

**The Music and Politics of Alan Bush with  
Reference to the Application of his Socialist  
Principles to his Workers' Choral Music and Songs  
between 1926 and 1939**

**Emer Bailey, B.A. Music (Hons)**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree  
of  
Master of Arts by Research**

**Supervisor: Dr David Rhodes**

**Waterford Institute of Technology**

**Submitted to Waterford Institute of Technology, September 2013**

## Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted previously for any other degree or qualification. Where reference is made to the work of others due acknowledgment is given.

Signed:

Candidate

Signed:

Supervisor

Date:

# Contents

<b>Declaration</b>	ii
<b>Abstract</b>	v
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	vii
<b>Glossary of Abbreviations</b>	ix
<b>Introduction</b>	x
<b>Literature Review</b>	xvi
<b>Chapter 1 – Life and Music I: Early Life (1900-1928)</b>	1
<b>Chapter 2 – Life and Music II: Socialism (1929-1935)</b>	25
<b>Chapter 3 – Life and Music III: Communism (1936-1939)</b>	61
<b>Conclusion</b>	96
<b>Bibliography</b>	
(a) Books, dissertations and articles	104
(b) Articles and other material from the Bush Archive	109
(c) Personal communications with Emer Bailey	112
(d) Radio Interviews	113
(e) Internet Sites	113
(f) CD Liner Notes	117
(g) Musical Scores	117

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Table of Workers' Choral Music and Songs	119
Appendix B: <i>Song to Labour</i> (1928)	120
Appendix C: <i>To the Men of England</i> (1927-1928)	121
Appendix D: <i>Songs of the Doomed: Epilogue</i> (Op. 14, 1929)	130
Appendix E: <i>The Road</i> (Op. 13, 1929)	136
Appendix F: <i>Question and Answer</i> (1931)	140
Appendix G: <i>Song of the Hunger Marchers</i> (1934)	142
Appendix H: <i>Pageant of Labour (1934): Reader's Report</i>	145
Appendix I: <i>Pageant Song</i> (1934)	146
Appendix J: <i>WMA Winter Programme 1940</i>	150
Appendix K: <i>Labour's Song of Challenge</i> (1936)	151
Appendix L: <i>Make Your Meaning Clear!</i> (1939)	160
Appendix M: <i>Against the People's Enemies</i> (1939)	162
Appendix N: Track Listing of CD of Workers' Songs Conducted by Alan Bush	166

## Abstract

### **The Music and Politics of Alan Bush with Reference to the Application of his Socialist Principles to his Workers' Choral Music and Songs between 1926 and 1939**

Despite his overt Socialist beliefs, Alan Bush's music was held in high esteem by the musical establishment until he began writing what he termed his 'workers' songs' for the Labour movement, at which point he was accused of lowering his standards. His harmonic language, however, shows a masterly and intellectual approach to the composition of what, initially, appear to be unremarkable and somewhat simplistic songs. There is nevertheless a clear distinction between his functional songs for untrained workers' choirs and 'art-songs' for more experienced ones: the tonal and harmonic complexities of the latter continue to prove challenging to modern performers.

The aim of this dissertation is to evaluate selective workers' choral music and songs written by Alan Bush (1900-1995) between 1926 and 1939, specifically for use by Labour Choirs, in the context of the circumstances of their composition, namely, Bush's early life and politics, and his developing political *credo* during the inter-war years. This will lead to a greater understanding of an important, if underrated, element of his compositions and musical activity for the working class. Having joined the Labour Movement in 1925, Bush's socialist principles eventually led him to active membership of the British Communist party in 1935. His involvement, with the London Labour Choral Union from 1925, and the Workers' Music Association from 1936, included music education and training, and the composition and performance of workers' choral music and songs. He also wrote music for large-scale pageants and festivals. The extent to which Bush's works adhered to his personal Marxist

beliefs will be explored in relation to the blueprint he devised for the composition of such workers' music in 1936. The outbreak of the second World War in 1939 did not mark the end of his workers' music, although the style of this remained substantially the same thereafter. Furthermore, in the years that followed, Bush's musical style would gradually change, and the texts that he set took on a more international dimension.

## Acknowledgements

I am indebted to many people for their help in the preparation of this dissertation. It would never have been realised without the encouragement, support, help and extreme patience of my supervisor, Dr David Rhodes, and in the early stages of the research, Dr Eric Sweeney. Dr Rachel O'Higgins, Alan Bush's daughter, provided me with many articles and scores, and she has been not only an invaluable source of information and practical help and encouragement, but also a dear friend. Together with her late husband, Professor Paul O'Higgins, Rachel also afforded me wonderful hospitality on my many visits to the Bush Archive, which is held at their home in Histon, Cambridge. Sincere thanks are also due to the following: Dr Nicolas Bell (Curator, Music Collections, British Library), who directed me to items of particular interest and who generously spent time discussing Bush with me; Dr John Jordan (Vice President, Workers' Music Association) and Ms Mavis Cook (Secretary, WMA), who provided me with valuable rare materials, their invaluable memories and experiences of Alan Bush and the WMA through many years, and with whom I experienced much laughter on an unforgettable day spent in their company.

I am also indebted to Dr Timothy Bowers (Alan Bush Lecturer and Undergraduate Tutor at the Royal Academy of Music, London) for discussing Bush's music with me in person and in correspondence, and for sharing his memories as one of Bush's students; Ms Bridget Palmer (Assistant Librarian, Special Collections and Archives, RAM), Ms Janet Snowman (Curator of Art and Iconography, RAM), Dr Peter Horton (Deputy Librarian, Royal College of Music, London), post-graduate researcher Ms Maria Kiladi, (Royal Holloway, University of London) and Ms Angela Durkin. I am particularly grateful to my son, Eoin Bailey, for transferring to CD a rare 1936 recording of two of Bush's workers' songs. Finally,

special thanks are due to my long-suffering husband Russ, who has had to live with Alan Bush as “the other man” in my life for many years, and also to my adult children Isobel, Eoin, Laoise and Aaron for their unwavering support and encouragement.



## Glossary of Abbreviations

ABMT	Alan Bush Music Trust website
BA	Bush Archive
BL	British Library
ILP	Independent Labour Party
LBC	Left Book Club
LLCU	London Labour Choral Union
RAM	Royal Academy of Music
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
RCM	Royal College of Music
WCML	Working Class Movement Library
Web ref.	Internet references
WMA	Workers' Music Association

## Introduction

The importance of Alan Bush as a prominent composer, musicologist and philosopher, teacher, and innovator, in English cultural life has never been fully acknowledged, or appreciated, by the British musical or political establishments. This is despite the fact that he was an accepted musical authority in the period between the two World Wars. He wrote regular articles for newspapers and magazines on many aspects of music, from ‘The Crisis of Modern Music’ and ‘Problems of Opera’ to ‘Marxism and Music’ and ‘The greatness of Beethoven’, for example. He was Professor of Composition and Harmony at the Royal Academy of Music in London for 53 years (1925-1978) and was a much sought after speaker for conferences and interval talks. Musicology was a relatively unknown university discipline in Britain between the wars, but in 1936-1937 Bush gave the first ever series of lectures in music history at the RAM. As a renowned composer he produced music in a wide variety of genres: works for the stage, orchestra, chamber ensembles, keyboard, choral and vocal, in addition to many arrangements. He was also an accomplished pianist and gave recitals in major performing venues, both at home and abroad. During his lifetime he received seven commissions for the London Promenade Concerts, yet his music is rarely included in current concert programming. Despite his undoubted importance as a leading British composer and musicologist, Bush’s music has never experienced the acclaim enjoyed by Britten or Tippett, for example, and it is now generally accepted that his entire *oeuvre* has suffered extreme neglect.

Much of this neglect can be traced to Bush’s radical left-wing activities. Having espoused socialism in the late 1920s, he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1935 and worked tirelessly to promote this ideology through his music. During the 1930s in

particular he devoted a great portion of his life to the organising of working-class musical activities, including the composition of workers' choral music and songs, mainly for performance by the London Labour Choral Union, of which he was musical director. The activities of the LLCU encompassed concert performances, labour rallies and marches, pageants, festivals, and competitions. Bush was also instrumental in founding the Workers' Music Association in 1936; it both published his worker's choral music and organised concerts in which such songs were performed. The musical establishment was unimpressed with this development, and regarded these songs as a lowering of Bush's otherwise high standards, and thus unworthy of evaluation. The neglect of this body of work is such that it is rarely even mentioned in existing profiles of the composer, unless in a dismissive or condescending manner. This dissertation seeks to address this neglect and to evaluate a selection of the workers' choral music and songs in the context of the circumstances of their composition, thus adding to an understanding of an important, if underrated, element of Bush's compositions and musical activity for the working class.

Bush did, of course, have his supporters. Apart from existing socialist groups, of which there were many in the early 1930s, he became acquainted with a number of eminent German and Austrian composers and musicologists who had fled to England to escape the Nazi regime. Among these were Hanns Eisler (1898-1962), Georg Knepler (1906-2003) and Ernst Hermann Meyer (1905-1988), all of whom were committed communists and who lent their services willingly to the workers' movement. Each of the above named has written a generous tribute to Bush in one or other of the symposia attributed to him. In a brief article entitled *The Choral Works*, for example, Meyer wrote:

“Choral work has always been one of Alan Bush's main fields of activity. As for the past twenty-five years he has been striving to serve through his music the working people of his country and to voice their hopes, their sufferings, their struggles and their kindness and solidarity with other countries fighting against oppression, choral music has been an obvious medium through which to address them. His choral works have always been true

people's music; they have been written for the common people and many of his choral songs have been performed by workers all over the country.”<sup>1</sup>

Clearly Bush's dedicated involvement with the workers' movement was held in high esteem by Meyer, even if conservative music critics of the time treated it with disdain.

The British musical establishment's disregard of Bush may be attributed to his political ideals. In his article 'Alan Bush: Committed Composer', Ronald Stevenson states "Bush's political commitment... is beyond doubt, the prime reason for his neglect."<sup>2</sup> He (Bush) took every opportunity to promote the benefits of a Marxist society as a political alternative to the prevailing capitalist system, passionately believing that this was the only possible way for a just society to flourish and provide opportunities for the fulfilment of its citizens. He expressed great frustration with what he saw as the exclusivity of the academic musical world and encouraged the Labour Movement enthusiastically, contributing unstintingly to the musical education of the working class. Bush believed an education in the arts was an essential ingredient to the development of a civilized society and that such an education should be available to all, and not just to those who could afford to pay for it. Moreover, he believed that music itself had an important part to play in the assimilation of the prevailing social order and, when filtered through an understanding of Marxism, how to change it:

“Marxism helps us to understand what tendencies in the music of today help the individual to change society in a progressive direction, or the reverse. In this way it is a guide to action to musicians.”<sup>3</sup>

This, in essence, was Bush's rationale for the imperative to convey his Marxist ideology through his music. His commitment to 'the people' was a lifetime endeavour; his involvement multiplied with his advancing years, and to the end he remained a dedicated Marxist, always seeking to help others to reach their true human potential. Despite this, there remains a dichotomy in Bush's compositional output, in that, throughout his maturity, he continued to

write more intellectually oriented music alongside overtly accessible and predominantly socialist works with various compositions falling between these two polar opposites.

How Bush's association with the Labour Movement affected his musical activity

will be shown by reference to his own writings and also to selective choral compositions. It is true that, as Lewis Foreman wrote:

“Such works for chorus with piano as *Song to Labour* (1926), *Song to the Men of England* (1928), *The Road*, (1929), *Question and Answer* (1931), *Hunger Marcher's Song* (1934), *Labour's Song of Challenge* (1936), and *Make Your Meaning Clear* (1939), seem to be stuck very much in the aspic of their times, the choral writing clearly by a man who knew how to get the best out of amateur choirs, but somehow lacking the common touch; without that memorability or catchiness, that easy popularity of an Elgar or a Walton, needed to achieve the catchy number for which the enterprise cried out. What we may glean from the two that were recorded... is that their earnestness, lack of a memorable tune and now dated words make them very much a historical phenomenon, which nevertheless deserves proper study and performance before we can make a final assessment of it.”<sup>4</sup>

This dissertation seeks to contribute to that necessary “final assessment”.

An overview of Bush's early life and compositions, with particular emphasis on his socialist leanings and the ways in which his political philosophy developed up until 1928, will form the basis of Chapter 1. Early influences, both musical and political, and his involvement in various formative organisations will be discussed, together with a stylistic analysis of *Song to Labour* (1926) and *To the Men of England* (1927-1928). A more detailed examination of Bush's continuing left-wing predilection will be undertaken in Chapter 2. From 1929, when Bush went to study in Berlin, his socialism developed to the extent that he adopted Marxism as his “world-outlook” in 1934, and a year later he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain.<sup>5</sup> How this impacted on his growing involvement in the London Labour Choral Union and the wider Labour Movement will be discussed, together with the musical out-working of his political beliefs. Several of his songs from this period will be examined: *Songs of the Doomed* (1929), *The Road* (1929), *Question and Answer* (1931) and *The Song of the Hunger*

*Marchers* (1934). The chapter will also include an overview of Bush's involvement with large-scale music-theatre productions, especially the highly successful *The Pageant of Labour* of 1934, and will briefly examine *The Pageant Song* from this venture.

Bush's musical and political involvements during the years 1936-1939 will be discussed in Chapter 3 with particular reference to the Workers' Music Association. An examination of how his approach to composition altered during the 1930s will include an assessment of whether or not his workers' songs from this period fulfilled his own blueprint for such compositions, as proposed in his 1936 teaching notes on 'The Problems of Workers' Music'. A stylistic analysis of three of his songs will be given as an illustration: *Labour's Song of Challenge* (1936), *Make Your Meaning Clear!* (1939), and *Against the People's Enemies* (1939). A brief overview will also be given of the choral finale of Bush's *Piano Concerto* (Op. 17, 1937) and the large-scale 1939 *Festival of Music for the People*.

Bush's long-term objective was ultimately to improve the lives of the working class, and by his reckoning the only way this could be achieved was by the embracing of Socialism:

"How much music in Britain today helps in the fight for peace and Socialism? We should be clear in our minds that if a musical event is not helping Socialism it is doing the other thing – that is to say, strengthening Capitalism. A musical event which helps in the fight for peace and Socialism does not mean just vocal music with a text which is both socially truthful and expressing determination to change the world. A concert which brings the masterpieces of music to a wider public, which introduces them in an entertaining way to people who don't as yet know or care about them contributes to the fight in that it enriches peoples' lives and so makes them love life more."<sup>6</sup>

While Bush himself fully embraced Marxism as the ideal solution to society's ills, considerable political co-operation existed among the many diverse left-wing groupings during the late 1930s, which offered real, if cautious, hope for change. He was tireless in his attempts to bring this about:

"Alan Bush, Britain's foremost progressive composer, is filled with an iron determination to aid the workers' struggle for peace, freedom and progress. It is his unshakable conviction that the composer can make a vital contribution to the progress of society only if he sides

with the forces of Socialism. It is this conviction which enables him to speak, through his music, with great passion and vigour.<sup>7</sup>

The onset of World War Two, however, changed the entire political spectrum, naturally centring the focus of attention of most of the population on simple survival, and it is at this point that the dissertation will conclude. World events brought about a change of emphasis in the texts of Bush's choral music *per se* that resulted in far fewer workers' songs after 1939, the musical style of which remained essentially the same as those examined in Chapter 3.

---

<sup>1</sup> Meyer (1950), 32.

<sup>2</sup> Stevenson, R. (1964), 323.

<sup>3</sup> Bush 1937-1938/2: Bush, A., BA.

<sup>4</sup> Foreman (2000), 105.

<sup>5</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 20.

<sup>6</sup> Bush, A. (1958), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Meyer (1950), 33.

## Literature Review

Alan Bush (1900-1995) was very proud of his workers' choral music and songs by which he established a revered reputation in working class organisations, notably the London Labour Choral Union and the Workers' Music Association. The musical establishment, however, dismissed his workers' music as unworthy, while simultaneously holding his intellectual and complex art music in high regard. Bush's exhaustive efforts to make music politically relevant to the masses during the 1930s ensured him a high public profile, not always to his advantage. The antipathy to his extreme political activities has always been a major stumbling block to performance engagements of his art music. This was confirmed by Timothy Bowers, who, when asked why Bush's music was still so neglected, replied "the music is worth more than his political outlook makes you listen".<sup>1</sup> Although a number of his major works have been analysed, or at least examined, no definitive biography that offers a comprehensive critical examination of Bush and his music has yet been written.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, until now there has been no stylistic or other examination of the music he composed for workers' choral groups. Only relatively little reference to it is made in the existing literature on Bush.

Much of the material for this dissertation has been researched from unpublished sources, not all of these generally accessible to researchers. The Bush family archive is an invaluable source of relatively unexploited information on Bush's choral music and songs. Initially held at the home of Bush's daughter and son-in-law in Histon, Cambridge, whilst in the process of preparation for transfer to the British Library, access was granted for extensive periods of personal research through the more than 250 boxed files of correspondence, articles, and personal papers, in addition to scores and scrapbooks. It is from this archive that much of the collaborative material used in this dissertation was discovered. There also now exists an extensive archive at the British Library from which various journal articles,



newspaper reports and scores, unavailable elsewhere, were obtained; in particular, the riveting exchange of letters between Bush and Britten, in which problems inherent in current concert performance, were discussed.<sup>3</sup> The archive of the Royal Academy of Music was sourced for confirmation of various events and awards in relation to Bush's time spent there. Personal interviews were conducted with John Jordan and Mavis Cook of the WMA and Timothy Bowers, current Alan Bush lecturer at the RAM, and many conversations took place with Bush's family; there were also exchanges of correspondence with these and others, all of which facilitated in an assimilation of their insights and reminiscences.<sup>4</sup>

The most important primary source of information about Bush is, of course, his own writings. He was a prolific letter writer and there is a rich collection of his correspondence with his many friends and associates. His letters were mostly typed in duplicate, the copies of which are preserved in the Histon archive, together with the replies that Bush received from the recipients; these form a fascinating insight into the life and times of the composer. While the composition of specific works was often mentioned, little detail was given, and that which was discussed in the correspondence does not form part of this research.<sup>5</sup> The large correspondence between Bush and Ronald Stevenson is of particular relevance and confirms their mutual admiration and respect.<sup>6</sup> Stevenson's opinions were important to Bush who admitted to him that "there are few people whom I have ever met, and none in Britain, for whose opinion I have much regard at all";<sup>7</sup> in the same letter he also wrote:

"your encouragement to me has been something which I have not previously known from anybody in Britain, because it proceeds from somebody so astonishingly well informed in general as you are, and moreover from a man whose general approach to the subject I share, while at the same time, from a musical point of view, there is so much that you know about that I don't."

Stevenson wrote an article, *Alan Bush, Committed Composer* (1964), in preparation for which Bush had sent him copies of various works "in the same genre, written at an earlier and later stage".<sup>8</sup> Having been warned by Bush that "you cannot write about me without reference to

them [his workers' songs], and I am sending you a number of them",<sup>9</sup> there is a brief defence of them in the article, where Stevenson states:

"an essential part of his output, a part not to be overlooked merely because it is musically unambitious, has been the composition of workers' songs to be sung at political rallies in England."<sup>10</sup>

He then reminds the reader of how some of Mahler's symphony movements were inspired by "the sight and sound of workers marching and singing",<sup>11</sup> and also referenced the Brecht-Eisler collaborations:

"as musical aphorisms wedded to verbal epigrams... at their best, they are laconic, pungent and utterly unsentimental.... Eisler has certainly written the most telling music for such songs, but the best of this type by Bush may bear comparison with Eisler's."<sup>12</sup>

Stevenson intended writing a book on Bush, but, regrettably, it has never materialised.

Bush's own quotations cited in this dissertation were mostly gleaned from articles written by him for lectures, conference presentation, radio broadcast or concert interval talks, or for publication in contemporaneous music journals. A collection of seven of his articles was published in his volume, *In my eighth decade and other essays* (1980), the first one of which is biographical. This forms a major first-hand source of information concerning Bush's early life and development, and considerable use has been made of it. Many of his other articles were never published, although some of these may now be accessed on the Alan Bush Music Trust website.<sup>13</sup>

Bush's writings range from distinctly simplistic explanations of the application of Marxism to music, as in the document *Notes on the theoretical and practical implications of Marxism in the field of music* (c1937-1938),<sup>14</sup> to erudite lectures such as *What is Modern Music* (1936). In the former, Bush outlined 13 points showing how "reactionary forces work through the music world" and a further eight points on "how to fight the class-struggle through music".<sup>15</sup> Many other articles enlarge on the absolute necessity to apply Marxist

ideology to musical compositions and urge the readers/listeners to take appropriate action. The importance of these articles lies in their clear explanation of Marxist principles in the field of musical composition, thus enabling the researcher to understand more fully Bush's own imperatives, especially with regard to his workers' choral music and songs.

Considerable repetition is found in many of Bush's articles: several of these, for example, 'The Problem of Style in Composition' (1940), 'The Crisis of Modern Music' (1946), and 'Two Works Each Side of a Gap of Thirty-Five Years' (1964), offer a defence of his 'Theory of Total Thematicisation'.<sup>16</sup> This justification follows a rational argument in each case concerning the stylistic confusion inherent in contemporary music where "there is no one method of composing which is generally accepted by the musical world",<sup>17</sup> thus resulting in the overthrow of the discipline of the past in favour of the modern composer's "wishful introspection".<sup>18</sup> Bush frequently repeats the Curt Sachs' statement, "Music began with singing",<sup>19</sup> which he (Bush) then expands into an understanding of the way in which music has been used and developed from earliest times as an accompaniment to all human activity, whether work or leisure. This in turn feeds into Marxist ideology whereby all art, including music, is considered part of the natural expression of human activity in all its fullness, thus vindicating the necessity for the workers to have a repertoire relevant to their everyday lives. The constant repetition of many of these ideas indicates that, although these articles were intended for many different audiences, the message remained the same.

Bush's article, 'The Battle of Freedom's Soldier' (post-1953),<sup>20</sup> was written to explain the circumstances that inspired the composition of the same name; it provides an overview of the musical content and includes more than three pages of useful biographical material. It also outlines Bush's fear that:

“musical art was losing touch with the people as a whole.... Thus I wrote in the 1920’s and 30’s a number of short choral compositions directly related to aspects of the life of the working people, out of whose labour the owners reaped their profits in times of prosperity and who bore the burden of the economic crisis when it was unloosed upon us all.”<sup>21</sup>

Bush also refers here to his own reaction to the 1934 Hunger March, an event that affected him deeply and for which he wrote *The Hunger Marchers’ Song* (examined in Chapter 2).

Insofar as this research is concerned, the most useful of Bush’s writings is a document entitled ‘Notes on the Problems of Workers’ Music’ (1936).<sup>22</sup> In this he sets out the contemporaneous problem of working-class culture imitating that of the bourgeoisie, since there was no real alternative; he states that “the workers’ task is to fight the capitalist system and workers’ culture is, and should be, based on the workers’ fight, and should reflect it.”<sup>23</sup> He then asks (and answers) the question “What should workers’ music be like?”, before moving on to a section entitled ‘The Composition of Workers’ Music’, in which he outlines a blueprint for such works. It is against this background that many of Bush’s songs are examined, and this document is comprehensively dealt with in Chapter 3.

Nancy Bush’s biography of her husband, *Alan Bush – Music, Politics and Life* (2000), published posthumously, is an excellent source of chronological detail concerning his studies, his professional life, and major musical endeavours. It provides an unsentimental, but compelling, picture of a dedicated hardworking pianist, composer and choral conductor, with some rare glimpses into their family life. The final third of the book consists of a significant essay by Lewis Foreman, ‘Spanning the Century – the Music of Alan Bush’. This provides an insightful, if relatively brief, survey of Bush’s large body of work from 1929 to 1987. He rightly observes the following need:

“to start the process of reassessment, re-launching those works which are indisputably a significant contribution to their time, and in due course surveying the whole oeuvre.”<sup>24</sup>

As with other commentators, Foreman's reference to Bush's workers' music is brief (a single paragraph), but not dismissive, and he nevertheless makes the relevant point that:

“It is difficult from over sixty years later to assess the purely musical value of this activity, particularly in the absence of surviving recordings.”<sup>25</sup>

The rest of Foreman's essay discusses some of Bush's large-scale works but without any in-depth analysis, although his commentary is balanced and revealing.

*The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland 1927-1961* (2006) by Rachel O'Higgins, Bush's daughter, is a scholarly and informative book that illuminates the fascinating relationship between the two composers.<sup>26</sup> O'Higgins' notes and her background commentary are of particular interest in the placing of various works in their context, and in the clarifying of the background detail concerning many of the events in Bush's life. Since John Ireland's influence on Bush was pivotal in the latter's musical development, this book is an important addition to an understanding of Alan Bush, the man, and his music. The correspondence is particularly interesting when there is discussion concerning the composition and performance of a specific work. It does not, however, help in any way to evaluate Bush's workers' choral music and songs, the main focus of this dissertation.

The WMA's *Tribute to Alan Bush on his fiftieth birthday* (1950), and Ronald Stevenson's *Time Remembered: Alan Bush – An 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Symposium* (1980)<sup>27</sup>, are important sources of mainly anecdotal remembrances, and information concerning Bush and his musical life. The contributions are, importantly, from people who knew Bush personally, whether as friends, students or colleagues. In each case the tributes are fulsome and impressive, from such diverse musical luminaries as Tippett, Eisler, Vaughan Williams, Ireland, Kabalevsky, Hanns Keller and Bernard Stevens. An in-depth analysis of Bush's Piano Concerto (Op. 18) and Violin Concerto (Op. 32) by Ates Orga is a welcome inclusion in the

*Symposium*, as also is a semi-analytical article on some of Bush's piano music, by Stevenson. In the same publication, however, reference to the workers' music is once again noticeable by its absence, except for the following comment by Bernard Stevens in his short essay, 'The Choral Music':

"he brought a new urgency and directness to this [English choral] tradition in the 1930's, in part due to the example in Germany of his friend Hanns Eisler, as in The Hunger Marchers, (Swingler) and Question and Answer (Atterbury). It is characteristic of Alan that he has never 'played down' to his audience in the sense of adopting any of the idioms of popular 'commercial' music, unlike so many of his fellow-composers in the Labour Movement.... Even the most direct and simple of his choral pieces contain subtleties and surprises of harmony and a complete avoidance of the clichés of typical 'competition festival' test pieces and folk arrangements."<sup>28</sup>

The WMA *Tribute*, however, also includes a short article by Ernst Hermann Meyer entitled 'The Choral Works'; this is the only one that does offer some insight and understanding of Bush's workers' music. Quotations from this source can be found in both the introduction and conclusion of this dissertation. Will Sahnow's effusive contribution 'Our President' in the same publication refers to "our well-beloved and revered president, Alan Bush"<sup>29</sup> and includes a long list of Bush's involvements in that organisation, leaving one to wonder where he (Bush) found time to pursue so many activities.

Duncan Hall's book entitled '*A pleasant change from politics*' – *Music and the British labour movement between the wars* (2001), provides a unique insight into the importance of music to the Labour Movement between the wars, and he credits Bush as having been pivotal in organising left-wing musical activity during that period:

"Clearly the work of certain individuals – H.G. Sears, Rutland Boughton and Alan Bush, in particular – was absolutely central to the role and importance of music in the inter-war labour movement. There was music without them – and plenty of it – but in terms of the organization of musical activities and the production of ideas about music, the importance of a small number of committed individuals cannot be overstated."<sup>30</sup>

Agreeing with Bush's *raison d'être* in relation to workers' music, Hall further states:

"There was something specific about the nature of labour movement politics that drew it to music and to aesthetic theories. Similarly, there were properties of music that made it an invaluable weapon for any movement that looked to win hearts and minds."<sup>31</sup>

Since Hall's book is concerned with the Labour Movement's musical life as a phenomenon, there is no examination of the relevant music. Instead, he documents the social history of that organisation's practical musical activity as a tool to enlighten, educate, agitate, and activate, the workers by making them politically aware. To this end he quotes Bush as follows: "politically progressive musicians... concentrated on getting the workers to use music as a political and agitational weapon."<sup>32</sup> He illustrates the socialist abhorrence of banal musical taste as exemplified in "music hall fare" and the desire for a relevant 'Music of their Own' that would be 'The Best Music Available'.<sup>33</sup> While invaluable as a source for understanding the complexities of the Labour Movement in the inter-war period and its relationship with music, it offers no commentary on the quality of Bush's music or its success, or otherwise, in meeting its objectives, apart from stating that "Bush's compositions varied to extremes".<sup>34</sup>

Andy Croft's biography, *Comrade Heart: A life of Randall Swingler* (2003) has many references to Bush in relation to the musical and theatrical collaborations of the two men. He records that:

"It was around this time [c1933] that Swingler met another young composer of powerful intellect and purpose, called Alan Bush... who combined an unswerving commitment to revolutionary politics with a passion for music-making."<sup>35</sup>

Although Croft quotes three of the four verses of *Song of the Hunger Marchers*, he comments only that it was the first of many songs they wrote together. The book documents Swingler's increasing commitment to communism and notes that it was through Bush that he became involved with The London Labour Choral Union, the London Co-operative Choir and the Workers' Music Association, and later with the work of the WMA Composers' Group. A brief discussion on the staging of Handel's *Belshazzar* is useful in understanding the context of their joint production and is not to be found elsewhere. Croft also records that the concert in the Conway Hall in December 1939 included two overtly anti-war songs that Swingler wrote for Bush, *Make Your Meaning Clear* and *Against the People's Enemies*. He (Croft)

suggests that Swingler saw this event as heralding a “new cultural movement”,<sup>36</sup> that could be seen in the work of various organisations in which he was involved, including the Left Book Club, Unity Theatre, and the *Festival of Music and the People* among others. Bush would also have been involved in the activities of many such groups, especially in any initiative of the Communist Party, of which Swingler was a dedicated member. Chapter 7 includes an extensive commentary on *The Festival of Music and the People* and credits Bush with having “assembled an impressive Festival committee.... It was a massive project.”<sup>37</sup> Croft’s book brings to life the times, and people, who populated the world inhabited by Bush and Swingler, and as such it has been an invaluable and useful research tool of its kind.

*Alan Bush – A Source Book* (2007), compiled by Stewart Craggs includes an ‘Index of Titles’ of Bush’s compositions, a ‘Chronology’ of his life and a ‘Catalogue of Works’, with an introductory ‘Profile’ written by Rachel O’Higgins. Many factual errors have been uncovered in this book in the course of the research for this dissertation: these have been noted as they arose. As a quick-reference guide, however, this is a useful addition to the Bush literature, and has been particularly helpful in noting first performance dates and venues.

There has been a welcome academic revival of interest in Alan Bush and his music in recent years, and two doctoral studies have been completed: in the first, ‘Musical Modernism and Left-wing Politics in 1930s Britain’ (2009), Joanna Bullivant included a section on Bush.<sup>38</sup> The relevance of her article, ‘Modernism, Politics and Individuality in 1930s Britain: The Case of Alan Bush’ (2009), to this dissertation, lies in its brief discussion of Bush’s song *Make Your Meaning Clear* as an example of one intended to:

“elicit a response from the audience, that is, a form of Brechtian alienation in which the audience will be pushed into reflection and discussion... [and] that offers an insight into what this may mean in practice.”<sup>39</sup>



The discussion of modernism as it relates to left-wing politics in Bush's music focuses on his art music, and while interesting and informative, it has limited relevance to the present area of research.

Finally, Julie Waters' doctoral thesis '*Against the stream: intersections of music and politics in the conception, composition and reception of Alan Bush's first three symphonies*' (2012), examines these works against the composer's Marxist background, but the time span encompassed lies outside the parameters of this dissertation. It is encouraging, nevertheless, and of great personal interest, that Bush and his music are finally receiving the serious academic attention they undoubtedly deserve.

---

<sup>1</sup> In conversation with Emer Bailey, 9 February 2005. Bowers was one of Bush's composition students and is currently Alan Bush Lecturer and Undergraduate Tutor at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

<sup>2</sup> Orga (1980) has analysed the *Piano Concerto*, for example, while Waters (2012) has examined three of Bush's four symphonies, and Bullivant (2012 and 2013) has examined two of Bush's operas.

<sup>3</sup> This correspondence had been stolen from the Histon archive some years earlier and was bought at auction in 2009 by the Britten-Pears Foundation, from which a copy was obtained by the British Library.

<sup>4</sup> John Jordan and Mavis Cook are currently Vice President and Secretary respectively of the WMA.

<sup>5</sup> The Bush-Ireland letters, for example, contain many references to specific works in the process of composition but no in-depth discussion of these is undertaken, while an illuminating critical exchange between Bush and Tippett of September 1944 concerns the latter's *A Child of our Time*.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald Stevenson (b. 1928), renowned pianist and composer, and expert on Busoni.

<sup>7</sup> Bush 1962/2, Bush, A., BA (1962), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Bush 1962/1, Bush, A., BA (1962), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Bush 1962/2, Bush, A., BA (1962), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Stevenson (1964), 327.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk>

<sup>14</sup> Bush 1937-1938/2: Bush A., BA (n.d., ?1937-1938), 1-2

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* The eight points included the following: (2) "by influencing the musical organisations of the working-class movement to fight the class struggle through their activities, and thus counteract the bourgeois and petty bourgeois influences, which at the moment are paramount, even among class conscious workers, in their musical work (3) by influencing musical societies in general... in their activities and choice of programmes, and by encouraging the activities of local government bodies (8) by improving the standard of light music, counteracting its enervating or trivial atmosphere, and developing the style and content of commercial dance music."

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 2, endnote 8 for a brief outline of this theory.

<sup>17</sup> Bush, A., BA (1946).

<sup>18</sup> Bush 1940/1: Bush, A., (1940), 6.

<sup>19</sup> Bush, A., BA (1956), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Bush A., BA (n.d., post 1953)

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Bush 1936/1: Bush, A., (1936), 2.

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Foreman (2000), 145.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>26</sup> O’Higgins (2006).

<sup>27</sup> Tribute (1950) and Stevenson (1980) respectively.

<sup>28</sup> Stevens (1980), 32.

<sup>29</sup> Sahnou (1950), 31. Will Sahnou was general secretary of the WMA and was almost certainly the editor of the *WMA Tribute*, although there is no reference to any editor in the publication.

<sup>30</sup> Hall (2001), 168.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 11, 114, 139.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>35</sup> Croft (2003), 44. Randall Swingler (1909-1967), was an English left-wing poet, author, librettist and publisher.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>38</sup> Bullivant, web ref. (2013), is currently researching a book entitled *Alan Bush: Music and Politics in Modern Britain*, supported by a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship at Nottingham University. This will be “the first critical study of the composer in the context of modern British music” (ibid.)

<sup>39</sup> Bullivant (2009), 444.

## Chapter 1

### Life and Music I: Early Life (1900-1928)

*“Life became my Pantheon and homo sapiens the object of my devotion.”<sup>1</sup>*

Born into a wealthy family in Dulwich, London, on 22 December 1900, Alan Dudley Bush was the youngest of Alfred and Alice Bush’s three sons. His father was a partner in the prosperous family business, W.J. Bush and Co., Manufacturers of Fine Chemicals and Essential Oils, founded by Alan’s grandfather in 1851. His mother played the piano and had shown considerable early talent as an artist; she studied at the Crystal Palace of Art, but the dictates of middle-class Victorian life prevented her from realising her ambitions.<sup>2</sup> Instead she married Alfred Bush in January 1894. Alan’s brothers, Alfred John (born December 1894) and (Hamilton) Brinsley (born May 1896), were both musical and received private piano tuition; Alfred was a promising pianist and Brinsley had a fine tenor voice.

An overview of Bush’s life up to 1928 will be given in this chapter, showing the influences that shaped the gradual development of his socialist politics. His early musical career will be explored, together with an overview of his performance ambitions, compositional output, and awards received. The significance of Bush’s early involvement with the London Labour Choral Union will also be assessed with relation to two SATB choral compositions: the simple workers’ *Song to Labour* and the ‘art-folk’ song *To the Men of England*.

#### **Earliest years**

Music lessons started early in Bush’s life – asked what he would like for his fourth birthday, he replied:

“a piano lesson.... I showed no talent or facility, but I evidently developed an interest in playing the piano as an occupation from the very start. When six years old I used to spend hours plodding through pages of piano music from my mother’s library; this included Hummel and Clementi and also fantasias by forgotten composers on such operas as Verdi’s *La Traviata* and Gounod’s *Faust*.”<sup>3</sup>

A delicate child, Bush was tutored at home until the age of 11, when he was sent to Highgate Grammar School, from where he matriculated in December 1917. At school he was encouraged in his interest in the sciences, but a whole new world opened for him when, at 14, he discovered the public library at Hornsey. This marked the beginning of his life-long interest in both philosophy and politics, not least the age-old search for truth. He was fascinated by Ernst Haeckel’s *Riddle of the Universe*,<sup>4</sup> and gave credit to H.G. Wells, as follows, for his:

“one positive contribution, that as the populariser of his own particular brand of Utopian socialism he did disclose the vile injustices of capitalism and the hypocrisies of its propagandists. I thus became aware of the fact that human society was not organised in a way which enabled all men and women, the most splendid of nature’s products, to live out their lives to the full, either in Britain or elsewhere; on the contrary it was quite evidently geared to promote the material advantage of a small group of rich families and to maintain their power over the poor”.<sup>5</sup>

This may well have been the seed that would eventually lead Bush to examine his own privileged position, and directly, to impact on his future political leanings.

In 1917, Bush’s piano teacher took him to meet Sir Edward Elgar, for whom he played several of his own compositions.<sup>6</sup> The great man declared that “a composer’s life is not a very pleasant one in England at the present time”, but advised him nonetheless to “have a go”.<sup>7</sup> In the same year the Bush family suffered a devastating loss when the eldest son, Alfred, was killed in Flanders “in one of the useless blood-baths with which Allied or German generals organised occasional interruptions to the quiet Western Front”.<sup>8</sup> In an effort to console themselves the family became involved in spiritualism for several years. Recognising its limitations, at the age of 19, Bush became a member of the Theosophical Society until he realised that with them:

“I could not find the ‘truth’ out for myself; I could not know for myself that it was the ‘truth’, but must accept it as such on somebody else’s authority. Once I realised that this was so, the whole tuppence-coloured balloon collapsed. I determined to try and find out

what I was in a position to know for myself about the world and about man, without having to accept anything on the authority of another person.”<sup>9</sup>

This search for truth would continue, running like a red line, throughout his long life.

### **Musical studies**

At this time Bush was hugely influenced by the music of Ravel and Debussy. Having played Beethoven's *Appassionata* sonata (Op. 57) at his interview for entrance to the Royal Academy of Music in London, he then played a couple of his own pieces, causing Sir Alexander Mackenzie to comment without enthusiasm: “I see he has been infected with the French fever.”<sup>10</sup> Entering the RAM in January 1918, Bush studied composition with Frederick Corder, piano with Tobias Matthay<sup>11</sup> and Lily West, and organ with Reginald Steggall, graduating in 1922. Whilst at the RAM Bush was a recipient of a number of awards, including the Thalberg Scholarship (1920-1922) and the Matthew Phillimore Prize in 1922, both for performance.<sup>12</sup>

The first documented record of a performance of one of Bush's own compositions is at a Royal Academy concert on 15 June 1918, just six months after he began his student life there, when he and Gladys Chester played his *Sonata in G for violin and piano*.<sup>13</sup> The following January his *Variations on an Original Theme for Piano* were performed by Warwick Braithwaite at another RAM concert, and Bush played it himself at a concert at the Wigmore Hall on 28 June 1919.<sup>14</sup> In the same year he was awarded the Charles Mortimer Prize for composition.<sup>15</sup> In 1921 he won both the Battison Haynes Prize for his *Three Pieces for two pianos* (Op. 1) and the Philip Agnew Composition Prize for his single-movement *Piano Sonata [no. 1] in B minor* (Op. 2).<sup>16</sup> Both works were well received and were published, in 1922 and 1923 respectively, by Murdoch, Murdoch & Co., London;<sup>17</sup> the publication of the latter work was subvented by the Philip Agnew Prize.<sup>18</sup> The importance of

this aspect of the award for a young aspiring composer cannot be overstated; the guaranteed publication of an early work must have been enormously encouraging to the 21-year-old Bush. No information is available to indicate who was responsible for the publication of his earlier *Three Pieces*.

Bush's *Festival March* for chamber orchestra was commissioned by the RAM for its centenary celebrations in 1922, and performed by the Academy orchestra at the Queen's Hall with Frederick Corder conducting. Most of his other early compositions were first performed at the RAM, usually for student concerts, while a couple had their first performance at Hampstead Town Hall. His *String Quartet in A Minor* (Op. 4) won the prestigious Carnegie United Kingdom Trust Award in 1925, and the BBC broadcast a studio performance of this by the Virtuoso Quartet on 11 June 1925. The only vocal music to feature in Bush's early works was his opera *The last days of Pompeii* (1923), for which his brother, Brinsley, both wrote the libretto and sang the tenor part. Friends, including the composer Michael Head,<sup>19</sup> who would later become Bush's brother-in-law, played other parts. Its only performance was a private one in the family drawing room in Highgate with the composer at the piano, and he destroyed the manuscript some years later.<sup>20</sup> The following table summarises Bush's compositional output up to 1925:

**Figure 1: Compositions of Alan Bush 1918-1925**

<b>Number of Works</b>	<b>Genre</b>
3	violin & piano
3	solo piano
1	two pianos
1	cello & piano
1	chamber orchestra
1	opera
1	string quartet
1	piano quartet
1	wind quintet

There is no evidence to suggest that political considerations informed Bush's youthful compositions in any way; the music was firmly rooted in the traditional art-music genre. In her doctoral thesis, Lisa Hardy comments on his *Piano Sonata in B minor* (Op. 2) as follows:

“The pianism is grounded in Chopin, using arpeggio accompanied figures which weave throughout the texture. The themes follow one another without being sectionalised, using ideas of free flow as in the music of Delius and Scott... there is one theme, having the character of a folk melody that is more diatonic and is harmonised with seventh chords. This example also illustrates Bush's flexible metres and irregular rhythmic accentuation, a feature that Tippett was also to use in his First Sonata.”<sup>21</sup>

Bush's early compositions were indeed European in style, without following mainstream developments. In the case of the *String Quartet in A Minor* (Op. 4) this elicited the following remarks by the Carnegie competition adjudicators:

“Work of very striking beauty, original without effort, well constructed and well written for strings. It contains some first-rate melodic phrases, and shows a firm and mature sense of texture and design. The style is terse and close-fitting adequately expressing the [composer's] thoughts without a superfluous bar or phrase. It certainly is one of the best chamber works that have been submitted to the Trust”.<sup>22</sup>

In 1922 Bush was elected Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM), and from then until 1927 he continued his musical studies privately. He took piano lessons with Benno Moiseiwitsch and Mabel Lander, and composition with John Ireland. “[Bush] was very much helped and encouraged by this gifted teacher [Ireland]”<sup>23</sup> and later wrote the following about his studies with him:

“John Ireland's methods of teaching composition followed those which he had himself undergone twenty years before as a student of Charles Villiers Stanford at the Royal College of Music. For my first year, I studied the idiom and contrapuntal technique of Palestrina and was introduced to English, Irish and Scottish folk music. I then proceeded to actual composition, and wrote a Fantasy Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 3, a String Quartet in A Minor Op. 4, a Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola and Cello, Op. 5, songs, a Symphonic Impression for Orchestra, Op. 8, and lastly, a Prelude and Fugue for Piano, Op. 9... John Ireland was an exacting teacher. A student of his had to produce work of consistently high quality, though voluminous quantity was not expected. During my period with him I was also appearing as a concert pianist... In 1936, he was invited by the B.B.C. to compose a work which was to celebrate the accession to the throne of King George VI. As there was little time, he asked me to do the orchestration for him. He would indicate the instrumentation he had in mind. This work I did and he dedicated the piece to me. It is the choral work, *These Things Shall Be*.”<sup>24</sup>

Their relationship was to develop into a lasting friendship, and their long correspondence continued almost to the end of Ireland's life.<sup>25</sup>

The Bush-Ireland letters offer illuminating insights into a relationship that had multiple strands (social, musical, political, financial and mutual promotion) and underwent shifts of balance over the years. It is indisputable that Bush held Ireland in high regard, as the following illustrates:

“An important aspect of Bush’s relationship with Ireland was that he was always aware of his good fortune in having Ireland as his teacher. This is apparent in many of his early letters to Ireland and he continued to admire him both as a musician and teacher throughout his life. In 1948, Bush published an elementary textbook on composition, *Strict Counterpoint in Palestrina Style, A Practical Textbook*. In a letter to Ireland in December 1948, Bush asked Ireland to write the Foreword, stating that the book provided ‘the practical exercises for just such a course of counterpoint’ that Bush had learnt from Ireland when he was first his pupil... Bush, for his part, took every opportunity to perform Ireland’s music in public concerts. In the 1920s, he often included Ireland’s piano music in his recitals. In 1932-33, with the formation of the RAM New Music Society, Bush, as a founder member, helped to secure the performance of Ireland’s chamber music and songs in early concerts of the Society. Later, with his own orchestra, the London String Orchestra, Bush often performed Ireland’s *Concertino Pastorale*. When Bush went on conducting tours in Eastern Europe in the years just after the War he included Ireland’s orchestral works in his programmes.”<sup>26</sup>

Ireland, for his part, was extremely proud of his pupil and wrote the following in a letter to Bush: “I am very proud of you – you are the only young Englishman with something really individual to say, & a technique adequate to say it, & for that, I take a small share of credit, tho’ not much”.<sup>27</sup> This is not to suggest that he was uncritical of some of Bush’s compositions, as the following clearly shows:

“As to your piece [*Relinquishment*, Op. 11], it is a most remarkable piece of work.... it is a fine structure, and a wonderfully clean piece of thought – but it is extremely difficult to apprehend the essential mood of the music... I am very alarmed to find you going helter skelter into this realm of rather painful and sinister abstractions. A world of faint nightmare and alarm. If you can’t become human, & show you have a heart, and blood of the normal temperature of mammalia, I don’t know what will happen to you eventually.”<sup>28</sup>

Many years later, in a tribute to Bush on the occasion of his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, Ireland referred to “the series of mature and significant works by which he has become known to the public and won the respect of the inner circle of musicians – works distinguished by sincerity, singleness of purpose and complete musical integrity.”<sup>29</sup>

Bush was appointed Professor of Harmony and Composition at the Royal Academy of Music in 1925, a post he held until 1978. A year earlier, having finished his studies there,



where “music was music and life was life, and never the twain seemed to meet”,<sup>30</sup> he discovered the existence of working-class organisations that sought to bring about a “rational society of socialism”,<sup>31</sup> and so joined the Independent Labour Party. The ILP was the socialist wing of the Labour Party and was also known to be more culturally minded than the Labour Party, offering educational talks and lectures on poetry, art and music, on Sunday afternoons.<sup>32</sup> It is important to recognise the enormous popularity of the entire Labour Movement<sup>33</sup> at this time. The appeal was not perhaps as intense as it had been during the late Victorian era, but Labour Churches, and even Socialist Sunday Schools, were still in existence in some areas, although it would appear they had virtually lost all of their spiritual content. The most popular songs commonly sung from ‘the Labour Church hymn book’ were *England, Arise!*, *Lift up the People’s Banner*, *Jerusalem* and *The Red Flag*.<sup>34</sup>

In 1925 Bush was appointed deputy conductor of the Finchley Choir and a year later he was elected assistant musical director of the London Labour Choral Union, the aim of which was to promote the cause of socialism through musical activity. According to its constitution, the object of the LLCU was “the development of the musical instincts of the people and aimed at rendering service to the Labour Movement of the metropolis”.<sup>35</sup> His only conducting experience up to this time was with one of the ten five-part choirs which had sung Frederick Corder’s 50-part motet, *Sing unto God*, at the Royal Academy centenary concert in 1922.<sup>36</sup> The LLCU appointment gave him his first real experience of choral direction, with which he developed a life-long relationship. It was also Bush’s first genuine contact with the working class, and he began to take part in general Labour Movement activities, even canvassing for Labour parliamentary candidates.<sup>37</sup> In August 1925 he attended a general Labour Choral Union summer school, at which Rutland Boughton and Vaughan Williams were both lecturers. Following this he sent a copy of his award-winning *String Quartet in A*

*Minor* (Op. 4) to Boughton who, as director of the LLCU,<sup>38</sup> consequently invited him to compose a song for the choir.<sup>39</sup>

For the first time Bush's political leanings now had a practical expression in his own field, and *Song to Labour* (1926) was the first of many choral works and workers' songs which he composed with a political text.<sup>40</sup> While many songs were specifically written for them, it was common for the Labour Movement to use hymn tunes, and other popular song melodies, in straightforward traditional SATB or unison settings, with a newly-written text appropriate to current requirements. The tunes were often subject to new arrangements by left-wing musicians, but it was not unusual for the existing well-known version to be used. With regard to Bush's early workers' songs, Ronald Stevenson commented that they "showed alliance to the doubtful practice of setting new political words to old religious music."<sup>41</sup>

### ***Song to Labour* (1926)**

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's poem *To Labour* was written no later than 1911.<sup>42</sup> It had already been set to music by Henry Walford Davies and published in 1915 in *The Fellowship Song Book (Part I)*.<sup>43</sup> It is reasonable to assume that Bush would have been familiar with this publication, since both composers entitled their setting *Song to Labour*, and the text was eminently suitable for his burgeoning socialist activities, although it is unclear from where Bush sourced the entire poem. The opening verse indicates the tenor of the remainder:

"Shall you complain who feed the world?  
Who clothe the world? who house the world?  
Shall you complain who are the world,  
Of what the world may do? "

Although the poem consists of six 4-line stanzas, Bush's setting as three 16-bar verses uses the text in full but changes a word in bar 12 ("As from this *hour*" instead of "As from this *time*"). The layout of the SATB score (see Appendix B), published by the Workers' Music

Association long after the song's composition,<sup>44</sup> is very crowded, with two lines of tonic *Sol-fa* shown above and below each system. This increases to four lines wherever there is slight rhythmic variation, to accommodate the text (bars 11 and 15), and the relevant notated rhythms are superimposed on each staff. The lines of text for all three verses are shown between the staves, which adds to the overall visual confusion, bearing in mind the amateur nature of the intended performers. Although it is unclear whether it was to be sung unaccompanied,<sup>45</sup> its hymn-like layout could easily be doubled on the piano.

The overall structure of *Song to Labour* is strophic, while its internal musical structure is binary: A – (A<sup>1</sup>) – B – B<sup>(1)</sup>. A is much varied (only the first four chords are repeated, although the rhythm of bar 2 is reused in bar 6, followed by related, but essentially new, material), whereas there is only one slight difference in the reprise of B (in bar 16). The tempo is *Energetic* (Walford Davies' setting is marked *With vigour*), which well suits the march style of the setting (albeit in 2/2 rather than the more usual 4/4). There are two simple rhythmic motifs employed throughout: five crotchets (beginning on an anacrusis) and a dotted crotchet – quaver – two crotchets. The second of these is reorganised in bar 10 to accommodate the text, and the dotted rhythm is retained for verses 2 and 3, in bars 11 and 15, but is changed to two crotchets in verse 1, giving emphasis to the rousing socialist line “the world must follow you!” In the second half of the same two bars, the dotted rhythm is reversed in verse 1, emphasising “fol-low” (see Ex. 1:1). With regard to the dynamic markings, the range is small: *f* (vs. 1 and 2) and *ff* (vs. 3), with a subsequent reduction at the start of the third phrase (end of bar 8): *mf cr[esc]*. building to *f* in vs. 1-2 and *f* leading to *ff* in vs. 3. These changes and differences once again clearly reflect the nature of the text.

*Song to Labour* is set in A major with simple passing modulations to the dominant and subdominant.<sup>46</sup> Bush's musical language at this time is reflected in the occasional use of modal harmony, such as from the end of bar 1 to bar 4, where only chords IIb (or II<sup>7</sup>b), III and VI (or VI<sup>7</sup>) are utilised. For the most part, however, triads and dominant or secondary seventh chords, sometimes including a dissonant note that subsequently resolves, constitute the principal harmonies of this song. A good example of dissonance, which always functions as a suspension (prepared or otherwise), is to be found in bar 7, where the soprano dissonance on beat 1 and the alto one on beat 3 both delay the harmonies that occupy beats 1-2 (IIb in E) and 3-4 (V) in a progression that could almost have been taken from a contemporary hymn book. A good example of a prepared suspension (in the alto part) occurs in the harmonic sequence of bars 9-10 (see Ex 1:1). The only truly chromatic harmony in the song is an augmented triad (in first inversion) on the final beat of bar 6, which heralds the ensuing modulation to the dominant (also seen in Ex.1:1).

Example 1:1 – *Song to Labour* (bars 6-12)

The musical score for Example 1:1 shows the vocal parts for Soprano and Alto, with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "are the world Of what the world may do? As from this hour you use your power The world must fol-low you!". The Tenor and Bass parts are shown below the vocal parts, with a dynamic marking of *(mf cr.)* under the word "As". The score is in A major, 2/2 time, and covers bars 6 to 12.

The melody line moves mainly by step, or by intervals of a third or a fourth, with a single fifth (bars 3-4) and a sixth (bar 12). The phrases rise and fall, in keeping with the text, with the high point occurring in the third phrase and repeated in the fourth, a common feature of much popular and traditional music. Unusually, the highest note in the song is given to the word “the” at the end of bars 10 and 14 respectively, thus giving prominence to a weak word rather than to “world” which follows it.<sup>47</sup> This contradicts Bush's own later advice to one of

his pupils: “The setting of that word could be done better. It’s a weak word and it’s an unaccented one. You have set it to a strong high note, thereby giving it an importance it doesn’t deserve”.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps this is indicative of the fact that *Song to Labour* was the first such song he composed for the London Labour Choral Union. With regard to the part writing, intervals of a fourth are characteristically frequent, not only within each but also between parts (some of which are written in parallel, as in the soprano and alto in bars 1-2). None of the lower vocal parts contain difficult intervals, with arguably the most angular writing occurring in the bass in bars 10-11 and 14-15. All four parts are written well within the range of each: the soprano and bass both have a ninth (e' – f#" and A – b respectively),<sup>49</sup> while the alto and tenor ranges are only a sixth (c#' – a' and g# – e' respectively). In relation to the general European musical scene at the time, this song, with its simple tonal scheme and relatively straightforward harmonies, was entirely suitable for an amateur choir and marked Bush’s entry into the composition of what he later proudly termed his “workers’ songs”.<sup>50</sup>

During 1926, Bush and violinist Florence Lockwood gave two well-received concerts in Berlin of contemporary, mostly British, music, including his own *Phantasy in C Minor* (Op. 3) for piano and violin at the Bechstein Hall on 9 September.<sup>51</sup> Bush’s intention at this time was to perform as a concert pianist, both at home and abroad, with an emphasis on his own works, but at the same time he continued as assistant musical director of the LLCU, for whom he composed *To the Men of England*, to a text by P.B. Shelley in 1927-1928.

### ***To the Men of England* (Op. 10, 1927-1928)**

This ‘song’ cannot be regarded in the same vein as *Song to Labour*.<sup>52</sup> It is a harmonically complex work and possibly reflects both Bush’s increasing confidence as a choral composer and conductor, and the growing musical ability of the LLCU after four years in existence. The

setting is for unaccompanied SATB chorus, with the coda *divisi à 8* but with an alternative 4-part ending “more suited to the capacity of smaller choirs”.<sup>53</sup> Unlike *Song to Labour* and most of his subsequent workers’ songs, this primarily socialist ‘art’ song presumably negated the necessity for including *Sol-fa* in the score (see Appendix C), although there is a piano reduction for practice purposes. Stevenson wrote of this song: “Shelley’s text is a consciously political manifesto, but Bush’s music is Central European and eclectic”.<sup>54</sup> In response, Bush expressed surprise at this assessment:

“I did not at the time nor do I now regard my ‘Song to the Men of England’ as ‘Central European and eclectic’. I estimate it as an example of a frequent occurrence in the works of a composer moving towards a national style, but without clear consciousness of the fact or of the way to achieve the aim, a combination of predominantly national (i.e. English) melody with eclectic harmony.”<sup>55</sup>

In an interview in 1963, however, he conceded that: “My music became eclectic... [and] I lost my balance”.<sup>56</sup> The political aspect is immediately apparent from the first two lines of Shelley’s poem:

“Men of England, wherefore plough for the lords who lay ye low?  
Wherefore weave with toil and care the rich robes your tyrants wear?”

The poem initially questions the English workers’ (“bees”) mindless obeisance and servicing of the needs of their elite masters (“drones” and “tyrants”), and then exhorts them to claim back the fruits of their labours. Finally, and ironically, Shelley suggests that they dig their own graves and weave their own grave-cloths, presumably acknowledging the futility of his hopes for a workers’ revolt. The text did not appeal to everyone at the time, however, as was made apparent by the following contemporaneous review of new (mixed voice) music, from W.R.

Anderson:

“Alan Bush... has set Shelley’s ‘To the men of England’, and set it with some distinction and power.... I am glad that any political party should have music made for it that has some clear ideas. (I believe the Labour people have the best art tunes so far.) But what a pity to choose this yeasty stuff of Shelley’s, full of bombast and bogeyism!.... Was ever such a piece of fustian from a real poet! This is worse than Alfred Austin at his foamiest. Mr. Bush will do Labour, and his art, better service by scrapping this fat boy’s fable, and setting his fancy to work at real poetry. He has good matter in him.”<sup>57</sup>

Anderson's scathing review of Shelley's text notwithstanding, he clearly acknowledged the quality of Bush's musical setting.

In the same way as he dealt with the text of *Song to Labour*, Bush scored the eight 4-line verses of Shelley's text in pairs as four 8-line verses and a coda,<sup>58</sup> and as before he set the poem in full, only this time fragmenting and repeating the final line several times at the end of verse 4, and reprising the opening two lines of verse 1 as the coda.<sup>59</sup> The overall structure of the song is A – A<sup>1</sup> – B – C – Coda (A<sup>2</sup>). As set, verses 1 and 2 are strophic with slight variation at the end; verse 3 offers new material in a sequential style, while verse 4 is largely declamatory. Overall Bush's *tempi* and dynamic markings complement both each other and the changing sentiments of the text. The opening *tempo* marking is "Moderate pace, but with vigorous emphasis" (crotchet = 108), and this is matched by predominantly loud music (*f* or *ff*) but with an occasional *mf* or *p* followed by a *crescendo*. The music slows progressively, initially to crotchet = 100 at the beginning of verse 3, in which the indication "very forceful" reinforces the exhortation in the text at bars 38-40 to "sow seed – but let no tyrant reap". The music continues to slow to crotchet = 84 at verse 4. This declamatory section is quiet, ranging from *mf* to *pp*, and towards the end it is curiously marked "blandly ironical", undoubtedly appropriate for the text:

"With plough and spade and hoe and loom,  
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,  
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair  
England be your sepulchre".

This final line is repeated several times *tranquillando*, gradually becoming quieter and ending *pp*, following which the coda reverts to *a tempo primo*, and the song concludes *ff* in rousing style.

The stated key signatures are A $\flat$  (bars 1-29), E (for the B section at bars 30-49) and a return to A $\flat$  at bar 50. It is obvious from the outset, however, that the tonal field is fluid, with the music moving freely through A $\flat$  tonalities, including the aeolian and dorian modes (bars 2 and 3 respectively), and the relative minor (bar 4). The time signature fluctuates constantly, with, for example, 3/2, 3/4 and 4/4 over the first three bars, and with seven changes in all by the end of the first verse (bar 14),<sup>60</sup> in contrast to the standard tetrameter of the text,<sup>61</sup> something that will later also be encountered in Bush's setting of *The Road*.

Although demanding enough, the vocal ranges are within the scope of each group of singers: soprano = e' – a $\flat$ ", alto = a – e $\flat$ ", tenor = d – g', bass = A $\flat$ – e'. Unusually for Bush, the melody remains entirely in the soprano voice. The singers have relatively few awkward leaps to negotiate, but several lengthy phrases require considerable breathing skill, given the *forte* dynamic, for example, in bars 4-8 (soprano and bass) and 18-22 (all four parts). The song commences with two consecutive folk-like 7-note motifs in the soprano part (see Ex. 1:2), which are repeated and sequenced with slight variation, thus providing most of the melodic and rhythmic material for the first two verses (bars 1-29). Both motifs make use of intervals of a rising, or falling, perfect fourth or fifth, and both of these, together with the interval of a rising major or minor third from the first motif, are reused in the homophonic third verse.<sup>62</sup> Here Bush employs a rising sequence of two consecutive responsorial 4-note motifs (see Ex. 1:3), each with its individual rhythmic identity and commencing with an anacrusis, the 'call' initially characterised by a rising third followed by a falling fifth and the 'reply' a rising fourth, although these intervals are modified in the course of being sequenced. This results in a memorable (in a 'catchy' sense) feel to this section, as if Bush were consciously attempting to reflect an English folk-, or popular, -song idiom. Another sequence is evident in verse 3 (bars 38-45) and employs a new 8-note motif (see Ex. 1:4), once again



with its own rhythmic identity but incorporating the same perfect fourth and fifth as before, only on this occasion in quick succession.<sup>63</sup>

Example 1:2 – To the Men of England (bars 1-4)

Moderate pace, but with vigorous emphasis ♩ = 108

Soprano Alto  
 Tenor Bass

*f* Men of England, wherefore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

Example 1:3 – To the Men of England (bars 29-33)

A little broader ♩ = 100

Soprano Alto  
 Tenor Bass

*mf* The seed ye sow an - other reaps; The wealth ye find an - oth-er keeps;

Example 1:4 – To the Men of England (bars 38-42)

very forceful

Soprano Alto  
 Tenor Bass

Sow seed but let no ty-rant reap; Find wealth let no im - pos-tor heap;

The declamatory-style fourth verse begins at bar 50 on an octave A $\flat$  followed by the slightly modified opening motif (of bars 4-6), all of which is then repeated a third higher with slight rhythmic modification. The soprano line in the “blandly ironical” passage which follows (bars 58-59) is angular; with a downward fall of a fifth followed by an upward leap of

a fourth and then a fall of a seventh. By contrast the next phrase is melodically reminiscent of a typical folk-song or hymn, moving mostly by step and followed a third higher by an example of word painting, with a modified sequence that includes an 8-note melisma on the word “winding” (bars 60-63). Bush’s setting of the final line of text (bars 64-71) both repeats and fragments various phrases, reusing the same basic melodic contours, with some modification each time. The coda (bars 72-75) comes full circle by repeating the melody of the first two lines of verse 1.

The immediate aural perception of *To the Men of England* is that it essentially belongs to a hybrid ‘art-folk’ genre, with a relatively definable melody, initially employing stepwise movement, followed by intervals of a fourth or fifth. The harmonic structure avoids conventional modulation, often using a minor seventh chord resolving to either I or Ib instead of a dominant seventh. Throughout the work Bush uses two or more chords in cadential fashion to give the aural impression of modulation, as, for example, in bars 2-7:  $V^{\flat 3} - I_b$  in  $G^{\flat}$  (bars 2-3),  $IV - I$  in F minor (bars 3-4),  $V^7 d^{\flat 3} - I_b$  in  $B^{\flat}$  minor (bars 4-5),  $V^7 d^{\flat 3} - I_b$  in  $D^{\flat}$  (bars 6-7), eventually ‘modulating’ with VII (with the root flattened rather than raised) – I into  $E^{\flat}$ , the dominant (bars 7-8) (see Exs. 1:2 and 1:5). This use of the flattened leading note is characteristic of Bush’s writing at this time.<sup>64</sup>

Example 1:5 – *To the Men of England* (bars 4-8)

The musical score for Example 1:5 consists of two staves. The top staff is for Soprano Alto and the bottom staff is for Tenor Bass. The music is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The lyrics are: "low? Where-fore weave with toil and care The rich robes your ty-rants wear?". The melody is primarily stepwise, with some intervals of a fourth and fifth. The bass line provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

Notwithstanding the change of key signature to E major at bar 30, the opening progression at this point (for verse 3) is modal: I – IIIc – VI, and the music then proceeds diatonically to bar 36. At the end of verse 3 (bars 45-49) Bush writes a number of cadences using half-diminished chords, which he had possibly absorbed from his knowledge of Debussy’s music.<sup>65</sup> B $\flat$  minor<sup>7 $\flat$ 5</sup> (functioning as V<sup>7</sup> at the end of bar 45) – I in E $\flat$  (bar 46) and D minor<sup>7 $\flat$ 5</sup> (= VII<sup>7</sup>c) – Ic in E minor (bars 46-47), but he ends the verse with a pseudo-plagal IIb – I in E $\flat$  (see Ex. 1:6). In verse 4 a highly dissonant chord of A $\flat$ <sup>7 aug 5</sup> on the word “grave” in bar 60 has an exact counterpart on the same word in bar 11 (G $\flat$ <sup>7 aug 5</sup>), a fine example of word painting (see Ex. 1:7).<sup>66</sup> Similarly, on beat 1 of bar 66 a discordant IV<sup>7 aug 5</sup> ostensibly in A $\flat$  (beats 3-4 = Ib<sup>aug 5</sup> – IV in that key) precedes a modulation to F minor in bar 67, appropriately echoing the words “[till fair] England be your sepulchre”. There is considerable textual repetition over an A $\flat$  pedal from this point to the end of the verse, which concludes with a pseudo-perfect cadence in bars 70-71 (V $\natural$ <sup>7</sup> – I<sup>6</sup> in D $\flat$  minor disregarding the accented passing-note g $\flat$ ’ on beat 1 of bar 71). The short 4-bar coda (bars 72-75) opens in the relative (F) minor, but there is a pseudo-plagal cadence (IVb<sup>7</sup> with an added 6<sup>th</sup> instead of the 5<sup>th</sup> – Ic) into F $\flat$  in bars 72-73. The tonic (A $\flat$ ) is only achieved on the final two chords, reprising the chord sequence of bars 7-8, albeit in a different key.

Example 1:6 – *To the Men of England* (bars 45-49)

The musical score for Example 1:6 consists of two staves: Soprano Alto (top) and Tenor Bass (bottom). The music is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B $\flat$  minor). The lyrics are: "arms, \_\_\_\_\_ Forge arms in your de- fence\_\_ to bear.\_\_\_\_" for the Soprano Alto and "arms, in your de - fence to bear," for the Tenor Bass. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and various musical notations including notes, rests, and bar lines.

Example 1:7 – *To the Men of England* (bars 60-61)

The musical score shows two staves. The top staff is for Soprano and Alto, and the bottom staff is for Tenor and Bass. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are "Trace your grave and build your tomb, And". The instruction "non cresc." is written above the Soprano/Alto staff.

The overriding perception of *To the Men of England* is of a somewhat ‘highbrow’ art-folk-song with recognisable melodic contours. Although Bush’s general musical language can be related to text-book harmony, his progressions are undoubtedly eclectic and ‘un-English’. As previously noted, he was greatly influenced by the works of various French composers, and Nancy later observed: “[in 1918 he] thought the music of Ravel and Debussy more ravishing than any other he had heard”.<sup>67</sup> This may well explain Bush’s use of such eclectic harmonies, having had the intervening years in which to absorb their harmonic language by the time he came to write this song in 1927-1928. His effective use of dissonant chords, notably half-diminished ones with either a flattened or augmented 5<sup>th</sup>, clearly reflects the negative inferences of the text; his pseudo-cadences, however, may simply be reflective of a desire for originality. This apparent dichotomy was one that occupied Bush’s thoughts for many years. In an interview, published in 1978, he spoke about the difficulties composers experienced in developing a suitable compositional style for workers’ music:

“composers wrote music for working-class consumption and performance in a somewhat different idiom from what they wrote their ‘professional’ concert music. And it took some of us a long time before we were able to unite those two styles of music – as indeed it took the very great composer Hanns Eisler in the 1930’s. His music, which was for working-class consumption, was in a kind of modal style, whereas in his other music he used the 12-tone system of Schönberg [*sic.*].”<sup>68</sup>

These problems are clearly reflected in the two very different settings examined in this chapter, and Bush’s comments offer some insight into the continuing challenge he faced at this time. Like Eisler, Bush embraced modality in *Song to Labour* and continued to do so in

his compositions through to the end of his life.<sup>69</sup> It is apparent, however, from an examination of *To the Men of England*, that he had not yet really commenced the slow process of fusing a simpler amateur workers' song idiom with one more suited to a higher level of socialist art music, albeit in a highly eclectic manner.

In autumn 1928 Bush returned to Berlin to further his piano studies with Artur Schnabel,<sup>70</sup> practising for up to eight hours a day between lessons; and he also attended opera performances and concerts, including the first performance of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* and a recital by Rachmaninov.<sup>71</sup> He also gave a well-reviewed concert of his own works at the Bechstein Hall there on 6 November.<sup>72</sup> The programme included his *String Quartet* (Op. 4, played by the Brosa Quartet), *Piano Quintet* (Op. 5), *Five pieces for violin, viola, cello, clarinet and horn* (Op. 6, dedicated to John Ireland), and two solo piano pieces, *Prelude and Fugue* (Op. 9) and the newly composed *Relinquishment* (Op. 11). Unusually, two favourable reviews of the time took opposing positions on the matter of Bush's tonality:

"The music bears witness in every note to a cultivated intellectual personality; all is rooted in tonality. In the moulding of melodic lines and in the weaving of the polyphonic texture one sees a tasteful musician who knows exactly how to handle the colours of the musical spectrum. Bush has a technique in composition which commands respect."<sup>73</sup>

"He is entirely a child of our time, following atonality unashamedly. Not, however, so strictly that he avoids a major common chord at the conclusion of a movement. An early work, such as the String Quartet, Op 4, is naturally more bound to tonality; it shows without any particular originality the universal style of modern dissonant writing. In the Five Pieces, Op 6, his approach to the expressionism of the Schoenberg school is remarkable, yet his own voice sounds through, the voice of a deep melancholy, a muted passion whose expression is resignation and lament. These Five Pieces are valuable music."<sup>74</sup>

It would appear from these reviews that the critical perception of tonality in these compositions was somewhat subjective. Atonality, however, had never appealed to Bush and, although ambiguous at times, there was always a tonal logic in his works.

The following recent comments about *Relinquishment* also refer to tonality whilst indicating that Bush's style was unique and eclectic before the time of his departure for Berlin:

"It [*Relinquishment*] has always struck me as particularly complex in its use of 'advanced harmonic techniques'. I should perhaps clarify that expression by saying that what I think he [Bush] does is to compose within a strictly tonal framework in which every note can be related to 'text-book harmony', and that his significant advance was to broaden that language by allowing diatonic modes the same status as major and minor keys. The idea of a 'chromatic modal piece' should be a contradiction in terms but not in the works of Bush."<sup>75</sup>

"Relinquishment Op. 11 (1928)... is a prime example of Ronald Stevenson's observations: its flowing sinewy, semiquaver figuration sets in motion a dialectical statement of A $\flat$  major, going to minor on the next note, the whole piece growing out of this semitonal tension. In 1930 Olivier Messiaen published his early Preludes, and I am struck by the similarity between the sonorities created by him in his block chords, in comparison with similar passages in *Relinquishment* though it is unlikely the one composer knew of the other's work."<sup>76</sup>

Since Bush was intent on a career as a concert pianist at the time, *Relinquishment* for piano was eminently suitable for concert performance.

Duncan Hall, among others, noted the importance of Bush's musical structures, about which he wrote:

"Even before going to Berlin, Bush experimented with very interesting compositional methods that prioritised the architecture of the whole piece over the usual British pre-occupation with the 'sensual moment'."<sup>77</sup>

Bush's major compositions up to 1928 are characterised by an intellectual rigour and an overall architectural approach to structure. The music is complex and demanding, requiring a high standard of technical performance combined with intelligence and concentration from performer(s) and audience alike, although the listener is never in doubt about the validity of the argument, which never falters and ultimately leads to a satisfying conclusion. It would, however, have had little appeal to the musically uneducated, then as now.

Bush's growing involvement with left-wing politics in the 1930s, and his consequent acceptance of socialist realism as a desirable philosophy, gradually brought about a less

rigorous compositional approach. This would eventually result in his music becoming somewhat more accessible, especially for the common man. His first leanings in this direction, including a large-scale theatrical pageant, are of particular interest and will be explored in Chapter 2.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 15, writing about the dawning of his interest in the sciences in 1915.

<sup>2</sup> After Alan's death in 1995, four of his mother's paintings under her maiden name, Alice Brinsley, were donated to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

<sup>3</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 14.

<sup>4</sup> London: Watts & Co., 1913.

<sup>5</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 16.

<sup>6</sup> William Wooding Starmer (1867-1927) was an organist and composer whose main interest was campanology. He was acquainted with Elgar, having lived near him in Worcester, and they remained in contact when each moved to London. In 1917 he was living in Hampstead, not far from Elgar (telephone conversation with Rachel O'Higgins, 16 October 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Bush, A., during his last radio interview, 1986, replayed by John Amis as part of the *Song to Labour* interval talk, during a BBC live recording of the Alan Bush Centenary Concert, 1 November 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 17.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Bush, N. (2000), 12.

<sup>11</sup> Bush described Matthey to Lewis Foreman as "the ruination of pianism in England" (Foreman (2000), 100).

<sup>12</sup> The Thalberg Scholarship was founded in 1877 in memory of pianist and composer Sigismund Thalberg (1812-1871). It amounted to "about £20 a year, which is appropriated towards the cost of two years' instruction in the Academy." Bush held this scholarship, which is no longer in existence, from May 1920 to April 1922. The Matthew Phillimore Prize was founded by the grandmother of a lieutenant of that name who was killed in action during the First World War in 1916. The prize, awarded annually, was "about ten guineas" (RAM Prospectus, 1920-1921, 35). Phillimore's name is erroneously spelled as Philimore in Craggs (2007), 15 (there are many inaccuracies in this book: see endnote 15, for example).

<sup>13</sup> Craggs (2007), 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 13. This was not an entirely solo recital given by Bush but one by "Lily West and her pupils".

<sup>15</sup> This was "the gift of Charles Mortimer Esq., JP", an annual award of £5 "to the composer of the best work of which the subject is announced by the Committee two months before the date of the competition" (RAM Prospectus 1918, 42). Bush was awarded this prize in March 1919 for "A Set of Three Melodious Pianoforte Pieces" (RAM Prize List, 1919, 2). Craggs (*ibid.*, 14) attributes this award to the *Three Pieces for two pianos* (Op. 1), but this is not credible as they were written two years later in 1921, and won the Battison Haynes Prize in that year. Nothing more is known about the winning pieces in 1919, however, as Bush presumably withdrew them along with many other early compositions.

<sup>16</sup> The Battison Haynes Prize was founded in memory of Walter Battison Haynes, Professor of Composition at the RAM (1890-1900). An annual award of "about Six Pounds... will be awarded for the composition of a piece, the nature of which will be duly announced by the Committee of Management" (RAM Prospectus 1920-1921). The Philip Agnew Composition Prize was a biennial award of 20 guineas from 1920 onwards, the gift of Philip L. Agnew, composer, pianist and publisher. Confirmation that Bush was awarded these prizes in 1921 is to be found in the RAM Prize List for that year (page 3).

<sup>17</sup> Foreman (2000), 100.

<sup>18</sup> As part of the Philip Agnew Composition Prize, in the year following the award, the donor contributed "a sum not exceeding Twenty-five Guineas towards the cost of publication of the work" (RAM Prospectus 1921-1922). This prize is no longer in existence.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Head (1900-1976) was the Sir Michael Costa Scholar for composition at the RAM in 1919, and Bush and he became good friends, often visiting each other's homes (Bush, N. (2000), 13).

<sup>20</sup> Bush, N. (2000), 13.

<sup>21</sup> Foreman (2000), 101, quoting Lisa Hardy, 'The Development of the British Piano Sonata 1870-1945' (Diss., Goldsmith's College, Univ. of London, 1996), 130-1. In a letter from Tippett to Bush of 20 September 1944, the

---

former wrote: “I gather that you’ve realised how much of your piano work has got into my Sonata! I didn’t realise it till afterwards or it might have been more. I’m afraid its [*sic.*] a naïve way of saying how much I learnt from the study of your music. It came just at the right moment. Latterly the influences have been all from the past. The Elizabethans & Purcell & Monteverdi in the new Symphony [no. 1]” (BA, 1944).

<sup>22</sup> Foreman (2000), 102.

<sup>23</sup> Bush, N. (2000), 16.

<sup>24</sup> Bush, A., web ref. (1979). This article was written as part of a John Ireland Centenary Programme broadcast by the BBC in October 1979.

<sup>25</sup> This correspondence formed the subject of a scholarly book by Bush’s daughter, Rachel O’Higgins (O’Higgins (2006)).

<sup>26</sup> O’Higgins, web ref. (2006).

<sup>27</sup> O’Higgins (2006), 17.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Ireland (1950), 16.

<sup>30</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 20.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Hall (2001), 40-41.

<sup>33</sup> The Labour Movement at that time included the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party, the trade unions, the co-operative movement, the Communist Party and other smaller socialist groups.

<sup>34</sup> Hall (2001), 32-36. The single quotes around ‘the Labour Church hymn book’ are Hall’s, referencing an earlier source.

<sup>35</sup> Bush, N. (2000), 17.

<sup>36</sup> Bush, A., web ref. (1972).

<sup>37</sup> It is unclear as to whether this was only for the ILP or also for the Labour Party (Bush, A. (1980), 20).

<sup>38</sup> Rutland Boughton founded the London Labour Choral Union in 1924. “[It]... was then sponsored by the Labour Party and enjoyed the support of Herbert Morrison” (Bush, N. (2000), 17).

<sup>39</sup> Bush, N. (2000), 18.

<sup>40</sup> The text was by Charlotte Perkins [not Perkin, as in the published score] Gilman (1860-1935), an American feminist author and social reform activist. It is important to note that Bush frequently made use of an interchangeable terminology for his shorter choral works, confusingly labelling these variously as ‘two-part songs’, ‘songs for mixed voice chorus with piano accompaniment’ or simply ‘choral works’. Pieces involving one or more solo singers and chorus are similarly labelled as either ‘songs’ or ‘choral works’. See Appendix A for a table of Bush’s workers’ choral music and songs composed between 1926 and 1948, the last year in which he composed one specifically for this medium (although many later songs continued to be performed by workers’ choirs, these were concerned with wider issues such as world peace, human rights, the nuclear threat and so on).

<sup>41</sup> Stevenson (1964), 327.

<sup>42</sup> *To Labour* appeared in full in the *Women’s Trade Union League Convention Handbook* (Boston, 1911), quoted in Pastorello (2008), vi.

<sup>43</sup> Walford Davies (1915). The intended use of this collection of 87 songs is clearly laid out on the cover as follows: “specially arranged, adapted and edited (for indoor or open-air singing) on behalf of The National Adult School Union, the Co-operative Holidays Association, The Holiday Fellowship, The Workers’ Educational Association, The Home Music Study Union, and for the general use of clubs, social unions and public schools”. Of the six 4-line stanzas, Walford Davies’ strophic setting omits the second and sixth, combining text from both to form a refrain (labelled ‘Chorus’) to verses one, three and five. The verses are marked ‘Solo’, and the choral refrain is in unison with an optional 2- (female voices) or 4-part (SATB) rendition. The piano accompaniment doubles the vocal line throughout, and there is a brief 2-bar codetta at the end.

<sup>44</sup> The score is undated, but its publication could have been no earlier than 1936, ten years after Bush composed the song. Whether it had been previously published by the London Labour Choral Union, for whom it was written, is unknown, although they performed it in Brussels around 1933 (Bush, N. (2000), 31).

<sup>45</sup> The song is listed in Bush, A. (1980), 84, under “Songs for mixed Voice Chorus with Piano Accompaniment”, but there is no reference to this on the actual published score.

<sup>46</sup> The modulation to E occurs from the end of bar 6 to bar 8, returning to A in bar 9, and that to D is in bars 10 and 14 returning to A in bars 11-12 and 15-16 respectively.

<sup>47</sup> Walford Davies’ setting interestingly does something similar in his refrain, but with a crotchet on the f' for the word “the” falling to c" on “world”. In the final phrase there is a climactic paused f' on the word “right is done”.

<sup>48</sup> Bowman (1980), 127.

<sup>49</sup> The Helmholtz system of notation is used throughout this dissertation for specific pitches, with uppercase letters for reference to general notation and key indication.



---

<sup>50</sup> Bush, A., BA (1962).

<sup>51</sup> Bush and Florence Lockwood had formed a duo during their student days and performed together both in England and in Germany. Their first performance was on 5 July 1920 at a RAM concert where they played Bush's *Sonata in E minor for violin and piano* (Craggs (2007), 28). Their second Berlin concert also took place at the Bechsteinsaal on 16 September 1926.

<sup>52</sup> Shelley's poem is sometimes referred to as *Song – To the Men of England*, and Bush himself listed it as such but without the hyphen (Bush, A. (1980), 82). A number of other writers have followed his lead, but the published score makes no mention of *Song*. The manuscript in the British Library, London, is dated December 1927 – January 1928.

<sup>53</sup> Bush, A., score (1928), 10.

<sup>54</sup> Stevenson (1964), 327. To what extent Bush's music reflects the "Central European" style is beyond the parameters of this dissertation, since it would involve a direct comparison with related workers' music by Hanns Eisler and possibly others.

<sup>55</sup> Bush, A., BA (1963). Stevenson had presumably sent Bush a copy of his article prior to publication.

<sup>56</sup> Schafer (1963), 58. "*Schafer*: You have spoken of formalism in a deprecating manner. Have you yourself ever been convicted of formalism? *Bush*: Yes I have, and with justification. Mine was an unconscious formalism for I never practised formalism for its own sake.... My music became eclectic and I was concentrating too much on technical procedures. I lost my balance. *Schafer*: Who accused you of formalism? *Bush*: I accused myself."

<sup>57</sup> Anderson W.R. (1929), 43. Anderson's review was made from his perusal of the published score (Curwen, 1928), since there is no record of any public performance of the work. The song was later reprinted by Joseph Williams in 1950 (Craggs (2007), 36), however, which indicates that it must have become part of the choral repertory. Alfred Austin was the Poet Laureate from 1896 until his death in 1913.

<sup>58</sup> Verses 1-2 (bars 1-14), verses 3-4 (bars 15-29), verses 5-6 (bars 30-49), verses 7-8 (bars 50-71), coda (bars 72-75).

<sup>59</sup> The only other example of word repetition occurs at bars 45-46, challenging the men of England to "Forge arms".

<sup>60</sup> In contrast, for the first half of verse 3 the time signature alternates each bar between 3/4 and 4/4 but remains in 4/4 for the second half, whilst verse 4 is in 4/4 except for one bar (68) in 3/2.

<sup>61</sup> Iambic tetrameter has four unstressed-stressed feet, but some variation is acceptable (www.tetrameter.com, accessed 22 June 2012).

<sup>62</sup> The only exceptions to this in verse 3 are a diminished 5<sup>th</sup> in the soprano part in bar 42 and a diminished 4<sup>th</sup> in bars 44-45.

<sup>63</sup> The falling fifth and subsequent rising fourth at the end of bar 39 are clearly an inversion of the earlier 'call' motif of this section as it was varied in bar 32, whilst the three stepwise notes that follow (start of bar 40) appear to have their origin in the second motif of the song as first heard in bars 2-3.

<sup>64</sup> Another related example occurs at bars 13-14, where what appears to be a cadence in D<sub>b</sub> (V<sup>7<sub>b</sub>3</sup> – I) is actually VII (with the root flattened) – Ib in B<sub>b</sub> minor. This is immediately followed by what also appears to be V<sup>7<sub>b</sub>3</sup> – I in B<sub>b</sub> major (with an accented passing note g') that is actually VII<sup>7<sub>b</sub>3</sup> (with the root natural rather than raised) – Ib in G minor followed by VIIb (with the root flattened rather than raised as before) – I into E<sub>b</sub>.

<sup>65</sup> A half-diminished seventh chord is one "that consists of two superimposed minor triads (forming a diminished triad) and one major third (e.g. B – D – F – A)... it is sometimes reinterpreted through enharmonic equivalence. Thus in E<sub>b</sub> minor the supertonic half-diminished 7<sup>th</sup> is F – A<sub>b</sub> – C<sub>b</sub> – E<sub>b</sub>, but when spelled F – G# – B – D# it is known as the 'Tristan' chord and is resolved by Wagner to the dominant of A minor.... in Debussy it contributes to the atmosphere of Impressionism (Rushton (2001, x, 691-2)).

<sup>66</sup> The text at bars 10-11 is "From the cradle to the grave" and in bars 60-61 "Trace your grave and build your tomb".

<sup>67</sup> Bush, N. (2000), 12.

<sup>68</sup> Watson (1978), 86.

<sup>69</sup> The influence of Eisler on Bush's workers' songs will be discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>70</sup> It is unclear precisely when in 1928 Bush returned to Berlin: Alan himself simply stated "I continued my studies... for the year 1928 in piano with Artur Schnabel" (Bush, A. (1980), 19). Nancy, however, elaborated on this: "In 1928 he returned to Berlin, giving up his teaching post at the Royal Academy of Music for the time being in order to study the piano with Artur Schnabel.... For the first six months Alan practised the piano for six hours a day... His life in Berlin, however, centred in his lessons with Schnabel, of which he had six, beginning in the autumn of 1928" (Bush, N. (2000), 20-21). On the following page she added, "Returning to England at the end of 1928.... Germany continued to attract him... and so in 1929 he came back to Berlin" (ibid., 22). Some confusion occurs in O'Higgins, however, who amalgamated Nancy's scenario for the entire year under a single chronological entry for October 1928 (O'Higgins (2006), xxviii). Bush incidentally was to return periodically to

---

piano lessons during his lifetime, the latest with Harold Rubens at the age of 79. Craggs (2007) omits any reference to Bush's lessons with Schnabel.

<sup>71</sup> Bush, N. (2000), 21. Rachmaninov's technical command and interpretative approach left a lasting impression on Bush.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, review by Fritz Ormann in the *Signale*.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, review by Ernst Schliepe in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.

<sup>75</sup> Bowers, email correspondence with Emer Bailey (28.4.2002). Timothy Bowers, a former composition student of Bush, is currently (2013) Alan Bush Lecturer and Undergraduate Tutor at the RAM.

<sup>76</sup> Jones, web ref. (2000). John Ireland's opinion of *Relinquishment* was quoted earlier.

<sup>77</sup> Hall, web ref. (2000). Hall's final phrase echoes an earlier statement from Payne: "Possibly the most significant factor in Alan Bush's development as a composer was the time he spent in Berlin, for it equipped him technically to deal with a vision which was at variance with that of his English contemporaries... it was the sensuous moment which was thought most truly English and... this was revered beyond its relevance to the overall form... The very essence of Bush's creative personality runs contrary to this spirit, and his Berlin years helped him to realize a characteristic which might otherwise have remained undernourished. To Bush the impact of the moment is of secondary importance to the architecture — expressive form in the true sense" (Payne (1964), 263). Hall himself later added: "Although his studies in Berlin appear to have cemented his compositional style as a more conscious, systematized method, the pieces that Bush wrote between leaving the Royal Academy and attending the University of Berlin (1922-9) were already characteristic" (Hall (2001), 133).

## Chapter 2

### Life and Music II: Socialism (1929-1935)

*“With the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I resolved from 1924 onwards to do what I could to advance the cause of socialism in Britain.”<sup>1</sup>*

This chapter will consider the development of Bush’s socialism up to 1935, in which year he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain. There will also be an exploration of how his political beliefs manifested themselves in musical terms with relation to the following choral compositions: the SSAA *Epilogue* of the ‘art’ song-cycle *Songs of the Doomed*, the unaccompanied SATB ‘semi-art’ *The Road*, and the accompanied, relatively simple but functionally different, unison workers’ songs *Question & Answer* and *Song of the Hunger Marchers*.

#### **The Berlin years from 1929 to 1931**

In 1929 Alan Bush attended Berlin University to study philosophy and musicology,<sup>2</sup> realising that he “must learn more about the world, more about politics”.<sup>3</sup> Arnold Schoenberg was a lecturer in composition at the nearby Prussian Academy of Arts from 1925 to 1933, but there is no evidence to suggest that the two ever met. Bush would certainly have been aware of his proximity, compositional stature, and the scale of his musical influence, since Bush’s later compositions show a thorough understanding of Schoenberg’s serial techniques. At that time, the Expressionist school in Berlin was experiencing what Ronald Stevenson described as “something like a witches’ sabbath of notoriety before the Nazis banished them.”<sup>4</sup> He conceded, however, that Bush’s artistic probity remained undamaged by those years: “It is testimony to Bush’s integrity of purpose, as a composer, that he emerged from his Berlin

years unscathed by the spiritually poisonous and rancorously pessimistic influence of Expressionism.”<sup>5</sup>

Bush’s best-known composition, the one-movement sonata-form *Dialectic* (Op. 15) for string quartet, dates from 1929 and reflects in its title his studies of the time, referring to a “philosophical... testing of truth by logical discussion and disputation”.<sup>6</sup> Bush’s own explanation of the work was:

“This was my first extended work to be organised not only harmonically and rhythmically but also thematically; the exposition contains five subjects, and all of these, as well as the counter melodies heard with them, are derived from the work’s opening, a passage played in unison. It occurred to me that the way in which these subjects, with their notes of varying length, swing from fast to slow, and then from faster to slower, is reminiscent of the developing contradictions in Hegelian dialect.”<sup>7</sup>

The intensely rigorous relationships between the harmonic, rhythmic and thematic materials resulted in a tightly interwoven and complex musical work, unique in the string canon. This was the first of Bush’s works to utilise completely what he later termed his ‘Total Thematicisation’ method of composition,<sup>8</sup> and it provided a blueprint for many future works.

While Bush was employed in a systematic study of philosophy and musicology in Berlin, he came “into contact with the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and with the music of composers associated with the German working-class movement, such as Hanns Eisler, whose world outlook was that of Marxism.”<sup>9</sup> He gradually became convinced that Marxism was the only possible way forward for society. Although based in Berlin during 1929, Bush travelled back to England frequently, to fulfil engagements; for instance, he gave a solo piano recital in the Wigmore Hall on 1 December. His art music was not neglected either, including, in addition to *Dialectic*, the composition of a song-cycle for tenor (or baritone) with female chorus and piano entitled *Songs of the Doomed* (Op. 14, 1929).<sup>10</sup>

### *Songs of the Doomed* (Op. 14, 1929)

The texts of the five songs in this cycle are by Frederick Cecil Boden,<sup>11</sup> and the first line of each song evokes the prevailing mood:

- I: Despair is at heart and hatred for ever
- II: When daylight's breaking
- III: Beauty dwells uncertain here in homes unsure
- IV: Here they lie, that once had breath
- V: Epilogue: Hush, be still, you bitter thing

The female chorus (SSAA), the subject of study here, only appears in the Epilogue and not in the four preceding songs.<sup>12</sup> The texts would have appealed to Bush as a powerful declamation and description of the human suffering and appalling conditions endured by the Derbyshire miners at that time. They form an angry lament for the plight of the miners, as the following selections, one from each of the first four songs respectively, show:<sup>13</sup>

“Despair is at heart and hatred forever,  
There among my fellows, hate and despair,  
Bitterness, strife and futile endeavour,  
Misery, anger, these things are there.”

“For ere day's risen,  
Ere light's come round,  
I'll be in prison  
Down underground.”

“Hueless and unsacred  
Here, in hearts fordone,  
Buds of beauty dying,  
Cheated of the sun.”

“Here they lie that once had breath,  
Here they lie, not nice to see,  
Men I knew all crushed to death,  
Men that used to work with me.”

Given the subject matter, the following comment is hardly surprising: “works like *Songs of the Doomed*, have a cold, grey quality that may reflect an emotional state or an absorption with experiments.”<sup>14</sup> The work belongs to the art-song genre and is subsequently of a much higher musical level than any of Bush's later workers' songs that he wrote for the LLCU. Whereas the latter are relatively easily learned by amateurs, this song cycle is intended for a trained soloist and chorus and is consequently musically more demanding. When it was eventually

first performed in 1933, it was, presumably, the Women's Chorus of the LLCU Central Choir that sang the *Epilogue*.

Bush uses Boden's poems in a seemingly random order,<sup>15</sup> but in fact each has been carefully chosen to depict in turn the abject misery and anger, longing, deprivation, and grief, of the miners, as, for example, in verse 1 of the *Epilogue*:

“Hush, be still, you bitter thing,  
Hush awhile and do not sing;  
Songs like these, dripping gall,  
Never should be sung at all.  
Sing no more your grief and ill,  
Oh, hush, be still!”<sup>16</sup>

When taken as a whole the cycle offers a glimpse into the miners' bleak, dark, and dangerous, world, with the *Epilogue* summing up the futility of their complaints in an expression of utter hopelessness.

The cycle is unified by the use of a 3-note rhythmic motif in the piano of two falling semiquavers followed by a leap to a quaver, and this is established at the outset of the first movement (see Ex. 2:1). The same feature appears in augmentation in the second movement, but is not evident in the third. It is transformed into triplets in the fourth, and recurs in the *Epilogue* as a series of paired chromatic semiquavers (either rising or falling), often followed by more than one quaver.<sup>17</sup> The first and last movements are further unified by the key signature of D minor, although the *Epilogue* is characterised by the extensive use of chromaticism throughout which negates any real sense of tonality.

Example 2:1 – I: *Despair is at heart* (bars 1-3)

Molto marcato ma non allegro (♩. = 76)

Tenor

Piano

Des-pair is at heart and

*f*

*sempre f*

The structure of the 2-verse *Epilogue* is modified strophic, with substantial rhythmic variations to accommodate the text, which Bush follows faithfully except for the final three words, which he repeats. While each of the other poems in the cycle has four lines in each verse, the *Epilogue* has six. The key signature is notionally D minor, although this tonality is not reached until the very end of the song, and the time signature oscillates between 9/8 and 6/8. The plangent and chromatic harmonies often employ augmented or diminished intervals and false relations, while for the most part the first and second sopranos move together in thirds or in unison and the altos similarly. Overall the writing is effectively in three parts rather than four, since when one group sings in harmony the other more often than not is in unison (see Exs. 2:2 and 2:3), with only one corresponding bar in each verse in four parts.

There is no formal musical structure within the two verses, unlike the simpler workers' songs, but each of these is clearly subdivided into three 2-line sections.<sup>18</sup> The overall *Andante tranquillo* tempo slows at the end of both verses and the coda (utilising a different Italian term for each). The 6-bar piano introduction is marked *p*, and each verse commences quietly but with various internal dynamic lozenges.<sup>19</sup> The third section rises to a *forte* climax, remaining thus to the end of verse 2 but returning to the opening *p* in verse 1. As with the workers'

songs, the vocal ranges are unchallenging, although the intervals to be sung are demanding in places.<sup>20</sup>

The bass part of the syncopated piano introduction descends in a partially chromatic fashion from  $b\flat$  to A, generally by alternate octaves,<sup>21</sup> a technique that continues throughout the song until a pedal D<sub>1</sub> is established at the end of verse 2 (bar 40), although this does not relate to a tonic harmony (the first in the entire movement) until the end of bar 41. Bush makes use of pluralistic compositional techniques in the *Epilogue* within an overall D minor context, commencing with elements of both octatonicism and serialism from the outset.<sup>22</sup> Bitonality is also present from the start, although Bush may have regarded this more as false relation. In bar 3, for example, the piano right hand commences with a G major triad alternating with a  $g\sharp$  in the left hand, which appears to be a false relation, although in bar 8 the choir has an A minor triad against an  $A^7$  harmony in the piano, which is clearly bitonal.

The 3-note rhythmic motif of the opening song of the cycle is re-established from the outset and recurs throughout the *Epilogue*, generally semitonally albeit with varying rhythms. Similar semitonal movement is frequently encountered in the vocal parts, which only occasionally have diatonic harmonies, unlike the simpler workers' songs. Bush instead employs a considerable variety of augmented and diminished chords, including the continued frequent use of half-diminished seventh chords. The opening vocal triad (bar 7), for example, is  $B\flat^{aug\ 5}$ , with an added seventh in the accompaniment. At bar 9 the same chord is enhanced as  $B\flat^{7aug\ 3+5}$ . In the first instance the resolution is to the bitonal harmony of  $A^7/Am$  noted above (bar 8), whereas the second one remains unresolved, moving at the end of the phrase (start of bar 10) semitonally to a spatial dissonance of  $F/f - e' - g'$  (see Ex. 2:2). Something similar occurs in two consecutive examples of a half-diminished chord, as if Bush were



applying a formula to his use of chromatic harmonies within the verse, with the dissonant one propelling the music forward. In the first of these (bar 16),  $Cm^{7\flat 5}$  resolves to  $E\flat m^7$ , with the second one (bar 19),  $Gm^{7\flat 5}$ , remaining unresolved as  $G - D\flat - E - F$  (see Ex. 2:3).<sup>23</sup> Other similar chromatic chords either occur relatively consecutively, as with  $Am^{7\flat 5} - Dm^{7\flat 5}$  in bars 30-31,<sup>24</sup> or remain unresolved as functional harmonies.

Example 2:2 – V: Epilogue (bars 7-10)

Example 2:2 – V: Epilogue (bars 7-10) musical score. The score is in 6/8 time and features Soprano 1-2, Alto 1-2, and Piano parts. The piano accompaniment is marked *p* and includes harmonic annotations:  $B\flat^{aug 5}$ ,  $A^7/Am$ , and  $B\flat^{7aug 3+5}$ . The vocal parts include lyrics: "Hush, be still, you bitter thing, Hush a - Oh hush, hush a -".

Example 2:3 – V: Epilogue (bars 16-19)

Example 2:3 – V: Epilogue (bars 16-19) musical score. The score is in 9/8 time and features Soprano 1-2, Alto 1-2, and Piano parts. The piano accompaniment is marked *meno p* and includes harmonic annotations:  $Cm^{7\flat 5}$ ,  $E\flat m^7$ , and  $Gm^{7\flat 5}$ . The vocal parts include lyrics: "all. Sing no more your grief and ill, oh,". Dynamics include *crescendo*, *f*, and *p*.

The harmonic ambiguity encountered at bar 8 ( $A^7/Am$ ) and later at 21 ( $E^7/Em^{7\flat 5}$ ), together with the  $Gm^7$  at bar 12, and the  $D^7$  (albeit with an added  $a\flat'$ ) at bar 40, offers at least some sense of a tonal field. The otherwise relentless tonal instability of the music is given a momentary stable respite at bar 12, where the  $Gm^7$  is held for a full bar, and 21, both bars indicating the end of a line of text. At the end of verse 2 the  $D^7/Dm^{7\flat 5}$  in bar 40, together with the start of the D pedal, finally offers a real sense of tonic harmony, albeit with continued chromaticism, until an unambiguous tonic chord is established for the final five bars.

Considerable choral expertise would have been required for the performance of this *Epilogue*, as many of the intervals and dissonances are challenging. With regard to the former, for example, the sopranos have, in close succession, a rising augmented fourth (bars 34-35), a descending minor sixth (bars 35-36), a rising perfect fifth (bar 36), a descending minor seventh (bars 37-38), a rising minor tenth (bars 38-39) and a final descending minor tenth (bars 39-40). The alto lines are not dissimilar.<sup>25</sup> From the outset the piano accompaniment offers relatively little help to the singers: for example, although the initial soprano 1 d" is heard two beats before their entry, the soprano 2 and alto 1 notes are only sounded one quaver before they are required to sing them.

Although *Songs of the Doomed* was a clear successor to *To the Men of England* (examined in Chapter 1) in terms of its eclecticism, Bush's sense of tonality in the earlier work is notably absent from the far more complex and harmonically adventurous *Epilogue*. Although this may have been the result of the previously noted French influence on him, it could alternatively be argued that Bush was simply reflecting the bleak situation of the miners, as depicted in the text, by the use of such tonal and harmonic experimentation,

thereby rendering Gill's earlier comment that this work "may reflect... an absorption with experiments", correct.<sup>26</sup>

The Labour Movement in England was experiencing difficulties towards the end of the 1920s, since differences of ideological affiliation had arisen within its ranks. The Independent Labour Party had become influenced by Trotskyism, which was anathema to Bush. He consequently resigned his membership of the ILP and joined the Labour Party. Rutland Boughton was, however, disillusioned by Labour Party policies following their 1929 election victory. He resigned in protest from the London Labour Choral Union, and Bush was elected Musical Adviser in his place. His first imperative was to establish a Central Choir within the LLCU made up of the best singers available. His object was "to provide a sensitive instrument upon which conductors can practise, and upon which experiments can be tried which will aid them in their development as musicians",<sup>27</sup> and that the Central Choir would "represent the LLCU in its pioneering expeditions to benighted districts",<sup>28</sup> thus providing much needed high-quality support to local choirs.

### ***The Road (Op. 13, 1929)***

Bush composed and arranged many songs for working class rallies and events. Some were planned as concert performance material and were therefore more demanding musically than those that were simply designed to arouse fervour in the assembly. *The Road*, to a text by Violet Friedlaender, is a good example of the former and is classified as a work "For chorus of mixed voices (unaccompanied)" in an SATB setting.<sup>29</sup> The text reflects the thoughts of men who broke stones to make the roads but who would never be in a position to travel on them, as expressed in verses two and four below:

For us the heat by day, the cold by night,  
The inch-slow progress and the heavy load,  
And death at last to close the long, grim fight

With man and beast and stone: for them the Road.

And yet the Road is ours, as never theirs!  
Is not one joy on us alone bestowed?  
For us the master joy, O pioneers!  
We shall not travel, but we make the Road.

The piano part is marked “for practice only” and replicates the four part harmony exactly, reading almost as a chorale. Unusually the melody is not also notated in *Sol-fa* as would have been the norm at the time. Bush’s setting is structurally straightforward as a relatively early choral work for the LLCU, although somewhat eclectic in the musical language employed. The setting follows a symmetrical pattern in his setting of the four 4-line verses as two 8-line sections of music, with the first and third and the second and fourth verses matching.<sup>30</sup> This is reminiscent of his earlier treatment of *Song to Labour* and *To the Men of England*, where two 4-line stanzas of each poem are scored as one 8-line verse. Bush makes one amendment to the text in the final line of verse 1, replacing the original “We shall but come...” with “We shall be come...”, the meaning of which is unclear.<sup>31</sup> The overall song structure is modified strophic (bars 1-16 and 17-32) with an internal binary musical form reflecting the layout of the original four verses (bars 1-7 and 7-16, etc.), albeit with some internal rhythmic and melodic variations. The setting is completely homophonic. All four voices are scored well within the normal range for each: the soprano, tenor and bass each has an eleventh, while the alto has only a ninth.<sup>32</sup> The parts move in close harmony with the largest leap a major sixth, but with occasional angular writing and diminished or augmented intervals.<sup>33</sup>

Although the original art poem is written in iambic pentameter,<sup>34</sup> Bush does not follow this metre; in his general use of anacrusis commencing with three notes of equal note value, for example, in the first, second and fourth lines of verses 1 and 3. He also makes use of Lombardic rhythm in several places, as in bar 1, by putting the emphasis unexpectedly on the second syllable of “travel”, again disrupting the metre. The opening time signature is 3/4 but

changes frequently to accommodate the text.<sup>35</sup> In bars 9 and 12 there are plausible examples of word painting, with each syllable of “inch-slow” given a rare crotchet and “last” a dotted crotchet. In the final verse the line “Is not one joy on us alone bestowed?” is unusual, with the emphasis falling on “not one joy” rather than the poignant “on us a-lone”, which is given peremptory treatment.<sup>36</sup>

There are distinctive rhythmic and melodic patterns used throughout the song, although their actual note values and pitch are varied. For example, verse 1 commences with a three-quaver anacrusis followed in bar 1 by a semiquaver – two dotted quavers – semiquaver – two quavers. At bar 5 this pattern is changed to a three-semiquaver anacrusis followed by a dotted quaver – semiquaver – four quavers, with the opening melody restated a third lower. While the melodic line of verse 3 is identical to verse 1 with just one note differing,<sup>37</sup> the rhythm is significantly altered: for example, bars 16 (end) to 17 combine the rhythmic patterns of both the opening anacrusis of the song and that of bar 6. In verse 1 the time signature shifts from 3/4 to 4/4, whereas in verse 3 the change is from 3/4 to 2/4. Similarly, verses 2 and 4 share the same melodic pattern until the last line but are also rhythmically varied to accommodate the text.

Although there is no key signature, *The Road*, for the most part, oscillates between the D dorian and aeolian modes but also incorporates the minor, and occasionally the major, sometimes even within the same phrase or cadence. For example, the song clearly commences in D dorian but ‘shifts’ to aeolian in bar 3 (with the introduction of B $\flat$ ) and cadences in D minor in bar 5 for the final line of verse 1 before reverting to the aeolian mode in bar 6. Similarly, bars 15-16 have a (D minor) Ic – IV<sup>9</sup> – Vb (D dorian) – I (D major) cadence (see Ex. 2:4) and bars 27-28 have a VII<sup>7</sup>b – III – VII<sup>7</sup>c (G major) – I (G modal) progression.

Example 2:4 – *The Road* (bars 15-16)

**Broadly**

Ic - IV<sup>9</sup> - Vb - I  
Dm Ddorian Dmaj

Bush frequently employs ambiguous chords that may be described as minor triads, with an added major sixth, but which actually function either as modulatory secondary sevenths (sometimes without the fifth) or as chromatic resolutions. For example, such a chord (A, C, E, F# in first inversion) in bar 8 acts as II<sup>7</sup>c resolving to Ib followed by a plagal cadence in E minor (see Ex. 2:5).<sup>38</sup> Similarly at bar 25 he uses the same secondary seventh, this time modulating to G major: Vb/IIb – Vb<sup>#6</sup>/VIIc<sup>7</sup> (D minor/G), continuing with a modal progression in G (III – IIb – I). The last chord in bar 26 (II<sup>7</sup>b<sup>aug</sup> 4 [=b<sup>5</sup>]) is given an enharmonic spelling with d#" rather than e<sup>b</sup>, presumably, better to accommodate the soprano chromatic line (d" – d#" – e") into bar 27.<sup>39</sup>

Example 2:5 – *The Road* (bars 8-9)

II<sup>7</sup>c - Ib IV - I (Em)

There are two short chromatic passages at bars 9-11 and 12-14, both of which are modified in verse 4. A diminished V<sup>7</sup> in E minor (following on from the preceding plagal

cadence in that key) on the third beat of bar 9 is followed by an early use of a half-diminished chord in this piece, one on D# (in third inversion),<sup>40</sup> and this is followed by a diminished seventh on C# (lacking the fifth) at the start of bar 10 that resolves to a VI<sup>7</sup> – IV<sup>7</sup> ‘cadence’ in D minor into bar 11. The second passage employs augmented chords of A<sup>b</sup> (bar 12) and B<sup>b</sup> (bar 13) with a secondary seventh on A in between. Bush’s part writing results in the resolution of some of these chromatic notes being in a different voice from that anticipated, as with the augmented A<sup>b</sup> chord in bar 12. Here the a<sup>b</sup>’ resolves to g’ in the chromatically-moving alto part (bar 13) but also to a natural in the bass, with the e” descending to e<sup>b</sup>” in the similarly chromatic soprano line that includes an occasional disruptive harmony note in between the initial f” in bar 12 and the final c” at the start of bar 14. Bush does exactly the same with regard to the f#’ of the augmented chord of B<sup>b</sup> on beat 2 of bar 13 (see Ex. 2:6). The augmented harmonic progression of bar 29 repeats that of bar 12 but ends on II<sup>7</sup> in D minor/aeolian, and the song finishes in D major on the affirmative words “but we make the Road” in bar 32.<sup>41</sup>

Example 2:6 – *The Road* (bars 12-14)

Soprano  
Alto

death at last to close the long, grim fight With man and beast and

Tenor  
Bass

A<sup>b</sup> <sup>aug</sup>      B<sup>b</sup> <sup>aug</sup>

Even though the text of *The Road* could hardly be described as optimistic, the major key ending is not completely unexpected as it was a common socialistic preference to end on a positive note. This is one of Bush’s relatively early choral compositions and lies somewhere between his art-music and later workers’ compositions. It employs traditional structures but

eclectic harmonic progressions which may well have caused the singers some difficulty, not least due to the considerable chromaticism (both in the harmonies employed and in the part writing), and the fact that the *Sol-fa* notation, to which they were accustomed, is omitted from the score.

### **The return to England and the 1930s**

Bush became engaged to Nancy Head during a visit home in the spring of 1930 and they returned to Berlin together, she as *au pair* to a Jewish family. The rise of fascism in Germany was increasingly oppressive during the next year to the extent that they both felt it imperative to return to England at the end of summer 1931.<sup>42</sup> This meant the abandonment of Bush's attempt to complete his doctorate, which must have caused him considerable distress. Their marriage had taken place in London in March of that year, and it proved to be a long and extremely happy one, of which Bush wrote: "our life together has brought days, months, years, indeed decades of ever deepening happiness in uninterrupted succession."<sup>43</sup> They had three daughters: Rachel, and twins Catherine and Alice. Nancy collaborated with her husband on many of his compositions, writing the libretto for three of Bush's four operas and the text for many of his songs.<sup>44</sup>

It is clear that, politically speaking, Bush returned from Berlin around September 1931 with a much greater understanding of socialism and an even greater commitment to the Labour Movement and the cause of 'the workers'. He realised the need to compose in a way that was meaningful and useful for the socialist cause, and his music now showed a more determined purpose. This initially meant writing songs with political texts that were musically accessible to the performers, since it was of the greatest importance to him to promote the



leftist agenda at every opportunity. Of Bush's approach to workers' music in general, Duncan Hall has made the following observation:

"He [Bush] was no crude propagandist, but he was happy (and relaxed) in his employment of agitational lyrics (such as those of his long-standing collaborator Randall Swingler). He recognised that songs, rhythms and melodies could be more than 'a pleasant way to pass the time' or a vague utopian glimpse of what was to come: music could drive home messages and articulate ideas more successfully than newsletters, pamphlets and posters."<sup>45</sup>

Bush's summed up his own rationale for the composition of such songs thus:

"I felt, however, that musical art was in danger of evaporation and of losing touch with the people as a whole unless efforts were made to link those of its forms that were most widely practised with the experiences of life of the performers themselves."<sup>46</sup>

Two of Bush's workers' songs with self-explanatory texts from this time will be discussed next.

### ***Question and Answer (1931)***

Bush composed this song to a text by G.Roy Atterbury.<sup>47</sup> Scored for unison mixed voices and piano,<sup>48</sup> it includes the following instruction immediately below the title: "The Choir asks the questions, the audience answers". Verse 1 is as follows:

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

Given the very pointed nature of the anti-establishment text, this song could only have been used at labour rallies and was unlikely to have been sung as a concert piece. The simple strophic structure comprises three 8-line verses, each of which is laid out as a series of alternate 1-line questions and answers, and the setting is strictly syllabic. The 2-bar introduction is based on the melodic motif of the Answer, a vital device to familiarise the audience with the refrain, which it was required to sing. The melodic pattern of the first full two lines of text (bars 3-6) is repeated immediately (bars 7-10) and is then sequenced up a

third and repeated with slight melodic and rhythmic variation to accommodate the words in bars 11-14, with the final question a tone higher but reverting to the original rhythmic motif (bars 15-16). The verse ends with the Answer, “Yes! Yes! Yes!” in Sprechstimme style with the note heads indicated by an x and given a pitched reference of b' (see Ex. 2:7). This is followed by a sung melodic variant of bar 2, here descending rather than ascending. The strictly symmetrical nature of the phrase structure throughout the song is surprisingly overturned by the single extra bar given to the piano following the last verse, which is clearly too brief to be considered a coda.

Example 2:7 – Question and Answer (bars 15-18: text for verse 1)

The musical score for Example 2:7 consists of two staves: Voice and Piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Voice part begins with a melodic line in bar 15, followed by a dotted motif in bar 16. Bars 17 and 18 feature the Answer "Yes! Yes! Yes!" with note heads marked with 'x' in a Sprechstimme style. The Piano part provides harmonic support with chords and a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *piu f* and *ff*. Chord progressions are noted as IV<sup>7</sup>-III (D) and VI<sup>♯5</sup>-VI (B aeolian). First endings are indicated by a box labeled "1.2." above the final bars of both parts.

1.2. | 1 :1 | t :1 | t .d:- |r' :- | 1 :1 | 1 :1 | d' .,t :1 | :  
 (Last Verse)  
 Voice  
 Q. Aren't they al-ways be - ing robbed? A. Yes! Yes! Yes! all of 'em.  
 (Yes!)  
 1.2.  
 Piano  
*piu f* *ff*  
 IV<sup>7</sup>- III (D)  
 VI<sup>♯5</sup>-VI (B aeolian)

The tempo of this song is 4/4, and Bush marked the score *Quick March time*. Both the Question and Answer make use of simple 2-bar rhythmic motifs throughout (see Ex. 2:8). There is only a slight variation in bars 12-13, where, to accommodate a slightly longer Question, the text is set to five consecutive crotchets instead of the dotted motif. The Answer consequently sacrifices its minim rest by sharing bar 13 with the Question. The small melodic range of the song (a ninth, d' – e'') ensures that it is undemanding for its intended singers, including the audience.

Example 2:8 – Question and Answer (bars 3-6)

The overall structure of *Question and Answer* is rounded binary (A – BA<sup>1</sup>), and its internal musical form is a – a – b – a<sup>1</sup>, employing unifying musical and rhythmic motifs throughout. It is set in the keys of D major and B minor/aeolian. The score is marked “Lah is B” and the *Sol-fa* notation is given above the vocal line.<sup>49</sup> The simple melody line moves mostly by step or intervals of a third, with a single fourth in bar 12. The accompaniment moves ambiguously between D and B minor from the outset, where the scalic descent in the bass in bar 2 leads the ear to expect a chord of D at the start of bar 3 (where the vocal line commences), but Bush instead opts for Ib in B minor. This key is not established until bar 5; the right-hand a# in bar 3, although followed by Ib in B minor, belongs to an implied augmented D triad minus the third but with an added accented passing-note fourth (g/g'). This same dissonance recurs on beat 3 in bar 4, where the G/G is in the bass. B minor is finally established with a cadence into bar 5, although even here the resolution is delayed until beat 2 by another accented passing-note fourth instead of the third on beat 1. Bar 6 ends with a repetition of the opening scalic descent, and bars 2-6 are then repeated in 7-10, fully in keeping with the straightforward melodic nature of the song. Bar 11 cadences in D rather than the previous B minor of bars 3 and 7 for the second section of the piece, which lasts for only four bars before the short reprise from bar 15 to the end.

The frequent use of accented and unaccented passing notes causes further tonal ambiguity throughout this song, for example beats 2-3 (left hand of the accompaniment) in bar 12 leading to a Ib – IV progression, still in D major, into bar 13. The final section (A<sup>1</sup>) is related to the first, both melodically and rhythmically, though with some slight variation. The melody is initially sequenced up a fourth in bar 15 but continues to rise in bar 16 (a seventh higher than bar 4) to reach the high point of the song on e". At the *ff* climax in bar 17 there is a unique chromatic internal descent (a# – a<sup>b</sup> – g') in the right hand against b' (as also notated in the Sprechstimme), and this also results in the most chromatic chord sequence in the song (see Ex. 2:7). The descending bass octaves bring the song to a conclusion on a tonic chord of B minor, finally ending the tonal ambiguity in the piano accompaniment, while the simple vocal line throughout sounds to be either major or minor. Similarly, in bars 15-16 (see Ex. 2:7), the harmonic structure could either be in D major or B aeolian (lacking an A# in chord V at the beginning of bar 16).<sup>50</sup> Bush's regular omission of the third of the triad, as frequently encountered in this song, was a favourite compositional device of his which contributed significantly to the overall tonal and harmonic ambivalence. This aspect will be further discussed in the *Song of the Hunger Marchers* below.

The early 1930s saw Bush become more involved with the Labour Movement, even taking part in the Hunger Marches that had commenced in 1927.<sup>51</sup> These had gained momentum by 1932, when 2,500 marchers from all over Britain presented a petition to parliament, demanding the abolition of the Means Test and Anomalies Act, and the reversal of social welfare cuts. The movement grew, there were nationwide protest marches in 1933, and the fifth National Hunger March took place in 1934.<sup>52</sup> For this event Bush wrote his unison *Song of the Hunger Marchers*,<sup>53</sup> with piano accompaniment to a text by Randall Swingler, his most frequent collaborator.

### *Song of the Hunger Marchers (1934)*

This angry song was originally intended to encourage the marchers and to garner support for their cause on the journey, as the refrain indicates; but it was too late to learn it by the time they reached Reading.<sup>54</sup>

“Then rouse to our tread  
When you hear us marching by;  
For servility is dead  
And the Means Test too shall die!  
Though they think our spirit’s broken,  
Because we’re underfed,  
We will stamp the Starvation Government  
Beneath the workers’ tread!  
*Stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp.*”

The song consists of four 8-line verses with an 11-line refrain (labelled ‘Chorus’), the last two of which repeat lines seven and eight with melodic variation.<sup>55</sup> It is set in unison with piano accompaniment, although no doubt the intention was for it to be sung *a cappella* on the march. Bush later wrote that “a clarinettist attempted to play the melody for the marchers to learn it”,<sup>56</sup> but this proved unsuccessful. The *Sol-fa* notation is given above the single vocal line (labelled ‘Voice’), suggesting at least the possibility of a solo (verse) – group (refrain) performance: surely a more realistic option than for a whole group to memorise overnight four verses of text set to a modal melody. Bush’s later categorisation of this song is for ‘mixed Voice Chorus with Piano Accompaniment’,<sup>57</sup> perhaps a reflection of later massed-voice performances in a hall with a piano. It is unclear whether the ‘mixed Voice Chorus’ refers to gender or to range. There was, however, a known ‘Women’s Contingent’ from Derby on the march,<sup>58</sup> but they would not have detoured via Reading where Bush met the other marchers, so the categorisation remains ambiguous.<sup>59</sup> The refrain in E<sup>b</sup> major is more catchy and upbeat with some quaver movement and is consequently easier to remember than the C minor/modal verse.

The overall structure of *The Song of the Hunger Marchers* is strophic with an internal binary form: A (verse) – B (refrain). Internally the c minor/aeolian-mode A section subdivides into eight 2-bar phrases structured as a – b – a<sup>1</sup> – c: a consists of two 2-bar phrases (bars 3-6), with the first restated in the second. The third one, with which the B section commences in bar 6, with the initial two notes a fifth higher, is otherwise only linked to the first two phrases through its rhythm, with the fourth descending, and ending on an indecisive chord IVb in bar 10. The partial reprise (a<sup>1</sup>) is of the first phrase, with the following one sequenced a third higher (bars 10-14), something also encountered in other songs by Bush, and the climactic c section (bars 14-18) rises to the highest note in the verse (d''), with its final phrase closely related to the end of the b section.

The refrain commences in E<sub>b</sub> major and is also structured in short phrases, the first of which (bars 18-21) is immediately sequenced a tone lower (bars 21-24) except for the last note, which, instead of continuing the tonal descent, rises a 6<sup>th</sup>. Similarly, phrases three (bars 24-26) and four (bars 26-28) are sequenced a (rising) third apart, this time ending with a falling 6<sup>th</sup>. Phrase five is a little longer (bars 28-32) and is sequenced, if not exactly,<sup>60</sup> a fourth higher in the sixth and final one, thus giving the climactic high e'' on the word “starvation”. Before lines 7-8 of the basic 8-line text are repeated (thus forming a varied reprise), the words “stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp” (bars 32-34) are to be shouted in a Sprechstimme style. This device was encountered previously in *Question and Answer*, but in this case the note-heads (again indicated with an x) are actually scored as c''– b' – c''– g', whereas in the earlier piece they were all on the same pitch.<sup>61</sup>

The tempo is marked ‘Steady pace’, and like *Song to Labour* the time signature is 2/2 rather than the usual march time of 4/4. The rhythm is straightforward, with a very simple

rhythmic motif used throughout the verse: five crotchets (commencing with an anacrusis) and either a minim or two crotchets (to accommodate the text) followed by a crotchet rest. The refrain is enlivened by the use of quavers replacing some of the crotchets, although the same basic pattern remains.

The 2-bar piano introduction begins on beat 2 and follows the basic rhythmic outline of the first phrase of the song, without introducing the actual melody, and with only three accompanying chords.<sup>62</sup> This must be regarded as an unusual start to an amateur song: it is far more usual in songs of this type to anticipate the melody and to offer four rather than three introductory chords. Within each verse there are several repeated motifs: bars 1-2 are repeated in bars 3-4 and bars 9-10, with slight rhythmic variation to accommodate the text.<sup>63</sup> The refrain is very similar in construction but, for example, replaces a crotchet with two quavers on the second and fourth beats in bar 19 and on beats 1-2 and 4 in bar 22.

Although the key is given as 'C mi[nor]' the 7<sup>th</sup> is never raised, indicating the use of the aeolian mode, and within the verse there are ambivalent modal modulations, as in bar 14, for example, which may be heard as moving to F minor.<sup>64</sup> Modulation to E<sub>b</sub> for the refrain is anticipated in bar 17 by a 4-3 progression on this chord, with the a<sub>b</sub>' on beats 1-2 resolving to g' on beat 3 and with an intervening octave D/D in the bass that harmonises with the a<sub>b</sub>' as a temporary modulating chord (see Ex. 2:9).<sup>65</sup> In contrast, a brief modulation to A<sub>b</sub> (bars 23-24) is effected with a simple II<sup>7</sup> – V<sup>7</sup> – I progression. The introduction of a G major chord in bar 32 eventually cadences back into the tonic in bar 35, but with a number of intervening harmonies that once again give rise to some tonal ambiguity. The G major chord in bar 32 is preceded by an implied IV<sub>b</sub> at the end of bar 31, resulting in an imperfect cadence at this point (see Ex. 2:10). The subsequent ambiguous use of chord III at the start of bar 33 (= I in

the key of the refrain) and the progression  $IV^7d - VIIb - I$  into bar 35 highlighting the *lah-te-doh* movement in the right hand, marks the return to the tonic, but avoids the traditional chord V in the process. Note also the ensuing harmony in bar 35, with the  $E^b$  in the bass clearly relating to beat 4 (=  $Ib$  minus the fifth) but clashing with the right hand chord V on beat 3 which, together with the melody line, clearly implies a simple perfect cadence at this point to follow the modulation.

Example 2:9 – Song of the Hunger Marchers (bars 14-18)

$I^7(C) - Ib(Fm) /$   
 $IVb(C)$

$E^b$   
 4 - 3

Example 2:10 – Song of the Hunger Marchers (bars 31-36)

\*These four notes should be shouted rather than sung.

$IVb$   
 (implied)

$III/I$

$IV^7d-VIIb-I$

$Ib$

Bush's approach to cadences in general is unconventional and individual. According to Ronald Stevenson:



“A whole article could be written on Bush’s cadences; I recommend a study of them to young composers, who could learn much from them about harmonic invention. Study of a composer’s cadences is an index to his style.... music [is] ‘the art of the cadence’.... a composer’s treatment of cadence is the essence of his music”.<sup>66</sup>

Throughout this song Bush’s predilection for secondary seventh harmonies and 4-3 melodic progressions is redolent of his compositional style in choral/vocal music in general. His avoidance (omission) of the third in many chords is completely in keeping with his later advice concerning ‘the composition of workers’ music’. In the notes for a 1936 pedagogical lecture he suggests that:

“It [workers’ music] can be written in a scale different from the major and minor scales... or it can contain prominent diminished and augmented intervals, such as were at one time carefully avoided.... the complete major or minor common chord can often be replaced by twopart harmony, in which the third of the chord is omitted.”<sup>67</sup>

Evidence of this approach is found in almost all of Bush’s choruses and songs.

The melodic range of the song is a tenth, c' – e". Commencing with an anacrusis the opening 2-bar motif includes a minor third and a fourth, and this pattern is repeated a fifth higher from the end of bar 12 to bar 14. For the most part, the rest of the melody moves by step with just one fall of a sixth in bar 28. The repeated text in the refrain literally becomes the high point of the song as the performers “stamp the starvation government”, moving from c" to e" (bars 34-35) and then gradually descending an octave by means of a fifth, and then by step for “beneath the workers’ tread” in bars 36-38. From the above it is evident that there was nothing so melodically demanding for the singers that would have prevented them from performing this song during the actual march.

It was a matter of regret for Bush that *The Song of the Hunger Marchers* never really achieved its purpose. In relation to workers’ songs of the time, Duncan Hall noted that:

“these brand new songs were ‘not only sung on the road, but in the big halls, at the demonstrations and at impromptu concerts. They always received an enthusiastic response from the workers and many times the local workers learned the words and sang the songs with the marchers.”<sup>68</sup>

In this case, there was no reason why it could not have gained popularity with those for whom it was written; had the marchers learned the song before they set out from Glasgow, Cornwall, South Wales and many other locations, perhaps it would have fulfilled its brief. It would seem that Bush underestimated the level of exhaustion experienced by the marchers, and his efforts to teach a new song to the weary protesters were doomed to failure. He later wrote about the fate of this song: “I... wrote a song which was intended to be sung on the march. This song is considered good by many people; it was not very successful in its purpose at the time.”<sup>69</sup> He continued:

“I shall never forget the night we spent in Reading cattle-market. A clarinettist attempted to play the melody for the marchers to learn it. But not many of the hungry and exhausted men and women were inclined to try to learn a new song, so that it was destined to become a piece of concert music insofar as it was performed at all.”<sup>70</sup>

Bush identified it as being one of the songs which were representative of his

“choral compositions directly related to aspects of the life of the working people, out of whose labour the owners reaped their profit in terms of prosperity and who bore the burden of the economic crisis when it was unloosed upon us all.”<sup>71</sup>

It was later published in the *Left Song Book*, and also in sheet form by the WMA in 1938, and it was included in the socialist repertoire for use at rallies and concerts. A rare 1936 recording of members of the LLCU performing this song under Bush is included as an Appendix to this dissertation.<sup>72</sup>

Bush was often accused of lowering his standards in much of his output for the labour movement, as in the following:

“The earliest of these choruses... are simple, traditional settings for S.A.T.B., revealing no originality; indeed they might have been hymns for evangelical revivalist meetings, apart from their text.”<sup>73</sup>

The harmonic language of the two workers’ songs examined above, however, shows a masterly and intellectual approach to the composition of what initially appear to be two unremarkable, and somewhat simplistic, melodies. It is clear, however, that while these, and other similar songs, were vocally undemanding – essential for amateur and *ad hoc* choirs – the

underlying construction was anything but simple. Bush's continual use of ambivalent modal tonalities and harmonic progressions, together with the frequent inclusion of accented and unaccented passing notes, resulted in the composition of relatively complex workers' songs, which, nevertheless, were melodically simple enough for those for whom they were written.

### **The influence of Hanns Eisler**

In 1934 Bush became acquainted with a group of German and Austrian musicians who had taken refuge in London. These included Hanns Eisler, Georg Knepler and Ernst Hermann Meyer, all three of whom assisted with the musical work of the Labour Movement.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps due to their influence, Bush consciously adopted Marxism as his 'world-outlook' in the same year, and joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in the following year.<sup>75</sup> In a later interview with Schafer, he explained:

"Bush: I became a Marxist through the study of science and philosophy, and as a result of discussions I had with Marxists.

Schafer: Were Bertold Brecht and Hanns Eisler among these people?

Bush: Yes indeed. I lived for a time in a house next to where Brecht and Eisler were staying. They argued in an intelligent manner, explaining things I hadn't understood about Marxist theory and the policy of the Soviet Union, the one socialist state at that time. I was already very close to communism and those discussions cleared away many of the problems and paved the way for my entering the Communist Party in 1935."<sup>76</sup>

The London Labour Choral Union, conducted by Bush, staged ten performances of Brecht and Eisler's *The Expedient* (*Die Massnahme*, Op. 20, 1930) in 1934-1935 in English translation.<sup>77</sup>

A 'Lehrstück' (didactic play), it has a message that proved controversial even to Marxists.<sup>78</sup>

Scored for three speakers, tenor, a male and a mixed chorus, brass and percussion instruments, it is "a work of hard-hitting austerity whose musical idiom is modelled upon the Bach Passions."<sup>79</sup> *Die Massnahme* made a deep and lasting impression on Bush, who attended its first performance at the Grosses Schauspielhaus, Berlin, in December 1931; and he attributed his early leanings towards opera writing and his later association with the Leipzig Opera House to the experience of having attended its premiere.

Having lived and studied in Berlin (1929-1931), and with an excellent knowledge of the German language, Bush would undoubtedly have been aware of Eisler's political and musical writings and activities (apart from *Die Massnahme*) from that time. Eisler was "politically scandalized that workers' choirs were singing within a context which had been provided in advance by the opposing side,"<sup>80</sup> and so he "attempted to replace the traditional *partisan song* by the *militant song*.... [that was] distinguished by topicality, concrete and precise political content whose impact was heightened by the music."<sup>81</sup> These *militant songs* achieved wide circulation during the Great Depression that began in 1929. A sentence from his "rabble-rousing choral document *Vorspruch* [Epigram] op.13" (1928) summarised his goal, one that was shared by Bush: "Our singing too must be a fight!"<sup>82</sup> In becoming personally acquainted in England in 1934 it is inconceivable that the two men would not have discussed their common objective to overthrow Capitalism, and to further that cause through musical activity. Eisler used various compositional techniques in his workers' choruses and marching songs, including modal elements, montage, parody, 'walking crotchets' in the bass accompaniment, the use of bare fourths and fifths, changes of metre, and a simplicity and transparency in his choral writing.<sup>83</sup> Bush's compositions, especially his workers' songs, incorporate many of the above elements, clearly exhibiting Eisler's influence. His song *Question and Answer*, for example, may well have been inspired by Eisler's "monadic militant songs... [that] were even rehearsed with their audiences".<sup>84</sup> This influence is further confirmed and endorsed in Bush's teaching notes for a 1936 'Study Class in The Problems of Workers' Music': this document will be discussed in Chapter 3.

The questions that still plagued Bush and his comrades at that time have been succinctly posed by Duncan Hall:

"Should workers inherit the musical and artistic heritage of the bourgeois society they were to overthrow or instead develop their own art? Did that art, that culture, already exist, or was it to be constructed and designed by an artistically conscious, organised labour

movement? Should the musical tastes of working people be taken more seriously, despite their perceived vulgarity and banality?”<sup>85</sup>

The dichotomy that existed between the opposing strands of Bush’s musical life, that of the rarefied ‘classical’ world on the one side, and working-class culture on the other, proved to be a very difficult path to negotiate without being patronising, and without compromising his own artistic integrity. It also had to be born in mind that “the communists too live in a capitalistic world.”<sup>86</sup> From this time on, Bush’s music began to assimilate more of the elements described above, thus bridging the gap to some extent between the two worlds, although it would prove to be a problematic area, requiring constant vigilance and great compositional skill.

### ***The Pageant of Labour (1934)***

This pageant took place at the Crystal Palace, London, from 15-18 October 1934. Organised by the Central Women’s Organisation Committee of the London Trades Council and written by Matthew Anderson, this was “a portrait of the history of the Trade Unions, Co-operative and Labour Movements in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries”.<sup>87</sup> The pageant was a theatrical and musical extravaganza in six episodes, and was a significant commission for Bush.<sup>88</sup> The different stages of the pageant are illustrated by the misfortunes of the fictional Fletcher family: they are happy at the beginning before the advent of factories, but the appalling human conditions of the industrial revolution are soon brought vividly to life. Each of the six episodes consisted of between three and nine scenes.<sup>89</sup>

As all drama had to be approved and licensed, the script of the pageant was duly submitted to the Lord Chamberlain’s Office. The report makes for interesting reading:

“The greater part of this pageant is occupied with showing the evils of the unreformed industrial system and is therefore extremely gloomy and sometimes almost unbearably painful. The evils are not exaggerated, but what is unfair is that the rich – politicians, bishops and what not – are all shown as smugly indifferent to them; no credit is given to

Disraeli for example, for his impassioned protests or to the Tory party which abolished the worst of them.”<sup>90</sup>

The children’s ballet, which depicted them as “miserable, starved and beaten”,<sup>91</sup> was particularly unpalatable as “it seems unbearable and something at least might be said about it.”<sup>92</sup> As for the rest, it was deemed that:

“it would be impolitic to interfere with this Pageant which moreover except for the unfair omissions noted above is more or less reasonable. Living politicians are not brought in to be ridiculed but to say what they have said.”<sup>93</sup>

Whoever had to give final approbation agreed, commenting that it presented:

“a very one-sided picture with which I agree it to be impolitic to interfere. Impersonations in these circumstances can hardly be stopped.”<sup>94</sup>

Despite the doubts expressed in this report, the pageant proceeded without any changes and apparently with great public success,<sup>95</sup> and Sahnou described it as one of “the great occasions in our British workers’ musical life”.<sup>96</sup>

Bush wrote and conducted the score, which included songs, choruses, orchestral interludes, a children’s ballet, and a ballroom ballet. Michael Tippett, who was “to all intents and purposes his assistant”,<sup>97</sup> recalled Bush’s:

“continuous generosity with which he as an older composer of known acclaim showed to a younger and quite unknown one.... He even allowed me to conduct one of the performances; part of my necessary education in the needs of a modern composer.... *The Pageant of Labour* must clearly be the high-water mark of the movement, which Alan to a considerable extent initiated to provide music with left-wing texts for performance by sympathetically inclined amateur choral societies.”<sup>98</sup>

An article entitled *Ballet in 1934* reads as follows:

“We have no record of what it may have been like, but there was a production of something called ‘The Pageant of Labour’ planned for October which had ‘1000 players of all ages, the London Labour Choir of over 100 voices, a symphony orchestra of 50 players, and a ballet of 200 dancers’ to be given at the Crystal Palace.”<sup>99</sup>

In a letter to Tippett in July 1934 Bush wrote that he had already written about half of the music, 80 pages, “parts [of which] were quite exciting”,<sup>100</sup> and that the *Pageant Song* was “a grand melody to be sung in unison by the thousand-odd performers.”<sup>101</sup>

The *Pageant Song* runs through the production, with some modification of the text, culminating in the grand finale with the entire cast on stage to perform it as the final chorus. The text, presumably also by Matthew Anderson, is set syllabically and refers to the workers as martyrs and expresses their hope for a new world:

“Around the workers’ flag,  
Dyed red with martyrs’ blood,  
The nations greet the dawn  
That bursts through like a flood.  
A red flag in the sky,  
Peace in the heart of man,  
Love’s banner held on high,  
A heav’n on earth,  
A heav’n on earth again.”

The refrain urges the workers to claim their rights as follows:

“Then rise up, rise up in your might,  
All sacrifices dare,  
To win the workers’ right,  
A world, a world for all to share,  
A world for all to share,  
For all to share!”

The song was originally scored with orchestral accompaniment,<sup>102</sup> but Bush soon reorchestrated it for concert use, as the choral finale of his ‘Men and Machines’ ballet.<sup>103</sup> This version has been used for the following brief examination of the song, since it includes a piano part that incorporates all the essential harmonies of the accompanying brass instruments (three trumpets, two trombones and tuba),<sup>104</sup> making this visually more user-friendly than the full orchestral score of the original pageant.

The *Pageant Song* reveals familiar traits, with Bush’s customary use of consecutive bass octaves in the piano accompaniment, and much stepwise movement in the vocal parts. Set in D major for the SATB verse, it modulates to G for the unison refrain, and overall would not have been a difficult song for the inexperienced performers to learn. The usual harmonic ambiguity is achieved by Bush’s use of dissonant accented passing notes that often function as suspensions and resolve immediately, as in bars 24-27 (see Ex. 2:11). In bar 24, for

example, the octave C in the bass (part of the preceding chord of I**II**) on beat 6 is alien to the harmony at that point (V in A**m**). When this resolves to B at the start of bar 25 the harmony simultaneously changes (to I in A**m**) to produce another such dissonance, the bass finally resolving to a consonant A on beat 3. A non-prepared example of harmonic dissonance can be found on beat 2, with the octave F# in the bass not part of the chord (VI) but quickly resolving to its root on the second half of the same beat. There are also frequent simple passing modulations, good examples of which can be seen in Ex. 2:11, initially moving from G major (bar 24) to A minor and E minor (bar 25), the latter heralded by the d#" on beat 5, and back to G major (bar 26).

Example 2:11 – *Pageant of Labour, Finale* (bars 24-27)

*a tempo largamente*

24

Trumpet in B♭

Trumpet in B♭

Trombone

Tuba

Cymbals

Soprano  
Alto

up, rise up with your might, All sac - ri - fi - des dare, To

Tenor  
Bass

Piano

(p) (p) (p) (p) (p) (p) (p) Ib(aug)

I(G) VI-IIb V(Am) I/IV(Em) I(Em) V7(G) Ib II VII(dim)7



The basic simplicity of the *Pageant Song*, as exemplified by the uncomplicated modulations and relatively straightforward harmonies, is no doubt attributable to the knowledge that it was to be performed by more than a thousand participants. The frequent use of prepared and unprepared dissonances is reminiscent of *Song of Labour* (examined in Chapter 1), the first of Bush's choruses for the Labour Movement, and is also found in other such compositions, as for instance, *Question and Answer*. It has consequently been deemed unnecessary to examine this song in further detail.

Bush's first overt association with the Soviet Union was his *Prologue to a workers' meeting* for brass orchestra (Op. 16), specifically written for the International Music Bureau, Moscow, in 1935.<sup>105</sup> This marked the beginning of a long relationship with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, both of which held Bush in high regard as a composer, and fellow socialist. This later proved to be extremely beneficial, as all four of his operas received full-scale productions in Eastern Europe, in stark contrast to their being largely ignored in England.

By the end of 1935 it had become evident that there was a need for an umbrella organisation to co-ordinate the requirements of the left-wing music movement, and this realisation gave birth to The Workers' Music Association in the following year. This was to bring Bush to greater prominence with the general public, and opened new doors into a wider application of 'workers' music' by making available properly structured music education classes, performing groups, and eventually, publishing and recording facilities and opportunities, all through the same organisation. This will form the subject of the next chapter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bush, A., web ref. (1981).

<sup>2</sup> Bush A., (1980), 20. There is considerable confusion concerning the dates of this period of Bush's time in Berlin. A chronological entry for November 1929 in O'Higgins (2006, xxviii) states: "Bush returns to Berlin to begin a course of Philosophy and Musicology at the Friedrich-Wilhelm University, Berlin", while the official Humboldt University (then known as the Friedrich-Wilhelm University) archive records show that "Bush was registered in the Faculty of Philosophy from 23 April 1930 to 24 June 1932", contradicting both Alan and Nancy Bush's (2000, 22-24) own dates. The obvious disagreement over Bush's start date cannot be explained, but it is possible that he started to attend the university before he was officially registered to do so. Regarding the end date, Nancy states "we left Germany for England at the end of the summer of 1931... not to see it again until the war was over" (ibid., 27), which makes it clear that Bush abandoned his course at this point. Alan's musicology lecturers were Johannes Wolf (1869-1947), an expert in Ars Nova and Protestant church music, who wrote two books on notation, and Friedrich Blume (1893-1975), most famous as the editor of the first edition of the German-language encyclopaedia, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1949-1968). Four comprehensive articles originally written for this were later published in English translation as *Renaissance and Baroque Music* (New York, 1967) and *Classic and Romantic Music* (New York, 1970). Bush's studies did not include composition.

<sup>3</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 20.

<sup>4</sup> Stevenson (1964), 326.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Amis, interview (1986/2000). This culled material from various recorded interviews between Amis and Bush that took place over a number of years. The date of this original quotation is therefore not known.

<sup>7</sup> Bush, A., web ref. (2000). The critical reception of *Dialectic* has perhaps best been summed up as follows: "*Dialectic* is an undoubted masterpiece.... Little wonder that the pre-war musical world accorded it the acclaim it so richly deserved. Since its inception in 1929 it has few peers in the repertoire of the string quartet. The driving intensity of its expression and its extraordinary communication reveal a musical intelligence of the highest order, able to sustain a musical argument of real depth in a great arch of inspired construction" (Lamb, CD notes (1985), [2-3] – the original pages are unnumbered).

<sup>8</sup> Bush developed a thematic style of writing quite early in his compositional life, but it was not until 1946 that he expounded his theory of 'total thematisation', the logic and desirability of it as a compositional principal and the way in which it works: "composers of today should take up the line of development of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven towards 'total thematisation'. That is to say, that there should be no tones in a composition which are not at the same time parts of a theme or thematic germ, no subsidising harmonic notes which are mere musical noises. Everything in the piece must be made sensible [*sic.*], and thus musical and human in the full meaning of these terms" (Bush 1940/1: Bush, A., BA (1940), 5). He later elaborated as follows: "... every detail of the composition should be organised thematically (as well as harmonically and rhythmically), and should be derived in some way from some feature or motive of the theme or themes of the particular work" (Bush, BA (1964), 2).

<sup>9</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 20.

<sup>10</sup> This date has been assigned both by Bush, A. (1980), 85, and Bush, N. (2000), 160. The manuscript in the British Library, however, is dated February 1932 – March 1933, although this concludes with some alternative music, partly sketched and in a mixture of ink and pencil, presumably a later revision or reworking and therefore not invalidating the original date of composition. The opus number (14) is also in sequence with those of *The Road* (13) and *Dialectic* (15). The date of the former is similarly stated by Bush, A. (ibid.), 82, to be 1929: the manuscript (British Library, MS Mus. 422, ff. 12-19) is accompanied by a typescript copy of the text dated by Bush 27 January 1930, which Craggs (2007), 38, assumes to have been the date of composition of the music. As for *Dialectic*, it was unquestionably written in 1929.

<sup>11</sup> The texts are from Boden's collection *Out of the Coalfields* (London, 1929).

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix D for the score. The first performance was in Morley College on 8 March 1933 with Geoffrey Dunn as tenor soloist, the LLCU choir and Bush at the piano. The soloist is not involved in the Epilogue. The four songs are not being examined since the focus of this dissertation is on Bush's workers' choral music and songs.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from Boden (ibid.), poems XVII, XXXIX, XLV and VII respectively rather than Bush's setting.

<sup>14</sup> Gill (1946), 31.

<sup>15</sup> See endnote 13.

<sup>16</sup> Boden (1929), poem V.

<sup>17</sup> This is evident from the opening notes, b<sub>b</sub> – a' (bar 1), followed immediately in the right hand by c''' – c#''' and g'' – g#'' in the upper part and f'' – e'' and d'' – c#'' in the lower one. There are many other similar occurrences: for example, at bar 5 the upper line moves from b<sub>b</sub>'' – b'' while the lower has g''# – g'', and at bar 16 (end of beat 1) f'' – g<sub>b</sub>''' in the upper part is against d<sub>b</sub>''' – c''' in the lower.

<sup>18</sup> The first and third sections commence in a similar manner for the first three words but continue differently, whilst the second begins with a point of imitation also on the first three words.

<sup>19</sup> The *psf* marking is assumed to be *sforzando* within the basic *piano* dynamic rather than a genuine *sf* accent. The emphasis falls at the point of imitation on appropriate words: sopranos – “dripping gall”, altos – “songs like these” (bar 14).

<sup>20</sup> The ranges are as follows: sopranos 1 and 2 = c' – g"; alto 1 = a – e"; alto 2 = g# – a b'.

<sup>21</sup> The bass notes are b<sup>b</sup> (bar 1), A (bar 2), g# (bar 3), G (bar 4), f – E (bar 5), d – C# – C – b – B<sup>b</sup> (bar 6) – A (bar 7).

<sup>22</sup> There are nine rather than eight pitches, and although these do not strictly alternate as a tone – semitone throughout (B<sup>b</sup> – C – C# – D – E – F – G – G# – A), the five final notes (lower line) in the right hand do, however, adhere to such a pattern: G – F – E – D – C#. In addition to the nine initial pitches noted above, F# and B are stated in bars 2 and 3 respectively, with only D# missing from the full series. Another 11-note series is to be found in the first choral phrase, commencing with the piano at the end of bar 6, with only G# missing through to the start of bar 10, although this pitch is stated soon afterwards. A further 11-note sequence follows immediately over seven bars from the second beat of bar 10 to the first beat of bar 16, this time with only B missing. Bush does not, however, appear to regard this as an 11-note pitch sequence, since the examples included here do not relate to each other. A full 12-note series finally occurs in bars 16-20 commencing on D<sup>b</sup> and ending on B.

<sup>23</sup> The first half-diminished chord in the verse occurs at the end of the previous vocal phrase in bar 14: here Dm<sup>7<sub>b</sub>5</sup> simply drops the 7<sup>th</sup> but retains the other three notes concordantly, and this is followed by a unison F between the choir and piano at the start of the next phrase, something frequently encountered in Bush's songs.

<sup>24</sup> As with bar 14, the Am<sup>7<sub>b</sub>5</sup> also omits the 7<sup>th</sup> on the last quaver of the bar, whereas the Dm<sup>7<sub>b</sub>5</sup> in bar 31 ends the phrase without further resolution.

<sup>25</sup> In the same passage, for example, alto 1 has a rising augmented fourth (bars 34-35), a descending minor seventh (bars 35-36), a rising perfect fifth (bars 36-37), a descending minor seventh (bars 37-38) and a descending diminished fifth (bars 39-49).

<sup>26</sup> See endnote 14.

<sup>27</sup> Letter dated 6 August 1929 from Bush to an unknown recipient who may have been Herbert Morrison, Labour Party MP, who helped to found and fund the LLCU. The letter begins: “Dear Comrade” (Bush, A., BA (1929)). It was presumably the women's chorus of the Central Choir that participated in the performance of *Songs of the Doomed*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 83; Bush, A., score (1929 and 1930), 1. The original art poem *Road Makers* was by Violet Friedlaender (1879-1950), novelist and poet, who was a prominent member of the Women's Social and Political Union from 1910 onwards. Her poems were published in a range of magazines during the 1920s and 1930s (Crawford (2001), 232-233), and a collection of poems entitled *A friendship and other poems*, was published in London in 1919. See Appendix E for the score.

<sup>30</sup> Although symmetrical, some rhythmic and metrical variation is obviously necessary to accommodate the text, and the final phrase of verse 4 is rewritten to provide an effective coda-like ending within the verse structure rather than as an appendage. All four verses commence in unison, with the final line in verses 1 and 3 and the second line in verses 2 and 4 doing likewise. The dynamic scheme is also symmetrical, with verses 1 and 3 essentially quiet and 2 and 4 loud. Verse 1 commences *p* and ends “Broadly, but very quietly”, with verse 3 *mp* and “Broadly” *mf*. In contrast, verses 2 and 4 begin *f* and continue *sempre f*, ending “Broadly” (v. 2) and “Very broadly to the end” (v. 4). While the opening instruction is “Slowly, and with sustained intensity”, each subsequent verse is marked *a tempo* following the “Broadly” marking. This slowing down at the end of each verse was previously noted in the Epilogue of *Songs of the Doomed*.

<sup>31</sup> The word may be a misprint, although this is unlikely.

<sup>32</sup> The ranges are as follows: soprano = d' – g", alto = a – b b', tenor = d – g' and bass = G – c#'.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, the diminished fifth in the soprano in bar 5 (b<sup>b</sup>' – e'), while from the end of bar 29 to the start of bar 31 the soprano line is relatively angular, especially when the harmonic underlay is taken into account, with a diminished fifth in the bass between bars 30 and 31 (b<sup>b</sup> – e) and an augmented fourth in the alto in bar 31 (a – e b').

<sup>34</sup> “Iambic pentameter is the name given to a line of verse that consists of five iambs, an iamb being one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed, such as ‘before’” (Poetry archive, web ref.).

<sup>35</sup> The pulse shifts constantly: 3/4 in bars 1-4 and 6-8, 10, 12-13, 15, 22-26, 28, 31-32; 4/4 in bars 5, 9, 16, 27 and 30, and 2/4 in bars 11, 14, 21, and 29.

<sup>36</sup> See bars 27-28 (crotchet – crotchet – crotchet tied to a semiquaver) and 28 (semiquaver – semiquaver – semiquaver – dotted quaver) respectively.

- <sup>37</sup> At the end of bar 23 the first note of the anacrusis is a' rather than the f' of bar 5.
- <sup>38</sup> This chord could also be interpreted as Vb<sup>(+6)</sup> in D dorian.
- <sup>39</sup> This first occurred at bars 9-10.
- <sup>40</sup> The first example of this in *The Road* occurs at the end of bar 4.
- <sup>41</sup> The chordal progression continues the tonal ambiguity to the very end, as follows: bar 30 (beat 2) = Ib (d minor/modal) – III<sup>7(#5)</sup> – VI<sup>7</sup>c – dim<sup>7</sup> on F# (as if modulating); bar 31 = I<sup>7</sup> (d minor/modal) – V<sup>7</sup>c<sup>(,5)</sup> – IVb<sup>(+4)</sup> – Vb (modal); bar 32 = I (D major).
- <sup>42</sup> See also endnote 2 (Bush remained enrolled at the Humboldt University until June 1932).
- <sup>43</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 19. The best man at Alan and Nancy's wedding was the composer William Busch.
- <sup>44</sup> Nancy Bush, née Head (1907-1991), was a graduate of Cambridge University where she studied English and History. She spoke excellent Italian and German and translated many song lyrics for Boosey & Hawkes (telephone conversation with Rachel O'Higgins, 27 January 2009). She also provided English lyrics for choral works of many composers including Shostakovich, Bartók, Eisler, Kodály, Mahler and Mussorgsky. Writing about her work Nancy described how at an early stage she began to "learn the value of choosing short, plain words for the vocal line, if possible not longer than two syllables, and the need to build up to a really singable climax in the last verse" (O'Higgins (2008), 4).
- <sup>45</sup> Hall, web ref. (2000). The internal quotation is taken from the introduction to Bush, A. and Swingler, R., eds. (1938), [3].
- <sup>46</sup> Bush, A., BA (n.d. post-1953), 3.
- <sup>47</sup> Nothing is known about G. Roy Atterbury, but judging from the colloquial use of language in the text it is reasonable to assume he was British. Surprisingly, in an essay entitled *Songs of the Labour Movement* by L.M. Munby ((1971), 137), Atterbury is wrongly credited with having written the words of *Song of the Hunger Marchers*, while *Question and Answer* is not mentioned at all.
- <sup>48</sup> Bush listed it as one of his 'Songs For mixed [*sic.*] Voice Chorus with Piano Accompaniment' (Bush, A. (1980), 84). See Appendix F for the score. This is indisputably a unison song. Craggs (2007, 39) mistakenly assumes that 'mixed Voice' refers to SATB when in fact Bush never uses the acronym, instead frequently using the term 'Mixed Voice' to indicate gender (men and women). It cannot be presumed, however, that SATB is ruled out in all cases without seeing the score. The same error occurs in relation to *Song of the Hunger Marchers*, which is also a unison song.
- <sup>49</sup> In *tonic Sol-fa* notation the "minor [key] is treated as mode of the major, first note being *lah*, 2<sup>nd</sup> *te*, 3<sup>rd</sup> *doh* etc." (Kennedy & Rutherford-Johnson (2012), 860).
- <sup>50</sup> The harmonies here (taking passing notes into account) are either VIb – V augmented – VI – III – IV – VII<sup>7</sup> in D major or Ib – VII augmented – I – V – VI – II<sup>7</sup> in B aeolian.
- <sup>51</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 20. Bush does not specify precisely when he joined the marches.
- <sup>52</sup> The itinerary for this march shows participation from the whole of Britain. The Scottish marchers left Glasgow on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and those from south Wales on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The latter group were met by Bush at Reading on 19<sup>th</sup> February where they rested for a day (WCML, web ref.). Presumably it was during this time that the failed attempt was made to teach them the specially written song.
- <sup>53</sup> Bush, A., and Swingler, R. (1938), 53-56. Although this song was written for the 1934 Hunger Marches it was not published until 1938. Swingler had previously provided a text for Bush's *Cradle Song for an Unwanted Child* (1929), but this was the real beginning of their long collaboration, which continued into the 1950s.
- <sup>54</sup> The itinerary for the march shows the many points of departure and the dates on which each contingent left its mobilisation centre, and it also indicates the rest days and their locations. All of the marchers were due to arrive at Hyde Park, London, at 3 p.m. on Sunday 25 February 1934. For the Scottish contingent the journey was considerably longer than for other groups, its march having begun on 22 January. The group that Bush met in Reading cattle market originated in South Wales on 10 February (WCML, web ref.).
- <sup>55</sup> See Appendix G for the score.
- <sup>56</sup> The quotation referenced by endnote 71 refers.
- <sup>57</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 84.
- <sup>58</sup> WCML, web ref. (2011).
- <sup>59</sup> Although Bush refers to "the hungry and exhausted men and women" (the quotation referenced by endnote 69 refers), women were discouraged from taking part in the protest so as not to undermine the impact of the thousands of men whose families and livelihoods were at risk.
- <sup>60</sup> The differences are that the first two notes of phrase five fall (bar 28) and the final two notes rise (bars 31-32), whereas this is reversed in phrase six with the first two notes rising (bars 34) and the last two falling (bars 37-38). Also, the descending interval in the second part of each phrase differs: a third (b' – g') at bars 30-31 and a fourth (c" – g') at bars 36-37.
- <sup>61</sup> Bush's indication in the score (page 2) is "These four notes should be shouted rather than sung".

---

<sup>62</sup> Purely for the convenience of concisely describing the rhythm in this song, beat 2 refers to the second crotchet beat in a bar not the second minim of the underlying pulse given the 2/2 time signature, with a total of four beats as thus described.

<sup>63</sup> Beat 2 in bars 1 and 3 and beat 1 in bar 10.

<sup>64</sup> Depending on the individual listener, this progression may be heard as either C<sup>7</sup> (omitting the third of the harmony) resolving to chord Ib in F minor on beat 3 or as a tonic secondary 7<sup>th</sup> resolving to chord IVb without any modulation. A good example of a modal cadence can be seen in bars 13-14, with the b<sup>b'</sup> – g' – c'' in the melody line being harmonised at the end of bar 13 with an ambiguous chord either of E<sup>b</sup> with an added 6<sup>th</sup> or the same chord with which bar 14 commences.

<sup>65</sup> The introduction of a natural in bar 18 delays the aural effect of the modulation until the start of bar 19.

<sup>66</sup> Stevenson, R., ed. (1980), 38-39. The quote within Stevenson's statement is cited as emanating from "Samuel Langford, the music critic of *The Manchester Guardian*... (in my view the most trenchant English-speaking music critic of this century)" (ibid., 39).

<sup>67</sup> *Bush (1936/1)*: Bush, A., BA (1936), 2-3.

<sup>68</sup> Hall (2001), 102-103, quoting Hannington, Wal, *Unemployment Struggles 1919-1936: My Life and Struggles amongst the Unemployed* (Wakefield, 1973), 191-192.

<sup>69</sup> Bush, A., BA (1956), 2. This article was subsequently published in *Music and Musicians*, iv (1956), 11, 31, but the material cited here was omitted.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Bush, A., BA (n.d., post-1953), 3, from an article explaining the background to the composition of *The Ballad of Freedom's Soldier*, Op. 44 (1953). The text of *Against the People's Enemies*, for example, begins: "Now goaded past endurance let us sing a song of hate for all the wrongs of government we will not tolerate", referring to "the British supporters of Hitler, led by Neville Chamberlain" (ibid., 4).

<sup>72</sup> See Appendix N for the recording details. There is no compositional information available about the second track on the CD, *Patrol and Song: "Work, Work, We Want Work"*, which has also been included as the only other known recording made of one of Bush's workers' songs: it is known to be by Bush, however, even though it is not listed in any of the sources.

<sup>73</sup> Stevenson (1964), 327.

<sup>74</sup> Austrian musicologist Georg Knepler (1906-2003) went to Berlin in 1931 to work in the theatre with Brecht, Brecht's wife Helene Weigel, and Eisler. In 1950 he became the first director of the Hanns Eisler Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. Ernst Hermann Meyer (1905-1988) was an eminent German composer and musicologist. He studied with Erich M. von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs at Friedrich-Wilhelm University, Berlin, and transferred to Heidelberg University in 1928 for his doctoral studies (just a year ahead of Bush's arrival in Berlin). He became a friend of Eisler, joined the communist opposition in 1929 and began to compose political songs. He fled to England in 1933, where he soon became actively involved with Bush and his workers' musical activities. He wrote more than 250 propagandizing songs and choral pieces, and two of his unaccompanied songs, *The Final Struggle* (1936) and *We are the Men* (1937), had texts by Atterbury and Swingler respectively. He wrote 26 socio-political vocal-orchestral works, one of which was *Labour's Marching Song* (1936). His *Song of the Refugees* was written during the war years and he also composed film scores and incidental music. Returning to Germany in 1948, he became Professor of Music Sociology at his *alma mater*, by then renamed Humboldt University, becoming an influential figure in the musical life of the German Democratic Republic (Grützner (2001), 560-561). Both Knepler and Meyer are listed on the WMA website ([www.wmamusic.org.uk](http://www.wmamusic.org.uk)) as having served as past vice-presidents of that organisation.

<sup>75</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 20.

<sup>76</sup> Schafer (1963), 55-56. In this interview Bush's reference to living next to Brecht and Eisler gives the impression that this was prior to or during 1934. Neither he nor Nancy makes any reference to having known them during their time in Berlin (1929-1931), however; they both refer to meeting Eisler in 1934 and 1935 respectively (Bush, A. (1980), 21; Bush, N. (2000), 31): Eisler confirmed the year as being 1934 (Eisler (1950), 25). It was not to be until 1937, while writing the finale of his Piano Concerto (Op. 18), in Denmark, that Bush did actually live next to Brecht and Eisler and their families. Nancy describes how they took tea together each afternoon and played board games (perhaps ironically, *Monopoly* was a favourite!), and they also had long political discussions (Bush, N. (2000), 39).

<sup>77</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 21. According to Bush, the ten performances took place in various (unnamed) districts of London, presumably to reach the widest possible audience. Nancy's account differs somewhat: she states that the first performance did not take place until 1936 (at the Westminster Theatre) and was followed by "some seven performances" (Bush, N. (2000), 34). A further contradiction comes from Bush: "once a year we aim at producing a more ambitious work. Last year [1936] we gave 12 performances of "Die Massnahme" (Bush, A., BA (1937), 1-2).

---

<sup>78</sup> Andrews, web ref. (2000). The play is centred on a moral dilemma in which one of the characters (the expedient) is killed as a sacrifice for the greater revolutionary good. It proved so unpalatable even to many dedicated Marxists that Brecht prohibited its performance for a time.

<sup>79</sup> Levi, web ref. (1998).

<sup>80</sup> Betz (1982), 72: "Late in 1927 Eisler wrote for the first time about the workers' musical movement, which ought 'under no circumstances to rest content with allowing singing to lull them into neutrality.... There is a lack of works that are truly irreproachable from the ideological and musical points of view.'"

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>85</sup> Hall (2001), 139.

<sup>86</sup> Betz (1982), 90.

<sup>87</sup> Craggs (2007), 40-41. "The huge choir was provided by several of the London Labour Choral Union choirs, and the orchestral players were drawn from Michael Tippett's Unemployed Musicians' Orchestra" (O'Higgins (2006), 12).

<sup>88</sup> In a letter to John Ireland of 17 April 1934, Bush wrote "I have been offered payment to compose the music to an enormous pageant, it is most thrilling. I will tell you all about it when I see you next" (O'Higgins (2006), 48).

<sup>89</sup> The six episodes are as follows (*Pageant*, BA (1934):

Episode 1: 'Capital Enslaves the Workers', covering the appearance of the first factories in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

Episode 2: 'The Martyrdom of the Children (1800)', dealing with the horrors of child labour, exemplified by the death of an exhausted child from falling into the machinery.

Episode 3: 'Consolations of Philanthropy and Religion (1800-1820)', ironical debates with William Pitt and Edmund Burke, and also with manufacturers and bishops.

Episode 4: 'London receives the Chartists (1848)': a member of the Fletcher family is implicated in the Luddite movement. He is arrested and hanged.

Episode 5: 'The Triumph of the Trade Union', beginning with the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Rochdale Pioneers followed by Lord Beaverbrook speaking against the co-operative movement and concluding with the Match Girls' Strike of 1888 and the Dockers' Strike of 1889.

Episode 6: 'The Fletcher Family (1900-1919)', one of whom is a conscientious objector in the Great War. Speeches by Lloyd George and Ramsey Macdonald are followed by Churchill denouncing the Bolsheviks. Finally, a worker from the earlier 1800 episode exhorts present-day workers to continue their struggle for a better life.

<sup>90</sup> Street, BA (1934), see Appendix H for the Reader's report.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately no contemporaneous reviews of the pageant have been traced to date.

<sup>96</sup> Sahnou (1950), 30.

<sup>97</sup> Tippett (1980), 9.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* Historical revisionism now credits Tippett ahead of Bush as musical director of this pageant when clearly, from a reading of Tippett's comments, Bush was the main director.

<sup>99</sup> Marriott, web ref. (1998).

<sup>100</sup> O'Higgins (2006), 54.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Craggs (2007), 41.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 42. Craggs omits the tuba (clearly shown in the Ms. score) from his list of instruments used in this version. In the following year, 1935, Bush wrote two further socialist ballets for the London Workers' Ballet, 'His War or Yours', and 'Mining'. The former was premiered at Co-operative House, London, by the Young Workers' Ballet on 28 March 1936 with the South London Brass Orchestra conducted by David Ellenberg (Craggs (2007), 43). No information is available concerning the first performance of 'Mining'.

<sup>104</sup> Cymbals and bass drum (presumably played by a single musician) are also included in this revised scoring of the song. See Appendix I for the score.

<sup>105</sup> Craggs (2007), 42. The date and place of the first performance are unknown.

## Chapter 3

### Life and Music III: Communism (1936-1939)

*“Music in capitalist culture is nearly always conscious or unconscious propaganda for the present system in one way or another.”<sup>1</sup>*

Bush’s adolescent reading of Ernst Haeckel, Darwin and H.G. Wells, had convinced him of “the astounding facts of organic evolution, culminating in man ‘the paragon of animals’ as Shakespeare described him.”<sup>2</sup> This led him to question the social order of British society and caused him to become disillusioned with the way in which it was organised, especially with regard to the inherent inequality suffered by the working man:

“I rebelled against the injustice of these owners of land and the means of production to force others to work for them on terms they themselves dictated and maintained by every means which terror, corruption or hypocrisy could devise. In these circumstances I turned to the working people and their organisations, in Britain the Trade Union and Cooperative Movements and the Labour and Communist Parties, through whose efforts I expected and still expect that a rationally organised society will be established, which will remove many of the unnecessary causes of suffering and lack of equality of opportunity, which still make life a burden to countless millions”<sup>3</sup>

It is important here to recognise the level of co-operation that existed among left-wing organisations at that time. Having joined the Communist Party, Bush, always an enthusiastic and dynamic organiser, gave himself wholeheartedly to that cause. There followed a period of intense activity on behalf of various left-wing groups, whether training or writing songs for workers’ choirs (whose members would have been affiliated to any one of the left-wing organisations), or lecturing, and writing articles explaining Marxist philosophy with particular reference to music.

Bush was determined to engage in the class struggle through the arts and to raise awareness among the working class of their rightful place therein. He railed against the hypocrisy of the established order:

“Deceit can never form the basis of a living art. Hence it is no wonder that the cultural products of the present ruling classes are so perverse when they are not entirely devoid of any kind of value.... The worker’s culture can only be centred in the class struggle.”<sup>4</sup>

During the years 1936-1939 Bush’s involvement in many different facets of music making was such that there could not have been time for much else; as Lewis Foreman has observed:

“During the 1930s Bush worked tirelessly in the cause of labour as only he knew how, endlessly writing music and directing all manner of people’s performing organisations.”<sup>5</sup>

He was an active member of many groups, and the setting up of the Workers’ Music Association was one logical outcome of this. During the same period he was also pivotal in the staging of several major music-theatre productions; both of these developments, together with various relevant workers’ choral music and songs will be examined in this chapter.

### **The Workers’ Music Association**

The Workers’ Music Association (WMA) grew out of a ‘Concert Demonstration and Conference’ on 1 March 1936 that was organised by the Co-ordinating Committee for Workers’ Musical Activity, of which Bush was the chairman.<sup>6</sup> He was also elected chairman of the WMA from its inception until 1941, when he became its president, a position he held for the rest of his life. The aim of the WMA (which is still in existence) is “to co-ordinate the musical activities of working class organisations, and to provide for this purpose the necessary musical materials and professional resources”,<sup>7</sup> and its objective is “to extend the influence of working-class musical activities”.<sup>8</sup> At its inception, it was envisaged that:

“the Association would help to educate those capable of musical leadership – conductors, composers and performers... in order that the working-class movement should have its ‘homegrown’ exponents, musically highly trained but with a thorough understanding of their art in relation to the social forces they represented, and entirely free of any taint of ‘musical slumming’”<sup>9</sup>

The WMA initially ran courses in conducting and composition under Bush and Rutland Boughton and soon established a publishing house “for the Labour choirs, providing them with new songs reflecting a socialist outlook.”<sup>10</sup> Within a few years 17 Co-operative Education Committees and 24 choral groups were affiliated, and diverse musical activities



were organised throughout the week. There were lectures and tuition on all aspects of music, including composition, dance band instrumentation, choral conducting, sight singing, string orchestra and chamber music.<sup>11</sup>

In what appears to be a lesson plan for socialist youth, entitled ‘Marxism and Music: Brigade Questions’, Alan Bush asked:

“Is the following statement correct, and if so what can we do about it [?]:  
‘Art belongs to the people. Its roots should penetrate deeply into the very thick of the masses of the people. It should be comprehensible to these masses and loved by them. It should unite the emotions, the thoughts and the will of these masses and raise them to a higher level. It should awaken artists in these masses and foster their development.’”<sup>12</sup>

This statement obviously represented Bush’s own beliefs concerning art *per se* (including music). His next question was:

“Do you approve of such an organisation as the Workers’ Music Association, which has the following as its aims:

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

If so, what ought such an Association to be doing?”<sup>13</sup>

From the number of activities previously listed, it would appear that, in answer to Bush’s questions above, the WMA was indeed fully engaged in the musical education of the working class. The Association had established itself quickly and received support from many musicians, such as John Ireland, who were not otherwise involved with the Labour Movement. By 1940 it was publishing a periodical, ‘Keynote’, and had initiated the ‘Topic Record Club’, which produced a monthly gramophone record for its members at a nominal price:

“Those were mostly recordings of popular workers’ songs and one or two interesting musical works by Soviet composers.... The name of Khatchaturian [*sic.*] was first introduced here [Britain] by *Topic* with recordings of his *Song Poem for Violin and Piano* and his *Clarinet Trio*.”<sup>14</sup>

The recording activities of the WMA were extremely successful, and by the 1950s the Association not only had the sole rights to issue Paul Robeson’s recordings in Britain but also had recorded a quantity of British folksongs and ballads, and songs by Woody Guthrie.<sup>15</sup>

Bush firmly believed that the composition and performance of workers' music were of vital importance, as much to others as to himself, as he later wrote in a letter to Ronald Stevenson: "You cannot write about me without reference to [my workers' songs]..."<sup>16</sup> One direct result of his belief was that in February and March 1936 the London division of The National Council of Labour Colleges organised a 'Combined Practical Course in Choral Conducting and Study Class in The Problems of Worker's Music, especially designed for conductors and members of co-operative, labour and socialist choirs'.<sup>17</sup> Arnold Goldsbrough taught the choral conducting class and Bush the study class. The latter's 'Notes on The Problems of Workers' Music' included the question "What should worker's music be like?"<sup>18</sup> Bush's answer to this fully exemplified his personal *credo* as a Marxist composer at that time:

"As regards theory and practice, worker musicians should avoid everything suggesting resignation, imperialistic feelings, purely lyrical and sentimental feelings, and emotions which tend to divert the workers from their historic task of overthrowing Capitalism. Pessimism and vague melancholy should be carefully avoided, but parodies making fun of pessimism and melancholy can serve a useful purpose. Too intricate harmonic and polyphonic structure in music should be avoided. The music must be easily understood."<sup>19</sup>

Bush ensured that the compositional criteria were made crystal clear for the attendees who engaged in a group exercise over several weeks to compose a suitable song to an agreed text by Swingler. The final version, entitled *For the People's Use*, was performed at the end of the course and later published by the WMA.<sup>20</sup>

The next paragraph of Bush's notes formed a blueprint for "The Composition of Workers' Music" in which he reminded his students that "an energetic style devoid of sentimental elements was the one to aim at."<sup>21</sup> He stated that, despite its simplicity, workers' music must be modern, the text clearly audible and set closely to natural speech. Detailed instructions were given with regard to text setting, including melodic and rhythmic characteristics and the use of a common element in two or more phrases was recommended: "an exact repetition of one whole phrase would be permissible; sequence or repetition at a

different interval of some important feature of the tune would also help.”<sup>22</sup> Bush warned against the use of a mechanical rhythm, however, and stated that “the use of a variety of note-values is a great advantage.”<sup>23</sup> He suggested the use of scales other than major or minor, and recommended the avoidance of chromatic semitones and (sentimental) suspensions. He then pointed out that diatonic was preferable to chromatic harmony, and also suggested using just two notes of the chord by omitting the third, resulting in another example of harmonic ambiguity.<sup>24</sup> In his conclusion, Bush reminded his students that “workers’ music must aim at the closest possible relation to the workers’ fight.”<sup>25</sup> This could be achieved by the use of “the ‘montage’ (a combination of different choral pieces or parts of choral pieces with spoken remarks, quotations from newspapers, etc.), [which] can deal with the problems of the day.”<sup>26</sup> As noted in Chapter 2, Eisler’s influence on Bush is clearly visible in the methodology for the composition of workers’ music, as outlined in this document. From this time on, Bush’s own workers’ songs fully adhere to this format, and while they are no longer heard, the LLCU and the WMA Choir which later replaced it, made enthusiastic use of them for many years.

### ***Labour’s Song of Challenge (1936)***

This song, a further collaboration with Swingler, was composed in the same year as Bush wrote his teaching manifesto and possibly represents a prototype of the perfect workers’ song. The text follows a now familiar pattern, exhorting the workers to action, and reminding them of who is to blame for their ills, as exemplified in verses 1 and 2:

“Work-mates, we must fight and strive  
If our children are to live,  
Take what greed will never give.  
Fight the exploiter, free the slave,  
Let freedom rise up from the grave,  
And all enjoy what all may have  
If Labour’s power prevails.

Do you forget  
Who deceived you and misled you?  
Who ill-housed you and ill-fed you?  
Do you forget

Who sweated you and bled you?”  
Let Labour’s power prevail.”

Published by the LLCU in 1936, it is not known for what occasion it was composed.<sup>27</sup> Written for SATB chorus, unison choir, and piano, the score is marked: “This song cannot be sung by a unison choir, but it is so written as to enable a choir which only sings in unison to sing it with a choir which sings in parts.”<sup>28</sup> Given its ‘elastic’ scoring, it is reasonable to assume that Bush composed it specifically for a ‘massed choirs’ event that would have included his own relatively well-trained LLCU choir, with the addition of other choirs whose ability might not have reached the same level of attainment, an occurrence that will also be noted in relation to *Make Your Meaning Clear!*<sup>29</sup>

The first and last verses (1 and 5) of the song are musically identical, while the inner verses display a strophic variation approach, with an overall structure as follows:

introduction – A – interlude – B – interlude<sup>1</sup> – B<sup>1</sup> – B<sup>2</sup> – interlude<sup>2</sup> – A – coda

This approach highlights the differing textual requirements as seen in the first two verses, with the outer ones containing seven lines each and the inner verses only six, and with the last line of each verse forming a refrain. The overall tempo is *Slow and dignified* with a *sempre molto marcato* indication at the outset. The score includes *Sol-fa* notation above or below the vocal lines, and the frequent changes of metre to accommodate the text are clearly marked for the singers (“four pulse”, “two pulse”, etc.). The time signature actually changes seven times in the first eight bars of verse 1, moving seamlessly through 4/4, 3/4 and 2/4 before returning to 4/4 to the end of the verse. Although the key signature is B $\flat$ , the music is frequently in B $\flat$  Lydian and modulates to G major and G minor, concluding with a G major cadence.

The 8-bar piano introduction provides all of the basic material for *Labour’s Song of Challenge*. The song is thematically organised in such a way that its melodic line is based on

the introductory 3-note motif that comprises a rising second followed by a rising third, with an overall range of a fourth (see Ex. 3:1). The melodic line is immediately extended to five notes and then to six by simply overlapping the motif. Throughout the song the motif is visible, both in its original form, and in modification by means of extension, contraction, or by insertion of intervening notes. The initial fourth (bars 1-2) is extended to a seventh (end of bar 2 to bar 3) and then to an octave (bar 4):

Example 3:1 – Labour’s Song of Challenge (bars 1-5)

In bars 6-8 the motif appears in full and in part, in both the treble and bass, at times moving to the inner parts as in bar 8, beats 2 and 3-4 (see Ex 3:2). In bars 7-8 the music moves stepwise apart from one leap of a third, and the introduction ends with consecutive accented double octaves, an idiom repeated, with slight rhythmic alteration, at bars 50 and 83.

Example 3:2 – Labour’s Song of Challenge (bars 6-8)

Throughout the song the melody is broken into short phrases. The vocal entry offers a modification of the original motif with the insertion of a falling second, and the reduction of

the overall interval to a third, while still retaining the contour (bars 9-10: see Ex. 3:3). In bars 14-15 a stepwise descent of a seventh is introduced and later re-used, albeit with rhythmic and pitch alterations, for the short refrain that descends over a fifth and finishes with either a rising fifth (bars 24, 37, 78) or sixth (bars 50, 61), and finally an octave (bar 84). Other short phrases either rise or fall for the most part over the range of a fourth, fifth, or sixth.

Example 3:3 – *Labour’s Song of Challenge* (bars 9-10, 14-15 and 22-24)

9 *f* Unison (Men and Women) 14 22  
 Work-mates, we must fight and strive Take what greed will never give If Labour's pow'r pre - vails.---

Despite its title, this song offers little melodic challenge to its performers. The range of the unison choir is universally acceptable, c' – e", while that of the SATB chorus is somewhat more demanding, with each part frequently near the top of its register, but still within its scope.<sup>30</sup> It is curious that within the 16 bars of verses 1 and 5 no two bars are identical, despite their similarities. The other verses employ considerable repetition, notably in posing the question “Do you forget...?”, where the original motif is clearly evident, beginning at bar 26 (see Ex. 3:4). In verse 4 the motif is inverted, initially at bars 50-51, and then at each subsequent question (bars 53-54 and 56-57).

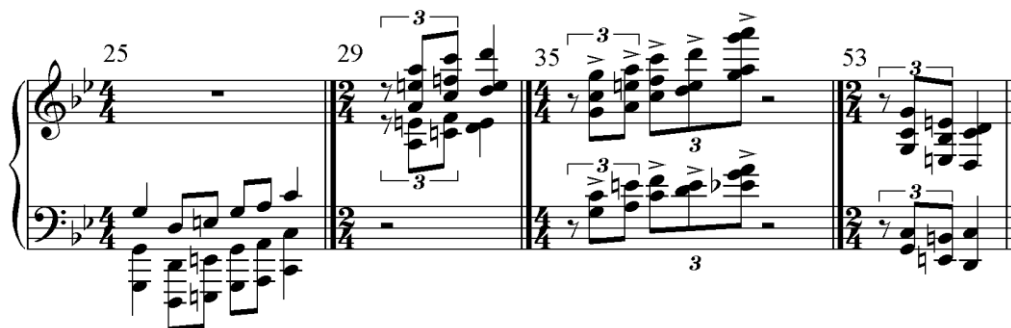
Example 3:4 – *Labour’s Song of Challenge* (bars 26-28 and 50-52)

26 *f* 3 50 *ff* 3  
 Do you for - get Who de - ceived you and mis-led you? Do you for - get Their empty pomp and loud i - deals?

The rhythmic material, like the melodic content, is largely motivic and likewise relatively simple, most obviously in verses 2-4, where a triplet, followed by crotchets and

quavers (occasionally dotted as in bars 30 and 39), is used for each question (as seen in Ex. 3:4 above), depending on the requirements of the text. Bar 28, for example, has six even quavers, which are modified elsewhere, such as in bar 52 (also see above). The accompaniment also makes a frequent use of triplets, often modifying previously used material. The interlude between verses 1 and 2 at bar 25 (see Ex. 3:5), for example, is taken from bar 4 of the introduction, and this is modified in bar 35 before the refrain, and repeated exactly at bar 48 (at the same relative point in verse 3). The three middle chords of this modified 5-chord progression are taken directly from the piano motif of bar 29, which in itself is reused between each question in verses 2 and 3 (bars 32, 41 and 44). An inverted version of this same motif is similarly employed in verse 4 at bars 53, 56 and 58 (see Ex. 3:5). Each of these examples further illustrates the tightly-woven thematic use of the original material.

Example 3:5 – *Labour’s Song of Challenge* (bars 25, 29, 35 and 53)



The use of double octaves in the piano accompaniment has already been noted in relation to previously examined songs by Bush.<sup>31</sup> In this song, however, it is also a feature of the part-writing, where much of the tenor line doubles that of the sopranos, while the bass doubles the alto line. This is in keeping with Bush’s recommendation to his students:

“In a part-song it is not necessary always to write in four parts; a two-part song in which soprano and tenor, alto and bass are set in octaves can be of good effect.”<sup>32</sup>

He further stated that “whole phrases can be treated in unison”,<sup>33</sup> a device also found in this song, for example, in the refrain. The expected ambiguity is more tonal than harmonically eclectic; concordant triads are rare, as the ST and AB parts frequently move in parallel thirds, fourths or fifths. The piano is only heard leading in and out of the refrain, during vocal rests, and throughout the coda, thereby leaving the tonal field almost exclusively to the singers with their sparse harmony (see Ex. 3:6).

Example 3:6 – Labour’s Song of Challenge (bars 19-22 and 30-32)

As previously noted, *Labour’s Song of Challenge* is chiefly arranged in short 2-bar phrases, each reaching a pseudo-cadence point that is rarely conclusive of key. While the song begins in B $\flat$  the opening repeated phrase ends with a bare fourth in a modal sounding I – IIIc progression minus the third (bar 10, with chord IIIc also in bar 13). The next phrase (bars 14-15), is distinctly major but still confusing, as it ends with a unison G followed by an open fifth chord, suggesting either IIc or IVb – V. Bar 16 introduces a degree of tonal ambiguity and could perhaps be heard as a perfect cadence in G aeolian, as opposed to III – VI in B $\flat$  major. The remainder of the verse is centred around B $\flat$  but with a number of modal harmonic



progressions before the G minor sounding refrain. In bars 18-20, for example, the progression is as follows:  $Vb - I - II^{\sharp 3} - VII^7 - I - II^{\sharp 3} - IIIb$ , most of which can be seen in Ex. 3:6 above. The use of  $E_{\flat}$  in bars 17, 19, 24 and 25 is suggestive of the lydian mode. The unison refrain includes an audible discord ( $C\# - E_{\flat}$ ) on the piano in bar 23, although the harmony of this bar overall is actually  $E_{\flat}^7$  ( $C\# = D_{\flat}$ ).

It is notable that there are no sung triadic harmonies in verses 2, 3 or 4. Verse 2 ‘arrives’ at G major in bar 28, but this tonal sense is soon disrupted with an unexpected  $C\#$  in bar 28, shortly followed by an ambiguous progression comprising open fifths ( $F\# - C\#$ ), an augmented fifth ( $G - D\#$ ), and a sixth ( $A - F\#$ ) in bar 31,<sup>34</sup> before the music returns to G minor/ $B_{\flat}$  lydian in bar 34. The third verse repeats verse 2 with slight rhythmic variation in bars 46-47, and the refrain concludes with a leap of a sixth instead of a fifth. This is accompanied by descending chromatic chords, resulting in a further ambiguous progression in bar 50 (bar 49 ends on  $Ib$  in G minor), that could be read as  $Ic$  ( $C\#m$ ) –  $Ib$  ( $Em$ ) (see Ex. 3:7), before starting verse 4 with  $Ic - V^{\flat 3} - IV$  in  $B_{\flat}$ .

Verse 4 differs from the previous two verses initially by means of the inverted motif in bar 50 (see Ex. 3:4), and follows on directly from verse 3 without any interlude. The first phrase could be interpreted as being in  $B_{\flat}$  lydian (with the introduction of  $E_{\flat}$  in bar 52), G aeolian (indicated by the  $F_{\flat}$  in bar 51) or D dorian (with  $B_{\flat}$  in bar 52), and with the ensuing piano interlude implying a pseudo-plagal cadence (outlined by the  $G - D$  movement) in D dorian in bar 53. The rest of the verse is essentially in D aeolian (with the reintroduction of  $B_{\flat}$  in bar 54). The falling fifth contour of bars 50-52 is an approximate inversion of the rising fifth in bars 29-31, and similarly the falling sixth outline of bars 53-55 reflects the earlier

rising sixth of bars 26-28, without being an exact melodic or rhythmic inversion. It is notable that the minimal piano contribution to the refrain is (on most occasions), treated differently throughout the song (see Ex. 3:7). The otherwise unison refrain in verse 4 ends in thirds, but again creates harmonic ambiguity in bars 60-61; this time the dissonant-sounding piano diad could be interpreted as a diminished 7<sup>th</sup> on B<sub>b</sub> (C# = D<sub>b</sub>) in relation to the notes that immediately follow in the voice (G, E<sub>4</sub>).

Example 3:7 – Labour’s Song of Challenge (bars 22-24/35-37, 48-50, 59-61)

The musical score for Example 3:7 is presented in three staves. The top staff is for Soprano Alto, the middle for Tenor Bass, and the bottom for Piano. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "If Labour's pow'r pre- vails Let Labour's pow'r pre - vail Let Labour's pow'r pre - vail". The piano part includes a descending stepwise line in sixths at the end of the refrain, marked with a '3' for a triplet.

The interlude leading into verse 5 is a loose inversion of the final two bars (8-9) of the introduction, and the piano accompanies the singers throughout the coda, at times with a contrapuntal version of the melodic line (see Ex. 3:7). This verse differs from the first one only in the piano part, where it descends stepwise in sixths with the voices at the end of the refrain. The coda (bars 79-83) is based on the last line of the verse, with the words “and all enjoy” (in G aeolian/B<sub>b</sub>) repeated sequentially a tone lower. The phrase continues with slight melodic variation before the song concludes with an optimistic perfect cadence in G major (bars 84-85).

Example 3:8 – Labour’s Song of Challenge (bars 78-82)

Unison choir  
Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass  
Piano

vails. And all en joy and all en - joy what all may have

vails. And all en joy and all en - joy what all may have

vails. And all en joy and all en - joy what all may have

vails. And all en joy and all en - joy what all may have

By utilising material from the introduction, Bush’s motif is clearly evident as the song draws to a close, and the entire song reflects Bush’s *penchant* for thematic organisation.<sup>35</sup> Unlike other SATB songs examined, there are no vocal eclectic harmonies in *Labour’s Song of Challenge*, but it still manages to maintain tonal ambiguity by the regular omission of the third of the chord, and by movement into and out of modal keys. By the use of considerable rhythmic variety, sequence, two-part and unison vocal lines, and with syllabic text setting, Bush has here both implemented his personal *credo* in Marxist composition, and also delivered a quintessential workers’ choral composition.

### Marxism in art music

The period leading up to the second World War was one of intense musical activity for Bush, and he was also engaged in serious proselytising for the Communist cause by every means open to him. Not only was he involved in the many activities of the WMA and still lecturing at the Royal Academy of Music, he was also in great demand as composer, conductor, lecturer, examiner, adjudicator, and writer. Many of his published articles addressed aspects

of Marxism as applied to the composition and performance of art music. In ‘Music’,<sup>36</sup> for example, he described its changing use from one of involvement with the cultural and physical world experience of the times, to one of passive entertainment for the privileged few, “a spiritual narcotic”<sup>37</sup> or an:

“expression of the personal-psychological reactions of the composer, his soul’s sensibilities and miseries being treated as though they were all important in complete disregard of the widespread destitution and physical need of the exploited masses of the world.”<sup>38</sup>

He also outlined the various ways in which music and musicians became the tools of the rich and powerful, and the means by which the cultural life of the worker was obstructed:

“The atmosphere of the worker’s daily work, where the economic suicide of his class goes on without cessation, is no basis for culture. His leisure hours are spent amid the cultural influences of the capitalist state, whose function it is to preserve the present property relations intact as far as possible and whose prime need must therefore be to keep the worker ignorant of his true position and to delude him into thinking that his interests are being served by the preservation of those property relations. Deceit can never form the basis of a living art.”<sup>39</sup>

It was also during this period that Bush composed his *Piano Concerto* (Op. 18). This was completed on his birthday, 22 December 1937, and first performed on 4 March 1938 at Broadcasting House in London.<sup>40</sup> Although the press reviews that followed were favourable, subsequent performances have been regrettably few and far between, with a centenary revival being the most important of these.<sup>41</sup>

While Bush’s *Piano Concerto* definitively belongs to the category of art music, which excludes it from any musical discussion here,<sup>42</sup> the text of the choral finale nevertheless addresses the plight of the workers, and lists many of the injustices to which they were subjected, whilst also offering music as the “mind-changer, the life-giver”. This finale may have been influenced<sup>43</sup> by that of Busoni’s *Piano Concerto*,<sup>43</sup> and also by Beethoven; Bush was a huge fan of the latter and considered the Ninth Symphony as the pinnacle of his work. The opening of Swingle’s somewhat turgid text was also clearly influenced by Schiller’s *Ode to*

*Joy* as set by Beethoven in that work, not least in the initial word “Friends”.<sup>44</sup> It commences by addressing the conditions of the concert hall itself:

“Friends, we would speak a little of this performance.  
You have heard the intricate orchestra,  
The warm horns curled like snails, the cunning flutes,  
The sweep and shiver of the violins,  
Intense and varied as the play of your own nerves...

The most political aspect is to be found in the following lines:

“And those few, in whose hands  
The reins of power are gripped,  
Hold the lives of millions harnessed,  
Jealously hoarding their wealth and privilege...

These are they who propagate subtle falsehoods  
Daily, like poisonous gas, to corrupt opinion.  
These are they, who, whenever they see truth  
Unfolding in summer flower,  
Stamp it out with the violence of their law,  
Strengthen their frenzied grip, cry “Faster-faster”  
To the mills that grind men’s labour into profit;  
And to the hounds that guard their parks of privilege  
Cry “Fiercer-fiercer”...

The challenge to the composer to support the exploited workers is reflected in the words:

Art is no drug, nor yet oblivion’s river.  
Music is the mind-changer, the life-giver...

Upon our heads is laid such destiny  
As none knowing can coldly cast away  
Man’s future is to be fought for in our day.”

Believing that “it is a basic tenet of Marxism that the great intellectual and artistic achievements of mankind must be made available to all the people”,<sup>45</sup> Bush was deeply concerned with the “ordinary conditions of the capitalist concert-hall... [as] the circumstances in which a performance takes place play an important part in the effect upon the audience”,<sup>46</sup> and also that “the formalities of the procedures and costume of the players are the insignia of the ruling-classes”.<sup>47</sup> These circumstances meant that performance of art music had become the preserve of the elite in society, an issue that also concerned Britten, as expressed by him in a long letter to Bush in 1936, and to whom the above quotations were addressed in reply.<sup>48</sup>

Bush was determined to do what he could to address this injustice. Many years later he referred to the political philosophy that lay behind the composition of several of his major works, including this one:

“In 1934 I became convinced that Marxism explained the world and showed the way forward to the establishment of socialism and ultimately to communism. I then realised that it was my duty to create works of musical art with which I could invade the musical domain of the ruling class. I composed a piano concerto, in the fourth movement of which I introduced a text which analysed the state of affairs within the four walls of the very concert hall in which the performance was taking place as well as conditions in the world at large.”<sup>49</sup>

The *Piano Concerto* was really the first of Bush’s major art music compositions to be overtly political and its artistic merits were never in doubt.

Earlier in 1937 Bush and Swingler had also collaborated in a satirical revue, *Peace and Prosperity*, which was staged at Morley College in early April, and performed by members of the LLCU. A review in the *Daily Herald* enthusiastically reported:

“[it was] the nearest approach in this country to the ‘living newspapers’ that are causing enthusiasm all over the United States... [and was] first-rate propaganda against the ‘National’ Government’s record, served up with laughter, ballet, music and dramatic excitement”.<sup>50</sup>

Together with pageants, theatrical revues were particularly popular in England during the 1930s, and the two men continued to build on the success of this event with even more ambitious productions in the following two years, as will be shown.

### **Musical education in the Labour Movement**

In an interview with Bush in 1979, Ian Watson attempted to explore the dilemma of meeting the educational task of the Labour Movement, “the democratic distribution of the existing cultural heritage... to raise musical standards”, while also fulfilling the need to compose music as “a political weapon”.<sup>51</sup>

*I.W.:* What of the two tasks we mentioned earlier: ‘music as agitation’ versus ‘the redistribution of the existing heritage’? Was the WMA able to redress the balance?  
*A.B.:* We concentrated very little on the classical heritage.... until the summer schools of the WMA were founded (only in 1946...) we didn’t concern ourselves with it at all.... We

had neither the time nor the manpower in those days to embark upon widespread propaganda among the working class for the classical heritage. We concentrated on what was *singable* to them, what was *performable* to them and *appropriate* for their particular requirements.

*I.W.*: both technically *and* ideologically?

*A.B.*: That's right, quite right."<sup>52</sup>

Although there was insufficient time within the activities of the WMA to promote the "classical heritage" *per se*, certain works were occasionally utilised to suit their political propagandist purposes, as with the staging of Handel's *Belshazzar* in 1938 (see below), thus widening the public's access to such music. A dichotomy undoubtedly still existed between Bush's art music and his workers' music, the latter being considerably simplified for general use, while the former is definitely not for the musically untutored.

In setting up the WMA, Alan Bush, Rutland Boughton, and others, brought about a vibrant flowering of musical activity among the working class, from the mid-1930s onwards, and Bush remained actively involved with the Association for the rest of his life. Many prominent musicians of the day gave their services freely to such amateur organisations in order to promote their belief that art and music were integral and essential to the furtherance of the Labour Movement, and a vital means by which the workers would "break through the cultural disguises by which the ruling-class conceal the workers' true situation."<sup>53</sup> The continuing importance of the WMA and its historically pivotal role in the development of music education for the working class cannot be overstated. Bush was particularly proud of the annual Summer School that commenced in 1946; it still offers a comprehensive musical training experience, and continues to be the highlight of the of the Association's activities.<sup>54</sup>

## **Pageants and other musical extravaganzas**

In the late 1930s Bush became involved in several large-scale theatrical productions in line with his beliefs and constant seeking of ways to bring music in all its guises to the masses. The 1934 *Pageant of Labour* and the 1937 *Peace and Prosperity* revue had been highly successful, and now it was time for another such enterprise. The London Co-operative Society's Joint Education Committee sponsored a weeklong run of Handel's oratorio *Belshazzar*, in an operatic staging, commencing on 16 May 1938. Produced by John Allen at the Scala Theatre London,<sup>55</sup> it was the first time that it had been performed in almost 200 years, and Charles Jennens' original controversial text ensured that the subject matter was eminently suitable for purpose.<sup>56</sup> Bush conducted the 300-strong massed choir and Randall Swingler adapted the text, shortening it by some 30 minutes, thus simplifying the story and reducing the cast.<sup>57</sup>

According to Croft:

*“Belshazzar was a triumphant example of Bush's and Swingler's commitment to widening cultural access through an alliance of professional and amateur musicians. It was also a stunning demonstration of the Communist Party's argument that ‘the Past is Ours’, and that the working class and labour movement needed to reclaim the radical potential of English cultural traditions, sacred oratorio just as much as folksong.”*<sup>58</sup>

Bush immediately followed up the success of *Belshazzar* by writing and arranging part of the music and conducting the performance of *Towards Tomorrow: Pageant of Co-operation* at Wembley Stadium on 2 July 1938.<sup>59</sup> Produced by the London Co-operative Society in celebration of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Co-operative Day, 3,000 performers took part and 60,000 ‘co-operators’ attended the presentation, which lasted seven hours.<sup>60</sup>

With a script by playwright Montagu Slater, this pageant followed a chronological approach broadly similar to that of the earlier *Pageant of Labour*, but on a larger scale. Following various confrontations with workers through the ages, including war, ‘Capital’, “aligning with war and dystopia”,<sup>61</sup> was overthrown, allowing ‘Peace’ and ‘Democracy’ to enter and flourish. The ultimate ‘Resolution’ was for “a Peaceful and Equitable Solution to



the Present World Conflicts” symbolised by the release of a flock of white pigeons.<sup>62</sup> The proselytising message of the pageant would have appealed to Bush, and no doubt was taken very seriously in those tense pre-war days. This production represented workers’ music, theatre and dance, and it achieved Bush’s aim in vehemently proclaiming the injustices of contemporaneous society, while simultaneously offering an equitable and peaceful alternative in a powerful exhibition of workers’ culture.

Bush and Swingler were determined in their efforts to make music in particular, and the arts in general, more accessible to the ‘man in the street’. A co-operative venture between the WMA and the Left Book Club produced *The Left Song Book* in 1938. Jointly edited by Bush and Swingler, the introduction states:

“Great attention has been paid to the words of the songs. Where the song is entirely new, or where new words for an old tune were wanted, we followed the principle of making the text as concrete and as clearly related to our movement as possible. We must sing what we really mean and sing it as though we meant it, or else our singing is only a pleasant way of passing the time. Which it will be, of course, but it must be much more as well, if we are to get the true value from our singing, and to develop the art of music in the process.”<sup>63</sup>

Both *The Song of the Hunger Marchers* and *Question and Answer* were included in this anthology, together with several arrangements by Bush of existing well known songs such as *The International*, *The Red Flag*, and *Scots, Wae Hae*.<sup>64</sup> Publisher Victor Gollancz, editor of *Left News*, wrote in his editorial:

“I want to call attention to this publication, one of the most important that the club has issued.... This year’s biggest developments are going to come in the cultural or what might be called the socio-cultural field – theatre, cinema, music etc. From this point of view nothing could be more valuable than a good song book.”<sup>65</sup>

According to Croft:

“The idea for the book derived from the experience of the LBC summer school the previous summer, when Bush and Swingler spent the week working with a scratch choir, most of whom could not read music... so the two men began collecting songs which existing choirs could use, and which might help stimulate the formation of new amateur choirs in the labour movement.”<sup>66</sup>

*The Left Song Book* became a useful tool for the benefit of amateur choirs and was in use by the WMA for many years.

Writing for 'Left News', Bush declared "no people is more richly gifted for music than ours in Britain, yet masses of people feel the remoteness of much current music-making from their daily lives"<sup>67</sup> The two men set about addressing this situation by planning "another fabulously ambitious project, a 'Festival of Music and [*sic.*] the People'... the name of the Festival indicating that it would be both popular and politically committed."<sup>68</sup> The resultant *Festival of Music for the People* took place on three nights, at three different venues in London in April 1939,<sup>69</sup> commencing with the stirring pageant *Music and the People* in ten episodes, staged at the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday 1 April:

"It was part theatre, part recruitment meeting, educational, propagandist and enjoyable. Amateurs worked with professionals and the audience itself was part of the spectacle, their history the subject of the performance as real historical figures 'played' themselves on stage."<sup>70</sup>

Conducted by Bush, and with a scenario by Swingler, there were 100 dancers, 500 singers, two soloists,<sup>71</sup> and the participation of 100 members of the International Brigade. Swingler's texts were composed and arranged by 12 different composers including Vaughan Williams and Rubbra.<sup>72</sup> The lengthy programme took the form of an elaborate tableau with linked scenes, or episodes, all with musical accompaniment.<sup>73</sup> Reviewing the Festival, Maurice Carpenter wrote the following:

"Music is no fantasy, no escape from the real world, it is the pattern of the life we wish for, the inspiration to attain it. This is the spirit of the great Festival of People's Music... Such music will live in us and make us unconquerable. For in Randall Swingler's words: 'The heart remembers when the mind forgets'."<sup>74</sup>

Recalling the event in 1974 Carpenter wrote: "I rose to my feet and applauded... I was exhilarated by the festival. I felt there was still some hope in and for the People."<sup>75</sup> The overall effect on the audience of this highly political and emotionally charged pageant can only be imagined.

On Monday 3 April, the second part of the Festival took place at the Conway Hall with a programme that included music by Schoenberg and Eisler.<sup>76</sup> The final concert, at the

Queen's Hall on Wednesday 5 April,<sup>77</sup> included the slow movement and choral finale of Bush's *Piano Concerto* (Op.18),<sup>78</sup> Ireland's *These Things Shall Be*<sup>79</sup> and Britten's *Ballad of Heroes*.<sup>80</sup> The Festival was a triumph for all concerned. The coming together of many elements of the Labour Movement for such an ambitious project demonstrated "the extraordinary reach of the [Communist] Party's ideas about history and art."<sup>81</sup> For Swingler the pageant:

"represented 'the most satisfactory demonstrations of what we were really aiming at in practice', anonymous *mass* cultural activities, 'which broke right out of the little glass-covered critics' clinic and drew thousands of people into an immediate mass experience."<sup>82</sup>

Wallis later made the following insightful observation:

"This musical event is an opportunity to help construct a broad political alliance against the specific threat of fascism. It figures not Class against Class, but the People against the Exploiters. Music, in the service of this construction, both acts as a metaphor for and is theorised as the material carrier of humanity's persistent urge to realise its true potential in the course of conquering the rest of nature.... 'Music' in the text crosses over from being the representation of a material cultural discourse to become a metaphor for... utopian existence: a world of harmony, the natural heartbeat of humanity."<sup>83</sup>

The onset of the second World War a few months later brought to an end the possibility of any further such large-scale festivals for the foreseeable future,<sup>84</sup> but Bush and Swingler periodically continued to write workers' choral music and songs during the war years.

### ***Make Your Meaning Clear! (1939)***

At the remove of over 70 years it is perhaps hard to imagine the absolute terror that must have gripped the British public following the declaration of war on Germany, in consequence of the latter's invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939. In the firm belief that war was a capitalist endeavour, Bush and Randall Swingler wrote several songs decrying what they regarded as the government's exploitative policies, especially the war effort. *Make Your Meaning Clear!*, a unison accompanied song written for the WMA Combined Choirs,<sup>85</sup> is typical of these, as exemplified by its refrain:<sup>86</sup>

"Rise, rise, rise, working people,  
And make your meaning clear!

Our foes are the exploiters,  
Our battleground is here.  
And peace shall end what wars defend,  
The rule of greed and fear.  
And peace shall end what wars defend,  
The rule of greed and fear.”

Bush would not have conducted some of these choirs previously and would therefore have had no knowledge of their level of vocal ability, and this is reflected in the comparatively simple nature of this song compared with the majority of those previously examined.

*Make Your Meaning Clear!* was first performed, with the composer at the piano, at the Conway Hall on 15 December 1939. The growing fear of being called up for active service must have been ever-present for most of the singers, especially for those who, like Bush himself, had already lost family members in the previous war just over 20 years earlier. Despite the highly sensational lyrics,<sup>87</sup> it is reasonable to assume that the song would have been sung with real passion and conviction, totally devoid of any degree of embarrassment at its anti-patriotic sentiments, given the context of the times, as in verse 2, for example:

“They bid us fight for freedom;  
But all they ever gave  
To Britain’s working people  
Is freedom to starve or slave.  
Democracy’s their catch-word  
To send our sons to die.  
We heard them use it once before  
And know it for a lie.”

The song consists of three 8-line verses with an 8-line refrain (labelled ‘Chorus’), the last two lines of which repeat exactly the text of lines 5 and 6 with only a slight melodic variation. The overall structure is strophic with an internal binary form: A (verse) – B (refrain). The verse structure is also binary (a – b), while that of the refrain is c – d – e – e<sup>1</sup>, with the stepwise descent of c (bar 23) repeated in e (bar 31) and e<sup>1</sup> (bar 35).<sup>88</sup> Unlike all of the previous songs examined, the 4-bar introduction is identical to the final four bars of the refrain and therefore provides cyclic unity, and the piano accompaniment also mirrors the melodic line throughout the song.

Like *Song to Labour* and *Song of the Hunger Marchers*, the time signature is cut common, although the score is marked “Four pulse” for the benefit of the singers. The tempo is “Energetic but not too quick” and, as with most of Bush’s songs, *Sol-fa* notation is added above the vocal staff. The verse melody moves predominantly in crotchets with an occasional minim, whereas the refrain is more varied, also employing some dotted crotchet – quaver rhythms. The dynamic range is small, moving from *f* to *meno f* with *crescendo* at the end of the verse leading to *ff* for the refrain. The melodic contour is undemanding and eminently singable, although the outer notes (the vocal range is a twelfth: a – e”) may perhaps have proved challenging to some of the less experienced singers. There is considerable stepwise movement, interspersed largely by rising or falling fourths and fifths, with a sixth in the final repeated climactic phrase of the refrain on the words “And peace” (bars 28-29 and 32-33).<sup>89</sup> All of the above reflects the comparatively simple nature of Bush’s setting.

Tonal ambiguity is present from the outset of the song; despite the key signature of three sharps the opening of the 4-bar introduction clearly sounds to be in C# minor (with d#” in bars 1-3 but no b), shifting to C# aeolian at the end of bar 3 as indicated by the use of b $\natural$  in conjunction with the perfect cadence in bars 3-4. The final chord in bar 4 also functions as III in A, with the singers entering on chord I in that key at the start of bar 5, a sudden tonal shift that is clarified by Bush with the indication “Doh is A” (see Ex. 3:9).<sup>90</sup> While the melody line on its own sounds to be in A for much of the verse, the piano accompaniment contradicts this by ambiguously providing a C# aeolian alternative tonality with the regular use of chords III/I (A/C#m) and VI/IV (A/C#m) (see bars 5 and 7 of Ex. 3:9). There is an implied passing modulation to E at bars 11-12 (with a modal-sounding IV<sup>7</sup> – IIb – I progression), quickly returning to A for two bars before a similar IIb – I cadence returns to C# aeolian in bar 16. The I – IIIb<sup>b3</sup> progression into bar 17 initiates a short rising chromatic passage in the bass,

with the second chord of bar 17 (V<sup>7</sup>) omitting the fifth and the following one (VI) augmented. The only half-diminished chord in this song is on the third beat of bar 19 but with the minor third replaced by a fourth, which acts as an accented passing note to the minor third of the following chord (IIb). The verse concludes with an imperfect cadence (with V omitting the third), and a traditional, popular-style descending piano bass line leads into the refrain at bar 21 on chord I of C# aeolian, finally accompanied by the appropriate key signature (see Ex. 3:10).

Example 3:9 – Make Your Meaning Clear! (bars 3-7)

Example 3:9 – *Make Your Meaning Clear!* (bars 3-7)

Score for Example 3:9, bars 3-7. The score is in C major, 4/4 time. The voice part has lyrics: "Doh is A | m : s : m | l : l : s : d | . d : t : l". The piano part features a descending bass line with octaves marked "8". Dynamics include "f" and "loco".

Example 3:10 – Make Your Meaning Clear! (bars 16-22)

Example 3:10 – *Make Your Meaning Clear!* (bars 16-22)

Score for Example 3:10, bars 16-22. The score is in C# aeolian, 4/4 time. The voice part has lyrics: "Lah is C# | m : s : s : r : r | m : m : l : l | t : t : r : d | t(m) : - : : || CHORUS | l : m : | l : s : f : s : d : d |". The piano part features a descending bass line with octaves marked "8". Dynamics include "f" and "ff".

The refrain includes the indication “Lah is C#” on the score for clarification.<sup>91</sup> Opening with the exhortation to “Rise, rise, rise”, the melody follows suit (c' – g' – c''). A melodic and rhythmic motif of four descending stepwise crotchets, which first appeared in the piano

introduction (bar 3 right hand), and again in the left hand in bar 20, is reintroduced in bar 23, where it becomes part of the vocal melody line, here extended by a rising minim. This reappears at bar 31 a tone higher and again at bar 35 a minor third lower, with the final minim falling (rather than rising) to end the song on the tonic note.

*Make Your Meaning Clear!* is diatonic for the most part with few eclectic chord progressions, despite the ambiguity of the tonal field, with thirds often, but not always, omitted, and it is rhythmically energetic but not mechanical. The music also reflects the uncompromising and unsentimental text that was intended to rouse the audience from complacency to action, and would have been highly relevant to those for whom it was written. Composed in a straightforward manner, the song is fully in keeping with Bush's own blueprint for writing workers' music, as described earlier.

### ***Against the People's Enemies (1939)***

Composed in the same year as *Make Your Meaning Clear*, and first performed at the same concert in the Conway Hall in December 1939,<sup>92</sup> *Against the People's Enemies*, to a text by Randall Swingler, was one of only two songs referred to by Bush as being "directly related to aspects of the life of the working people".<sup>93</sup> Given the uncertainty of the times, the text reflects the horror felt by many at the apparent support given by "the people's enemies", namely Neville Chamberlain's government, "the British supporters of Hitler",<sup>94</sup> on signing the Munich Pact on 29 September 1938.<sup>95</sup> The angry, accusatory text exhibits complete disillusionment with a government policy that committed its citizens to war, and as such, it supported Bush's political views that war was an imperialistic and capitalistic profit-driven endeavour, as the song text by Bush from 1941 clearly demonstrates:<sup>96</sup>

"Landlords and bankers still drive us  
To war for their gain."<sup>97</sup>

The following lines (effectively an introduction followed by verse 1) fully reflect the sentiments of the time:

“Now goaded past endurance let us sing a song of hate  
For all the wrongs of government we will not tolerate.  
For fiercely as we love the life for which we fight and long,  
We hate with equal fierceness ev’ry lie that does it wrong.

We hate you first, our governors, for ev’ry promise made  
To peoples like ourselves whom you have shamelessly betrayed.  
We hate the slimy words of peace that dribble from your tongue,  
While to the rabid dogs of war our children’s food is thrown.  
We hate your cynic speeches for the saving of your face,  
While mothers starve and prices rise (and profits rise apace).  
What do you care if men are killed and cities gasp for air,  
While there is plunder to be had and you will get your share?”

The first four lines of the second verse are even more specific about the cause of such hatred:

“To keep your friends in power you have sold what was not yours,  
Mortgaged the lives of millions upon Munich’s deed of war.  
You dare to say you brought us peace, indifferent to the tread  
Of the feet of thousands fleeing from the terror you have spread.”

At this early stage of the war the horrors of Hitler’s tyranny had not yet been fully realised, but having served in the armed forces from 1941-1945 as a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps, Bush would later write that “Great Britain’s fight, together with the United Nations against German fascism and its allies, was a fine contribution to humanity’s advance.”<sup>98</sup>

Composed as an “Anthem for Solo and Chorus” with piano accompaniment and the usual *Sol-fa* notation, only the SATB refrain (labelled “Chorus”) is harmonised, whilst the introductory lines and subsequent two verses are marked “Baritone Solo (or unison chorus)”.<sup>99</sup> The overall form is strophic with an essentially binary structure (A verse – B refrain), but with the music of the ‘introduction’ being repeated in the first half of the verse, which internally is in binary form (a – b). There are the usual slight variations to accommodate the text. Presumably in order for the message of Swingler’s text to be conveyed with the maximum impact, the initial tempo marking of the 5-bar piano introduction is



“Majestic and unhurried”, with “At a speaking pace” at the vocal entry and “Steady and unhurried beat, but not too slow” for the refrain. The given key signature is C minor, but more often the song is in C aeolian and occasionally in E $\flat$  major. The accompaniment always outlines the pitch of the melodic line and utilises bass octaves throughout. Unlike many of Bush’s other workers’ songs, the solo/unison straightforward melody is instantly memorable with stepwise falling quaver movement, usually following initial ascending leaps of a fifth followed by a fourth, or some variant of this (see Ex.3:11).

Example 3:11 – *Against the People’s Enemies* (bars 5-9)

The musical score for Example 3:11 is presented in two staves. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the piano. The key signature is C minor (two flats) and the time signature is 3/2. The voice line begins with a melodic phrase that descends stepwise, following an initial ascending leap of a fifth. The piano accompaniment provides a steady, unhurried beat, primarily using bass octaves to outline the pitch of the vocal line. The lyrics are: "Now goaded past endurance let us sing a song of hate For all the wrongs of government we will not tolerate." The score includes a dynamic marking of *mf* for the piano part.

With its slow pulse, 3/2 time signature and multiple vocal suspensions,<sup>100</sup> the refrain delivers the essential message of the “anthem”, with the verse, perhaps, being more of a parody, and with the “steady and unhurried beat” facilitated by the frequent (and sometimes dotted) breves and semibreves. The SATB harmonies and cadences of the refrain display a harmonically conventional approach, employing full three- and four-part ‘standard’ chords, for example, V – I (C aeolian) at bars 36-37, VII $\bar{7}$  $\flat$  – I (E $\flat$ ) at bars 41-42, V – VI $\bar{7}$  (C minor) at bars 50-51, and concluding with a traditional perfect cadence (also in C minor) in bars 62-63 (see Ex. 3:12).

Example 3:12 – *Against the People’s Enemies* (bars 40-42 & 60-63)

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Soprano Alto, Tenor Bass, and Piano. The score is in 3/2 time and B-flat major. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 40-42, and the second system covers bars 60-63. The lyrics are: "a sym - bol of dis - gust. are snap - ping at your feet. re - vealed with blood upon its hands." The Soprano Alto part has a melodic line with some rests. The Tenor Bass part has a more active line with some rests. The Piano part provides harmonic support with chords and some melodic fragments.

It is difficult to establish exactly where this workers’ song fits in relation to Bush’s ideology, bearing in mind the following statement:

“Only when the workers realise and protest against their exploited condition can they evolve their own culture. The workers’ task is to fight the capitalist system and workers’ culture is, and should be, based on the workers’ fight, and should reflect it. In the field of music the workers’ idea regarding music is thus entirely different from the orthodox idea – namely that music is an aspect of eternal beauty – beauty in the abstract.”<sup>101</sup>

This difficulty is a result of the more orthodox presentation of *Against the People’s Enemies*, compared with that found in previously examined songs, exhibiting as it does a jaunty and almost child-like simplicity in the solo/unison verses while the chorus is sombre and sedate. Was this song perhaps intended as a parody? Or was the message of such importance that a more conventional method of delivery was considered more effective? The general political context of the times cannot be ignored, but a firm conclusion cannot be reached as either scenario is plausible.

### **The early war years**

Despite Bush’s intense activity during these pre-war years, he still managed to find time “to launch his London String Orchestra of 22 players, led by Samuel Kutcher, with two concerts at the Wigmore Hall on 30 January 1939 and 25 March 1939.”<sup>102</sup> In June of the same year he began to compose his *Symphony in C* (Op. 21), about which he wrote:

“In this Symphony, the composer’s intention is to evoke the feelings of the men and women of Britain during the 1930s. There is no programme of events depicted; the three main movements are more in the nature of mood pictures, each an expression of the prevailing mental and emotional atmosphere of the social movement of the time.”<sup>103</sup>

By using in a tonal way a 12-tone series, which later breaks down and is eventually overthrown, Bush considered that he was “turning the latest musical weapon of the bourgeoisie against the bourgeoisie” and thus applying his Marxist principles to the actual music.<sup>104</sup> This work reflected the next level in Bush’s ongoing fusion of his political and socio-musical ideologies, even more so than in the *Piano Concerto* before it, since it lacks a Marxist text. The symphony exemplifies his commitment to the widening of the cultural spectrum by the inclusion of music relevant to the workers’ lives, but since it belongs to the category of art music and also lacks any choral content, it will not be examined here.<sup>105</sup>

Musical endeavour in general, whether composition or performance, was curtailed significantly at the onset of the second World War, since both Bush and Swingle were called up to serve in the armed forces from November 1941. Bush was a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps and Swingle served in the Royal Army Signals Corps, but they continued their collaboration as circumstances allowed. The textual emphasis of Bush’s settings altered somewhat according to changing world events, becoming naturally more concerned with peace-related issues, and less with workers’ rights as heretofore.<sup>106</sup> Musically, however, the songs of the 1940s are substantially the same as those already examined, negating the need for any further stylistic analysis. Throughout his long life Bush continued to write music that reflected his socialist beliefs and from 1946 further modified his style in line with the Zhdanov directive to all Soviet artists requiring them to simplify their work, whether literary, visual or musical.<sup>107</sup> While this development was received sceptically by many, it undoubtedly resulted in Bush’s adoption of a freer style, thus making his later music more accessible and appealing to the general public.

It has been shown conclusively that, during the 1930s, Bush's tireless commitment to the political education of the working class, through his music, was born out of a deeply held political conviction that made it compulsory for him to use all the means at his disposal. That he gradually and consciously simplified his compositional techniques to further his aims, making his workers' choral music and songs more accessible, has also been demonstrated and supports this view. It is apparent from the extent of Bush's popularist activities at this time that he had committed himself unstintingly to the Communist cause, and the relevance of this total dedication cannot be overstated. When one considers the list of his involvements with pageants and other music-theatre productions, his extensive conducting commitments, the setting up of the Workers' Music Association, collaborations with other composers for the benefit of 'the people', the workers' songs written with Swingler, his major symphonic compositions and his many varied other activities such as teaching, it is clear that the 1930s represented an enormously important period in Bush's life.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bush 1936/1: Bush A., BA (1936), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Bush, A., BA (n.d., post-1953), 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>4</sup> Bush, A. (1980), 31.

<sup>5</sup> Foreman (2000), 105.

<sup>6</sup> Sahnou (1957), 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Worker* (19 March 1948), 2.

<sup>8</sup> WMA Winter Programme (1940).

<sup>9</sup> Sahnou (1950), 28.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> The WMA programme is unclear as to whether these activities were participatory and/or auditory: the 'chamber music hour', for example, may well have been the latter. The patrons included Benjamin Britten, Hanns Eisler, John Ireland, Lennox Berkeley, Alan Rawsthorne, Elizabeth Maconchy and Rutland Boughton, some of whom played an active role in the WMA's activities. The full extent of Bush's involvement in these is given in Sahnou (1950), 29-30. The 1940 WMA winter programme is included as Appendix J: the lecture on *Marxism and Music* on 2 February was actually given by Bush (no name is given on the programme). The wider issue of music education within the Labour Movement will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>12</sup> Bush 1937-1938/1: Bush A., BA (n.d., ?1937-1938), 1. There is no further reference to 'the Brigade', which may have been affiliated to either the WMA or the Communist Party.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Sahnou (1957), 5.

<sup>15</sup> These included ten long-playing records of Child ballads, two of "sailor songs" (Sahnou, *ibid.*, 13: whether shanties or ballads is not known) sung by Ewan MacColl and A.L. Lloyd and one of Guthrie's songs sung by Jack Elliott. The publication by the WMA in 1955 of *Irish Songs of Resistance* by Patrick Galvin sold out, and the recording of this collection, issued in two parts by 'Topic', was similarly successful. (*ibid.*, 13).

<sup>16</sup> Bush, A., BA (1962).

---

<sup>17</sup> Bush 1936/1: Bush A., BA (1936), 1. The course commenced on 21 February and took place on six consecutive Friday evenings from 8-10 p.m. The first hour was a “Practical course in choral conducting under the direction of Arnold Goldsbrough”. The second hour was Bush’s “Study class in the problems of workers’ music”.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Bush, A., BA (1937), 2-3: “a group of nine composers, consisting of two students at musical institutions, one professional violinist and six amateur musicians of various kinds attended a course and produced a workers’ song” (*ibid.*, 2). “Each member of the group composed a melody to suit the text, one of which was selected and rewritten by the group; all the members then wrote a piano accompaniment, of which one – by WMA Secretary Will Sahnaw – was chosen for the final score” (Croft (2003), 60).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> It was obviously intended for some specific occasion, but there are no records of any public performances ever having taken place, although it was surely heard at events such as Labour rallies.

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix K for the score of *Labour’s Song of Challenge*.

<sup>29</sup> “The LLCU unites the great majority of workers’ choirs in London and district, except those associated with the Co-operative Movement. We sing songs about all aspects of the workers’ struggle, about the Hunger Marches and May Day as well as Spain and the USSR. Our songs vary from very easy unison songs to very difficult unaccompanied or accompanied part-songs.” (Bush, A., BA (1937), 1).

<sup>30</sup> Sopranos = d’ – g”, altos = c’ – e”, tenors = d – g’, basses = c – e’.

<sup>31</sup> Double octaves are frequently found in the piano accompaniment of Bush’s songs, often including internal harmony notes, as, for example, in both *Question and Answer* and *Song of the Hunger Marchers*.

<sup>32</sup> Bush 1936/1: Bush A., BA (1936), 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> There are clearly whole-tone elements here, although this sequence of chords could be regarded as follows: VII<sup>aug</sup> – I<sup>aug</sup> (both minus the third) – Vb (minus the root). This is the only bar in the entire song (although repeated in verse 3) to include the leading note in G major – it is natural in bar 29, for example.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 2 endnote 8.

<sup>36</sup> Bush, A. (1937).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>40</sup> The soloists were Alan Bush (piano) and Denis Noble (baritone), with the BBC Male Voice Chorus and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult.

<sup>41</sup> The concerto was played on the occasion of the Bush Centenary Concert on 19 December 2000 at Maida Vale. Leonard Slatkin conducted the BBC Symphony Orchestra with soloists Rolf Hind (piano), Ashley Holland (baritone) and the Apollo Voices in a well-received performance, about which Simon Jenner commented: “Bush’s scale is the most impressive thing. Two things emerge quite clearly. Bush was most inspired when writing challenging piano music he performed himself, and when setting texts. The first is thorny, dialectic in the sense of his String Quartet, generating a terrific rhythmic pulse that leaps coruscating into argument. The other quality already hinted at, is the memorable thematic material of the sung text” (Jenner, web ref. (2001)). It is interesting to note that much of the sentiment expressed in the text of the choral finale is not that far removed from many commentators’ thoughts on the hardships and economic difficulties being faced by hard-pressed taxpayers (workers) in the financial crisis that commenced in 2008. The greatest recession in modern history is generally being attributed to that same ‘greed’ of the ‘privileged few’ so often referred to in Bush-Swingle collaborations.

<sup>42</sup> Orga (1980), 45-56, has analysed the musical content of the concerto.

<sup>43</sup> Both are scored for male chorus, to which Bush adds a baritone soloist.

<sup>44</sup> Randall Swingle was not present for the first performance: according to Bernard Stevens, he thought the text was ‘terrible’. Bush: “Have you heard from Randall? He wasn’t present at the premiere” (Bush, A., BA (March 1938), 1). Stevens: “He said he would have come if you hadn’t used his text which he thought was terrible!” (Stevens, BA (March 1938), 1).

<sup>45</sup> Bush, A., BA (1972), 13.

---

<sup>46</sup> Bush 1936/2: Bush, A., BA (1936), 2. He wrote this in reply to a letter from Britten, who was also struggling with the conflicts inherent in the composition and performance of modern music at the time (see endnote 48 below).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Britten, BA (1936), 5: “Every B.B.C. or Contemporary music concert I go to emphasises this point – and it is the reason why music has become the meat for only the cultural few.” In this 10-page hand written letter to Bush the 22-year old Britten describes how “I am at the moment going through a species of mental spring-cleaning. One arrives at a time of life, I feel, in which after a certain success a decision must be faced. I am now at such a parting of the roads, and although politically at any rate I have started to pull the steering-wheel around I haven’t started up the new road” (ibid., 2-3).

<sup>49</sup> Bush, A., BA (1972), 9.

<sup>50</sup> Croft (2003), 59. The review was dated 7 April. A “typescript of the revue [is preserved] among Swingler’s papers; *Peace and Prosperity* was revived a few months later for Unity Theatre’s first season in its new Goldington Street premises in January 1938” (ibid., 265 note 12). It is curious to note that there is no mention whatsoever of this event amongst any of the Bush source materials researched for this dissertation.

<sup>51</sup> Watson (1978), 86.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>53</sup> Bush 1936/1: Bush A., BA (1936), 2. At the end of the second World War, the Association published ‘A Policy for Music in Post-War Britain’. According to Sahnaw “it was taken up by local councils as the only available guide to the possibilities of municipal enterprise in music. Much of what was recommended and forecast has now become part of our national culture” (Sahnaw (1957), 7).

<sup>54</sup> The annual summer school takes place in August at Wortley Hall, Yorkshire. There are 18 different courses on offer in 2013, ranging from opera to jazz, and folk and cheilidh to sight-singing, woodwind ensemble and chamber music. Various scholarships are available for those wishing to attend: six scholarships are currently available, four of these the gift of the Communications Workers and Unison unions. All six offer up to 100 per cent of the tuition and accommodation fees for qualifying students. The tutors give their services without remuneration and only receive expenses (web ref. (2013)).

<sup>55</sup> “The Scala Theatre in Charlotte St, London, was built in 1904 on the site of a previous Theatre which originally opened as the ‘New Rooms in Tottenham Street’ in 1772” (Lloyd, web ref., n.d.). It was destroyed by fire in 1969 and on the site is now an apartment block. The original building was opened in 1772 as the King’s Concert Rooms and went through many alterations and name changes throughout its history (ibid.).

<sup>56</sup> “The reasons why Swingler and Bush were attracted to the work is [*sic.*] evident in the opening chorus of the Jews in captivity (‘By the waters of Babylon’): ... Charles Jennens’ text was itself a coded work, casting the liberator Cyrus in Jacobite terms taken from Lord Bolingbroke and employing the Babylon of Protestant tradition to attack Whig corruption.... For Swingler the moral corruption of the Babylonian court, exemplified by Belshazzar’s feast, was capitalism in crisis: ‘Their greedy empire crumbles by excess And harsh subjection; with surfeit grown corrupt, In slavery exhausted: and all its people Hate what they must defend.’” (Croft (2003), 74).

<sup>57</sup> Bush adapted the music to match Swingler’s reduced text. The soloists were Parry Jones, May Blyth, Trevor Anthony and John Hargreaves. Warwick Braithwaite conducted the Boyd Neel String Orchestra on five of the seven nights and Bush conducted the remaining two performances (Croft (2003), 73-4, and Bush N. (2000), 36).

<sup>58</sup> Croft (2003), 75.

<sup>59</sup> Bush, N. (2000), 37.

<sup>60</sup> Co-operative News, web ref. (2008), and Burton (2005), 33.

<sup>61</sup> Wallis (1995), 25-6.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Bush A., and Swingler, R. (1938), 3.

<sup>64</sup> The song book was arranged in four parts: ‘Traditional Workers’ Songs of Different Countries’; ‘Traditional Songs of Revolt from the British Isles’ (including *The Wearing of the Green* and James Connolly’s *A Rebel Song*); ‘Topical Workers’ Songs of Different Countries’ (including Eisler’s *The United Front Song* to an English translation of Brecht’s text and Shostakovitch’s *Salute to Life* translated by Nancy Bush), and ‘Five Famous Rounds with New Words’.

<sup>65</sup> Croft (2003), 71.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 71-72.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> *Festival*, BA (1939). The Festival’s programme-poster bore the following superscription: “art, made by the people and for the people, a joy to the maker and the user – *William Morris*”.

<sup>70</sup> Croft (2003), 91.

<sup>71</sup> The soloists were the tenor Parry Jones and the famous American bass and political activist, Paul Robeson.

---

<sup>72</sup> The 12 composers were Frederic Austin, Alan Bush, Erik Chisholm, Arnold Cooke, Christian Darnton, Norman Demuth, Elizabeth Lutyens, Elizabeth Maconchy, Alan Rawsthorne, Edmund Rubbra, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Victor Yates (*Festival of Music for the People*, programme-poster, BA, 1939).

<sup>73</sup> *Festival of Music for the People: Scenario*, BA (1939). The *Scenario* refers to the episodes only by number, whereas the titles are to be found in Wallis (1994), 149. Each group of performers introduced itself in rhyme before the pageant began. The first part dealt with the plight of the common man from earliest times:

Episode 1: 'Feudal England', ostensibly a typical scene of 'Merry England', with music composed and arranged by Elisabeth Lutyens.

Episode 2: 'The Massacre of the Innocents', drawing parallels between Herod's biblical slaughter and the contemporaneous killing of innocent civilians at Guernica (1937), with music arranged by Edmund Rubbra and Victor Yates.

Episode 3: 'Peasants in Revolt', covering the Peasant Rising of 1381 and the murder of Wat Tyler (Bush was to write an entire opera about this event in 1948-51), with music arranged by Erik Chisholm.

Episode 4: 'Soldiers of Freedom', dealing with events of 1649 (the Levellers, the beheading of Charles I and the transfer of power to Parliament), with music composed and arranged by Christian Darnton.

Episode 5: 'Village Green to Concert Hall', describing the effects of industrialisation and the resultant destruction of rural communities, with musical content by Frederic Austin.

The second part of the pageant opened with:

Episode 6: 'For a Changing Europe', centred on the French Revolution, with music arranged by Norman Demuth but commencing with Grétry's ballet *Le Fête de la Raison* orchestrated by Mátyás Seiber.

Episode 7: 'Prisoners', dealing with issues of freedom and featuring the character of Beethoven, who is asked "What does your vision show you of the men of your time? What of the world and their condition?" His reply seems extraordinarily prophetic in these early 21<sup>st</sup>-century economically turbulent times: "These great bankers have all the ministers of Europe in their power; they can hurl governments into confusion as often as they choose. No political business can be concluded without them. The way European politics are going, nothing can be done without money and without bankers. All the governments put together haven't a single idea.... The privileged class has been the first to tear up the social contract, and then they speak of their rights! They are alone in not knowing what sort of temper moves the people of to-day. The nobles, who govern us, have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing." It was appropriate that it fell to Bush, a great Beethoven enthusiast, to arrange the music, commencing with The Prisoners' Chorus from Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

Episode 8: 'Slaves', featuring Paul Robeson and a 'Negro Choir' performing chain-gang and freedom songs, a cotton-picking song and finishing with Robeson singing *Kneelin' Low*. The content appears to have been entirely musical without any interlinking text, and the musical arranger is unknown.

Episode 9: 'The People Advance', commencing with the Chartist song *We're Low* sung by the chorus and focusing on the founding of the Co-operative Movement and the first trades' unions, with music composed or arranged by Elizabeth Maconchy.

Episode 10: 'For Peace and Liberty' brought all the performers together and dealt with contemporary issues in the grand finale, with music arranged by Alan Rawsthorne.

Although no mention of it is made in the *Scenario*, a score entitled *A Song of the Peace-Lover* with a text by Swingler is in the British Library (Ms Mus, 424 ff. 67-70): 'Alan Bush Collection. Vol. XCIX. Choral Music; 1972 – circa 1985, n.d.' The text, however, is included in the 'Festival of Music for the People' file, suggesting it may have been written for this pageant (*ibid.*). If so, the obvious place for it would have been in the finale.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted by Croft (2003), 95, stating the source as 'Challenge', presumably a journal, although there is no mention of this in Croft's bibliography.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>76</sup> Schoenberg's *Peace on Earth* originally composed in German as *Friede auf Erden* was sung by the Fleet Street Choir and conducted by T.B. Lawrence. Eisler's three overtly political cantatas for solo voice and instrumental accompaniment were *News from Vienna 1938*, *Exile Cantata* and *Prison House Cantata*, and were performed by Anne Wood. The concert ended with Medvedeff and his Balalaika Orchestra performing "Russian Tunes of To-day" (*Festival*, BA, 1939).

<sup>77</sup> 12 Co-operative and Labour Choirs (300 voices) took part in the concert with Denis Noble (baritone), Alan Bush (piano) and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert.

<sup>78</sup> Bush's *Piano Concerto* was written in 1937 and first performed in full in March 1938, not at this concert as claimed by Croft (2003), 93. Its stridently political choral finale to a text by Swingler was an obvious choice for inclusion on this occasion.

<sup>79</sup> Running short of time to fulfil a BBC commission for the coronation of George VI, Ireland asked Bush to orchestrate *These Things Shall Be* from verbal instructions (Bush, A., web ref. (1979)). At a chance meeting of the two men Ireland asked Bush if he knew the tune of the *International*, and the latter hastily wrote out the melody on the back of an envelope. It was thus incorporated into *These Things Shall Be*, later to be regretted by

---

Ireland who requested in a letter to Adrian Boult in 1951 that the horn part be made “quite subordinate so as not to stand out in performance above the top outline in the strings” (O’Higgins, web ref. (2002) and O’Higgins, (2006), 79).

<sup>80</sup> Britten’s *Ballad of Heroes*, with a text by W.H. Auden and Swingler, was specially written for this event “in honour of those men of the British Battalion of the International Brigade who fell in Spain” (*Festival of Music for the People*, programme-poster, BA, 1939).

<sup>81</sup> Croft (2003), 95.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Wallis (1994), 144-5 & 146.

<sup>84</sup> The next such event was to be *The Living English*, “A Song Pageant of People based on English Folk Songs selected by A.L. Lloyd and arranged by Alan Bush [with a] script by Maurice Carpenter [and] Music arranged by Alan Bush...” (Craggs (2007), 63-64). This was first performed at the Scala Theatre on 26 October 1946 “as part of the Folk Song and Dance Festival [with the] Massed choirs of the London Co-operative Society Ltd. and Orchestra, conducted by Alan Bush” (ibid., 63).

<sup>85</sup> Then, as now, many workers’ choirs would have been affiliated to the WMA and be drawn from various parts of the country.

<sup>86</sup> See Appendix L for the score, which was published by the WMA.

<sup>87</sup> These lyrics could arguably still have resonance in today’s austerity-driven and war-torn (albeit not in these islands) climate.

<sup>88</sup> a = bars 5-12, b = bars 12-20; c = bars 21-24, d = bars 25-28, e = bars 28-32, e<sup>1</sup> = bars 32-36.

<sup>89</sup> The vocal entry in bar 7 is an octave higher than the previous note (with a crotchet rest in between), but this is helpfully supplied by the piano.

<sup>90</sup> Sudden mediant tonal shifts like this are commonly encountered in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic music.

<sup>91</sup> As previously noted in Chapter 2, in the minor key *Lah* denotes the tonic, clearly showing the relationship to its relative major, the key signature of which serves both.

<sup>92</sup> The score, published by the WMA, is copyright dated 1939, but Bush, A. (1980), 84, mistakenly dates the song to 1940. It is regrettably not known whether Bush composed both it and *Make Your Meaning Clear!* before or after the outbreak of war.

<sup>93</sup> Bush, A., BA (n.d. post-1953), 3-4. The other song was *The Song of the Hunger Marchers*: “I felt, however, that musical art was in danger of evaporating and of losing touch with the people as a whole unless efforts were made to link those of its forms that were most widely practised with the experiences of life of the performers themselves. Thus I wrote in the 1920’s and 30’s a number of short choral compositions directly related to aspects of the life of the working people, out of whose labour the owners reaped their profit in times of prosperity and who bore the burden of the economic crisis when it was unloosed upon us all. Such songs as The Hunger Marchers’ Song (for the unemployed marchers of 1934) and Against the People’s Enemies (the British supporters of Hitler, led by Neville Chamberlain) are examples of these works” (ibid.). See also Chapter 2, endnote 70.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> The Munich Pact appeasement was intended to avert war by allowing Hitler to annex the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia, but the failure of the initiative eventually led to the declaration of war on Germany on 3 September 1939 following the latter’s subsequent invasion of Poland.

<sup>96</sup> Since Bush and Swingler collaborated closely on so many songs and projects, the ideology expressed in the text of *Make Your Meaning Clear* and in that of *Against the People’s Enemies* undoubtedly represented the shared views of both men. Bush furthermore held that “the basic antagonism of the British imperialists to the USSR is the cause of the whole world events of the last eight [1931-1939] years (since Japan invaded Manchuria and was supported by Sir John Simon [the British Foreign Secretary] at Geneva)” (O’Higgins (2006), 111). The remainder of the letter (Bush to John Ireland, 28.12.1939) from which this quote is taken outlines the British imperialistic manoeuvres (not least the following: “Mr. Chamberlain has bribed Turkey with a loan of 60 millions to allow our warships entrance into the Black Sea”) that, in Bush’s view, directly led to the Soviet invasion of Finland on 30 November 1939. In a later letter to Ireland (21 February 1941) Bush wrote: “You must be aware that we are now financially and militarily at the mercy of the monopoly-capitalists of the USA, people who organised capitalism with thugs, machine-guns, and paid spies in the factories to smell out vigorous working-class and trade union supporters, before ever Hitler was heard of.... In order to fasten the shackles of American imperialism tightly enough upon the people of this country, we have already advanced rapidly into fascism, as is made clear by the banning of the Daily Worker and the statement by Churchill that the present government is to remain in power for three years after the end of the war” (ibid., 123).

<sup>97</sup> *Unite and be Free*, score, BA (1941).

<sup>98</sup> Bush, A., BA (n.d. post-1953),

<sup>99</sup> See Appendix M for the score.



---

<sup>100</sup> The piano introduction is in 3/2, changing to 2/2 for the vocal entry.

<sup>101</sup> Bush 1936/1: Bush A., BA (1936), 2.

<sup>102</sup> O'Higgins (2006), 87. The initial concert included "the first performance of Bush's arrangement of *Dialectic for String Orchestra*, Op. 15a (1938)" (ibid.).

<sup>103</sup> Foreman, CD notes (2004), 8, quoting from Bush's own programme notes. Bush began to compose the symphony in June 1939 and completed it in August 1940. The first performance was given at a Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall on 24 July 1942 and formed the second half of an otherwise Beethoven programme, a circumstance that must surely have pleased Bush immensely.

<sup>104</sup> Bush, A., BA (1972), 11. The 'bourgeois' tone-row introduced in the Prologue is used to build the entire first movement, although with a definite suggested tonality of C, and it clearly represents the ruling class. The 'passively suffering working-class' gains ground in the second movement through the breaking down of the tone-row accompanied by a tonal melody, and the (Marxist) workers ultimately triumph over the bourgeoisie in the third movement. The final movement is characterised by a cheerful diatonic march that leaves the listener in no doubt as to the positive outcome for the workers (paraphrase of Foreman, CD notes (2004), 8-10, quoting from Bush's own programme notes).

<sup>105</sup> Waters (2012) has examined the musical content of the first three of Bush's four symphonies.

<sup>106</sup> These are listed in Appendix A.

<sup>107</sup> Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948) was responsible for Stalin's cultural policy and established the doctrine of 'Socialist Realism', which "presented composers with the task of representing contemporary reality in a musical language comprehensible to 'the People'" (Fanning & Fay (2001), xxiii, 294). Composers who failed to do so in a manner that adhered to the Communist Party line were denounced as cultural fascists. In 1946 the Central Committee, overseen by Zhdanov, the then USSR Minister of Culture, passed a new cultural doctrine requiring Soviet artists to adhere to the party position in all their works. On 10 February 1948 Zhdanov issued a further decree that heralded his anti-formalism campaign and resulted in the disciplining of many Soviet composers such as Shostakovich, and Bush further modified his compositional style accordingly (endnote 57 of Chapter 1 refers to this).

## Conclusion

Alan Bush lived a long and full life, maintaining his involvement with many different humanitarian causes and organisations and continuing to compose well into his nineties. This dissertation has focused on the workers' choral music and songs of his inter-war period. The formation of his political and compositional *credo* took place during that time, and this led him to espouse the cause of the working class movement, not only politically but also in his music. During this period he encountered such hostility towards his ideology from the musical establishment that it stereotyped him for the rest of his life; even today, if Bush is known at all it is almost always as a 'Communist Composer', a description which reflects nothing of the worth and variety of his music. Although it has been shown conclusively that his political philosophy dictated his compositional methodology, it is also true that his music was no less worthy as a result. That Bush was always true to himself is surely a commendation of the highest order.

In the mid 1930s Bush worked closely with a number of eminent musicians who had fled to Britain from Austria and Germany to escape fascism, as explored in Chapter 2. One of these, Ernst Meyer, later wrote a short article on Bush's choral works in which he observed:

“His earliest mass songs, such as his fine *Song to Labour...* are still based on the idiom of traditional English Labour songs from the Chartist movement to the First World War. However, with the sharpening of the class struggle in England and especially with the growing fascist menace, Bush's choral style became more and more pointed, more forceful, more modern, altogether more original. The basic features of national British folk music, even a certain touch of pentatonicism, are present in all Bush's work. Yet in his choral pieces of the thirties (*Song of the Hunger Marchers, Against the People's Enemies, To the People of England, Make Your Meaning Clear, Truth on the March, Labour's Song of Challenge, You have Betrayed Our Friends, etc.*) a rhythmic sharpness and melodic passion is developed which is something entirely new in English music. Whether unison or part songs, they always have plenty of punch; there is wit, humour, grimness or even hatred where needed. In these songs Bush makes straight for his goal, they are deeply felt, and directness and effectiveness prevail over formal niceties and technical tricks. The words are often hammered out with terrific power; who could ever forget the simple dramatic strength of *Truth on the March*, or of such passages as Bush's setting of *Workmates, We must Fight and Strive* (Swingler)?”<sup>1</sup>

Meyer, whose involvement with the work of the London Labour Choral Union and the Workers' Music Association continued until he returned to Germany in 1948, would have witnessed first-hand the effectiveness of Bush's early songs when they were first performed at rallies, in concerts and in staged productions.

Given that Bush devoted so much of his time and energy to composing, directing, arranging, participating in, and encouraging, all manner of workers' musical activities, it seems astonishing that this aspect of his life and work has been ignored for so long. It is a fact, however, that through the years his constant assertive proselytizing for the communist cause was seriously off-putting to many, as Lewis Foreman recalls:

“In the late 1950s and 1960s in London at that time there were also many meetings promoting modern music, in which the composers of the day spoke about their music, or music of the day. One abiding memory of these occasions is the presence of Alan Bush, who would invariably ask a question and hector us about the role of music in promoting socialism. Everyone would smile, sigh, and sit back to hear the lion roar. I have to say that these impromptu speeches never persuaded me, and I am sure for many became a barrier to the appreciation of the music. If he spoke to the promoters of London's concert halls and opera houses in a similar vein it is not surprising he was unheard.”<sup>2</sup>

One can only imagine the understandable antipathy with which these outpourings were greeted, and this is undoubtedly the principle reason for the neglect of Bush's music; it should surely have been possible, nevertheless, to separate the message from the messenger, and, more importantly, not to allow personal prejudice to dismiss his music peremptorily. In a period where Tippett and Britten have achieved significant status, Bush still remains almost unknown to the general concert-going public.

Bush's workers' choral music and songs, as examined in this dissertation, reflect the difficulties of the inter-war period in Britain, with mass unemployment, low wages, poor healthcare, and an ever-widening gulf between rich and poor. Although anathema to the establishment, both musical and political, these vital issues were of immense importance to those affected by them. The many concerts of this repertory, together with the mass rallies and

pageants undertaken by Bush and his associates, fulfilled a need for non-aggressive mass expression of legitimate grievances in an entertaining setting, and they received tremendous support at the time. Since then, however, this whole aspect of his musical life seems to have been virtually erased from valid consideration, hence the need for the present research.

The songs examined in this dissertation were all written for the LLCU over a period of 14 years. The circumstances and requirements of their composition varied considerably according to whether they were intended for performance at choral concerts, protest marches and labour rallies, or pageants. These conditions in turn directly influenced the resulting musical style, which remains textually and texturally flexible but may be divided into two broad categories: simple catchy or popular songs and art or hybrid folk-art ones. That the former could be unison or harmonised (the latter are all harmonised), accompanied or *a cappella*, is a further example of the flexibility adopted by Bush in his settings.

The first workers' song Bush wrote, the SATB *Song to Labour* (1926), with its simple tonal scheme and relatively straightforward harmonies, would not have been problematic for the choir and belongs to the first category. It was also his first choral commission, and no doubt he was anxious that it would be well received and therefore not too complicated, since he was also likely to have been unsure of the musical standard of the LLCU.<sup>3</sup> The optional piano accompaniment did, however, include modal elements and several dissonances that would become familiar in future compositions. The following songs, *To the Men of England* (1927-1928), the *Epilogue of Songs of the Doomed* (1929) and *The Road* (1929), were all assigned opus numbers, which in itself is indicative of the higher musical status attributed to them by Bush. The first and third of these are for unaccompanied SATB, whilst the second is for accompanied SSAA, and all three can be viewed as art or semi-art songs, although there

are also audible folk elements present in *To the Men of England*. They have in common a complex and eclectic harmonic language, considerable chromaticism, tonal ambiguity, and a level of difficulty that would have required a high standard of choral competence, being no doubt intended for concert performance. Since these songs were composed during the years that Bush spent between London and Berlin, it is probable that he was influenced to some extent by the contemporaneous musical eclecticism prevalent in Europe, as well as by the music of Debussy and Ravel, as noted in Chapter 1.

By 1931, when *Question and Answer* was written, Bush had already encountered both Hanns Eisler's music and Marxist ideology. Having studied philosophy in Berlin, he was now moving further to the left in his own political affiliations until, in 1934, he fully embraced Marxism and all its musical ramifications. From this time on he strove to simplify his workers' songs, but it was a slow process. The unison *Question and Answer* and *Song of the Hunger Marchers* (1934) definitely belong to the first category as outlined above although both still retain elements of eclecticism in the piano accompaniment; nevertheless, they do not present any difficulty for the singers. As examined in Chapter 2, they employ secondary sevenths, accented and unaccented passing notes, and tonal ambiguity, partly the result of omitting the third of the triad, and also from shifting to and from related keys and modes. It was in these two songs that Bush first used continuous bass octaves in the accompaniment, an element that became a 'hallmark' feature of the later songs. The SATB-unison *Pageant Song* (1934) has a more elaborate accompaniment than the other songs, since it is featured at various stages throughout the large-scale *Pageant of Labour*.

By 1936, Bush had formulated his blueprint for the composition of workers' music and, in February and March of that year, he taught a study course on 'The Problems of

Workers' Music', the details of which are presented in Chapter 3. As a committed and active Communist Party member, he ensured that the criteria for such composition fully espoused Marxist ideology. It was to be expected, therefore, that Bush's future workers' choral music and songs would adhere to his own brief. Each of the three songs examined from this period (1936-1939) has a different choral scoring, whilst all are accompanied. *Labour's Song of Challenge* (1936) is a substantial SATB composition that made an impression on Ernst Meyer, as quoted earlier: "who could ever forget the simple dramatic strength of... such passages as Bush's setting of *Workmates, We must Fight and Strive?*"<sup>4</sup> It is largely motivic in its structure, both melodically and rhythmically, but unlike previous songs there are no eclectic harmonies in the vocal parts. Tonal ambiguity is achieved by considerable use of open fourths and fifths, the regular omission of the third of the triad, and frequent movement into and out of related keys and modes. It employs most of the elements that Bush listed as being desirable in a workers' song, including the use of sequence, no chromatic vocal writing, and the scoring of whole phrases in unison. The dramatic, if at times sparse, double-octave piano accompaniment sets it slightly apart from his simpler workers' songs, while the vocal lines would not have presented any difficulty for the singers. This song was intended for use by a unison choir and SATB chorus singing together, and was undoubtedly used in concert, although there is no information concerning its first performance. While not an art-song of the same calibre as *Song to the Men of England*, for example, *Labour's Song of Challenge* is, nevertheless, a choral work of some substance, and it achieved Bush's objective in the composition of workers' choral music.

By 1939, the threat and subsequent reality of war had certainly impinged on the consciousness of the British population, including Bush and Swingler. Their bitter anti-war unison song *Make your Meaning Clear!* (1939) is simple in structure and diatonic for the

most part. The aural effect of its tonality, however, is not necessarily matched by Bush's harmonic procedures; with a 4-bar introduction in C# aeolian, for example, while it simultaneously offers a key signature of A major, the key of the verse that follows. The setting is melodically straightforward and undemanding, and places this song firmly in the same category as his earlier workers' songs. *Against the People's Enemies* (1939) for baritone solo, SATB and piano, could also be considered a choral work rather than a workers' chorus, but is different in character from all of the other songs examined. Its simplistic solo/unison verse may well have been intended as a parody – another of Bush's recommendations to his students – as it seems incongruous to sing “a song of hate”, filled with invective, to such a jaunty melody. The vitriolic verse is then followed by the sombre SATB anthem, which is set with straightforward conventional harmonies. These three songs all exhibit a clear commitment to Bush's blueprint, as previously discussed, and signify his arrival at the target he had set for himself; that of writing workers' music in a clearly presented and accessible form, for use by workers' choral groups of differing musical standards.

Bush's unstinting devotion to the workers' movement was born out of his socialist convictions, including Marxist ideology, as applied to the arts and to music in particular. That this resulted in his total commitment to working class culture was surely greatly to his credit, and was the logical out-working of those convictions. This was recognised by Meyer when he wrote the following:

“A true national composer, Alan Bush has written music for his people, side by side with his people and in the musical language of his people. He is one of the most popular men in Britain. His popularity among London workers and especially among members of the workers' choral movement has to be seen to be believed. In his choral works Bush continues the finest musical traditions of his country. *This great and lovable composer should be the pride of his fellow country-men.* He has won an international reputation and respect – as a great British artist who is deeply rooted in his people and has remained a faithful champion of their cause.”<sup>5</sup>

After the second World War, Bush's songs continued to reflect the human condition and the concerns of ordinary people, especially with regard to issues of human rights, with titles such

as *A World for Living* (1946), *Ballad of the March to Aldermaston* (1958), *Turkish Workers' Marching Song* (Op. 101, 1985) and *Mandela Speaking* (Op. 110, 1985). His four operas, composed between 1948 and 1967, were all staged successfully in various locations in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The subject matter of each depicted some social unrest or injustice to the ordinary man at the hands of the establishment.<sup>6</sup> Regrettably the British public has only had one opportunity to see the first of these, *Wat Tyler*, when the WMA formed a company to produce it at Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1974.

Bush never reneged on his convictions, nor did he waver in his belief that:

“Art is the privilege of the free. So all art is conditioned by the conception of freedom which rules in the society that produces it; art is a mode of freedom, and a class society conceives freedom to be absolutely whatever relative freedom that class has attained to. In bourgeois art man is conscious of the necessity of outer reality but not of his own, because he is unconscious of the society that makes him what he is. He is only a half-man. Communist art will be complete, because it will be man conscious of his own necessity as well as that of outer reality.”<sup>7</sup>

That he lived such a long life without ever seeing his desired society become a reality must surely have disappointed Bush. The collapse of Communism must have caused him much pain, but he may not have regarded the revelation of the truth of the horrors committed under the Stalinist regime as a negation of the essential doctrine of Marxism. He would, however, have been fully vindicated in his convictions concerning Capitalism had he been alive to witness its spectacular collapse in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, when to use his own words “the burden of the economic crisis was unloosed upon us all”,<sup>8</sup> an apposite comment as relevant today as it was to an earlier time. The texts of Bush's workers' choral music and songs are therefore arguably as appropriate in today's world as they were in the 1930s.

---

<sup>1</sup> Meyer (1950), 32-33. Craggs (2007), 132, lists *Workmates, We Must Fight and Strive* as a distinct song, quoting Meyer as his source of reference. This is in fact the first line of *Labour's Song of Challenge*: Meyer's statement is perhaps somewhat ambiguous in his use of the words “Bush's setting”, which could equally refer to a line of text or a complete song by that name, hence Craggs' incorrect assumption.

<sup>2</sup> Foreman, (2005), 1.



---

<sup>3</sup> When Bush was first appointed to the LLCU in 1925, he acted as deputy conductor to the Finchley choir whose members did not read music and who were used to being taught the songs by having them “played through and we picked [them] up somehow” (Bush, N. (2000), 17-18). *Song to Labour* was a commission from Rutland Boughton for the full Choral Union of which he was the director. At that time the LLCU had 400 members in ten affiliated choirs, and in 1926 Bush was subsequently elected its assistant musical director. The choice of an SATB rather than a unison setting for this initial workers’ song is undoubtedly the result of Bush wanting to make a positive impression on both the choir and Boughton.

<sup>4</sup> Endnote 1 refers.

<sup>5</sup> Meyer (1950), 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Wat Tyler* (1948-1950), for example, dealt with the 14<sup>th</sup> century Peasant Revolt and “achieved at last what I had been striving for for years, a work for the general public, in this case the operatic public, which was acceptable to them, and which at the same time set forth in an unmisunderstandable way the problems and expressed joys and sorrows of those who struggle for the betterment of mankind” (Bush, A., BA (1956), 4). *Men of Blackmoor* (1954-1955) concerned a miners’ strike in early 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Northumberland, *The Sugar Reapers* (1961-1963) was based around the 1961 advent of self government to British Guiana, and *Joe Hill – the Man Who Never Died* (1966-1968) told the story of a union organiser who was framed for murder by the authorities and subsequently hanged in 1915.

<sup>7</sup> Bush, A. (1950), 13.

<sup>8</sup> Bush, A., BA (n.d. post-1953), 4, referring to the 1930s.

## Bibliography

### (a) Books, dissertations and articles

Anderson, W. R., *New Music*, The Musical Times, lxx/1031 (London, 1.1929), 43

Betz, Albrecht, *Hanns Eisler Political Musician* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)

Boden, Frederick Cecil, *Out of the Coalfields* (London: Dent, 1929)

Bowman, Aubrey, *A Matter of Talent*, in Stevenson, R., ed. (1980), 127

Bullivant, Joanna, *Modernism, Politics and Individuality in 1930s Britain: The Case of Alan Bush*, in *Music and Letters*, xc/3 (London, 2009), 432-452

Burton, Alan, *The British Consumer Co-operative Movement and film, 1890s-1960s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 33

Bush, Alan, *What is Modern Music?* (10.12.1936), Proceedings of the Musical Association, 63<sup>rd</sup> Session (London, 1936-1937), 21-37

Bush, Alan, *Music*, in Day Lewis, Cecil, ed., *The Mind in Chains: Socialism and the Cultural Revolution* (London: Frederick Muller, 1937), 123-144

Bush, Alan, *Marxism and the Battle of Ideas with special reference to the World of Music* (London: WMA, 1950)

Bush, Alan, *The Study and Teaching of Musical Composition*, *The Musical Times* (London, 12.1952), 539-542

Bush, Alan, *Music in the Fight*, *The Daily Worker* (London, 2.6.1958), 3

Bush, Alan, *In my eighth decade and other essays* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1980)

Bush, Nancy, *Alan Bush – Music, Politics and Life* (London: Thames, 2000): see also under Foreman, L.

Caudwell, Christopher, *Illusion and Reality. A study of the sources of poetry* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1937; 2/1946)

Craggs, Stewart R., *Alan Bush, A Source Book* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

Crawford, Elizabeth, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866-1928* (London: University College London Press, 2001)

Croft, Andy, *Comrade Heart: A life of Randall Swingler* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)

Croft, Andy, 'Sing it as though we meant it!': *Alan Bush and Randall Swingler*, *Clarion – Newsletter of the Alan Bush Music Trust, 2009-2010*, xii (Litchfield, 2009), 2

Eisler, Hanns, "...A genuinely progressive man...", in *Tribute to Alan Bush* (1950), 25

Fanning, David and Fay, Laurel, *Shostakovich, Dmitry*, in Sadie & Tyrrell (2/2001), xxiii, 294

Field, Christopher D.S., *Phantasy*, in Sadie & Tyrrell (2/2001), xix, 539

Foreman, Lewis, *Spanning the Century – the music of Alan Bush*, in Bush, N. (2000), 100-103

Foreman, Lewis, *Alan Bush: Symphonies 1 and 2 – a personal exploration*, Clarion – Newsletter of the Alan Bush Music Trust, 2004-2005, vii (Litchfield, 2009), 1

Gill, Robert, *Composers of Today – 6. Alan Bush*, Our Time (London, 9.1946), 31

Grützner, Vera, *Meyer, Ernst Hermann*, in Sadie & Tyrrell (2/2001), xvi, 560-561

Hall, Duncan, *'A pleasant change from politics' – Music and the British labour movement between the wars* (Cheltenham: New Clarion Press, 2001)

Hull, Robin, *What Now?*, British Music of Our Time, ed. Bacharach, A. L. (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1946), 230

Ireland, John, *The Student*, in Tribute to Alan Bush (1950), 15-16

Kabalevsky, Dmitri, *Messages*, in Tribute to Alan Bush (1950), 13

Keller, Hans, *Bush's Creative Character*, in Stevenson, R., ed. (1980), 11-13

Kennedy & Rutherford-Johnson, *Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 860

Lowerson, John, *The Winter Journey – Alan Bush's Most Popular piece?*, Clarion – Newsletter of the Alan Bush Music Trust, 2007-2008, x (Litchfield, 2007), 1-2

Meyer, Ernst Hermann, *The Choral Works*, in *Tribute to Alan Bush* (1950), 32-34

Munby, Lionel M., *Songs of the Labour Movement, The Luddites and other essays* (London: Michael Katanga, 1971), 137

O'Higgins, Rachel, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

O'Higgins, Rachel, *Nancy Bush (1907-1991): Poet and Librettist*, Clarion – Newsletter of the Alan Bush Music Trust, 2008-2009, xi (Litchfield, 2008), 4-5

Orga, Ates, *The Concertos*, in Stevenson, R., ed. (1980), 45-68

Pastorello, Karen, *A Power among Them: Bessie Abramowitz Hillman and the making of the amalgamated clothing workers of America* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2008), vi

Payne, Anthony, *Alan Bush, Composer*, *The Musical Times*, cv/4 (London, April 1964), 263-265

Rushton, Julian, *Half-diminished seventh chord*, in Sadie & Tyrrell (2/2001), x, 691/2

Sachs, Curt, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World* (London: Dent, 1944), 21-22

Sadie, Stanley and Tyrell, John, eds., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 2/2001): see also under Fanning, D. and Fay, L.; Field, C.D.S.; Grützner, V.; Rushton, J.

Sahnou, Will, *Our President*, in *Tribute to Alan Bush* (1950), 26-31

Sahnou, Will, ed., *1957 – WMA – twenty one years* (London: WMA, 1957; R/1994)

Schafer, R. Murray, *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963)

Scholes, P., ed. Ward, J.O., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 2/1964), 90

Stevens, Bernard, *The Choral Music*, in Stevenson, R., ed. (1980), 32-34

Stevenson, Ronald, *Alan Bush: Committed Composer*, *Music Review*, xxv/3 (Cambridge, August 1964), 323-342

Stevenson, Ronald, ed., *Time Remembered: Alan Bush – An 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Symposium* (Kidderminster: Bravura, 1980): see also under Bowman, A.; Keller, H.; Orga, A.; Stevens, B.; Tippett, M.

Stevenson, Ronald, *Alan Bush: Marxist musician*, *Performance* (Spring 1981), 44-45

Tippett, Michael, *A Magnetic Friendship: An Attraction of Opposites*, in Stevenson, R., ed. (1980), 9

*Tribute to Alan Bush on his Fiftieth Birthday*, compiled by The Workers' Music Association (London: WMA, 1950): see also under Eisler, H.; Ireland, J.; Kabalevsky, D.; Meyer, E.H.; Sahnou, W.

Wallis, Mick, *Pageantry and the Popular Front, Ideological Production in the 'Thirties*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 10/38 (1994), 132-156

Waters, Julie, "*Against the Stream*": *intersections of music and politics in the conception, composition and reception of Alan Bush's first three symphonies* (PhD Diss., Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, 2012)

Watson, Ian, *Alan Bush and Left Musik [sic.] in the Thirties*, *Argument Sonderband*, xxix (Berlin, 1978), 80-90

**(b) Articles and other material from the Bush Archive (7 Harding Way, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9JH, England)** [see also under Musical Scores]

Britten, Benjamin, copy of handwritten letter to Bush (2.8.1936)

Bush, A., typewritten letter to unknown recipient (6.8.1929)

Bush 1936/1: Bush, Alan, *Notes on The Problems of Workers' Music for those taking part in the course at 12, Archer Street, London, W.1., February and March, 1936*, typescript (1936)

Bush 1936/2: Bush, Alan, copy of typescript letter to Benjamin Britten (11.8.1936)

Bush, Alan, *Worker's Music in England*, typescript (10.3.1937)

Bush 1937-1938/1: Bush, Alan, *Marxism and Music: Brigade Questions*, typescript (undated, but most likely 1937-1938)

Bush 1937-1938/2: Bush, Alan, *Notes on the theoretical and practical implications of Marxism in the field of Music*, typescript (undated, but most likely 1937-1938)

Bush, Alan, copy of typescript letter to Bernard Stevens (3.1938)

Bush, Alan, copy of typescript letter to Ralph Vaughan Williams (28.12.1938)

Bush 1940/1: Bush, Alan, *The Problem of Style in Composition*, typescript (undated full-length version of a lecture given at the Royal Academy of Music, London, 4.1940)

Bush 1940/2: Bush, Alan, *The Problem of Style in Composition*, typescript (condensed and emended version of the lecture given at the Royal Academy of Music, London, 4.1940)

Bush, Alan, programme notes for the Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall (24.7.1942)



Bush, Alan, *The Crisis of Modern Music*, typescript (originally published in the WMA quarterly magazine, *Keynote* i/4, London, 1946)

Bush, Alan, typescript programme note for the first performance of *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, Op. 32 (London, 1949)

Bush Alan, *The Ballad of Freedom's Soldier*, typescript article concerning this composition (undated, post-1953)

Bush, Alan, *Music and the People*, typescript article (10.1956)

Bush 1962/1: Bush, Alan, copy of typescript letter to Ronald Stevenson (10.2.1962)

Bush 1962/2: Bush, Alan, copy of typescript letter to Ronald Stephenson (12.9.1962)

Bush, Alan, copy of typescript letter to Ronald Stevenson (23.11.1963)

Bush, Alan, *Two Works Each Side of a Gap of Thirty-five Years*, typescript copy of an article following a BBC presentation at the 'Tuesday Invitation Concert' on 28.4.1964 of *Dialectic* for string quartet (Op. 15, 1929) and *Prelude, Air and Dance* for solo violin, string quartet and percussion (Op. 61, 1963-1964), (6.1964)

Bush, Alan, *The Composer Speaks*, typescript text of a talk given by Bush on BBC Radio 3 (29.8.1971)

Bush, Alan, *The Composer and his Public*, typescript copy of an article written for a lecture to a Birmingham audience (London, 1972)

*Festival of Music for the People*, photocopy of programme-poster and *Scenario for Pageant: Music and the People*, transcript (1939)

*Pageant of Labour, Official Book and Programme* [transcript] (Histon, 1934).

Stevens, Bernard, handwritten letter to Bush (3.1938)

Street, G.S., “*The Pageant of Labour*” – *Reader’s report*’ (London: Lord Chamberlain’s Office, ref. 13140, 23.7.1934)

Tippett, Michael, handwritten letter to Bush (20.9.1944)

**(c) Personal communications with Emer Bailey**

Bell, Nicolas, several conversations in person and by email [latest on 7.12.2012]

Bowers, Timothy, letter (14.4.2002)

Bowers, Timothy, email (28.4.2002)

Bowers, Timothy, conversation in person (9.2.2005)

Bowman, Aubrey, conversation in person (11.2 2009)

Cook, Mavis, conversation in person (25.1.2008)

Jordan, John, conversation in person (25.1.2008)

O'Higgins, Rachel, multiple conversations over many years, in person, by telephone, and by email [latest on 26.6.2013]

#### **(d) Radio Interviews**

Amis, John, BBC radio interviews (1980 and 1986). Excerpts from these and other interviews between Amis and Bush were replayed by the former as part of the *Song to Labour* interval talk during a BBC live recording of the 'Alan Bush Centenary Concert' on 1 November 2000.

#### **(e) Internet Sites**

ABMT: [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk)

Andrews, Edmund L., *An updated version of Die Massnahme*, The New York Times, 21.11.2000: Arts Abroad, [www.brechtsociety.org/articles/kontingent.html](http://www.brechtsociety.org/articles/kontingent.html) [accessed 23.1.2011]

Bowers, Timothy, *Alan Bush as a Composition Teacher* (1999), [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles) [accessed 26.5.2010]

Bullivant, Joanna, <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/music/people/joanna.bullivant> [accessed 12.6.2013]

Bush, Alan, *Recollections of the Royal Academy of Music's Centenary Celebrations, 1922* (1972), [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/writing](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/writing) [accessed 25.2.2011]

Bush, Alan, *My studies and Friendship with John Ireland* (1979), [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/writing](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/writing) [accessed 18.11.2010]

Bush, Alan, *Some Thoughts About My Chamber Music* (1981), [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/writing](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/writing) [accessed 22.9.2012]

Bush, Alan, *Dialectic for String Quartet, Op. 15* (1929), (2000), [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/music/commentaries](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/music/commentaries) [accessed 22.9.2012]

Co-operative News, [www.thenews.coop/features/Wider%20Co-op%20Movement/1310](http://www.thenews.coop/features/Wider%20Co-op%20Movement/1310) [accessed 20.9.2009]

Country data, [www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12625.html](http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12625.html) (1989) [accessed 25.1.2011]

Friedlaender, Violet H., *Road Makers*, <http://www.religiousverse.com/poems/man/115-the-aspirations-of-man/993-road-makers> [accessed 29.2.2012]

Hall, Duncan, *More than a pleasant way to pass the time? Alan Bush and Socialist Music between the wars* (2000), [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles) [accessed 10.12.2012]

Handel, George F., *Belshazzar*, <http://opera.stanford.edu/iu/libretti/belshaz.htm> [accessed 29.9.2009]

Jenner, Simon, *The Alan Bush Centenary Concerts* (2001), [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles) [accessed 5.6. 2013]

Jones, Michael, *Alan Bush 1900-1995 – ‘Time Remembered’*, [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles) (ed. Rachel O'Higgins, undated), originally published in *British Music*, xxii (2000) [accessed 17.10.2010]

Lang, Andy, *Hanns Eisler, A Composer's Life*. <http://eislermusic.com/lifeline.htm> [accessed 29.9.2009]

Levi, Erik, *Hanns Eisler: A Composer's Life*, <http://eislermusic.com/eriklewi.htm>, BBC Composer of the Month, *Hanns Eisler: musician for the workers* by Erik Levi in *BBC Music Magazine* (8.1998) [accessed 20.03.2012]

Lloyd, Matthew: <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Scala.htm> [accessed 2.6.2009]

*Lyric Interlude*, [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/music/commentaries](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/music/commentaries) [accessed 2.2.2011]

Marriott, Bruce, *Ballet in 1934* (October), Ballet.co Magazine (1998), [www.ballet.co.uk/aug98/year\\_1934.htm](http://www.ballet.co.uk/aug98/year_1934.htm) [accessed 7.10.2009]

Morris, <http://www.univ-paris13.fr/ANGLICISTES/POIRIER/Morris/MorrisDeathSong.htm> [accessed 20.9.2011]

O'Higgins, Rachel, *Rhapsody in Red* – BBC Radio 4 [a review of the BBC Radio 4 programme on 15 June 2002], [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles) [accessed 12.5.2011]

O'Higgins, Rachel, *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland, 1927 – 1961* [book preview, 2006], [www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles](http://www.alanbushtrust.org.uk/articles) [accessed 15.1.2013]

Perry, Matt, reviewing Laity, Paul, ed., *The Left Book Club Anthology* (London 2001) for the Institute of Historical Research, [www.history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/perryMat.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/perryMat.html) [accessed 14.5.2011]

Poetry Archive, <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/glossaryItem.do?id=11938> [accessed 20.11.2012]

WCML: Working Class Movement Library, <http://www.wcml.org.uk/contents/protests-politics-and-campaigning-for-change/unemployment/1934-hunger-march> [accessed 23.9.2011]

WMA, *Summer School*, <http://www.wmamusical.org.uk> [accessed 19.2.2013]

**(f) CD Liner Notes**

Foreman, Lewis, *Alan Bush Symphonies 1 & 2*, Royal Northern College of Music Symphony Orchestra [Manchester], Douglas Bostock, CD liner notes (Classico, 2004, CLASSCD 484)

Lamb, Peter, *Alan Bush – Violin Concerto, Op. 32, Six Short Pieces, Op. 99, Dialectic for String Quartet, Op. 15* (Manoug Parikian (violin), BBC Symphony Orchestra, Norman Del Mar/ Alan Bush (piano)/ Medici String Quartet), CD liner notes (Claudio, London, 1983/4; R/2002, CB5151-2), [1-3]

**(g) Musical Scores**

Bush, A., *Against the People's Enemies: Anthem for Solo and Chorus* (London: WMA, 1939)

Bush, A., *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 18* (London: British Library, MS Mus. 332, 1937)

Bush, A., *Freedom on the March/Truth on the March* (London: WMA, 1942)

Bush, A., *Labour's Song of Challenge* (London: LLCU Publications, 1936)

Bush, A., *Make Your Meaning Clear!* (London: WMA, 1939)

Bush, A., *Question and Answer*, in Bush, A., and Swingler, R., eds., *The Left Song Book* (London: Gollancz, 1938), 56-57

Bush, A., *Song of the Hunger Marchers*, in Bush, A., and Swingler, R., eds., *The Left Song Book* (London: Gollancz, 1938), 53-55

Bush, A., *Song to Labour* (London: WMA, c1936)

Bush, A., *Songs of the Doomed, Op. 14* (London: British Library, MS Mus. 422, ff. 20-51, February 1932 – March 1933)

Bush A., *The Pageant of Labour*, final chorus (London: British Library MS Mus. 395, ff. i + 44)

Bush, A., *The Road* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1929; Philadelphia: Curwen, 1930)

Bush, A., *To the Men of England* (London: Curwen, 1928)

Bush, A., *Unite and Be Free* (London: WMA, 1941)

Bush, A., and Swingler, R. (1938), Bush A., and Swingler R., eds., assisted by Members of the Workers' Music Association and the Left Book Club Musicians Group, *The Left Song Book* (London: Gollancz, 1938): see also under Musical Scores: Bush, A., *Question and Answer*, and Bush, A., *Song of the Hunger Marchers*.

Walford Davies, H., *The Fellowship Song Book (Part 1)* (London: Curwen, 1915), 22 and cover



## Appendix A

### Table of Bush's Worker's Choral Music & Songs (1926-1948)

TITLE	TEXT	YEAR	SCORING
<i>Song to Labour</i>	Charlotte Perkins Gilman	1926	SATB & piano
<i>Song to the Men of England</i> Op. 10	Percy B. Shelley	1929	SATB
<i>The Road</i> Op. 13	Violet A. Friedlaender	1929	SATB
<i>[5] Songs of the Doomed</i> Op. 14	Frederick Cecil Boden	1929	Baritone solo, SSAA & piano
<i>Song to Freedom</i>	R.C.K. Ensor	1930	SATB & piano
<i>Question and Answer</i>	G. Roy Atterbury	1931	Unison chorus & piano
<i>Song of the Hunger Marchers</i>	Randall Swingler	1934	Unison chorus & piano
<i>Pageant Song</i> (from <i>Pageant of Labour</i> )	Randall Swingler	1934	SATB-unison chorus, brass, percussion & piano
<i>Red Front</i>	Sylvia Townsend Warner	1935	SATB, speaking choir, brass & percussion
<i>Labour's Song of Challenge</i>	Randall Swingler	1936	SATB, unison chorus & piano
<i>Make Your Meaning Clear</i>	Randall Swingler	1939	Unison chorus & piano
<i>Against the People's Enemies</i>	Randall Swingler	1939	Baritone solo or unison chorus, SATB & piano
<i>Song of the Peace-lover</i>	Randall Swingler	?1939	Baritone solo, SATB & piano
<i>Freedom on the Air</i> [6 songs]	Randall Swingler	1940	2 baritone soloists, SATB, piano & optional percussion
<i>March of the Workers</i>	William Morris	1941	SATB & piano
<i>Unite and Be Free</i>	Alan Bush	1941	Unison chorus & piano
<i>The Great Red Army</i>	Randall Swingler	1941	SATB or SSAA & piano
<i>Britain's Part</i>	Alan Bush	1942	Speaker, SATB & orchestra
<i>Freedom on the March</i>	Randall Swingler	1942	"Solo voice", SATB, piano & percussion
<i>Song of the Commons of England</i>	Maurice Carpenter	1944	Unison chorus or SATB & piano
<i>A World for Living</i>	Randall Swingler	1946	Unison chorus & piano
<i>Our Song</i>	Nancy Bush	1948	SATB & piano

# Appendix B

## Song to Labour (1926)

**SONG TO LABOUR**

Words by  
**CHARLOTTE PERKIN GILMAN**

Music by  
**ALAN BUSH**

**Energetic**

Key A. { r d :l, ld :r | m :-s lm :d | r :-d lr :m | l, :-s, ll, :r }  
 { :s, s, :f, ls, :l, t, :-t, lt, :d | l, :-l, ll, :s, m, :-, lm, :s, }

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

{ f m :r lm :f | s :-s ls :m | r :-r lr :t, d :-d ld :f }  
 { :s, d :d ld :f, m, :-m, lm, :l, f, :-f, lf, :m, l, :-l, ll, :s, }

5 { d :l, ld :m | r :-s lr :t, | r :d ll, :l, | s, :- :s, }  
 { s, :f, ls, :d t, :-t, lt, :t, | l, :l, ls, :fe, s, :- :s, }

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

{ m :r lm :s | s :-s ls :fe | m :m r :r | t, :- :s, }  
 { :d :d ld :l, r :-r lr :r, d, :d, lr, :r, s, :- :s, }

9 { l, :r ld :d | r :s lf :-l | s :-m lr :r :r | m :- :s, }  
 { s, :f, lm, :d d :ta, ll, :-d d :d :d ld .t, :- d :- :s, }

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

{ r :t, ld :m | s :m lf :-f | m :-s s :s | s :- :s, }  
 { r, :s, ll, :l, s, :d lf, :-r, s, :s, s, :s, :- s :- :s, }  
 { s, :-s, s, :s, :- s, :- :s, }  
 { d :- :s, }

13 { l, :r ld :d | r :s lf :-l | s :-m lr :r :r | d :- :s, }  
 { s, :f, lm, :d d :ta, ll, :-d d :d :d ld .t, :- s :- :s, }

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

{ r :t, ld :m | s :m lf :-f | m :-s s :s | s :- :s, }  
 { r, :s, ll, :l, s, :d lf, :-r, s, :s, s, :s, :- d :- :s, }  
 { s, :-s, s, :s, :- s, :- :s, }

Published by the  
**WORKERS' MUSIC ASSOCIATION LTD., 17 Bishops Bridge Road, London, W.2** TWO PENCE

# Appendix C

## To the Men of England (1927-1928)

For the London Labour Choral Union

# To the Men of England

FOR CHORUS OF MIXED VOICES  
(UNACCOMPANIED)

Poem by  
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ALAN BUSH

Moderate pace, but with vigorous emphasis  $\text{♩} = 108$

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

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

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

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

Piano  
(for practice only)

5

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

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

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

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

*V* *perescendo*

Copyright, U.S.A.: 1928, by Alan Bush  
London: J. Curwen & Sons Ltd., 24 Berners St., W. I  
U.S.A.: Curwen Inc., Germantown, Philadelphia

61243

CURWEN

9

feed and clothe and save, From the cradle to the grave, Those un-  
 clothe, wherefore clothe, wherefore save, From the cradle to the grave, Those un-grate-ful  
 clothe, wherefore clothe, wherefore save, From the cradle to the grave, Those un-grate-ful  
 feed and clothe and save, From the cradle to the grave, Those un-

12

grate-ful drones who would Drain your sweat - nay, drink your blood?  
 drones who would Drain, would drain your sweat - nay, drink your blood?  
 drones who would Drain, would drain your sweat - nay, drink your blood?  
 grate-ful drones who would Drain your sweat - nay, drink your blood?  
 Tenuto.....

15

*f* Where-fore, Bees of Eng-land, forge Ma - nya weapon, chain and scourge, That these

*f* Where-fore, Bees of Eng-land, forge Ma - nya weapon, chain and scourge, That these

*f* Where-fore, Bees of Eng-land, forge Ma - nya weapon, chain and scourge, That these

*f* Where-fore, Bees of Eng-land, forge Ma - nya weapon, chain and scourge, That these

19

*vp* sting-less drones may spoil The forced pro-duce of your toil? Have ye

*vp* sting-less drones may spoil The forced pro-duce of your toil? Have ye lei - sure,

*vp* sting-less drones may spoil The forced pro-duce of your toil? Have ye lei - sure,

*vp* sting - less drones may spoil The forced pro-duce of your toil? Have ye

23

lei-sure, com-fort, calm, ——— love's gen-tle balm? Or what is it ye buy so  
 — have ye com-fort, calm, Shel-ter, food, love's gen-tle balm? Or what is it ye buy so  
 — have ye com-fort, calm, Shel-ter, food, love's gen-tle balm? — Or what is it ye buy so  
 lei-sure, com-fort, calm, Shel-ter, food, love's gen - tle balm? — Or what is it ye buy so

*crescendo*

*crescendo*

*crescendo*

*crescendo*

*crescendo*

27

dear With your pain and with your fear? The — seed ye sow an-  
 dear With your pain and with your fear? The — seed ye sow an-  
 dear With your pain and with your fear? The — seed ye sow an-  
 dear With your pain and with your fear? The — seed ye sow an-

*f* *v* *sf* *mp* *mf* *molto tenuto* *A little broader*  $\text{♩} = 100$

*f* *v* *sf* *mp* *mf* *molto tenuto* *A little broader*  $\text{♩} = 100$

*f* *v* *sf* *mp* *mf* *molto tenuto* *A little broader*  $\text{♩} = 100$

*f* *v* *sf* *mp* *mf* *molto tenuto* *A little broader*  $\text{♩} = 100$

other reaps; The wealth ye find an - other keeps; The robes ye weave an - oth-er wears; -

other reaps; The wealth ye find an - other keeps; The robes ye weave an - oth-er wears;

other reaps; The wealth ye find an - other keeps; The robes ye weave an - oth-er wears;

other reaps; The wealth ye find an - oth-er keeps; The robes ye weave an - oth-er wears;

*più f* >>> > > > **very forceful**  
The arms ye forge an - other bears. Sow seed - but let no ty-rant reap; Find

*più f* >>> > > > **very forceful**  
The arms ye forge an - other bears. Sow seed - but let no ty-rant reap; Find

*più f* >>> > > > **very forceful**  
The arms ye forge an - other bears. Sow seed - but let no ty-rant reap; Find

*più f* >>> > > > **very forceful**  
The arms ye forge an - other bears. Sow seed - but let no ty-rant reap; Find

41

wealth— let no im - pos - tor heap; Weave robes— let not the i - dle wear; Forge

wealth— let no im - pos - tor heap; Weave robes— let not the i - dle wear; Forge

wealth— let no im - pos - tor heap; Weave robes— let not the i - dle wear; Forge

wealth— let no im - pos - tor heap; Weave robes— let not the i - dle wear; Forge

45

arms, \_\_\_\_\_ Forge arms, in your de - fence to bear. — (along pause)

arms, \_\_\_\_\_ Forge arms, in your de - fence to bear. —

arms, in your de - fence to bear, in your de - fence to bear. —

arms, in your de - fence to bear, in your de - fence to bear. — (along pause)



50 Slower  $\text{♩} = 84$

*mf* Shrink to your cel-lars, holes, and cells; *p* In halls ye deck an-oth-er dwells,

*mf* Shrink to your cel-lars, holes, and cells; *p* In halls ye deck an-oth-er dwells,

*mf* Shrink to your cel-lars, holes, and cells; *p* In halls ye deck an-oth-er dwells,

*mf* Shrink to your cel-lars, holes, and cells; *p* In halls ye deck an-oth-er dwells,

Slower  $\text{♩} = 84$

54 *mf* Why shake the chains ye wrought? *p* Ye see the steel ye tem-pered glance on ye. *mp* With

*mf* Why shake the chains ye wrought? *p* Ye see the steel ye tem-pered glance on ye. *mp* With

*mf* Why shake the chains ye wrought? *p* Ye see the steel ye tem-pered glance on ye. *mp* With

*mf* Why shake the chains ye wrought? *p* Ye see the steel ye tem-pered glance on ye. *mp* With

58 *blandly ironical* plough and spade and hoe and loom, — Trace your grave and build your tomb, *non cresc.* And

*blandly ironical* plough and spade and hoe and loom, — Trace your grave and build your tomb, *non cresc.* And

*blandly ironical* plough and spade and hoe and loom, Trace your grave and build your tomb, *non cresc.* And

*blandly ironical* plough and spade and hoe and loom, Trace your grave and build your tomb, And

62

weave your wind - ing sheet, till fair Eng-land, till fair

weave your wind - ing sheet, till fair Eng-land, till fair

weave your wind - ing sheet, till fair Eng - land be, fair

weave your wind-ing sheet, till fair Eng - land be, till fair

66

Tranquillando

Eng - land be your sep-ul-chre, till fair Eng-land, till fair

Eng-land be your sep-ul-chre, till fair Eng - land, till fair

Eng-land be your sep-ul-chre, till fair Eng - land, till fair

Eng-land be your sep-ul-chre, your sep-ul-chre, your sep-ul-chre,

Tranquillando

69

rit. molto

Eng - land be your sep-ul-chre, your sep - ul-chre.

Eng - land be your sep-ul-chre, your sep - ul-chre.

Eng - land be your sep-ul-chre, your sep - ul-chre.

be your sep-ul-chre, your sep - ul-chre.

rit. molto

72 a tempo primo allargando

Men of England, where-fore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

Men of England, where-fore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

Men of England, where-fore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

Men of England, where-fore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

a tempo primo allargando

+ a tempo primo allargando

Men of Eng-land, where-fore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

Men of Eng-land, where-fore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

Men of Eng-land, where-fore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

Men of Eng-land, where-fore plough For the lords who lay ye low?

a tempo primo allargando

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

# Appendix D

## Songs of the Doomed: Epilogue (Op. 14, 1929)

Epilogue

Words by F.C. Brown  
Music by Alan Bush

Andante tranquillo (♩ = 45)

Soprano  
Cantata  
Piano  
Piano  
Voice  
Piano

4

7

Hush, be still, you bitter

10

thing, Hush a while and do not sing, Songs like these, drifting  
 thing, Oh hush, hush a while and do not sing, Songs like

Handwritten musical score for measures 10-13. The score is written on a grand staff with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "thing, Hush a while and do not sing, Songs like these, drifting" and "thing, Oh hush, hush a while and do not sing, Songs like". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *pp*.

14 *ppf*

gall, Never shall I sing at all. Sing no more your  
 knee Never shall I sing at all.

*crepando*

*meno p*

*ritardando*

Handwritten musical score for measures 14-17. The score is written on a grand staff with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "gall, Never shall I sing at all. Sing no more your" and "knee Never shall I sing at all.". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *ppf*, *meno p*, and *ritardando*, along with the instruction *crepando*.

18 *f*

*p*  $\Rightarrow$  *pp* *mf*  $\Rightarrow$  *p*

grief — and ill, — Oh, hush, be still!

22 *Slentando* - - - - - *allegro*

Hush now, take

26

some little rest, Surely si - lence is the best! Sing no

O haste,

*mp*

30

more and stay your tongue, — Sing like these should not be sung. — Hush!

Sing no more, — Sing like these

*mp*

*meno p*

34

*f*

and though your grief be sore, oh sing no

*poco allargando - - - molto - - - a tempo*

38

*molto supplicante*

*f*

more, sing no more!

*na*

*loco*

*Crescendo*



42

*diminuendo*

*Rallentando al fine.*

*mp e sempre Diminuendo*

46

# Appendix E

## The Road (Op. 13, 1929)

61255

CURWEN



EDITION

Price 4d.

U.S.A.: 10 cents

# The Road

FOR CHORUS OF MIXED VOICES  
(UNACCOMPANIED)

Poem by  
VIOLET H. FRIEDLAENDER  
By permission

Music by  
ALAN BUSH

Slowly, and with sustained intensity  $\text{♩} = 54$

Soprano *p*  
Contralto *p*  
Tenor *p*  
Bass *p*

We shall not travel by the road we make; Ere day by day the sound of many

Piano (for practice only) *p*

Broadly, but very quietly

feet is heard up-on the stones that now we break, We shall be come to where the crossroads

feet is heard up-on the stones that now we break, We shall be come to where the crossroads

feet is heard up-on the stones that now we break, We shall be come to where the crossroads

feet is heard up-on the stones that now we break, We shall be come to where the crossroads

Broadly, but very quietly

Copyright, U.S.A., 1930, by Alan Bush.  
London: J. Curwen & Sons Ltd., 24 Berners St., W. I.  
U.S.A.: Curwen Inc., Germantown, Philadelphia.

Made in England

CURWEN

*f* *a tempo*

meet. For us the heat by day, the cold by night, The inch-slow progress and the heavy

meet. For us the heat by day, the cold by night, The inch-slow progress and the heavy

meet. For us the heat by day, the cold by night, The inch-slow progress and the heavy

meet. For us the heat by day, the cold by night, The inch-slow progress and the heavy

*a tempo*

*f*

*sempre f*

load, And death at last to close the long, grim fight With man and beast and

*sempre f*

load, And death at last to close the long, grim fight With man and beast and

*sempre f*

load, And death at last to close the long, grim fight With man and beast and

*sempre f*

load, And death at last to close the long, grim fight With man and beast and

*sempre f*

Broadly *a tempo*

*f* *mp*

stone: for them the Road. For them the shade of trees that now we plant, The safe, smooth

*f* *mp*

stone: for them the Road. For them the shade of trees that now we plant, The safe, smooth

*f* *mp*

stone: for them the Road. For them the shade of trees that now we plant, The safe, smooth

*f* *mp*

stone: for them the Road. For them the shade of trees that now we plant, The safe, smooth

Broadly *a tempo*

*f* *mp*

Broadly

*mf*

journey and the certain goal, Yea, birthright in the land of covenant: For us day-

*mf*

journey and the certain goal, Yea, birthright in the land of covenant: For us day-

*mf*

journey and the certain goal, Yea, birthright in the land of covenant: For us day-

*mf*

journey and the certain goal, Yea, birthright in the land of covenant: For us day-

Broadly

*mf*

a tempo

la-bour, tra-vail of the soul. And yet the Road is ours, as nev-er

la-bour, tra-vail of the soul. And yet the Road is ours, as nev-er

la-bour, tra-vail of the soul. And yet the Road is ours, as nev-er

la-bour, tra-vail of the soul. And yet the Road is ours, as nev-er

a tempo

*sempre f*

theirs! Is not one joy on us a-lone be-stowed? For

theirs! Is not one joy on us a-lone be-stowed? For

theirs! Is not one joy on us a-lone be-stowed? For

theirs! Is not one joy on us a-lone be-stowed? For

*sempre f*

Very broadly to the end

us the master joy, O pi-o-neers! Weshallnottravel, but wemakethe Road.

us the master joy, O pi-o-neers! Weshallnottravel, but wemakethe Road.

us the master joy, O pi-o-neers! Weshallnottravel, but wemakethe Road.

us the master joy, O pi-o-neers! Weshallnottravel, but wemakethe Road.

Very broadly to the end

# Appendix F

## Question and Answer (1931)

56

No. 17

### QUESTION AND ANSWER

(The Choir asks the questions, the audience answers)

Words by  
G.R. ATTERBURY

Music by  
ALAN BUSH

Quick March time      La is B  $\parallel$  m :- .m lf :m }

VOICE

1. { Are the work - ers  
2. Q. { Do the boss - es  
3. { Do the work - ers

PIANO

Quick March time

bad - ly    fed?    { Yes!  
ev - er    starve? A. { No!  
          think?    { Yes!

most of 'em.    { Are the work - ers  
none of 'em.    Q. { Do the boss - es  
some of them.    { Are they con - scious

bad - ly    housed?    { Yes!  
live in    slums?    A. { No!  
of their    class?    { Yes!

most of 'em.  
none of 'em.  
some of them.

Q. Do their chil - dren ev - er feel the pinch?  
 Do their chil - dren ev - er go in rags?  
 Do they fight for power to rule the state?

A. { Yes!  
 No!  
 Yes!

most of 'em.  
 none of 'em.  
 some of them.

Q. Aren't they al - ways be - ing robbed?  
 Don't they get the juic - iest plums?  
 If they get to - ge - ther can they win?

A. { Yes!  
 No!  
 Yes!

(Last Verse)

A. { Yes! Yes! Yes! all of 'em.  
 Yes! Yes! Yes! all of 'em.  
 Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! all of them.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>Q. Are the workers badly fed?<br/>             A. Yes! most of 'em.<br/>             Q. Are the workers badly housed?<br/>             A. Yes! most of 'em.<br/>             Q. Do their children ever feel the pinch?<br/>             A. Yes! most of 'em.<br/>             Q. Aren't they always being robbed?<br/>             A. Yes! Yes! Yes! all of 'em.</p> | <p>2</p> <p>Q. Do the bosses ever starve?<br/>             A. No! none of 'em.<br/>             Q. Do the bosses live in slums?<br/>             A. No! none of 'em.<br/>             Q. Do their children ever go in rags?<br/>             A. No! none of 'em.<br/>             Q. Don't they get the juiciest plums?<br/>             A. Yes! Yes! Yes! all of 'em.</p> |
|--|--|
- 3
- Q. Do the workers ever think?  
 A. Yes! some of them.  
 Q. Are they conscious of their class?  
 A. Yes! some of them.  
 Q. Do they fight for power to rule the state?  
 A. Yes! some of them.  
 Q. If they get together can they win?  
 A. Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! all of them.

# Appendix G

## Song of the Hunger Marchers

### No. 16 SONG OF THE HUNGER MARCHERS

53

Words by  
RANDALL SWINGLER

Music by  
ALAN BUSH

Steady pace C mi. Doh - E5f .1, || t, .1, .1, :d .1, | r ,r .r : .1, |

VOICE

1 We march from a strick - en coun - try, From  
pass through sleep - ing vil - la - ges And  
this Em - ploy - ers' Gov - er - ment Is  
mem - ber, fel - low work - ers, Who

PIANO

5

broken hill and vale, Where fact - ry yards are empty, And the rus - ty gear for  
poor and strugg - ling farms, We pass through towns where factories Are forging war and  
hop - ing for the best, To set one a - gainst an - other By the grad - ing of the  
earn a wage to - day, That they'll throw you on the scrapheap, When they find it does - n't

10

sale. Our coun - try will not thrive again, Our strength is not for use, The  
arms. In towns and fields and vil - la - ges We see it more and more, How the  
Test. They would train us in their La - bour Camps For ac - tion against you, But  
pay. All you who are em - ployed, Mak - ing car - tridges and bombs, We'll be



15 *tt* : *t* : *t* : *l* : *s* | *l* : *l* : *f* : *m* | *f* : *f* : *m* : *d* | *r* : *m* : *f* }

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

19 CHORUS

*mf* *mf* *mf* *f* *f* : *s* : *s* | *l* : *s* : *f* : *m* : *r* | *d* : *r*, *m* | *f*, *f*, *f*, *m* : *f* : *f* | *s* | *f* : *m* : *r* : *d* }

rouse to our tread When you hear us marching by; For ser - vil - i - ty is dead And the Means Test too shall

24 *f* : *s* | *s* : *l* : *t* | *s* : *s* : *l* | *t* : *l* : *t* : *d* | *f* : *m* : *r* }

die! Though they think our spir - its brok - en, Be - cause we're un - der - fed, We will

29 *f* : *s* : *f* : *s* : *l* | *f* : *m* : *r* : *s* | *m* : *r* : *d* : *r* | *m* : *s* : *l* : }

stamp the Star - va - tion Gov - er - ment Be - neath the work - ers' tread! Stamp,

\* These four notes should be shouted rather than sung.

33

stamp, stamp, stamp, We will stamp the Starvation Government Beneath the Work-ers' tread!

37

1, 2, 3 Last time  
1, 2, 3, 4. Re -

1  
We march from a stricken country,  
From broken hill and vale,  
Where factory yards are empty,  
And the rusty gear for sale.  
Our country will not thrive again,  
Our strength is not for use,  
The bubble of prosperity  
Has never come to us.

*Chorus* Then rouse to our tread  
When you hear us marching by;  
For servility is dead  
And the Means Test too shall die!  
Though they think our spirits broken,  
Because we're underfed,  
We will stamp the Starvation Government  
Beneath the workers' tread!  
Stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp.

2  
We pass through sleeping villages  
And poor and struggling farms,  
We pass through towns where factories  
Are forging war and arms.  
In towns and fields and villages  
We see it more and more,  
How the boss exploits the worker  
And drives him into war.

*Chorus* Then rouse to our tread *etc.*

3  
And this Employers' Government  
Is hoping for the best,  
To set one against another  
By the grading of the Test.  
They would train us in their Labour Camps  
For action against you,  
But we march for the working-class,  
For we are workers too.

*Chorus* Then rouse to our tread *etc.*

4  
Remember, fellow workers,  
Who earn a wage to-day,  
That they'll throw you on the scrapheap,  
When they find it doesn't pay.  
All you who are employed,  
Making cartridges and bombs,  
We'll be marching side by side,  
When the final crisis comes.

*Chorus* Then rouse to our tread *etc.*

# Appendix H

## Pageant of Labour 1934: Reader's Report

### STAGE PLAY SUBMITTED FOR LICENCE.

Title: "THE PAGEANT OF LABOUR"  
 No. of Scenes or Acts: 5 episodes and roughly 25 scenes  
 Place of Production: Crystal Palace  
 Date of Production: October  
 Author:

LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,  
 ST. JAMES'S PALACE, S.W. 1.

READER'S REPORT. July 23rd 1934.

(Towards the end the scenes are not numbered.) The greater part of this pageant is occupied with showing the evils of the unreformed industrial system and is therefore extremely gloomy and sometimes almost unbearably painful. The evils are not exaggerated, but what is unfair is that the rich - politicians, bishops and what not - are all shown as snugly indifferent to them; no credit is given to Disraeli for example, for his impassioned protests on the Tory party which abolished the worst of them. That is hardly, however, a matter for the censorship, and about matters of detail there is little to be said. A working family called Fletcher illustrates different stages of the story. We see them first happy before the advent of factories; illustrating in 1798 the horrors of child labour; deteriorating further and suffering more in 1800, and a little later losing a child who fell worn out into the machinery. This all refers to the first 2 episodes and in them we have also debates of Pitt and Burke, and a Manufacturer, philanthropists and bishops - all ironical or bitter. There is also a "ballet of children", miserable and starved and beaten. In Episode 3 also there is scoffing at the professed philanthropists of the early 18th century. We now get the Luddite movement in which a Fletcher is implicated, arrested and hanged - only a glimpse of the scaffold - and to the Chartist movement - a scene of the Duke of Wellington reassuring people about his preparations. Episode 5 begins with the sentence on the Tolpuddle Martyrs, and goes to the Rochdale Pioneers; here is introduced Lord Beaverbrook speaking against the Co-operative Movement which is regarded as the descendant of the other (slip) but as the Match Girls Strike and the Dockers Strike follow - Pillest, John Burns and so forth. Episode 6 is ambitious and muddled. It takes various "groups" - Parliamentary, Workers, etc. - and shows them functioning from the earliest date of the pageant. The Boer War comes in and a Fletcher is a conscientious objector in the late war. We get down to bits of speeches by Lloyd George and Ramsay MacDonald and Churchill denouncing the Bolsheviks. This more or less contemporary business is pp.40 to the end. Finally a worker of 1800 exhorts present "workers" to persevere in getting what they want.

It would be obviously impolitic to interfere with this Pageant which moreover except for the unfair omissions noted above is more or less reasonable. Living politicians are not brought in to be ridiculed but to say what they have said.

The only thing I should notice is the "ballet of children" - p.13. As described it seems unbearable and something at least might be said about it.

Recommended for Licence.

(sd.) G.S. Street

*Oct. 1934*

*+ my one-sided propaganda picture, with which I agree it is impolitic to interfere. Impersonation in these circumstances can hardly be stopped. + caution might be given regarding the children's Ballet.*

13140  
 24 July 1934

# Appendix I

## Pageant Song (1934)

Handwritten musical score for "Pageant Song (1934)". The score is written on ten staves. The first five staves are for the vocal line, and the last five staves are for the piano accompaniment. The music is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The vocal line begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The piano accompaniment begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. A handwritten instruction "Mancu forte mezzo y. de." is written above the first staff. The score is divided into two systems by a double bar line. The first system consists of five staves, and the second system consists of five staves. The music concludes with a double bar line and a final cadence.

Handwritten musical score for Clarinet and Piano. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Clarinet (Claro) and Piano (Piano). The second system includes parts for Clarinet (Claro) and Piano (Piano). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Handwritten musical score for Clarinet and Piano. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Clarinet (Claro) and Piano (Piano). The second system includes parts for Clarinet (Claro) and Piano (Piano). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are also some handwritten annotations and markings throughout the score.

allarg. - - - a tempo largamente -

Handwritten musical score for Clarinet and Piano, measures 1-10. The Clarinet part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Piano part is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes and rests. The tempo markings 'allarg.' and 'a tempo largamente' are present. The word 'Corno' is written below the Clarinet staff, and 'Piano' is written below the Piano staff.

Handwritten musical score for Clarinet and Piano, measures 11-20. The Clarinet part continues on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Piano part continues on a grand staff. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes and rests. The tempo markings 'allarg.' and 'a tempo largamente' are present. The word 'Corno' is written below the Clarinet staff, and 'Piano' is written below the Piano staff.

allarg. - - - a tempo.

85  
9  
(59)

The image shows a handwritten musical score on ten staves. The first five staves are for the piano, and the last five are for chamber instruments. The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 34 and ends at measure 38. The second system starts at measure 39 and ends at measure 43. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The chamber instruments include strings and woodwinds. The score is written in a clear, legible hand with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

# Appendix J

## WMA Winter Programme 1940

### 1940 CONTEST FESTIVAL of Music of Social Significance

This Festival will take place on December 14th and 15th. There will be classes in Solo and Choral Singing, Choir Training, Original Song Performances, Composition, Song Sketches, Mass Declamation, Choral Accompaniment and other interesting innovations. Entries must be received by 15th October. Details may be had on application to the General Secretary of the Association.

### TOPIC RECORDS CLUB.

This Club provides first-class recordings of music of social significance to its members at the rate of one 10 in. disc per month for 2/- (3/- for the initial record on joining). Application forms and further details on request.

### MUSIC PUBLICATIONS.

Over one hundred songs of social significance of all times and places have now been published, comprising solos, community songs, revue songs, choral songs and children's songs. In addition, orchestral and band arrangements of many of the numbers are available and also scripts and musical matter for variety and revue. Catalogue on request.

### THE WORKERS' MUSIC ASSOCIATION

is dependent for much of its income on voluntary subscriptions and donations to its working fund are always welcome. The fees for affiliation are:—

- (1) Industrial and Education Organisations Two guineas per annum.
- (2) Branches and Auxiliaries of (1) ... 2/6 per annum.
- (3) Music and other cultural groups ... 10/- per 50 members p.a.
- (4) Individual membership ... 5/- per annum.

The services of the Association are available to its members for advice and assistance in the organisation of concerts, demonstrations, festivals, pageants, week-end schools, etc., and the provision of professional tutors, adjudicators, artists, etc.

### LECTURES - DISCUSSION - RECITALS

Sunday Evenings at 7 o'clock.

- SEPTEMBER 1st.** OFFICIAL OPENING OF WORKERS' MUSIC CENTRE.  
Host: Alan Bush, F.R.A.M.
- OCTOBER 6th.** THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF MUSIC.  
Lecturer: Dr. Peter Baker.  
Guest Artists: The Kenton Co-operative Singers.
- NOVEMBER 3rd.** PARODY IN MUSIC.  
Lecturer: W. R. Anderson.  
Guest Artists: The Hampstead Left Singers.
- DECEMBER 1st.** THE VALUE OF MUSIC IN CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION.  
Lecturer: Joseph Reeves, J.P.  
Guest Artists: Greenford Co-operative Choir.
- JANUARY 5th.** THE RELATION OF POETRY TO MUSIC.  
Lecturer: Randall Swingler.
- FEBRUARY 2nd.** MARXISM AND MUSIC.  
Lecturer: ...
- MARCH 2nd.** MUSIC IN THE SOVIET UNION.  
Lecturer: Alan Bush, F.R.A.M.  
Guest Artists: East Ham Co-operative Choir.

Tickets: 1/- per lecture—course ticket, 5/-  
Individual members of the W.M.A.—course ticket, 2/6  
Refreshments will be served at each meeting.

### SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS of the W.M.A.

#### Co-operative Education Committees:

BIRMINGHAM,  
BURSLEM,  
COLNE,  
DARTFORD,  
FAIRSWORTH,  
IPSWICH,  
KINNING PARK,  
WALSALL,  
WARRINGTON,  
WATFORD.

#### Co-operative Women's Guilds:

HOLLOWAY,  
NORTH KENSINGTON.

#### Industrial Groups:

BERMONDSEY TRADES COUNCIL,  
DULWICH TRADES COUNCIL,  
FULHAM TRADES COUNCIL,  
N.U.C.—WESTERN BRANCH,  
N.U.G.M.W.—LONDON CATERING BRANCH.

#### Music, etc., Groups:

BEXLEY HEATH CO-OPERATIVE CHOR.  
BIRMINGHAM ORPHEUS MUSICAL SOCIETY.  
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY SOCIALIST CHOIR,  
CLAPHAM LABOUR CHOIR,  
CROXLEY CO-OPERATIVE SINGERS,  
EAST HAM CO-OPERATIVE CHORAL SOCIETY.  
EDGWARE CO-OPERATIVE MUSICAL SOCIETY.  
G.M. CO. ORCHESTRAL CLUB,  
GREENFORD CO-OPERATIVE CHOIR,  
HAMPSTEAD LEFT SINGERS,  
KENTON CO-OPERATIVE SINGERS,  
LEEDS UNITY THEATRE,  
LONDON LABOUR CHORAL UNION,  
NEWCASTLE UNITY CHOIR,  
NORTH LONDON WORKERS' BAND,  
UNITY THEATRE MUSIC GROUP,  
(LONDON.)

### WORKERS' MUSIC ASSOCIATION

OBJECT: To extend the influence of working-class musical activities.

#### PATRONS:

LENNOX BERKELEY,  
BENJAMIN BRITTEN,  
RUTLAND BOUGHTON,  
ERIK CHISHOLM,  
CHRISTIAN DARNTON,  
HANNIS EISLER,  
ALOIS HABA,  
JOHN IRELAND,  
ALEXANDER JEMNITZ,  
JOSEPH LEWIS,  
ELIZABETH MACONCHY,  
ALAN RAWSTHORNE,  
VLADIMIR VOGEL.

#### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (1940):

ALAN BUSH, Chairman (London Labour Choral Union),  
D. C. DAVIES (Watford Co-operative Society's Education Committee),  
MRS. LEIGHFIELD } (Women's Co-operative Guilds),  
MRS. HARTWELL }  
A. HUCKLE (North London Workers' Band),  
JAMES GIBB (Unity Theatre Music Group),  
MISS ELLEN DRAPER } (Representing individual members and Committees),  
WILLIAM LEWINGTON, Jr., }  
A. L. LLOYD }  
R. J. BOONE }

GENERAL SECRETARY: WILL SAHNOW.

OFFICES: 9 GREAT NEWPORT STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.2.

TELEPHONE: TEMPLE BAR 4620.

### WINTER PROGRAMME

1940

### CLASSES (Autumn Term—12 Lessons)

MONDAYS, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. DANCE BAND INSTRUMENTATION (fee, 30/- the course).  
Commencing October 7th  
Tutor: ALFRED RALSTON.

TUESDAYS, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. MUSIC IN THEATRE PERFORMANCE (fee, 20/- the course).  
Commencing October 1st  
Tutor: BENNIE FRANKEL.  
7.30 p.m. STRING ORCHESTRA.  
Conductor: DAVID ELLENBERG, A.R.C.M.

FRIDAYS at 7.15 p.m. SIGHT SINGING (fee, 6/- the course).  
Commencing 8.15 p.m. CHORAL CONDUCTING AND TEACHING OF SIGHT SINGING (fee, 10/- the course).  
October 4th  
Tutor: ARNOLD GOLDSBROUGH, F.R.C.M.

SATURDAYS, 2-3.30 p.m. MUSICAL COMPOSITION (fee, 10/- per course). (Elementary and advanced in alternate weeks.) (Students for advanced course will have to satisfy the tutor of an adequate knowledge of elements of the subject.)  
Commencing October 5th  
Tutor: ALAN BUSH, F.R.A.M.  
3.30-5.30 p.m. STRING ORCHESTRA.  
Conductor: DAVID ELLENBERG, A.R.C.M.

IMPORTANT NOTE—Individual members of the Association admitted to all classes at half-fees.

CHAMBER MUSIC HOUR.—Friday evenings from 6 to 7 p.m., commencing October 4th. Admission free—collection.



# Appendix K

## Labour's Song of Challenge (1936)

# LABOUR'S SONG OF CHALLENGE

Words by  
RANDALL SWINGLER

Music by  
ALAN BUSH

Slow and dignified

Piano

*f sempre molto marcato*

*molto allarg.*

9

Four pulse      Two pulse      Three pulse      Two pulse

Doh is B: | d' | :d' .d' | r' :- .d' m' :- | :d' .d' | d' :d' :r' .d' | m' :- |

UNISON (Men & Women)

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

Four pulse      Two pulse      Three pulse      Two pulse

Doh is B: | d' | :d' .d' | r' :- .d' m' :- | :d' .d' | d' :d' :r' .d' | m' :- |

SOPRANOS

ALTONS

TENORS

BASSES

Four pulse      Two pulse      Three pulse      Two pulse

Doh is B: | d' | :d' .d' | r' :- .d' m' :- | :d' .d' | d' :d' :r' .d' | m' :- |

:d' .d' | r' :- .d' m' :- | :l .l | t :l :s .l | t :- |

*a tempo*

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

Words and music copyright

14

Four pulse                      Two pulse      Four pulse

f' :-m' lr' .d' it ,l.- | s :- | m ;m .m ll :l | r :-r lt :- | it lt :d' |

Take what greed will never give. Fight the exploit-er, free the slave, Let free-dom

Four pulse                      Two pulse      Four pulse

f' :-m' lr' .d' it ,l.- | r' :- | m' ;m' r' id' .d' | f' :-m' lr' :- | :r' ls' :m' |

d' :-t ll .l it ,l.- | s :- | m ;m .m ll :l | r :-r lt :- | it lt :d' |

Take what greed will never give. Fight the exploit-er, free the slave, Let free-dom

Four pulse                      Two pulse      Four pulse

f' :-m' lr' .d' it ,l.- | r' :- | s' :s' f' m' :m' | l' :-s' fe' :- | :r' lr' :m' |

d' :-t ll .l it ,l.- | s :- | m ;m .m ll :l | r :-r lt :- | it lt :d' |

19

r' :-lt id' .r' m' :- | id' | f' :-m' lr' .m' r' .d' | r' :- | m' | r' :d' it :-l | m' :-t. : |

rise up from the grave, And all enjoy what all may have If Labour's pow'r pre-vails.—

l' :-ll' :s' .fe' | s' :- | :m' | l' :-s' if' .m' r' .d' | f' :- | :m' | r' :d' it :-l | m' :-t. : |

r' :-lt id' .r' m' :- | id' | f' :-m' lr' .m' r' .d' | r' :- | :m' | r' :d' it :-l | m' :-t. : |

rise up from the grave, And all enjoy what all may have If Labour's pow'r pre-vails.—

fe' :-r' :m' .fe' | s' :- | :m' | l' :-s' if' .m' r' .d' | f' :- | :m' | r' :d' it :-l | m' :-t. : |

r' :-lt id' .r' m' :- | id' | f' :-m' lr' .m' r' .d' | r' :- | :m' | r' :d' it :-l | m' :-t. : |

25

Two pulse Doh is G Three pulse Two pulse

*sempre f*

Do you for - get Who de - ceived you and mis - led you? Do you for -

Two pulse Doh is G Three pulse Two pulse

*sempre f*

Do you for - get Who de - ceived you and mis - led you? Do you for -

*sempre f*

Two pulse Doh is G Three pulse Two pulse

*sempre f*

Do you for - get Who de - ceived you and mis - led you? Do you for -

30

Three pulse Two pulse Doh is B Three pulse

get Who ill - housed you and ill - fed you? Do you for - get Who sweated you and bled you?

Three pulse Doh is B Three pulse

get Who ill - housed you and ill - fed you? Do you for - get Who sweated you and bled you?

Three pulse Two pulse Doh is B Three pulse

get Who ill - housed you and ill - fed you? Do you for - get Who sweated you and bled you?

35 Four pulse : | :m' | r' :d' |t :- | m' :- : | : | : | Doh is G |  
 : | :m' | r' :d' |t :- | m' :- : | : | : | :s, (s, d, |  
 : | :m' | r' :d' |t :- | m' :- : | : | : | :s, (s, d, |

Let Labour's pow'r pre-vail.— Doyou for-

Let Labour's pow'r pre-vail.— Doyou for-

Four pulse : | :m' | r' :d' |t :- | m' :- : | : | : | Doh is G |  
 : | :m' | r' :d' |t :- | m' :- : | : | : | :s, (s, d, |  
 : | :m' | r' :d' |t :- | m' :- : | : | : | :s, (s, d, |

Let Labour's pow'r pre-vail.— Doyou for-

Let Labour's pow'r pre-vail.— Doyou for-

39 Three pulse |d |d :r ,r | d .d :d .r :m | Two pulse :s, (s, d, | Three pulse d :r :d ,d |  
 |d :f :r ,r | m .m :m .fe :l | Two pulse :s, (s, d, | Three pulse d :s :m ,m |  
 |d :d :r ,r | d .d :d .r :m | :s, (s, d, | d :r :d ,d |

-get Who built the fac-to-ries and slums? Do you for - get Who makes the

-get Who built the fac-to-ries and slums? Do you for - get Who makes the

-get Who built the fac-to-ries and slums? Do you for - get Who makes the

43

Two pulse      Dob is B<sub>2</sub>      Three pulse

|| t, .t, :t, .d :r |      :s, :s, .l, | d :t | d' :- .d' |      d' .t :t .t :r' |

pro-fit out of bombs?      Do you for-get Their feasts from which you get the crumbs?

|| ba .ba:ba .se :t, |      Two pulse      Dob is B<sub>2</sub>      Three pulse

|| t, .t, :t, .d :r |      :s, :s, .l, | d :t | d' :- .m' |      m' .fe' :s' .fe' :s' |

|| t, .t, :t, .d :r |      :s, :s, .l, | d :t | d' :- .d' |      d' .t :t .t :r' |

pro-fit out of bombs?      Do you for-get Their feasts from which you get the crumbs?

|| ba .ba:ba .se :t |      Two pulse      Dob is B<sub>2</sub>      Three pulse

|| t, .t, :t, .d :r |      :s, :s, .l, | d :t | d' :- .m' |      m' .fe' :s' .fe' :s' |

|| t, .t, :t, .d :r |      :s, :s, .l, | d :t | d' :- .d' |      d' .t :t .t :r' |

48

Four pulse      Three pulse

|| : | m' | r' :d' |t : .l | fe' :- l - . :m' m' r' |      t :t m' r' |t .t :r' .t :l |

Let Labour's pow'r pre - vail... Do you for - get Their empty pomp and loud i-deals?

|| : | : | m' | r' :d' |t : .l | fe' :- l - . :m' m' r' |      t :s' :s' l' | m' .m' :r' .t :l |

|| : | : | m' | r' :d' |t : .l | fe' :- l - . :m' m' r' |      t :t m' r' |t .t :r' .t :l |

Let Labour's pow'r pre - vail... Do you for - get Their empty pomp and loud i-deals?

|| : | : | m' | r' :d' |t : .l | fe' :- l - . :m' m' r' |      t :s' :s' l' | m' .m' :r' .t :l |

|| : | : | m' | r' :d' |t : .l | fe' :- l - . :m' m' r' |      t :t m' r' |t .t :r' .t :l |

53

Two pulse      Three pulse      Two pulse

Do you for-get The fa-tal fraud it all con-ceals? Do you for-

Do you for-get The fa-tal fraud it all con-ceals? Do you for-

Two pulse      Three pulse      Two pulse

57

Three pulse      Four pulse

-get How they ne-glect-ed your ap-peals? Let

-get How they ne-glect-ed your ap-peals? Let

Three pulse      Four pulse

60

Labour's pow'r pre - vail. \_\_\_\_\_ Workmates, we must fight and strive

Labour's pow'r pre - vail. \_\_\_\_\_ Workmates, we must fight and strive

*sempre ff*

*molto allarg.* *a tempo*

65

If our chil - dren are to live, Take what greed will never give.

If our chil - dren are to live, Take what greed will never give.

70 *Four pulse*

Fight the exploit-er, free the slave, Let free-dom rise up from the

Fight the exploit-er, free the slave, Let free-dom rise up from the

74

grave And all en-joy what all may have, If La-bour's pow'r pre-

grave And all en-joy what all may have, If La-bour's pow'r pre-

*più legato*



78

-vails. And all en-joy and all en-joy what all may

-vails. And all en-joy and all en-joy what all may

82

*allarg.* have If La-bour's pow'r *a tempo* pre - vails.

have If La-bour's pow'r pre - vails.

*allarg.* *a tempo*

Appendix L

Make Your Meaning Clear! (1939)

2

# MAKE YOUR MEANING CLEAR!

Words by RANDALL SWINGLER Music by ALAN BUSH

Energetic but not too quick

PIANO

8ca loco

5 Four pulse Doh is A

Rise now, you long ex - plo - ted, And let your voice be heard with  
They bid us fight for free - dom; But all they e - ver gave To  
Truth is a thing we'll fight for, To save the world we make, That

9

all peace - lov - ing peo - ple, And this shall be your word: *meno f* We  
Bri - tain's work - ing peo - ple Is freedom to starve or slave. De -  
we our - selves may own it And rule it for our sake. We

13

will not fight for pro - fits, We will not die for pay, Nor  
- mo - cra - cy's their catch - word To send our sons to die. We  
rise and give our an - swer To the ma - kers of all wars: The

*crescendo* *f*

8 8 8 8

Copyright MCMXXXIX  
The Workers' Music Association

17 *Lah is C#*

let our ru - lers drag us down In ru - in and de - cay.  
 heard them use it once be - fore And know it for a lie.  
 peo - ple fight for the peo - ple's right, Their just and on - ly cause.

21 **CHORUS**

*ff* Rise, rise, rise, work - ing peo - ple, And make your mean - ing clear! Our foes are the ex -

26 - ploi - ters. Our bat - tleground is here. And peace shall end what wars de - fend, The

31 rule of greed and fear. And peace shall end what wars de - fend, The rule of greed and fear.

*Fine.*

# Appendix M

## Against the People's Enemies (1939)

Against the People's Enemies  
*Anthem for Solo and Chorus* Music by Alan Bush

Lak is C  
 Three pulse | : : . m

Majestic and unhurried. At a speaking pace

For the l. l. : l. l. | m. m : m. m

Voice

Piano

*BEST OF SOLO:*  
*(or women chorus)* *allargando* Now guided post endurance let us

7 l. l. : s. f | m : . m | r. r : r. r. | l. l. : l. l. | r. d. : t. l. | s : . s | d. t. : l. s | f. m : l. l.

sing a song of hate For all the wrongs of government we will not tolerate. For fiercely as we love the life for

11 s. s : f. m : r : s | d. d. : r. m : f. q. : t. t. | s. m : d. r. m : | : | : . m

which we fight and long, We hate with equal firmness every lie that does it wrong. We

15 l. l. : l. l. | m. m : m. m | l. l. : s. f : : . m | r. r : r. r. | l. l. : l. l.

1. hate you first, our' governors, for for every promise made To peoples like ourselves whom you have  
 2. Keep your hands in power you have sold what was not yours, mortgaged the lives of millions upon

Published by: Workers Music Association  
 201, Sentinel House,  
 Southampton Row, W.C.1.

Price 4d

Copyright 1939.

18 r. d': t. l. i. s : . e | d. t: l. s i f. m: l. l | s. s: f. m i r : s., | d. d: r. m i f. f: t. t.,

shamelessly betrayed. We hate the slimy words of peace but dribble from your tongue, while to the rabid days of war our  
Munich's deed of war. You dare to say you brought us peace, indifferent to the bread Of the feet of thousands fleeing from the

22 m. m: d. r i m : | : | : . r | s., s.: s. s i l. l.; l. l | t., t.: d. r i m : f

children's food is thrown. *(not so loud but more sharply if possible.)* We hate your cynic speeches for the saving of your face, while  
Terror you have spread. And so our halted and our wrath grows like a forest flame, And

26 r. r: r. r i m. m. m. m | f. s. l i t : d | d. d: l. l. s. l. t. t

mothers starve and prices rise (and profits rise apace). What do you care if men are killed and  
from the seats of government will drive you forth in shame, who, zealous in the service of no

29 t. m: m. m i l : l | . l. l: r. r i m. f: s. d | r. d i o t. e l. t : -

citrus gasp for air, while there is blunder to be had and you will get your share?  
interest but yours, here cunning in suppressing truth as in fomenting wars. *allargando*...

Steady and unhurried beat, but not too slow.

CHORUS  
33

Three parts

l : l.l : l.l	s : - : m	l : - : t	d' : t : l.s	l : - : m	t : - : t
l : l.l : s.f	m : - : t	d : - : r	l : s.r : m.m	m : - : m	m : - : f.m

S. A. 3/2

1. You have betrayed our friends, our peace, our free-dom and our trust. And made our  
 2. re-a-lis-tic rise, our and go, our you mas-ses of de-cep-tion. We rise up

T. B. 3/2

l : l.l : t.d	t : - : l.s	l : - : s.f	m : s.l : t.t	d : - : m	t : - : l.s
l : l.l : l.l	m : - : m	f : - : r	d.r : m.f : m.m	l : - : m	l : s : m

sempre f

39

name one, through all the world a sym-bol of dis-tinct. Your smooth con-ci-li-

our flames of our wraths are sharp-ping of your feet. The smooth con-ci-li-

menof

l : - : l : l.s	t : - : d	s : t : s	f : l	m : - : m	s : l : s : l.m
l : - : f : f.m	r : - : d	d : t : l	r : r	d : - : d.r	m : d : l.m : s.s

1<sup>st</sup> time.

mf

44

a - - - tions and your gen-tle - - - le-manly parts conceal - con- - - ceal the plots of mur-derers and

r : r : m.f	m.d : t.l : r.de	r : s : l.t : m.r	m : - : m : m : d	d : - : d : d : l
t : t : r.r	l.l : s.f : t.t	m.m : f.s : l.t	d : - : d : d : d	f : s : f.m : r



## Appendix N

### Track Listing of CD of Workers' Songs Conducted by Alan Bush

**Track 1: *Song of the Hunger Marchers* (1934)**

Words by Randall Swingler & music by Alan Bush, performed by members of the London Labour Choral Union conducted by Alan Bush.

**Track 2: *Patrol & Speech: "Work, Work, We Want Work"* (n.d.)**

Author of text unknown, music by Alan Bush, performed by members of the LLCU conducted by Alan Bush.

These two songs were originally produced in 1936 on an eight-inch vinyl record by the Workers' Book Shop Ltd., 38 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1. The only known surviving copy formed part of the huge Roger Thorne collection of 300 gramophones and over 30,000 vinyl records that were auctioned after Thorne's death in 2010. The recording is available on a YouTube video ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exMh\\_dzvJsQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exMh_dzvJsQ)), with a commentary by "The Colonel" which has been excluded from the CD. The recording has been edited and transferred to CD by Eoin Bailey. Only limited sound improvement was possible due both to the age and condition of the original recording and the fact that the amateur YouTube video (of the record being played on an old gramophone) was made with a camcorder.