic these lawyers are! Perhaps he catches fire later on ... Ah, what's this? "You are ever in my thoughts, my dearest ..."

BETH Tom, you go too far! That letter is private! (She snatches it out of his hand.)

TOM Steady on! You're like a cat with kittens. Dick is my friend too, you know. Very well; leave out the private tittle-tattle and read me the public news. When does he propose to grace us with his company?

BETH He says he will be coming down as soon as he can, but things are very busy in London.

TOM O these politicians! So busy with details! They cannot see beyond their noses. The important issues they completely ignore. Look out there: do the birds care whether the Archbishop celebrates mass or whether Kings are by God appointed? What are
they concerned about, except Love? Look at those
sparrows courting!

You make Richard sound a stubborn, heartless person.
You know he's not like that at all.

0 he loves you, I know. But he has changed. He's
not the carefree companion I knew as a boy, fishing
down at the mill, hunting for nests in the forest,
stealing apples from the parson's orchard. Speak
to him, Beth. In London there are treasonable tongues
to whisper in his ears. Speak to him, Beth, and
bring him back here to Cottenhoe. If anyone can
.teach him sense, it is you.

(Voices are heard offstage. HANNAH enters.)

What is it, Hannah?

Your father is back, miss. There's grave news from
London.

(BETH rises apprehensively. SIR GEORGE enters the
room briskly.)

What's all the excitement, father?

Bad news, I'm afraid, bad news. The King has really
set a cat among the pigeons. Yesterday he walked
into parliament and arrested five of its members.

No!

Impossible!

The House was in an uproar as you can imagine.

It was a shameless breach of liberty.

But what else could he do? What else could he do?

Now the city has risen in anger and the King has
been forced to flee for his life!
BETH  Oh no! Fled for his life? Left London?

HANNAH  The King? Oh no! Fled for his life?

TOM  Left London? The King? Oh no!
     But this is treason!

SIR GEORGE  Treason? How can it be treason when a King acts as a despot?
            This is tyranny: a clear breach of liberty.
            No wonder the people are angry.
            This is tyranny! Tyranny!
            Let's hope they have sense to patch up their quarrel,
            He to redress, they to forget.

TOM  This is treason, however you look at it
     To rise up against your lawful King,
     This is treason! This is treason!
     What else could he do?
     What else could he do?
     If you clip a bird's wings
     You must expect it to fly into a rage!

BETH  But what of Richard?
     Pray God he is safe!
     Safe and out of the turmoil!
     I cannot help but think of him.
     If only I were there by his side
     To love and comfort him.

HANNAH  Don't fret, miss, don't fret!
        Master Richard can look after himself,
        Look after himself.

BETH  Pray God he is safe!

HANNAH  Don't fret, miss!

TOM  This is treason!

SIR GEORGE  This is tyranny!
SCENE FIVE: THE DANCE. Terrace of the convalescent hospital, Cottenham.

Time: 1941, a few weeks later than Scene 3.

(The sounds of a dance-band can be heard in the distance. ASHBY enters with DIANA.)

ASHBY Poor Diana! I'm sorry to be such bad company. I never was any good at dancing.

DIANA You managed very well, Martin.

(ASHBY laughs.)

What are you laughing at?

ASHBY I was thinking - I've never seen so many three-legged waltzes in my life.

DIANA Now you're being cruel! You shouldn't laugh!

ASHBY I feel quite exhausted. Let's shut out the music and sit down.

(ASHBY shuts the door. DIANA sinks into a chair.)

You're looking tired, my love.

DIANA It's nothing that a good sleep won't cure.

ASHBY You're working too hard. Can't you take some leave?

DIANA It's impossible at the moment. We're so busy.

ASHBY Always so busy! O how this war drags on!

DIANA Will it ever be over?

ASHBY Do you ever think of the times we spent together before the war? They now seem like halcyon days.

DIANA It all seems so very long ago ... 

ASHBY All those things that we took for granted ... 

DIANA Going to the cinema ...
ASHBY  A day at the coast ...
DIANA  A night out in London ...
ASHBY  With a really good meal ...
DIANA  A day on the river feeding the swans ...
ASHBY  A weekend in Paris and a box at the opera ...
DIANA  O Martin! You're so extravagant!
I would be happy with simple everyday things.
BOTH  Shall we ever be free from this nagging uncertainty?
Ever be free to plan for the future?
Shall we ever? Ever?
(The sounds of a waltz are heard from the dance-hall.)
ASHBY  Did I tell you? I managed to walk as far as the terrace this morning.
DIANA  That's wonderful! Doctor Heyford says you are an excellent patient.
ASHBY  Does he now! I had the feeling that he'd despaired of ever curing me. But let's not talk about me.
What about you? You said in your letter you had some important news.
DIANA  I've been recommended for special duties. It may mean going abroad. There's no pressure. The decision rests entirely with me.
ASHBY  For purely selfish reasons I would prefer you to stay ...
DIANA  I feel torn: it sounds so exciting, but I feel that my place is here with you. If you want me to stay, to be near you, then I'll say no.
ASHBY  O Diana!
DIANA  O Martin! (They embrace.)
(The door opens and DR. HEYFORD enters. The sounds of a quickstep can be heard from the dance-hall.)

HEYFORD
Oh, what a racket! What a racket! (Slams door.)
They don't write tunes like they did when I was a boy!

ASHBY
You're talking like an old man, doctor. You'd better come and join us here out of the noise.

HEYFORD
I think I shall, I think I shall. (To DIANA.) And how do you find the patient today?

DIANA
He tells me he's walked as far as the terrace.

HEYFORD
A few weeks more and he'll be challenging me to a game of golf.

DIANA
You and your staff have done wonders. (Looks at watch.) Is that the time? I must leave or I'll miss my train.

HEYFORD
Must you go so soon? I was hoping you would join me for the next dance.

DIANA
Another time perhaps.

ASHBY
Come again next week.

DIANA
If I can.

ASHBY
And write.

DIANA
And you too.

ASHBY
Goodbye, darling.

HEYFORD
Goodbye, Diana.

(DIANA Leaves.)

She's a plucky girl. And you, Ashby, are a lucky man.

ASHBY
She makes me feel so helpless. Everyone seems to be so busy, whilst here am I stuck in hospital, a machine out of action.
"Longest patience fastest mends." You must be patient.

So they all say. But what am I expected to do in
the meantime? Daydream?

Ah, dreams: that's quite another matter!

You're not going to lecture me again, I hope. We've
been through this matter many times before.

You must not let these dreams obsess you. I have
the feeling that you enjoy living in this fantasy-
world and don't want the dreams to go.

But that's just the point! I don't want them to
go - not just yet. Not until the jigsaw is completed
to its very last piece. Doctor, don't think that
I don't appreciate all the things that you've done
for me. I'm grateful for your understanding and
sympathy. But the fact remains that, with all your
skill and knowledge, you have not dreamt my dreams.
You think I'm crazy, don't you?

Not crazy - merely obstinate. But others will not
be quite so sympathetic. Even Diana is worried,
though she tries to hide it.

Doctor, I assure you I am perfectly sane. And I
am determined to follow this matter through to the end.
I'm convinced that my dream takes place here at Cottenhoe.
But not all the details fit into place.
I recognise the garden but not the house.

There must be a simple answer.

Do you know anything about the history of this house?

I don't myself, but I know someone who does. You should
have a talk with the rector, Mister Malin.

Malin? Malin? The name seems familiar, strangely
familiar. Malin ... Malin ...

He has many family documents in his possession, so
I'm told. Would you like to speak to him?
ASHBY That would be most kind.

HEYFORD I'll go and see him in the morning. Perhaps you will sort out this matter once and for all. But the music has stopped. The dance is over. I should be on duty and you, Ashby, should be in bed. Goodnight, Captain.

ASHBY Goodnight, doctor - and thank you for being so patient.

(DR. HEYFORD leaves.)

This puzzle must be resolved.
Until the jigsaw is completed
My mind will not be at rest.
It is an omen - a portent - a forewarning.
If I failed to heed it, what then?
I would never forgive myself,
Never!

SCENE SIX: THE ROSE GARDEN (1). The Rose Garden, Cottenhoe.
Time: late summer 1642. In the centre of the garden stands a sundial.

(SIR GEORGE and TOM enter.)

SIR GEORGE Richard has arrived. Essex's forces are gathered at Northampton and he's determined to join them.

TOM Can't you stop him, father? It's sheer folly. The King has a professional army behind his banner. Essex's men are no more than scarecrows! For Beth's sake - for his own sake - can't you dissuade him?

SIR GEORGE I think it better if you talked to him, Tom. He's more likely to listen to you than me. I'll see Beth and explain matters as best I can.

(They leave. HANNAH AND RICHARD enter.)

HANNAH O Master Richard, what's all this about? I've heard such rumours in the village.
RICHARD Don't upset yourself, Hannah. These matters need not concern you.

HANNAH But they do, Master Richard, they do! You and Miss Beth ... they do!

RICHARD This issue will be settled soon, I'm certain of it. By Christmas we shall all be met round the table, eating and drinking as usual. We shall probably be laughing at the whole foolish affair.

HANNAH I hope so, I hope so. I'll go and tell Miss Beth you are here.

(HANNAH goes out. TOM enters.)

TOM Richard! I thought I would find you here.

RICHARD Tom, dear friend, how good to see you! You're looking well! Nothing like the lovesick poet your poems would have us believe.

TOM You should know that appearances are deceptive. All of us wear masks, Richard, even you. But this is no time to be talking about poetry, much as I would like it.

RICHARD You need not tell me what's on your mind. You're here to try to talk me out of joining Essex's army. But save your breath, dear friend, save your breath: my mind is made up and even you won't dissuade me.

TOM But, Richard, this is madness.

RICHARD Tom, please listen to me, please listen to me. I haven't taken this decision lightly. It grieves me to see our country split in two. There's nothing uglier than a civil war - war within a nation, between country and country, between family and family ....

TOM Between friend and friend ...

RICHARD It will not come to that.
TOM How can it be avoided? You are my oldest and dearest friend. I would do anything within reason for you. But this is not reason: it is treason. By joining Essex's forces you will be donning the cap of a rebel.

RICHARD Pray God that I am right!

TOM You are determined?

RICHARD I leave for Northampton tonight.

TOM Pray God that you are right!

(They leave together. SIR GEORGE and BETH enter separately from different parts of the garden.)

SIR GEORGE Beth, my dear.

BETH Father.

SIR GEORGE Come, sit down beside me. Richard is here; but before you see him, I wanted to have a talk with you myself. You have heard the news?

BETH Of the King raising his standards? That is common gossip.

SIR GEORGE Don't hedge round the subject, Beth. It's Richard I'm talking about. You know that he's decided to join the rebels?

BETH Yes, father. We've discussed it many times. I've tried to dissuade him but cannot change his mind. He says he must follow the path of his conscience — and I admire him for it!

SIR GEORGE Beth, my dearest Beth! My dearest Beth!

BETH O father, why must this have happened? I'm torn between two loves: for Richard and you. I know how you disapprove. And it cuts me to the heart. What can I do. But burn like a beacon of love?
(BETH) Be a calm, still harbour
Whilst the tempest rages?

SIR GEORGE O Beth, my darling daughter,
It grieves me to see you unhappy.
My heart bleeds for you,
Caught in this tragic conflict
Of loyalties and ideals!

(HANNAH enters.)

HANNAH Sir - Mistress - Master Richard is here.

(RICHARD and TOM enter. BETH runs to them both,
then to HANNAH, hands over her face. RICHARD goes
to her. TOM remains where he is. SIR GEORGE walks
up to TOM and puts a hand on his shoulder.)

SIR GEORGE Like a Greek tragedy
The plot unfolds.
The path ahead
Disappears into the darkness
Where shadows flit,
Lit by tongues of fire.
  Gone for ever
  Peace and reason:
  Conflict reigns ...

BETH Families split,
Friends estranged;
Torn between two loves,
The love for a lover,
The love for a brother -
I cannot bear to see the pain
Drawn on my father's face.
  Gone for ever
  Peace:and reason:
  Conflict reigns ...
TOM

How can I remain apart,
A dispassionate poet?
In times such as these
The poet too must stand and be counted,
Or never more raise his pen.
   Gone for ever
   Peace and reason:
   Conflict reigns ... 

HANNAH

What can we poor people do
Who stand at the fieldside
Watching the combat?
Prepare the meals in the silent kitchen,
Light the fires in the deserted parlour
And patiently wait at the door.
   Gone for ever
   Peace and reason:
   Conflict reigns ... 

RICHARD

My heart and mind
Fight in a civil war.
My heart is pledged
To my friends and Beth,
My mind is committed
To the cause of freedom.
This battle must be won
Before we can return
To the warmth of the family hearth.
   Gone for ever
   Peace and reason:
   Conflict reigns ...

(The lights fade as the ensemble comes to an end.
TOM, SIR GEORGE and HANNAH go out separately, leaving
RICHARD and BETH spotlighted. They stand on either
side of the sundial.)

RICHARD

"Time past cannot be recalled ..."

BETH

"Time lost cannot be won again."
RICHARD Beth ...
BETH Richard ...

(They embrace passionately.)

RICHARD I must go now.
BETH I know, my dearest.
RICHARD I'm sorry.
BETH I understand.
RICHARD You will be in my memory always.
BETH I shall carry your picture in my heart for ever.
RICHARD I must go now, my dearest Beth.
BETH [Goodbye, Richard! Goodbye!
RICHARD [Goodbye!

CURTAIN
SCENE ONE: (The REVEREND MALIN enters with ASHBY.)

MALIN And as I said to Doctor Heyford, if I can be of any assistance ...

ASHBY It's very kind of you to take such trouble.

MALIN Not at all, not at all. Always glad to help a fellow burrower.

ASHBY Burrower?

MALIN That's what I like to call us local historians: burrowers. Always burrowing away like rabbits into the warrens of Time. (To himself.) Now where did I put that key? Ah, yes ... (He goes to a wooden chest. ASHBY meanwhile looks round the room. He seems mesmerised by it.) (to ASHBY.) Captain Ashby ...

ASHBY Oh ... yes? I'm sorry - dreaming as usual!

MALIN You look as though you've seen a ghost!

ASHBY This room: it seems so familiar Yet I've never set foot in it before. In fact the whole house: I seem to know it.

MALIN "I have been here before, But when or how I cannot tell: I know the grass beyond the door, The sweet keen smell ..." Dante Gabriel Rossetti - do you know it? These old
houses possess a strange atmosphere, as though they had stored up all the experiences of their past. Look at this beautiful panelling - solid oak, solid oak. Carved, so it is said, by Grinling Gibbons himself. Commissioned by the Parr family when they lived here.

ASHBY You say the Parrs lived here?

MALIN Yes, of course - I thought you knew. This used to be the manor house until after the Civil Wars. The present Cottenhoe House was not built till much later. As you will appreciate, it is William-and-Mary ...

ASHBY Of course, of course! It all begins to make sense now ...

MALIN Ah, it is a very tragic story, that of the Parrs. Sir George Parr owned the estate in those days, a man much respected by all who knew him. He had twin children, a boy and a girl. They were inseparable. By all accounts a happy family. Then came the Civil Wars, the household was disrupted. The girl, Elizabeth, was betrothed to one of Cromwell's officers - the boy, Thomas, joined the King. Forced by outside conflict into conflict amongst themselves, their lives were completely shattered. Thomas was killed in battle. His sister died, so it is said, of a broken heart.

ASHBY Such misfortunes must have happened to many others.

MALIN Ah, but cases were rarely recorded. By a piece of good fortune most of the papers of the Parr family have been preserved. Do you like poetry, Captain Ashby? Thomas, you know, was a promising young poet, favourably compared with Herrick and Waller, so I'm told. Just listen to this:

"Heart's-ease, a herb that sometimes hath been seen In my love's garden plot, to flourish green, Is dead and withered with a wind of woe; And bitter rue in place thereof doth grow."
(MALIN) The cause I find to be, because I did
Neglect the herb called Time: which now doth bid
Me never hope; nor look once more again
To gain heart's-ease, to ease my heart of pain.
One hope is this, in this my woeful case,
My rue, though bitter, prove a herb of grace."

ASHBY What a charming poem.

MALIN Yes, isn't it good? But the real treasure of the collection is this.

(He hands a leather volume to ASHBY.)

ASHBY What is it?

MALIN A diary kept by the girl, Elizabeth. A fascinating document of domestic life during the Civil Wars. Full of valuable detail for the social historian. Indeed (confidentially) I had planned to edit it for publication - scholarly footnotes, the lot. It's very nice to escape when we can from our own troubled times. But I mustn't detain you! I'll leave you alone to your researches.

ASHBY (who has been engrossed in his reading of BETH's diary.) You have been most kind and helpful. There's more than enough to occupy me here.

MALIN Do call if you need any further assistance.

ASHBY I will indeed.

MALIN Goodbye, Captain Ashby, goodbye! Goodbye! ... 

(MALIN leaves the room. ASHBY sits down in a chair to read the diary.)
SCENE TWO

ASHBY (reading from the diary.) "Elizabeth Parr, her book, in which I write what I do and of the things which happen to me, In the Year of Our Lord, Sixteen-forty-four ..."

A young hand, unaccustomed to express itself.
The ink is faded and hard to decipher,
But the words ring clearly as a bell
Across the centuries.

(As he reads from the diary, the faint outline of BETH writing at her table can be discerned across the room. When BETH takes up the words, the scene should 'dissolve' to her.)*

"My heart is split in two. Where do my loyalties lie? I am torn in my love between Tom and Richard and do not know to whom I should turn. Each claims God for his side and calls the other a blinded fool.
And my father, who loves them both as sons, my father is stricken with grief. Those who are caught between two armies must surely perish, must surely perish ...

... Must surely perish.
O the sweet days of the past!
Shall we ever be so happy again?
O those happy meadows of childhood
Where nothing ever clouded the sun from our sky!
Shall we ever be happy again?

(Dissolve to ASHBY.)

* In these 'dissolves', the character who is speaking should be strongly illuminated, the silent character only dimly discerned. Between each of the 'BETH' scenes, time moves on rapidly; in the 'ASHBY' scenes, time is frozen.
SCENE THREE

ASHBY

Who are you?
Where do you come from?
Why do you come to haunt my dreams?
So young, yet so sad a brow,
Care-worn beyond your years,
Cheeks whose colour pales away,
Eyelids dark with tears.
Tell me who you are!
Speak to me! Speak to me! Speak to me!

(He reaches out his hand towards BETH, but she cannot see him. Dissolve to BETH. SIR GEORGE enters, holding a letter.)

SCENE FOUR

SIR GEORGE Beth! Are you there?

BETH Yes, father.

SIR GEORGE I've news from Tom.

BETH What does he say?

SIR GEORGE The King has won a notable victory and Waller and his rebels are in disarray. Here, listen to this: "While our troops faced the enemy several shots were fired at us. 'Victory without Quarter!' they were shouting, so confident they were. But soon they were singing another song. Routed by our cavalry, forsaking guns and wounded, they fled in disarray, and Victory was ours! Drums beating, colours flying, trumpets sounding, the King with all his army marched away in triumph!"

BETH Thank God he is safe!

SIR GEORGE Thank God he is safe!

BOTH Thank God he is safe!
SIR GEORGE Let us hope that these unhappy times are quickly over so that we can return again to our normal life. My dearest wish is to see Cottenhoe the happy home that once it was.

BETH But how can things ever be the same again? How can they ever be? The hatred bred by this conflict will remain like a poison in the blood. Those happy days are gone for ever and even their memories begin to sour.

SIR GEORGE Dear Beth, do not fret. Events are in God's hands. We cannot prevent or alter them. Peace will come again ... Do not fret, dear Beth, do not fret.

BETH O father, I am so afraid. I cannot sleep at night for worry. And when I do sleep my dreams are filled with terrible visions, of blood and burning, of fire and flames, as though some dreadful disaster were approaching.

SIR GEORGE You are too anxious, push yourself too hard, always doing something, tiring body and mind.

BETH If I were not busy, I would only mope and brood.

SIR GEORGE I never hear you singing nowadays. I love to hear you sing. When you were a little girl and something had upset you, you would sing a song to cheer yourself up. There's nothing like music to calm the spirit.
(SIR GEORGE) Sing to me now, Beth,
    Sing to me now ...

BETH  "The gardener standing by,
    I bade him choose for me.
He chose me the lily and the violet and the pink,
    But those I refused all three.

    Thyme it is the prettiest thing
    And time it will grow on,
    And time will bring all things to an end,
    And so does time grow on ... "

(As BETH sings, the scene dissolves to ASHBY. SIR
GEORGE slips quietly from the room.)

SCENE FIVE

ASHBY  Music from another world
    To soothe my spirit;
    A voice from the past
    To calm my fears,
    To calm my ...

    I see it all!
    What a fool I've been!
    A fool I've been!
    The fire! Of course!
    And she sees it too,
    But only as a dream.
    Tom – Richard:
    One of them will die.
    I must prevent it!
    I must prevent it!
    But how?
    She cannot hear me.
    A curtain divides us.
    How can I break this barrier of time?

(Dissolve to BETH who is seen sewing.)
SCENE SIX

(HANNAH) (offstage) Mistress Beth!

BETH Yes, Hannah? (HANNAH enters.)

HANNAH Mistress Beth, a letter from Richard.

(BETH gets up excitedly and opens the letter.)

What does he say?

BETH O Hannah, good news, good news! He's promoted captain! His men are in good spirits, so confident of their cause that they march into battle singing psalms! Cromwell and Fairfax have joined forces and the King is fleeing northwards. But soon he'll have to stand and fight. The next encounter will determine the conflict one way or the other.

HANNAH I hope so, my lady, for your sake. Then Master Tom and Master Richard can come home again.

BETH O Hannah, could it be true, could it be true, could it be true, I would be so happy!

(HANNAH slips quietly from the room. The scene half-dissolves leaving ASHBY and BETH equally prominent.)

SCENE SEVEN

BETH We can do no more than pray. We women are cursed With the ambitions of our menfolk. Impatient, stubborn, Arrogant, devious, They would turn the world upside down For a smouldering grievance. Buildings crumble, Farms are neglected, Cold ashes lie in the hearth.
In the end they destroy
The very things that they are fighting for.
Hannah is right:
Soon it will be over
And Tom and Richard will come home again.
In the slow, grey hours that intervene
I must be patient ...

How can I reach her?
Break down this curtain that divides us?

I must busy myself with my tasks,
Look after my father
And see that the house is cared for until they return ...

I must speak to her.
She must be told.
She must warn Tom,
Speak to Richard ...

And when they come home
I shall be here to welcome them ...

I must forewarn her,
Tell her of my dream ...

I will give them both my love.
I will heal the rift
And bring them together again.

I must speak with her,
Stop this senseless tragedy!

(BETH sits down again to her sewing.)

Beth, I must speak with you!
Dear Beth, try to hear me!
Try to hear me!
Beth! Dear Beth!
Beth! Dear Beth!
Beth! Beth! Beth!

(BETH looks up suddenly from her sewing, sees ASHBY
and screams.)
QUICK CURTAIN
ACT THREE


(DR. HEYFORD enters with DIANA.)

DIANA  O, what a beautiful day!
Such a luxury to be out of the city,
Away from the sirens, the dust and the rubble!
Wandering here in such peaceful surroundings,
Who would think that we were at war?

HEYFORD  I don't need reminding, Diana,
Not when I walk through my wards
And see the wounded and maimed.
Sometimes, when I look at this garden,
I wonder if it and I exist
In the same universe.
These roses are unreal, no part of my world.
This sundial tells me another time of day.

DIANA  (reading the motto on the sundial.)
"Time past cannot be recalled;
Time lost cannot be won again."
They had a quaint way of expressing things in those
days. I wonder who chose that motto? Some old gentle­
man, perhaps, musing on a misspent youth? ...

HEYFORD  Come, come, Diana, you're beginning to catch Martin's
disease - living in the past.

DIANA  Poor Martin! He's completely obsessed by his visions.
The past seems so real to him. He talks of the people
in his dreams as though he actually knew them.
They're more solid, more real than - than ...

HEYFORD  Than you or me. I know how upsetting this must be
for you. I've tried to tell him so without causing
Sometimes when I'm with him, he doesn't seem to notice me. I might just as well not be there. I think, for both our sakes, it would be best if I went away.

You've decided then?

Yes. I don't think that I can be of much help to him - at the present time.

You may be right.
And when you return
You'll find a different man.
The dreams will be gone,
The nightmare over,
And - who knows? - in a few months' time
The war will be over too
And we can all plan again for the future.

You're very thoughtful, Doctor Heyford:
I do appreciate it.

He'll be here soon. I'm sure there's a great deal you want to talk about. I'll leave you alone.

Ah, Diana. They said I would find you here.

Martin, how are you?

I'm fine. And you?

Yes, fine. (Pause.) There's something I wanted to tell you.

You've decided to go.

You knew ...

Yes. (Pause.) I'm sorry.
DIANA  Martin: I think it will be best for both of us.
ASHBY  They say absence makes the heart grow fonder ...
DIANA  We shall really know then ... When the war is over ...
ASHBY  Diana!
DIANA  Martin!
(They embrace.)
DIANA  I must go, my love.
ASHBY  Must you?
DIANA  I'm sorry.
ASHBY  I understand.
DIANA  I have that old photograph of us taken last summer ...
ASHBY  I don't need a photograph, I don't need a photograph: your picture is engraved on my memory for ever.
DIANA  I must go.
ASHBY  I shall be waiting for you.
DIANA  [Goodbye, Martin. Goodbye!
ASHBY  [Goodbye!

SCENE TWO: THE CROWNED KNOT. Inside a dimly-lit church. Time: June 1645, immediately after the battle of Naseby.

(Royalist troops, led by TOM, are under siege by Cromwell's men, led by RICHARD. During the scene, there is a constant background noise, of soldiers shouting, muskets and cannons firing.)

RICHARD  Tom! Tom! Come out! Surrender your troops!
TOM  Surrender? To rebels? To the King's enemy? Never!
RICHARD  Tom! Listen to me! There's no way of escape. My men have surrounded the church and are covering every exit. Surrender now and you and your men will be unharmed.

TOM  You may wait till Domesday, but we shall never surrender.

RICHARD  You're a fool, Tom, a fool! Your troops are scattered to all sides. Our soldiers are barking like dogs at your heels. No one will come to your rescue, for the King has no army!

TOM  Then we shall fight our way out!

RICHARD  You're hopelessly outnumbered.

TOM  Then you'll have to force us out!

RICHARD  Tom! Listen to reason. This isn't a child's game. (Silence.) Tom! Listen to me — as a friend.

TOM  (Laughing forcibly.) A friend! Ha! A friend! How dare you call yourself my friend? You are my enemy!

RICHARD  I do not see it that way. It's not you that I oppose, but your cause. I beg you to see reason! Listen to me! If you lay down your arms and surrender, you can go free — you and all your men. We shall not harm you; we shall take no prisoners. You can go quietly back to your homes.

TOM  And if we refuse?

RICHARD  Then we shall set the church on fire!

TOM  What? Set fire to the House of God? And damn your souls?

RICHARD  There's no alternative.

TOM  You would burn us out like rats from a hay-barn?

RICHARD  I have no other choice.
Richard, I said that you would damn your soul. But I was wrong. You have no soul. You and your godless crew are already with the devil! Beth is well rid of you!

Is that your final answer?

Yes.

Then you must take the consequences!

May God have mercy upon you!

SCENE THREE: THE FIRST DEATH. The convalescent hospital, Cottenhoe.

Time: a few days after Act Three, Scene One.

(Voices are heard off-stage.)

Ah, Doctor Heyford, I got your message. You said it was urgent.

It is good of you to come so quickly, vicar. I'm afraid I have some bad news. Captain Ashby's fiancée - Diana: she's been killed.

Killed? - but how?

The plane she was travelling in - it was shot down over the channel last night: there were no survivors.

But this is terrible. Does Captain Ashby know?

No, not yet. He's still asleep. That's why I asked you to come. I think it would be easier if you could break the news to him.

Of course, of course ...
FOUR: NIGHTMARE (2). Beth's room, Cottenhoe Manor. Time: the same night as Act Three, Scene Two.

(HANNAH rushes in as BETH screams out in her sleep.)

BETH Fire! Fire!
I cannot breathe! I'm burning! burning!
Put out the flames! Put out the flames!
I cannot breathe! Cannot breathe!

HANNAH Wake up, mistress, wake up!

BETH Where am I?

HANNAH You're quite safe now.
You've been dreaming.

BETH O Hannah, I've had such a terrifying nightmare,
So vivid, yet so strange.

HANNAH Come, tell me all about it.

BETH There was a loud explosion,
The smell of burning and flames.
Then we seemed to be falling through air,
Down, down, down in a ball of fire.
There was a noise like a thousand beating wings,
Then a great crash,
Like a city of houses falling to the ground;
And I was being burnt alive! ...

HANNAH O Miss Beth, you do dream such funny dreams!
You are worse than Master Tom with all his fanciful tales!

BETH O Hannah, I'm frightened.
I'm sure that something dreadful has happened.

HANNAH What nonsense you do talk! Now back to bed, miss,
before you catch a cold!

(BETH gets into bed. HANNAH tucks her in, then leaves.
The curtain remains up, but the lights dim.)
SCENE FIVE: THE SECOND DEATH. The same. Time: early the next morning.

(BETH is still asleep. Voices are heard off-stage.)

(SIR GEORGE) Hannah! Is your mistress awake?

(HANNAH) No sir, not yet. The poor dear was up for most of the night and didn't fall asleep till dawn.

(SIR GEORGE) Could you call her? I must speak to her.

(HANNAH) O sir, is anything wrong?

(SIR GEORGE) A messenger has arrived from Harborough ... Bad news, Hannah ... There's been a battle - the King and the rebel forces ... Tom has been killed ...

(HANNAH) O no! No! Not master Tom! Not master Tom! .. (She sobs.)

(BETH wakes from her sleep and calls out.)

BETH Martin! Martin! Martin!

QUICK CURTAIN

THE END
This dissertation is a pendant to my main submission, an opera in three acts entitled The Second Death. It is a discussion of my ideas on the wedding of words and music, with particular emphasis on the problems of framing a suitable language for musical setting in a dramatic context. Chapter One looks at 'words-for-music' in general: the different perspective given to composition when words are set; the aesthetic and technical consideration of writing words for music; the use of prose texts in musical setting; and words-for-music in the special context of an opera libretto. Chapter Two describes the background to the writing of The Second Death, the works that influenced me and the music I wrote leading up to its composition. Chapter Three considers the writing of the libretto, gives a synopsis of the plot, discusses the revisions I made and the reasons for them and concludes with a note about its sources. Chapter Four looks at the music: after a general note on musical styles and techniques, it goes on to make a brief technical analysis of the work, a "short guided tour" of the opera's musical imagery. The complete libretto is given as an Appendix.

Trevor Hold
March 1988
TREVOR HOLD

THE

SECOND

DEATH

An Opera in Three Acts

FULL SCORE
CHARACTERS

1. FROM THE PAST ('The Dream')

SIR GEORGE PARK, square of cottongoe
BASSE
BETH, his daughter
SOPRANO
THOMAS, his son, born to Beth
TENOR
RICHARD MALIN, a family friend
BARITONE
HANNAH, Beth's maid
MEZZO-SOPRANO

2. FROM THE PRESENT ('The Fable')

MARTIN ASHBY, a group-captain in the R.A.F., wounded in action
HIGH-BARITONE
DIANA, his fiancée, a secretary at a wartime ministry
SOPRANO
DOCTOR HEYFORD, doctor at the R.A.F. convalescent hospital, Conker
BARITONE
REVEREND MALIN, rector of Cottingtree
TENOR

ORCHESTRA

2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo) 2 horns in F
2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn) 2 trumpets in B♭
2 clarinets in B♭ (2nd doubling B♭ clarinet) 2 tenor trombones (3rd doubling
2 bassoons (2nd doubling double bassoon) 1 tuba (less trombone)
1 piano (doubling celesta)
1 harp
14 percussion players:
- tam-tam symbols (altered and suspended)
- side drum xylophone
- bass drum glockenspiel
- bass drum vibraslap
- wood block gong
- Strings

Off-stage band (iv.): flute, clarinet in B♭, tenor saxophone, double bass
- drum-kit (E.D.I. suspended symbols)

DURATION: c. 3½ minutes (Act I: 15'; Act II: 25'; Act III: 25')
“Time past cannot be recalled;
Time lost cannot be won again.”

Old Scandinavian motto.

NOTE

The action of THE DREAM takes place at the Manor House, Cottesmore, the home of the Parr family, before and during the Civil Wars (1641-45). The action of THE FABLE takes place at Cottesmore during the Second World War (1941). Cottesmore House has been requisitioned as an RAF convalescent hospital. What had previously been the manor house is now the recovery.

“Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.”

T. S. Eliot: Burnt Norton

“He was part of my dreams, of course— but then
I was part of his dreams, too.”

Lewis Carroll: Through the Looking-Glass
"...out of silence music is born..."

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SCENE ONE: NIGHTMARE

Time: early M.I. Dr. Heyerdahl enters the room as Ashton walks from a nightmare.
Flowers! Put me the flowers! I cannot breathe—cannot breathe—cannot breathe! Captain Arey! Captain Arey!

Wake up, Captain Arey! You're quite safe.
in every detail. I was stopped in a room. An upstairs room. The house was an
fire, the roof fell in smoke. The flames were leaping up through the boards. — There was no escape.
And so you'll need for per-ambula- tion? See your cap at the...
Well, never you mind, then, Richard. I've had my fill of po-

...
I decided to come - my life! I love Cotter - hoe - and all it stands for.

My happiest childhood memories we built here.
It too can answer.

But, as you know, it has always been my ambition to become a lawyer and work for...
Your former machine opened, I know.
But what does Ben think of it?
I think the approver.

Even if I had a calling to the law.

This would not be the time I'd seek

tenure to permanent.
The king has been vexed with grief

and Commus are not on the best of terms.

arrogance. The Cannons are highly ag graced.
But we shouldn't be calling

for speed
Enter BETH.
let me warn yon, dear Beth, a house theme!
when all the time they're reading the gazette or planning the next day's coat.
I shouldn't call her if I were her wife.
That's more the picture.

I wish you been the...
greatest happiness.

If marriage gives you half the joy it gave to me, then...
like an old gentleman! And I'm jumping my hedges too quickly! Why, you're
I'm sure my parents would be pleased with all you

only give a chance!...

music significantly slower; \( \frac{\text{d}}{\text{e}} = 104 \)
fortuneful husband.

Let us drink a health to love!

held back

in time (as before) \( d = c 172 \)

emphatically as before
let me pour out a glass: To Richard and Eliza been; May your be a

Slightly slower
They trust each other

May our friendship be sealed for e-ver!

May our friendship be sealed for e-ver!
But I must go! My horses are waiting. My groans are your impatience. And we're not synchronized.

Never do! I've nine more things to tell about— In love you a-
SIR GEORGE goes out. As BETH turns to RICHARD, her glass

stage from her hand.

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Slower: \( d = 60 \)

Quickier: \( d = 100 \)
What was

me, then?

is this limit

and burn me.

What wrong, my love?

It's so un-like you to be up-see—by myself.
It's nearly: I suddenly feel faint.

Hold back.

Slower: \( \text{I} \circ 69 \)

Richard, do you ever have the feeling that you're
Have seen something hideous?

Then the sight beyond the door in a run-down house is far.
touching you on the smaller.

It will be all right, Richard? I mean, you and

(RECIT.) Oh, oh.

I...

(Continue)

Of course it will. Why do you suddenly say that?
re Hear me -.

These may always be un-dead, as long as
human beings. It's part of our con-
dition.

Quietly, as before.

He embraces her.

Talk like a lawyer.

It is clear you up, I always saw.
Have a strange girl, Beth; so unlike Tom never ministered so.
"O, but Dan and I are very much alike. We both have vivid imaginations..."

Dan wrote his famous autobiography..."
It's growing dark.

Has even come!
I'll light a candle.

Now you're coming to me, Jean!
SCENE THREE: OBSESSION

The convalescent hospital, Cottenhoe.

Time: 1941

ASHBY is visited by DR HEYRE and DIANA.

QUICKLY: \( \frac{1}{2} \approx 126 \)
no one. But every thing is vivid, each detail so clear, that it must -

I knew it sounds ri-di-ca-ulous—true it must be some kind of per-tact.

(quickly)

rule: ______ originated space (x: 100)

Challiness Limited

57

ms 24th
Replay while I'm mad, of course. He talks, my injuries have affected my

He thinks nothing of the sort. He is saying in this: that

—- nothing of the sort, nothing of the sort.
Doctor Hewitt is only trying to help. As a doctor he

sees such things—wi a different light—

Love, Captain Avery,
Don't end, you mean — It hasn't yet reached in be.

Let us go over the 6-16 of your dream from the beginning.

Well — believe
In time

Slight cres.

Slight cres.

Slighty slower

Slighty slower

-String

The event is being told back to some like a film run backwards. I was never changes in the
verely burn and injURED. Here is the source of your in-I-ferno! Never escape un-scathed from him or...
Slower again: $\textit{d = 92}$
fears in your mind; A door to your unconscious mind has been unlocked; — But there's coming sleep;
"Un-locked"? "Un-locked", you say? Then I would agree with you.

"Fare."

RECIT: quickly

Some where a door has been opened in my mind. On to something rich and strange, rich and strange...

What do you mean, March?

I don't understand you, Caspar.
A door long closed... I find it
quickly, as before: A 126 held back (with voice)

difficult to explain. It is as though a story were unfolding before me

violin again

held back
If only I knew the whole story, I hope I could...
vi-vid-ly! 
A house: a never-know- I come: A has my family. 

Not too fast: $\pm c. 100$

nor: vi corn-field; Two there in a gar-den, the man dressed like a sol-dier;
They are saying goodbye.

The girl is in tears.

Now we're in a new building.
A teacher-clicks a board.
Two men are arguing.
he is trapped! he is trapped! he is trapped!...

fading away
But who are these people?

The rest you know.

Recit (shadily)

They are dressed in strange / 

Did you decide to join us?

Recit: (shadily)
It has already taken place and its participants have long been dead.
Come, and honor me— Your trust is my joy. Trust me...
SCENE FOUR: A SPRIG OF THYME

BETH'S room, Cottenhoe Manor.

Time: early spring. We see BETH is alone sewing. As she sings quietly to herself, TOM enters unobserved.

CURTAIN
Once I had a spring of thyme. Its preside by night and by day till a false young man...
Come a-court-ing to me, And he took all this trouble a-way. And he
She quickly hides a letter under her workbasket.

(small)

Don't you dare jump!

RECIT. (quickly)

(small)

The night in a gate has pictured better than in ever done.
Now, unless you have something important...

You have eaten his best notes!

---

But before I go, I'm not wanted! But before I go, I'm no...
He definitely picks up the letter.

Tan! Give it back.

Nothing? Then it won't matter if I take it!

Once! It's no concern of yours.

But it's nothing... you said me so.
BETH tries to wrest it from him, but TOM holds her aside and reads it.

Ah, as I expected.

Nothing but sweet nothing!

Standing: J = c 88
Thank you for your letter which reached me this morning. Oh, how strange - is there longer are? Yes, certainly.

Hope he comes for lunch on... Ah, what's this? You are in time as before.
Can, you go too far! That lesson is over in my thoughts, my dear...!"
Cello: 

Very well: leave out the private sense, and read me the public news.

(Flute, Clarinet, Harp, Violin, Cello, Double Bass, Piano, Drums)

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as before
When does he come to grace us with his company?
O hive per-bi-cide!
So hun-ky with de-tox!
They cannot see be-yond their

Climber rock (L - v. H), moving in

mf (expansively)
The unimportant words... they completely ignore. Look... out.

Very quickly (rec. 15 a)
there:

do the hydrocarbons the Arch-bishop celebates
new or uneven knife are by God expiated?
Oh he loves you. I know. But he has changed. He's not the same as can-
I was as a boy,

fishing down at the mill.

Quick and light, as before (d = 126)

I was as a boy,

stealing apples from the parent's orchard.
Speak to me, Beowulf. In Lindan there are many enchanting tongues to whisper in his ear.

RECIT. freely

Slow, as before (d = c\textsuperscript{1/4}2)
Voices are heard off-stage. HANNAH enters.

If anyone touches him, sense, it is you.
BETH rises apprehensively.

SIR GEORGE enters the room briskly.

HANNAH

Your father is back, miss.

There's grave news from London.
The King has really set a cat among the pigeons. — Yes — yesterday he walked into parliament and arrested five of its members.
No!

Impossible!

The house was in an up stair as you can see...
But what else could he do? What else could
Now the city has risen in anger and the King has been forced to flee for his

subject held back

Challispress Limited: manuscript, published 1952
On no! Red for his life?

The King?

Left her don? The King?

Life!
Loren. don’t.

(cries)

But this is true—en!

Same speed, but reverently.

[Music notation]
By running: a clear breach of liberty.

Text: d = 0.88

This is dream, however you look at it.

No wonder the people are angry. This is
To rise up a, gic herf, blef, king, this is treason!

Try—ranny! Try—ranny! Let's hope they have sense to
But who is James? Pray God he is safe.

O Lord, is James in heaven? What else can he do? What else can he preach in the gospel, the new gospel, they say.

Gradual crescendo to 80 dB
Said and said of the warder!

I cannot keep the

Don't free, man,

Do? If you clip a bird's wings you must expect it to fly into a rage!

—to forget, re-dress and forget.
Lynne

I wish of him. If only I were there by his side— To care

don't fret! Master Richard can look after himself!
SCENE FIVE: THE DANCE

The sounds of a dance band can be heard in the

Asbury enters with Diana.
I never was any good at dancing.

Well, Mrs. B. What are you laughing at?

I was thinking...
never seen so many three-legged witches in my life.
cruel! You shouldn't laugh!

I feel quite ex-
ASHBY shuts the door. DIANA enters into a chair.

- handed...

Let's move out the maul and sit down.

Slightly quicker; \( d \times 0.72 \)

D.

It's nothing that a good sleep won't

A.

You're looking tired, my love.
I'm working too hard. Can't you take some time?

Possible at the moment. We're so busy.

Always so
Do you ever think of the times we shared together before the war?

They now seem like

Not synchronized

Do all seem so very long ago...

halcyon days

Lyrically: \( d = c \quad \frac{1}{2} \)
Go-ing to the ci-ne-ma.

All those things that we took for grant-ed...

In time
A night out in London...

A day at the coast...

With a really good meal...

A week-end in Paris and...
The sounds of a winter are heard from the dance hall.

Chapplepress Limited (registered in England and Wales No. 2472)
Did I tell you? I managed to walk as far as the bridge to

Case's were der-ful. — Doctor Key ford.
I had the feeling that he'd despised me ever since.

staring down

But let's not talk about me... What about
You said in your letter you had some in Paris and now

102

slightly slower: $d = c \frac{7}{4}$

for the - evil choice - It may mean going abroad. There's no pressure. I'd do.
The lute opens and the sea-food enters. The sounds of a quill-up can be heard from the dance-hang.
They don't write tunes like you did when I was a boy!

Challenge Limited shortened or material removed due to OCR errors

ms 24st
Challenger Limited is an instrument for International Spring 1943 24st
- P悉ed to do wi the mean-tine? Day-dream?

Ah, dreams: most evice.ansome.

[103] Steady, (as before: D = C4), but every gal.-wai.

You're not going to leave me a-guai, I hope. We've been through this matter many times be-

madder!
In this moment, let these dreams go—lose you—
I have the feeling that you e

—joy living in this fantasy world—and don’t want the dreams—to
But weak just the pain! I don't want them to go— not yet. Not until the judge is convinced of its
Dave, do me__I'm grateful for your understanding and syn-pa-my._
... I am perfectly sure. And I am determined to follow this matter through to the
end. I am convinced that my dream took place here at Cow - sen - nec... But

he has been... in some

not sure where, I've no place... I re - cog - nize the gar - den...
There must be a simple answer.

Do you have any stories about the history of this house?
I don't myself, but I know someone who does. You should have a talk with me first, Mister Mom.
You, Ashley, should be in bed. Good night, captain—

Slower
This piece must be repeated.

Quickly, as before: $\frac{3}{4}$ at 128
Until the jaguar is completed, my mind will not be at rest. It is an omen.
SCENE SIX: THE ROSE-GARDEN (1)

The Rose-garden, Cottenham.

Scene: Late Summer 1642.

In the centre of the garden stands a sundial.

Slow and sustained. $s=64$ (TEMPO 1)

Quicker and more lively. $s=168$ (TEMPO 2)
I think it's better if you talked to Mr. Tom. He's more likely to
I'll see Bern—and er—plan matters—in buses.

Ceased to you gain me.
HANNAH and RICHARD enter

H.

Did you hear? I've heard such rumors in the village.
TOM

Richard! I thought I would find you here.

R.

Tom, dear friend, how good to see you! We're looking well.

RECIT: slowly

Viola

Nothing like a lovebird, for your poem would have it believe.

In time (1 \times 150)

Solo

Challengers Limited (Unlicensed and Unofficial Piano Music. Not for Public Performance.)
recit.

But this is no topic to be handled about freely, much as I would like it.

Slightly slower: \[ \text{\textit{f} \approx 108} \]
mind is made up, and even you won't do.

But, Edward—this is madness.

- make me.

Toni, please listen to me, please listen to me.
You are my oldest and dearest friend. I would do anything within reason for you. But this

T.

recit: freely

Challecony Linke: 1944 - 1945
Come on, are you determined?

Pray God, that I am right!

Hold back (1 = c 88) in time (1 = c 108)
They leave together.

Held back

Not too fast: \( \frac{d}{c} = 104 \)
Come, sit down, dear."

"Are you not going?"

"No, not for a while."

"I am going to take you to see my uncle."

"I wish you would."
I've tried to dissuade him—but cannot change his mind. He says he must go into the

RECIT.: freely

been so his conscience— and I ad—more had for it—

 been, my dearest Beth! my dearest Beth!
It grieves me to see you unhappy!

My heart...
Down like a keg can we love? Be a calm sea her bow

Caught in this trap in can settle of

slowing down
RICHARD and Tom enter. BETH runs to them both, then to HANNAH, hands over the box. RICHARD gives it to her. TOM remains where he is. BETH moves closer to RICHARD and puts a hand on his shoulder.
brother— I cannot bear to see the team drawn on my face. Poor for ever

in the darkness where someone said, but by tongue or fire
brother— I cannot bear to see the pain drawn on my father's face Gone for ever

never more— raise his pen Gone for ever Peace and reason:

—sinking darkness where shadows flit left by hope is felt.
Peace and reason. Come, - first revenge. For - on you sweet Elyzade -

What can we swear, men so long stood in the field still watching the carmine? -

Four revenge. How can I scorn a - part, a - dis - stimulate -

Come, for a - ver Peace and reason. Come, - first revenge.

227
Ms 28

Moving on slightly
I know, my love.

I must go now.

148 vivo (d < e 104)

mezzo voce, sempre molto espressivo

237
I understand.

I'm sorry, you will be in my memory always.

I shall carry your kindness in my heart for ever.

I must go, my dearest Rose.
ACT TWO

"...Time Present and Time Past..."

The Rectory, Cotteridge. Time: a few days after Act One Scene 5

PRELUDE: "Time Present and Time Past"

Briskly: $d = 126$
SCENE ONE

CURTAIN RISES  THE REVEREND MALIN ENTERS ADOBE

And as I said to Doctor Kay...+

4  Briefly again.

M.  If I can be of any assistance...

A.  It's very kind of you to take me...
Not at all, not at all. Always glad to help a fellow musician.
Always burning a very like, moves into the universe of Time.
He goes to wooden chest. Arthur, meanwhile,
looks round the room. He seems mesmerised by it.

(Almost to himself)

Now where did I put that key?  Ah, yes...
"Can I help you?"

"I've just seen a ghost!"

"I'm sorry, dreaming as usual!"

"This room is so familiar..."
Bene Gab. el Ross. fer---- do you know it?

Faster, as before (d = 128)
These old houses possess a strange atmosphere as though they had stood up an the air.

-Perhaps of their past.

How is this beautiful paneling—solid oak—solid oak.

10 Slightly slower: \( \frac{j}{q} = 10 \)
- when they lived here.

Yes, of course — I thought you knew.

You say he lived here?

held back — in time — held back — —

(half-speed)

This used to be the men's house until after the Civil War. The present Coert's house was not built.

11 At a steady pace: \( \frac{3}{4} = 92 \)
M.

As you will appreciate, it is William and not...

(to music)

A.

Of course, of course! De

RECI:

quickly

M.

Ah, it was a very tragic story, that of the, Sir George Bar...

A.

don't quite to make sense now...

12. Slightly quieter

Chappell & Co. Limited, London. All Rights Reserved.
A man much respected by all who knew him, he had two children, a boy and a girl. They were inseparable. By all accounts a

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Then came the Civil War, the house was burned.

---
time (d=92) but accelerating all the time

---
The girl, E-lle-ta-see, was brought to one of Connell's officers— the boy, Zomo, joined me begin to near a...
their lives were completely wasted.

Very broad
did, so it is said, of a broken heart.

same time too.

Some more for the

sect. animate

but such cases were rarely recorded.

By a piece

music have happened to many others.
Just listen to this: In heartless, a hero that someone had been keen
He hands a letter volume to ALICE.

A di-ale kept by the qui. E.

Quicker: \( \frac{1}{2} \) = c 116 (as before)

Chappelle Limited © 2008. Used with permission.
Lizanne A fascinating document of domestic life during the Civil War.
Even slower $\left( \times 0.72 \right)$
AS HP:] is expressed in his reading of KEEN's writing.
You have been more kind and helpful. There's more than enough to occur by me here.
Very slow: $\frac{3}{4}$ at the end. ($\frac{3}{4}$ unless indicated)
reading from the diary

RECIT: freely
book, in which I write what I do—and of the things which happen to me. To the Year of Our Lord: Sixteen-forty-four.
A young hand - undertaken to oppress is self. The ink is faded.
When BETH takes up the tune, the scene should 'diving' to her.
Good for his side, and calls the other a blind-ed fool. And my

sigh dan

father, who loves them both as sons, my fa-ther is sor-ri-s - en with grief.

6/8 (slower, legato)

Grief

67/17 (slower, legato)

m: 24st
(crec.)

(Crescendo gradually to the tone)

Tone who are caught between two arms must kneel first in peril.

(Gradually fade into fade)

(cresc.)
In the land of childhood where never the sun feeds our souls shall we ever be so weak
"Who do you come to haunt my dreams?"

So young, you so

351 d = 60 (as before)
(soprano)
w-w-

(middle)

(bass)

Set a clown,
Cares will be beyond your years,
Cries will soon.

300
Prelude a minor, Regret dark with tears. Teen—no one you are!

Rall. Slower
Dissolve to BETM. SIR GEORGE enters, holding a letter.

Briskly: \( d = c 118 \)

---

Yes, in ever.

Bust! Are you there? The mouse man.
Dan.
The King has won a no-brainer victory.
Walter and his restless arm in direct rays here
Listen to this:

As our troops face the enemy,

a gradual cresc. to 41

Several ships were fierce...

Victory without guile!
showing, so con-fident they were, but soon everyone singing a no-ther song.
Suite 2 — piccolo

Poco cresc.

Vienna oboes and clarinets

Drones, bassoons.

40

Pizz. (all)

Poco cresc.
Arm is marched away

ms 28st
Thank God he is!

Thank God he is!

[Music notation with text]
In time (3 x 816)

43 Slowly, as before (3 x 65)
The hatred bred by this confence will re-
free E- venue in God's hands We can not prevent
man like a poison in the blood. These happy days are gone for

...
I love you.

Woven in the memories:
please do not.

Quickener tempo (r = 144)


B

Dreams are filled with terrible visions, of blood and brea...
You are too anxious. Rush yourself too hard. Always do something.

If I were not busy, I would eat more and bread.

Turning back and round.

Never hear you singing nowadays. I love to hear you sing.

Beating slow, as before (2x72) mark.
I sang as a little girl and something took up in you, you need sing a song to cheer yourself.

There's nothing like music to calm the spirit.

50 The space (End)
As BETH sings, the scene resolves to ASHBY. SIX GEORGS slip quietly from the room.
Things to an end. And so does time go on, And

BETH: slow down

ORCH: moves on a

ms 24st
"In the heart of the city..."

Quickly: $d = 104$
-vene il! I must penetrè le! But how? She cannot hear me.
Dissolve to BETH who is seen saving...
HANNAH enters

BETH gets up excitedly and opens the letter

Mr. Owen Beech, a letter from Master Richard. What a shock!
fl.

gradual dimin.

cel.

gradual dimin.

B

for ever and ever is fleeting never more. But soon.

H


gradual dimin.

mixes

vl. 2


gradual dimin.


gradual dimin.

d b.
So

[Sheet music with lyrics: "Heaven, could it be true, could it be true, home again..."

"Could it be true, I would be so happy!"

"MUTED"
HANNAH slips quietly from the room. The scene falls slowly, leaving ADITYA and RATH equally stranded.

Very slow: \( d = 0.68 \)

---

@note: ON TO SCENE SEVEN
SCENE SEVEN

We can do no more than hope.

We women are cursed with the auk-tongue of our man-folk.

Inquire, therefore.
As reggae, de virus, Baymond turn the world upside down for a processing grievance.

Build into crowd...

(slow back, m/s with voice)
Farms are neglected, cold carcass lie in the garden.
How can I reason him? Break away, this cannot have divided us?

(aggrieved)
I must speak to her. She must be told. She must hear them. Speak to Richard...
And when they came home
I shall be here... to wel...
...come them...

I must familiar her. Tell her...
BETH sits down again to her sewing.

...
Singing, busy noise and screams.

QUICK CURTAIN

END OF ACT TWO
Prelude: "Halcyon Days"
In time (d = 0.92)
Away from the blare, the dust and the rush we!

Wandering here in such peaceful surroundings, who would think that we were
I don't need reminding, dear. Not when I walk through my words.
I see the wraithed and wanied. Sometimes, when I lose a
garden I wander if it too and I exist. In the same universe.

These roses are unreal, no part of my world. This sundial tells me a.
They had a quaint way of expressing things in those days. I wonder who gave that money.

RECIT.: quieter

12. Playfully: \( \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{9}{2} \)
whistles, doves —

me - s Co - f e —

Come, come, Bi-a-na, you're going to roost.

rushing

Sheet: D = C B4

March's disease — bring in the peas

(in time: D = B4)
D. sad, more real then then...

H. Then you or me.

Quicker as before $\left( \frac{\text{q.a}}{\text{Bd}} \right)$

Dear has up, seeing this must be for you. I've tried to tell him so without causing any...

MUTED
no sign of him, not a sound, slow.
think, for both our sakes, it would be best if I were away.

Yes.

H.

Have you decided then?

don't think I can be of much help to him - at the present time.

Don't think so.

H.

When you return, you'll find him a different man. The dream will be gone.

17 o c 92 (as before)
The nightmare over,
And who knows? — in a few moments more,
The war will be

387
Sure there's a great deal you want to talk about. I'll leave you a line.
ASHTON enters from another part of the garden.
Mercury: How are you?

Tony: I said I would find you here.

I'm fine. And...
Yes, fine. There's something I wanted to see you.
Yes, I've decided to go.

You know...

Yes, I'm sorry.
We shall really know then, when the war is o-ver...

They say absence makes the heart grow fonder...
I must go, my love.
Picture is engraved on my memory for ever.

In time (1:08s)
J \text{arrow} / T >

L \text{arrow} llisp iv ss il IhJlM ncw atl. v*Ml

K > m

I'll U 'l'« » K *i«

402

D

I must go.

A

I shall be waiting for you.

 farewell.

26 Very dear: do not

(of) I wi ne 15

402
CURTAIN
SCENE TWO: THE CROWNED KNOT

Inside a dimly lit church.

Tone: June 1845, immediately after the
Battle of Navarino.

Regular troop, led by TOM, are under fire
by Cornwall's men, led by RICHARD. During
the scene, there is constant background noise
of soldiers shouting, muskets and cannon fire.
CURTAIN

30

Quicker: \( \frac{1}{2} \) of bar (T. 1), reading quickly (with piano)

REHEAR: freely (with Richards)
Never! Never! Never!

Never!

32 "One line, slowing down quietly as before."

"Organize speed again."
You're a fool, Dan, a fool!

Original speed: N.B. (as is) except for piano
Your troops are scattered to all sides.
soldiers are barking like dogs at your heels. No one will come to your rescue, for the King has no
Then we will fight our way out!

You're hopeless by our-numbered.
Then you have to force us out!

Tom! Listen to reason.
This isn’t a child’s game.

Don’t listen to me — as a
A friend! How dare you call yourself my friend? You are...
Listen to me! If you lay down your arms and surrender, you can go free — you and your men.
We shall not harm you; we shall take no prisoners. You can go quietly back to your homes.
"What? See five to the House of God? And damn you, Sales?"
You’re born in one line.

There’s no alternative.

Fast from a hay-barn?

I have no other choice.
Richard. I said that you would harm your soul. But I was wrong. You have.

no soul. You and your godless crew are at read—y with the devil!
is well rid of you!

Is that your final answer?

STRAIGHT

'INFERNO' (2)

INTERLUDE

Then... you must take the
SCENE THREE: THE FIRST DEATH

The convalescent hospital, Cattervile.

Time: a few days after Act Three Scene 1.

(piano)

(type)

(trumpet)

(time)

(pro)

(organ)

[Music notation and lyrics]
Voices are heard off-stage. The dialogue begins at 

(Malin)  Ah, Doctor Heyford, I got your message. You said it was urgent.

(Heyford) It is good of you to come so quickly, yes. I am afraid I have some bad news. Captain Ashby's fiancée — Diane — she's been killed.

(Malin)  Killed? — but how?

(Heyford) The plane she was traveling in — it was shot down over the Channel

last night; there were no survivors.

(Malin)  But this is terrible. Does Captain Ashby know?

(Heyford) No, not yet. He's still asleep. That's why I asked you to come. I think it would be better if you could break the news to him.

(Malin)  Of course, of course...
dying away (moresoso)
SCENE FOUR: NIGHTMARE(2)

Time: The same night as Act Three Scene 2

Fire! Fire! I cannot breathe! In burning!

MUTES OFF
HANNAH FLAMES IN.

burning! Rise are the flames! Rise are the flames! I cannot breathe! cannot breathe!

Wake up, mistress, wake up!

Where am I?

You're drunk.
There was a loud explosion. The smell of burning and flames.
in a ball of fire there was a noise like a thousand
break - ing wings,  

Then a great crash, 

like a cri - ng of
B

has seen falling to the ground; And I was being burnt.
O Miss Beech, you do dream such funny dreams! You are more than Master Tom with curiosity.

Slower and calmly, 1 to 80

O Hannah, I'm frightened—I'm sure that something... fanciful tale!
dreadful has happened —

What nonsense you do talk!

Quickly, playfully. § 2 x 70

Now back to bed, Miss, before you catch a cold!

(adagio)
[Musical notation image]
SCENE FIVE: THE SECOND DEATH

BETH'S room, Cotterneath Manor.

Time: early the next morning.

BETH is asleep. Voices are heard off-stage.
Auch! Is your mistress awake?

RECIT: freely

No sir, not yet. The poor dear was up for more of theogue and didn't feel a sleep till——

O Sir, is anything wrong?

Could you call her? I must speak to her.

(Tempo as before)
In time

Bad news, Hannah... There's been a battle... the King
gradually growing louder and more urgent
and the rebel forces...
Oh no! Oh no! Not Master Tan! Not Master Tan!

 kills...
BETH wakes from her sleep.

RECIT. (freely)  

Quickly, very clipped; $\frac{1}{2} = c 1 \text{th}$. 

Martin! Martin! Martin! Martin! 

Challenge Limited (Chillissimo Limited, Year 8)
"... out of silence music is born..."