

- ARTICLE -

Reflections of a Broken Love in Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* (1941)

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Introduction

Much has been written about Michael Tippett's oratorio, *A Child of Our Time*;¹ its themes and narratives have been explored by scholars since its premiere in 1944 at the Adelphi Theatre in London. The work is widely understood to be inspired by the case of Herschel Grynszpan, a Jewish refugee who assassinated a Nazi official after learning that his family were to be deported from Germany and that they were to be dispossessed of their property. Grynszpan's act triggered *Kristallnacht*, the antisemitic pogrom of November 1938.

A Child of Our Time carries a message of solidarity with the oppressed. In addition, it underlines the composer's pacifist inclinations and, by highlighting the dark and light sides of human nature, reflects Tippett's interest in Jungian psychoanalysis.

In my recent book—which chronicles the life of my grandfather, the artist Wilfred Franks—I explore his relationship with and the impact he had on Michael Tippett.² This article aims to introduce some perspectives not explored even in the most recent of literature related to Tippett, particularly how Tippett's life and work were influenced by his relationship with Franks, and how these influences come to be effected even in *A Child of Our Time*.

This article focuses on three aspects of Franks and Tippett's relationship that are realised in the oratorio: first, the love relationship's bitter end which inspired Tippett to delve into the Jungian dream analysis that would appear in the libretto; second, that Franks' enthusiasm for the poems of Wilfred Owen may have influenced Tippett to include them as part of the work's text; and third – how, inspired in part by Franks, Tippett's political thinking in the 1930s and his

compassion for oppressed Trotskyist 'comrades in distress' would find its way into the piece.

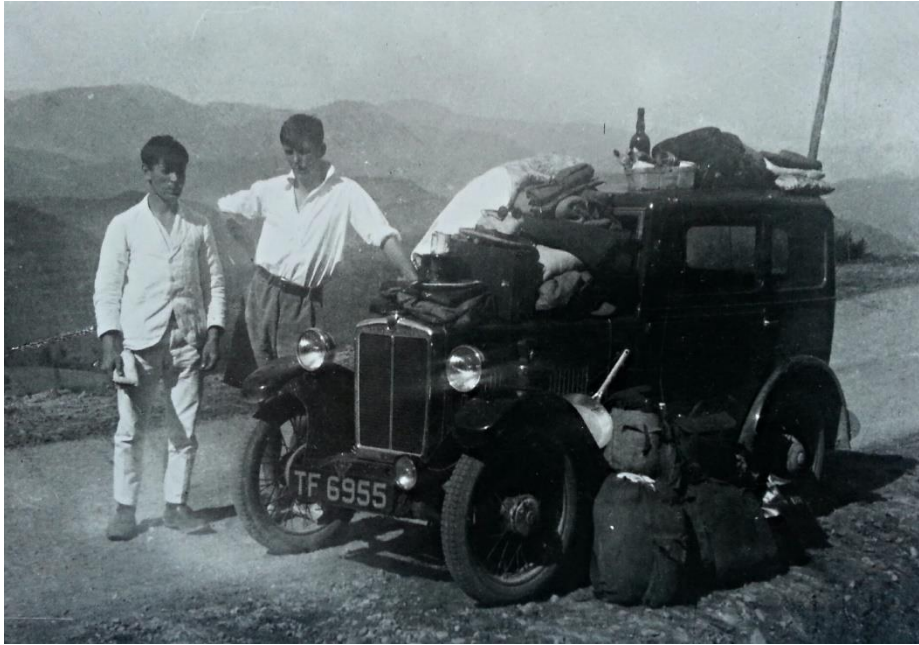


Fig. 1: Wilf Franks and Michael Tippett in Spain, 1933. Photograph taken by David Ayerst.
Courtesy of Caroline Ayerst.

Tippett was quite explicit in linking *A Child of Our Time* to the poetic and the personal:

Remembering the war poet Wilfred Owen, killed in World War I, who had always seemed close to me in spirit, I thought of two lines from one of his prophetic poems: 'War broke: and now the winter of the world / With perishing great darkness closes in.' I joined this notion of seasons in history with personal experience concerning the 'dark' and the 'shadow' in C. G. Jung's terminology³

However, at the time he was writing the text, Tippett distanced the work from the overtly political: 'I am contemplating an oratorio on the Grynspan story... but it

won't be political – in the strictest sense of the word'⁴ This article aims to examine how the composer distills some of his political ideologies into the work.

Section I narrates the background to Franks' and Tippett's relationship. Section II discusses how Tippett used Jungian dream therapy following the end of his romantic relationship with Wilfred Franks: the latter featured in many of these dreams, some of which were incorporated into the libretto of *A Child of Our Time*. Section III details Franks' passion for—and detailed knowledge of—poetry, particularly the work of William Blake and Wilfred Owen. Section IV discusses how Franks influenced Tippett's attitude to politics in the 1930s, not only in relation to Tippett's adoption of politics associated with the radical left, but also in the way that he, Franks and associates perceived themselves as societal 'outsiders'. This article examines how these factors fed into *A Child of Our Time*.

Background

Tippett and Franks met in 1932 on a railway platform in Manchester. For Tippett, it was love at first sight:

What was immediately obvious that April evening was that something totally unexpected by Michael had happened. He was stirred and disturbed. Without saying a word Wilf had moved to the vacant centre of Michael's life and filled it.⁵

Between 1932 and 1938, Franks and Tippett were lovers⁶ and artistic soulmates inspired by the culture and politics of the time. David Ayerst—Tippett's life-long friend—described Wilf's artistic sensibilities as “compatible but not competitive with Michael's”, and that while the ‘sun ... shone on them ... they had both already seen the world's dark side.’⁷ Both grew up during the First World War and had witnessed the loss of a significant proportion of the younger generation. This was imprinted on them both, for later they became conscientious objectors and anti-war campaigners.

Franks studied art and design under Bauhaus masters at the Staatliche Bauhochschule Weimar during the late 1920s. While there he witnessed the success of the Nazi Party in the Thuringia regional elections of December 1929. This led to the closure of the art school in Weimar, as the Nazis took control of

education in the new coalition government.⁸ Prior to the school's closure, Franks embraced the Bauhaus philosophy relating to the unity of the arts; this would stay with him throughout his life. By the late 1930s, he was not only a painter, sculptor, and dancer, but also an actor and costume designer for the fledgling BBC Television Service at Alexandra Palace in North London.

Tippett's letters⁹ during the period of the romantic association indicate that the relationship with Franks was a stormy one, and that its end was inevitable. Notwithstanding Tippett's own premonitions, the eventual breakdown of the relationship came as a shock. The relationship had been volatile and rather one-sided from the outset. Franks was bisexual, and throughout the affair he struggled to come to terms with both his own homosexual instincts as well as the intensity of Tippett's affection for him.¹⁰ Until Franks made the decisive break, both were in their own way trapped in the relationship, which was characterised by cycles of arguments and separations never truly resolved before reconciliation. Eventually, Tippett would be left out in the cold as Franks began a new relationship.

Illuminating Dreams

It was August 1938 when Franks met Tippett in a London café to end their relationship. This would shock Tippett to his very core. Franks informed Tippett of his intention to marry Meg Masters. Tippett must have known her well, for there are several references to her in *Those Twentieth Century Blues*. Meg's full name was Margarita Masters; she also used the name Margarita Medina for her creative endeavours. Masters, like Franks, had several creative interests – she was a dancer, choreographer, and visual artist.

In *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, Tippett provides an account of his break-up with Franks:

I reached the café ahead of him and sat with my head in my hands, brooding on the section I had reached in the slow movement of my Double Concerto. When Wilf arrived he said, 'I have decided to marry this girl.' I went completely cold. At the very moment he said that I cut off relations absolutely. Wilf was deeply hurt. I returned to Oxted and had such violent dreams, it was as if a whole dam had opened.¹¹



Fig. 2: A young Meg Masters.

Courtesy of Karen Archer.

Despite this shattering event, Tippett completed the Concerto for Double String Orchestra in 1939. Composition had for a long time provided him with an escape from his often-troubled relationship with Franks.¹² On return to his Oxted cottage, Tippett's reaction to that painful moment in the London café fed into the slow movement which he was working on;¹³ it incorporates the material of the folk song known as *Ca' The Yowes to the Knowes*.¹⁴ Tippett first used this folk tune in the mid-1930s when, as Musical Director for Margaret Barr's Dance Drama Group, he

composed experimental music for that collective, of which Franks and Masters were members.¹⁵

After the split, Tippett spent a year striving to heal the pain caused by the end of the all-consuming affair. The break-up with Franks was so painful for Tippett that he felt 'unable to come to terms with either the wretchedness of the separation or the emotional turmoil it let loose'.¹⁶ During this time, Tippett turned to his friend and collaborator, Francesca Allinson.¹⁷ Like Franks, Allinson was bisexual and despite her being in a long running same-sex relationship, Tippett even contemplated marrying her at this time. As they struggled with their respective relationship problems, Tippett and Allinson shared a passion for self-reflection.¹⁸ Using Jungian analysis, Tippett searched for answers as he underwent a period of introspection in an effort to better understand his own sexuality.¹⁹ Franks and Masters were also engrossed in Jungian analysis at this time.

Tippett continued to work with Franks and Masters despite his own recollection of cutting off relations 'absolutely'.²⁰ For example—in the summer of 1939—Tippett, Franks, and Masters collaborated on a 'Symphony of Youth' at Brockwell Park in south London. Tippett's contribution was as producer and conductor, Franks was responsible principally for sets and costumes, and Masters' portfolio focused on choreographic matters.²¹

Tippett's letters to the poet Douglas Newton—a mutual friend—provide further evidence that the friendship among the three continued well into the war years, with a shared interest in Jungian analysis. (Although—as time progressed—Tippett, Franks, and Masters would become increasingly distant.) In one letter, Tippett requests the return of two books by Carl Jung which were in the possession of Franks and Masters:

There is something I'd v. much appreciate & that's to get back the two Jung books they've got. One ('Two Essays') is out of print now – it's really John Layard's copy. The other is the 'Secret of the Golden Flower'. I feel, from every point of view, they're more sensible in my keeping again.²²

Around the time of the breakup with Franks, Tippett had turned to the psychologist John Layard, 'a maverick Jungian analyst',²³ for help concerning the interpretation of his dreams.²⁴ Eventually, Tippett lessened his reliance on Layard:

When the break-up with Wilf came, I decided to start writing down my own dreams and, independently of Layard, made my own analyses from a Jungian standpoint.²⁵

Franks and Masters were in Tippett's thoughts a great deal at this pivotal time in his life. This becomes clear in his 1939 dream sequence, parts of which feature in his autobiography. Franks is a dominant figure throughout the sequence; Masters, on the other hand, makes fleeting, but forceful appearances. For example, a dream occurring on Sunday 14 May includes the image of a head separated from its body, which Tippett interprets as follows:

This represents some definite compensation for a certain inflation and superiority in my behaviour to Wilf's Meg. I have tended to depreciate an artist's relations to a woman. Thus by implication Wilf's to Meg...²⁶

That Franks and Masters were so prominent in Tippett's dream analysis is significant in relation to *A Child of our Time*. In the period of its genesis, the composer was wrestling with his own feelings toward them; on one occasion he wrote to Masters in a bid to mend fences: 'I've sent letter to Meg and to break the ice and [offer] the bond of correspondence...'.²⁷ Tippett's guilt regarding the manner in which he handled the situation concerning himself, Franks and Masters was also a theme in his dreams. His analysis of a dream that occurred on 27 May 1939 provided him with some relief from the guilt he had been feeling, which led, ultimately, toward the composer's acceptance of his homosexuality.

I had a deep guilt that came in my final relations with Wilf... I went into the dream therapy anticipating that what would come out was the possibility of marriage. But then I began to realise half-way through that something else was being said. That came in an extraordinary dream... in which I was contrite and Wilf forgiving, and a mystic marriage took place. This I rejected. I turned away for some reason...from Wilf's shining face, knowing that love had to go deeper.²⁸

For Tippett, this dream signified a release from the past and acceptance of his true self going forward. 'This was the turning point in the therapy',²⁹ he wrote. So important was this image of reconciliation and self-acceptance that it was included in the libretto of *A Child of Our Time*, as Tippett explains: 'The image of the shining face later appeared transformed in the alto aria in Part Three of *A Child of Our Time*':³⁰

The Soul of man is impassioned like a woman.
She is old as the earth, beyond good and evil,
The sensual garments.
Her face will be illumined like the sun.
Then is the time of his deliverance.³¹

In his notes for this aria, Tippett equates this section to the engraving in William Blake's *Illustrations on the Book of Job*, where Job becomes unable to distinguish between the actions of God and those of Satan, with the Divine Mercy showing him the mystery of rebirth.³² Years later, Tippett forms an explicit connection between the same Blakeian image of Job and his relationship with Franks:

The level of distress we reached was sometimes acute. I remember being in bed with Wilf and feeling that I did not know which of our personalities was his and which was mine. At the time it occurred to me how close this was to the Blake picture of Job, when he was forsaken by his Creator and could no longer distinguish between the action of Satan and the action of God.³³

Tippett's Jungian dream therapy came to its conclusion at the end of August 1939. He explains:

A kind of rebirth was now happening. I stopped writing down my dreams. Three days later, 3 September 1939, the war began: simultaneously, I started writing the music for *A Child of Our Time*.³⁴

Poetic Influence

Wilf Franks was not only a visual and performing artist; he was also a lover of poetry. In a letter written in 1937, Tippett describes how Franks' understanding of poetry influenced him:

... he spends an hour or so with me here on the Blake I am going to set, and with a surer instinct for poetry than mine tells me where to get off – in point of fact I

am therefore only setting the 'Song of Liberty' from 'The Marriage [of Heaven and Hell]' ... Wilfred Owen he knows almost word for word and draws it out for me, its meanings, its divine pity and so on – that will stay as long as it means something to us both³⁵

Franks' knowledge and understanding of poetry influenced more than Tippett's setting of William Blake's *A Song of Liberty*. Their shared love of Wilfred Owen's poetry is also evidenced throughout the 1930s. For example, Tippett wrote out Owen's poem *Happiness* on the score of his First String Quartet (1935),³⁶ a composition into which his love for Franks 'flowed out in the slow movement'.³⁷

Importantly, it is through Wilfred Owen's poetry that another imprint of their relationship appears in *A Child of Our Time*. Just two years after Franks 'drew out the meanings' for him, Tippett used Owen's poetry as the basis for several parts of the libretto for the oratorio. This includes the opening lines, derived from Owen's poem *Seeds* (later re-worked as *1914*.)

Tippett takes Owen's lines:

War broke. And now the winter of the world
With perishing darkness closes in.
And they become:
The World turns on its dark side.
It is winter.³⁸

Again, in the third chorus, Tippett adapts material from the same poem; he explains that 'the association to the war and the general upheaval is in Owen's lines':

But now the exigent winter, and the need
Of sowings for new spring, and flesh for seed.

Adapted to:

We are lost.
We are seeds before the wind.
We are carried to a great slaughter.³⁹

Then, in the tenor solo toward the end of Part Two, Tippett takes inspiration from Owen's *Strange Meeting*:

Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now.

Tippett noted that here Owen was distilling some of the 'pity of war.'⁴⁰ And in the libretto the material appears thus:

My Dreams are all shattered in a ghastly reality.
The wild beating of my heart is stilled; day by day
Earth and sky are not for those in prison.
Mother! Mother!⁴¹

For both Franks and Tippett the poetry of Wilfred Owen and his evocative description of the horrors of the First World War provided powerful imagery which helped instil in them an anti-war stance. A stance which was so strongly held that it would lead both men to prison sentences as conscientious objectors during World War Two.

Politics

The spectre of Franks floats around *A Child of Our Time*, but not only through poetry and Tippett's somewhat abstract dream analysis. Politically too, Franks had long been a major influence on the composer. By 1939, Tippett had moved decisively from Trotskyism towards pacifism, and Franks was as pivotal in this change as he had been in Tippett's first adoption of Marxism some six years prior. Bryan Fisher, a friend of Tippett's at the time, explained that the split with Franks proved to be a political turning-point for the composer:

His profound and tempestuous relationship with Wilf came to an end ... and Michael was free to pursue a policy more in accordance with his own beliefs, which were essentially pacifist.⁴²

Franks had been on a journey through various idealistic movements, but in Germany in the late 1920s, he discovered Marxist politics. This is evidenced by his friendship with the German artist Rudolf Brückner-Fuhlrott, a radical leftist who was later imprisoned by the Nazis in a concentration camp at Hohnstein.⁴³ Upon his return to England, Franks persuaded Tippett to come and work with him amongst a community of depression-era ironstone miners in the North East. This shared experience in the early days of the relationship cemented in Tippett's mind the startling reality of the poverty experienced by the working class. It also helped awaken him to the Marxist politics that Franks had already adopted. While others in Tippett's circle were also influencing his political thinking at this time (for example his cousin Phyllis Kemp and composer Alan Bush), his new-found love for Franks was pivotal, and the pair went on to develop a shared political outlook that merged Marxist and pacifist ideologies.

In 1935, Franks performed the lead part in Tippett's play, titled *War Ramp*, which presented a stinging critique of the banking industry's supply of credit to fund war. The play was produced later in the year at a series of 'concert demonstrations' under the slogan 'International Working-Class Solidarity means Peace'.⁴⁴ The slogan encapsulated the fusion of pacifism and Marxism espoused by both Tippett and Franks by that point. They believed that by bringing together the working people of Europe through Marxist ideology, the ongoing cycle of nationalist and imperialist wars could be ended. Franks and Tippett continued their political journey and by 1936, were fully embracing the political philosophy of Leon Trotsky⁴⁵ after they became aware of the sinister and brutal nature of Joseph Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union. By aligning themselves with Trotsky, Franks and Tippett found themselves at loggerheads with both Kemp and Bush, who remained loyal to the Communist Party of Great Britain. Undaunted, they proceeded on what they saw as the path to a fairer, more equitable and ultimately more peaceful society. Until their break-up in 1938, the two men remained politically aligned and were actively participating in London's fledgling Trotskyist movement.

In an impassioned letter dated July 1937, Tippett wrote about the brutal oppression of Trotskyist 'comrades in distress' who were fighting in the Spanish Civil War,

stating 'the repression against the left elements is very bitter'.⁴⁶ During that war, the Soviet-backed Spanish Republicans found themselves increasingly reliant on the USSR's military support in their fight against Franco's fascist armies. This gave Stalin's Soviet Union growing influence as the war developed. Stalin used his influence in Spain to repress the Trotskyist militias with a campaign of disinformation and propaganda. Under the influence of Stalin's USSR, Trotskyist-leaning groups (such as the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification) and their members⁴⁷ were slandered, imprisoned, tortured, and even murdered during the Spanish Civil War. Trotskyists in the Soviet Union faced a similar fate, circumstances that Tippet was well aware of.⁴⁸

Despite Tippet's departure from Trotskyism as he began composing *A Child of Our Time*, Trotskyist thinking is still evident in the work. One figure more than any other is the focus and inspiration for *A Child of Our Time*, the Polish-German Jewish refugee Herschel Grynszpan. Grynszpan's act was one of violent revenge against the Nazis who had a few days earlier arrested his family and, along with thousands of other Polish-German Jews, deported them to the Polish border.

Tippet discovered the plight of Grynszpan in the November 1938 edition of *Picture Post*;⁴⁹ it is also likely he read Leon Trotsky's article on Grynszpan in *Socialist Appeal*, a Trotskyist newspaper which Franks would sell on the streets of London.⁵⁰

While Trotsky's article sympathised with Grynszpan, it did not endorse his lone act of terror, remarking 'all our sympathies are with the self-sacrificing avengers even though they have been unable to discover the correct road'.⁵¹

With echoes of Tippet's earlier letter about the Spanish Civil War, Trotsky wrote the following about the Grynszpan case in his article:

All the more revolting... is the campaign now being conducted against Grynszpan by command of the Kremlin in the international Stalinist press. They attempt to depict him as an agent of the Nazis or an agent of Trotskyists in alliance with the Nazis.

The brutal oppression of the Trotskyist groups during the Spanish Civil War and in the Soviet Union stayed with Tippet, and in a letter to Alan Bush, he discusses the

persecution of Trotskyists, and how *A Child of Our Time* recognises their plight alongside other persecuted groups:

It has been dawning upon me that the *Child of Our Time* is only too continuously a document of our day. Its deepest sympathy, in fact its hero, is the modern scapegoat – who are often whole classes of people, such as Jews, Negroes – and in my opinion political groups like anarchists, Trotskyists.⁵²

The image of Grynspan was not only used as a metaphor for the oppression of Jews and those persecuted on the basis of their political affiliation, but also African Americans in the Deep South, as the bass solo in Part One of the libretto makes clear:

Now in each nation there were some cast out by authority and tormented;
made to suffer for the general wrong.
Pogroms in the east, lynching in the west ...⁵³

Further to this, Tippett includes five African-American spirituals in *A Child of Our Time*: these introduce an ‘emotional release’ at key moments in the oratorio. The inclusion of such widely-recognised musical representations of oppression must have served as an ideal metaphor at the time, highlighting both anti-Semitism and the racism embedded in western imperialism. As Martyn Hudson writes:

The text also points to the idea that, in every epoch, one race becomes a symbol of persecution amongst tyranny: the Holocaust in one age, African slavery in another.⁵⁴

Tippett’s musical expressions of empathy with an enslaved people would have resonated with Franks’ father, Dan, who had been taught to play the violin by African Americans in the Deep South in the late nineteenth century, some decades after the official end of slavery in that region. Franks’ parents had pursued their own idealistic dream and lived as part of a ‘radical socialist Christian’ commune in Florida where ‘they embraced an alternative way of living’.⁵⁵ But Dan Franks was appalled by the racism that he saw in the Deep South, believing that ‘all men are equal in the eyes of the Lord’. He socialised with the African Americans in the community against the wishes of the commune.

Franks explained:

He made what the people there thought was a tremendous mistake... he went down and sang with them, and they were playing violins and instruments and so on, and he persisted in doing this against all the threats and so on... One of them actually made him a violin and showed him how to play it.⁵⁶



Fig. 3: Wilf's parents, Dan and Florence Franks.

Source: Franks Family Collection.

When Franks' parents returned to England, Dan Franks brought home his gift of a violin and busked on the streets of London. He ended up playing professionally, initially in orchestras at the Moss Empire Theatres, and latterly at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and the Queen's Hall Orchestra.⁵⁷ Tippett visited the Franks' family home in Highgate, London throughout the years he was with Wilfred; he also knew the elder Franks well. Having become an accomplished brass and string player, Franks senior was, at this time, teaching music at Morley College. It was Dan Franks who introduced Tippett to Eva Hubback, the principal at Morley,⁵⁸ prior to the

composer's appointment as Director of Music there. Inspired by Franks senior, who became both its secretary and violinist, Tippett established the South London Orchestra of Unemployed Musicians, which was based at Morley.⁵⁹ When Dan Franks performed at the premiere of *A Child of Our Time*, the spirituals would have likely been familiar to him from his years spent in Florida. Even so, he and other musicians found the composition to be technically demanding:

Even in the early performances of *A Child of Our Time*, a work which I deliberately made as direct and simple as I could, stylistically, there were upheavals. I remember Wilf's father, Dan Franks, who played the violin in the first performance, getting up at one point and banging his chair on the floor in fury: 'This is impossible!' he exclaimed. No one would have guessed that this would become the most frequently performed of all my compositions, nationally and internationally, by amateurs and professionals alike.⁶⁰

Tippett's compassion towards the plight of oppressed people from around the globe was entwined with the Trotskyist, anti-imperialist thinking he and Franks had arrived at in the latter part of the 1930s. *A Child of Our Time* also represented a condemnation of the violence perpetrated by war-time leaders of the Allies. Franks considered Churchill as 'one of the great mass murders of the twentieth century',⁶¹ while Tippett claimed that Hitler's evil acts could not justify the 'gratuitous slaughter unleashed by Stalin, Churchill, or the Allies.'⁶²

Although not specifically expressed in *A Child of Our Time*, another anti-imperialist focus was the subjugated existence of the Indian people under British rule. Tippett speculated about the possibility of Britain losing the war and its Empire in a letter to Alan Bush:

I hate the Empire as I hate nothing else. It is the key pin of world capitalism and it's our job to bring it to the ground. Actually a defeat of England means the freedom of India.⁶³

Tippett's empathy towards the oppressed and marginalised was not only expressed in abstract terms. Indeed, many in his circle considered themselves as outcasts. One reason why Franks, and in turn Tippett, may have felt particular empathy toward Indian people was through Masters, who was the illegitimate child of an

Indian doctor. For much of her youth, she hid her true self from an intolerant society. This is evidenced by her stage name – Margarita Medina. In a newspaper article published in 1951, she denies her Indian heritage, citing her exotic looks as of Anglo-Spanish origin.⁶⁴ Moreover, as homosexuals in the 1930s, both Tippett and Franks were cast as outsiders by both the religious orthodoxy of the day, in addition to the law. Tippett's experience of living as an outsider in his own society was embedded in his psyche, and it played an important part in his world view. This could explain his feelings of empathy with the oppressed people of the world.

Conclusion

Little scholarly attention has been given concerning Franks' influence on the composer, particularly relating to *A Child of Our Time*. Tippett's relationship with Franks leaves imprints on the work, measured by heartbreak (which led to self-analysis and acceptance), a rejection of the political hegemony of the time where individuals were oppressed for their differences, and the salve of artistic escape in the power of poetry. *A Child of Our Time* begins in the darkness of winter, a time of political strife and war, and perhaps the symbolic darkness too of Tippett's painful split with Franks. It concludes in springtime, representing a renewal of hope as well as reconciliation for the human race, and for Tippett, a release from the pain of a broken relationship.

As World War Two progressed, Franks was drawn closer into his relationship with Masters. The couple attended the premiere of Tippett's *Fantasia on a Theme of Handel* on 7 March 1942 at Wigmore Hall: 'On this occasion it is for the boys to wear their corduroys, and Wilf to wear his beard and his green trousers, and Meg her peculiar make-up',⁶⁵ wrote Tippett. By the premiere of *A Child of Our Time* in 1944, Franks and Tippett were estranged; however, the friendship was re-established forty years later. The day after the first performance of *A Child of Our Time*, Masters gave birth to a daughter, named Karuna—an Indian name which in English translates as 'compassion'. But there is a final twist to this story that has echoes of *A Child of Our Time*'s themes of painful division, separation, and loss. Some four years after Karuna's birth, a bitter split occurred between Franks and Masters, and in

enduringly mysterious circumstances, Franks lost contact with his young daughter, never to see her again.⁶⁶

Danyel Gilgan studied Furniture Design at the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design before gaining a postgraduate teaching qualification at Middlesex University. However, most of his career has been spent working in sports broadcasting, and he currently travels the world with the ATP Tennis Tour. He has spent the last seven years researching the life of his late grandfather, the artist Wilf Franks, whose alternative view of life had a profound effect on the composer Michael Tippett. Gilgan has recently published a book entitled The Life Before: My Grandfather's Life Uncovered.

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Endnotes:

¹ For example:

- a. Michael Tippett, *Music of the Angels: Essays and Sketchbooks of Michael Tippett*, ed. Meirion Bowen (London: Eulenburg, 1980).
 - b. Kenneth Gloag, *Tippett: A Child of Our Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- ² Danyl P. Gilgan, *The Life Before* (Self-published, 2020).
- ³ Michael Tippett, *Music of the Angels: Essays and Sketchbooks of Michael Tippett*, ed. Meirion Bowen (London: Eulenburg, 1980), 124-25.
- ⁴ Michael Tippett to Alan Bush, 6 October 1939, in *Selected Letters of Michael Tippett*, ed. Thomas Schuttenhelm (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 127.
- ⁵ David Ayerst, "Young Michael Tippett" (talk, Burford Society, Burford, 1985). Courtesy of Caroline Ayerst.
- ⁶ In later life Franks denied any sexual relationship; see Cathie Brett, "How Depression Hit East Cleveland Inspired a Musical Great", *Middlesbrough Evening Gazette*, 22 January 1998. However, Tippett makes several references to their sex life; see Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), 58; *Selected Letters of Michael Tippett*, ed. Schuttenhelm, 218, 232-233.
- ⁷ Ayerst, "Young Michael Tippett" (talk, Burford Society, Burford, 1985). Courtesy of Caroline Ayerst.
- ⁸ Michael H. Kater, *Weimar: From Enlightenment to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 205.
- ⁹ To mutual friends, such as David Ayerst and Alan Bush.
- ¹⁰ See Danyl P. Gilgan, *The Life Before* (Self-published, 2020), 116.
- ¹¹ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 62.
- ¹² See *Selected Letters of Michael Tippett*, 218. Letter to David Ayerst, 1934.
- ¹³ See Thomas Schuttenhelm, *The Orchestral Music of Michael Tippett: Creative Development and the Compositional Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 53.
- ¹⁴ See Gilgan, *The Life Before*, 131.
- ¹⁵ Wilfred Franks, interview by Malcolm Chase, 1988, Teesside Archives, U/S/1516.
- ¹⁶ Ian Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and his Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 36.
- ¹⁷ Born 1902, died 1945. A musicologist, writer, choral conductor, and pacifist.
- ¹⁸ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 62.
- ¹⁹ See Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and his Music*, 36.
- ²⁰ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 62.
- ²¹ A programme of the event is held in the Louis Golding Collection at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.
- ²² Michael Tippett, letter to Douglas Newton [ca. 1940/41], MS Mus. 291-292, British Library.
- ²³ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 63.
- ²⁴ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 63.

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- ²⁵ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 63.
- ²⁶ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 105.
- ²⁷ See Gilgan, *The Life Before*, 129. [Words are as they appear in an undated letter to David Ayerst, late 1930s, private collection]
- ²⁸ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 108.
- ²⁹ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 110.
- ³⁰ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 109.
- ³¹ See Tippett's explanation in *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, page 109.
- ³² Michael Tippett, *Music of the Angels*, 180.
- ³³ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 61-62.
- ³⁴ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 110.
- ³⁵ *Selected Letters of Michael Tippett*, ed. Thomas Schuttenhelm (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 233.
- ³⁶ This is stated in Schuttenhelm, *The Orchestral Music of Michael Tippett*, 300; it is reproduced in Gilgan, 118.
- ³⁷ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 58.
- ³⁸ Tippett, *Music of the Angels*, 128-129.
- ³⁹ Tippett, *Music of the Angels*, 132-133.
- ⁴⁰ Tippett, *Music of the Angels*, 170
- ⁴¹ Tippett, *Music of the Angels*, 170-171.
- ⁴² Unpublished memoirs of Bryan Fisher. I am grateful to Helen Southworth for pointing this out.
- ⁴³ See Gilgan, 64.
- ⁴⁴ Helen Southworth, *Fresca: A Life in the Making* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2017), 128.
- ⁴⁵ In the mid-1920s, Joseph Stalin came up with the concept of 'Socialism in One Country', which flew in the face of Trotsky's more traditional Marxist view that the revolution had to spread internationally if it was to fulfil Marx's concept of World Revolution.
- ⁴⁶ Letter to Ruth Pennyman, July 1937, U/PEN(4)6/7/1, Teesside Archives.
- ⁴⁷ POUM were originally a Trotskyist group but by 1937 they were not in line with Trotsky. Nevertheless, they remained defiantly anti-Stalinist.
- ⁴⁸ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 47.
- ⁴⁹ Kemp, 150.
- ⁵⁰ See *Socialist Appeal*, 14 February 1939. I am grateful to Martyn Hudson for pointing this out.
- ⁵¹ *Socialist Appeal*, 14 February 1939.
- ⁵² Michael Tippett to Alan Bush, autumn 1944, in *Selected Letters of Michael Tippett*, ed. Thomas Schuttenhelm, 133.
- ⁵³ Tippett, *Music of the Angels*, 135.
- ⁵⁴ Martyn Hudson, "Five African American spirituals and Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*." *Race & Class* 54, no. 2 (2012): 77.
- ⁵⁵ Gilgan, 30.
- ⁵⁶ Franks, interview by Malcolm Chase, 1988, Teesside Archives, U/S/1516
- ⁵⁷ Franks, interview, 1988, Teesside Archives, U/S/1516
- ⁵⁸ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 114.
- ⁵⁹ See Kemp, 27: "The Inspiration behind the Orchestra though, and its real founder (and secretary), was Dan Franks, a string player and teacher who had been told by his son of Tippett's abilities."
- ⁶⁰ Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 205.
- ⁶¹ Gilgan, 154
- ⁶² Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 121.
- ⁶³ Michael Tippett to Alan Bush, July 1936, in *Selected Letters of Michael Tippett*, ed. Schuttenhelm, 125.
- ⁶⁴ *The Stage*, 3 May 1951.
- ⁶⁵ *Selected Letters of Michael Tippett*, ed. Schuttenhelm, 98.
- ⁶⁶ Further information may be found in Gilgan, chapter 20.