

Pageantry and the Popular Front: Ideological Production in the 'Thirties

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A PLAYING-FIELD in South Wales, 1 May 1939. A paying audience on tiered scaffolds have watched 2,000 other local people enact a history of the Welsh working class, an episodic account of its strengths and its struggles. Some perform as members of choirs, others have become involved individually. The *Pageant of South Wales* now nears its end. There is a fanfare, and a group of uniformed men march into the arena to the music of the Spanish Republican Hymn. One steps forward and speaks:

I am one of the little band that went out from South Wales to fight in the International Brigade in Spain. I am going to ask you to rise, all of you, and swear with me this oath of victory. In the name of Wales and its people, in the name of our high-wrought past, in the name of our traditions, in the name of all our battles in the fight for freedom, on this day 1st May 1939, we solemnly swear not to relax until freedom, and the prosperity that can only be brought by the power of the people, bring back the sunshine to our land. All those in favour shout 'Aye'. You, who are reading this programme, and all around you, shout the answer, and the Bands play - THE INTERNATIONAL. [1]

The words are given in the programme, so that all might sing the Communist anthem. The veteran is a real veteran, living proof of struggle brought up to date and into immediate presence. Locally lived history is seen in its genuine continuity with events on a global scale. A narrative gives coherence and perspective to history. Both the sturdy might and the protective strength of a community are imaged - once by that narrative, and again by the shape of an event performed by a community to and for itself, and present in mass.

The programme helps the spectator to follow the events in the arena. The simultaneous speaking and reading of words, the utterance of clearly selected and scripted phrases, producing the sense of a litany, enhance the felt value of the oath. But the programme also importantly acts as a souvenir, a trace to be carried away of that sensation of special presence, of bearing witness. The same event was staged simultaneously in three separate locations. It rained, and fewer turned up than expected.

To many in the mid-1930s, the march of fascism across Europe looked as if it might be unstoppable. Faced with this crisis and this perception, Communist policy changed. The assumption had been that capitalism was in final crisis. As the legitimate embodiment of the organized international working class, the Party should have no truck with the parties of social democracy or reformist trade unions, since these had already demonstrated their complicity with capital. But by the time of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, the old strategy of Class against Class had given way completely to a new logic: the need for a United or Popular Front against fascism. The Communist Party of Great Britain and its satellite political, educational, and cultural organizations were now seeking both the co-operation of other organizations and the membership of individuals from a very broad 'progressive' political spectrum.

The advent of the Popular Front in Britain was also marked by changes in Communist theatrical repertoire and organization. A short spate of publications in the 1980s has helped identify this as a shift away from the mobile agit-prop practice of the Workers' Theatre Movement to the work of the Unity Theatres in London, Liverpool, Bristol, and Sheffield. In this and a subsequent article, I aim to extend the available picture of theatre-related Popular Front cultural activity in Britain by describing and analysing some of the pageants mounted by the Party and its workers after 1936.

A Popular or Unpopular Front?

Popular Front theatrical product was not as uniform as some commentators have implied. Chambers (1989), for instance, provides ample evidence of the variety of forms and performance situations employed by the Unity theatres. These were by no means confined to naturalism on the 'curtain stage': performances of the mass declamation *On Guard for Spain* at Trafalgar Square or at public meetings are an obvious case in point. The pageants, mounted outside the remit of the political theatre clubs, are further witness to this variety. [2]

Simplified claims about Popular Front theatrical initiatives make the job of criticizing the general political turn in European Communism all too easy. For example, one received version of the narrative recounts how the vigorous, urgent, and defiantly working-class politics and aesthetics of the late 'twenties and early 'thirties gave way to class compromise and a retreat to bourgeois theatrical values and 'amdram' institutions. The movement was misled. Stalin's pact with Hitler demonstrated the Comintern's abandonment of international Communism in favour of socialism in one country, state capitalist nationalism. The leaderships of the British and other Communist parties obediently sold out their members and their class.

In such an account, the supposed theatrical retreat either reflects or is a typifying instance of an overall political retreat. A counter argument is that agit-prop merely hectored its auditors and typically gave them neither practical nor theoretical perspectives - that, in short, it failed both as agitation and as propaganda. And this claimed failure is linked to the failure of Communism to stem the tide of reaction during its sectarian phase. That tide is seen as being stemmed at least temporarily by the united fight against fascism, the translation of an imperialist war into a people's war.

Four interrelating questions arise here. One is the actual nature of the cultural practice in concrete terms. A second is the relationship of this to an overall political practice, its role in relation to other organizational and rhetorical activities. A third is the politics of historical interpretation - what value we place on the choices taken. And a fourth is a more general and abstract political question of form - how it constructs a relationship to reality, situates the spectator in relation to others, and offers or withholds the sense of agency, or of unified or decentred subjectivity.

We need to interpret the past to make choices in the present, and those choices include attention to forms of cultural production and product. These two articles are intended to contribute towards such choices, but not to arbitrate them. The material presented here might be mobilized in the making of such choices, but can only usefully serve this purpose if the four questions are not collapsed into one another. They are importantly related but are not interchangeable. [3]

These articles will briefly describe, situate, and analyze a number of pageants. However various in its forms, most Popular Front cultural product bears the clear marks of the changed political project. Thus, there is plenty of evidence here of materialist Marxism having recourse to idealist images, of

middle-class artists writing for working-class performers, of women seen as the repositories of peace and human feeling, of the construction of heroic narratives. There is also evidence of the powerful popularization of Marxist theory, of the galvanizing of a community, of a sober self-reflexivity.

Dominant or Counter-Discourse

These and the earlier left pageants from which they derive can be seen as a special form of meeting or demonstration, as highly articulate means of imaging a community to itself or constructing the illusion of such a community. They are part of a felt tradition of protest and celebration. While I do not intend to offer the material as one station in a heroic narrative of continued struggle and resistance, some may want to see it as such. As will become clear, this very image of democratic effort as a constant thread, a voice subdued but never silenced, is strong within the performance texts themselves.

As I shall show, they - like their predecessors - are also appropriations of spectacular forms employed by the dominant apparatus of commerce and the state at both national and local levels. The early century is crowded with pageants of empire, of local history and trade. When and to what extent is such an appropriation able to operate as a 'counter-discourse'? When does it merely surrender to the dominant?

And an immediate context for their understanding - as well as a demonstrable cue for their making - is the use of such huge events elsewhere in Europe. Mass spectacle was a major propaganda tool in the Soviet Union from the early years. It was consciously seen as a pseudo-religious form - an outward mimicry of the ritual ecstasies of religion, which would both deeply engage the spectator and also deliver a secular, materialist message.

Yet form and content are not so separable. To what extent does the form merely deliver faith, offer the spectator immersion into a process which promises sublimity while actually delivering oppression and objectification? For some, the narrative from Bolshevism to Stalinism has the shape of an inevitability, the juxtaposition of a Communist rally with one at Nuremberg a shape something like a mirror.

But the totalizing emphatics of an agitprop sketch are not the same as a totalizing critique, and neither of these are the same thing as totalitarianism. However integral and typical a part of a political practice agitprop sketches or pageants or pantomimes may be, the temptation to reflect a rhetorical analysis directly into a generalized political critique can be a temptation to reductionism.

[4]

The turn to the United or Popular Front against fascism was not simply the result of the Comintern's edict. The move to a new political perspective also emerged amongst rank-and-file working-class Communists. It was not just that the sectarian politics of Third Period' Communism had damaged recruitment. Fascism threatened the survival of the very institutions on which working-class struggle could base itself. For many, the nature of the Spanish Civil War was clear. The probable and indeed eventual world war might well be a fight between states on behalf of competing blocks of capital, hungry for new markets and raw materials: but it also needed to be fought and won in order to preserve the possibility of a future transition to socialism. [5]



□ Mass participation - and an intimate moment. Top: scene at the Communist Party's Earl's Court rally in July 1939. It was claimed that a thousand actors took part in the pageant - and that seven hundred new members were enrolled. Bottom: time-out from a costumed rehearsal for the *Pageant of South Wales* in the previous May.

If Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy and Franco's Spain lost the Second World War, it is clear now that capital won it - and that fascism still eats at the heart of Europe, both East and West. Communism has collapsed, with few mourners. But there can be no second-guessing history. We cannot know what would have happened had the Third International taken a different line in the mid-thirties, or the Trotskyist Fourth won the initiative.

Calls have been made in the recent past for a performance culture geared to a broad-left cross-class politics. Yet the relations of mass consumption and organizational conditions on the left are now so different as to prevent these spectacles from being anything like candidates for emulation in the service of this or any other initiative.[6] These events were opportunities for people to bear witness to a belief, a resolution, or membership of a community. Some of them attempt to recruit. Most are explicit attempts to popularize political theory. They do ideological work.

The rhetoric of the Popular Front continued directly into the promotion of the idea of a People's War. An examination of pageants made after 1945 demonstrates that the discourse, the structure of key categories, the 'structure of feeling' of the Popular Front persisted in some residual way in this (by then increasingly marginal) form. And the main work of the second of these two articles will be to contextualize Popular Front pageantry in relation to similar contemporary forms within the dominant culture, and to map the evolution of each out of earlier practices. [7]

This first article looks at the pageant *Music and the People* which stands in direct challenge to dominant cultural product - and bears eloquent testimony to the shifts in British Marxist rhetoric that the fight against fascism evoked. It is one of the three parts of the *Festival of Music for the People*, mounted in London from 1 to 5 April 1939.

People's Festivals, Mass Markets

The idea of the festival had occurred to the Communist composer Alan Bush around June 1938. It was to comprise three events: the pageant itself at the Albert Hall on Saturday 1 April 1939; a concert of folk songs and popular music at the Conway Hall on 3 April; and lastly a concert of a more classical nature at the Queen's Hall on 5 April. [8]

The Conway Hall concert begins with four numbers from the British folk tradition as recovered by Vaughan Williams and Percy Grainger. Within the context of the dominant culture, such a starting point might well signal the construction of a sense of national heritage. For instance, the declared aim of an almost simultaneous event, the London Music Festival - a 'five-week long family party of musicians and music lovers' patronized by the royal family and overseen by Beecham and Owen Mase - was 'to make apparent, not only to our own people, but to Europe, what we are doing as a nation'. But as I shall demonstrate, the Bush festival reclaims this starting point to inaugurate not a discourse of national tradition, but the theme of 'folk' - the People.

In fact, the phrases just quoted are from a full-page advertisement carried in the programme for the *Festival of Music for the People*. Its presence there is a measure perhaps of the sheer need to raise cash, but is also a sign of the redefinition of a political opposition into an implied free market of ideas. There is maybe still a notion of 'their music and ours', but the boundary of the unspeakable or intolerable has moved. From the perspective of the Popular Front event, highbrow middle-class flagwaving looks less sinister than it might have done to other eyes early in the decade.

This seemingly casual inclusion of an advertisement for a hostile event might appear to have the shape of an aristocratic negligence - the attitude that 'all this can be coped with'. And this may then appear to be symptomatic of the class relations of the event. Crudely, the 'folk' festival can be seen as an intended celebration of working-class tradition, imagined and marshalled by an upper middle-class composer, whose hostility to nationalist jamborees is real but not urgent in a personal sense.

By 1939 this shape of a class relation had for a long time been the subject of debate and contestation. The question of the relationship of the working-class movement to the heritage of bourgeois culture is at issue within Marxism from the time of Marx. The threat of dilution of a class politics that such a cultural engagement may bring has been much discussed. The *Festival of Music for the People* and other large-scale Popular Front events were part of a deliberate move to a politics of class collaboration. The question of the class purity of socialist cultural work is particularly foregrounded. [9] But also foregrounded is the question of consumption, of the conditions of reception.

This event takes its place within a tradition of resistance, but it also positions itself within the marketplace. The event is at one level a ritual affirmation of persistent solidarity. At the same time, an ideological claim is brought into the public sphere of relatively highbrow entertainment. This entails a patent recognition of the power of forms of mass consumption. While the event as a whole does not have the obvious shape of a mass commodity - its repertoire does not extend to 'jazz', for instance - it is none the less recognized as a commodity, a thing competing in the market. It celebrates the People as a subject in history while addressing the mass, the object of capitalist production. [10]

The Programme for the Music Festival

This rhetorical negotiation is made the more apparent by the working assumptions of pageant-making established in the ten or so previous years. The need to emulate cinematic values is a repeated assumption made by pageant-makers from the late 'twenties. The pageant as a form claims an organicity: its rhetorical procedures are appropriated from Hollywood.

Excellent standards and immensity of scale were important to the meaning of both festivals: but while the one thought to luxuriate in national accomplishments, the other was forthright in its assumption of a forward-looking internationalism. The *Festival of Music for the People* was 'designed to pay a tribute to the musicians of Europe who have linked their art to the progressive social forces in which they lived or are living'. [11]

A look at the concert programmes will demonstrate how this sense was conceived and constructed. The programme of music at the Conway Hall constitutes an argument. After the Fleet Street Choir had sung the Williams and Grainger settings, they turned to modern versions of Hungarian folk songs: Kodaly's 'Matra Pictures'. The sequence of opening numbers constructs an image of two sorts of extension or connectedness. There is the sense of reaching back to recapture a people's culture, a sort of retrospective persistence of a popular voice. And there is the sense of an international, universal folk: the roots of a common democracy.

The next piece maintains the international dimension, but now brought urgently up to date. The reassuring communality of the choir gives way to the isolated figure of soprano Anne Wood, who sings the 'Three Cantatas for Solo Voice' of Hanns Eisler: 'News from Vienna 1938', 'Cantata of Exile',

and 'Prison House Cantata'. As the discourses of socialism and anti-fascism are introduced, one woman stands in double relation to the body of the choir: as a lonely figure for alienation and loss, and as the lyrical voice still able to stand and bear witness. the promise of the People's strength persists, however dark and lonely the times.

Lastly before the interval, the Fleet Street Choir returns to sing Schonberg's 'Peace on Earth', embracing even this modernist composer in the people's canon. [12] The text, by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer (translated by Nancy Bush, *nee* Head), presents a narrative of the universal longing for freedom of the oppressed. The first two stanzas tell how the Christian promise of salvation had been an hour in which that hope revived, only to be followed by 'deeds of bitter striving'. Then the third reflects:

Yet the deathless hope still lingers
That mankind will break its bondage
That the rule of might can never
Reign on earth eternally.

Justice lives, however fettered, and in spite of death and sorrow. The stanza ends with the promise that a state will rise tomorrow, to install eternal peace. The fourth delivers the promise:

Slow it rises from earth's ruins,
Wide its loving sway extending,
Man's eternal rights defending.
Flawless weapons now it forges,
Flaming swords for Truth's defence.

Should anyone be in doubt as to which state it is that forges flawless weapons in truth's defence in 1939, the mystery is solved after the interval. The audience return to hear Medvedeff and his Balalaika Orchestra perform popular tunes of the day from the USSR, including 'Chastoushka' from Yuri Tyulin's 'Collective Farm Suite'.

The concert then ends with two mass songs involving choir and orchestra, Dunayevski's 'The Young Comrade's Song' and 'Land of Freedom'. The hope for the people's internationalist cause, formulated in the most abstract and lyrical terms, is set firmly and uncritically in the Soviet Union.

Bourgeois Form, Secret Messages of Peace

The Conway Hall concert constructs a sense of an international 'people' and places their hope for the future in the Soviet Union, using contemporary Soviet musical production as witness to this guarantee. The Queen's Hall concert brings the perspective and guarantee home again: it centres on British composers who link their art to progressive social forces.

After Stratton led the London Symphony Orchestra in the Egmont overture, the first performance was given of Benjamin Britten's 'Ballad of Heroes for Tenor, Solo, Chorus, and Orchestra'. [13] This specially-composed setting of poems by W. H. Auden and Randall Swingler honours the men of the International Brigade who fell in Spain:

Men who wished to create and not to destroy,

But knew the time must come to destroy the destroyer.
(Swingler, 'Funeral March')

This condensed, lyrical expression of the claimed necessary paradox that liberty depends on killing works through a tight structure of opposition and repetition: create/destroy/destroy/destroyer. The syllabic extension of 'destroy' into 'destroyer' echoes the movement from 'wished' to 'knew'. The precise similarity of two words with contrasting meanings stresses the paradox.

This extreme economy of style has two linked effects. It communicates a dialectical model with great efficiency, rhetorical strength, and memorability. It also produces and depends upon dialectical structure – the play of opposites - as an object of pleasure in itself.

In the final Recitative and Chorale, to text by Swingler and Auden, the Tenor Solo sings that 'at the centre / Of the wheeling conflict the heart is calmer, / The promise nearer than it ever came before'. 'Secret messages of peace' discovered by the Solo are linked in the Chorus with 'a city where / The will of love is done / And brought to its full flower / The dignity of man.'

These themes - of a quietly persistent essence which will re-emerge in times of conflict to bring humanity nearer to realizing its true potential - are at the heart of Swingler's verse script for the pageant, which opened the *Festival*. There, they are given a more accessible, deliberately popular form.

In Auden's bitterly jaunty 'Dance of Death', [14] set by Britten as the Scherzo, he tells us that now that 'matters are settled with gas and bomb',

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

Among the bric-a-brac of drawing-room civilization, next to its attractive though empty gestures of olive-branch and fairy stories, are 'the works for two pianos'. Auden resolutely attempts to turn his back on bourgeois forms and heads for the anger and oblique irony of pastiche. But can bourgeois forms be appropriated? Britten's Ballad in itself assumes that they can, and the work which follows is insistent: 'Friends, we would speak a little of this performance' is the opening line of Swingler's text for the last section of Bush's 'Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra', with Baritone Solo and Male Voice Chorus, of which the Lento and Finale were given. Alan Bush, who played, has looked back on the piece as 'the penetration of socialist realism into the bourgeois concert hall'. An index of its success in reappropriating a bourgeois form to the service of the people was its being banned by the BBC.

The concerto form is used as an opportunity to estrange the musical medium. The verbal text celebrates the evolution of music out of the rhythms of work, out of and in the process of men's (*sic*) living together – mechanical skill then developing instruments, and 'the enriched imagination controlling the skill into harmony of sound'.

And thus exchanging a wordless currency of thought
Men are changed, are somehow enriched,

Discover within them latent power,
Know their own fears and desires better than before,
And knowing, can better control.

This is seen to parallel the general growth of power through knowledge gained from meeting human need in history: 'Yet in our day the influence of thought / Is caged and bonded, like a bird' and 'Music itself must fret like a pent flood'.

The reason, and its solution, are clear. The reins of power are gripped by a few, who 'fear the liberating impulse and the uniting spell, / The revealing beams of knowledge that all art begets'. What early in the previous century would have been a Romantic schema of the artist's imagination countering a corrupt world is here realized as a liberationist inflection of historical materialism. This resort to Romantic structures helps redefine the contemporary Marxist perspective: the struggle of Class against Class has become that of the People against the Exploiters.

Against the exploitation and alienation of the present system is set a Utopian vision of a time when

The unfenced fields and the towns like hearts beating
With regular pulse spread about him in generous peace;
And love is the law and Man in the pride of his will
Giving his all for all.

If humanity is to be free, then the overthrow of the oppressors' rule is both necessary and inevitable:

Only in death shall it be fruitful, only its utter
Annihilation shall cleanse the world....

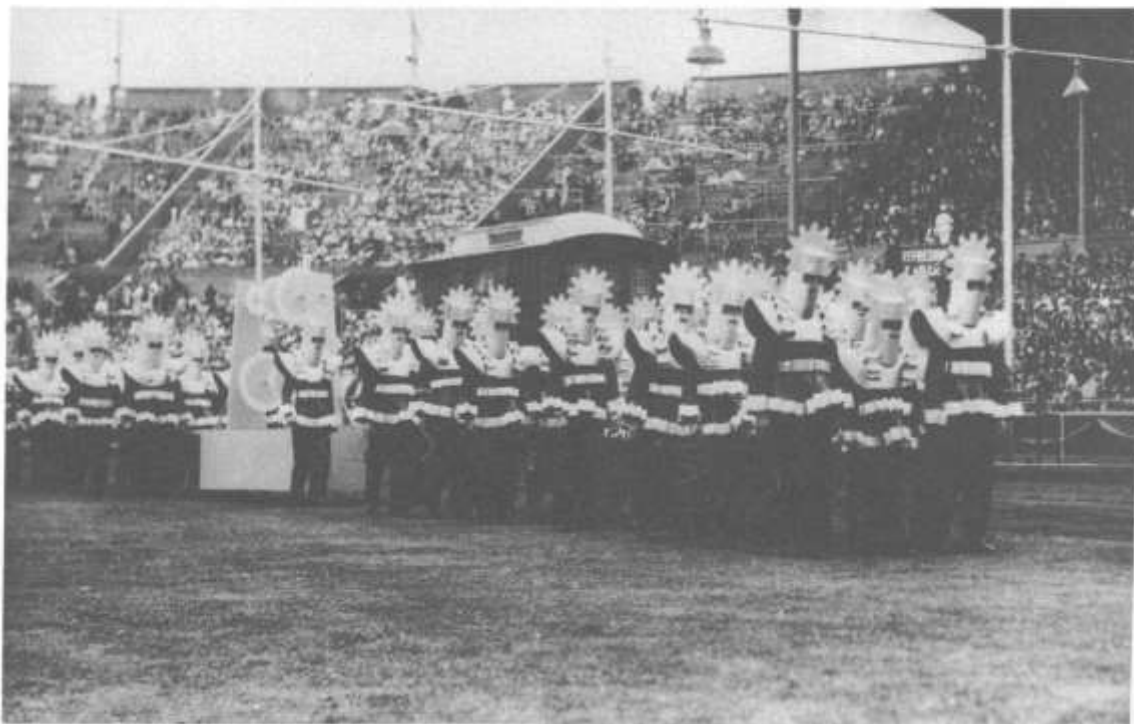
Yet while it is without doubt that 'they shall fall, fall, fall for ever', the audience must not sit comfortably while a mechanistic history proceeds on their behalf:

There can be no more sides than two:
War and waste for the privilege of the few.
Or a share for all in all men make or do.

Socialism and Heroic Inevitability

Classical Marxism provides a grand narrative of the movement of history towards the universal emancipation which the socialist revolution will bring by ending class society. Socialized production will be joined by socialized consumption, the state as instrument of the ruling class will wither away. That model, which in any case I put here in very crude terms, has been much reworked within Marxism. Much less stress is put on the narrative, much more on Marxism's materialist critique of capitalism.

Yet embedded in that narrative is a question of agency and determination which persists, and which Swingler's text faces directly. Liberal culture is marked by oscillations between a depressed sense that all individual behaviour is determined and so nullified by external forces, and the illusion that choices are freely made. Marxism by contrast insists on a dialectical model in which choices are real, though determined in the sense that they are delimited by material circumstances.



□ Two episodes from the earlier Popular Front pageant, *Towards Tomorrow* (1938). Top: 'Instantly the arena is flooded by a tumbling, laughing crowd.' Episode 1 sets up that 'Merrie England which is partly the invention of storytellers and partly the memory of a little country where eight million women and children lived on a rich wheat-growing soil'. Bottom: Episode 2 displays 'the machines which are going to make a new world - but destroy an old one first.' Here, 'a sinister ceremony' is enacted, whereby the brutalities of capitalist production surround and bewilder 'the people of pastoral England'.

The one who chooses is a product of history, possesses a consciousness particular to the material circumstances in which it is formed. The choice is therefore made not only within a constraining material landscape of possibilities, but also according to a constrained perspective. But there are always options, and the choice is real.

Swingler adheres to the classic grand narrative and situates the agency of his auditors within it. For Marx (and for Brecht) the narrative was a possibility: the choice was between human emancipation and a return to barbarism. For Swingler in this text, the narrative appears more as an heroic inevitability. Yet motivated human activity is an integral part of that inevitable process.

This particular inflection of the dialectic between agency and determination takes part in a rhetoric which, with an urgency characteristic of the period, calls for a broad front against an increasingly hostile force, as 'Man's future is to be fought for in our day.' [15] If the rhetoric of Swingler's text has a Romantic inflection due to the concerns and conditions of a Popular Front, it can be specified as a humanist inflection common to both. At first sight, the line 'There can be no more sides than two' seems to echo Lenin's dictum that 'There is no middle course'. Yet the two actual propositions are potentially contradictory. According to Lenin:

All worship of the spontaneity of the labour movement, all belittling of the role of the party of Social Democracy, means strengthening the influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers. . . . The only choice is: either the BOURGEOIS or the SOCIALIST ideology. There is no middle course. [16]

While the Swingler text promotes consciousness of the material origins of culture and its relation to material progress, the history of the material struggle of classes is disprivileged. This favours an appeal to 'man's history' in which the unified subject 'man' has progressed. It is 'in our day' that this progress is said to be challenged. Music, as 'the mind-changer, the life-giver', the repository of 'the human spirit', will 'release . . . a new endeavour' that will 'leave the giant Man / Enormous in freedom, shaking his lightened shoulders, rejoicing once more'. The text meets Lenin's demand that the mass be instructed rather than be left to spontaneous action, but itself theorizes a progressive human spontaneity subject to external aggression and limit.

While a humanism is available in (especially the early) Marx, it is progressively subordinated to the specifics of class struggle at each historical juncture. This Popular Front text reprivileges this discourse. [17] The last line is at the centre of the argument: 'Man's future is to be fought for in our day'. It both marks the analysis that fascism and the struggle against it constituted the major contradiction, supplanting for the time being the class struggle within national boundaries; and it marks the appeal to 'mankind' rather than to the progressive class, concomitant with such a shift. [18]

The Agency of Art

Implicit within Swingler's text for the Bush concerto is a celebration and reclamation of a tradition of struggle on the artistic front. Music figures as a 'wordless currency of thought' that is a help towards the emancipation of the People. This is made more explicit in the pageant *Music and the People* and is fully concordant with the new political line. It is also concordant with emergent emphases in left-liberal quarters.

In 1934, for instance, W. H. Auden and John Garrett edited *The Poet's Tongue*,

an anthology that claims, not explicitly and so more weightily, that real English poetry has been shaped by the people in every generation: that folk poetry has a continuous lineage to our own day, though sometimes it has an author's name attached and sometimes not. [19]

These reclamations are not infrequently made by middle-class artists finding their own place within working-class struggle. In *Fanfrolico and After*, the third volume of his autobiography, Jack Lindsay tells of his conversion to Marxism early in 1936, upon which he threw himself into the political struggle on the artistic front. Already established as a poet, historical novelist (with the Roman trilogy of 1934-35), translator, fine-art publisher, and writer on aesthetics, Lindsay now turned his knowledge and skills to serve the new authority for his actions.

Thus, for instance, he embarked on a new trilogy of historical novels which trace the English revolutionary tradition - *1649*, *Lost Birthright*, and *Men of Forty-Eight* - and at the poet Edgell Rickword's request wrote *England My England*, a long essay on the same theme. Published in 1939 as the second of *Left Review's* new 'Key Book' series, 'the tract sold some 80,000 and had a strong effect in the factories'. [20]

A Short History of Culture, published in the same year, in a much cut-down version that Lindsay came to regret, attempts an analysis of cultural history and anthropology on historical-materialist lines. With Rickword he published the anthology *Handbook of Freedom*, and he edited poetry broadsheets for the Left Book Club.

A long declamatory poem, 'Who are the English?', written in reply to a *Times Literary Supplement* review, was published in *Left Review* in 1936, and proved so popular that it was republished in large numbers as a pamphlet. According to Lindsay, it was the staging of this that provided a group at the recently-formed Unity Theatre, who wanted to develop a form of dance-mime together with spoken verse, with the basis of an English form of mass-declamation. [21]

A similar request from Rickword at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War gave rise to Lindsay's second, more famous mass declamation, *On Guard for Spain*. This was a major text for Unity in the early years, and was much used both at benefits and as a piece of agitational propaganda. [22]

Lindsay's work in this period busily establishes a popular tradition of struggle and of artistic production which rehearses the Marxist grand narrative. He establishes this by popular or mobile means - the historical novel, the performed lyric. In interview, Lindsay recalled that at this time he was continually composing declamations for small and large occasions, often at the request of trades councils and strike committees.

Of particular relevance to the present narrative, however, is *Five Thousand Years of Poetry*, 'A Declamation in Prose and Verse'. Moving progressively from the earliest recorded poetry to the present, the declamation reclaims poems and poetry for the people, re-establishing a tradition of the struggle for liberation carried on in art: 'We are here to speak of the reality of poetry.' [23]

Swingler's pageant text for April 1939 makes a precisely similar claim for music. As I shall demonstrate, this again gives a Romantic inflection to a basically materialist analysis. In Swingler's

treatment, music is at once a material cultural practice able to affect lives, and a metaphor for hope and inspiration.

I want now to turn to the pageant *Music and the People* itself. Swingler's text for it adopts a 'popular' style of diction, serves a theatrical form enacted by the mass for the mass, and appropriates the musical tradition to the people. [24]

The Pageant 'Music and the People' (1939)

After a flourish on bass and drums, the Speaker comes to the centre of the arena and delivers a direct address in a roughly regular trochaic tetrameter, regularly rhymed and organized into paragraphs, reminiscent in style of the moral interlude:

Good people all within this hall,
Gallery, circle, pit and stall
Be welcome to our Festival...

The diction is largely monosyllabic in feel if not in fact, and tends to Saxon-rooted vocabulary. Thus at the outset, through stylistic means as much as argument, the discourse of 'tradition' is established. Descent into pastiche is in the main avoided by a softening of the rhyme and the occasional poetic inversion, as well as a conscious (good) humour: 'No mystic rite we shall unfold / Initiate to a world remote / Where none but Muses had the vote.'

The 'traditional' presenter-prologue makes promises about the ensuing action. This will not argue that Music is 'Nature's select prerogative/ For certain rare and lofty minds'. Music neither has its origin in the ideal, nor is it solely the province of the privileged:

Our world is life. Our theme is man,
Whose music since the world began
Like tributaried river runs
Through villages and swarming towns
And whose original springs arise
Deep down in man's necessities.

As in Swingler's text for the Bush Concerto, the argument is materialist. Music arises, as does knowledge that leads to power, from the meeting of human need in history. The metaphor of the tributaried river has its referent in the social, material, historical.

But the argument shifts as it develops, by means of a new metaphor. 'Music' now provides the image rather than featuring as its subject. The shift is towards an idealist register. The image is of an uncorrupt world which both recedes and will post-date exploitation, a world of natural harmony. People have always sought 'One rhythm and one harmony, / Such as the heart, which beats for good'. But while men compete for private gain,

Life's tune is broken, drowned its song;
The rhythm that makes the heart beat strong
Is buried deep, though still it keeps

But faintly beating while we sleep.

Like the 'wordless currency of thought' of the 'Concerto' and the 'secret messages of peace' of the 'Ballad of Heroes', music has carried the hope for peace and freedom throughout history. All working men and women

Hold in their hearts and always held
This dream of an united world.
And music from their hearts has sprung.

The Shift to Idealism

What adequate sense can we make of this apparent idealist shift? In one way it can be seen as a common lyrical expression of the aims of socialism, which none the less remain rooted in material practicalities. But the problem then remains of a species of utopianism - a tendency to talk of an abstract, essential, and *natural* order that *precedes* corruption and will be regained when corruption is banished.

Two sorts of Utopian thought - 'ontological' and 'teleological' - surface in but are also actively negotiated by this text. By 'teleological utopianism' I mean the basic assumption that history is an already-written narrative with a happy end. By 'ontological utopianism' I mean the frequently linked idea of there being a now-lost but recoverable natural essence. This latter idea finds particular expression in Swingler's association of 'music' with 'heart'.

The notion that natural rights have been lost that once existed *historically* has its place in the British socialist tradition. Such an idea informed the rhetoric of 'freeborn Englishmen', oppressed by the 'Norman yoke', and a similar argument can be found persisting in possibly innocent form in *the Pageant of Labour* (1934). In Swingler's text such a notion is deliberately destabilized. As the Speaker introduces the first episode, in some other texts an occasion for Merrie Englandry, he remarks, 'A merry scene, you say? In this / The fifteenth century / These men are serfs. Their life is harsh / And none of them is free.' [25]

If Swingler does construct an ontological Utopian argument, it is not on such a chronological axis, but rather on a synchronic one of simultaneous cause-and-effect. In this sort of model, an already-existing but never-materialized (i.e., ideal) state of perfection is forced from concrete realization by the persistence of an opposing (often 'evil') agency.

Mediating between the synchronic and chronological models of ontological utopianism is the idea of a prehistorical state of natural harmony. A version of this formula has had strong persistence in the Marxist grand narrative, where class society figures as a temporary alienation of the natural human *potential*, implicit but as yet to be realized in human relations in the supposed 'primitive communism' of the earliest human societies.

Slippage between notions of potential and essence (what humanity has the capacity to become, what it really is) are notorious within and at the margins of Marxist discourse. Swingler's reliance on biologicistic metaphors ('heart') and idealized ones ('music') grounds his rhetoric in essentialist territory even as he foregrounds his refusal of other idealizing or essentialist options. This could be

seen as deep compromise. I think it is a very sophisticated piece of declared negotiation for a mass/popular text. [26]

Singers, Dancers, and Players

The negotiation continues as the Speaker is joined in the arena by three groups who enter from all sides. They represent the Singers, the Dancers, and the Players, and each group identifies 'the origin and importance of its contribution'. [27]

For the Dancers, Swingler maintains the tetrameter but introduces more unstressed syllables to produce a 'tripping' rhythm. From the 'Lambeth Walk' to the 'Palais Glide' of the 'thirties, a brief list returns us to 'The Furry, the Maypole and the Hobby-Horse':

Do you remember, as you tread the floor,
How your fathers danced it long before
And their fathers' fathers, and what it was for?

And the audience are in community across the centuries with their ancestors:

And the ring of our dance was the ring of men
Facing the powers beyond their ken.

I want to note two features here. First is the appeal to a popularized cultural anthropology on the left already in existence, with its roots in Marx and Engels. Lindsay's *A Short History of Culture*, published in the year of the festival, elaborates it.

Second, as another specific instance of that discourse, Swingler's text figures mankind (*sic*) facing the powers beyond its understanding. The pageant text maps out the basic tenets and metaphors of a classical (though maybe necessarily reductive) Marxism: it both maintains a sense of 'natural' humanity or human potential and also here expresses the basic dialectic of the human *versus* the rest of nature, which the development of intellect, knowledge, and power will conquer. [28]

The Dancers conclude that Dance, which 'bind(s) men together' with 'new vigour and will', ever sets humanity 'a new aim' - 'For the heart remembers what the mind forgets.' Dance's 'compelling rhythm' joins company with the 'wordless currency of thought', 'secret messages of peace', and 'rhythm that makes the heart beat strong'. 'Life's tune' inspires oppressed mankind to liberate itself, and mankind in general to 'master' nature: the aims are coterminous.

Further modulations of the verse form and similar arguments see the Singers and the Players complete this expository Introduction. The short, irregular, and highly-articulated lines of the Singers tell how they bring the word, 'the mould and form / of man's understanding', a seed from which his 'secret will / Bursts into action'. The Players (meaning musicians) civilize 'the million sounds of nature' and their harmonies, 'recalling your hidden will', and transforming it into 'A power which is real'.

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 theorized as the material carrier

of humanity's persistent urge to realize its true potential in the course of conquering the rest of nature. [29]

While this introductory section does not typify the whole script stylistically, its rhetorical features do reflect its main concerns. It is an exposition of what will be argued through narrative, the articulation of spectacular plenitudes, and formal figures

Episode Six Analyzed

Reproduced below are the two available records of the scenario for a single episode. Here, the new song is born from the old as the struggle for liberty progresses through history. It finds immediate echo in the male chorus and a triumphant unity swiftly develops.

The physical action works at two levels, the second more metaphorical than the first. At the first, the *Carmagnole* stands for the sung tradition as a specific material practice which gives inspiration to democratic endeavour in every generation. The old song has the power to rally, and in the struggle a new song is born.

At the second level, the *Carmagnole* simultaneously stands more abstractly for democratic endeavour itself, a constant source of progressive energy for the whole of humanity. The socialist tradition, quietly alive beneath the repressive forces, flowers forth at the historic moment to be itself transformed into yet clearer meanings, greater potential.

Some Marxist historians have maintained that crucial theoretical and organizational models have arisen *outside* the revolutionary oppressed class. Swingler, however, both effaces the class argument in favour a narrative in which 'the People' are the subject, and figures a rhythmic energy which urges up from within this organic unity. The key ideological work of the episode is to insist on the effective as well as the chronological precedence of the 'immemorial' *Carmagnole* over the 'written' *Marseillaise*. [30]

In Swingler's treatment, then, the song is both an image for the socialist tradition, and one of the material practices by which that tradition is maintained. In the narrative of the pageant, however, and in the argument of this episode, the song figures as *the* material practice by which a democratic 'energy' is transmitted down the generations. This foregrounding, with the liaison of the literal and metaphorical levels just noted, together produce a very ambivalent model.

Swingler insists on a materialist analysis: it is not 'ideas' which move history, but developing material practices ultimately based in labour. Music-making is thus treated literally, in itself, as one instance of ideological production - the making and dissemination of 'ideas'. As a typical instance, it also stands in metonymic relation to all progressive ideological production. It is part of that whole sphere of organizational-cerebral-emotional-productive work which constitutes both a tradition of and a capacity for democratic revolutionary struggle. Yet the foregrounding of music suggests a high degree of agency for the sung tradition in relation to other activities (political association, party discipline, printed propaganda, economic association, etc.) – a 'culturalist' pressure in the text which has already been noted above.

Episode 6: *Changing Europe*

Music: Norman Demuth

The Episode opens with Gretry's ballet *Le Fete de la Raison*, written in honour of the French Revolution. It shows here the causes and outcome of the Revolution, the development of large-scale industry and the changing life of the people.

Everybody knows the story of the birth of the 'Marseillaise' from the lips of the young lieutenant Rouget de Lisle, as briefly depicted here, and how it inspired the armies of intervention. But the real song of the people in revolution was the 'Carmagnole', the tune of which was an ancient peasant dance. We see here how the music which had been through centuries the secret bond of unity among the peasant people, flowered into an open expression of their rights and demands at the historic moment.

The Gretry Ballet orchestrated
by Matyas Seiber
Danced by Unity Theatre Dance Group
Rouget de Lisle: Parry Jones

Episode VI

INTRODUCTION:

Gretry's Ballet, *Le Rosier de la Revolution*.

At the finish of the ballet a small group of Dancers dance the Carmagnole in its original form.

ANNOUNCER 1:

Now that the towns like spider's webs suck in
The country's life
And under the yoke of the machine
Pass man and wife
Has music lost its power
To rally the people and their acts inspire?
Are all the old bonds broken
And the old culture utterly forsaken?

*The tune of the Carmagnole is lightly played by
the band.*

ANNOUNCER 2:

Listen - that tune - an age-old dance
The Carmagnole, beloved of peasant France:
Not lost now, but sweeping up like a wave
Over a people resolved their lives to save,

Resolved to clean the corruption from their
land
And break the stranglehold of idle hands.
Liberty - Equality - Brotherhood - still it sings,
And to their hearts a clearer meaning brings.
And out of the birth-pangs of revolution torn
The Marseillaise is born.

ACTION:

The whole Acting Chorus comes into the arena, singing the Carmagnole, verses 1 and 2, dressed as French peasants of 1790. They perform a wide circular dance. Then, in the centre, Rouget de Lisle (Parry Jones) gets up on a table, and sings the first verse of the Marseillaise. The second verse is sung by a male voice choir (off) who enter singing, and the third verse is sung by all in the arena. They form into a column, singing, and march off.

□ Episode 6 of the pageant *Music and the People* (1939). Top: as printed in the programme. Bottom: the script-scenario for the same episode in the typescript copy held by Alan Bush. There has just been an interval of 15 minutes.

Furthermore, music is especially available as a model for natural or organic beginnings. 'Music' in the text crosses over from being the representation of a material cultural discourse to become a metaphor for (socialist or originary, teleological or ontological) Utopian existence: a world of harmony, the natural heartbeat of humanity.

A Formulaic Anthropology

The metaphor is itself underpinned by Marxist accounts of the origins of artistic forms, which have sometimes tended to ideal-essentialist formulations, supporting and supported by a theory of natural order. Thus, from the beginning of Lindsay's *Five Thousand Years of Poetry*:

Rhythm is the concentration of labour-process: men gathering into co-ordinated activity, the construction of significant speech, the dance and the song that utter the inner meaning of labour-process, its uniting of men.

And by rhythm of labour and art man merges with the universe, the cosmos of energy, the dialectic of matter.

By mastery of labour-process man grasps the universe in knowledge, and in art the very dynamic of life, the pulse and power of rhythm.

That is how it is that out of the masses of toil all art and all knowledge have arisen. Take away that base and there is nothing human left.

That is the living relationship which we seek to state, which we seek to rediscover with deepening clarity.

Lindsay's phrase 'masses of toil' figures as a generalized formulation for all productive classes in history and for humanity before the class division of labour. The phrase manages both to name and not to name the modern working class. The gesture of abstraction both gives significant shape to the material of history and threatens to dematerialize it. What might precisely constitute 'the masses of toil' either specifically or generally recedes from consideration under the pressure of an heroic narrative.

This formulaic anthropology constitutes a broadly idealizing pressure within a materialist narrative. Swingler's pageant text is just one instance of the way in which models of natural origin, essential human balance, have participated in this construction. Lindsay on the whole resists this.

But it must be allowed that Swingler's text is a rhetorical text and not a philosophical treatise. The text recalls, in order to revivify, a tradition in which it itself stands. It does, nevertheless, have its 'scientific' dimension, as does in a less-diluted sense Lindsay's declamatory passage just quoted. [31]

To return to the theatrical text immediately at hand, it is difficult to gauge how well-known Gretry's ballet might have been to any of the audience through contact with the many dance groups and schools active within the period. And did the Unity group perform in a late eighteenth-century 'classical' manner, or a 'modern' Laban-influenced manner, then gaining currency in progressive circles?

Certainly the *Carmagnole* was current, in *The Left Song Book* - one of the several publications through which the left's cultural tradition was being proselytized. But, in any case, the audience would have been able to place either piece after seeing the pageant, since the programme synopsis supplements the educational concerns of the enacted event. (It may be noted that the inclusion of Gretry's piece effects a liaison between the 'organic effectivity' of the *Carmagnole*, the 'instrumental effectivity' of the *Marseillaise*, and 'classical' music in the cause of the people.)

This pattern is repeated elsewhere. The preceding episode shows 'The country music caught and caged' by the bourgeois Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. But it then relents to admit that Handel's *Belshazzar* - which Bush had just himself produced - 'depicts a dream of an international peace, brotherhood, and extended freedom' in its Finale. Episode 7 features Beethoven, quoting from the 'Conversation Notebooks' and staging the 'Prisoners' Chorus' from *Fidelio*. The implication is that bourgeois forms are there to be reclaimed.

Rhetorical and Organizational Features

Pageants are station-dramas, whether they are processions or have localized physical action. Popular Front pageants and those from which they derive are arranged by episodes. What 'passes by' is a series of episodes that recounts a tradition - a history proper to its audience and makers. A series of that tradition's landmarks is visited.

In narrative terms, therefore, the texts have a potentially huge content: and so condensation is essential. The dramatic action in each episode must be as simple as possible, to allow the action across the episodes, or their repeated argument, to become clear. At the limit is the tableau.

Reproduced on page 21 is the arrangement of episodes in *Music and the People*. If the episodes are 'busy', it is not with dramatic action but with a quantity of smaller episodic units. Each unit tends towards a tableau, and together the episodes form a broad chronological sweep, with local discontinuities and tangents to pursue thematic issues.

The degree of tangent and discontinuity in *Music and the People* is marked in comparison with other Popular Front and related pageants, and this reflects its having a thematic concern. The other events are more directly concerned with establishing a clear line of pedigree for the social or political institutions they serve.

The main discourse in *Music and the People* is one of 'inspiration' - the role of music in promoting the struggle of all oppressed peoples against the oppressor. While this is argued through commentary, scenic action, and images, I suggest below ways in which spectacle supplements these formal means.

The dominance of this discourse of inspiration/liberation has its corollary in the relative disprivileging not only of Marxist class politics but also of the historical-materialist cultural anthropology strongly (if simply) set forth in the Introduction.

The pageant was a schematized presentation of what is already known or what could readily be developed as knowledge. Thus, as shown above, Episode 6 offers a 'dialectical' model of the relationship between the cultural tradition and a narrative of human liberation. But its importance is

probably as an *emblem* of 'dialectic' – the statement of a way of figuring the world. As such, through the aesthetic pleasure of recognition, it may serve an affirmatory function.

Spectacle and Scale

All theatre is spectacle. By means of showing, it makes meanings and gives pleasures. The pleasure of looking can be had 'for itself, as a 'direct' aesthetic stimulus. It is there as such even in the case of the naturalistic stage, though there it also enables the facticity of the pretended objects, persons, and events to attain a significance. There is pleasure in the ostension, and this helps construct meaning through a sort of aesthetic validation.

Looking is never innocent, for we watch culturally. Our pleasure-taking is a sorting-through of deep structures of our subjectivity, our historical, psychic, discursive positioning, the traces of our individuation. Hence the scare quotes in the last paragraph. This understood, it might be useful to think of spectacular pleasure as offered by theatre in two senses: heteronomous and autonomous.

By heteronomous spectacle I mean simply those meaningful visual pleasures that can be translated into other discourses, such as verbal narrative: 'The soldiers entered, clashing their swords and putting fear in our hearts.' Both the information-content and the more directly emotional meanings of theatrical visual stimuli can, then, be heteronomous.

But the same modes of expression can - often simultaneously with a narrative or expository (significatory) function – achieve an autonomous meaning. It thus becomes enough - or necessary - to say: 'It was spectacular!' The meaning is constituted directly in the pleasurability, the (never innocent) act of witness which doubles as a fulfilment, an access to plenitude.

If it is useful to think in terms of heteronomous and autonomous spectacle, it is also useful to think of these as vectors rather than as separate phenomena. While all theatre is spectacle, we distinguish what we call spectacular theatre. Here, the autonomous vector is the strongest. Pageants are a species of spectacular theatre.

The discourse of 'inspiration' present in the pageant *Music and the People* is realized in both the senses sketched out above. Meaning is carried in both a narrative-expository sense and a directly experiential sense. The pageant is both expository and spectacular. The reduction of dramatic action to a minimum not only facilitates a clarity of signification, of encoded meaning. It also produces the condition for a high degree of autonomous pleasure/meaning.

This autonomy, as in all spectacle, is achieved through scale, and thus more becomes pertinent than the visual register. To this may be added the aural register and certain abstract elements. These latter, while based in ideological systems, are imported meanings experienced as if sensually ('It was sensational!'). They may be generally characterized as superlatives, and include such ideas as verisimilitude, originality, and wealth.

Quantity and physical scale plus the idea of the superlative each contributes to the achievement of high amplitude, which (together with, say, pronounced rhythm) leads to pleasurable excitement. Spectacular theatre plays directly with plenitude: excitement mounts and perhaps satisfaction is glimpsed as the arena fills, or the volume and variety of signal suspends decoding and discernment.

[32]

Music and the People

Introduction

1. *Feudal England*. A canon from 1350; songs 'that have lived in the peasant tradition for centuries, only lately collected because they were beginning to be forgotten'; a primitive fertility ritual dance; a Hebridean spinning song. (No dramatic action.)

2. *The Massacre of the Innocents*. Parts of two pageant-plays are performed, as if to the villagers: after the famous complaint from the *Second Shepherds' Play*, *Herod and the Innocents* - 'no doubt much of its popularity owed much to the memory of the massacres of their own people after the rising of 1381'; the song *King Herod and the Cock* in which 'the invincible spirit' wins against the oppressor; a choir of early Christians, following an introductory verse by Paul Robeson; and, since 'the play's not finished yet' (i.e., of history) the *Basque Lullaby*.

3. *Peasants in Revolt*. A return to 1381: John Ball addresses the crowd; a signal arrives from him; the march on London, singing *The Cutty Wren*; Tyler's meeting with Richard II, and murder ('All words spoken in this scene, except for the commentary of the Speaker, are taken from authentic records'); all the men of the Mass Chorus (nine choirs) sing *The German Peasants' Song*.

Interlude. 'The ancient ritual carried on / And the forbidden message spoke': members of the Woodcraft Folk 'come on in small numbers, like conspirators, and perform the *Stag-Dance*', part of the cult which was 'the bond of unity between the harassed peasants'.

4. *Soldiers of Freedom*. Two Announcers briefly set the scene for 1649 (the episode is *not* concerned with celebrating Cromwell). 'One king may be dead, but who still owns the land? 1 Six Levellers and the actor-singer Parry Jones sit at tavern tables and sing; an Announcer recounts their talk as they remain in tableau; a group of dancers; some Diggers brought on in ropes by soldiers; an Announcer hails them in verse while the soldiers order drinks; the Diggers sing *Stand up Now*.

5. *Village Green to Concert Hall*. Announcer's verse reports the break-up of rural communities and the appropriation of their culture by bourgeois institutions; 'A group of dancers enters and performs to the tunes from which *The Beggar's Opera* was concocted. At the end of their dance, a proscenium arch appears over the platform, and a scene from the play is performed to the dancers as audience.

Interval

6. *Changing Europe*. 1792 (see page 17)

7. *Prisoners*. 'Ludwig van Beethoven descends from rostrum'; 'But who are these / In modern clothes appearing / Their haggard eyes / The brand of torture like a web of scorpions wearing?'; prisoners from the Nazi concentration camps enter and sing the *Peat-Bog Soldiers' Song*.

8. *Slaves*. 'Following this train of thought', John Payne and his Negro Choir enter as slaves, singing a chain-gang song, a cotton-picking song, and some 'songs of freedom, led by one of the foremost champions of freedom', Paul Robeson'.

9. *The People Advance*. As Robeson's *Kneelin' Low* ends, the Mass Chorus sings the Chartist *We're Low* and the Speaker takes up a prose narrative to take us forward to trade unionism - 'To every trade its club, to every club its song' - and 'the Trades Unionists sit round a table and sing their song' (unspecified), 'the verse sung solo'; 'the tide rose apace', and in a few sentences taking in the Co-operative Movement, the Speaker takes us to the late 1880s - a crowd headed by William Morris enters, singing *People of England*; the Speaker relates the killing by the police of the demonstrator in Trafalgar Square in 1880, and William Morris gives his famous 'Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay'; the Chorus marches off to the Russian 1905 Funeral March, 'that now commemorates all those who have fallen in the fight for freedom'.

Finale: For Peace and Liberty. The Speaker makes a summation in verse of the Pageant, and reflects on its meanings for us now:

*And having present struggles and despairs
Sharp in our minds, remember too
The past whose urgent influence prepares
The issues of today, and know that you
By today's action map the future's road....
Never so needed was that single will
That unity of the people, to fulfil
The claim for freedom, and to ensure our peace...
It is time we answered, as they answer now
In Spain, in China, in every tortured land....
Let our song rise whose simple power
Can flood the boundaries that divide us still
And make our common hope, our single will.*

Then a procession of groups: Christian Hymn; Levellers' Song; Marseillaise; People of England; 'Bandera Rossa'; German Solidarity Song; Chinese Student Song; Spanish National Anthem; (and now not representations but actual) veterans of the International Brigade led by Fred Copeman; the Negro Choir. Paul Robeson sings *The Land of Freedom*, 'the great song of liberated Soviet humanity', with the Acting Chorus (twelve choirs); Tom Mann, the Dean of Canterbury, and Fred Copeman speak briefly on the theme 'Music and the People'. Finally, all (audience included) sing the American *Men Awake! the Day is Dawning*.

The 'ideological' and 'sensory' aspects of scale of course interpenetrate. The promotional material for the left pageants no less than that for the civic-commercial ones of the period trades heavily on physical immensity to promote both excitement and prestige. A broadsheet advertising the *Lancashire Cotton Pageant* (1932) proclaims:

MAJESTIC PAGEANTRY. GLORIOUS SPECTACLE.
A MIGHTY ACHIEVEMENT FOR LANCASHIRE
12,000 performers. 1,500 chorus.
500 ballet. 5 bands.
18 months' work. Cost £25,000

and lists each episode, providing a lavish descriptive scenario. Edward P. Genn was a consummate showman.

A venue such as the Royal Albert Hall may carry prestige, while the 'natural amphitheatres' of *The Pageant of South Wales* (1939) may connote an authentic communality. Value of scale may attach to more than size of arena or numbers of participants. Copiousness in terms of number of episodes, of choirs or organizations, of professionals (twelve composers for *Music and the People*) may also add pleasure through value.

Such copiousness also connotes solidarity and confirms strength. Thus a procession of, say, Co-operators representing Co-operators across the world (*Towards Tomorrow*, 1938) may serve an expository function while also providing sensual excitement (scale, movement, presence) and so evidence emotionally a real scale transcending the arena.

Evidence becomes consummate with authentic presence, and a spectacular value attaches to the real presence of the International Brigade (*Pageant of South Wales*, 1939; *Music and the People*, 1939) or Party Leader Harry Pollitt (*Heirs to the Charter*, 1939). The effect is similar to the presence of a 'star' though is not reducible to it. A star presence operates in these circumstances through an imported prestige. Paul Robeson's presence in *Music and the People* is especially full, combining the heroic, prestigious, and evidential. [33]

Issues of Authenticity and Involvement

Voice-over narration and the use of speakers and commentators achieves an epic scale with value-laden connotations of authenticity, presence, and truth. Thus also, the scientific function of a speech quoted from real history may be attended by a spectacular function deriving from the presence of the authentic (a special fetishization related to the effects I noted above in relation to naturalism). In the case of the pageant-plays re-enacted in Episode 2 of *Music and the People* (see page 21), the sensation of reflexivity (a pageant of pageants, the tradition of popular playing in which we stand), may join with that of authentic presence to achieve a feeling of plenitude.

Costume may achieve spectacular effect by sensory means and through copiousness, this itself being part of the argument of the *Lancashire Cotton Pageant* (1932). There may also be connotations of wealth: the *Co-op News* of 8 July 1944, reporting on the progress of L. du Garde Peach's pageant at Dewsbury, proclaims 'Players' Costumes Worth £3000'.

Connotations of both wealth and authenticity may attach to the antique. Thus, a 120-year-old gown used for the Manchester production of *Co-operative Century* was exploited (*Co-op News*, 8 July and 29 July 1944). The fact of its being an heirloom in a Cooperative family of several generations will have enhanced the sensations of tradition and authentic presence.

The dominance of the 'inspirational' discourse in *Music and the People* has a rhetorical function: the pageant is itself designed to inspire. This is achieved through a combination of example, spectacle, and involvement. Many in the audience would have been there to see 'their' choirs; the text argues for a community between audience and the subjects of the drama ('We danced the seasons', 'You too like them'); and as a left event opposed to the dominant culture, it is the special property of its audience, the community of makers: the enacted history is theirs, they are its guardians.

Writing songs for the movement and promoting musical activity within it was a major part of Alan Bush's activity at this time. His engagement was close. He was himself conductor of the Tooting Co-op Choir. Having joined the London Labour Choral Union in 1924, the year of its formation, he became its Musical Adviser in 1929. The LLCU, Workers' Theatre Movement Music League, and some independent choirs merged in 1936 to form the Workers' Music Association. Moves towards federation date from about the turn of the century. Repertoires were dominated by 'community' and 'hymn' numbers until the mid-thirties. [34]

Logistics of Mass Participation

Bush chaired the Festival Committee and his friend Edward Clark acted as Organizing Secretary. Clark regularly promoted working-class music-making at the BBC Music Department, from which he later resigned over a matter of political principle. The active participation of the twelve composers was sought, even though their work was limited to harmonizations and arrangements of the pre-selected music, and the writing of link material. [35]

The entire arena of the hall plus stage was used by the 500 singers and 100 dancers, plus principals. The Acting and Mass Choruses comprised a total of 22 Labour, Co-operative, and other left choirs, of which at least one found it necessary to call for new members - especially men - to make up full strength for the event. The Woodcraft Folk, directed by Margaret Leona, and the Unity Dance Group performed the dances. Music was provided by the specially-formed People's Festival Wind Band. [36] Choirs rehearsed as local units, combining once for rehearsals of the two entire individual choruses in late February, and all together one week before the performance. Dress rehearsals took place at the Albert Hall on the day before and the afternoon of the performance.

These choirs constituted a major organizational basis for Popular Front pageantry. By corollary, the pageants extend their dual cultural work: as fashioned communities and as carriers of the socialist tradition expressed in song. Thus, Bush had composed and conducted the music for the pageant *Towards Tomorrow* mounted at Wembley by three of the London Co-operative Societies in July 1938. In the same year John Allen had directed an operatic version of Handel's oratorio *Belshazzar* made by Bush and his wife Nancy, and performed by Co-operative choirs. [37]

About 1,000 people took an active part in the Festival, which was watched by a total of about 10,000. It had been planned to donate any financial surplus to the Basque Children's Home. But in the event the donations and guarantees which had been sought and secured could not offset costs that climbed well beyond budget. This was an expensive enterprise, which ended with a deficit of £600.

As has been noted, some episodes in *Music and the People* develop tangentially from the main chronology. In particular, Episodes 2 and 7 bring the history of the struggle for liberty up to the present, with songs evoking the suffering of the children in Spain and of the victims of Nazism in Germany. The spoken text stresses the links between past and present: 'The massacre of innocents is here again', 'For their humanity is a crime / Even in our time'.

These references to the suffering might evoke pity, anger, or even resolve in the abstract: but they are unlikely to inspire. The *actuality* of the present struggle is brought into the arena by the entry of the International Brigade veterans. (see page 25) Despite the close memory of defeat, and despite the bitter struggles within the anti-fascist forces, the veterans march on as the embodiment of an heroic inspiration. They represent the concrete struggle at its sharpest local resolution. Their presence signifies not only their own sacrifice and struggle, but also that immense community of effort that surrounded them - fund-raising benefits, the Basque children's homes, Spanish Medical Aid, and relief for widows.

The present struggle is given heroic representation in an arena now filled with procession and sound. Past and present inform one another urgently and at the point of closest involvement for the spectator. [38] And, before the entire gathering joins together to sing, there are addresses from three leaders. The inclusion of the Dean of Canterbury indicates the 'broad church' to which this event is addressed. A voice in solidarity from inside a dominant institution is made manifestly welcome: the Front declares itself to be broad. (A contrasting apotheosis is engineered by the specifically Communist Party *Heirs to the Charter* of July 1939. This pageant was in effect a lead-up to a major address by Pollitt, the event as a whole being a major station in a national 'Crusade' of mass recruitment meetings.)

While the pageant *Music and the People* was neither a political meeting in the strict sense, nor part of a recruitment drive, nor geared to a specific party, it shares in the rhetorical strategies of affirmation, heroism and interpellation of each of these to some degree. [39]

Splits in the Front

Clark's promotion of this event, as of others, could make itself felt in the ruling-class press. Ernest Newman of *The Sunday Times* took the opportunity to try to wean his old friend off of such a naive habit. Responding publicly in his column to Clark's request for an assessment of the festival, he opined that he didn't really know who 'the people' was.

'Why this rather painful class consciousness?' The working class had played little part in the growth of music: the pageant presented a specious history. The festival had been an expensive piece of junketing undertaken by modern equivalents of von Bülow, who 'found, as many of his class do today, that sympathy with "the people", about whom he knew very little, was an excellent safety valve for his hatred of human beings of his own sort, of whom he knew too much.' [40]

A more serious dissension came from 'within'. John Goss, a Marxist outside the CPGB and conductor of the Unity Male Voice Choir, wished to dissociate himself entirely from the planned event. Refusing to be tempted by Clark's insistence that he was the very person to introduce material on early trade-union bands into the pageant, he wrote that 'the proposed festival is just musical "Leftism" and therefore quite reprehensible in view of the need for a broad popular appeal in all our political activities'. [41]



□'The actuality of the present struggle is brought into the arena by the entry of the International Brigade veterans.' (see page 24)

Goss's opposition to the event marks a rupture from within the general position of the need for a Popular Front. He did not find agreeable 'the idea of being a steadying weight on the tail of Mr Bush's kite', [42] and argued strongly that:

at this juncture to give our struggling leftish efforts such a grandiose title is a deception. It tries to give the false impression that we have tremendous forces at our disposal and that the Labour Movement is seething with musical activities that are of such high standing that we have a right to ask the public to pay good money to hear them.

The performance standard of our Choirs and Bands is deplorably low, and until this can be altered and until we can raise the standard of the smaller musical units, get together a large body of music for their performance, and then make the whole movement music-conscious, we are only building up an ostentatious lath and plaster facade, behind which there is next to nothing, by presenting festivals such as the one proposed. [43]

Goss expresses a contemporary concern over the 'illusionism' perhaps necessarily attendant upon the reclamation, through invention, of a tradition. And the personal charge of self-importance is less significant than the vigilance over 'dilution' of the working-class movement by intellectuals in the period in which it is situated. Goss throws light on the class contradictions attendant upon a situation where

In presenting this music to the general public, the musical forces of the British working-class movement are enlisting the services of the most highly-skilled professional musicians. In doing so they are on the one hand securing the best possible conditions of performance, and on the other hand they are enabling the professional musicians to link their art directly with the progressive social forces of today. [44]

Notes and References

1. Programme, *Pageant of South Wales* (1939). Bibliographical details of this and all other pageants mentioned in the text will be found in a later article in *New Theatre Quarterly*.
2. For Unity, see Colin Chambers, *The Story of Unity Theatre* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989); Jerry Dawson, *Left Theatre: Merseyside Unity Theatre, a Documentary Record* (Liverpool: Merseyside Writers, 1985); Angela Tuckett, *The People's Theatre in Bristol, 1930-45*, 'Our History' Pamphlet No. 72 (London: History Group of the Communist Party, 1979). The strongest recent claim for the political effectiveness of agit-prop is made in Raphael Samuel, Ewan MacColl, and Stuart Cosgrove, *Theatres of the Left, 1880-1935: Workers' Theatre Movements in Britain and America* (London: Routledge, 1985). For a range of Popular Front theatrical activity, including pageants, see Bernadette Kirwan, 'Aspects of Radical Theatre in England in the 1930s' (doctoral thesis, Loughborough University, 1989). Popular Front pageantry appears to consolidate from 1937, typified at first by relatively small events such as the ones held at Manchester and banned in Dundee, cited in my next article. Larger in scale is the *Pageant of Scottish History* (1938). The major examples are *Towards Tomorrow* (1938), *Music and the People* (1939), *The Pageant of South Wales* (1939), and *Heirs to the Charter* (1939).
3. The relationship is vital and cannot be ignored. For a good mediation between more abstractable questions of form and political priorities, see Stourac and McCreery, *Theatre as a Weapon: Workers' Theatre in the Soviet Union, Germany and Britain, 1917-1934* (London: Routledge, 1986). Pragmatic accounts from the left based on the (ultimately proper) assumption that theatre should enlighten have tended both to efface the operation of desire in the performance contract, and to suppress either or both the specificity of performance and its partiality as one of a set of political practices. It would be good to see a non-Hegelian version of Frederic Jameson's 'political unconscious' applied to these materials, something to unlock the structures of feeling inhabiting scenarios at the levels both of 'theatre' and of 'performance'. For a definition of these levels see Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 1988). For a counter-narrative to that given by Samuel, in Samuel et al., op. cit., see Leonard Jones, 'The Workers' Theatre Movement in the Twenties', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, XIV (1966), p. 259-81, and 'The Workers' Theatre in the Thirties', *Marxism Today*, XVIII (1974), p. 300-10.
4. Agit-prop depends much on the phatic tropes of repetition, binary opposition, and the construction of crescendi by augmented repetition (Murder, m-u-r-d-e-r, MURDER!). These syntactical tropes typically reflect into simple linear and/or symmetrically-organized dramatic shapes. Both support the localized delivery of schematized versions of Marxist critique as part of the exhortation. They might then at a superficial level seem good game for both 'post-Marxist' and 'postmodern' appropriations of Derridean deconstruction.
5. For hostile accounts of the political turn, see Hugo Dewar, *Communist Politics in Britain: the CPGB from its Origins to the Second World War* (London: Pluto, 1976); Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson, *Two Steps Back: Communists and the Wider Labour Movement, 1935-1945. A Study in the Relations Between Vanguard and Class* (Ilford, Essex: Socialist Platform). For benign accounts of the turn's cultural manifestations, see John Clark, Margot Heinemann, David Margolies, and Carole Snee, eds., *Culture and Crisis in Britain in the Thirties* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979); Jim Fyrth, ed., *Britain, Fascism and the Popular Front* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985). Trotsky made clear that the main threat of fascism was its determination to extinguish the organizational and institutional bases of socialism. The CPGB for its part, under Harry Pollitt, for a short time proposed a struggle on 'two fronts': *with* the British state against fascism, and *against* it as the instrument of the capitalist class. But Comintern imperatives prevailed.
6. See, for example, David Edgar, 'Festivals of the Oppressed', *New Formations*, 3 (Winter 1987), p. 19-32. The mass die-in was a regular feature of CND activity in the 1980s, a theatricalized

demonstration in which parade turns to tableau-image, often accompanied by short agit-prop sketches and sometimes supporting a spoken address. Rock Against Racism in the late 1970s came near to an 'organic' politics based in popular culture and self-organization. In the dominant apparatus, the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games have produced an ersatz notion of international community by means of televised pageant since 1985; Jean-Michel Jarre in the late 1980s provided a distant echo of Leger's plan to turn Paris into a lightshow for the Front Populaire, Jarre manufacturing pseudo-religious plenitudes for punters in Houston or London with himself as hero-priest; and by celebrating the history of their region's resistance to Paris, including the Revolution of 1789, through a sentimental and reactionary pageant enacted by locals, the inhabitants of the Puy de Fou in France have created a tourist industry to revive the flagging local economy. My disclaimers about my own relationship to the material signal neither an adherence to the outmoded and reactionary attitudes of literary New Criticism - a sort of agnostic close reading - nor to the banal cataloguing procedures now largely abandoned in the writing of theatre history. But such a false signal may be a necessary risk. The intention here is to open this material up, not close it down.

7.1 suggest but make little theoretical progress with a development of Raymond Williams's coinage 'structure of feeling' into 'structure of desire' in Mick Wallis, 'Present Consciousness of a *Practical Kind: Structure of Feeling and Higher Education Drama*', in W. John Morgan and Peter Preston, eds., *Raymond Williams: Politics, Education and Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1993).

8. Otherwise unascribed facts and opinions relating to Bush derive from a number of conversations I held with him in 1984-85. See also Ian Watson, 'Alan Bush and Left Music in the Thirties: an Introduction and an Interview', *Gulliver*, XXIX, German-English Yearbook (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1978); Alan Bush, *In My Eighth Decade, and Other Essays* (Kahn and Averill, 1980).

9. See, for example, Samuel, in Samuel et al., op. cit., p. 58 ff.. The WTM sketch 'Their Theatre and Ours' places agit-prop culture in direct opposition to opiate bourgeois product. The working-class Herbert Hodge and Robert Buckland's *Where's That Bomb?* for London Unity (1937) skits its working-class writer-hero for indulgence in the easy expressivity of agit-prop rhetoric. The play's humour contains a strong vein of self-effacement. Articles tracing tropes of rhetorical negotiation/embarrassment from British agit-prop into Popular Front product are in preparation.

10. The London Music Festival effaces the fact that the condition of its own existence is as a commodity, with cosy talk of family parties.

11. Circular letter, n. d.

12. Eisler wrote in 1935 that he admired his ex-tutor Schonberg, though for the reason that the decadence of his music was perfectly expressive of the chaos attending capitalism's death-throes (see Eisler, 'Schonberg', in his *A Rebel in Music*, ed. Manfred Grabs (Berlin: Seven Seas, 1978)). By 1939 two things had happened: Schonberg had left expressionism behind to return to natural harmonics; and he had been exiled by the Nazi threat from Austria to the USA, where Eisler also arrived in 1938. For accounts of Eisler's Popular Front cantatas, see Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler, Political Musician* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

13. Op. 14, dedicated to Montagu and Enid Slater. *The Sunday Times* of 12 March 39 gives the title as 'Anthem for Englishmen'. The eventual title is notably both more secular and more internationalist.

14. From the play of that name written for the Group Theatre. Montagu Slater situates the Group aesthetically in 'The Turning Point', *Left Review* (1935), p. 15-23

15. This account leaves the Queen's Hall concert here, still only at the Interval. The audience returned to John Ireland's setting of John Addington Symond's poem 'These Things Shall Be'. Dennis Noble sang baritone throughout.

16. V. I. Lenin, *What is to be Done?*

17. This reprivileging is concomitant with a shift in the understanding of how 'our epoch . . . has simplified the class antagonisms' (Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*) and favours a generalized understanding of 'oppressor and oppressed' (ibid.) over specifics. In the British context this reprivileging occurs on the ground of the 'William Morris' tradition.
18. This has a precise echo in Montagu Slater's 'Women's Chorus' for *Towards Tomorrow*, the Cooperative Pageant of 1938.
19. Montagu Slater, 'The Turning Point', *Left Review* (1935), p. 15-23. More is of concern here than the immediate question of a tradition. There are important 'formal' questions relating both to the historical analysis of poetic discourse and much more immediately to the contemporary poet's finding a 'popular' voice. See the Slater article, and Margot Heinemann, 'Three Left-Wing Poets', in Clark et al., op. cit.
20. Jack Lindsay, *Fanfrolico and After* (London: Bodley Head, 1962), p. 274. *England my England* (London: Fore Publications, 1939) describes itself as 'a Pageant of the English People' and declares that 'Communism is English'. It opposes the Second World War, a position that Lindsay was to reverse before the Communist Party did. He joined both the Army and the CPGB in 1941: call-up came on the day before Hitler launched the attack on the Soviet Union. Unquoted opinions ascribed here to Lindsay are derived from my interview with him in December 1985.
21. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 263
22. There are many versions of the declamation, which was cut to make it performable in different performance conditions, and updated by hands other than Lindsay's with the progress of the Civil War: see, for instance, the three versions dating from 1937 to 1939 at 1937/23 in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection at the British Library. To stress the variety of situations: *On Guard* was licensed for a first performance by Unity at Shoreditch Town Hall in April 1937 (though see Chambers, op. cit., p. 84, n. 23); shared the programme with *Where's That Bomb?* and Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* at a benefit for the Spanish Relief Fund at the Phoenix Theatre on Sunday 2 May; and was given at an IB rally at Trafalgar Square that July. The poem as printed in Valentine Cunningham, *The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), is neither the original nor a performed version. A brief formal appreciation is given in Don Watson, 'Poetry and Politics: Mass Declamation and the 1930s', *Artery*, V, 3 [No. 19], p. 25-7.
23. Jack Lindsay, *Five Thousand Years of Poetry* (London: Left Book Club, n. d.)
24. The account which follows derives from two textual sources: the synopsis printed in the programme to the festival and a lacunose script-scenario in duplicated typescript in the possession of Alan Bush. The latter is probably a near-final version.
25. See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963), Chapter IV, and my next article. Swingler's immediate target is almost certainly the Merrie Englandry of dominant cultural accounts of history, which looked back to a constructed era before (left-wing) class-consciousness. While his insistence on the class nature of feudalism could still logically allow a notion of a natural social contract or even 'Saxon precedent', his swipe at a sentimentalized history of innocent beginnings is plain enough. But the assault on dominant ideology has reverberations in his own narrative.
26. For an assault on attempts to 'save' Marx from his assumption that there is such a thing as 'human nature' see Norman Geras, *Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend* (London: Verso, 1983). For a Popular Front account, see Emile Burns, *What Is Marxism?* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1939). The presence of a species of ontological utopianism in Marx may be accounted for by his debt to the idealist Hegel. Althusser, in *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984) remarks that as Marx developed his thought, the term 'alienation' progressively disappeared from his writings. Its persistence in Marxism may be accounted for in general terms by the necessary dialectic between science and ideology (as defined for a time by Althusser) within the historical struggle. In times of

political expediency and physical as well as ideological onslaught it may be expected that these earlier formulations will gain greater currency. The worst result in this case is an analysis of the historical juncture in Manichean rather than more complex dialectical terms. But this may suit the political situation. Though for an insistence that the 'worst in this case' is nothing less than a betrayal of the working class and socialism, see Dewar, op. cit., p. 129 and 141. I have suggested that any teleological utopianism in Swingler's text has its legitimation as an expression of the living tradition of socialist aspiration, underwritten by his albeit modest 'deconstructive' gestures. In the swim of history the dialectic between idealist and materialist formulations (because of and within consciousness) will remain - until we reach Utopia, that is.

27. Programme scenario. This identifies by name the actors of 'Two Players' and 'Two Singers', and it may be that they spoke some or all the text for their groups. The Dancers may, by implication, have moved to a voice-over or spoken ensemble.

28. '[Man] opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces.' 'By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature' (Marx, *Capital*).

29. For Marx, humanity's productive articulation of the rest of nature gives rise to an 'objective force' (the organized means of production) to which humanity is bound in its own ultimate interest: '[Man] not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his *modus operandi*, and to which he must subordinate his will' (Marx, *Capital*). The condition of class society is that one group controls that objective force for its own benefit. While the notorious base/superstructure metaphor might seem on the basis of this to consign cultural realities to a secondary level of materiality, that of 'effects', poststructuralist currents within Marxism have recovered or at least constructed a sense of a structural totality in which the historical effectivity of 'culture' is recognized. Swingler's text emphasizes its insistence on the materiality and effectivity of cultural production by recounting music's 'own' grand narrative. This produces a 'culturalist inflection to the argument: a sort of inverted base/superstructure metaphor in which a true human potential calls, through the agency of art-based-in-material-production - as intuitive theory, an organic understanding - for progress towards the emancipation of humanity from class society.

30. See, for instance, George Rudé *Ideology and Popular Protest* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980). Marx, in the Introduction to *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, writes that 'Theory . . . becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses'. And see Rosa Luxemburg for a negotiation of the idea of 'spontaneity'.

31. A comparison of this with Lindsay's own theoretical work demonstrates the conceptual shifts attendant on finding negotiable metaphors. It can be said, following Macherey, that as a dramatic transformation of historical substrate (the culture and politics of Revolutionary France) this portion of Swingler's text, as all other rhetorical texts, is situated between 'science' and 'ideology'. As a piece of Marxist analysis, it stands nearer to 'science'. As a piece of Marxist pragmatics or faith, it stands nearer to 'ideology'. It is not necessary to be a naive empiricist to find the distinction useful. British Marxist literary theory of the period, to which Swingler's text is closely allied, is largely considered to be impoverished compared with continental examples. See Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality* (London: Macmillan, 1937); Alick West, *Crisis and Criticism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1937).

32. This is necessarily a sketch. A full discussion would need to mobilize not only Lacanian psychoanalysis (especially as mediated by film theory, while not inattentive to somatic realities) but also anthropological models, and the sort of specificities engaged with by Wolfgang Fritz Haug in *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality and Advertising in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986). See Schechner, op. cit. (especially Chapter 8, 'Magnitudes of Performance'), for a mediation between somatic and semiotic dimensions.

33. Authentic presence need not be real, but constructed diegetically, and still achieve spectacular effect. I shall argue this for the closing sections of *Heirs to the Charter* (1939).

34. This is only briefly to situate Bush in relation to the choirs: see Note 8. In his practical involvement with popular music-making, Bush was following in the footsteps of his mentor Rutland Boughton: see Michael Hurd, *The Life and Time of Rutland Boughton* (London: Routledge, 1962). Boughton moved from reforming the Edwardian choir festivals to founding the (utopian) Glastonbury Festival with Reginald Buckley, and both wrote about the project. See Rutland Boughton, *The Reality of Music* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1934) for a resolutely biological-materialist account of the origins and history of music. Stalin's 'proletarianized' academy was busily producing such narratives, typically fetishizing a mechanical notion of the concrete.

35. The Committee comprised: Bush, Clark, John

Allen, Parry Jones, Alan Rawsthorne, Randall Swingler, representatives of the LLCU, WMA, Labour Stage and LCS Education Committee, Barbara Allen (theatre designer), Michael Ross (painter), a chartered accountant, and a concerts manager. Composers: Frederic Austin, Alan Bush, Erik Chisholm, Arnold Cooke, Christian Danton, Norman Demuth, Elizabeth Lutyens, Elizabeth Maconchy, Alan Rawsthorne, Edmund Rubbra, Victor Yates, R. Vaughan Williams. This section is based on papers in the possession of Alan Bush, too numerous to cite individually.

36. Acting Chorus: Ashford, Bromley, Clapham, Eltham, and Epsom and Elwell Labour Choirs, Greenford Co-op Choir, Hendon Left Singers, Laindon Ladies' Co-op Choral Society, New Progress Choir, Rhondda Unity Male Voice Choir, Unity Male Voice Choir, West London Co-op Choir. Mass Chorus: Bexley Heath, Enfield Highway, Kentish Town, Redhill and Reigate, Surbiton, Tooting, and Tottenham and Edmonton Co-operative Choirs, East Ham Co-operative Choral Society, Edgware Co-operative Musical Society. A 'name' was sought for the role of Announcer. In the event the role was split between Wilfrid Walter and Ronald Kelly.

37. One of their aims in adapting the Charles Jennings libretto had been to restore the 'revolutionary' chorus excised by earlier editors and producers. The institutional nature of *Towards Tomorrow* typifies Popular Front cultural production. Mounted by Co-operators, its artistic principals were all Communist Party members. This seems genuinely not to have been regarded as entrism, rather as an obvious thing to be doing in the circumstances. It is unlikely that the Party at an official level valued these activities as a political end. Bush, who joined in 1935, remarked in conversation that the Party 'rather discouraged us from wasting time on matters of such unimportance'. *Heirs to the Charter* (1939) as a rally was a different matter.

38. See Jim Fyrth, *The Signal Was Spain: The British Aid to Spain Movement* (London: St Martin's Press, 1986). The Minutes of the Festival Committee Meeting for 1 March 1939 indicate that 20 of the young Basque refugees then at the Barnet Children's Home were to be invited to come and sing in the pageant. Many benefit and memorial meetings for the Brigade continued to be held at this time. As was seen above, *The Pageant of South Wales* ends in similar fashion.

39. Notwithstanding the religiosity of procession, spectacular plenitude, and fetishized text, most Popular Front pageants remain resolutely secular in normal ideological terms. An exception is the *Pageant of South Wales*, designed for a community in which the traditions of nonconformity and socialism were and remain closely interwoven. For 'interpellation' see Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984). Ideology 'hails' (interpellates) the individual as subject: the subject is constituted in ideology. A pageant may hail spectator or participant as subject of a community or interest. See for example my discussion of the Sherborne Pageant (1905).

40. *The Sunday Times*, 12 March 1939.

41. Goss to Clark, 20 January 1939. His name appears in the programme, which may simply have been wishful thinking. But Bush recalled that he was there.

42. Ibid.

43. Goss to Clark, 11 December 1938.

44. Circular letter, n. d. (op. cit., Note 11).