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The songs of Madeleine Dring: Organizing a posthumous legacy

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THE SONGS OF MADELEINE DRING:
ORGANIZING A
POSTHUMOUS
LEGACY

by

Wanda Brister

Bachelor of Music
University of Southern Mississippi
1979

Master of Music
University of Southwestern Louisiana
1980

A doctoral document submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

**Doctor of Musical Arts
Department of Music
College of Fine Arts**

**Graduate College
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Dissertation Approval

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The Songs of Madeleine Dring: Organizing a Posthumous Legacy

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

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ABSTRACT

The Songs of Madeleine Dring: Organizing a Posthumous Legacy

by

Wanda Brister

Dr. Carol Kimball, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Music
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This document is dedicated to the published songs of British composer Madeleine Dring (1923-1977). A look at Dring's musical background, upbringing, training, and career is followed by a close examination of her art songs for solo voice. A breakdown of her vocal works includes many musical examples.

Dring, composer of works for solo piano, pieces for small ensemble, and for voice and piano, was quite active as a composer in the 1940s through her premature death in 1977. Few of her pieces for voice and piano were published at the time of her death. This study relates the journey of her widower, Roger Lord, in having Dring's pieces made accessible and recorded in hopes of their acceptance into the standard vocal repertoire.

Assessment of each of the thirty-eight published and readily available art songs examines the texts, their specific musical challenges, and compositional devices. Mention of the other songs is included.

This paper quotes and annotates many excerpts from Dring's letters, diaries and speeches. Ten photographs documenting her life are included. Also cited are excerpts from nearly four years of correspondence with Roger Lord.

Appendices include lists of seventy-six musical examples, correspondence from Roger Lord to the author, a ten-year chronology of Dring's correspondence with Eugene Hemmer, a directory of the songs by title, and a list of photographs.

Representing a direct link to the composer, this document is on a topic that has gone largely unnoticed in the United States.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Madeleine Dring first came to my attention in June 2000 when Glendower Jones loaned me a compact disc of her songs. Roger Lord, Dring's surviving spouse had published his home address in the liner notes of that disc. Many thanks to Roger, who has become a constant source of information and inspiration. Without him, I may not have learned more about Dring.

Dr. Carol Kimball, my committee chair, has been very enthusiastic from the outset about this project and its eventual publication. Invaluable throughout this entire process, Dr. Kimball's advice about how to proceed, her editorial experience, and "eagle eye" have been extremely helpful in completing this document.

My husband, Zygmunt Rachwal, has been consistently supportive and encouraging, never complaining about my unswerving dedication to the topic, sometimes to the exclusion of attention to him.

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I have received assistance (and packages) from Alistair Fisher, an electronic copy of the Hancock-Child book from Micropress, and first-hand

accounts from Pamela Larkin and William Bennett, all from England. From Spain I received taped letters about Dring from her friend, Ray Holder. In the United States my major contact was Lance Bowling, who has been enthusiastic about Dring since the 1970s. A real visionary, Lance was the first to arrange recordings and publish many of Dring's works. Kevin Walters gave a warm and informative interview regarding his study with Herbert Howells.

I thank Dr. Robert Cutietta, now Dean of Music at USC, who was excited about my return to school, as was his successor, Dr. Rex Woods at The University of Arizona. My Dean at Florida State, Dr. Jon Piersol, has been very supportive about my work on this degree. FSU has generously supplied a grant to help with further research and a recording of Dring's songs.

The faculty and staff at University of Nevada, Las Vegas have been extremely helpful. Dr. Cheryl Taranto was very helpful in the final stages in getting the document printed. Dr. Dean Gronemeier helped with administrative issues. Dr. Alfonse Anderson, Dr. Stephen Caplan, Dr. Kenneth Hanlon, Prof. Christine Seitz, and Dr. Joseph A. Fry have all graciously served on my committee. Dr. Caplan, Dr. Andrew Smith, and Prof. Byron Tauchi played beautifully on my chamber music recital. Accompanist for my first recital was Polya Bankova. Shuwen Wen played for the other three required recitals, including the lecture recital on Dring.

Dr. Jay Rosenblatt of The University of Arizona helped me to acquire the necessary research and documentation techniques.

During this process, my voice students have been very accommodating and supportive.

I finish this document in what would have been Dring's eightieth year. Even though it is presently my intention to continue work on this topic, I hope to have prepared some groundwork for the Dring centennial celebration.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*When, suddenly and unexpectedly, one finds oneself with a legacy of music that, over the years, one has come to love and respect, it becomes necessary to find new champions to continue to promote it.*¹

— Roger Lord

Almost every composer who has achieved distinction has had a champion. The opuses of Mozart were studied and organized by Ludwig Köchel, who assigned “K” or “Köchel” numbers by which most of Mozart’s compositions are known today. Anthony van Hoboken amassed a huge collection of works by Haydn before he began his work cataloguing them. Hoboken’s thematic catalogue on Haydn took a full thirty years to complete. As a result of Hoboken’s efforts, Haydn’s works are known by “Hob.,” or Hoboken numbers. Otto Deutsch organized Schubert’s works, accounting for the “D” numbers found in concert programs today.

These advocates were sometimes good friends of the composer; sometimes they had never met. Many were musicologists who were inexplicably drawn to the works of a particular period or fascinated with the persona of a composer. Students of the composer were occasionally asked to catalogue the

¹ Roger Lord, biographical notes for *Madeleine Dring: The Far Away Princess*, Meridian Records, 1982. Reissued in 1998 as CDE 84386.

works. The families of these composers sometimes enlisted the aid of an outsider to organize the opuses. Once in a great while, a loved one who knew a great deal about music rose to the task. This was the case with Madeleine Dring.

The champion has to examine all the works, some of which may not have been published, try to establish dates of composition, and put them in some kind of order. This forensic exercise involves analysis of compositional styles, notepaper, ink, notes found in diaries, letters, handwriting styles, dedications, programs of world premieres, and the like.

If the composer worked on commission, it was possible for the cataloguer to follow the trail of contracts and correspondence from the organization or performer commissioning the work. Sometimes it is only the program that survives and the score is found years later, or never at all. If the works were not composed for a publisher or a particular event, the pieces may have remained for decades filed away in a desk drawer or sitting in a piano bench waiting to be discovered. Many of Madeleine Dring's works languished in this way, suffering from benign neglect until their revival by Roger Lord.

Madeleine Dring (1923-1977) composed many pieces that had traceable dates, premieres, broadcasts, and publication. Works that she wrote for the sheer joy of it often fell to the wayside, never dated. Dring's body of works includes pieces for solo piano, two pianos, small instrumental chamber ensembles, and art songs. She also wrote incidental music and songs for plays and revues throughout her nearly forty years of documentable music writing. *Cupboard Love*, an opera, *The Real Princess*, a ballet, and *The Fair Queen of*

Wu, designated as a “dance-drama” in the *New Grove*, second edition, are Dring’s longest works.²

Roger Lord, principal oboist for the London Symphony Orchestra from 1952 to the 1980s, was married to Madeleine Dring for thirty years. Although she was quite successful during her lifetime, much of Dring’s music was unpublished at the time of her death. Since 1977, Lord’s major focus has been that of a lonely soldier trying to get her unpublished music typeset, printed, recorded, and made available to interested musicians.

This paper will discuss Dring’s vocal works that have been published posthumously due to the efforts of Roger Lord. Because Dring did not date her materials, she left Lord with a special challenge as he tried to organize her works. Among his other duties, Lord had to study the scores and go through numerous letters and papers for approximation of dates of completion. When asked if Dring told him of these unpublished projects or played them for him he replied:

Oh yes! She worked mainly at the piano so you could hear what was going if you were at home. Of course I was out a great deal and that was when she preferred to work, and she would ‘choose her moment’ to play the music to me – when I wasn’t over-tired! She was always most considerate of other people. Yes, she would sing to her own accompaniment.³

² Stephen Banfield, “Madeleine Dring,” *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d ed.

³ Roger Lord, Shaftesbury, to Wanda Brister, Tucson, AZ. Letter not dated, in answer to author’s letter of November 19, 2002, answered over a period of days in January 2003. All originals of letters from Lord are in the possession of the author.

Also examined will be the life of Madeleine Dring, her musical training, her life with Roger Lord, Dring's success as a musician during her lifetime, and her musical legacy. It will maintain that upon a closer look, Dring rivals many of her contemporaries as a composer of importance. Her works deserve their place in the twentieth century performing repertoire as examples of fine music of the post-war era. Her solo song literature will be the primary focus of this study.

Lord has made his home address available to the public through compact disc liner notes and as the Manuscript Service under "Dring" in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition. These thoughtful gestures have led interested parties directly to him.

Lord has been very generous in sharing his experiences about living with Dring and the difficulties and frustrations he has experienced, being the lone promoter of her works. Although remarried many years ago, Lord has made the promotion of his former wife's works a major part of his own life and legacy.

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

*Now I have a horror of biographical notes. Although they may be true, they seem to bear no relation to me at all, whenever I look at them. Couldn't you say I came from the Moon and wish to remain a mystery?*⁴

-- Madeleine Dring

Birth and Family

On September 7, 1923, Madeleine Winefride Isabelle Dring was born at 66 Raleigh Road, in the Hornsey section of London. She was the second of two children.

Her father, Cecil John Dring (1883-1949), was an architect and a surveyor. An amateur musician who played cello and had the ability to improvise at the piano, Cecil was also known for his antics as a ventriloquist. He had worked as a stretcher carrier in "The Great War" and entertained the troops, bringing smiles into the gloom and despair of war. Entertaining and performing came easily to him and Madeleine followed his example. Mr. Dring was one-fourth French, a fact that Madeleine liked pointing out as she related to French

⁴ Madeleine Dring, London, to Lance Bowling, Lomita, California, November 3, 1976. This was near the beginning of their plans to make a recording of Dring's piano works and near the end of Dring's life. This letter is in the possession of Bowling.

composers later in her life. Her father passed away in 1949, the same year that Roger and Madeleine moved into the Dring home and the year of Madeleine's first and only publication of art songs: *Three Shakespeare Songs*.

Madeleine's mother, Winefride Isabel Smith (1891-1968), was a singer (mezzo-soprano) of Scottish descent. She sang in public occasionally. The Drings liked to have company and many of their visitors are documented in Madeleine's childhood diaries. Music making was always central to their Sunday afternoons. Mrs. Dring lived with the Lords until the time of her death in 1968.

Lord's mother passed away just a few months before Mrs. Dring. Madeleine wrote in a letter to Eugene Hemmer⁵ about the death of her mother-in-law and the required nursing home care for her father-in-law. She said: "I am not good at coping with life on so many different levels without getting completely exhausted."⁶ The next letter to Hemmer mentions the death of her own mother. Just after these tragic events, the London Symphony Orchestra was in residence in Daytona Beach, Florida. After returning from Florida she wrote and apologized: "there are countless sad things to see to and here I am trying to readjust."⁷

Madeleine's brother, Cecil, born in 1918, was five years older than Madeleine. His was "missing in action" and presumed killed in World War II.

Lord speaks about Cecil:

⁵ Eugene Hemmer was a pen friend of Dring for the last ten years of her life. He was a pianist and piano teacher from California.

⁶ Madeleine Dring, London, to Eugene Hemmer, Lomita, California, April 5, 1968. Originals of letters in the possession of Lance Bowling, Lomita, California.

⁷ Dring to Hemmer, October 15, 1968.

Cecil was in the Territorial Army (the peace-time forces) when war was declared (Sept. 1939) and so he found himself drafted . . . immediately into the British Army, and was in the British Expeditionary Force which crossed over into Europe to oppose the German Forces. He was killed before that Force was evacuated from Dunkirk, but was simply reported as 'missing' from May 29, 1940.⁸

Dring mentioned Cecil in her diary a few months after he was declared missing, reflecting the anxiety of the family:

Cecil did not go to France until after Christmas and was last seen round Elverdinge in Belgium. We are certainly not giving up hope – so many prisoners were taken . . . Even Herbert Howells . . . who knows a person 'in the know' and is himself doing that sort of work, I believe, has taken up the case.⁹

Youth and School

Madeleine was enrolled at St. Andrew's School in the Streatham section of London in what the English refer to as public school - what Americans call parochial school. She later attended La Retraite, Clapham Park. Studies of the violin and piano began in her youth and she soon realized that she had perfect pitch.

The Headmistress of her school took notice of an audition announcement in a local paper and suggested it might be something appropriate for Madeleine. It was for the Saturday morning Junior Royal College of Music. After that very important (and successful) audition as a young girl, Madeleine was pictured in the newspaper. Her scholarship was for violin, although she soon added piano

⁸ Lord to author, email of January 20, 2004.

⁹ Madeleine Dring's diary entry, October, 1940. No day is given. As with her compositions, Dring often did not give a date for her diary entries. Howells became Dring's composition teacher later that year.

and composition to her list of studies at the Royal College of Music (hereafter “RCM”).



Madeleine with her violin, 1933
(Photo provided by Roger Lord)¹⁰

Royal College of Music Junior Department

Most of the biographical notes on Dring, including some of the materials supplied by Dring herself, say that she won her scholarship to the Royal College of Music Junior Department at the age of ten. In reality, Madeleine auditioned at the age of nine and entered school on her tenth birthday, the 7th of September 1933. (Acceptance into the Junior Department of the Royal College of Music is much like acceptance into the Preparatory Department of the Juilliard School.) As a young violinist, Dring showed terrific promise.

The more involved she became with the RCM (which she referred to as “Coll” in her diaries), the less satisfied she was in other areas of her life. She commented in her diary about the girls at St. Andrew’s. At age 14, she wrote:

Mummy says I am as old as some girls of sixteen. . . . Other children (except a few at the Coll) bore me & I don’t seem happy in

¹⁰ All photographs provided by Lord except where credited otherwise.

conversation with grownups unless I'm delving into some fusty deep subject.¹¹

Dring complained about the students in her class:

- a) None of them seem musical
- b) They are horribly contented and unambitious
- c) They are very small minded¹²

She also referred to her classmates as "29 thoroughly unartistic children."¹³

At the RCM, Dring quickly became very active. She was noticed by all of her teachers for her numerous talents and small stature.

Physically, Dring was very short. Referred to as having a "hollow back,"¹⁴ Dring may have suffered from what is known today as scoliosis. She grew to be five feet two inches tall, but her hands were long and slender as though she were meant to be taller. This condition had its impact on her life, limiting some of her career choices, but it did not hinder her abilities at the piano. Her compositions, in fact, are known for their wide intervals, easily accommodated by her hands.

From the beginning of her time there, Dring was enraptured with the RCM and its faculty. Angela Bull, the Director of the Junior Department, quickly began to rely on Madeleine's many talents as she put together plays and musical evenings. Like Madeleine's father, Bull made things look easy. As a young performer, Dring never showed fear or anxiety about any task assigned her

¹¹ Ro Hancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life and Music*, Nantwich: Micropress, 2000, 10. Hancock-Child rarely dates the diary entries in her book. Dring kept the diaries from age 12-19 or 1935-41. Dring's own system of dating is spotty at best.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 4.

except in her diaries. With “Billikins,”¹⁵ Dring’s name for Bull in her diary, Dring helped to write shows, arranged pieces for the orchestra, acted parts, played the piano, and provided help in almost any capacity needed. Dring realized very early in her career that Angela Bull had helped shape her compositional philosophy. She was reminded to “write for the forces at hand” as stated below in a letter from Bull to Dring:

I doubt if we’ve got anyone who can do one difficult rhythm you’ve written for side drum. Keep in mind the material we have actually got, not professional standards. . . . So everything has to be fitted to idioms familiar to them and techniques possible to them. They can achieve perfection within their limits but not even mediocrity when they are aiming at idioms beyond their capacity and experience.¹⁶

When Dring began composing is not quite clear, but in 1967 she commented to Eugene Hemmer: “Have written music ever since I can remember. It is always associated with colour for me, each note of the octave being a different colour.”¹⁷

Roger Lord says:

[While still a student at the Junior Department of the RCM] a very youthful piece of hers was played at a competition and the adjudicator asked to speak to her professor (Leslie Fly . . .) because he (the adjudicator) was sure that the teacher/prof. had supplied/improved the harmonies. He was assured by Leslie Fly that this was not the case.¹⁸

Dring mentioned an early composition in a letter to Hemmer:

I’d forgotten about the Fantasy Sonata. I think I did most of that at 14 or 15. Yes, I did write music before, long before, I went to

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 6.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 12.

¹⁷ Dring to Hemmer, biographical notes dated 1967, enclosed in letter of November 11, 1967.

¹⁸ Lord to author, April 23, 2003.

school. And it's nothing to do with being clever. I can only assume I must have lived before and brought through the memory!¹⁹

Another milestone that took place around this time was an invitation to represent the RCM by playing *Romance*, one of her own pieces for violin. She performed on a live BBC broadcast from the RCM on March 23, 1939. Her diary goes on for twenty pages about this one experience.²⁰

The influences in Madeleine's early life at the RCM were numerous; all were faculty members with whom she came in regular contact. According to Lord, "Madeleine had a soft spot for Sir Hugh Allen,"²¹ the Director of the RCM while she was a junior student. She referred to him in her diaries as "Hudge."²²

Her piano teacher was Leslie Fly and her violin teacher was Freda Dinn, famous in England for her teaching books. Fly was essentially her first teacher of composition and gave her assignments from time to time. She wrote in her diary:

I've finished the piano piece on Mr. Fly's little theme . . . I said I hoped I'd excluded all "squishy" chords from my piece[.] He says I'm to keep off them for now. Just after he'd layed [*sic*] down the law the other week (he's done it before but those funny little chords keep slipping in), he was extemporising and played a beauty. He had to laugh and said 'You've got me doing it now.'²³

"Squishy" chords, as Dring and Fly labeled them, became one of her trademarks. Her music can sound quite traditional and yet it is constantly full of harmonic surprises, sustaining the listener's interest. Exposure to her father's improvisations at the piano from an early age influenced Dring to be experimental

¹⁹ Dring to Hemmer, December 13, 1970.

²⁰ Hancock-Child, 10.

²¹ Lord to author, November 8, 2003.

²² Hancock-Child, 6.

²³ *ibid.*, 9.

with harmonic language from the outset. Sometimes the harmonies have an “added note” feel and at others there is almost a jazz quality. Her aural palette was quite developed at a young age through exposure to her father’s improvisations and she continued to use these devices throughout her latest compositions.

Dring was at the RCM for six years as a junior student and at age sixteen enrolled as a full time student into the “regular” school. Two scholarships made it possible for her to attend.

Going to “Coll” During the War

England entered World War II just as Dring was beginning her work at the RCM as a regular student. Sir George Dyson had fought to keep the institution open. The Board of Directors was concerned about the safety of the students, while Sir George was concerned about music and the arts having their place in wartime.

Christopher Palmer has assembled an anthology of Sir George Dyson’s writings and talks on music entitled *Dyson’s Delight*. The book contains many addresses given to the students at RCM during Dring’s stay. The gravity of war comes to life in Dyson’s speech of September 1939, given at the time Dring entered the RCM as a full time student:

The war which has now descended on us may be long and ruinous, but the world will survive it, and if life as we conceive it is to be worth living at all, there must still be room in it for the things of the mind and spirit, and for the cleansing beauty of the arts. It is true that we must put first things first, and whatever task we are called upon to perform, for the preservation of our society and our social

and national ideals, we must accept it unflinchingly, and bear our share of the public burden by service without limit. But until we are called to other duties, we may and should, I think, continue to fit ourselves for that vocation we here have chosen.²⁴

Dyson continued, reminiscing about the first war, and then warned the students about ARP (Air Raid Precautions).

It was not Dyson's talk of the "preservation of society" that may have resonated with Dring. Phrases like "things of the mind and spirit" may have piqued her attention, for later in her life, Dring was to become interested in spiritual things.

Madeleine's friend and fellow student from the Junior Exhibitioners days says: "Madeleine's fortitude and humour helped us through many bad moments. There was no doubt that we were going to continue our careers, in spite of falling bombs – and having to sleep in the cellar!" Pamela Larkin lived with Madeleine and her mother for about a year "during the Blitz."²⁵

Dring's first official composition teacher was Sir Percy Buck. He is rarely mentioned in any of her biographical material. Sir Percy was the author of numerous textbooks on music theory. Dring may have been uncomfortable with some of Sir Percy's behavior. In her October 1940 diary entry, Dring speaks about Sir Percy Buck: "who in turn held your hand & patted you on the back (habits he has dropped a good deal – thank heavens)"²⁶ and that Mr. Fly is still

²⁴ Christopher Palmer, comp., *Dyson's Delight: An anthology of Sir George Dyson's writings and talks on music* (London: Thames Publishing, 1989), 48.

²⁵ Pamela Larkin, Middlesex, England to Wanda Brister, Tallahassee, Florida, February 20, 2004.

²⁶ Dring diary dated October 1940.

her “teacher by post.”²⁷ Her relationship with Leslie Fly was very stimulating for her and she would accept assignments and criticism from him very willingly.

Dring began her composition studies with Herbert Howells around 1940.

Dring’s relationship with Howells is described by Hancock-Child:

Herbert Howells, with whom she had an ongoing love-hate relationship fuelled by his continual and infuriating habit of silencing pupils and teachers in practice rooms above, below and on either side of his chosen place of work, was *Erbie*, or simply THAT MAN.²⁸

Dring’s playful nature is evident, again giving everyone in authority a nickname. When speaking about Howells, Lord, who also studied composition with him, says: “His main interests were polyphony -- so many lines going on in the music that you can lose the main thread. M.D. was a harmony person.”²⁹

“THAT MAN,” as Madeleine put it, may have been disagreeable, but later that year, he was under a kind of duress all his own. Kevin Walters, an American composition student of Howells in the early 1970s, cites this situation:

In December of 1940 the Howells house was blitzed. Completely destroyed. They lived in a town called Barnes, a suburb of London. They theorized that it had been a German bomber that needed to dump its final bombs. Howells lost everything. The family happened to be away visiting relatives.³⁰

Walters continues:

When he [Howells] came back to work at the RCM he had no place to live. Howells lived at the RCM and was given a cot in the cellar. His job was to go on the roof and look for incendiary devices after the bombing raids.³¹

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Hancock-Child, page 6.

²⁹ Lord to author, not dated, answer to November 19, 2002.

³⁰ Kevin Walters, interview by author, Rye, New York, December 30, 2002.

³¹ *ibid.*

On occasion, Dring had composition lessons with Ralph Vaughan Williams. She also studied with Gordon Jacob, who was quite gifted in orchestration. Other studies included violin with W.H. Reed, concertmaster of the London Symphony Orchestra from 1912-1935. Besides his wonderful playing, Reed was known for his friendship with Elgar and his ability to spin a story. Reed died in 1942. After Reed's death, Dring dropped the study of violin and focused more on piano and composition.

Dring studied voice with Topliss Green during this time. Green said that Dring might not be strong enough to make it as a professional singer.³² She spoke about how emotionally involved she got during her singing in a letter to Hemmer:

I spent this morning singing . . . the emotion spent singing "Ruhe Sanft" by Mozart (from an unfinished Opera "Zaide") . . . It moves me so much and one has to have the emotion but also separate from it in order to manage those long, long phrases.³³

By this account, Green may have been correct about Dring's lack of stamina required for a singing career. It does show her dramatic commitment to singing. All who knew her described her voice as having an easy long range. A look into the vocal works, mostly written for her voice, reveals this characteristic.

In addition to the applied music studies and composition, Dring studied acting and mime. Anything that involved any of the performing arts was an ideal mode of expression for her. Also visually creative, she doodled and drew

³² Hancock-Child, 4.

³³ Dring to Hemmer, October 2, 1971.

cartoons in her diaries, almost every page containing visual commentary. She also did watercolors.

The last part of Dring's stay at the RCM was quite important to her life. At age 19, she met Roger Lord in a drama class. Lord, a promising oboist, later held the Gilbert Cooper Scholarship at the RCM. He was still serving in the Royal Air Force when they met. They became friends when Lord needed an accompanist for his audition into the performing program at the RCM. This was in 1943.

Marriage and Career

The engagement of Dring and Lord was announced on October 2, 1945. They married on August 12, 1947 in Streatham, London at Church of the English Martyrs. Lord obtained a position with the BBC Midland Light Orchestra and they lived briefly in Birmingham. By 1949, Lord had secured a position with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and they moved to the Dring home in Streatham. They had one child, Jeremy, in 1950. Jeremy is an inventor.³⁴



Dring with son Jeremy and
dachshund, Non-Non

³⁴ Hancock-Child. 14.

Because of the demands on her time as a wife and mother, Madeleine became a composer like Gabriel Fauré, a master of the miniature form: piano pieces, vocal works, and chamber works.

As Dring settled into married life, she “worked as a composer writing songs, stage works and incidental music for shows and television”³⁵ including cartoons. She was at home with many media and contributed to the popular culture as well as to classical repertoire.

When Lord was out of town on LSO tours, Dring often felt burdened with loneliness. This became some of her most productive time. She said in a letter to Hemmer about Roger’s touring:

So I must dig my toes in and work. But I never get used to these tours, it makes all the difference to know someone is going to put their key in the door even if it’s very late at night.³⁶

She did not want to be stuck in music she referred to as “that cerebral, cold-blooded stuff”³⁷ and made jokes about becoming famous and then writing a parody on one of her own pieces. She said in one of her diaries:

I often think, that if I ever do make a hit with something really good and classical I’ll turn around and write a red-hot swing number, just because it’s never been done before, it would shock all the Dr’s and Mus. Bachs, and it would show all the lowbrows that I’m not so far gone after all. Besides! the pure joy of it!³⁸

³⁵ Victoria Twigg, “Madeleine Dring,” (Thesis, Trinity College, London 1982), 3.

³⁶ Dring to Hemmer, August 25th. No year is indicated.

³⁷ Dring to Hemmer, November 6, 1967. This is the first letter to Hemmer.

³⁸ Hancock-Child, 10. Dring had a general disdain for academics. She was encouraged to get a “Mus. Bach.” by Bull, but was highly discouraged by Fly. (At the RCM, there was quite a stigma attached to getting any degree that might mark one as “academic” rather than “artistic.”)

Dring might have been referred to in today's language as a willing "cross-over" composer, not a common thing at that time. She seemed to have one foot in the theatre and another in the Western art music tradition. Some post-war composers chose to publish their pieces meant for mass appeal under a pseudonym. One composer who follows this practice is Lou Hayward, a pseudonym used for popular music written by Luigi Zaninelli. Zaninelli uses his given name for publication of his more serious compositions.

Dring lamented the fact that when people discovered she could write music, she was often overlooked as a performer. She acted in various capacities from the time she was a child at the Junior Department of the RCM. As an adult, she did pantomime at Players' Theatre. A pianist friend, Ray Holder, was invited to act in one of the skits with her, and according to his account, Dring was quite talented in this art form. She also liked singing Victorian songs and acting with a group called The Kensington Gores. Here she acted with Alan Rowlands and Margaret Rubel, the drama teacher at the RCM.³⁹



Player's Theatre Pantomime
(Dring, an unknown actor, and Maurice Browning)

³⁹ Lord to author, January 2003, package of photographs, not dated.



Dring in Victorian costume



The Kensington Gores
(Dring, Rowlands, and Rubel)

Families of the London Symphony Orchestra members were rarely accommodated on tours, but Dring visited Florida for four consecutive summers (1966-1969) as documented in her letters to Hemmer. In 1967 she was photographed in what Lord describes as:

at Solano on the St John's River, the orange plantation run for about a year by Frederick Delius. The lady-owner grew day lilies (*hemerocallis*) . . . it is one of those blooms that M holds.⁴⁰



Dring at Solano Grove, Florida, 1967
(Photo provided by Alistair Fischer)

This particular trip was also described by English author J.B. Priestley in his book *Trumpets over the sea*. Priestly documented the visit to Solano Grove

⁴⁰ Lord to author, November 8, 2003.

with a photograph of Dring and a comical description of the drive. He also mentioned "Madeleine Lord" on at least three occasions. In one account he wrote about the talented wives of the LSO members and how the group could even boast of "its own composer, Madeleine Lord."⁴¹

During another stay, a photo of Dring appeared in a Daytona newspaper with a Dr. James Mason. When asked what they were speaking of, she said "Unisex – and we're both dead set against it."⁴²



Dring with Dr. James Mason in Daytona, 1969

The Last Ten Years

The youthful Dring diaries are interesting, but it is with a look into the letters to Eugene Hemmer that one sees a glimpse of the mature Madeleine and her sensibilities.

In 1967 Dring began a pen pal relationship with Eugene Hemmer, an accomplished pianist, composer, and piano teacher. That correspondence lasted until her death. Hemmer also died in 1977. What began rather formally

⁴¹ J.B. Priestley, *Trumpets over the sea: being a rambling and egotistical account of The London Symphony Orchestra's engagement at Daytona Beach, Florida, in July-August, 1967*. London, Morris and Gibb Ltd., 1968, 110.

⁴² Liz Eastman, "Chatterbox," *Daytona Beach (Florida) Evening News*, August 4, 1969.

became quite chatty and reveals a side of Dring that was undeniably witty and flirtatious. Seeing the relationship evolve through these letters is an insight into her personality.

At the beginning of their letter writing, we see that Dring did not have a particular liking for things like biographies. She often gave terse, humble, and even sarcastic answers to queries about her life and training. In the copy of her biography she sent to Hemmer, her own words are interesting to observe: "Won scholarship to the Royal College of Music on tenth birthday and two more scholarships enabling me to attend as full-time student after leaving school."⁴³ In this biography, she continued writing about her studies, not being specific about teachers or dates. It becomes obvious that she prepared this biography specifically for Hemmer. This reflects her lack of interest in self-promotion.

The letters to Hemmer exhibit a thirst for companionship with a kindred spirit. What began rather innocently and formally became more and more heartfelt with time. Comments such as:

It was most heartening to hear that one[']s music has made 'contact' -- I write pieces, they go away to the publishers, and once I have been through the proofs and got the first copy, I lose track of them and often wonder what (if anything!) is happening to them and whether people are playing them.⁴⁴

She also talked about London:

We have so little social life in London – there are too many people, too many cars, too many concerts, too much strain – and things seem to cancel each other out.⁴⁵

⁴³ Dring to Hemmer, enclosure with letter of November 11, 1967.

⁴⁴ Dring to Hemmer November 6, 1967.

⁴⁵ Dring to Hemmer February 4, 1968.

About her need to rejuvenate she wrote, "I do my damndest to get a silent patch to myself everyday. I find it difficult to go on if I don't."⁴⁶

On performance:

I am in a strange state today because I had to play and sing before a gathering last night -- lots of people packed into a very large room, so they were on top of one -- and this is torture to me. Also I played first and sang second and I should have done it the other way round. Nothing terrible happened outwardly. They all seemed to like everything -- but I feel rather jangled and fragile today and that's my own silly fault.⁴⁷

In thanking Hemmer for a surprise transatlantic telephone call, she wrote:

Most of all it touched my heart, so much that afterwards I sat in a little rocking chair just thinking and feeling warmed by what had taken place. I really don't know how much time passed.

For the rest of the day I have felt enveloped and protected and strengthened and I use these words knowing exactly what they mean because I have felt it (and that seems the only way to know anything!).⁴⁸

Dring also revealed to Hemmer her feelings about hearing her works performed:

Do you get worked-up when you listen to a public performance or broadcast of your music? I do. By the time it is over I have a wildly thumping heart and feel utterly vulnerable!⁴⁹

On writing music for herself, she said:

I am writing some more songs and piano music but the mundane things of life do get in the way. I don't know why I'm writing them really, I wish I had a better plan of action. Let's start an 'Encouragement for Drooping Composers' Club . . . one needs to be in a special state to compose and have quite a lot of inner energy for music. And it's difficult to find people of one's kind who

⁴⁶ Dring to Hemmer July 24, 1969.

⁴⁷ Dring to Hemmer November 4, 1970.

⁴⁸ Dring to Hemmer, January 4, 1971.

⁴⁹ Dring to Hemmer, January 17, 1972.

understand what a draining, intoxicating, exciting[,] infuriating, humbling business it is.⁵⁰

Dring's interest at this time was focusing in a spiritual direction. She attended meetings at the Centre for Spiritual and Psychological Studies (CSPS) in London and read books on a wide variety of topics regarding world religions, psychic phenomena, UFOs, and the like. She was invited to speak at the CSPS on several occasions. It is possible to observe her frame of mind near the time of her death. Speaking on subjects in 1975 that would be considered "New Age" in 2004, Dring was clearly ahead of her time. The subject on which she spoke was "Music and the tangible expression of man's spirit through music." She began:

Before we get going, let us admit and get out of the way the fact that there is bad music and boring music; and now we also have raucous, sizzling pseudo-music that screams forth with moronic lyrics from countless transistors, the black holes of Oxford Street boutiques, garages, etc. and it either shatters the nerves, or acts as a malignant drug that stuns thought.

All this is a kind of dross that comes into being when the channels through which we receive inspiration have become clogged. We need not dwell on the causes, we live in the midst of them.

But dross doesn't burn for long, and bad pieces of music have comparatively short lives. So let us think about and listen to some of the music that burns brightly with a steady flame, and speaks clearly and directly to our spirit and our hearts.

I believe that running through music that has stood the test of time there is a specially pure strain, like an unending golden thread, speaking some truth that is eternal, therefore this music is ageless. And I also believe that in this terrifying and extraordinary time we have the opportunity, as never before, to listen with fresh ears to this enduring and true music.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Dring to Hemmer, June 22, year not indicated.

⁵¹ Madeleine Dring, "The Role of the Arts: Music" (speech delivered at the Centre for Spiritual and Psychological Studies in London on 6 December 1975), manuscript provided by Roger Lord.

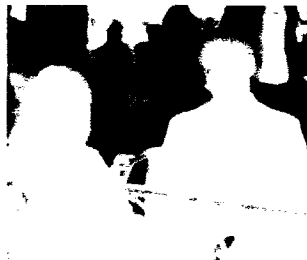
When asked about Dring's interests, Lord said:

I think M[adeleine] was psychic to some extent. A friend down the road, Doris Crouch, was a medium & they became good friends. There was a big interest in psychic things: The phenomenon of Rosemary Brown,⁵² who "received" music from famous composers of the past, wrote it down and played it at lectures; Rudolph Steiner & the Anthroposophical Society; the C.S.P.S. had lectures and discussed these sort of subjects. . . . in the main, it was something she did.⁵³

It was at one of these gatherings that Dring met another kindred spirit, Michael Armstrong, a poet and painter. Armstrong sent several poems to Dring who chose some of them for a song group. Two of the songs were complete at the time of her death, a third was roughly completed and a fourth song, the one Dring was working on at the time of her death, was completed by Lord.

Lord says about her death:

she simply collapsed and died from what the death certificate called 'interrupted developmental cerebral aneurism.' I was told it could have happened at any time, so I was lucky to be married to her for 30 years.⁵⁴



Madeleine and Roger Lord
Chantilly, France, ca. 1960

⁵² Rosemary Brown was an English woman who "received" music from composers like Beethoven in the late 1960s, early 1970s. She notated the music on paper and played it flawlessly. Those who knew Brown claimed she had never been formally trained as a musician. She was a regular guest on talk shows in Britain and the United States.

⁵³ Lord to author, answer to November 19, 2002.

⁵⁴ Lord to author, August 5, 2002.

CHAPTER 3

OVERVIEW OF COMPOSITIONS

*I think that Madeleine herself would like to be remembered for her songs and piano music, and for the pieces including oboe, which were mainly written for me to play.*⁵⁵

— Roger Lord

Madeleine Dring wrote music for a variety of media and instruments.

Since she was a fine pianist, singer, and violinist, these were all natural outlets for her creativity. Her husband, Roger Lord, was one of the world's leading oboists, and he encouraged her to write many pieces for that instrument.

Dring had success during her lifetime in publishing piano music, works for piano duo, piano teaching pieces as well as some chamber works and a small group of songs. She also wrote songs for West End revues.⁵⁶ This music often had a very short performing life and was usually not published.

Dring's playful nature showed in her compositions. Seeing herself as having a musical personality similar to Francis Poulenc,⁵⁷ she loved to throw

⁵⁵ Roger Lord, foreword to *Madeleine Dring: Her Music Her Life*, by Ro Hancock-Child (Tetbury: Micropress, 2000), v.

⁵⁶ On the West End of London, there were many musical comedy acts such as Flanders and Swann who regularly performed. Dring wrote with Swann for Laurier Lister, one of the best known entertainers of this genre.

⁵⁷ French composer Francis Poulenc was known for his "aural antics."

jokes into the music. The idea of having someone come behind her to analyze her works was very distasteful to her. Dring wanted the music to speak for itself.

Dring had the ability to write a long musical line and to keep a rhythmic drive going through an entire piece or movement, all the while supplying the listener with harmonic surprises. Some of the compositional devices used by Dring are: intentional “added notes” into an otherwise traditional chord, groups of uneven beats, rapid harmonic rhythm, and shared musical phrases used in a conversational manner. She also employed major and minor chords together and used many consecutive parallel intervals.

It is not the inclusion of any one of these elements that makes her sound unique, rather the combination of these characteristics that make her work ultimately recognizable. The music is audience-friendly and rewarding for the musicians involved.

According to Roger Lord:

In the ‘50s the critics used to dismiss any new work unless it paid obeisance to Schoenberg’s 12 note [*sic*] a-tonal system. Works like “Pierrot Lunaire” and *Wozzeck* [*sic*] of Berg, innovative and original as they were, to some extent made life difficult for the traditional, tonal composer. It always seems to be difficult with publishers, unless you “hit the headlines” in some ways, and they think there is money to be made. I don’t think Madeleine was ever disillusioned, but I think she was disappointed at the way the things were going in the composing field. She loved . . . highly sophisticated tonal music. Present day freedom to do what you like hardly existed 50 years ago. Publishers gradually got scared because of photocopying coming in, with enormous loss of income from sales of sheet music.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Lord to author, April 23, 2003.

CHAPTER 4

DRING'S RISE IN POPULARITY

*I don't like talking about music in an academic way . . .*⁵⁹

-- Madeleine Dring

Dring's addition into the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, is an indication that her works should be taken seriously. This inclusion is largely due to the efforts of Roger Lord. Stephen Banfield's article on Dring describes her music as "unpretentious and attractive" and a "combination of a frank enjoyment of vernacular idioms such as Latin American rhythms with a harmonic and melodic fastidiousness."⁶⁰

Four documents on Dring have been published in the twenty-seven years since her death. Shortly after she died, Sarah Wharton of the RCM wrote a thesis about her. Miss Wharton's work was premature, as Roger Lord was just beginning to uncover the treasure trove his wife had left. A document done by Victoria Twigg for Trinity College was completed in 1982, before much of this music was published.

Ro Hancock-Child, who had written a biography of C. Armstrong Gibbs, asked Lord for permission to write about Dring. Published in 2000 by her own

⁵⁹ Dring to Bowling, November 3, 1976.

⁶⁰ Banfield, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d ed.

company, Hancock-Child's book is a charming account of Dring's life, her likes and dislikes, her passions, and her music. This book is out of print and was never available in the United States. The limited number of copies did not make it into many of the important musical collections in Great Britain.⁶¹ The biographies sold quickly, bought by friends and people "in the know" about Dring. Although Hancock-Child had access to all the Dring documents, her book speaks in generalities about where she obtained information, making it necessary to follow up with Lord concerning primary sources.

Through her company Micropress, Hancock-Child sells some of the Dring music that has not been accepted by other publishers. The quality of the pieces that have not been published by the larger companies is quite high. According to Lord, most of the companies favor pieces that can form a cohesive recital group or are appropriate for one particular voice type. These pieces do not fall into that category.

Alistair Fisher needed a thesis topic for his degree from University of Hull and chose Dring as a focus. His paper looks closely at the Shakespeare songs and the *Night Songs*, Dring's first and final vocal works. Since Fisher's paper had to do with analysis, he was particularly interested in putting the entire catalogue of songs in order. He worked diligently with Lord to get this accomplished. Instead of giving Fisher specific years of composition, Lord

⁶¹ Search of World Cat February 12, 2004. Only two copies at the British Library and one at University of Oxford showed in this search. The author received an electronic copy of the book directly from Michael Hancock-Child.

suggested assigning many of the songs to decades. Where works and dates could be documented, Lord and Fisher assigned a specific year.

Four years ago, there were only four mentions of Madeleine Dring on the World Wide Web.⁶² Today the number of sites that have information and photographs of Dring, announcements of concerts that include her works, festivals, reviews of compositions, and advertisements for compact discs and sheet music that is available through the Internet has reached several hundred with more added each day. Of course the Internet itself has expanded exponentially in the last four years, but the mention of Dring on the Internet is a tangible way to measure the positive effects of Lord's efforts.

Although Hancock-Child's book was published by a vanity press, it received some reviews. One writer said: "She [Dring] was by no means single-talented; a singer, pianist, cartoonist (her cannily amusing line drawings decorate many pages of the book), actress and lyricist."⁶³ One review of a compact disc of several instrumental works says: "Utterly charming miniature," "an utterly delightful romp," and "effortless sense of melody."⁶⁴ A review of a composer-specific disc states: "There are not many full CDs of Dring's works although her reputation does seem to be building up."⁶⁵ Yet another review of the same disc says: "A collection of charming pieces, nostalgia-laden yet wittily penned, by this

⁶² The author originally searched "Madeleine Dring" at www.google.com on July 1, 2000. On February 11, 2004 more than 1,500 sites came up. Of these nearly one thousand were about this composer.

⁶³ Rob Barnett, <http://www.musicweb.uk.net/classrev/2000/dring.htm>, review of Hancock-Child's book, accessed July 1, 2003.

⁶⁴ <http://www.ambache.co.uk/wDring.htm>, accessed July 1, 2003.

⁶⁵ David Finch, <http://www.musicweb.uk.net/classrev/2002/Nov02/DRINGREV.htm>, review of CD, MRC Records, accessed July 1, 2003.

greatly under recorded post-war composer.”⁶⁶ An overview of her music is summarized: “Lovely, melodious and memorable; who needs gloom and doom in their listening?”⁶⁷ Several of Dring’s publishers have recently listed her works on the Internet, posting lovely photographs and biographies as well as works available through them. These biographies never mention the moon.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ <http://www.morec.demon.co.uk/page10.html>, accessed July 1, 2003.

⁶⁷ Finch review.

⁶⁸ Refer to Dring’s quote on page 5.

CHAPTER 5

THE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Piano Music

*Madeleine's music for piano is, in today's parlance, intensely user-friendly. . . . it was written by an able pianist who knew how to create the musical effects she wanted without burdening the performer with needless technical difficulties.*⁶⁹

-- Ro Hancock-Child

This document is dedicated to the songs of Madeleine Dring, but mention of her other works at this time is in order. Some of Dring's earliest success as a composer for piano came in the form of piano teaching pieces. Eugene Hemmer's original contact was written to Dring's publisher, Lengnick, after he used some of the pieces in his piano studio. Hemmer was soliciting "other works by this composer" when the correspondence began. These teaching pieces are still used in piano competitions for young pianists today. Dring wrote: "I found it very rewarding to write music that was attractive within a limited technical range."⁷⁰ This clearly illustrates Angela Bull's lasting influence.

⁶⁹ Hancock-Child, 36.

⁷⁰ Dring to Hemmer, November 11, 1967.

Dring was passionate about writing for children, sharing that “Here, for instance, people (young ones, particularly) are apt to ‘fall by the wayside’ between Grade III-IV.”⁷¹

Victoria Twigg’s thesis said: “Being a pianist herself Madeleine felt most at home on this instrument and could therefore write most fluently for it. She could express herself very clearly.”⁷² As Lord said, “MD was a harmony person,” therefore the piano was her perfect medium.

“Valse Française” is reminiscent of solo piano works of Erik Satie (*Gymnopédies*) for its barren texture and almost melancholy mood. This piece was published in its solo piano form by Cambria after Dring’s death. Cambria is owned by one of Hemmer’s former students, Lance Bowling, who, along with Leigh Kaplan, has done what he could to promote Dring in the United States. Kaplan made a recording of piano works in 1980. Dring was included in the initial plans and was delighted by the idea:

Thank you for all the exciting news and I am thrilled to think I may be put on record. It has cheered me up a lot. Now I am hu[s]tling fast through a legible copy of my 2-piano Nostalgic Waltz which I call “Waltz Francaise.” I hope to get it xeroxed speedily and then I’ll air mail you two copies.

I wrote it some time ago and then put it in an ivory-tower until I felt an understanding sort of person would find some use for it!

Well, its [*sic*] operation Hemmer and Kaplan. So I’ll get on with it.⁷³

Dring’s “American Dance,” also published by Cambria, is a chromatic keyboard romp with many sections that keep developing its melodic ideas over

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² Twigg, 7.

⁷³ Dring to Hemmer, September 14, 1976.

the cleverest of harmonizations. “Red Glory” was written in America in Dring’s red color, C major.⁷⁴ Leigh Kaplan captured the spirit of the piece in this recording. It made its way into a group called *Colour Suite*. The first piece in the suite, entitled “Pink Minor,” is reminiscent of Henry Mancini’s main theme from the “Pink Panther” films (Example 5.1). Both pieces are the same vintage; Mancini’s tune “hit the charts” in 1964, and Dring had published her piece with Arcadia in 1963. This was the kind of light music that was in vogue at the time. It would be fascinating to investigate Mancini’s perception of pitch and color. Mancini was born in 1924, about six months after Dring. One can deduce that their musical exposure as it relates to popular culture was quite similar.

Example 5.1 “Pink Minor” from *Colour Suite* mm. 1-8
(Provided by Lance Bowling. Fingerings are those of Leigh Kaplan.)



In an interview with Marian McPartland, Mancini described “Pink Panther” as a “minor blues.” He said that the piece “paints a picture. How *else* would one

⁷⁴ In her first biography sent to Hemmer on November 11, 1967, she mentions notes and keys being associated with color for her.

portray a pink panther?” Mancini chose to perform this piece in E Minor.⁷⁵ It is notable that Mancini could have easily been in England during 1962-63, collaborating with Peter Sellers on the film score and its needs and could have heard or purchased the Dring compositions.

Dring’s *Piano Sonata*, recorded by Ray Holder, has an extended harmonic color palette. The piece seems to meander a bit, but always manages to come back toward a logical but unpredictable conclusion.

Dring’s music for piano has been compared to Gershwin⁷⁶ and has also been called “American” in flavor. Dring came to America several times later in her life, and certainly had access to American music; but if we refer to it as American, we must include “the Americas” instead of limiting its characteristics to the United States. The rhythms used often involve mixed meters. One of her favorite time signatures was 5/8 with three eighths barred plus a quarter. This was the rhythm of her name: Ma-de-leine Dring.

Publishers of her piano works in her own lifetime included Lengnick, Oxford University Press, Mozart Edition, Heinrichson, Peters, Inter Art, and Weinberger. Cambria began printing her music in the United States just after her death, or around 1980.

Ray Holder, formerly of a professional piano duo that performed extensively in England in the 1950s and 1960s, spoke of Madeleine’s music. He and his piano partner, Audrey Hayward, had found a duo by Dring entitled *Three*

⁷⁵ Henry Mancini, “Piano Jazz: With Guest Henry Mancini,” interview by Marian McPartland, National Public Radio, March 14, 1985, CD Jazz Alliance, Inc., TJA-12024.

⁷⁶ Banfield, *New Grove*, 2d ed.

Fantastic Variations on Lilliburlero (Lengnick 1948) and they began to program it in their concerts. They soon added *Tarantelle* (Oxford University Press 1948) to their repertoire. Later they met Madeleine through the mime instructor at the RCM, Margaret Rubel, and became friends. Besides recording Dring's *Piano Sonata*, Holder has accompanied a singer in a variety of her songs on compact disc.

Holder, an Associate of the RCM, says that on occasion he would go to the Lord home to find Madeleine at the piano composing. Madeleine would have him read piano duets with her or sing to his accompaniment. She adored singing with him because he could sightread well and, like Dring, had large hands, managing her signature tenths in the left hand parts.⁷⁷ Holder says that piano duo music was popular in the 1950s and duo teams often included a Dring selection to represent music of the twentieth century.

Holder, who is a champion of Dring as well as other composers he feels are "underrated" (such as Ernst von Dohnányi), regularly programs works to feature his favorite composers.

Instrumental Ensembles

*Dring's Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano is one of the best pieces of its kind in the entire repertoire.*⁷⁸

-- William Bennett

⁷⁷ Ray Holder, Alicante, Spain, to Wanda Brister, Tallahassee, Florida, January 4, 2004, by cassette tape.

⁷⁸ William Bennett, interview by author, Thomasville, Georgia, 7 February 2004.

Dring's music for instrumental ensemble often includes the oboe. She regularly heard this instrument played with beautiful artistry by her husband at home and in the concerts by the LSO. Quite naturally, she thought of Roger and the oboe when a "soprano" voice was called for.

William Bennett, the world-renowned flutist, and his accompanist, Clifford Benson, regularly play "WIB Waltz," transcribed for Bennett by Dring from an oboe suite. Bennett describes it as a crowd-pleaser he often uses to end a recital. A recent recording of the work given to the author was from a live concert in Vienna, implying that this music is suitable to the most discriminating audiences. He also included the work on his compact disc entitled *Carmen Fantasy: Encore Pieces*.⁷⁹

Dring's *Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano* was commissioned by Musica da Camera. It was conceived as a companion piece to the music of the Baroque period for the same combination of instruments.⁸⁰ The world premiere was on February 17, 1968, and included the members of Musica da Camera: Harold Clarke, principal flute of the Royal Opera House Orchestra; Roger Lord; and Hubert Dawkes, piano. The piece was featured in the 1968 Daytona International Chamber Music Festival. The American premiere featured Peter Lloyd, flutist, Roger Lord, oboist, and André Previn at the piano (Previn was

⁷⁹ <http://www.flute4u.com/CarmanFantasy.html>. Accessed February 10, 2004.

⁸⁰ Roger Lord, biographical notes on Dring in compact disc for *Joseph Robinson: Principal Oboe New York Philharmonic*, New York Legends, Cala 1998.

principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra at the time). Dring's trio has grown to be one of her most popular works.

Bennett, then a flutist in the London Symphony Orchestra and on tour in Daytona said that he was asked to play a solo Bach piece on the same program. He says he would have preferred to play the Dring. He "wanted to play with Roger! I admired his playing so much. Besides, the piece is *fun!*"⁸¹ Bennett refers to this music as "quite likable light music."⁸²

Dring's works involving instrumental ensemble are as follows:⁸³

Dance in C for piano and strings; *Minuet in F* for 2 violins, viola, cello and bass; *Tango* for cello and string orchestra with piano (for Lance Bowen, dated January 1948); *Festival Scherzo* for solo piano and string orchestra (dated 1951); *Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano* (for Musica da Camera, January 1968, published by Weinberger in 1970); and *Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Harpsichord* (for Athenaeum Ensemble, 1971-72, published in 1986 by Nova). A "complete" list is not available as one can never be sure if Lord has managed to find it all.

Music for flute and piano includes: *Three pieces*: "WIB Waltz," "Tango," and "Sarabande," originally written for oboe and piano. Lord edited and published them in 1983 with Cambria.

Harmonica and piano was one of the more unusual combinations for Dring. Her *Harmonica Suite* was published in 1984 by Nova. For treble recorder

⁸¹ Bennett interview.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ Hancock-Child, 72-73.

she wrote *Six Pieces*. Hancock-Child's works list designates them as "easy" and published by Lengnick.

For oboe and piano, there was the *Italian Dance*, published in 1960 by Weinberger, and the *Polka* published in 1962 by Arcadia. *Polka*, *Waltz*, *Tango*, and *Sarabande*, were all published by Cambria in 1983. The *Three-piece Suite*, originally conceived for harmonica, was reworked by Roger Lord and published in 1984 by Nova. From the *Harmonica Suite* comes "Danza Gaya," published by Mozart Edition.

A piece for Viola and Piano written in May 1948 is entitled *Idyll*.

Some of Dring's earliest pieces were for Violin and Piano and had simplistic titles such as *Piece in D 3/4*, *Piece in C*, *Piece in D 6/8*, *Sonata in B Minor in 1 Movement*, *Reverie*, *Allegretto*, *Boldly - B Minor*, *Lightly - D*. Some of her pieces were dated as early as 1937: *In Happy Mood*, from 1938: *Impromptu*, and from 1939: *Romance*. *Country Dance* is not dated. The *Romance* was the piece she was featured playing on the BBC in that same year.⁸⁴

The disparity between dates of composition, premiere, and publication is often quite a long period of time. Perhaps this is one of the things that Dring had on her list of things to do in her senior years, after retirement, if a composer ever retires. Because her life was cut short, the burden fell on the shoulders of Roger Lord.

⁸⁴ Hancock-Child's book is the source for the earlier works. Many are found in *New Grove*, 2d ed.

CHAPTER 6

VOCAL MUSIC

[Madeleine Dring is] *one of the best unknown, unrecognized English songwriters.*⁸⁵

-- Robert Tear

Herbert Howells and Ralph Vaughan Williams, Madeleine's composition teachers, were fine songwriters. Howells found his voice for songwriting in the poetry of Walter de la Mare. Robert Louis Stevenson and A.E. Housman suited Vaughan Williams very well. Another student of Howells, Kevin Walters, says Howells encouraged his students to look for a poet whose works might appeal for purposes of musical expression.⁸⁶

Dring was "ambivalent about poetry 'per se.' She would set poems that attracted her – mainly love poems."⁸⁷ Many of the poems Dring selected were set by a host of other English composers. This did not intimidate her at all. Like fine songwriters before her, she set the words melodically and often illustrated aspects of the texts within the accompaniment. Her experience as an actress may have played a large part in her ability to pick poetry that worked well in the song form.

⁸⁵ Lord, CDE 84386, Robert Tear, Tenor is the singing artist on this compact disc.

⁸⁶ Walters interview.

⁸⁷ Lord to author, answer to November 19, 2002 letter.

Dring's art songs span the time period of approximately 1943 through her death in 1977. Most of the songs were not dated. Leslie Fly had encouraged Dring to date things. "You should always write your name and the date on your manuscripts because if you don't, anyone can pinch it."⁸⁸ Dring kept diaries through her nineteenth year (1943) and Lord believes she destroyed her more mature diaries. He says: "[she] would have destroyed the early ones too, if I hadn't asked her to keep them for me to read."⁸⁹ Thanks to the preserved letters from Dring to Hemmer there is evidence of Dring's activities during the last ten years of her life.

Dring's perception of time was very fluid. As an adult, Dring came to embrace belief in reincarnation. Even as a young girl, she had begun the practice of leaving out dates in diary entries except in the most general sense, the month and year. Some of her letters to Hemmer have undesignated years, making them difficult to pinpoint. Occasionally we are able to connect a comment in a letter to Hemmer directly to a musical event. "I have just finished setting five poems by the Elizabethan poet, Robert Herrick."⁹⁰ This is in a biography, included with a letter to Hemmer dated November 11, 1967.

Had Dring only written songs, she would have deserved a place in music history. One must remember that Henri Duparc has only sixteen songs to his credit and singers throughout the world revere his composing genius. At the time of her death, only four of Dring's songs had been published. Her *Three*

⁸⁸ Hancock-Child, 53, quoting Dring's diary.

⁸⁹ Lord to author, Email dated January 20, 2004.

⁹⁰ Dring to Hemmer, biography included with letter of November 11, 1967.

Shakespeare Songs were published by Lengnick in 1949 and a single sheet, "Thank you Lord," which, according to Lord was "messed about with"⁹¹ was published by Keith Prowse and Co. Ltd. in 1953. According to Alistair Fisher:

Dring was quite upset by the editorial simplification that Prowse had undertaken in order to 'commercialize' the song. This was a practice common to publishers of sheet music 'parlour songs' in the post war years, before the emergence of mass market recorded media. Thus, what was to become Dring's fourth and last song to be published in her lifetime, and now out of print, does her a gross injustice.⁹²

Dring did not dedicate the songs to singers, friends, or acquaintances. This absence of dedicatees shows us that Dring was not working with any limitations in mind but her own. She also did not specify things like tempo or dynamics but on occasion. As she says in a letter to Hemmer:

Here's "[D]anza Gaya" for 2 pianos. I haven't put a metronome indication (always enough to bring me out in a rash!), it's quite a romantic piece (surprize, surprize [*sic*]), and can be played with a slightly lazy feel or a little faster. Anyway, the tune should sing.⁹³

With her affinity for color as it related to notes in the scale, it is interesting that Roger Lord had several of the songs transposed. He did this with the idea of making the songs available to singers of various voice types, rather than only those with Madeleine's exact range. From looking at the pieces and their original keys, one can discern that she may have been a lyric coloratura, a soprano with an extended upper range. Lord says: "She had a light but wide-ranging voice. This becomes a problem in some early songs . . . and the main reason for their

⁹¹ Lord to author, April 26, 2001.

⁹² Fisher, 7.

⁹³ Dring to Hemmer. Letter dated Sept 16th. No year is indicated.

not being published yet.”⁹⁴ About the songs written later he says, “Madeleine watched her vocal line much more carefully and her songs became highly singable, all part of the learning process!”⁹⁵

“Madeleine’s tendency . . . to think that all singers had perfect pitch (as she did) and very wide vocal ranges . . . the ability to pitch notes very easily meant that she wrote passages, which are very difficult.”⁹⁶

Dring’s songs share some commonalities: all songs are in English and all are immediately understandable texts. Although she used many old texts of poets such as Shakespeare, Herrick, and Dryden, she also set more contemporary poets such as John Betjeman and her friends, D.F. Aiken, Joseph Ellison, and Michael Armstrong. The song texts chosen by Dring are excellent vehicles for teaching song interpretation to young singers. The songs are rewarding both musically and dramatically and students respond positively to this literature.

Many of the songs exhibit the need for a wide variety of vocal color. Almost without exception, the songs demand a fine pianist.

Roger Lord had seven volumes of songs processed between 1977 and 1999. Chronologically, the first book was the *Betjeman Songs*, a group of five, published by Josef Weinberger in 1980. These songs have been out of print for the last four years. They contain Dring’s most often-recorded and perhaps her most often-performed song: “Song of the Nightclub Proprietress.”

⁹⁴ Lord to author, answer to November 19, 2002.

⁹⁵ Lord to author, April 26, 2001.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

Thirty-three of Dring's songs are available from Thames/Elkin Publication. These songs are all of the highest quality. The first volume was printed in 1992 and Volume Six was released in 1999. Lord worked directly with the publisher on grouping cohesive sets for performance purposes. Sometimes Lord grouped the songs by poet as with the *Seven Shakespeare Songs* (Volume One), *Dedications: five poems by Robert Herrick* (Volume Two), and the *Four Night Songs* (Volume Three), with texts of Michael Armstrong. When Dring first began composing, it was not uncommon to have a song published as a separate entry in a publication catalogue. The songs in volumes four, five and six feature a variety of poets. Volume Five: *Love and Time* is thematically and motivically connected. Dring composed only collections in the last decade of her life, including" *Love and Time* (1970s⁹⁷), *Five Betjeman Songs* (1976), and *Four Night Songs* (1976-77).

Alistair Fisher has worked directly with Lord in typesetting an additional twelve songs. Some of these pieces are available through Micropress, the company owned by Ro Hancock-Child and her husband, Michael Hancock-Child. Others are available directly from Lord.

There are thirty-eight songs art songs readily available at this time. Lord has additional manuscripts worthy of publication with some modification. For purposes of this study, the songs that are commercially available in the United

⁹⁷ In a July 27, 1969 letter to Hemmer, Dring refers to writing songs that are making her lose sleep. She never mentions the work by name, but these are the most harmonically complex of her songs. Her other songs of the 1970s can be dated accurately.

States, those published by Joseph Weinberger and Thames/Elkin Publication will be examined. The songs will be discussed in order of publication.

Five Betjeman Songs

Lyrics by Sir John Betjeman⁹⁸

High Voice and Piano

Published by Joseph Weinberger, Ltd.

Composed 1976, Published 1980

*the Five Betjeman Songs, classic encapsulations of the poet's observations of the British and their surroundings serve as a prime memorial to her personality and his.*⁹⁹

-- Stephen Banfield

"A Bay in Anglesey" is a song about a seaside town and observation of tide coming in. The song has a sleepy introduction marked "Lazily" that moves toward the first vocal entrance, "The sleepy sound of a teatime tide." There is perpetual motion in the piano accompaniment which illustrates water, shells, and seaweed. It becomes more chromatic as the piece evolves (Example 6.2). As the poetry goes on to describe the neighboring town, the key returns to "white notes." When Dring is illustrating the smells of seaweed, she opts for chromaticism again (Example 6.3). As the tide is coming in, the key resolves back to the original key of C major (Example 6.4). This song is not very demanding for the singer. It is a legato piece at a moderate tempo and the range

⁹⁸ Sir John Betjeman (1906-1984) was knighted in 1969, named Poet Laureate of England in 1972.

⁹⁹ Banfield, *New Grove*, 2d ed.

is limited. The major challenge in this piece is keeping the flow in what is a rather static vocal line.

Example 6.1 "A Bay in Anglesey" mm. 1-3

Lazily ♩ = 76 approx.

Musical score for measures 1-3 of "A Bay in Anglesey". The score is in common time (C) and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest in measure 1, followed by the lyrics "The sleep - y sound of a" in measures 2 and 3. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and a *simile* marking.

Example 6.2 "A Bay in Anglesey" mm. 14-19

Musical score for measures 14-19 of "A Bay in Anglesey". The score is in common time (C) and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest in measure 14, followed by the lyrics "The wa - ter, en - larg - ing shells and sand, Grows green - er em - er - ald" in measures 15-19. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano).

Example 6.3 “A Bay in Anglesey” mm. 42-47

Far to the east - ward, ov - er there,

Snow - don ri - ses in pearl - grey air. Mul - ti - ple

Example 6.4 “A Bay in Anglesey” mm. 60-63

p

pp

The second song in the volume, “Song of the Nightclub Proprietress” has an immediately recognizable jazz-like introduction. The triplet and dotted figures do not indicate the exhaustion or depression of the woman in the poetry. The coloration of the scale changes from a blues minor to major back to minor. The last line states that she is “tight,” or drunk. The jazz rhythms illustrate her lack of

surefootedness, literally and figuratively (Example 6.5). The rhythms are dotted and rhythmic integrity without a feeling of bounce is required.

Two words unfamiliar to many Americans should be clarified. “Kummel on the handle of the door” refers to a German liqueur that is very sweet and sticky. “A box of baby ‘pollies” makes reference to small bottles of Apollinaris Water. It was “a fashionable bottled thirst-quencher in the 1920s, in upper-class drinking establishments. ‘Polly is the diminutive. Probably non-alcoholic and good for dyspepsia”¹⁰⁰ (heartburn).

Example 6.5 “Song of the Nightclub Proprietress” mm. 1-6

Freely ♩ = 80 approx.

f

mp

I walked in - to the night-club in the

ten.

mp

“Business Girls” is a wonderful song depicting the lives that are lived in an unvarying routine. Betjeman has captured the sense of melancholy that

¹⁰⁰ Lord to author, e-mail of February 24, 2004.

overcomes women who recognize they may remain single forever. We hear the perpetual motion in the piano part, this time illustrating the smoke coming from the stacks on an autumn morning (Example 6.6).

This song is full of descriptions of women running their baths and trains churning through town. Motion slows down to quarter note accompaniment as Betjeman says “Rest you there, poor unbelov’d ones” (Example 6.7). When the ladies have to leave and go into the grind of work and routine, the motion begins again, this time the trolley cars delivering them to work (Example 6.8). The Camden Town mentioned in the song is important to song literature history. It was there that French poet Paul Verlaine penned his beautiful poem, “*Il pleure dans mon cœur*.” We can almost imagine the tears in the hearts of the ladies there and the gray, damp weather for which England is so famous.

This piece requires an evenness of scale in the vocal line especially due to its large intervals on unaccented beats (Example 6.7).

Example 6.6 “Business Girls” mm. 1-2

Allegretto con moto ♩ = 80 (approx.)

mf

Con ped.

Example 6.7 "Business Girls" mm. 23-24

poco più lento
p
Rest you there, poor un - be - lov'd ones Lap your lone - li - ness in__ heat.

p poco più lento

Example 6.8 "Business Girls" mm. 27-30

a tempo
street!

p a tempo *rit.*

pp *gva* *ppp*

"Undenominational" is a musical portrait of a zealous reverend rattling off phrases familiar to the ear, but not necessarily meaningful to the individual. The congregant is halfway listening, tuning in and then tuning out. Dring portrays the piety of the speaker with dotted rhythms in the voice part and solid quarters in the accompaniment (Example 6.9).

Although she had studied with Howells and Vaughan Williams, both of whom were quite successful in writing sacred songs, Dring never chose to express herself in this way. She also avoided the opportunity to quote fragments of hymn tunes mentioned in this song (Example 6.10) as someone like Charles Ives could not have resisted.

Vocal demands include extremely clear diction because of the dotted rhythms. This song requires more “vocal presence,” or more of a commanding tone than the other songs in the set. The last phrase, “glory in my soul,” should be sung as though the singer has achieved that level of spiritual bliss.

Example 6.9 “Undenominational” mm. 1-5

Declamatory, with conviction $\text{♩} = 72$ approx.

Un - de - nom - i - nat - tion - al But still the church of God He stood in his con -

Example 6.10 “Undenominational” mm. 17-21

a tempo più moto

“Glo - ry”, “Gos - pel”, “Rus - sell Place,” “Wrest - ling Ja - cob,” “Rock,”; “Saf - fron Wal - den,”

For “Upper Lambourne,” a piece about a place in the country where horses and racing are a big tradition, Dring chose 5/8 time (Example 6.11) with an occasional extra beat. Coincidentally, Betjeman mentions a Cararra headstone “where in nineteen twenty-three” (the year of Dring’s birth) “He who trained a hundred winners Paid the final Entrance Fee.”

The piece implies Lydian mode, with a raised fourth most of the time (Example 6.11). Unusual for Dring, she keeps all four verses of this song in the same key, but she modifies the last verse, putting a coda with optional high notes at the end.

This song is good for teaching 5/8 time, mixed meters, and altered scale tones. The song text is in a comfortable range for easy articulation.

Even though the cycle is designated for high voice, it is accessible to medium high voices. All the songs in the cycle are appropriate for women and men, with the exception of “The Song of the Nightclub Proprietress.” Although this song was included in the 1982 recording of Robert Tear, it is more appropriately sung by women. One review on the Internet says of the other Betjeman songs, “the other four songs are nearly as good . . . yes she [Dring] could be quite deep, on occasion even sombre.”¹⁰¹ “Song of the Nightclub Proprietress,” has an asterisk behind the title of the table of contents, stating: “If preferred, this song may be sung last.” Although they were conceived as song sets, since Dring did not oversee their order, the artist may have this freedom with any of the song sets. Louise Urban reviewed the cycle not long after its

¹⁰¹ <http://www.musicweb.uk.net/classrev/2002/Nov02DRINGREV.htm>, accessed July 1, 2003.

release for *The American Music Teacher*. “They are gentle songs . . . the music is well crafted and accessible to the singer looking for something a little different and not too difficult.” Urban suggests that “Nightclub Proprietress” would be a strong ending.¹⁰²

Example 6.11 “Upper Lambourne” mm. 1-4

Con moto *Piacevole* ♩ = 184 approx.

Example 6.12 “Upper Lambourne” mm.5-9

Up—the ash-tree climbs the i-vy, Up—the i-vy climbs the sun, With— a twen-ty-

¹⁰² Louise Urban, “Reviews: Vocal,” *The American Music Teacher*, June July 1982, 36.

Thames Volume One
Seven Shakespeare Songs

Medium Voice and Piano

Written ca. 1944-1960s, Published 1992

Volume One includes a reprint of the original *Three Shakespeare Songs* that were written around 1944 and published in 1949 by Lengnick. Lord says: “I don’t think that Madeleine tried to get any more songs published by Lengnick after Bernard de Nevers retired.”¹⁰³ Dring’s songs rival the settings of composers such as Roger Quilter and Peter Warlock in their originality and Dring’s careful attention to word setting. The first three songs discussed will be the original trilogy.

“Under the Greenwood Tree” has a very energetic introduction with the piano quickly moving to several different keys: C major to A major to F-sharp major to E-flat major, with each chord changing after one beat. It settles in C major as the singer enters, but the key is not stable for very long (Example 6.13). Here there is quick harmonic rhythm coupled with mixed meter. Another element present in this song is a feeling of perpetual motion in the piano part (Example 6.14).

¹⁰³ Lord to author, answer of November 19, 2002. Not dated.

Example 6.13 "Under the Greenwood Tree" mm. 1-4

Allegro ritmico

f with vigour *mp*

f *p*

Un - der the green-wood tree

mf *p*

Example 6.14 "Under the Greenwood Tree" mm. 8-9

tune his mer-ry note un - - to the sweet birds throat And

This song is ideal for male or female and is published in a key accessible to all medium high and medium low voices.

"Come Away Death" begins unaccompanied (unusual for Dring) and has one of the more sparse accompaniments. The pianist must still be a quick reader of chromaticism to play this piece well. The song lies in the middle of the

voice, making it quite possible to recite the text with clear musical expression. Although the text is from the male perspective, it is too beautiful a setting to be denied to female singers.

The first interlude wanders to an unexpected place melodically and almost leaves the listener hanging, as though going up a set of stairs to find nothing (Example 6.15.) She also uses a chromatic churning pattern in the accompaniment to illustrate the singer's line "A thousand, thousand sighs to save." (See Example 6.16.)

Example 6.15 "Come Away Death" mm. 9-12



Example 6.16 "Come Away Death" mm. 32-33



"Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind" has another of Dring's introductions with an unexpected chord progression. She repeats it with some slight voicing

modifications (Example 6.17). The wind is depicted in the accompaniment of the song, always chromatic (Example 6.18).

This song was transposed down from Dring's original into a key that fits most voices by Roger Lord.

The set of three songs makes a fine recital group and was performed by Mr. Ifor Evans who sang it with Dring at the piano at the RCM before its publication.¹⁰⁴

Example 6.17 "Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind" mm. 1-2



Example 6.18 "Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind" mm. 5-6

¹⁰⁴ Fisher, 23.

“The Cuckoo” is a setting of “When Daisies Pied,” a poem set by numerous other British song composers. Lord has elected to transpose it down a minor third from Dring’s original key to allow accessibility to more singers. The figures used in the piano to depict the cuckoo throughout the piece are on the beat (Example 6.19). When the singer derides the cuckolded man, Dring places the “cuckoos” in the vocal part on different beats, making it difficult to predict the next entrance of the word (Example 6.20). A long, chromatic melisma at the end of the song requires a flexible voice (Example 6.21). The text is most appropriate for a female singer. The mixture of A-natural in the bass with the A-flat in the melody shows Dring’s joy in writing “wrong notes” into the part, letting even an untrained ear hear the musical joke (Example 6.19). The dissonance illustrates the uneasiness felt by the cuckolded man. The true tonality of the piece is finally revealed when the singer enters.

Example 6.19 “The Cuckoo” mm. 1-2

The musical score for "The Cuckoo" mm. 1-2 is presented in 6/8 time. The tempo is marked "Allegretto". The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score consists of a vocal line (soprano) and a piano accompaniment (treble and bass staves). The vocal line begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note G4, and then a half note A4. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords. The first measure of the piano part has a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The second measure has a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte). The third measure has a dynamic marking of *mf* and a "loco" marking. The fourth measure has a dynamic marking of *mf* and a "loco" marking. The score ends with a final chord in the piano part.

Example 6.20 “The Cuckoo” mm. 34-35

p *mp* *mf*

Cuc - koo, Cuc - koo, Cuc - koo!

Example 6.21 “The Cuckoo” mm. 36-39

rit. *a tempo*

word of fear, Un pleas

rit. *a tempo*

ing to a

Under the supervision of Roger Lord, “It Was a Lover” has been transposed down a minor third from its original key.

With one of Dring’s more tame piano parts, this song has harmonic surprises along the way. It contains larger intervals (Example 6.22) than most of

the other songs and also has optional higher notes written in (Example 6.23). Other stylistic traits include mixed meters (Example 6.24), chromaticism (6.25), and accessible text - many of Dring's favorite devices - are found in this song as well. It was begun at the RCM but was reworked by Dring at a later time.¹⁰⁵

A medium voice, male or female, with upper and lower extension is suitable for this song. Ability to sing large intervals in tune is very important.

Example 6.22 "It Was a Lover" mm. 9-11

Example 6.23 "It Was a Lover" mm. 67-70

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 28.

Example 6.24 "It Was a Lover" mm. 25-28

sweet lo ————— vers love the Spring.

Example 6.25 "It Was a Lover" mm. 21-24

(cresc.)
sing hey ding a ding ding! Sweet lo ————— vers

cresc.

Although the poem has been set to music by many composers, Dring's version of "Take o Take those Lips Away" is fresh. The 6/8 rhythm has a barcarole feel, as though the person who is mourning the beloved is rocking to console himself. This pain reaches its height at the B section of the song where the vocal line clashes dissonantly with the accompaniment (Example 6.26).

Example 6.26 "Take o Take those Lips Away" mm. 13-16

The musical score for "Take o Take those Lips Away" (mm. 13-16) is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The vocal line is on a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is on two staves. The lyrics are: "Take O take those lips a - way". The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score shows a melodic line for the voice and a supporting harmonic line for the piano.

This is a good song for teaching independence from the piano line. The voice is not doubled in the most obvious way, but is supported in harmonies that have the "added note" effect. The singer must be able to trill to sing this song.

This song is appropriate for males and females of medium high voices with a lower extension. The song is dated *circa* 1960s by Lord and Fisher.

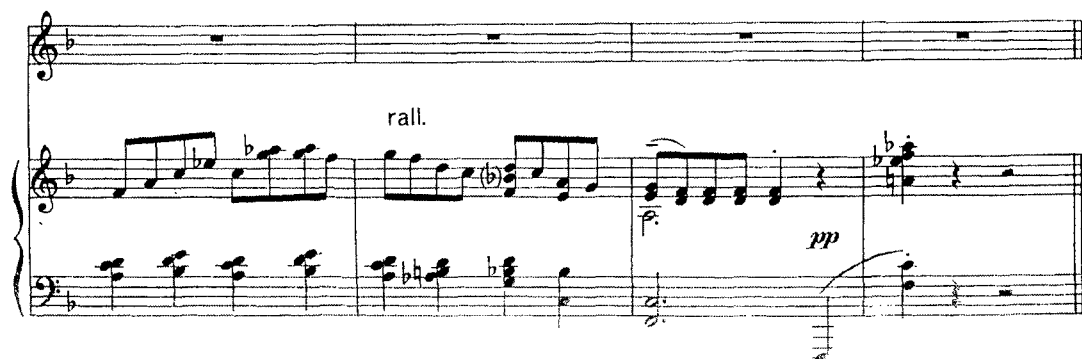
In "Crabbed Age and Youth" Dring depicts crabbiness very well. She uses the outline of a flatted seventh chord for the first melodic line, 1 3 5 flatted 7 5 (Example 6.27). This piece, attributed to the 1960s, has a jazz feel. The postlude of this piece is particularly "sassy," praising youth (Example 6.28).

Suitable for men and women, the piece goes to the upper middle range often, but the tessitura makes it accessible for most voice types. This is a great song with which to end a recital or English language group.

Example 6.27 "Crabbed Age and Youth" mm. 1-2
Allegro non troppo



Example 6.28 "Crabbed Age and Youth" mm. 42-46



A charming volume of songs, they may be performed together or in part.
The older songs and the newer additions each make a respectable song group.

Thames Volume Two

Dedications: Five Poems by Robert Herrick

Medium High Voice and Piano

Written 1967, Published 1992

*Towards the end, she [Dring] was proud of the Herrick Songs & the
Betjeman.¹⁰⁶*

-- Roger Lord

¹⁰⁶ Lord letter to author, answer to November 19, 2002 questions.

As suggested by the title, each of the songs is dedicated to a different person or thing. The poetry is appropriate for male and female with the exception of song number five, "To Phillis," which is more suitable for men.

The songs are said to be for medium high voices, but they are really more comfortable for high voices. The tessitura is too high for most people who are otherwise comfortable in medium high keys. "Apart from the early Shakespeare settings, '*Dedications*' is the first suite of songs that Dring composed."¹⁰⁷

"To Daffodils," in 12/8 and marked *Andantino grazioso*, is gracious in every way. Although there are no sharps or flats in the key signature, the feeling is of D Minor/D Major throughout. Dring continues to play with the third throughout the song, going from major to minor and back.

The piano part is one of Dring's easier accompaniments. There is a "pull" in the inner voice of the right hand near the beginning that returns from time to time (Example 6.29).

The text, about the brevity of life, is quite poignant considering Dring's own early departure. This is another wonderful song which helps a student with interpretive issues.

¹⁰⁷ Fisher, 11.

Example 6.29 “To Daffodils” mm. 1-6

Andantino grazioso

mp

mp

mp

mp

Fair Daf - fo - dils, we weep to see you haste a - way so soon: As

“To the Virgins – to Make Much of Time,” is based on the very famous poem, “Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May.” Dring has set up the movement of time in the accompaniment. Time sounds as though it is racing by (Example 6.30).¹⁰⁸ The B section of this song is indicated with a double bar and key change. The bridge to the C section is quite brutal (and brilliant) in the piano part, going through many chromatic changes at rapid succession (Example 6.31). It is one of the most manic examples of Dring’s writing. After spending three measures in the new key of C-sharp Major, we are brought through another bridge to our original key, D Major. The sentiment in this song makes it extremely appropriate for mature singers.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* Fisher points out that “simple rhythmic ostinato motifs highly evocative of an Elizabethan tabor rhythm” are present in the song.

Example 6.30 "To the Virgins – to Make Much of Time" mm. 1-6
Allegro moderato e spiritoso

Ga-ther ye rose-buds

while ye may, Old Time is still a fly-ing: And

Example 6.31 "To the Virgins – to Make Much of Time" mm. 19-22

set-ting.

ten.

That age is best which

One of the cleverest things in the word setting is the word “forever,” where Dring creates a long melisma with a *poco ritardando* before a breath and the word “tarry.” (See Example 6.32.)

Example 6.32 “To the Virgins – to Make Much of Time” mm. 36-41

The musical score for Example 6.32, "To the Virgins – to Make Much of Time" mm. 36-41, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "e ver tar - ry you may for e". The piano part includes markings for *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *p* (piano). The second system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "e ver tar - ry". The piano part includes markings for *poco rit.* (poco ritardando) and *p* (piano). The score shows a melisma on the word "forever" (e ver tar - ry) with a long note and a breath mark, followed by "you may for e".

“To the Willow Tree” uses one of Dring’s favorite time signatures; 5/8. This is a difficult song because of its chromaticism. A secure sense of pitch and key is necessary. The piano part is a bit too chromatic for many young accompanists. Dring plays with the accents of the words in this time signature, placing them on the “wrong” syllables in a playful way (Example 6.33).

Example 6.33 "To the Willow Tree" mm. 6-9

plant found, Wherewith young men and maids dis-tress'd, And left of love,

"To Music – to Becalm a Sweetsick Youth," is the second of Dring's songs that begins unaccompanied (Example 6.34). The dissonances in this song are quite moving examples of text illustration. There is a feeling of pulling when the sick youth is mentioned (Example 6.35). The dissonances or pulling in the music seem to have a healing effect ("so As to entrance his pain"). (See Example 6.36.) Melodically, it is one of Dring's most interesting and challenging pieces.

Example 6.34 "To Music – to Becalm a Sweetsick Youth" mm. 1-3

Andante misterioso e sempre legato

p

Charms, that call down the moon from out her sphere,

p

Example 6.35 “To Music – to Becalm a Sweetsick Youth” mm. 13-18

Example 6.36 “To Music – to Becalm a Sweetsick Youth” mm. 24-27

“To Phillis – to Love, and Live with Him” is one of the most interesting pieces written by Dring. It incorporates a complex accompaniment, mixed meters, altered keys, altered scales, changes of accent, and a skillful setting of the text. It is a long song, but a strong way to end a group. Dring’s adroit manipulation of musical elements produces a song that sounds deceptively simple, but a closer look reveals her expertise in working with text and accompaniment to produce a cohesive texture. Most of these features are exemplified in Example 6.37.

Example 6.37 "To Phillis – to Love, and Live with Him" mm. 61-64



Thames Volume Three

Four Night Songs

Poems by Michael Armstrong¹⁰⁹

Composed 1976-77, completed 1980 by Roger Lord

Published by Cambria Publications, 1985

Published by Thames/Elkin, 1992

Madeleine's *Four Night Songs* reflect who she was as a person and a composer. The texts are by Michael Armstrong, who had become friends with Dring through their mutual interests in spiritualism. When they met, Armstrong introduced himself as a poet and eventually Dring obtained a group of poems directly from him. She chose four of her favorites and these became what Roger Lord has named the *Four Night Songs*.

¹⁰⁹ Armstrong was a poet and painter who Dring met at meetings of the Centre for Psychological Studies in London. They began corresponding and Dring visited him in the Canary Islands shortly before her death.

Dring visited Armstrong in the Canary Islands near the end of her life, the only time she traveled on her own. Armstrong was so moved upon hearing about Madeleine's death that he penned a poem, "For Madeleine."

The main theme of this cycle is one's ultimate goal of physical and spiritual fulfillment through love. There are references to reincarnation as well as other themes revealing Dring's beliefs at the time of her death.

"Holding the Night" has a very long and chromatic introduction of thirteen measures. No key signature is assigned the piece, but eventually there is a feeling of E-flat Major/Minor. "Holding the night in the palm of my hand" begins the piece with very open intervals as though one were reaching for the moon with the voice (Example 6.38). The piano depicts the wind in running chromaticism (as in "Blow Thou the Winter Wind"); "falling" in the text also falls in the melody (Example 6.39). Dring has found the perfect poetry for her gifts of prosody and composition.

Example 6.38 "Holding the Night" mm. 13-16

The musical score for "Holding the Night" mm. 13-16 is presented in two staves. The top staff is for the voice (soprano) and the bottom staff is for the piano. The key signature is E-flat Major/Minor. The vocal line begins with a long, chromatic introduction of thirteen measures, marked *mp*. The piano accompaniment features running chromaticism in the right hand, marked *rit.* and *poco meno mosso*. The lyrics are: "Hol - ding the night - in the palm -".

Example 6.39 "Holding the Night" mm. 25-31

as the wind streams streams to the edge of the

gulf to fall. fall through un-known trees

f *rit.*

f *rit.* *più lento*

The second song, "Frosty Night," begins with a staccato piano part, which is extremely chromatic throughout (Example 6.40). Dring seems to settle into a fast tempo and at measure 14 with the time suddenly twice as slow. "Encircling" is illustrated with chromaticism (Example 6.41). This is the only one of the songs from this group that would not be considered "romantic."

Example 6.40 “Frosty Night” mm. 1-3

Allegro drammatico ♩ = 168

p Stars rain like peb - bles

p stacc.

Example 6.41 “Frosty Night” mm. 14-16

Doppio piu lento, misterioso

mf The night's black moat en - cir - cles

mp Doppio piu lento, misterioso

“Through the Centuries” is a wonderful gem. The beginning of the song has a slowly moving and very chromatic piano introduction eventually leading to moving sixteenth notes that illustrate the passing of time (Example 6.42).

The poetry is about the familiar and unfamiliar, and coming back to this earth to find the same lover. Dring’s setting of the phrase “Our meetings renewed a secret joy” is a joyful, well-crafted phrase (Example 6.43). Its theme of deeply profound love that transcends time makes it interpretively difficult for the very young and inexperienced singer.

Example 6.42 "Through the Centuries" mm. 1-4
Lento

Example 6.43 "Through the Centuries" mm. 13-15

"Separation" is one of the most intriguing songs written by Dring. She was working on this song when she died. Her husband Roger was at a rehearsal. Lord says: "I didn't think I would ever be able to finish it, but after a year or two of working on her songs (to do with publishing) I decided there was enough material for me to complete it."¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Lord to author, August 5, 2002.

Lord has shared his experience with this song with only a few. Madeleine died just after penning the phrase “Of all things in the world, I love you most, but I cannot...” Lord began writing “get near you, and you remain unknown.”¹¹¹ (See Example 6.45.) No one will ever know the difficulty of that undertaking for Roger Lord. He used a great deal of motivic material that had been drafted by Dring to expertly finish the song. He humbly says: “It’s not so good as it would have been if she had done it.”¹¹² As this author wrote back to Lord: “I thank you for finishing it. It is a perfect song.”

This song is extremely effective in performance due to its long interlude and postlude (Excerpt 6.44). Ending a song group with a song of this mood and dynamic is a risk taken only by people comfortable on the recital stage.

Example 6.44 “Separation” mm. 1-10

Andante ♩ = 60 approx.

Andante

* *p*

Con ped.

mp

Out in the dark night the

mf

p

¹¹¹ *ibid.*
¹¹² *ibid.*

Example 6.45 "Separation" mm. 20-29

The image shows a musical score for a song titled "Separation" from measures 20 to 29. The score is written for a voice and piano. The voice part is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are: "Of all things in the world I love you most but I can not get near you and you remain unknown". The score includes dynamic markings: *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the beginning and *poco rit.* (poco ritardando) at the end. The piano accompaniment features a complex, flowing melody with many accidentals and a steady rhythm.

This song is appropriate for medium high voices with an upper extension. Some high and soft singing is required.

Thames Volume Four

Seven Songs

Medium voice and piano

Written in the 1950s and 1960s, published in 1993

Lord and Thames have assembled some of Dring's best single songs to put in the fourth volume; *Seven Songs*.

"Come Away, Come Sweet Love," is the opening song in this volume.

Written in the 1960s, the song is in 6/8 time with some changes in meter, usually involving a rhythmic combination of quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth. This is one

of Dring's more complex songs. The text is suitable for male singers and is in a very comfortable medium voice range. The words are anonymous from the 16th century, in the tradition of the troubadours.

The second selection, "A Devout Lover," with words by Thomas Randolph, is suitable for men. The song has many words, but the tempo is *Cantabile, poco lento*. The piano part is extremely chromatic with many parallel fifths in the left hand part, making it difficult to establish legato (Example 6.46).

Example 6.46 "A Devout Lover" mm.1-3

Cantabile, poco lento

p *p* *p*

I have a mis - tress

"The Faithless Lover" is set to an anonymous text. More appropriate for a male singer, it is plaintive in mood as the shepherd first pipes his disappointment in love and then relates the entire story of his abandonment. The song features a piano accompaniment in perpetual motion with many meter changes in rapid succession, brilliantly characterizing the girl's fickle nature and illustrating the hapless shepherd's disorientation at being left alone. The poetry describes a lover who leaves after three days, and goes on to leave her next lover after the same brief period. Predictably, she has left the second lover for yet a third (Example 6.47).

Example 6.47 "The Faithless Lover" mm.19-26

"Weep You No More, Sad Fountains" has been set by many fine writers of English song. This is a lovely melody, written in the 1950s, with a text suitable for ladies and men. This piece is in 6/8 time, with a hemiola effect in the introduction, placing a strong beat four times per measure (Example 6. 46.) The singer ends the piece with a coda, repeating the same phrase quoted in the beginning. (See Example 6.49.) The song is suitable for all voices.

Example 6.49 “Weep You No More, Sad Fountains” mm. 1-3

“My Proper Bess” uses the poetry of John Skelton. Dring employs several time signatures in the piece, making it rhythmically unpredictable for the listener (Example 6.50). The piece sounds as though it is in E-flat major with a touch of Lydian, adding to this overall promiscuous spirit (Example 6.51).

Example 6.50 “My Proper Bess” 1-4

Example 6.51 “My Proper Bess” mm. 14-16

“Melisande: The Far-Away Princess” features words by Dring’s friend and playwright, D.F. Aiken. They collaborated on several ventures over the years. The score states that it is “Based on a XIV Century French Air.” The sparse texture is not Dring’s usual keyboard writing style. This open and ancient feeling is quite successful, setting the song apart from anything else she wrote. It has one of the most exposed voice parts in Dring’s entire song catalogue. The poem is about the “East” and “the Holy Land” and Dring’s harmonic colorations illustrate Melisande’s loneliness very well (Example 6.52). The song has a key signature of G Minor, but in the first measure there are F-sharps and E-naturals, indicating some type of altered scale.

Example 6.52 “Melisande: The Far-Away Princess” mm. 1-10

Poco lento

p

mp

Far, far in the East, where

Although the text is most appropriate for men, the sensuality of the song seems to be quite feminine. Lord and Robert Tear liked this song so much that they named Tear's recording of Dring's songs after it.

"Encouragements to a Lover" utilizes words by Sir John Suckling (Example 6.53). The poet persuades a young man to act in various ways to woo a young lady. When the young lady refuses to respond, the poet replies, "The devil take her!" The song is not overly difficult with a tempo marking of *Allegretto* and a fun text.

This entire volume is suitable for men's voices. It is pitched in keys not quite high enough to adequately show off a tenor and a bit too high for the baritone in recital. This writer believes it would be worth the effort to supply two new volumes pitched appropriately for each of these groups of singers to enjoy. It could become the next volume of English song men purchase after acquiring Vaughan Williams's *Songs of Travel* and the *Seven Elizabethan Lyrics* of Quilter. For the voice teacher who is weary of both of those sets, this song volume would provide a nice alternative.

Example 6.53 “Encouragements to a Lover” mm. 1-9

Allegretto

poco staccato

mf *f* *dim.* *p*

mf Why so pale and

wan, fond lo - ver? Pry - thee, why so pale? Will, if look - ing

Thames Volume Five

Love and Time

Soprano and Piano

Composed 1970s, Published 1994

*Have been writing songs suddenly – or rather – being taken-over by the writing of them.*¹¹³

-- Madeleine Dring

This is the only set of songs in which Dring uses recurring motivic material. Completed in the 1970s, the piano introductions of songs one (Example 6.54), two (Example 6.55) and four (Example 6.56) are the same melodic material given different harmonization. The first song utilizes decorated

¹¹³ Dring to Hemmer, July 27, 1969.

fifths and octaves. By the time the performer arrives at song four, Dring is using bitonal techniques.

Example 6.54 "Sister Awake" mm. 1-8

Andante mistico (♩ = 104)

mp pp mp

pedal each chord

Example 6.55 "Ah, how sweet it is to love!" mm. 1-7

Andante (♩ = 108)

mp loco

poco a poco cresc. e poco accel. (♩ = 138)

p sub. f

Example 6.56 "The Reconciliation" mm. 1-10

Solenne (♩ = approx. 92)

mf cantabile

mp

pedal each chord

As stated before, Dring's perceptions of time were not of this world. The cycle reflects her favorite subject; love, along with this idea of time moving ahead.

Song number one, "Sister, Awake!" is a charming song about a young woman and the possibilities of meeting a new beau. She is admonishing her sister to wake up and join her in the May festivities. Tentative at the beginning of the song, the girl becomes exuberant about what the day holds as the song continues. The anonymous text is taken from Thomas Bateson's *First Set of English Madrigals, 1602*. At the end of the song, Dring writes a cadenza-like phrase expressing "going to the park." This is where the girl may meet her new beloved. There is much hope and anticipation in the phrase. A music box effect is used in the piano part as the piece closes (Example 6.57).

Example 6.57 "Sister, Awake" mm. 45-51

The musical score for "Sister, Awake" mm. 45-51 is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with "ad lib." and "a tempo" markings. The lyrics are "In - to the park... the park... a - may - ing...". The piano accompaniment includes a "loco" marking and a "rit." marking. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, ending with a double bar line and a key signature change to F major.

"Ah, How Sweet it Is to Love," with text by John Dryden (1631-1700) has the same four-bar melodic introduction as the previous song, reworked by Dring. At measure five, she starts a development of seven measures, which leads us to the singer's entrance over static chords. This is the same type of dramatic shape as in the previous song. (See previous Example 6.55.)

At bar 19, there is a double bar (unusual for Dring) with a key signature change (also unusual). She goes through a few rhythmic changes, alternating patterns of quarters and eighths until she ends up in 4/4 with a pattern of quarter, two eighths, quarter, two eighths (Example 6.58). Here the singer begins the phrase which is the title of the song, "Ah how sweet it is to love." The song is full of rhythmic surprises, all of which are true to prosody. (See Example 6.58.)

Dring quotes the phrase "Love and Time with reverence use," using the same

motive as the piano introductions. This is the only example of Dring quoting herself (Example 6.59).

Example 6.58 “Ah, How Sweet it Is to Love” mm. 16-23

più mosso (♩ = 176)

- sire.

leggiere

poco rit. poco meno mosso

Ah, how sweet it is to

poco rit. poco meno mosso

p

Example 6.59 “Ah, How Sweet it Is to Love” mm. 50-53

meno mosso Tempo I

mf *p*

Love and Time Love and Time with re - verence use, Love and Time with

meno mosso Tempo I

mf *p*

“I Feed a Flame Within” is also to the poetry of John Dryden. This is the only song of the set that does not use the “Love and Time” motive. This is one of the longer Dring songs and requires secure vocal technique in the upper middle vocal range.

This movement is somewhat reminiscent of the third movement of *Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano*. The left hand part is extremely marcato. Dring uses a percussive bass line on the beat with eighth note chords in the right hand of the piano.

Example 6.60 “I Feed a Flame Within” mm. 1-3

Con fuoco (♩ = 132-138)

The musical score for Example 6.60 shows three measures of music. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The tempo is marked 'Con fuoco' with a quarter note equal to 132-138 beats per minute. The key signature has two flats. The vocal line begins with a rest in the first measure, then sings 'I feed a flame with' in the second and third measures. The piano accompaniment features a strong, marcato bass line in the left hand and eighth-note chords in the right hand.

“The Reconciliation” could be Dring’s personal anthem because of her beliefs in spiritualism and world harmony, combined with her gentle nature. The text is from John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire (1649-1720). Dring’s opening motive, by now familiar even to an untrained ear, is repeated six times in augmentation (Example 6.55), and then altered yet again with rolled chords, spelling out her harmonic choices in alternating measures, resolved in the following measures (Example 6.61).

Example 6.61 "The Reconciliation" mm. 23-28



The Reconciliation

Come, let us now resolve at last
 To live and love in quiet;
 We'll tie the knot so very fast
 That Time shall ne'er untie it.
 The truest joys they seldom prove
 Who free from quarrels live
 'Tis the most tender part of Love
 Each other to forgive
 When least I seem'd concern'd
 I took no pleasure nor no rest
 And when I feigned an angry look
 Alas I loved you best.
 Own but the same to me you'll find
 How blest will be our fate.
 O to be happy to be kind,
 Sure never is too late.

- John Sheffield (1649-1720)

The introduction is twenty-eight measures long -- quite an extended introduction for Dring. When the singer enters, the chords remain static, as though the text was being chanted (Example 6.62). She chooses to repeat the first four lines of text. One interpretation is that the singer is relating the text to an individual in the first utterance, followed by an appeal to the world at large in

the next phrase. At the end of the piece, she repeats lines one and two with an echo on "quiet." (See Example 6.63.)

Example 6. 62 "The Reconcilement " mm. 29-32

Tempo commodo (Freely)
♩ = 66

Come, let us now re-solve et last To live and love in qui - et;

Example 6.63 "The Reconcilement " mm. 97-107

qui - et; qui - et qui - et qui - et

qui et. rit.

loco (b) mp

It is a very effective ending with a somewhat unpredictable melodic idea at the end including an altered scale passage. This cycle is designated for soprano voice but offers very few challenges to a mezzo-soprano comfortable with “second soprano” parts. The texts are old-fashioned but are understandable on first recitation, making them immediately accessible for purposes of interpretation. The cycle requires a very fine pianist with a great ear for subtleness of color. These songs might be best suited to mature singers.

Dring rarely reintroduces intervals, rhythms or melodies that are recognizable quotations from her other songs or instrumental works. In “The Reconcilement,” she uses a motive similar to that in “The Cuckoo,” quoting the bird. It is as though she is suggesting forgiveness for even the unthinkable, infidelity. She uses a major third pattern in the accompaniment instead of the minor third in “The Cuckoo,” suggesting forgiveness has already been attained. (See 6.19 and 6.64 mm. 1-5. Measures 1-2 are in augmentation and measures 3-5 are in the same rhythm as “The Cuckoo.”)

Example 6.64 “The Reconcilement “ mm. 68-73

The musical score for "The Reconcilement" (mm. 68-73) is presented in two systems. The first system shows the voice part (soprano) and the piano accompaniment. The voice part begins with the lyrics "loved you best..." and is marked "ad lib.". The piano accompaniment features a major third pattern. The second system continues the piece, with the voice part marked "colla voce" and the piano accompaniment marked "poco accel." and "poco rit.". The dynamics are marked "mf" and "f".

Thames Volume Six

Six Songs

High voice and piano

Written 1940s – 1960s, Published 1999

Lord recommends the six songs in this volume to be sung by a man or a woman with the exception of the first song in the volume, which is a woman's song.

"My True-Love Hath My Heart," with words by Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) is a "heart-on-the-sleeve" romantic love song. Dring had just begun keeping company with Roger Lord, a young man at the RCM who she later married in 1944, the year of this composition. The beginning sounds unextraordinary until we reach measure four, when she throws in an unexpected color (Example 6.65 mm 1-4). As the singer enters, the opening piano statement is repeated in the accompaniment this time as a countermelody (Example 6.65 mm 5-8).

The interlude has the rush of youth and expectation and is full of chromaticism (Example 6.66 mm 22-26). At verse two, the piano provides the countermelody. With one of the highest sustained notes in all of her published songs (A-natural), this song shows us where Dring was comfortable as a singer. The piano part moves rapidly to the end where it ends on an A Major⁷ chord (Example 6.67). This piece could easily have been a hit as a single sheet, appropriate for weddings, providing the singer was a trained singer and not merely a friend of the family.

Example 6.65 "My True-Love Hath My Heart" mm. 1-8

Allegro moderato

Voice

Piano

mp *dim.*

mp

My true love hath my heart, and I have his, By

p

"The Enchantment" is a beautiful setting of a poem by Thomas Otway.

According to Fisher and Lord, this song is from the 1960s. Good for a high soprano, this piece also calls for a secure low voice. The range of the piece is an octave and a fifth. Dring does not seem to be looking for special effects in going to the lower voice, but the high tessitura used throughout the piece makes it difficult to access the bottom without an abrupt vocal change to the chest voice (Example 6.68).

Example 6.66 "My True Love Hath My Heart" mm. 19-28

p. **rit.** **a tempo**

My true love hath my heart and I have his.

rit. **a tempo (rubato)**

p *cresc. poco a poco*

allarg. **a tempo**

His heart in me keeps him and me in

allarg. **a tempo**

mp *f*

Example 6.67 “My True-Love Hath My Heart” mm. 47-52

heart... and I have his.

rall. *poco a poco a tempo*

cresc. *ff*

1944

Example 6.68 “The Enchantment” mm. 17-20

can... not melt... your heart, Yet can - not melt your heart...

9

“Echoes” has a text by Thomas Moore (1780-1852). Also from the 1960s, it requires fluidity in the voice from a middle voice F-sharp to high A. The range of this song is more limited than the previous one (Example 6.69).

Example 6.69 "Echoes" mm. 7-9

an - swer - ing light!

colla voce

mf

"The Cherry Blooming," dating from the 1940s has a text by Joseph Ellison. When asked about Ellison, Lord wrote: Ellison was "a (medical) doctor friend who worked at a hospital (and almost had to operate on Madeleine for mastoid (ear), used to come to tea on Sundays sometimes and was great fun."¹¹⁴ In the middle of these old English texts we find a modern poet who is otherwise not identified. This is another of Dring's songs that requires a very wide vocal range. There are several inferred key changes and much chromaticism in the writing. The beginning of the piece reminds one of Rodgers and Hammerstein and the *Sound of Music* with the music for the Mother Superior (Example 6.70).

Example 6.70 "The Cherry Blooming" mm. 1-3

Moderato with subdued excitement

Allegro

mp

f

mp

Allegro

p

f

p

con Ped.

Now have the tight buds burst in a passion of flower And,

¹¹⁴ Lord to author, answer to November 19, 2002 letter.

It is quite grand music and illustrates one of Dring's favorite subjects; resurrection, return of life.

"Love is a sickness" employs text by Samuel Daniel. Dring assigns dissonance or altered scale notes for purposes of word painting. Written in the 1960s, this song has no introduction (Example 6.71). The song starts out somberly and becomes more and more animated as it continues. It is as though Dring cannot contain herself. She is following the sentiments of the text and finds her own voice within it.

Example 6.71 "Love is a Sickness" mm. 1-3

Not too slow

Voice

Love is a sick-ness full of woes,

Piano

f

"The Parting" has a text of Michael Drayton (1563-1651). The composition is believed to be from the 1960s. Dring's 5/8 time signature is back and cleverly used here (Example 6.72). The piece alternates with other time signatures, not allowing the listeners or artists any predictability (Example 6.73). The piece uses the wide ranges that are peculiar to this volume of songs.

Example 6.72 "The Parting" mm. 1-4

Leggiero, poco agitato

Voice

Piano

mp

Example 6.73 "The Parting" mm. 24-27

That thus, thus so clean - ly I my-self, my - - self can

mp

This piece demands a high extension, wonderful counting skills, and a secure middle voice.

This writer would like to see some of these pieces transposed down a bit to allow access to them by heavier lyric soprano voices. They are stunningly feminine settings, and would keep this quality even if pitched just a bit lower. It is a set of songs that makes one long for consultation with the composer, asking for an alternative pitch here and there. The final diagnosis may be that they are a bit more instrumental than most of her more mature songs. Since Dring traditionally did not compose songs for anyone other than herself, it would be marvelous to hear them done by a skilled singer of that *fach*.

A Note about the “Unpublished” Songs

In addition to the art songs examined in this document, there are an additional eight pieces that have been typeset by Alistair Fisher.¹¹⁵ He also set four excerpts from *The Provok'd Wife*. His song list includes:

Come live with me and be my love	1940s
Slumber song	1940s
Love Lyric	c. 1943
Willow Song	c. 1943
My heart is like a singing bird	1946
Elegy on the death of a mad dog	1947
What I fancy	c. 1950
The Blind Boy	c. 1960
Oh lovely Nymph	1963 (<i>The Provok'd Wife</i>)
Fly, fly, you happy shepherds	1963 (<i>The Provok'd Wife</i>)
What a pothor of late	1963 (<i>The Provok'd Wife</i>)
When Yielding to Damon's flame	1963 (<i>The Provok'd Wife</i>)

An illustration of Fisher's work follows below as Example 6.74. Of the pieces listed, the “art songs” “Come live with me and be my love,” “Willow Song,” and “What I fancy” are now available through Micropress. These songs have not been reviewed in this particular study because of the impracticality of their purchase. Micropress at the time of publication did not take credit cards as payment, making it difficult for an international purchase. All of these songs are available from Roger Lord at the address provided in the *New Grove*.

Also available from Micropress are some of the show songs not covered in this study: “Everything Detestable Is Best,” “High in the Pines,” “I've Brought You Away,” and “Snowman,” one of Ray Holder's personal favorites.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Fisher, 87.

¹¹⁶ These pieces are available from Micropress Spiral in Shropshire, England.

Example 6.74 "Come Live With Me and Be My Love" mm. 1-12
(Fisher – sample of song transcription)

Come Live With Me and Be My Love

1

Words:

Marlowe

Andantino (♩. = 60)

Music:

Madeleine Dring

Tenderly

mp

mf

ten.

Come

live with me—and be my love, And we will all—the pleas-ures prove That

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

*Honor the old, but also welcome the new. Hold no prejudice against unknown names.*¹¹⁷

-- Robert Schumann

The music of Madeleine Dring is delightful. It is full of many devices that show her skill, artistry and individuality. Since musical personality is so challenging to describe, one might use the composers with whom she has been compared to conjure an image. Her songs have the lyricism of Roger Quilter, the art of Herbert Howells and the personality of Francis Poulenc. Her instrumental music has the rhythmic drive of Prokofiev, melodic subtlety of Érik Satie, and the immediately recognizable, audience-friendly character of George Gershwin or Henry Mancini. Dring's vocal music is immediately accessible to student singers and serious artists and deserves its place in the standard art song repertoire.

In a recent blind listening experiment, four Dring songs were played for forty college students, all vocal performance majors of varying degree levels, ages 19-40. They were asked to describe each song. At the end of the hearing, they were asked if they would like to hear more of this composer. Thirty-eight

¹¹⁷ Robert Schumann, *House Rules and Maxims for Young Musicians*, 1848. As a reviewer of new music, Schumann had a particularly liberal attitude about unknown composers.

students responded positively. One student was lukewarm and one student replied “No.” When they were asked if they would consider singing songs of this composer, thirty-nine students said “Yes.”¹¹⁸

As a champion of Dring, this author hopes to spread the word of this diversely talented song composer. A real Renaissance woman, Dring may have preferred to be remembered as an actress. This paper documents that activity with photographs. As a final look at Dring, we have a glance at one of her manuscripts. This is the type of material Roger Lord found tucked away in desk drawers and in the piano bench (Example 7.1). We should be forever grateful that Lord had the insight and energy to see to it that this music found the light of day.

Behind Roger Lord have come other champions. All those who have picked up her music and breathed the breath of life into it have played a role in promoting Dring. Additionally, there have been those who wrote about her in an academic manner. Taking the care and time to learn her music well enough to record it requires an additional level of dedication. All of these activities have been instrumental in widening the circle of interested performers, teachers, and students of this music.

As Roger Lord has gotten to know each of the researchers, he has given each one little bits of information that are unique and comes together to paint a more complete picture of who Madeleine Dring was as a person and composer.

¹¹⁸ Played for students at Florida State University on Tuesday, February 3, 2004. Songs used were “Under the Greenwood Tree,” “Through the Centuries,” “To Daffodils,” and “Song of the Nightclub Proprietress.” No information about the composer was provided until after the test.

Now eighty years of age, Roger Lord has been energetic and generous in sharing information and putting people in contact with one another so that this web of interest spreads further. Lord's wife, Jennie, has also been extremely gracious in sharing her husband with those who have required so much of him. For that we can also be grateful.

With the present writing climate and the popularity of women composers as a subject, it would be easy to choose any feminine topic and try to justify it. Dring is a wonderful composer who happens to a woman.

As a final word, it has been a challenge to write about someone who was so multidimensional. Asking a former spouse about a subject who died twenty-seven years ago is an art, especially when that spouse is now married to another person. Requiring Lord to constantly reminisce about very old memories and to look up archival materials long packed away, his direct quotes shall ever be a direct link to who Dring really was. She was, after all, more than an entry in the *New Grove*. She was a wife, mother, composer, artist, actress, and gentle creature who had a very deep sense of spirituality. She believed that she might return to this world. It is entertaining to imagine which of her many talents she might choose to realize in her next life.

Example 7.1 Reduced Copy of Madeleine Dring's handwritten manuscript for "Weep You No More Sad Fountains" mm. 1-14

reduced photo-copy of one of M. Dring's M.S. 'Fair copies', (not titles, not dynamics, which she rarely bothered about!)

WORDS UNKNOWN (1603) WEEP YOU NO MORE, SAD FOUNTAINS MUSIC MADELEINE DRING

Andante sostenuto. (♩. = 46)

poco meno mosso

Weep you no more, sad

poco rit

foun-tains, What need you flow so fast? Look how the snowy

moun-tains Heaven's sun doth gently waste. But my Sun's

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J. R. LORD.

THAMES/ELKIN

(Provided by Roger Lord)



Madeleine Dring
(Photo Courtesy of Lance Bowling)
Thames



Roger Lord's favorite photo of Madeleine Dring

APPENDIX I

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

NUMBER	PIECE	MEASURES	VOLUME
5.1	Pink Minor	1-8	<i>Colour Suite</i>
6.1	A Bay in Anglesey	1-3	<i>5 Betjeman Songs</i>
6.2	A Bay in Anglesey	14-19	
6.3	A Bay in Anglesey	42-47	
6.4	A Bay in Anglesey	60-63	
6.5	Nightclub Proprietress	1-6	
6.6	Business Girls	1-2	
6.7	Business Girls	23-24	
6.8	Business Girls	27-30	
6.9	Udenominational	1-5	
6.10	Udenominational	17-21	
6.11	Upper Lambourne	1-4	
6.12	Upper Lambourne	5-9	
6.13	Under the Greenwood Tree	1-4	Volume One
6.14	Under the Greenwood Tree	8-9	Shakespeare
6.15	Come Away Death	8-12	
6.16	Come Away Death	32-33	
6.17	Blow, thou the winter wind	1-2	
6.18	Blow, thou the winter wind	5-6	
6.19	The Cuckoo	1-2	
6.20	The Cuckoo	34-35	
6.21	The Cuckoo	36-39	
6.22	It was a lover	9-11	
6.23	It was a lover	67-70	
6.24	It was a lover	25-28	
6.25	It was a lover	21-24	
6.26	Take O take those lips away	13-16	
6.27	Crabbed age and youth	1-2	
6.28	Crabbed age and youth	42-46	
6.29	To Daffodils	1-6	Volume Two
6.30	To the Virgins	1-6	<i>Dedications</i>
6.31	To the Virgins	19-22	Herrick
6.32	To the Virgins	36-41	
6.33	To the Willow Tree	6-9	
6.34	To Music	1-3	

6.35	To Music	13-18	
6.36	To Music	24-27	
6.37	To Phillis	61-64	
6.38	Holding the Night	13-16	Volume Three
6.39	Holding the Night	25-31	<i>4 Night Songs</i>
6.40	Frosty Night	1-3	Armstrong
6.41	Frosty Night	14-16	
6.42	Through the Centuries	1-4	
6.43	Through the Centuries	13-15	
6.44	Separation	1-10	
6.45	Separation	20-29	
6.46	A Devout Lover	1-3	Volume Four
6.47	The Faithless Lover	19-26	
6.48	Weep you no more	1-3	
6.49	Weep you no more	47-49	
6.50	My proper Bess	1-4	
6.51	My proper Bess	14-16	
6.52	Melisande	1-10	
6.53	Encouragements to a lover	1-9	
6.54	Sister, awake	1-8	Volume Five
6.55	Ah, how sweet it is to love	1-7	<i>Love and Time</i>
6.56	The Reconcilement	1-10	
6.57	Sister, Awake	45-51	
6.58	Ah, how sweet it is to love	16-23	
6.59	Ah, how sweet it is to love	50-53	
6.60	I feed a flame	1-3	
6.61	The Reconcilement	23-28	
6.62	The Reconcilement	29-32	
6.63	The Reconcilement	97-107	
6.64	The Reconcilement	68-73	
6.65	My true-love hath my heart	1-8	Volume Six
6.66	My true-love hath my heart	19-28	
6.67	My true-love hath my heart	47-52	
6.68	The Enchantment	17-20	
6.69	Echoes	7-9	
6.70	The Cherry Blooming	1-3	
6.71	Love is a sickness	1-3	
6.72	The Parting	1-4	
6.73	The Parting	24-27	
6.74	Come live with me and be my love	1-12	Fisher typesetting
7.1	Dring Manuscript		Manuscript

APPENDIX II

CORRESPONDENCE FROM ROGER LORD TO WANDA BRISTER (All original correspondence is in the possession of the author.)

August 2, 2000	Letter from Lord to Brister
April 26, 2001	Letter from Lord to Brister
May 2001	Package from Lord
July 1, 2001	Letter from Lord to Brister
December 2001	Christmas Card
June 24, 2002	Letter from Lord to Brister
August 5, 2002	Letter from Lord to Brister
September 4, 2002	Letter from Lord to Brister
October 15, 2002	Letter from Lord to Brister
October 25, 2002	Letter from Lord to Brister
December 2002	Christmas Card
January 2003	Answer to November 19 letter. No date indicated
April 23, 2003	Letter from Lord to Brister
October 24, 2003	Email from Lord to Brister
November 8, 2003	Letter from Lord to Brister
December 18, 2003	Email from Lord to Brister
January 3, 2004	Letter from Lord to Brister
January 20, 2004	Email from Lord to Brister
January 23, 2004	Email from Lord to Brister
February 12, 2004	Email from Lord to Brister
February 24, 2004	Email from Lord to Brister

APPENDIX III

CORRESPONDENCE FROM MADELEINE DRING TO EUGENE HEMMER
(The letters were transcribed and provided to the author by Lance Bowling.
Original letters are in the possession of Lance Bowling in Lomita, California.)

November 6, 1967	Initial letter to Hemmer
November 11, 1967	Letter to Hemmer with Bio
February 4, 1968	Letter to Hemmer
April 5, 1968	Letter to Hemmer
October 15, 1968	Letter to Hemmer
July 27, 1969	Letter to Hemmer
November 4, 1970	Letter to Hemmer
December 13, 1970	Letter to Hemmer
December 19, 1970	Postcard of Perthshire, Scottish Islands
January 4, 1971	Letter to Hemmer
February 24, 1971	Letter to Hemmer
July 9, 1971	Letter to Hemmer
July 17, 1971	Letter to Hemmer
July 20, 1971	Postcard, Theatre Royal, Bury St. St Edmunds
September 6, 1971	Letter to Hemmer
October 2, 1971	Letter to Hemmer
January 17, 1972	Letter to Hemmer
July 3, 1972	Letter to Hemmer
July 10, 1972	Letter to Hemmer
July, August 1972	Letter to Hemmer
January 9, 1973	Letter to Hemmer
December 16, 1974	Letter to Hemmer
1975	"I still don't know the date (and what's more, I don't care)"
August 6, 1976	Letter to Hemmer
September 14, 1976	Letter to Hemmer
November 3, 1976	Dring to Bowling about bio and recording project
November 8, 1976	This was Dring's last letter to Hemmer.
No years specified:	
March 27	Letter to Hemmer
August 25	Letter to Hemmer
June 22	Letter to Hemmer
September 16	Dring was not aware of the real date

APPENDIX IV
SONG REPERTOIRE
Art Songs by Title

Song Title (Poet) <i>Circa</i> /Composed	Year/Publisher
Ah, how sweet it is to love! (Dryden) 1970s	1994 Thames
Ballad (Thank you Lord) (Kyme)	1953 Prowse & Co./Out of Print
Bay in Anglesey, A (Betjeman) 1976	1980 Weinberger
Blind Boy, The (Cibber) <i>Circa</i> 1960	typeset, unpublished
Blow, blow thou winter wind (Shakespeare) <i>Circa</i> 1944	1949 Lengnick, 1992 Thames
Business Girls (Betjeman) 1976	1980 Weinberger
Cherry Blooming, The (Ellison) <i>Circa</i> 1944	1999 Thames
Come away, come sweet love (anon 16 th C) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1993 Thames
Come away, death (Shakespeare) by 1944	1949 Lengnick, 1992 Thames
Come live with me and be my love (Marlowe) <i>Circa</i> 1940s	Micropress
Crabbed Age and Youth (Shakespeare) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1992 Thames
Cuckoo, The (Shakespeare) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1992 Thames
Devout Lover, A (Randolph) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1993 Thames
Echoes (Moore) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1999 Thames
Elegy on the death of a mad dog (Goldsmith) <i>Circa</i> 1947	typeset, unpublished
Enchantment, The (Otway) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1999 Thames
Encouragements to a Lover (Suckling) <i>Circa</i> 1950s	1993 Thames
Faithless Lover, The (Anon) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1993 Thames
Frosty Night (Armstrong) 1976	1985 Cambria, 1992 Thames
Holding the Night (Armstrong) 1976	1985 Cambria, 1992 Thames
How sweet I roamed from field to field (Blake) <i>Circa</i> 1940s	unpublished
I feed a flame within (Dryden) 1970s	1994 Thames
It was lover and his lass (Shakespeare) <i>Circa</i> 1944	1992 Thames
Knot, The (Campion) <i>Circa</i> 1940s	unpublished

Song Title (Poet) <i>Circa</i> /Composed	Year/Publisher
Love is a sickness (Daniel) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1999 Thames
Love Lyric (Ellison) <i>Circa</i> 1943	typeset, unpublished
Love was once a little boy (Anon) <i>Circa</i> 1944	unpublished
Love will find out the way (Anon) RCM	unpublished
Mélisande (14 th C Fr./Aitken) <i>Circa</i> 1950s	1993 Thames
My heart is like a singing bird (Rossetti) <i>Circa</i> 1946	Micropress
My proper Bess, my pretty Bess (Skelton) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1993 Thames
My true love hath my heart (Sidney) <i>Circa</i> 1944	1999 Thames
Panorama, <i>Circa</i> 1943 RCM	unpublished
Parting, The (Drayton) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1999 Thames
Reconcilement, The (Sheffield) 1970s	1994 Thames
Separation (Armstrong) 1977	1985 Cambria, 1992 Thames
Sister, awake (Anon) 1970s	1994 Thames
Slumber Song (Ellison) <i>Circa</i> 1940s/ rev. 1970s	typeset/unpublished
Snowflakes (Longfellow) <i>Circa</i> 1940s	unpublished
Song of a Nightclub Proprietress (Betjeman) 1976	1980 Weinberger
Take, O take those lips away (Shakespeare) <i>Circa</i> 1960s	1992 Thames
This is the time when bit by bit (Hinkson) <i>Circa</i> 1940s	unpublished
Through the Centuries (Armstrong) 1976	1985 Cambria, 1992 Thames
To Daffodils (Herrick) 1967	1992 Thames
To Music (Herrick) 1967	1992 Thames
To Phillis (Herrick) 1967	1992 Thames
To the Virgins (Herrick) 1967	1992 Thames
To the Willow Tree (Herrick) 1967	1992 Thames
Twas on the midmost day in June (Ellison) 1943 RCM	no manuscript/unpublished
Undenominational (Betjeman) 1976	1980 Weinberger
Under the greenwood tree (Shakespeare) <i>Circa</i> 1944	1949 Lengnick, 1992 Thames
Upper Lambourne (Betjeman) 1976	1980 Weinberger
Weep you no more, sad fountains (Anon) <i>Circa</i> 1950s	1993 Thames
What I fancy, I approve (Herrick) <i>Circa</i> 1950	Micropress
Willow Song (Shakespeare) <i>Circa</i> 1943	Micropress

Show songs:

Everything Detestable is Best

Micropress

High in the Pines

Micropress

I've brought you away (*Circa* 1965)

Micropress

Snowman

Micropress

Four songs from "The Provok'd Wife" (Vanbrugh)

Fly, fly, you happy shepherds (1963)

typeset

Oh Lovely Nymph (1963)

typeset

What a pothor of late (1963)

typeset

When yielding first to Damon's flame 1963

typeset

APPENDIX V

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Chapter 2	Page 8	Madeleine with her violin, Age 10
Chapter 2	Page 16	Madeleine with son Jeremy and Non-non*
Chapter 2	Page 18	Madeleine in Player's Theatre Pantomime
Chapter 2	Page 19	Madeleine with Kensington Gores, 2 photos
Chapter 2	Page 19	Madeleine at Solano Grove, Florida, 1967
Chapter 2	Page 20	Madeleine in Daytona, 1969
Chapter 2	Page 24	Madeleine and Roger Lord, <i>circa</i> 1960*
Chapter 7	Page 96	Dring glamour shot, provided by Bowling
Chapter 7	Page 97	Dring glamour shot, Lord's favorite*

* (Original photograph in the possession of the author. All other originals are with Roger Lord.)

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Naumburg Foundation, 1989