Tobias Escher

“I feel as if I was inside a song”

The Presence of Music in J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth
and Songs and Poems of *The Lord of the Rings* set to music

novatlansound

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http://www.middle-earth-music.info
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About this book

This book, representing a revised form of a M.A. paper submitted by the author in 2011 at the University of Mainz / Germany, sets out to discuss the extent in which selected musical works based on the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien represent the ideas and descriptions of music in Middle-earth introduced in Tolkien's works.

While this book (and the paper it is based on) strives to follow academic standards, for reasons of brevity the whole complex of textual criticism needed to be largely omitted. This is explained in more detail in the text and mentioned here just as a note to readers coming from the academic world: Yes, I am keenly aware of the fact that this topic is not dealt with in this book. This is on purpose because it, despite being good practice and very interesting, does not contribute to the topic researched here. As such, J.R.R. Tolkien's idea of Middle-earth being set on our earth, but a very long time ago, along with the origin of *The Lord of the Rings* as a translation of the *Red Book* is taken as "reality" here on purpose.

Everyone who has read the original paper will find a number of additions in this revised edition, along with a sizable number of corrections and clarifications.

For all readers not from the scholarly world: I hope you will find this book informative and maybe even entertaining. At times it can get a bit technical, simply because after all it is first and foremost a research paper. But nevertheless I hope you enjoy reading.

I am open for any feedback, criticism and maybe even a tiny bit of praise if you think it is deserved. Please use the contact form at www.middle-earth-music.info to send a message. I fully plan to expand this paper in the future with discussions of additional pieces as well as more background information. This version is for the interested reader who wants to explore the Music of Middle-earth a bit further and represents just a tiny fraction of what one may find out about this topic.

Tobias Escher

CONTENT

Introduction

The references to music in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, both in terms of musical elements only mentioned indirectly in passing as well as music directly performed as part of the story are many and varied. Spanning nearly all cultures described by Tolkien in his work they arguably form an important part as to the cultural and historical background of the cosmos envisioned by the author. We may say that, to a large extent, music serves as a major characterising force for the protagonists, while – as shall be discussed at length – still remaining very realistic in its depiction and use as a believable part of the characters' behaviour, cultural background and overall place and importance in the universe of Tolkien's work.

While a very large number of artists – creating both private, "inspired by" and similar projects as well as licensed productions[1] – have striven to bring the music described by Tolkien in his works to life already shortly after their publishing, only recently the scientific world has begun to look further into this aspect of the Professor's works. The year 2010 has seen the publication of a number of books on the general subject, dealing with extensive analysis of Tolkien's texts, which will form the basis of this paper.[2]

As noted, J.R.R. Tolkien's works, and *The Lord of the Rings* in particular, have inspired countless artists to bring elements of his stories to life in their respective art form(s). A major part of the works created by these artists draws motives and inspiration from Tolkien's works and does not necessarily follow his directions to the letter, but instead builds upon his legacy to create unique and personal works of art. We may in this category see most of the musical creations commonly referred to as "fan art", but also some commercial releases of music. All those projects for the most part do not overly concern themselves with strictly following the author's clues and indications, but instead extend his universe by making references to works or to elements from works. While all those pieces of art are undoubtedly interesting and can give great insight into

[1] These terms here are used for any works of art not officially approved by the Tolkien Estate. This is not a distinction of quality, but simply a matter of finding a terminology. Licensed works on the other hand are approved by the Tolkien Estate.
[2] See Bibliography

how a particular story universe can be modelled, this paper will be concerned with what is best described as "official interpretations" of musical allusions, clues and descriptions in Tolkien's works, focused on *The Lord of the Rings*, meaning projects aiming to bring the music of the book to life as a retelling of Tolkien's words in a different medium.

The most important aspect of Music in Middle-earth are songs sung by characters during the course of the story as well as poems recited by them, with the boundaries between the two not always clearly separable. These texts range from traditional folk songs to – supposedly – art music as well as prophecies, riddles and verse. All of these are tightly interweaved with the actual narrative, not disrupting the storyline, but instead being part of it and are in some cases even necessary for understanding the plot. The mere number of poems and songs in the book confirms their importance to the author, who clearly suggests poetry and vocal as well as instrumental music to be an integral part of the culture of most peoples in the story.

Given all this, it is not surprising that, even when leaving out all music not directly based on the author's texts (sanctioned by the Tolkien Estate or not) and solely focussing on instrumental music described in more or less detail by Tolkien himself, as well as songs based on the numerous poems by the author, there is still a significant amount of musical material created by different artists, all of it claiming to be true to the general vision of Tolkien. This paper aims to analyse the musical allusions and clues as well as the poetry given in *The Lord of the Rings* and partly also *The Hobbit* and compare these findings with the creations of artists who have used this information to create musical renditions of Tolkien's words and worlds.

1 Major Works

It would be absolutely impossible to in a single paper address all musical works claiming to bring Tolkien's creations to life in a manner true to the author. In the field of musical works based on *The Lord of the Rings*, there are, however, four very important works[3], in which composers have tried to make the music of Middle-earth audible. These works all are officially licensed and approved by the owners of the rights to Tolkien's Legendarium and will form the basis of this analysis. What these works have in common is that clearly the artists responsible for their creation have carefully studied Tolkien's writings as well as his background rather than only loosely basing their art on Tolkien's universe. A short overview of these works is in order to establish chronology and gather some general information before dealing with the author's clues as concerning music as well as ultimately applying this information to specific parts of the works mentioned.

1.1 The Tolkien Ensemble: Complete Songs & Poems

The Tolkien Ensemble is a Danish group of musicians, founded and led by composer Caspar Reiff. The ensemble came together in 1995 with the goal to create the first complete musical interpretation of all of Tolkien's poems in *The Lord of the Rings*. With permission from the Tolkien Estate, the ensemble recorded two albums. In the course of the heightened public and media attention after the release of the *Fellowship of the Ring* film in 2001, the Ensemble met Christopher Lee, the actor playing the part of Saruman in the film trilogy, who would then take part in the group's third album as a narrator and singer. This album gained the group wider public and media attention. After releasing a fourth album with the poems and songs still missing in the previous albums, all the songs and poems from *The Lord of the Rings* had been recorded. Composer Caspar Reiff explains the idea behind the four releases as follows:

> *The four albums that led to the 4CD box were called* An Evening in Rivendell, A Night in Rivendell, At Dawn in Rivendell *and* Leaving

[3] These works are relatively widely known and are representative of the ways in which Tolkien's texts have been approached by musical artists.

> Rivendell*. The reason for this is that the whole production could be seen as a fictive evening, night and morning in Rivendell where the main characters and the population meets up after the War of the Ring to share the songs and tales of the recent war.* (Reiff, e-mail 1).

In 2006, a 4CD-set of all songs and poems was released, which is what Reiff is referring to as "4CD box" in the quotation above. This set presents the material in chronological order and features quotes from the book in its liner notes, which underscores the Ensemble's intention to bring Tolkien's verse to life as a part of the actual narrative. The chronological order furthermore makes it possible to listen to the renditions of the songs while reading the book. Because the Ensemble deliberately chose this approach for their definitive collection of Tolkien's songs and poems – as opposed to the single album releases, which were not chronological – we need to take this into account. In this paper, the Tolkien Ensemble's compositions as elements of the actual story will therefore be the focus of attention and the basis from which we will analyse the music of Middle-earth, with a number of pieces analysed in greater detail as to how well they work as renditions of actual story elements.

1.2 Donald Swann: "The Road Goes Ever On" Song Cycle

The only published renditions of songs from *The Lord of the Rings* during the author's lifetime were written by British composer Donald Swann (1923-1994), who set a number of songs from the book to music along with one song from *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*. In later editions two additional songs were added, which are not an official part of the song cycle, named *The Road Goes Ever On*. Swann wrote the cycle at the request of his wife, who was an avid fan of the book (Swann, v). Swann played the songs to Tolkien, who liked them with the exception of one single song (see 4.1.1). This song then would become the only published musical work by Tolkien himself, but included in Swann's song cycle. The songs are set for a solo vocalist with piano accompaniment and in their style draw from art song. The cycle is intended to be performed as a whole with key changes composed in. As such, it does not strive to represent the actual performances from the book, but must be seen as separate from the book. The composer writes that his "music was not written in Middle-earth" (Swann, v).

1.3 The Lord of the Rings: The Stage Show

There have been a number of stage productions setting out to bring Tolkien's most well-known work to life, one of those being Bernd Stromberger's *The Lord of the Rings* in 1998, which, however, actually was a stage version of *The Hobbit* and was a commercial and artistic failure. Originally a part of the creative team of this production, writer Shaun McKenna then found his way to the big theatrical production of *The Lord of the Rings* (this time indeed based on the actual book), which premiered in 2006 in Toronto and, after mixed success, was shortened and with parts re-written reopened in London in 2007. It only had a short run until July 2008, supposedly due to unsatisfying spectator numbers.

The music for the production was written by Indian composer A. R. Rahman in collaboration with Finnish world music group Värttinä. According to the producers, orchestrator Christopher Nightingale had a significant part in shaping the score (Russell, 77), so we shall give him credit as a composer, too, since arguably his influence can easily be discerned. He is said to have been the force bringing the different styles of Rahman and Värttinä together, which suggests that his work went far beyond the realm of regular orchestration.

Even though only very few direct quotes from Tolkien's poems were used for the lyrics of the musical, the producers nevertheless maintain their desire to be true to Tolkien:

> *"Was I ever tempted to use Tolkien's lyrics?" asks Shaun McKenna [Co-Writer]. "No, it wouldn't have been appropriate here [. . .]* (Russell, 75).

According to Christopher Nightingale [Orchestrator], it was the very essence of Tolkien's worldscape that he wanted to capture in the music and themes. (Russell, 70). The composers of the musical approached the task of setting Tolkien's world to music from the angle of capturing the feeling and the underlying drama and culture, not by following the letters to the word. The songs were intended not as regular musical songs, progressing the story, but as the songs of the cultures itself:

> *…with this notion that the songs wouldn't do what songs do in musical theatre; instead they would be the old songs of Middle-earth; that people were singing them because they were singing the old songs.* (Russell, 49).

As a stage production intended for a large audience and with a running time of just short of three hours, we need to make amendments to the show in terms of completeness of the text; nevertheless the fact that the show arguably managed to bring such a complicated story to the stage at all – and successfully, at least from a musical point of view – is no small feat.

1.4 Howard Shore: The Lord of the Rings Film Scores

By far the most well-known soundscape modelled on Tolkien's works, Howard Shore's score to the *Lord of the Rings* films[4] (U.S. 2001-2004) has proven to be able to stand firmly on its own and even after the few years since its release has found its place both in film music history as well as in the concert hall. A note about the dates: Even though *LotR: The Return of the King* was released theatrically in 2003, for the 2004 Extended DVD Edition the composer wrote and recorded new cues. The Extended Editions of the films are commonly regarded as the definitive versions and object of most of the research as well as official publications, so 2004 is used here as the date for *The Return of the King*. Furthermore, the Extended Edition contains a song that is not present in the theatrical release (see 4.2.5).

With the music playing an exceptionally important role in creating the effect of the movies, a vivid interest of the public in it and the will of all involved to make information about it accessible, its genesis and inner workings are very well documented. This led not only to commercial releases of Complete Scores for all three films, but also to a book solely dealing with the music (Adams). This fortunate aspect facilitates gaining a deeper insight into the way the composer dealt with Tolkien's legacy and constitutes one of the rare occasions, where scientific insight can be given by those directly involved. These materials clearly state the amount of thought that has gone into making the music as faithful to the author as possible. This, as well as the importance of the films in modern culture, more than merit the inclusion of the film scores for analysis in this paper.

[4] It would be more correct to refer to it as one film split into three parts, but due to official sources referring to "films" we will follow their lead in this matter.

1.5 Connections of the Four Works

The Tolkien Ensemble gives concerts regularly, during which most of the time their music is presented together with adaptions of cues from the score for the feature films by Howard Shore. Attending these concerts and following up the press, one will discover that this leads to some confusion, partly due to the fact that the Ensemble sometimes is not even mentioned in the concert description, which is why a short clarifying note is in order: While making artistic sense, combining the music of the Ensemble and Shore's score is a decision based on the popularity of the films as well as the immediate attraction of the film score. Apart from Christopher Lee taking part in concerts as narrator and singer, there are no musical or artistic connections between the Tolkien Ensemble and Howard shore's score.

The *Lord of the Rings* stage show has no connections with either of them. On the contrary in its visual and musical style it is distinctly different from both, with the exception of Hobbit folk songs, which shall be discussed later on.

Donald Swann's music, finally, stands on its own and musically is firmly rooted in 20th century art song mixed with English folk music and as such does not strive to be true Music of Middle-earth. Caspar Reiff of the Tolkien Ensemble stresses that "If there's one source of inspiration Peter [Hall, co-composer] and I haven't used its Swann's music..." (Reiff, e-mail 1).

We may therefore say that the four major works discussed in this paper, apart from being based on the same source material (Tolkien's works), do not have any common elements as far as the process of their creation goes.

2 Prerequisites

With music being an important part of Tolkien's world and featuring prominently in his books, it is important to have a look at the concepts and ideas that are a driving force for the forms of music therein. When dealing with any form of literature, completely separating the author from the work is leaving aside an important source of knowledge about the text. For works by a learned man like Tolkien, who most certainly has read the occasional book himself, this would be even more severe. In this section we will therefore have a look at come ideas and concepts that may have influenced Tolkien, as well as at the origins of music in the legendarium and finally some important analytical concepts probably developed by the author on which we will base our interpretation of the findings.

One note about the general approach to the text: As will be discussed in more detail later on, Tolkien maintained *The Lord of the Rings* being a translation of the *Red Book of Westmarch*, not a work of fiction. This was to underscore his intention of creating a mythology for the English (again more about that later). As such, in this paper, all contents from his works are treated as "real" – that is as being realistic descriptions of actual music. Also the chronology established by Tolkien as to the place and time where his works are set is accepted as-is: Tolkien sets his world of Arda as a former form of today's world, set in the distant past. For the purpose of this paper, which solely deals with the extent in which musical works conform to the author's descriptions and ideas (as far as it is possible to ascertain them), all these prerequisites are accepted as valid source material. In fact, to completely determine the level in which the musical works discussed here follow Tolkien's descriptions, we need to follow his approach of taking his Legendarium as "reality", including the origin of most poems from a different language, Westron, despite its actual origin as fiction. To place the Music of Middle-earth as music from our own world, but created many hundreds of thousand years ago (as Tolkien wants it to be seen), we need to take it as "reality" to make it possible to place it in context to our actual reality.

A full research in the field of literary criticism would be very interesting to undertake to discuss the way in which Tolkien's Legendarium needs to be

treated in terms of fiction as opposed to reality. This needed to be omitted here for reasons of brevity.

2.1 Music as the Foundation of the Physical World

The origins of music in Middle-earth – or in the whole of Arda for that matter – are clearly supernatural. It is hard to think of any universe in which music plays a more important role in its creation. By describing the creation of the world as an act of music, Tolkien implies its importance in the actual world. How can music – in a world created by music – not remain important? We will have a look at how the author describes this "First Music", but beforehand let us go back to our world and the importance of supernatural music: As Kristine Larsen points out, ancient world and medieval music theory was based on the connection between earthly music and its counterpart in the "spheres". She quotes Boethius, who "described three discrete types of music: that of the universe, human music, and music created by instruments." (Larsen, 11). This fits perfectly with the music present in Tolkien's myth: There is music of the universe, the Music of the Ainur to be precise, even though we could even say that in this case the music actually *is* the universe. There is "human music", which we shall interpret as vocal music, and there is instrumental music. While in our world we cannot really say that the physical world resembles the music, we can very much say that music resembles the physical world. Scientists as early as Johannes Kepler "discovered that the ratio of certain properties of planetary and lunar motions were approximately the same numerical value as that between notes in chords." (Larsen, 12). Larsen then lists a sizable number of connections between music and the universe even predating classical western culture and refers to one of the rare occurrences of music based on astronomy in more recent times: Gustav Holst's *The Planets*, which opened to him "new worlds of sound" (Larsen, 12). Larsen also notes that the *Music of the Ainur* is one of the texts by Tolkien to have stayed more or less the same over the years and has not seen too many revisions. (Larsen, 14). For our purpose this serves to sufficiently prove that Tolkien without doubt has intended for music to take a major role in his universe, its importance having remained unchanged over all the iterations of his texts.

In this paper we will be concerned with the actual sound of the music in Middle-earth, so it is imperative to find out how it might have sounded like. We will have a look at the music of the Ainur in the following section, with an analysis of the music of the peoples of Middle-earth later on. While the music performed or mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Hobbit* undoubtedly is real, acoustic music, can we say the same thing for Tolkien's "music of the spheres"? After all, when the Ainur came together for their First Music, there was no matter, so there could not have been sound waves in the traditional sense. Larsen gives us the material for one possible explanation: Scientists today are able to make radio waves sent out by astronomical objects audible by converting them into sound waves. This very frequently is done with eruptions on our sun, whose surface bubbles with a period of about five minutes, a phenomenon discovered in 1962. This "solar symphony", as Larsen calls it, can be made audible. (Larsen, 17). Now we can form a theory based on this: If we can make radio waves into music (technically speaking: sound waves), then the Ainur could have made music into radio waves. The music of the Ainur then would constitute a "radio programme of the universe", very similar to a radio programme from earth - with a beginning, an end and some content in-between. It would be possible to take this theory even further, but for now we shall leave it at that, after all our goal merely was to find suitable proof that we can indeed see the music of the Ainur as real, factual music.

2.2 The Ainulindalë – The First Music in Middle-earth

So now how did the First Music sound like? Tolkien writes in the *Silmarillion*:

> *[. . .] Ilúvatar called together all the Ainur and declared to them a mighty theme [. . .] Then Ilúvatar said to them: 'Of the theme that I have declared to you, I will now that ye make in harmony together a Great Music. [. . .]*
>
> *Then the voices of the Ainur, like unto harps and lutes, and pipes and trumpets, and viols and organs, and like unto countless choirs singing with words, began to fashion the theme of Ilúvatar to a great music; and a sound arose of endless interchanging melodies woven in harmony that passed beyond hearing into the depths and into the heights, [. . .] But as the theme progressed, it came into the heart of Melkor to interweave matters of his own imagining that were not in accord with the theme of Ilúvatar [. . .] and straightway discord arose about him, [. . .] but some began to attune their music to his rather than to the thought which they had at first. Then the discord of Melkor spread ever wider, and the melodies which had been heard before foundered in a sea of turbulent sound. [. . .] Then Ilúvatar arose, [. . .] and a new theme began amid the storm, like and yet unlike to the former theme, and it gathered power and had new beauty. But the discord of Melkor rose in uproar and contended with it, and again there was a war of sound more violent than before [. . .] Then again Ilúvatar arose, [. . .] and he lifted up his right hand, and behold! a third theme grew amid the confusion, and it was unlike the others. For it seemed at first soft and sweet, a mere rippling of gentle sounds in delicate melodies; but it could not be quenched, and it took to itself power and profundity. And it seemed at last that there were two musics progressing at one time before the seat of Ilúvatar, and they were utterly at variance. [. . .]*
>
> *In the midst of this strife, whereat the halls of Ilúvatar shook and a tremor ran out into the silences yet unmoved, Ilúvatar arose a third time, and his face was terrible to behold. Then he raised up both his hands, and in one chord, deeper than the Abyss, higher than the Firmament, piercing as the light of the eye of Ilúvatar, the Music ceased.* (S, ch. 1)

There are two things to gather from this: Firstly, Tolkien expressly states that there were "themes", not just "tunes" or "motifs", which suggests some form of symphonic music with the themes being changed and used as a nucleus of musical development. We also learn that there were several layers of music going on at the same time, with “interchanging melodies”, so we clearly have polyphony here. It is likely that the Ainur both knew true polyphony with all voices being of equal importance, as well as forms of accompanying the theme(s). How exactly this polyphonic accompaniment of the original theme, or of its alterations, may have sounded like we will see.

Secondly, even though the Ainur did not take any part in Ilúvatar's third theme – he ended the music before they could vary the theme – they were able to accompany him and vary the first two themes without difficulties. This suggests some kind of theoretical framework known to the Ainur, otherwise they would not have been able to keep playing or singing – or if they did it would hardly have sounded as good as it is described here. The third theme held in it the Children of Ilúvatar (Elves and Men). We may assume that it had to be noticeably different from the previous themes, so possibly Ilúvatar brought the music to an end because this third theme was so different from the first two that the Ainur would not have been able to take part in its alteration.

Now that we have established that the music most likely was polyphonic and built upon a certain theoretical framework, so it was not just anyone singing notes at libitum, we shall enlist the help of Reuven Naveh, who asks the question *What Kind of Music Do the Ainur Sing?* (Naveh, 30).

Naveh maintains, that the music of the Ainur, as a celestial music, does not resemble any earthly music. This fits with the radio waves-theory detailed earlier. Like many of his texts, Tolkien wrote more than one account of how the music of the Ainur came to pass. While the first version speaks of a genuine orchestra, the published version is more cautious, but still speaks of "trumpets" and other sounds. (Naveh, 31). We can rule out a real orchestra, because there was no matter yet created at the time of the First Music, but we can see the mention of these instruments as a description of the overall sound. It is also notable that Tolkien uses terms from western music theory ("chords", "themes", "harmony") to describe the music. Naveh on this builds an elaborate analysis

about the form of the music, in which he compellingly proves that the music of the Ainur is set in the sonata form (Naveh, 35). What we can gather with certainty from Tolkien's description of the music is its general orientation towards tonality. Judging from the description, we might even imagine it to sound a bit like late romanticist music with a truly magnificent ensemble, both in size and timbre.

Naveh forms a theory that Melkor, who brought dissonance to the music, which up to this point seems to not have had any big dissonances in it, represents atonality clashing with traditional tonal music. He compares Melkor to the composers, who in the early 20th century "abandoned tonality in favour of its diametric opposite, atonality", the Second Viennese School (Naveh, 40). While the general direction of this theory certainly is right, it is debatable whether or not this original dissonance of Melkor can be compared to the works of the Second Viennese school. While it is correct that Schönberg, Berg and Webern have written a great number of works using dissonances in ways previously literally unheard of, the term itself describes their musical style after completely abandoning any form of tonality with no links to tonal music left. Melkor's part of the music, however, while being dissonant, clearly is dissonant towards the tonal centre of the Ainur's music. Tolkien clearly states that Ilúvatar manages to make his music work with Melkor's dissonance, to adapt his music. This simply is not possible with truly atonal music as composed by the Second Viennese School. Furthermore, Ilúvatar tells Melkor that whatever he may try to do, it will still ultimately come from Ilúvatar himself, for Melkor, as the other Ainur, is an offspring of his thought. As such, we may perhaps see Melkor in the lines of composers like Stravinsky, who used dissonance in completely new ways, indeed clashing with conventional musical language up to this point.

For the purpose of this paper, this is what we can say about the First Music with some certainty: It was tonal, employing themes and motifs in a symphonic sense; it in its palette of tonal colours resembled the sound of an orchestra and choir and was highly polyphonic. They style seems comparable to large orchestral works, possibly sounding a bit like late-romantic tone poems, using recognizable, but highly complex chord progressions, but by the doings of Melkor, was imbued with heavy dissonances at odds with the tonal centre of the

music. These dissonances, however were still part of the tonal language and by this made it possible to incorporate them into the music without placing them out of context.

We could continue this investigation, but shall instead leave it at that, with our goal of getting an idea of the possible sound of the First Music fulfilled.

There is one last element that is of interest to our analysis of Tolkien's music: Naveh quotes an earlier version of the creation of Arda, where the physical world was created while the Ainur were playing their music, published in the *Book of Lost Tales 1*. The version from the *Silmarillion* however has Ilúvatar create Arda after the music has finished.

> *As Christopher Tolkien says in his notes to this chapter, this is the most important difference between the first and the last versions of the Ainulindalë (LT1, 62). The fact that in the scenario ultimately chosen the world is not created when the music is played, but rather the Valar have to create it themselves, supports the assumption that the events that follow the descent to Arda are not necessarily as foreseen in the music of the Ainur.* (Naveh, 42).

This holds in it two possibilities: Firstly, that events happening on Arda can develop independently from the music they were initially envisioned in. Secondly, that these events may bring forth other events that were not present in the First Music at all. This also serves as an explanation for the presence of pure evil in Arda, even though Ilúvatar had originally said that everything Melkor added to the music was part of His plan. This of course is correct, but after the creation of Arda, the free will of Melkor allowed him to indeed perform actions that were not foreseen by Ilúvatar.

In the same train of thought we can apply this to musical references in the works: While the music of Middle-earth is based on the music of the Ainur, because in a way it was envisioned in it, it still has the possibility to move away, at least in portions, from its originally envisioned state. Just as the actual, physical manifestation of Arda, and the whole of Eä at that, can be described as a "performance" of an original work - in this case of the First Music - newly composed music representing and following Tolkien's descriptions of music in

Arda can as well constitute a performance of an original thought from the music of the Ainur. As such renditions of songs and poems from *The Lord of the Rings* like those we are dealing with in this paper, are valid extensions of Tolkien's work.

2.3 Reverse Musical Development

The most notable and interesting feature of the creation of the physical world in Tolkien's mythology undoubtedly is its foundation on music. What is in the music, becomes physical reality – or at last in a form heavily inspired by and based on said music, as we have seen in the course of discussing the "performance" aspect of the music of the Ainur.

In most writings, scholars have compared the music of Middle-earth in its general style to our medieval music. In his article *A Speculative History of the Music of Arda*, Steven Linden suggests an interesting theory about the development of music in Arda: To solve the dilemma how a music from an ancient world such as Middle-earth can sound very much alike to music tens of thousands of years later, while having completely different social and political as well as environmental variables – our world neither has mithril nor balrogs, just to mention two examples – Linden proposes the concept of "reverse progress":

> *There is a modern tendency to view such things [the development of music] through the lens of "progress" [. . .] And it is valid, at least to a degree, in the history of music as well. Polyphony really did develop out of monophony [. . .] But that is not how things work in Middle-earth. [. . .] There, great things, once achieved, often can never be achieved again. [. . .] In Arda, decay and decline are dominant [. . .].* (Linden, 76f).

What this means is that we can assume that the stylistically most highly developed music was the music of the Ainur. This music, performed by gods, in its technical characteristics (use of counterpoint leading to perfect polyphony, choice of harmonies, melodic properties) can be considered as the ultimate peak of music - what else than the very best could a gathering of Gods, with the Allfather himself presiding this heavenly orchestra, possibly bring forth? This

perfect music was then passed on to the Elves, then to the Men and all the other peoples of Middle-earth. Ultimately, all music is therefore based on this First Music, which is the reason why in this paper we are dealing with it so extensively. Linden imagines the actual sound of this music as a mixture of the styles of Palestrina and Bach, the "very epitome of polyphony" (Linden, 78f). After this perfect, most highly developed music, all music that followed is of lower complexity and ultimately skill. Whenever dealing with the music of a particular people in due course, we will have a further look at what Linden has to say about this topic. For now we will base the interpretation of our findings on this premise: That musical development is reverse in Middle-earth, so that the older a piece of music is, the “higher in art” it will probably be.

2.4 Real-World Influences on the Music of Middle-earth

It is naturally impossible for an author to be completely oblivious to the things going on around him, nor is it desirable. As a professor and well-learned man, Tolkien was keenly aware of what was happening around him, including musical developments. As such it can be no surprise to see that music and other elements from our real world have influenced the way in which music, most notably songs, work in Middle-earth. Gregory Martin has looked into this subject matter in detail in his article *Music, Myth and Literary Depth in the "Land ohne Musik"* (Martin), providing a concise overview of real-world influences with some focus on Tolkien’s intention of creating a pure-English mythology. For the purpose of this paper, there are a few points worth mentioning:

Martin shows a striking similarity in general appreciation and thought as pertaining to folk music between Tolkien and Ralph Vaughan Williams, one of England’s most notable composers. Vaughan Williams is quoted with a passage about one of his friends dying, that “he could no more help composing in his own national idiom than he cold help speak his own mother tongue” (Martin, 131). Tolkien shared a similar idea of not only a common language, modelled after and uniquely fitting to its speakers, but also of the same phenomenon in music. While Vaughan Williams took this idea into action by collecting folk songs and using them extensively in his works, Tolkien did the same by making music and its performance an integral part of his stories. The amount of music

in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* is staggering – not only the high number of musical performances, but also in the lengths the characters take to actually make these performances by bringing a whole Dwarven orchestra to Bilbo's "unexpected party" or singing at every possible opportunity in *The Lord of the Rings*.

What we can also gather from this is one more reason why it makes sense to set Tolkien's poems to music and then analyse these renditions. Martin writes:

> *There is a mutualism between music and language to which both Tolkien and VW [Vaughan Williams] attested. Tolkien's consistent equation of the two in his letters has already been noted. Similarly, Vaughan Williams linked music with language, contending that it arose from emotionally-charged speech.* (Martin, 133).

So trying to compose suitable music to the poems is very much in Tolkien's spirit and is the intended use of the poems, or rather songs. Every time a song is mentioned, someone actually sings it in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* alike. Songs are sometimes just recited as lyrics, but it is made clear that there is a melody to the text.

3 The Sound of Music

So what does the music from Middle-earth actually sound like? Tolkien has given us a number of clues and, in some rare cases, even literal descriptions of instruments. Detailed descriptions of how music was performed are most prevalent in *The Hobbit*, most likely because it adds to the feeling of the book as a travel novel as well as manages to draw its target audience emotionally nearer to the story – *The Hobbit* being a children's novel, after all. Nevertheless there are plenty of cues in *The Lord of the Rings*, too, which will allow us to construct a pretty clear picture of how Middle-earth music most likely sounds.

There are, broadly speaking, two kinds of music, namely vocal music and instrumental music. The line between the two is not fixed – many a song mentioned is most certainly sung without accompaniment, which but does not exclude the likelihood of there being an accompaniment if the instruments and players are at hand. Furthermore, we may differentiate between on the one hand art music, which means music that is created over a period of time as a work of art and has a clear development and on the other hand spontaneously created music, the latter very likely covering a large part of the musical creations of the evil creatures in Tolkien's fiction. Their music, meant for encouragement in war, possibly not even recognized as music in the sense of songs with or without instrumental accompaniment or as solely instrumental pieces, most likely consists of rather primitive chants, shouts and sounds produced by other means than the voice and does not serve any higher function as art. Nevertheless we need to take it into account if we want to get a picture of the musical phenomena presented in Tolkien's works. In an universe created by music, with music mentioned all the way – even the Orcs are repeatedly mentioned singing some kinds of songs – Vaughan Williams' observation of the non-existent distinction between articulating something in a speaking voice or by means of a song in folk music, as described by Martin, holds even more true for Middle-earth:

> *to this day a country singer*[5] *will speak of 'telling' you a song, not of singing it. Indeed the folk singer [. . .] seems unable to dissociate words and tune [. . .]* (Martin, 134).

The way music is presented in Middle-earth suggests the validity of this observation in an even more pronounced form: The process of passing on historical information as well as legends seems to be largely orally via music. When the Hobbits ask Aragorn to "tell them a story", he proceeds to sing them a song of Beren and Lúthien and only after finishing his song, actually tells them the background. He also mentions that what he just sang is "just but a rough echo" of the original Elvish setting (LotR, 191-193). The poem, sung in Westron and re-translated by Tolkien into English from the *Red Book*, is very well crafted and does not at all appear like a "rough echo", so we can assume that the original version sung by the Elves somehow managed to bring the background information across, too. Otherwise it would be really hard to imagine in which way it could be superior to the Westron version by Aragorn. On a similar note, it is also interesting to note that Galadriel chooses to relay her messages to Aragorn and Legolas in verse, not simply as spoken prose. (LotR, 503).

Bilbo (and subsequently Frodo and Sam) are about the only characters ever to write those songs and the back story down, which led to the *Red Book of Westmarch* (see 3.1). It is likely that this way of communicating information through songs is a remnant of the creation of the world through music, which in turn suggests that this mode of passing on stories is shared by most sentient species – which leads us right back to the Orcs and similar creatures. While they apparently do not have art music, they do sing songs. This, as well as their spontaneously created instrumental music, or soundscapes, used in battles, mixed with war chants shows their adherence to the music-centred world of Arda. In the following section we will therefore have a look at the kinds of music of the various races before analysing a number of pieces.

[5] Martin refers to folk singers, not country singers in the sense of contemporary country/western-style music.

3.1 General Stylistic Features and Vocal Music

There is little music in the physical world of Arda that is purely vocal. Most renditions of songs mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* are performed a capella out of circumstances, but are by no means always performed this way; for many instrumental accompaniments are suggested. Hobbit drinking songs for example are certainly played in inns with instrumental accompaniment in addition to them being sung on the road a capella.

Any endeavour to find out how vocal music in Middle-earth may sound is hindered by the way the texts are brought to the reader, as Ben Koolen writes: Tolkien maintains that his works are translations from the so-called *Red Book of Westmarch*, the diary of Bilbo Baggins, greatly expanded by Frodo Baggins with his recollection of the War of the Ring and finished by Sam Gamgee. This diary was written in Westron, the common language of men, which served as a kind of lingua franca in Middle-earth, and (with the exception of some Elvish songs) all the songs and poems in there are written in Westron. (Koolen, 74). With the exception of songs and poems from human authors or Hobbits, who supposedly wrote the original works in Westron, all songs and poems from *The Lord of the Rings* are translations from the native language of their authors. In the case of Elvish texts, translations or transcriptions should be very accurate since both Bilbo and Frodo were able to speak Sindarin and had some understanding of Quenya, so they were able to ascertain the correctness of texts, at least as far as the content goes. As we will later see, still there seemed to be enough mistakes and errors to warrant a revision of the text. For other poems the Westron versions were written by the authors of the poems themselves. One example would be the *Song of Durin*, of which the Dwarves created an official Westron version; most likely by the author of the original poem or at least under his supervision. For the accuracy of these texts we need to rely on Bilbo's and Frodo's memory and assume that they have written them down correctly from memory after hearing them. A last group of texts now has only been translated by people not directly involved in the creation of the texts. The most notable example of this group is the *Verse of the Rings*, which was originally written in the Black Speech. It is unlikely that Sauron himself created a Westron version: The verse clearly speaks of the goal of the ring and of its master. From Tolkien we know that Sauron forged the Master Ring in secret without anyone knowing,

so spreading poetry about its existence and true nature would contradict his whole plan. We can therefore assume that the translation probably was done by Gandalf or even by Frodo, modelled after Gandalf's translation when he informed him of the nature of the ring. The accuracy of any translation from the Black Speech could also be hindered by the fact that, as Gandalf maintains, it is not customarily spoken out loud. Presumably it is not spoken at all by anyone outside Mordor. Unless Gandalf himself made sure the translation was accurate, it is doubtful that anyone else would have been able to determine its accuracy at all.

As Tolkien tells us in the Prologue of *The Lord of the Rings*, this diary then was copied several times, with the *Thain's Book*, a copy of the original diary created for King Elessar, being the source for an annotated and edited version by the King's Writer Findegil, who corrected spelling errors and other mistakes, especially concerning Elvish names. This basically means that Bilbo's and Frodo's Sindarin or Quenya were not perfect, which is a bit surprising given Bilbo's extended stay in Rivendell. That suggests that there were indeed errors in the text, possibly even in the wording of poems and songs. It is this version that ultimately was preserved, while the original was lost.

So when Tolkien finally translated the *Red Book* into Modern English we get the complete picture: The text of the *Red Book* is passed on to the reader in the English translation of an annotated copy of a copy of the original Westron manuscript. So when looking at any given poem, in the worst case the text at hand is the English translation of a Westron version, copied from a copy of a translation from another language, originally written down from memory years after the writer originally heard the text. This complicated history unfortunately makes it futile to try to reconstruct the sound of a vocal piece from its text, as the original version has nothing to do in sound with the present version. Therefore we need to focus on descriptions of the overall sound of the music and need to live with the fact that an analysis of the text will not bring forth any meaningful information.

3.1.1 Ainur

The only purely vocal music in a way was the First Music of the Ainur. As this music was heard before matter was created, no instruments can have existed. With the music being similar to a "solar symphony", as discussed earlier, this music is vocal music insofar as the Ainur did not use any instruments or tools to create it, they only used their own abilities. The First Music cannot be heard in the physical world in its original form, so for the purpose of this paper it makes no sense to speculate about its definitive sound. We may argue that Ilúvatar himself has taught the Ainur to sing, but we can be fairly sure that this is not meant literally since the Ainur clearly had no physical form back then, so this is not a process of learning how to articulate sounds. Ilúvatar introduced the Ainur to the concept of music in the first place and taught them the theoretical framework used for the First Music.

3.1.2 Elves

The Elves were the first to awake on Arda after its creation, so they are also the first ones who had the chance to make music. Linden suggests that their first music (probably vocal) was inspired by the water, "wherein, it is oft repeated, there lives an echo of the music of the Ainur" (Linden, 79). He suggests that the Elves mimicked the flow of the water figuratively in their music, with rising and falling monophonic lines, either in unison or not sung by more than one singer at all. But if music is really as present in Arda as we may assume, there is a strong likelihood of the water actually making the true music of the Ainur audible. With the First Music being the epitome of polyphony, even as a mere echo it should still retain a good amount of what makes it special. The Elves are the Children of Ilúvatar and the immediate offspring of his thought; so even after subtracting the possible influence of the "interpretation" in the process of transforming the First Music into the physical world (see 2.2), they would still be powerfully linked to His thought and most likely have a deep subconscious understanding of the world. Add to this their curiosity and intelligence, which are again and again mentioned by Tolkien, and it should not stress logic too much to imagine this very first physical music as far more than just a monophonic imitation of gurgling water. Language will not have developed yet

at that point, but we can be sure that the first Elves will have tried to imitate the multi-layered polyphony they heard in the water. We can dispute how successful they were at first to imitate this highly polyphonic music, but they most certainly tried!

Linden poses the question about the time when Elves began to use musical instruments. As he rightly states, the highest form of Elvish music was to be found in Aman, so the question arises whether or not instruments were only used after the split of the Eldar by those who journeyed to Aman, or also by the Avari, who remained behind. If they started to use instruments before the split, their tuning systems and their general music theory would be based on common roots. (Linden, 80). We have no way of knowing the answer to this question, so we will concentrate on Amanyan music because it is the style directly related to and influenced by the music of the Ainur: The Calaquendi[6] in Aman had the unique chance to learn directly from the Valar, and were probably instructed in music by them. With their understanding of the workings of the First Music gained from "listening to the water", they were able to extend their knowledge of this music, and possibly even further develop it to a form that more resembled the original music of the Ainur. This most enlightened form of course could not be compared to the First Music in either perfection or musical workmanship, but nevertheless, gifted as the Children of Ilúvatar were, the Valar-influenced form(s) must have been quite a progress from the original Elven music. Linden quotes a passage from the *Book of Lost Tales 1*, where the Teleri are explicitly mentioned singing to the accompaniment of the harp. He also mentions that before the gates of Valmar, "the Elves launch into a song 'in unison' " (Linden, 82), so monophonic music certainly is present at that time, but probably in a way where performances are usually either accompanied by instruments or are homophonic/polyphonic.

On the other hand, the Elves that did not go to Aman, the Sindar, did not meet the Valar and did not have the chance to learn from them. Linden asserts that their style must have developed differently from the music of the Calaquendi:

[6] Those Elves living in Aman, as opposed to the Moriquendi, who did not see the light of the two trees.

> *But whereas it is easy to picture the Noldor writing treatises and studies on music theory, the Sindar would probably have adopted a more free and expressive idiom. [. . .] melody would be the most important element; and perhaps the rules concerning counterpoint would be unrestrictive enough that certain dissonances and rhythmic differences would be tolerated among the various parts. [. . .] for example, tension could be created through the use of dissonance.* (Linden 83).

If we apply the theory of "reverse development" to the two forms of Elven music, we get the following picture: The music of the Calaquendi was directly influenced by the Valar. Depending on how well they were able to understand what they were taught, Amanyan music will have been very similar in style to the First Music, employing extremely intricate polyphony with equal status of all voices, in a very rigid tonal system with equally rigid rules. Mild dissonances would be allowed, but the music would never stray too far from the tonal centre.

Sindarin music, however, developed in a completely different way: The musicians over the years most likely continued to study the music they heard in the world, starting with the music of the water, and improved their understanding of it. Instead of being told the rules like the Calaquendi, they needed to understand them themselves. This, along with the missing controlling instance of the Valar – which the Elves in Aman had access to, as the Valar presumably told them when something did not conform to the rules – the Sindar had the chance to extend the musical framework. They probably did not have complete equality of all voices; while still highly polyphonic, their music most likely had some form of leading voice, if only so that their best singers and instrumentalists could show what they were capable off. Not without reason, the minstrel Daeron is quoted by Linden as being called the mightiest of the great three minstrels (Linden, 83) – and he was a Sindar!

When the Noldor then returned to Middle-earth, the two musical cultures met and Noldorin music was forced to change due to different circumstances. Linden discusses the possible implications in detail, but for our task at hand we can do with a short summary: Both cultures learned from each other and exchanged their views on music theory. As Linden puts it:

> *Perhaps Maglor [A Noldorin minstrel] had to write a new treatise on melody and harmony to take into account the Sindarin practices he observed. And possibly allowance was made for new chromaticisms in his music. Daeron, for his part, would have found Maglor's approach a little too formalistic, but he may have come to a better understanding of the foundations of his own musical system [. . .].* (Linden 84).

We may therefore assume, that – at least for the open-minded Elvish minstrels – a major shift took place to a common musical language. Over time music continued to develop, possibly influenced by ideas of other cultures the Elves encountered. While the individual styles will have continued to be played, minstrels learned to compose in other styles, too, leading to a diverse palette of Elvish music. The Elven songs featured in *The Lord of the Rings* all talk of former times and are presumably very old. While we can assume that the texts underwent slight changes over the centuries, these art songs will still represent the musical styles of Noldorin and Sindarin minstrels. If we add to this that after the fall of Beleriand the Elves began to gradually go from Middle-earth until at the time when *The Lord of the Rings* is set in the Third Age only the major dwellings of Rivendell and Lothlórien are still preserving the Elvish culture, we can safely assume that their music has not changed much since the First Age. At the most there would have been some influence again from other races – the biggest stylistic influence possibly being songs that Bilbo taught the Elves while staying at Rivendell. A curious people such as them would be hard-pressed to pass up the opportunity to hear a Hobbit bath song.

3.1.3 Men

The clues about in which way the music of Man developed and how it sounded are scarce. Most songs sung by humans in the books are either of Elvish origin or are very learned songs, which would not have been sung by common folk. Linden speculates that the humans came into contact with music first from the Avari with their music very quickly dominated by Elvish music. (Linden, 84). This will have continued when the Edain moved to Númenor, but, as Linden points out, from there on there probably was a lot of development in the music, possibly leading (as per the notion of reverse development) from a very chordal

style practiced by the Elves to a more interval-based accompaniment. (Linden 87). We may imagine Gondorian art music to sound quite similar, a bit like medieval music with a touch of plainsong. So when Aragorn sings a song, this is what it may sound like.

As for the Rohirrim, whose ancestors, the Éothéod (Old English for "horse people"), had contact with the people of Númenor, Linden suggests that their music might be influenced by Elvish music (as all music ultimately seems to derive from the Elves), as well as by Dwarvish music. He notes that all of the Rohan songs are written in alliterative verse (Linden, 88), which we can attribute to the fact of their language being translated as Old English by Tolkien. With Rohirric[7] being closely related to the old Númenorian tongue as a derivation from the language of the Éothéod, its relationship to Westron, the Common Speech, is roughly the same as between Old English and Modern English. Since we can assume some development of the language over time with influences from other language families – the word "westfold" comes to mind, which is of Scandinavic origin – we could say that Rohirric is based on archaic Westron, which would be rendered with pure Old English, but adds a number of unique features. While not strictly important for the topic of discussing Rohan music, one clue that might somehow prove that Rohirric has developed quite a bit from just being an Ancient Form of Westron is that Legolas does not seem to be able to understand a single word of Rohirric, even though he, through his education as son of the Elvenking Thranduil, should have been taught Ancient Westron, because his father certainly spoke it.

While we do not find many details about Rohan music in *The Lord of the Rings*, the fact that Tolkien chose Old English for representing Rohirric and explicitly states that their songs were in alliterative verse suggests a strong similarity of the historical Old English music and Rohan music. If we take Tolkien's familiarity with Old English literature into account, we can actually be quite specific about Rohan songs and imagine them to be performed in the same way as epics like *Beowulf*, which can tell us a great deal about possible instrumentation. We will have a more detailed look at how these songs might be accompanied later, but for purely vocal performances we can assume that they

[7] Tolkien himself used „Rohan" for the name of the language, but because the term „Rohirric", created by Rober Foster, is widely accepted, it is used here.

were monophonic, probably only sung by one person at a time. The power of alliterative verse only really comes to pass on soloist performances. As Rohirric poetry of all Middle-earth poetry relies the most on alliterative verse, the musicians of Rohan may very well be the only culture in Middle-earth that has more or less stopped, or never even started in the first place, to use polyphony, even for its more learned songs. This does of course not exclude the possibility of Rohan minstrels singing Elvish or Gondorian music, which is polyphonic!

We do not know much about Gondorian vocal music, with no Gondorian character actually singing – contrary to the Rohirrim, who have a large number of songs mentioned. Only two rhymes from Gondor are mentioned: The herbmaster of the Houses of Healing recalls a rhyme about athelas and Aragorn sings one when looking at the White Mountains. (Smith, 201). Gondor, as one of the two big kingdoms of the Dúnedain in gradual decline (the other being Arnor, which was reinstated by King Elessar after the War of the Ring), Gondorian songs are certainly very much focused on the past, celebrating the glory days and remembering the kings of old. The most of vocal music that is mentioned is the "singing of clear voices" at the crowning of King Elessar (LotR, 968). While most songs sung at the court of the stewards would have been old songs, probably again about former times, it is not clear what those "voices" sang at the coronation. If it was some sort of choir, they could have rehearsed a number of pieces. If the common people of Minas Tirith sang, the songs in question most likely were victory songs or other songs suited for celebrations. While possible, it is doubtful that the people either remembered special songs intended for the crowning or learned them from sheet music. This was the first coronation of a king since nearly a thousand years, so chances are slim that people still knew the songs sung at such an occasion.

Smith notes that the Gondorian society had a strong sense of nationalism; he quotes Boromir that "alone are peace and freedom maintained in the lands behind us, bulwark of the West" (Smith, 199). He also notes that Denethor's interest in Hobbit music may actually be genuine: Faramir himself is said to have been a lover of music, so Denethor might be as well (Smith, 200). Music seems to still have a high standing in Gondor, even though the kingdom at the time of the War of the Ring is waning: After the battle at the Field of Cormallen,

a Gondorian minstrel sings. This means that there are still professional minstrels employed, which suggests that the musical culture of the past is preserved and actively supported.

As for other human races, we have no clear indications of their music and since no songs or poems are available, they will not concern us here.

3.1.4 Hobbits

Of all the music in Tolkien's works, Hobbit music is by far the one kind of music where we can find a good number of references in the books itself. From the mere description of Hobbiton in the prologue of the *Fellowship of the Ring*, one cannot help to picture the Shire as very much resembling a 19th century English countryside. In fact, Tolkien himself in his letters confirmed the Shire to be based on rural England: "the Shire ... is in fact more or less a Warwickshire village of about the period of the Diamond Jubilee"[8] (Bratman, 142). As greatly varied the different interpretations of how the music of Middle-earth may have sounded are, as common is the way in which Hobbit music is portrayed: It always is more or less in an Irish folk style, on occasion mixed with some untypical instruments, as we shall see. As Tolkien explains in the Prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*, Hobbits are very easy-going people and not overly concerned with big politics. They are not very eager to study any history, apart from the genealogy of their families and usually do not travel very far, if at all. We are told that the Hobbits originally had extensive contact with Men, Dwarves and Elves and even used Westron exclusively as their language despite originally having their own language, but that after moving to the Shire "passed once more out of the history" (LotR, 4). The fact that most Hobbits never travelled far and seldom dealt extensively with other races (mixed settlements like Bree were few and far between) probably led to their music mirroring their simple lifestyle. We can assume that indeed Hobbit music sounds very much like traditional Irish folk. There have been exceptions of Hobbits knowing songs and music from other cultures (Bilbo and Frodo come to mind, obviously), but for sure the average Hobbit would be far more interested in a drinking song than in

[8] The Jubilee referenced here is that of Queen Victoria (reigned 1819-1901), which was celebrated in 1897.

an Elven hymn. Indeed Peregrin Took himself confirms this indirectly when asked by Denethor so sing him a song:

> *[. . .] we have no songs fit for great halls and evil times, lord. We seldom sing of anything more terrible than wind and rain. And most of my songs are about things that make us laugh; or about food and drink, of course.* (LotR, 806).

This quote also tells us that sometimes Hobbits *do* sing about more evil things than wind and rain, but no such songs are known to us. Also we cannot determine if Pippin with "my songs" means just songs he knows, or songs he composed himself. If the latter, that would suggest that there are professional musicians in Hobbit society, since Peregrin is still quite young and would not have referred to his own compositions if he merely saw it as a pastime.

The topics of Hobbit songs have been summarised eloquently by Murray Smith:

> *[. . .] the songs and poems of Hobbit origin that readers come across mostly deal with themes of food, drink, bath and bed, overlapping with comedy and with bestiary lore. [the latter refers to Sam's Oliphaunt rhyme, see 4.1.13] The more sophisticated ones, sung by Hobbits who had travelled and had connections with Elves and men, also include stories of those other peoples, as well as about travelling.* (Smith, 198).

As for their style, it was melody-driven, with catchy phrases, most likely quite rhythmic, at least for traveling songs and very cheerful all in all. Even the sadder songs would still have an optimistic element in them – but for the average Hobbit, no sad song would ever find the way into his repertoire. Here we encounter the very problem that Steven Linden felt the need to address with his theory of "reverse development": How can it be that music that was played thousands of years ago can sound just like a particular kind of modern music? Indeed the notion of "reverse development" can also be applied to Hobbit music. If all music is ultimately based on the Music of the Ainur with its perfect polyphony, it is likely that elements of that music are also to be found in Hobbit music. Tolkien writes in the Prologue of *The Lord of the Rings* that at least the Fallowhides - one of the three tribes of Hobbits - had "more skill in language and song" (LotR, 3), so there definitely are skilled Hobbit musicians and there seems

to be a general inclination to see making music as a worthwhile activity. While there is probably no true polyphony in any Hobbit music, there is nothing that speaks against having multiple homophonic lines. One remnant of the polyphonic style of the First Music in Hobbit songs could therefore be multiple melodic lines in close harmony, very similar to what is today to be found in Bluegrass music. Close harmony voicing, probably based on modal harmony not restricted to only major/minor, would not require any special musical education, but only knowledge of the principal melody, the "lead", as it is called in this style.

Hobbit music with its catchy, memorable tunes is perfectly suited for this kind of performing style. It likely (just as today's folk music) mainly employs easy to grasp harmonic progressions immediately memorable on the first pass, allowing any singer to join in at the second chorus at the latest. As long as the singer knows the chord progression, with this kind of harmony singing it is almost impossible to hit a wrong note. Considering that drinking seems to be a major part of what a Hobbit would call a perfect day, such a musical style would also comply with the need to still be able to perform after a number of pints of ale. With an instrumentation resembling Irish music and closed "bluegrass" harmony based on a modal system, Hobbit music perfectly fits into the music-centred world of Arda.

3.1.5 Dwarves

There is a special cultural trait that sets Dwarves apart from other races: Because of their activities in trading with other races, Dwarves on the one hand were more open to outsiders, but on the other hand guarded their personal culture very actively. From the earliest times they have had extensive contact to Elves and men alike, which, in the course of business negotiations, certainly also involved attending social events as well as hosting such events themselves. They therefore very likely developed a kind of representative music that would be very "Dwarvish" in its style to present them as a rightfully proud and well-cultured people, but at the same time accessible to as many prospective clients as possible.

Tolkien also tells us that wide areas of Dwarven culture were kept from outsiders, including their language, Khuzdûl. Few people spoke it, therefore, with Gandalf probably being the only one of the main characters during the War of the Ring. When in company, Dwarves used the language of their hosts, usually Westron. They even kept their real names secret, so of all the Dwarves mentioned by name, not a single one actually is called by his real Khuzdûl name. Undoubtedly very traditional songs as well as the most intimate legends and epics would be similarly known only to Dwarves and are lost to us.

This basically leaves us with two distinct types of Dwarvish music: Firstly, the music commonly heard performed by Dwarves in public. This would include the performance of Thorin and Co. at Bilbo's place, as well as Gimli's *Song of Durin*. The Dwarves performed these songs in Westron, which they spoke very well, albeit in a very formal and slightly archaic mode of speaking; probably on purpose, to set them apart from other cultures. Secondly, we have the traditional music, played only among Dwarves when no outsiders were around. About this music we know nothing substantial, apart from the fact that it is sung in Khuzdûl. Any endeavour to use our knowledge of other languages spoken in Middle-earth to draw any conclusions about which kind of music the language may have brought forth is futile, as the Dwarves were given their language by the Valar Aulë. Therefore it does not have any connections to any other language. The Dwarves taught the language only to very few selected people (Gandalf again presumably being one of them), so external influences were minimized. From the few words we know in this language, with only one single real sentence ("Baruk Khazâd! Khazâd ai-mênu!", "Axes of the Dwarves! The Dwarves are upon you!", LotR, 534) with no pronunciation given, we cannot say anything about how the language actually sounds.[9]

Furthermore, all the songs of Dwarvish origin mentioned in either *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Hobbit* (in *The Hobbit* there is not even a mention of Khuzdûl) certainly belong to the first category detailed above, so they are intended for outsiders to hear. For lack of songs from the second category, we can only make guesses about the sound of those representative songs, which presumably

[9] Of course there now is Neo- Khuzdûl, but this language was developed for the motion picture and, as the name implies, does not necessarily strive to be identical to the original language.

incorporate stylistic elements from other musical styles, or at least somewhat tone down the supposedly very harsh and percussive style of the Dwarves.

As Koolen notes in his article about the *Song of Durin*, which we will analyse in greater detail later, of the five songs of Dwarvish origin, four are from *The Hobbit* (the fifth being said *Song of Durin* from *The Lord of the Rings*). Koolen leaves out *Farewell we call to hearth and hall* (see 0), which is based on a Dwarven melody, but uses words by Hobbits. Those four songs, for various reasons, are not very reliable sources for Dwarven music. *The Hobbit* being a children's book, we have to give everything contained therein a fair bit of leeway in its language, but even then we may doubt the origin of at least some of those songs. To understand the significance of the *Song of Durin*, we need to follow Koolen's thoughts and have a brief look at the four songs from *The Hobbit* (Koolen, 75):

> 1) The Dwarves, according to Bilbo, sang a not very nice song about destroying his possessions with the memorable line "That's what Bilbo Baggins hates!" (H, 16). They did not do such thing, but instead carefully cleaned everything. As Koolen notes, it is unlikely that the Dwarves really sang this song - Bilbo probably just made it up because he was angry with them disturbing him. Frankly, a dwarf of royal lineage like Thorin is very unlikely to sing such songs.
>
> 2) *Far over the misty mountains cold* is a song about their destination, the Erebor. The song, speaking about the lost treasure the Dwarves want to win back, seems genuine, but likely is an invention of Thorin and company, and not truly fit to be seen as typically traditional Dwarvish music. Nevertheless it certainly has some features of Dwarven music, an assumption on which we will analyse a different song to the same melody later (see 0).
>
> 3) At Beorn's house, the Dwarves sing a song called *The wind was on the withered heath*. This sounds like a genuine Dwarvish song fit for campfires. Unfortunately we have no information whatsoever about the music that accompanied this song (if there was any, because no instruments are mentioned) or about the melody.

4) The fourth song, *Under the mountain, dark and tall*, is a counterpart to *Far over the misty mountains cold*, as Koolen quotes Rateliff (Koolen, 75). This song clearly is a recent invention as it refers to the events that happened just before.

So as we can see, only the second song is somehow reliable as a source because we are at least given some information about the instruments used. This leaves us with only Gimli's rendition of the *Song of Durin* as the only song performed by Dwarves we can say anything about with some certainty by deducing some information from the circumstances of its performance. But before going into this analysis, let us consider some general features of Dwarvish music:

Now as to how the vocal style of the Dwarves could sound, we can get a few clues from the way the Dwarves are living as well as by deducing from what we know about Khuzdûl. Because Dwarves spend most of their time in large halls, a style using the inevitable echo present in rooms of this kind is likely to be employed. We would find long notes, with adjacent notes being notes belonging to the same chord, or at least to a chord closely related, for quite some time, with little polyphony, so as to not create a muddy sound in a big reverberated room. For the same reason the harmonic rhythm of pieces will be rather slow, so melodies will remain on notes of the current triad for some time. Pieces in general should be rather slow than fast to further comprehensibility of the text. On the other hand, the spacious reverb of the room could be used to create layers of sounds - singing an arpeggiated chord would result in the complete chord sounding, allowing very few people to make very impressive music. As for the tonal system, Dwarven music most likely would not use too many dissonances, again for reverberation reasons, but also because of the sound of the language itself. Khuzdûl is described as “cumbrous and unlovely” (S, ch. 10) by the Elves. While it certainly did not sound as bad as this to its speakers, it certainly had a certain harshness to it, making it difficult to control in song. We can assume that melodies were retained if possible when songs were translated into Westron, so all in all what we can assume about Dwarvish music makes it very much reminiscent of today’s sacred choral music – a matter that we will investigate on the example of the *Song of Durin*.

There also is the *Farewell Song of Merry and Pippin* (see 4.1.14), as it is called in the rendition by the Tolkien Ensemble, which, according to the book, was "made on the model of the dwarf-song that started Bilbo on his adventure long ago, and went to the same tune" (LotR, 106) and which we will have a look at, too.

3.1.6 Other Cultures

It is likely that all sentient races in Middle-earth had some kind of music. We have already briefly touched on Orcish music, or rather chants. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the Orcs do not seem to actively sing songs in the general sense, but instead only use war chants. They are, however, mentioned singing a song in *The Hobbit*[10]. While this song is rather silly and does not really show the character of the Orcs as they are in *The Lord of the Rings*, it nevertheless is sung by several Orcs at the same time, so to them it is a known, regular song, not an impromptu invention. Bilbo in the book is able to understand the words, so the Orcs are singing in Westron. This again makes drawing conclusions from the English text futile, but even if just considering the meaning of the song, we can be sure that the music of the Orcs is mostly concerned with their favourite pastime, being cruel, and has a quite unpleasant tone to it. It probably is chanted rather than sung, with not too much effort spent on a pleasant tone. Nevertheless, we can be sure that even Orcs have music. If used as a device to tease their captives, the use of the Westron language makes sense. Such a cruel and violent song would not achieve its goal if the addressee were not able to understand the meaning.

The Ents are very musical, with their meetings being held by means of a slow chant. We will have a further look at the Ents later when dealing with instrumental music. Similarly, all other races certainly have developed their own styles of music. Music as the foundation of the world clearly is universally practiced by its inhabitants.

[10] The Orcs are called Goblins here, but clearly are the same race.

3.2 Instrumental Music

Most of the songs printed in *The Lord of the Rings* are performed a capella in their context, but it is clearly shown that they are usually not performed this way, but with some form of accompaniment. Heidi Steimel has researched the clues given in the novel about the kinds of instruments mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings*. She rightly observes that

> *Music is more than mere entertainment in Tolkien's Middle-earth. Readers of his books know that a song can tell a story or set the mood for a festive occasion; it can also weave a spell, win a battle and create a world.* (Steimel, 91).

The latter of course refers to the First Music, but can also be seen figuratively: Surprisingly often, characters instead of speaking a sentiment, sing a song. This is most notable with Rohirrim characters, which is probably what Steimel is referring to with "win a battle": When riding into battle, the Rohirrim chant a poem instead of addressing their men by speaking. They also – and this is where we get to instrumental music – use wind instruments even more than other cultures with constant mentions of horns. Use of instruments is attested to most other cultures, as well, including (in a way) the Ents. As with vocal music, we will have a look at the most important occurrences of instrumental music or vocal music accompanied with instruments.

3.2.1 Valar and Maiar

After going to the physical world, some Ainur, who then became the Valar and Maiar, took physical form. Some evidently also played instruments; Steimel lists several from the Silmarillion:

Manwë, highest of the Valar, is said to have "trumpets", in the plural. Steimel notes that nowhere it is stated that he himself played (Steimel, 92). In Arda, the Ainur took a physical form, evidently human, so he would have been able to, but not several instruments at the same time. So in this case we can assume that those trumpets were played by subordinates to mark him approaching or to send other messages. Nothing suggests any polyphony nor harmony, so the

trumpets were played in unison, quite like regular signal trumpets, possibly in fifths or fourths, but certainly with signal calls, not melodies.

Ulmo, Lord of the Water, through whose element the First Music is still audible, has horns made of conch shells. He definitely plays them himself, as is described in the *Book of Lost Tales 2*. Steimel notes that these horns could play melodies, "producing music that is art, not merely a signal" (Steimel, 93).

The last instrument mentioned is the horn of Oromë, the hunter. We do not know its material, but as a hunter, Oromë could maybe have made it from the horn of an animal or possibly asked the smith Aulë to craft it for him, as Steimel suggests. Like Ulmo, Oromë was certainly capable of playing melodies. As to the question what he (and possibly other Valar/Maiar) played, we have no information. It is likely that they played some melodies from or modelled after the First Music. It is interesting to note that Ulmo is described as having several horns, not just one. It should be safe to assume that these horns are not identical and differ in tuning and possibly even range. If this indeed were the case, it would suggest some form of musical ensemble formed by the Valar. Why else should he have more than one horn if not in order to be able to play in different keys or for different musical requirements within a piece, for example long solo lines or providing notes filling up the harmony?

All those instruments certainly were natural horns, so while by possessing more than one instrument Ulmo would be able to play in different keys, Oromë was not with his single horn. While at the first glance this would speak against some form of Valar orchestra, there is nothing that speaks against Oromë using someone else's horn or possessing additional instruments himself.

3.2.2 Elves

As outlined previously, the Elves learned how to make music from the Valar. Steimel lists the instruments played by the Elves after they split:

> *The Vanyar played congregated harps, the Noldor viols and instruments; and the Teleri played pipes blended with their voices (LT1 143-4).* (Steimel, 94).

The latter, as Steimel notes, proves that those Elves played together in ensembles, which should not be surprising considering the origin of their music from highest polyphony.

To get a clear picture of how Elvish music sounded and in which way it might be reproduced today, it is important to know the instruments important to the Elves. There is a diverse range of instruments mentioned that are attributed to learned musicians: Steimel refers to the three greatest minstrels from the *Book of Lost Tales 1*, Tinfang Warble, Maglor and Daeron. Tinfang Warble plays the flute and Daeron is described as a "piper", too. So both play wind instruments, with Daeron said to having accompanied Lúthien when she sang or danced. So wind instruments were considered learned and fitting to the courts of kings and their players were renowned and had a high standing in society. This is in contrast to medieval society, where the "pipers" were the lowest rank of musicians.

Maglor plays the harp and accompanies himself when singing. The harp seems to be a very important instrument for the Elves. Norbert Maier, an instrument builder himself, has looked into the significance of this instrument in Middle-earth: He refers to Tolkien's deep knowledge and connection to Old English epics, particularly *Beowulf*, where the harp is mentioned several times and to the changes in meaning of the word "harp" over the years. (Maier, 110). While there are no detailed descriptions of any Middle-earth harps, there is nothing that suggests that they are not roughly comparable to modern folk harps. Maier raises an interesting point: When people in Middle-earth were reading of the use of harps some thousands of years back, the image that formed in their head was of the harp they knew. It would therefore entirely be possible that in earlier times those harps were ever so slightly different from their form at the end of

the Third Age just like a modern instrument in our time may have differences from older instruments. (Maier, 111).

Another valid question is that of whether those harps were diatonic, used pedals or levers to lower or raise the pitch of strings like the modern concert harp, or maybe even were chromatic. Fully chromatic harps are hard to play: Glissandi are complicated because the player needs to remember which strings to skip, which is practically impossible to do at very high speeds. Likewise, chromatic harps require many strings making the instruments hard to transport. With the complicated mechanics, pedal or lever harps are unlikely to be used in Middle-earth; regardless, because they only came into use in the 17th century, their presence in Middle-earth would therefore constitute an anachronism similar to the clarinet. No glissandi are ever mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Hobbit*, so we cannot ascertain if any were played at all. It is likely that harps in Middle-earth were confined to a single key and did not allow changing keys, let alone chromatic playing. At least with smaller travel harps it would be possible for a player to possess more than one instrument in different keys to counter this. Of course retuning the harp before playing is also possible.

Finally, there are mentions of trumpets and horns during battle. These are supposedly used for signals and employed primarily because of their volume. Any other instrument simply would have been too quiet to be audible over the noise on the battlefield. No use of any is mentioned in orchestras, so it is likely that they were not considered musical instruments in Elvish society, but instead were only regarded as communication devices.

As for how the instruments were used, we can draw some conclusions from the description of Daeron: If he accompanied Lúthien on the harp when she sang, the harp was probably widely and customarily used for the purpose of accompaniment. This would make sense, as the player can strum chords as well as play short fills during melody breaks. When used as a solo instrument, a harpist can play melodies and chords with both hands very fast, so soloist performances are easily imaginable, making the harp an instrument suitable for all styles of music and in all situations. We know that the Elves played several harps together, because in the Book of Lost Tales we read that the Noldoli "made much music, for the multitude of their harps and viols was very sweet"

(LT1, 137) and, later, that "the throbbing of their congregated harps beat the air most sweetly" (LT1, 158). Judging from the description ("multitude"), the number of harps played at the same time was rather large. Maybe their playing style was such that one or two players always played the lead while the rest provided rhythmic and harmonic backing; after a number of bars then other players would take over. Unless they strictly played in unison or from some form of sheet music, there is no other way imaginable how they could have played well together with so many players playing the same instrument. Not only is it necessary to play the right harmony, but also not to accidentally get in the way of other players, creating a muddy sound. From the quotes we can also gather that Elven harps had a quite short sustained tone or were muted with the hand rather quickly – again with so many instruments otherwise the sound would have become quite muddy.

We have already touched on the subject of probable musical differences between the Elves that went to Valinor and those who remained in Middle-earth and the likely fusion of the two styles after the first returned. Maier notes the likely presence of two different strands of harps, too. The Elves who had remained in Middle-earth continued their musical tradition; Maier takes Haldir's words "our hands are more often upon the bowstring than upon the harp" (LotR, 348) as representative of this group. Their harps would have largely remained the same, but probably were influenced by Dwarven designs because chances are high that Elves had contact with Dwarves.

The Elves who went to Valinor would have had the chance there to learn directly from the Valar, probably influencing their craftsmanship. Maier names the harps of Galadriel and Elrond as examples of this line (Maier, 119) and suggests their similarity to a "special harp construction of the 17th century with three parallel rows of strings. These instruments were sometimes even larger them two meters and had approximately 80 to 100 strings" (Maier, 120). Such an instrument would indeed have been magnificent and fitting to an Elven king. Furthermore it would sufficiently explain the special sound of Elvish harps, if only those had three rows of strings, but not the harps played by other cultures.

The flutes are used for melodies, suggesting the presence of purely instrumental music. Players like Tinfang Warble would not have gone to the length of

learning to play as well as they could, only to end up only accompanying someone else, so they played solo without doubt. As for the "viols" of the Noldor, we can take these for the presence of general bowed instruments. We know nothing about how exactly those instruments were built or how they sounded, but it proves that Elvish orchestras had bowed instruments in their sonic palette. For today's "Elvish" music this basically means that bowed strings are indeed acceptable in performances as a replacement of the instruments used by the Elves, contrary to brass instruments, which do not seem to have been used at all for this purpose. Woodwinds obviously are fine, too, but there is no mention of any percussion in the text. It is hard to believe that Elves did not even know any drums or other percussive instruments, but they do not seem to have played any at all. Maybe they did not because percussive instruments were considered to be instruments of the dark forces; after all, Orcs and other cultures allied with the enemy are reported to having used them.

3.2.3 Men

With the music of Men similar to and dominated by Elvish music, it is only logical that the similarities extend to the use of instruments. Steimel refers to the *Unfinished Tales* when writing, "the Edain are said to have preferred the harp for accompanying their songs. In Númenor, it was the men's part to play the instruments, while the women sang." (Steimel, 95).

Here we learn that the harp is an important instrument for the Men, too. While most of the instruments mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* are horns (the most important one being Boromir's silver-lined horn), those seem to mainly be used for signalling in battle, not as musical instruments. This goes in line with the musical traditions of the Elves. Steimel mentions the use of trumpets in Gondor for announcing the comings and goings of important persons or even soldiers, with those trumpet signals bearing meaning as signal calls. (Steimel, 98).

The Rohirrim very well could be an exception to the rule of using horns mainly for signals: They by far are the culture that is most mentioned using horns, with sometimes miraculous effects and properties. The Horn of Helm strikes such fear into the Orcish hordes that "Many of the Orcs cast themselves on their faces

and covered their ears with their claws." (LotR, 540), caused by the wondrous echo of the horn, which does not grow fainter, but instead louder. The horn is blown by men – in the plural – which suggests that it is a huge, stationary instrument. We can assume that it is of Dwarven origin, because the horn given to Merry Brandybuck by the Rohirrim is of Dwarvish making, as are the instruments used at Bilbo's birthday party. By being so large and having magical properties, just like the Merry's horn of the Mark, and with horns in general having such a high standing in Rohan society, they may very well have developed their own musical style for it – Linden suggests such a development, but calls it "utterly fanciful" (Linden, 88).

It does not appear so fanciful if one thinks of how much the Rohirrim rely on their horns in battle. We do not get any background information, but Théoden insists on Helm's Horn being blown when riding into battle, with profound effects. Similarly, horns are frequently used to encourage the Rohirrim – it is their counterpart to war cries or the Orc's clapping of their shields. The powerful magic of those instruments – again probably Dwarvish – will have come at a price. That the Rohirrim chose to have someone build magical horns, but not for example magical shields, proves their affinity to these instruments. Besides, on horseback an easily portable horn is much less a burden than a huge shield. As a highly mobile people, portability would have been an important aspect of the selection of instruments for performance. With the horns always close at hand it is only natural that they began using them as musical instruments while underway and probably specifically commissioned instruments that were fit to this task.

The harp as the common instrument of all cultures again deserves some insights from Maier: Since we have no information about how the Men came to play the harp. Maier speculates that they encountered Elves and Dwarves and learned from them. He states that, contrary to the Dwarves, their harps would have gut or sinew strings, not metal strings, since the Men were not able to craft these. (Maier, 115). While this is certainly correct, they could have bought Dwarven harps. In *The Lord of the Rings*, harps are mentioned as being played by the Rohirrim and the people of Gondor. There are harpists at the coronation of King Elessar, presumable playing soloist performances as well as accompanying the

"singing of clear voices" mentioned earlier. The harp is used in Rohan, too, or at least was at the time of Eorl, because it is mentioned in the old song translated to Westron by Aragorn: "Where is the hand on the harpstring, and the red fire glowing?" (LotR, 508). The mention of the glowing fire suggests that the harp was primarily played in the mead hall – as it was customary in the kingdom of Mercia, on which Rohan is heavily based – and maybe during travels at the campfire, too. It certainly was an instrument reserved for instrumental music or vocal accompaniment of old, traditional songs, possibly also for accompanying the recitation of epics. We cannot imagine it ever being used to accompany a song sending the Rohirrim forth into battle.

Maier quotes the description of one such recitation of the Old English epic *Beowulf* from Humphrey Carpenter's biography of Tolkien:

> *…the opening of his series of lectures on Beowulf. He would come silently into the room, fix the audience with his gaze, and suddenly begin to declaim in a resounding voice the opening lines of the poem in the original Anglo-Saxon, commencing with a great cry of 'Hwaet!' [. . .] It was not so much a recitation as a dramatic performance, an impersonation of an Anglo-Saxon bard in a mead hall . . .* (Maier, 109).

Apart from Tolkien not having a harp at hand back then, it is very likely that his performance of *Beowulf* would not have differed greatly from a similar recitation by a Rohirrim bard.

Finally, there is the interesting absence of any percussive instruments in either Gondor or Rohan. Only the Drúedain are said to use drums for communication, but not as musical instruments. One possible explanation for this would be that most uses of music in *The Lord of the Rings* are either in war, or on the road, where larger instruments would have been unfeasible. Most likely percussive instruments were not used because they are employed quite heavily by the Orcs and as such are automatically associated with enemies. Whether this is a decision by the people themselves within the universe of the books or by Tolkien as the author himself cannot be ascertained. One cannot say, though, that only the "good people" use other instruments like horns and trumpets –

during the Battle of the Pelennor fields the enemy uses them as well in a similar fashion as signal devices.

3.2.4 Dwarves

As already discussed when dealing with vocal music, the guardedness of the Dwarves to outsiders and their subsequent custom to create special versions of songs for outsiders in the Common Language of Westron makes analysing originally Dwarvish music quite hard. As with vocal music, for instrumental music, too, we need to accept that we cannot say anything with certainty about the music played among Dwarves when they were on their own. What we can however do is look at the music performed or mentioned by Dwarves in public and at the influence of Dwarven craftsmanship on other cultures.

Steimel at length discusses Bilbo's "unexpected party" in *The Hobbit*, which indeed is the best source about Dwarven music (Steimel, 100-103). The instruments mentioned are: fiddle, viols, flutes, clarinets, drum and a harp. The fiddles, viols (comparable to a cello in size probably) and flutes easily fit into what we have already learned about music in Middle-earth. None of the other races are said to play fiddles – most likely regular violins, as Tolkien preferred the term; and indeed it makes more sense in such a style of music – but that does not prove that no others may have played fiddles, too. Viols were already used by the Elves a long time earlier and since fiddles are basically a smaller version of the same design, they would have been a natural choice for traveling musicians. As to how the Dwarves got the big viols on Bilbo's front porch, we have no information.

The drum, which could have been almost any size, is not surprising, either. As Steimel notes, it probably was used to keep all the players together. Also it proves that not only the cultures allied with evil were using percussive instruments. The problem lies more with the clarinets, them being a rather modern invention and something that severely clashes with the notion of the music of Middle-earth being roughly comparable to medieval music. (Steimel, 101). Of course, Tolkien may have had something like the chalumeau or even the medieval double clarinet in mind, forerunners of the modern clarinet, but

with a much narrower range. It is unlikely, however, that Tolkien specifically researched old wind instruments, just to then use a modern instrument name. Why Tolkien chose the clarinets, we do not know, but evidently he did not really mind the issue, otherwise he could have easily changed the instrument in a later edition of the book. We shall be content with Steimel's theory that he "merely chose an instrument which could go unnoticed among the walking sticks" (Steimel, 101).

Again here we have a harp. Thorin's harp must have been magnificent, judging from the description. Once again Maier has some insight into how Dwarven harps could look and sound like: From a passage in *The Hobbit* he suggests that Dwarves used metal strings for their harps. He compares these harps to instruments by the Gaelic Celts in Ireland and Scotland, which were not plucked with the fingertips, but instead with the nails and "sound like bells" – exactly the sound attributed to the Dwarven harps. (Maier, 113). Also at least Thorin's harp had to be fairly small. Thorin takes it out from a cloth and it clearly is very portable. We can assume that, apart from singular instruments in larger dwellings, most Dwarven harps would be built this way. While it is indeed likely that they were built from hardwood, with the Dwarves' skill and the presence of special metals (Mithril may not necessarily be the only metal not known anymore today, even though no others are mentioned by Tolkien) it could be possible that at least some instruments were made of metal. Bilbo's mithril shirt is very light, so that a harp made of mithril would not be too heavy. We have no indication that there were harps made of any other material than wood, but it is very likely that the Dwarves at least tried to use metal, maybe successfully.

Lastly, there is a curious feature of those harps: They are sometimes enchanted, for example the instrument found in Smaug's cave, so they are never out of tune. Again there is no information about the kind of magic employed here. It might be interesting to know, though, because this special feature of the instruments could again be a result of the knowledge of its makers: Maybe it wasn't even real magic, but skill. Arthur C. Clarke's third law comes to mind: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." (Clarke).

If the Dwarves indeed were either able to routinely weave magic into their instruments or had knowledge of instrument-making that to outsiders would

appear like magic, this would go a long way to explain a striking fact about the importance of Dwarves in music: While we do not know whether or not Dwarvish musicians were leading the way as performers, Dwarven craftsmen certainly played a major role in crafting many of the instruments of Middle-earth. We have already heard about the origin of Merry's horn and will learn that instruments of their making were even used in the Shire. Merry's horn is described being embroidered with Rohan ornamentation, so the Dwarves made it specifically for the Rohirrim. Unless it was a one of a kind instrument, built as a gift to the Rohirrim, we can assume that Dwarves had a major enterprise in crafting instruments as to their customer's wishes. We must not forget that the overall presentation of Dwarves in Tolkien's works is as a very enterprising culture, with a monopoly on all sorts of metal, construction of stone structures and hosts of expert craftsmen. With a once gigantic corporate empire - we are told that Dwarves helped build many a great landmark - the Dwarves far more appear like a culture of professional craftsmen with a knack for corporate thinking (to speak in modern concepts) than as just some people digging holes and mining for metal! When later having a look at the *Song of Durin*, we shall see this in a very pronounced form.

While in the times *The Lord of the Rings* is set there was not much contact or even friendship between Elves and Dwarves, this had not always been the case. In former times, Dwarves took a great part in crafting Elven kingdoms. With Dwarves being very good at building instruments, as we can see at Merry's horn, it is not at all unlikely that a great number of instruments used by Elves, Men and in other cultures alike are of Dwarven making. The Dwarves may not always have created the design and specifications, but for anyone wanting to have instruments built it would have made perfect sense to give the task to the most important source of expert craftsmanship.

If this theory is correct, this means that the instruments played by the Dwarves at Bilbo's so-called party could be taken as models for most if not all instruments present in Middle-earth. This also would explain our findings of the similarity of the choice of instruments between the different cultures. While this similarity undoubtedly harks back to the First Music, whose sounds, resembling real instruments, encouraged the cultures to develop instruments sounding this

way, it nevertheless better explains why there also seems to be little diversity between the instrument types. There is no reason to assume that an Elvish viol would differ greatly from a Dwarven one - which would make sense if both were built by the same people. This does of course not mean that races other than the Dwarves did not build instruments or were not even able to, just that they probably most of the time chose to let expert instrument builders do it rather than doing it themselves.

3.2.5 Hobbits

Hobbits routinely play instruments, as it seems. When Bilbo holds his party at Bag End, he distributes musical crackers, which produced small musical instruments “of perfect make and enchanting tone” (LotR, 29). These instruments are supposedly of Dwarven origin, so we cannot say whether or not the Hobbits themselves built such instruments, but they were certainly able to play them very well. Some Hobbits formed an impromptu orchestra and began playing dance tunes, which not only proves that they were able to play, but also that there was a good number of instrumental music regularly played by Hobbits, otherwise they would not have been able to play together without any rehearsal. This goes in line with the description of Hobbit music detailed before: If this music was somehow similar in its build to modern folk or bluegrass music, such an impromptu performance would have posed no difficulties.

We can also assume that either the crackers did not contain any instruments that were not regularly played by Hobbits, or if they did, that no Hobbit would have taken any instrument not known to him when forming said orchestra. There were “trumpets and horns, pipes and flutes, and other musical instruments” (LotR, 29), so those instruments were common among Hobbits, as it seems. We know that Hobbits liked merry dance tunes and often played in inns, so the "other instruments" most likely would be some sort of bass instruments (for example Viols), small drums (comparable to the bodrhán, maybe) and possibly even plucked instruments. Lutes are mentioned in the course of the First Music, so maybe those were common, too. Hobbits would prefer rather small instruments because of their body height, so we can safely exclude double basses or other similarly large instruments, possibly even

guitars. With the average Hobbit being about two to four feet tall, a very small guitar would be necessary. Hobbits may therefore use instruments resembling mandolins for chordal accompaniment as well as for playing melodic phrases. Fiddles seem to be identical to what we know as fiddles (regular violins, sometimes with a slightly flatter bridge), so other instruments may as well. If they are, the "Hobbit mandolin" would have the same tuning as the fiddle, making it easy to learn and play for someone familiar with the either instrument.

3.2.6 Other Cultures

As noted previously, the Orcs are one of the few races using percussive instruments, going in line with their very percussive singing style ("Clap! Snap! the black crack!", H, 72). Drums are used for communication and seem to have some signal value, too, as can be seen in the Mines of Moria: The "drums in the deep" evidently tell the Orcs the exact location of the Fellowship and organize the battle plan. Steimel also mentions the use of shields and spears as a means to produce percussive sounds on the battlefield. Orcs evidently also used some form of trumpets: At the beginning of the attack on Helm's Deep, "brazen trumpets sounded" (LotR, 533). We do not of if those were played by Orcs, since there were also men from Dunland present on the enemies' side, but it is possible. While none of these uses constitutes a proper musical performance, the song from the Hobbit confirms that Orcs have music, so it is likely that they would also have some sorts of instruments to accompany their songs. Why a race like the Orcs, bred artificially for the pure goal of being soldiers and going to war, with no regular social life given, develops any form of song or even instrumental music must be attributed to the influence of music in Arda in general. By originating from the Elves, the Orcs literally have it in their blood and even Melkor's perversion was not fully able to overcome the inherent workings of the world.

Of all the non-human music, Entish music is probably the most interesting, because it is described as having the sound of instruments – Tolkien speaks of sounds "like a very deep woodwind instrument" (LotR, 463), "like a discord on a great organ (LotR, 466) and "solemn drums" (LotR, 484). The only other

occurrence of sounds that are instrument-like, but actually are not produced by real instruments, is in the First Music. The Ents create sounds by using their wooden bodies, so in a way they have woodwinds and wooden percussion instruments, as Steimel notes (Steimel, 99). As one of the oldest races of Middle-earth, their music is very old and learned and like all their doings, takes a lot of time. It is interesting to note that Treebeard is able to instantly sing Entish songs in Westron, even though he hasn't had any contact with Westron speakers for a long time and usually presumably sings in his own tongue. Even if he had contact, most people would hardly be interested in hearing Ent songs - he himself complains about the lack of feelings for the forest in most people, so it is unlikely that he very often before had to sing any song in Westron. Still he can at a moment's notice. This again goes back to the influence of the First Music in Middle-earth: To be able to express oneself by means of song and music in the Common Tongue, and the desire to do so when prompted, seems to be a gift every culture possesses and may therefore well be part of the First Music and one of the many things set into being when it was made reality.

4 Selected Music

Now after we have had a look at how Middle-earth music came to be, how it sounds like in terms of both style and instrumentation and, perhaps most importantly, the great importance it has in the inner workings of the world, we will turn to a number of musical pieces composed in our time based on *The Lord of the Rings*.

The focus of this section will lie on songs and poems from the original text and their renditions. We will analyse these for coherence, in how far they fit with the stylistic guidelines we have discovered and in which way they could be seen as successful renditions of the particular situation in the book. Of some texts there are no recorded songs, but only accompanied declamations. These will also not be forgotten, but their value is limited, because the declamation without melody is heavily dependent on the rhythmic and tonal properties of the language. Because all such texts are printed in English, which Tolkien employed as a representation of Westron, a language we have no information about, we cannot say anything about these features.

Some pieces, finally, at the first glance have no direct connection to Tolkien's descriptions of Middle-earth music at all. Still these are claiming to in essence be true to his work, so they merit some investigation.

For reasons of space, this section only deals with a selection of pieces. They were chosen for their ability to give insights about the way in which their composers transferred the concepts and ideas discussed before into music. The selection made here does not in any way constitute any judgement of the musical or artistic quality of the pieces not included – it is merely that these pieces were best suited to bring across the point of this paper. For the reader to place these pieces into context and to evaluate the validity of the finding detailed here, it is recommended to listen to the full recordings of all discussed works.

The pieces discussed here are listed under the names given to them by the Tolkien Ensemble, with the exception of all songs under 4.2, whose names are prefixed by the topic from the book they are dealing with. Most of the time, in

addition to the song mentioned in the heading, we will also have a look at songs with similar content, sometimes based on that particular song. At the beginning of every section all the musical recordings and/or sheet music sources are printed. Running times in the text refer to these recordings detailed at the beginning of each section and are in the format [minutes]:[seconds]. A note about score excerpts and lyrics present in the text: All score excerpts as well as lyrics are transcribed from the recordings of the pieces, unless indicated otherwise (see 6.2). The lyrics of songs performed by the Tolkien Ensemble are taken from *The Lord of the Rings* book. Metric beaming and syllabic slurs are used throughout for readability.

4.1 Songs and Poems From the Book

The large number of songs listed in *The Lord of the Rings* can be roughly divided into two groups:

1) Songs invented and sung by characters from the narrative during the course of the book or not a very long time before. The content and execution of these songs is personal and representative more of their composer than of a more general faction. To phrase it differently: A song from this group stands for its singer/composer, not necessarily for the race or culture he or she belongs to. One example is the *Old Walking Song*, composed by Bilbo Baggins, which not necessarily is representative of all Hobbit travel songs.
2) Traditional songs, whose origins very much predate the timeframe of the book (the end of the Third Age). These songs now are much more representative of the culture they originated from, by the fact of gradual textual selection: Most of the songs and poems composed over time would have been forgotten, with only the most important and most valued ones remaining in cultural memory. These songs mostly deal with legends and past events or describe a certain state of the culture in a former time. Musically speaking, these songs also would be most representative of the accepted general style of that particular culture, since they would be passed on from one generation to another as a cultural heritage and therefore are unlikely to be changing much, if at all.

The renditions of some of the many songs from *The Lord of the Rings* will form the basis of this section. Sometimes when there are several versions of the same song, due to the song being mentioned several times in the book, mostly with some lyrics changes, those different versions will be taken into account, too. We will then compare the findings to other uses of the song.

There is one general feature of all the songs presented here that needs to be taken into account: All the renditions are accompanied, even though in the book some clearly are not. The creators of the recordings clearly wanted to picture the common performance situation, not the special circumstances of the book. Therefore this intention is taken for granted and a composition will not be judged on the basis of whether or not the performance is realistically in such a

way of being possible in the situation where it is mentioned in the book. It is obvious that Gimli will not have had an 80 piece symphony orchestra at his disposal when singing the *Song of Durin*. But if we let such a performance stand as a representation of how such a song would usually be performed, we can and should analyse it as to the way this performance might be true to the book. Caspar Reiff, the founder of the Tolkien Ensemble confirms this:

> *Well if you want to do a version that represents "the actual performance in the book" our version obviously does not achieve that goal. Almost all songs would have to be single voice only. It was never the intension [sic!], though, to do so. Our version is an artistic interpretation based (but never consequently) on using music styles to represent the various peoples of Middle-earth. Thus the Hobbits music is based on traditional English/Irish folk music, The humans go in a more traditional Classical music style, the Elves, well, something in between.* (Reiff, e-mail 1).

So we will look at the general musical stylistics of the pieces and determine whether or not they fit with the previous findings as concerning harmony, melody, use of counterpoint and instrumentation.

The instrumentation of pieces is a quite different topic, however, and will be treated somewhat more strictly. It is easily possible that in Rivendell there may have been an ensemble with musicians from different races or even cultures within the same race, providing the accompaniment to the songs. This would sufficiently explain the presence of some instruments in songs by cultures usually not likely to play these instruments. Nevertheless, there is no reason why any song should be accompanied by a “wrong” instrument at a retelling of the War of the Ring – just like in a modern ensemble these players could just have stayed silent for the song. Or, in other words: At Rivendell, there might have been drums in use played by dwarves; but they most likely would not be used in traditional Elvish music, simply because Elves did not seem to use drums at all.

4.1.1 Namárië

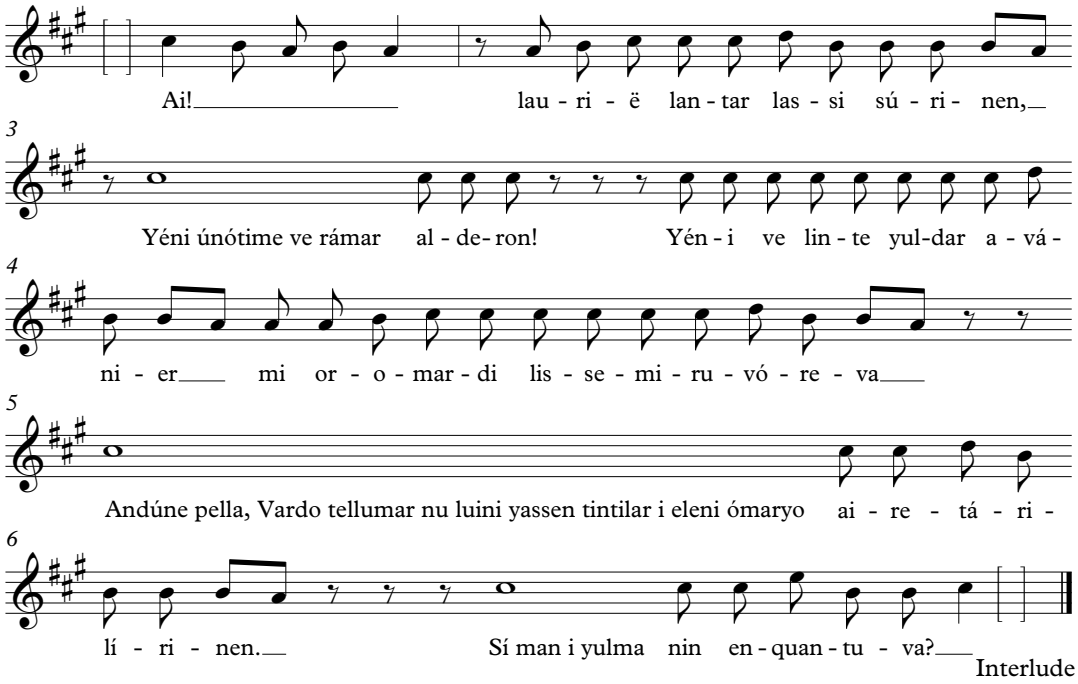
Donald Swann, *Namárië*, Swann, 22.

Tolkien Ensemble, *Song Of The Elves Beyond The Sea / Galadriel's Song Of Eldamar (II),* TE CD 2, Track 13, 6:13.

For a world so full of music and musical allusions, we have precious little first-hand information about how Tolkien imagined this music to sound like. There is one exception, though, where we not only have a description of the general stylistic qualities of a piece, but even a melody that goes with it by hand of the author. Galadriel sings *Namárië* after the Fellowship leaves her realm. The song is the longest Quenya text in the book. It deals with "things little known on Middle-earth" (LotR, 377) and refers to the Undying Lands and Galadriel's desire to return there, something that was forbidden to her due to her being part of the group of Elves that went to Middle-earth against the wish of the Valar. More about this topic can be found at 4.1.11 and 0. In the song she expresses the wish that Frodo may find the way to the Undying Lands; and indeed he ultimately does and even Galadriel is granted to go there, too, presumably because of her aid during the War of the Ring.

Donald Swann, who first set the poem to music, maintains that while Tolkien liked the rest of his renditions, he "bridled at my [Swann's] music for "Namárië." He had heard it differently in his mind, he said, and hummed a Gregorian chant." (Swann, vi). So this song is the only music directly confirmed by Tolkien. Swann therefore to use Tolkien's melody for the song and just print it in the way the author had told him, so technically speaking, *Namárië* is composed by Tolkien, not Swann.

Sadly, Swann's original version of the song seems to be lost; of all the research done for this paper, this was the only avenue that went dry.



excerpt: Namárië, Swann, 22.

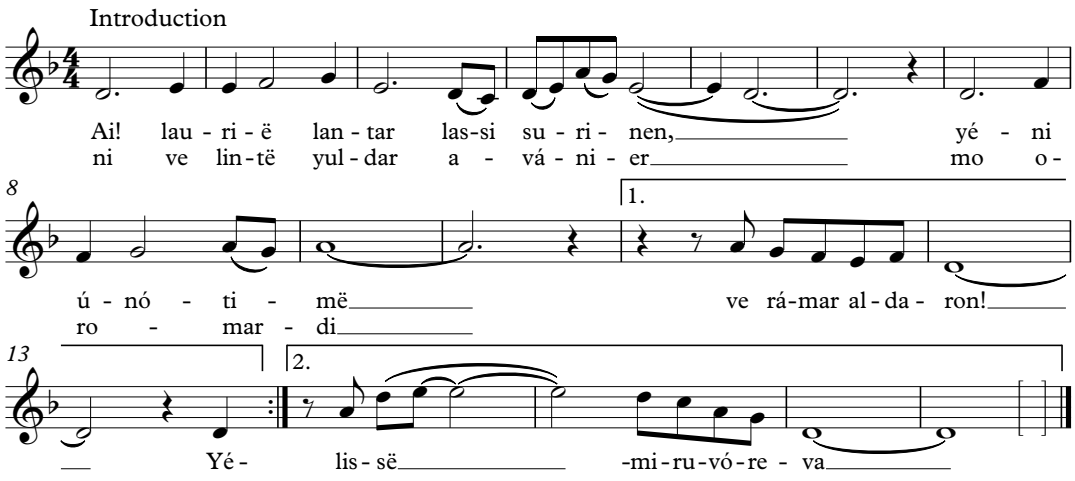
Save for the introduction, the interlude and the ending of the piece, *Namárië* is performed unaccompanied; the tempo is given as "freely". Giving the Elves a musical language oriented towards plainsong makes sense if one sees them as the oldest, most traditional race. Naturally, if the author himself asserts that this music sounded like plainsong, he is bound to be right.[11] Nevertheless, if we think of the idea of "reverse progress", it seems curious for such an ancient and important piece of music to be quite so simple. We would expect rather rich polyphony in High Elven music, as it is nearest to the First Music. One possible explanation would be that Galadriel simply preferred this mode of singing. Also if she only ever sang her lament to herself, there would have been no other musicians present for a polyphonic version. It is likely that Tolkien chose the plainsong approach to represent Galadriel's loneliness: Far away from home, with no prospect to go back and the knowledge that when the Master Ring would be destroyed, her time to fade would come, too, due to her Ring loosing its power. So the most likely explanation for Tolkien's wish to see this song represented as plainsong is that he intended it as a representation of Galadriel's personality, not as a model of what High Elven music sounded like in general.

[11] In literary criticism, the author does not necessarily need to be right in everything he writes. Nevertheless, with the amount of thought Tolkien put into creating his Legendarium, one might be tempted to remain true to the work in this case.

We need to leave it at this and see *Namárië* as what it is: The only music from Middle-earth passed on to us by Tolkien himself, which may or may not tell us more about the musical taste of the author than of its singer. With this paper firmly building on the notion of "reverse progress" and assuming a very high level of musical culture throughout the whole of Arda, *Namárië* stands here as the only primary source of music available to us and most likely represents a single instance of Elvish music, not the norm.

The Tolkien Ensemble has also set this poem to music as the *Song Of The Elves Beyond The Sea / Galadriel's Song Of Eldamar (II)*. The rendition at the first glance does not use a Gregorian chant, but instead is oriented towards operatic music, similarly to the other renditions of Elvish songs by the Ensemble. As we will see, though, it intelligently unites classical elements with plainsong technique, following Tolkien's conception of Elvish music, yet at the same time removing it from being purely based on existing "real-world" musical styles.

The piece begins with a tremolo marimba introduction, with a female soloist providing figures on "aah". The voice in the whole piece constitutes a major source of momentum, driving the piece forward. Midway through the introduction, an arpeggiated marimba pattern is taken over by the harp. Low male voices and a string section provide a pad. The actual poem begins at 0:53:



transcription (excerpt): Song Of The Elves Beyond The Sea / Galadriel's Song Of Eldamar (II), TE CD 2, Track 13.

During the whole piece, the string and choir pad stays consistent; the harp plays its arpeggiated eights pattern with the first beat silent. Only occasionally for

added impact, the accompaniment stays silent for a number of beats at the end of lines as well as mid-piece for single lines. These sparsely used passages of unaccompanied soloist singing strongly evoke a feeling of plainsong, thereby establishing a link between the Ensemble's mental image of what Elvish music sounds like ("something between folk music and classical music", according to Caspar Reiff; Reiff, e-mail 2) and what we know of Tolkien's ideas of Elvish music from Swann's song cycle. It may be argued that the Ensemble's approach of mixing learned classical music (including use of crafted instruments as a result of centuries of refinement of instrument families, establishing and suggesting an active development of instrument craftsmanship) with plainsong as described by Tolkien actually makes perfect sense by combining the author's vision of the sound of Elvish music with the background of a musical style developed over centuries and rooted in firm harmonic and melodic rules, thus complying to the idea of all music in Middle-earth directly being derived and based on the First Music.

The Ensemble chose to record the version of the poem translated into English (or Westron) only as narration, making an analysis of this version for the purpose of finding possible ways in which the Elves adapted their songs to Westron-speaking audiences futile. We will, however, have the chance to look at a similar topic in the analysis of the *Song of Durin* (see 0).

4.1.2 The Old Walking Song

Tolkien Ensemble, *The Old Walking Song (I),* TE CD 1, Track 1, 5:09.
Tolkien Ensemble, *The Old Walking Song (II),* TE CD 1, Track 3, 1:13.
Tolkien Ensemble, *The Old Walking Song (III),* TE CD 4, Track 17, 3:33.
Donald Swann, *The Road Goes Ever On,* Swann, 1.
Howard Shore, *Bag End,* LotR FotR CD 1, Track 3, 4:36, starts at 0:20.
The Lord of the Rings Musical, *The Road Goes On,* LotR M, Track 2, 4:51.

The Old Walking Song, the very first song to be encountered by the reader in *The Lord of the Rings*, is without doubt the most well-known song from the book, primarily because of it being the first one and thus the most likely to still get read. It is sung by Bilbo when leaving the Shire after the "long-expected party" and, with textual alterations, sung repeatedly later by Frodo. The origin of the song is not completely clear: One might argue that it is derived from a similar poem spoken by Bilbo at the end of *The Hobbit*. Nothing suggests that he has invented it himself and the text clearly says that he "said" it. This might, however, lead us back to Martin and his observation of folk singers rarely distinguishing between singing and speaking – so if Bilbo is here described "saying" what would clearly be a good walking song, there is no reason to assume that even if he did not sing it when coming home, he would not make a song out of it later on. After all he had sixty years of time until the events of *The Lord of the Rings* to find a suitable melody.

It is therefore likely that Bilbo wrote the song present in *The Lord of the Rings* based on his idea from when he returned in *The Hobbit*. The song is then again spoken by Frodo when crossing the border of the Shire and a final time by Bilbo as an old Hobbit in Rivendell. The first two versions are nearly identical, with the only change being the line "Pursuing it with eager feet" in Bilbo's version, in which Frodo replaces "eager" with "weary". This hardly qualifies as a completely new version. Frodo plain and simple replaced the word because his feet hurt and it fitted the occasion.

> *The Road goes ever on and on*
> *Down from the door where it began.*
> *Now far ahead the Road has gone,*
> *And I must follow, if I can,*
> *Pursuing it with eager / weary feet,*

Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.

(LotR, 73)

Bilbo's version from Rivendell, however, is noticeably different:

The Road goes ever on and on
Out from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
Let others follow it who can!
Let them a journey new begin,
But I at last with weary feet
Will turn towards the lighted inn,
My evening-rest and sleep to meet.

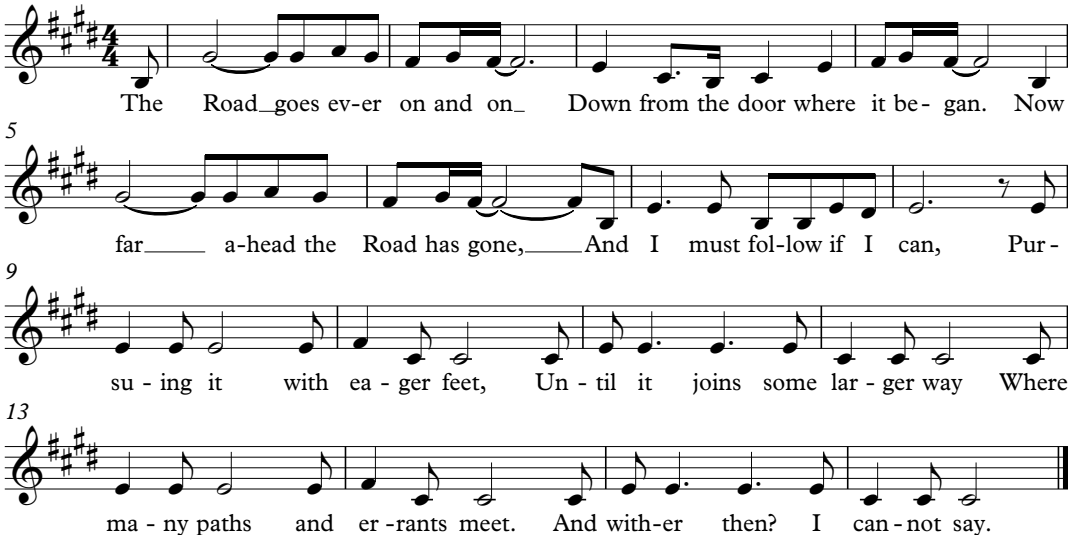
(LotR, 987)

It is best described as a textual adaption of the earlier song. The new text only uses the first three lines of the original poem, but by this (and presumably by using the same melody) Bilbo clearly draws upon the knowledge of the original song on the part of the reader. We may describe this new version as a musical summing-up of his part in the story to Frodo: He, as the Ring-bearer and the one who was responsible for the task of destroying it, has successfully taken over from Bilbo, who was originally responsible for the ring since the time he found it in *The Hobbit*. Figuratively speaking, Bilbo confirms in retrospect having passed the torch to his nephew. Indeed with him giving his old Mithril shirt to Frodo before he goes out to destroy the ring without anyone knowing, this act is pronounced even more clearly (LotR, 278). As such, we may not just see Bilbo's second version as the mutterings of a tired old Hobbit, but rather as an active decision to now accept that others have handled the affairs.

Arguably Bilbo may even have prepared Frodo for this all the time, subconsciously. Frodo knows Sindarin, something only very few Hobbits do and he obviously is well educated. It may even be possible that the ring itself had some part in making Bilbo help Frodo to become ready for his task: Just as the

ring has kept Bilbo from ageing, he may have influenced his dealings with his nephew to ultimately make Frodo the one to bring the ring back to Sauron. And indeed Frodo would have done so – if not for Gollum. Gandalf's quote "My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet", (LotR, 59) may refer to him knowing such thing, or at least having an inkling that something like this may be forthcoming. For the ring, Bilbo was one tool to get back to his master as he could make sure that he raised Frodo in a way that would suit his needs – the only thing the ring did not consider is that Frodo may indeed let Gollum live, so despite Frodo ultimately succumbing to the ring, it would nevertheless be destroyed, if only by accident.

The Tolkien Ensemble has set these three versions of the song to music, all three with the same melody and similar instrumentation, listed here in book order.



transcription (excerpt): The Old Walking Song (I), TE CD 1, Track 1.

The Old Walking Song (I) begins with a long plucked classical guitar introduction, with a solo violin coming in after 45 seconds, until the singer begins at 1:40. When looking at the instrumentation of the introduction, the use of a guitar poses some questions. There is no mention of guitars in the book, nor is it likely that any Hobbits played them, as a standard concert guitar would be very large indeed for a Hobbit. They could have used smaller versions, but this surely would have merited a mention by Tolkien. It is also doubtful that - if there indeed were guitars in Middle-earth - Hobbits would have kept using smaller versions without the chance of ever moving up to the full-size instruments. As with all musical instruments, the size of the guitar has

developed over time and is chosen for best sound. So for a people that could never play the full-size version, it is unlikely that they would even begin using the instrument at all. If we think about which instrument the Hobbits could have used instead of the guitar, the best alternative would be an octavo mandolin, which is tuned an octave lower than the regular mandolin. The instrument is much smaller than a guitar, while still having a tonal range allowing for chordal accompaniment as well as playing melodies. We do not know about the use of octavo mandolins, either, but if indeed Hobbit music would sound like modern folk music, it would make sense to have a "guitar-like" instrument. The inclusion of a guitar in the recordings is probably due to Caspar Reiff, the composer, being a guitarist. Reiff writes that he had "always thought of the guitar sound to be very close to a semi-sized-hobbit harp" (Reiff, e-mail 2). Indeed, a harp could take the place of the guitar in hobbit songs by providing chordal accompaniment as well as playing melodic fills.

The violin coming in during the introduction fits into the instrumentation, but we may question its playing style. The Tolkien Ensemble in its version has a violin, played with little vibrato, but still played in a classical style, not the folk style that is suggested by Tolkien. Even though we know he preferred the term "fiddle" in general, he nevertheless was certainly aware of the differences in style. Apart from a sometimes slightly flatter bridge, there is no visible difference between a fiddle and a violin, so the fact that Bilbo says "fiddle" and not "violin" when the Dwarves get out their instruments at his "unexpected party" suggests that Hobbits played fiddle style, not classical style. We might at least expect a couple of double stops in the piece. Lastly the introduction is very long. *The Old Walking Song*, as the name implies, is sung either while walking or before departing on a journey. In both cases, such a long instrumental introduction is not very likely. We may excuse this with Reiff's goal of presenting the songs as part of a retelling of the events of the War of the Ring in Rivendell, as outlined earlier.

When the voice comes in at 1:40, an orchestral string section accompanies the vocals until the end as a pad. This string section only makes sense in the situation of an after-the-war performance, because there is no reason to assume that at any performance of Hobbit music there was a string section present;

maybe single instruments, but not a full (orchestral) section. After the poem has been sung once through, an interlude is played with violins con sordino (2:25), while the guitar and string accompaniment stays present. After this, the text is repeated identically (3:20). After that, we again hear the violin introduction, but this time accompanied by a string pad (4:07).

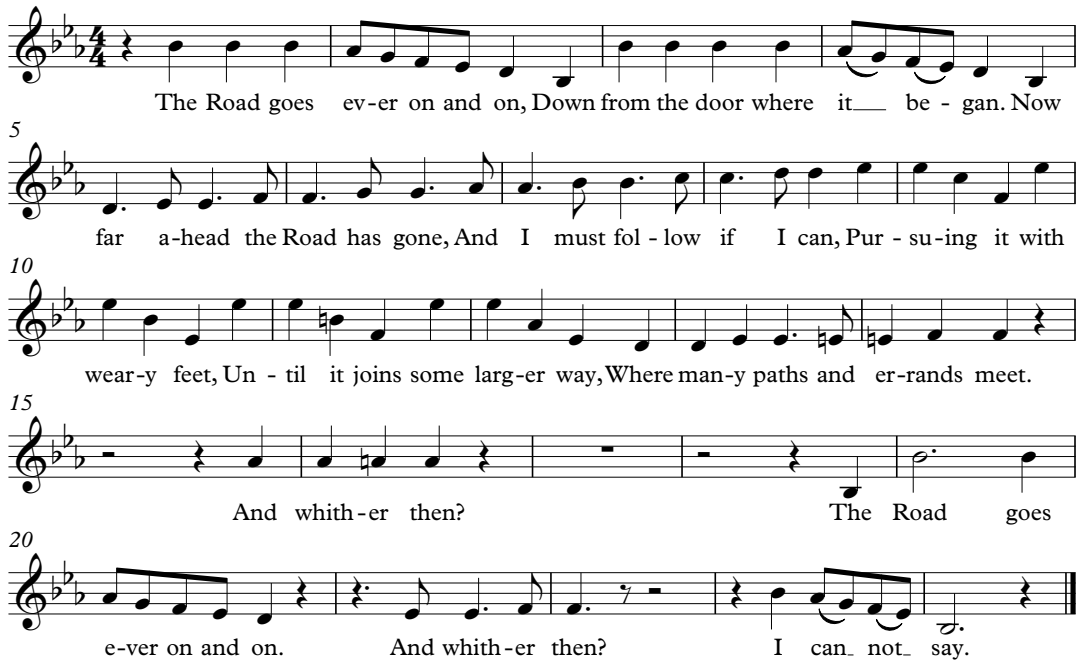
The whole piece is performed very slowly and with the string pad feels very much like a sad ballad. Apart from the instrumentation, which does not completely follow what we could gather of Hobbit music, the slow tempo makes this song not ideal as a walking song. The melody itself is sufficiently catchy as to be memorable on the first pass – again, one of the requirements we have detailed of Hobbit music. This version is sung when Bilbo embarks on his journey, so he supposedly is eager to go, which is also expressed in the book ("I am as happy now as I have ever been, and that is saying a great deal.", LotR, 35). In the book, the song appears to be a happy, encouraging song, which should come across in any rendition even with the artistic license of adding an accompaniment. From the whole style of this rendition, it would better fit Bilbo's second version of the song at Rivendell.

A guitar only accompanies *The Old Walking Song (II)*, with identical text to the first rendition. The text is only sung once through, contrary to the Ensemble's first version. We might well imagine this to be sung by Frodo when looking back at the Shire. The tempo is roughly the same, which still gives the song a slightly sad feel, but with the string pad missing, the song feels more like a reminiscence of the warm fire and the amenities of Bag End, not to speak of Frodo remembering Bilbo, which is exactly what the book suggests. Apart from the guitar as accompaniment, this version certainly makes sense and brings the situation from the book across nicely.

The Old Walking Song (III), Bilbo's version as an old Hobbit in Rivendell, is identical to the very first version. As said before, this rendition fits Bilbo's song as an old Hobbit well. The sad feel complies with a sense of regret in Bilbo not to have seen all these wonders himself, while at the same time being relieved to not have been forced to go to Mordor or to war. In Rivendell, we can even consider the presence of a string section and a solo violin. The song could have

been performed at a retelling of the story of Frodo's adventure, a reading from the *Red Book*, as per Reiff's concept.

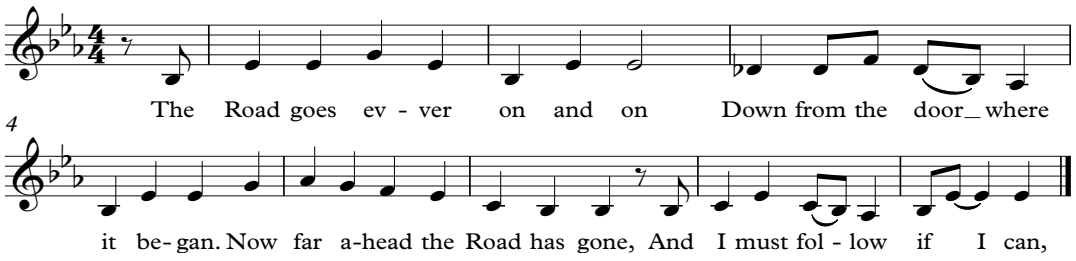
Donald Swann also set this poem to music in his song cycle *The Road Goes Ever On* as the first piece in the cycle. He chose the second version of the song ("weary feet") for his piece and set it to a simple melody accompanied by a piano providing chordal harmony and most of the time doubling the melody.



excerpt: The Road Goes Ever On, Swann, 1.

Stylistically, the piece is heavily oriented towards art song and does not in any way display any specific characteristics that we could describe as belonging to Hobbit music. The melody is identically used for the *Elven Hymn of Elbereth Gilthoniel*, which supports the theory that it does not reflect typical Hobbit music.

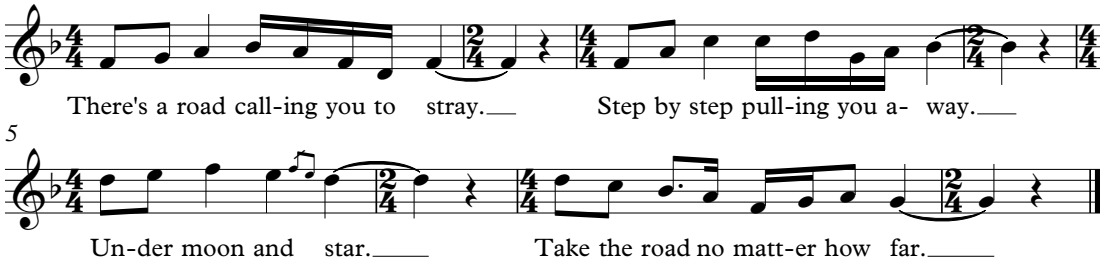
Testament to its importance and popularity, the *Old Walking Song* also features in the motion picture adaption as well as in the stage musical. In the film, Gandalf first sings it in the first version when he comes to Bag End. Bilbo likewise just sings the first four lines of the song on-screen when leaving after his birthday party. He supposedly continues singing on, but this is not audible on-screen. Both sing it to roughly the same melody, the only difference being the third line. Because Gandalf's version is more pronounced and is sung twice, we will use his version here:



transcription (excerpt): Bag End, LotR FotR CD 1, Track 3, from 0:20.

The tune is rhythmically easy to grasp, with a slow harmonic rhythm at the beginning – the whole first line is on the same chord (bars 1-2). Only later does the harmonic rhythm quicken. The melody is pretty catchy and works well at different speeds, making it suitable for a walking song. The song stands in the key of Eb major, most likely so it fits the key of the underscore during the scenes. There is no reason why it should regularly be played in this key by the Hobbits themselves. For a folk song it would rather be in D major. Indeed if we have the musical example of Howard Shore's pensive setting or rural setting of the Shire theme (see Adams, 23 for details about these themes) with its use of the Irish Whistle, which is customarily tuned in D major. By having Gandalf know both the tune as well as the words, the filmmakers suggest that the song is relatively well-known, or at least that Bilbo taught it to Gandalf.

The stage adaption of *The Lord of the Rings* does not use the song in its original form, but has a music number called *The Road Goes On*, which in its text draws images from Bilbo's song and essentially is used in the same manner.



[text continued (excerpt):]

Where it leads no-one ever knows
Don't look back follow where it goes.
Far beyond the Sun
Take the Road wherever it runs.

The Road goes on, Ever ever on
Hill by hill, Mile by mile
Field by field, Stile by stile.
The Road goes on, Ever ever on

[. . .]

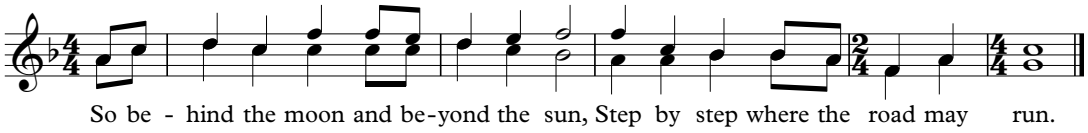
[FRODO/SAM]
See the Road flows past your doorstep, calling for your feet to stray
Like a deep and rolling river, it will sweep them far away.

[ALL]
Just beyond the far horizon, lies a waiting world unknown
Like the dawn its beauty beckons, with a wonder all its own.

[. . .]

transcription (excerpt): The Road Goes On, LotR M, Track 2.

We can use this song to get a complete picture of how a Hobbit could have performed the song during travel with instrumental and vocal accompaniment. While text is only very loosely based on Tolkien's poem, nevertheless the connection between the songs is obvious. In the musical, the song is introduced with a fiddle pattern accompanied by a bouzouki. The latter, though not mentioned by Tolkien, would be small enough to have been used by Hobbits. The introduction with its repeated figures gives a solid sense of tempo and allows the singers to join in at the right spot with a violin playing a pickup line at 0:13 with the voice beginning at 0:18. This is important for an impromptu group performance at the campfire and of course in the stage show in order for the actor to know his entry. The melody (see excerpt for the first few bars) is as catchy as the version from the films and harmonically easy, so as to facilitate singing and playing along. The musical also makes use of harmony singing, as suggested as a possible element of Hobbit music before: In the theatrical performance, there is a short two-part harmony section after the first chorus. This section is not included on the cast recording, however.



transcription (excerpt): The Road Goes On, LotR M, not on the recording.

This section could be representative of one of the vocal styles used by Hobbits, as this style of harmony singing lends itself to all catchy melodies with simple chord progressions, does not require any rehearsals and is simple enough to execute that a singer can play an instrument at the same time. In terms of adherence to the musical style of Hobbits, the song from the musical of all the renditions listed fits best, even though it uses different lyrics. In instrumentation and style it represents a typical journey song with all the attributes such a piece needs: memorable melody in a relatively narrow vocal range accessible to all singers, easy to grasp chord progressions and suitable for walking while singing.

The only word changed in Frodo's version of the *Old Walking Song*, "weary" instead of "eager", is used in the *Song of Hope* in the musical. In this duet between Aragorn and Arwen we find the line "And let the waking morning find the weary traveler[12] returning home" (LotR M, Track 5, at 1:45). The inclusion of this word surely is no coincidence, and suggests that the creative team of the show studied the poems very carefully. It also shows one of the ways in which the musical tries to stay as close to the book as possible despite being forced to cut large parts of the storyline: Quotes and events are transferred to other characters, allowing them to be present in the stage version, albeit under sometimes different circumstances.

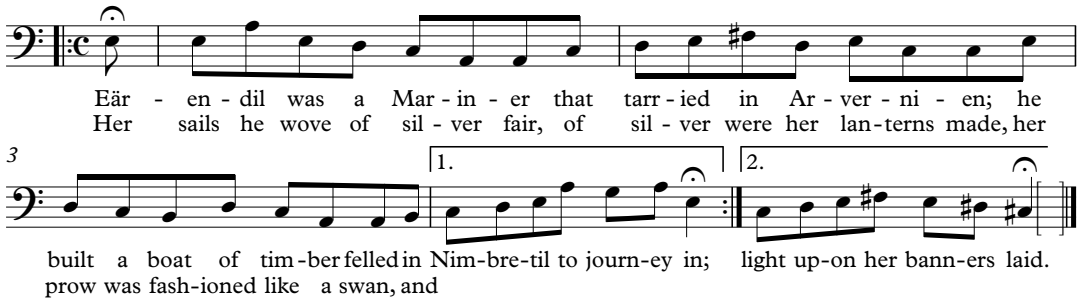
[12] The stage production uses American spelling throughout, which is interesting given that fact that it premiered in Canada, where British spelling is prevalent, and later moved to the UK.

4.1.3 Song of Eärendil

Tolkien Ensemble, *Song of Eärendil,* TE CD 2, Track 2, 10:18.
Lord of the Rings Musical, *Star of Eärendil,* LotR M, Track 7, 4:11.

Another poem of Bilbo's making, the *Song of Eärendil* is about the great mariner from the First Age, father of Elrond and the first mortal to set foot in Valinor. He convinced the Valar to help against Morgoth (Melkor). While at the time of the War of the Ring, Eärendil dwelled in the West, he indirectly nevertheless played an important role in Frodo's mission: Light from the Silmaril he brought to the West and which shone as a star in the sky was trapped in the phial Frodo was given by Galadriel. This Silmaril is what Frodo refers to with his exclamation "Star of Eärendil" when using the phial.

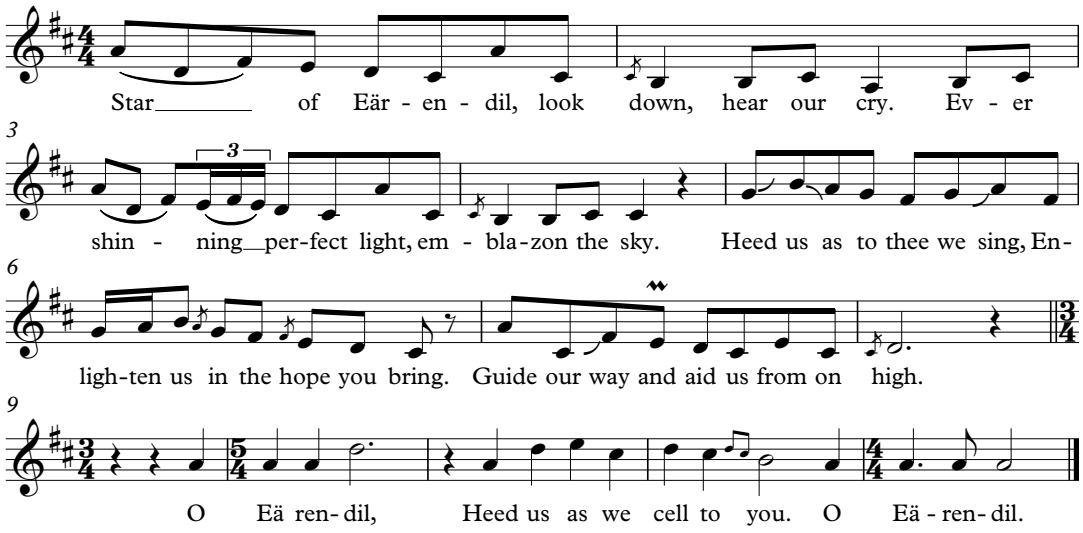
In Rivendell, Bilbo with the help of Aragorn wrote a long song about Eärendil, retelling his journey to the West, and performed it in front of Elrond and his court. The rendition of this song by the Tolkien Ensemble is interesting in that, for such an epic tale, it only has Bilbo singing, accompanied by classical guitar, in a style in parts reminiscent of a parlando aria. While not maintaining a high tempo at one note per syllable over the whole piece, when compared with either Elvish songs or the Ensemble's version of the *Old Walking Song*, the *Song of Eärendil* is one of the fastest pieces. Reiff gives the feel as "vivo". The Ensemble probably chose this approach to counter the great length of the poem. Indeed the style fits Bilbo well; it appears as a mixture of learned art song, possibly influenced by the songs Bilbo heard from the Elves, and his own Hobbit heritage, combining the two into a kind of Hobbit art music. Elrond and his company certainly seemed to enjoy the performance, but compared to the rest of Elvish music presented by the Ensemble, it might have sounded very "Hobbit-like" to them, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Maybe Bilbo deliberately fell back on the rather quick Hobbit folk style for the first time at Rivendell in this poem – the Elves requesting an encore certainly suggests that this performance notably differed from previous performances of other songs by Bilbo at the place.



transcription (excerpt): Song of Eärendil, TE CD 2, Track 2.

The guitar once again is questionable as a Middle-earth instrument, but this is eased by the fact that it is plucked, not strummed, which makes it possible for the sound to represent a kind of Elvish lute or a similar instrument. The version presented here fully qualifies as a recreation of Bilbo's original performance. Since the melody of the verses stays the same all the time, from a compositional and dramatical point of view, the *Song of Eärendil* would have been a good opportunity for enhancing the lyrics by means of composing an ensemble accompaniment serving to drive the narrative of the poem forward. The rather simple version by the Ensemble brings the poem to live very well, though. Considering Reiff's vision of his pieces to work as part of a dramatic retelling of the story, such additional musical elements would have made sense, however.

It is interesting to note that while the book lays some focus on Eärendil as a person with the *Song of Eärendil*, the motion picture leaves him out more or less completely. Galadriel mentions "our most beloved star" when giving Frodo the phial, but nothing here suggests that Eärendil is actually a person. In fact it seems as if the star was called this way. Bilbo's song does not feature in the film at all. The stage production, on the other hand, has its own song *Star of Eärendil*, which is sung when the Fellowship embarks on their task:



transcription (excerpt): Star of Eärendil, LotR M, Track 7.

Eärendil is not explicitly mentioned as a person, but the title alone makes it clear that he is a person, not a star. During the show, his blessing of the Fellowship is several times mentioned again, which makes his role more important than in the book. Musically, we can again observe a stylistic mixture of immediately accessible, "Hobbit-like" melodies with a sophisticated "Elvish" feel, just as with the version of the Tolkien Ensemble. The song from the musical also employs tonal ornamentations (see bars 5 and 6 of the transcription), which in the musical is a trademark stylistic element of Elvish music.

4.1.4 Song of Durin

Tolkien Ensemble, *Song of Durin,* TE CD 2, Track 9, 6:41.
Howard Shore, *Moria,* LotR FotR CD 2, Track 12, 2:28.
Lord of the Rings Musical, *Lament for Moria,* LotR M, Track 8, 1:38.

We have already touched on the unique way of the Dwarves in which they dealt with outsiders: Fervently guarding their customs and language, they composed special Westron versions of their songs, or completely new songs in Westron, as well as (presumably) instrumental music for interaction with other cultures. Some of those pieces are very old, for example the *Song of Durin*, which Gimli sings after Sam spoke of Moria as "darksome holes" (LotR, 315). The song speaks of Durin, one of the seven forefathers of the Dwarves, and arguably the most important of them. We do not know when the song was composed, but Gimli says that Durin is "still remembered in our songs", which means that there are several songs and implies that the one he is about to sing is not of recent origin and widely known. Maybe it belongs to the songs intended for representation when dealing with customers. The song may be regularly sung at such occasions for guests to introduce them to Dwarven history. It contains a number of musical references, which are written bold in the following text:

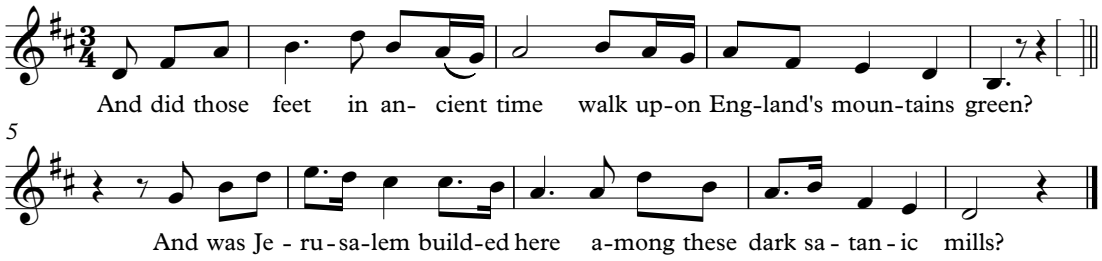
The world was young, the mountains green, No stain yet on the Moon was seen, No words were laid on stream or stone When Durin woke and walked alone. He named the nameless hills and dells; He drank from yet untasted wells; He stooped and looked in Mirrormere, And saw a crown of stars appear, As gems upon a silver thread, Above the shadows of his head. The world was fair, the mountains tall, In Elder Days before the fall Of mighty kings in Nargothrond And Gondolin, who now beyond The Western Seas have passed away:	There hammer on the anvil smote, There chisel clove, and graver wrote; There forged was blade, and bound was hilt; The delver mined, the mason built. There beryl, pearl, and opal pale, And metal wrought like fishes' mail, Buckler and corslet, axe and sword, And shining spears were laid in hoard. Unwearied then were Durin's folk; Beneath the mountains **music woke**: The **harpers harped**, the **minstrels sang**, And at the gates the **trumpets rang**. The world is grey, the mountains old, The forge's fire is ashen-cold;

The world was fair in Durin's Day.	**No harp is wrung**, no hammer falls:
	The darkness dwells in Durin's halls;
A king he was on carven throne	The shadow lies upon his tomb
In many-pillared halls of stone	In Moria, in Khazad-dûm.
With golden roof and silver floor,	But still the sunken stars appear
And runes of power upon the door.	In dark and windless Mirrormere;
The light of sun and star and moon	There lies his crown in water deep,
In shining lamps of crystal hewn	Till Durin wakes again from sleep.
Undimmed by cloud or shade of night	
There shone for ever fair and bright.	(LotR, 315).

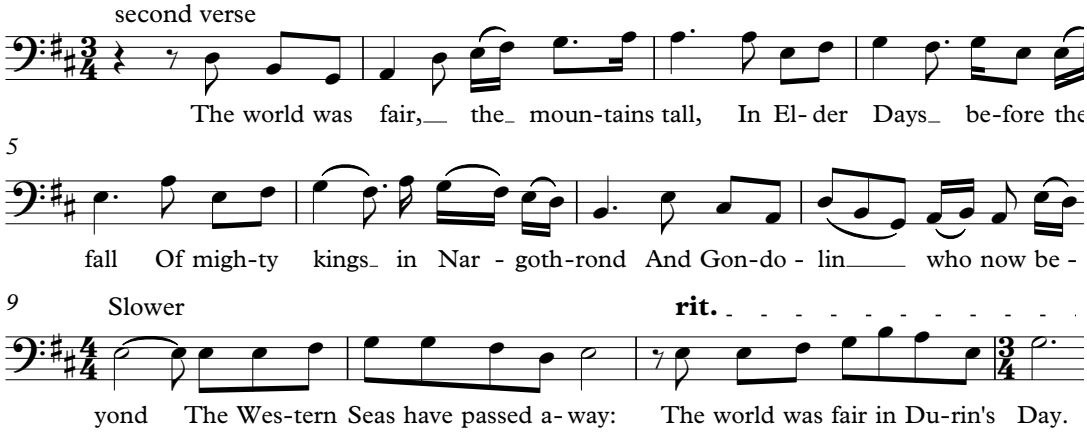
Not only can we learn from this song a lot about the appearance of Khazad-dûm in its early days after its foundation by Durin (the name Moria was later given to the place by the Elves), but also about the culture of the Dwarves who lived there. We learn of "golden roof and silver floor" and of "shining lamps of crystal". All this conjures up the image of a grand and very bright culture under the mountain - notably different from the way the place appears in the Third Age. We also hear of harps, minstrels singing and trumpets. The latter sound at the gates, which again suggests they are used for communication or to greet people approaching or leaving Khazad-dûm. It is no surprise that harps are mentioned - Thorin's magnificent harp is testament of the importance of the instrument to the Dwarves. The mention of minstrels is notable, however, because it confirms that Dwarves had professional singers, not just instrumentalists. For our purpose this means that vocal performances, either soloist or accompanied by instruments, have a high value in Dwarven society; otherwise minstrels would not be mentioned in such a song. It also means that songs, or vocal performances in general, were not just part of popular culture, but also performed at official events. Again: With the guardedness of the Dwarves, they would not mention minstrels in a song addressed to a non-Dwarvish audience unless everyone would know of their existence when visiting one of their dwellings. Gimli clearly sings the song for the Fellowship to hear - specifically for Sam, who in a way insulted the memory of Khazad-dûm - to inform them of former times, so his choice of this particular song was certainly deliberate. The *Song of Durin* therefore most likely is one of the

hallmark songs to sing to outsiders and as such has to be taken as the epitome of representative music.

So what did the Tolkien Ensemble make out of this song? Of all pieces by the Ensemble, the *Song of Durin* stylistically stands out the most. While most of the other renditions by the Ensemble are not directly modelled after a particular style, the *Song of Durin* certainly is. Stylistically, it is heavily oriented on 19th and early 20th century late romanticist tonal language, very similar to Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams. In fact, there is a striking similarity to sacred orchestral music from this period. We can find big similarities with Edward Elgar's orchestral arrangement of Hubert Hastings Parry's setting of the poem *And did those feet in ancient time*, written by Williams Blake. This hymn, which today is mostly known as *Jerusalem*, along with other stylistically similar pieces from traditional English music can be regarded as a big inspiration for the Tolkien Ensemble's version of the *Song of Durin*. It shall be noted, however, that composer Peter Hall denies drawing any inspiration from *Jerusalem* specifically. Nevertheless, this hymn remains the best example to illustrate the stylistic similarities, so we will have a look at the melody of both *Jerusalem* and the *Song of Durin*:



Hubert Hastings Parry: Jerusalem (excerpt).



transcription (excerpt): Song of Durin, TE CD 2, Track 2.

The pieces share the same key signature as well as time signature and are performed at roughly the same speed. The general shape of the melody is diametrically opposed – while *Jerusalem* first moves up, the *Song of Durin* moves down. Later on this is reversed. We may see in this an image of the subject matter: While *Jerusalem* is about Christ supposedly having set foot on the British Isles (an apocryphal story, which is not considered canon, but is widely known and accepted on the British Isles) and such describes the lifting of the country to a higher state of being, only to question this act by referring to the "satanic mills" of the Industrial Revolution, the *Song of Durin* indirectly deals with Durin first going down into the mountains when founding Khazad-dûm, but then bringing the dwelling to fame – moving it up, one may say.

Large orchestra accompanies both pieces, with the *Song of Durin* bringing the brass in the foreground and mixing the strings more to the background as a pad. This supposedly is to differentiate Dwarven music from Elvish music. Indeed, the song mentions trumpets and harps, so brass instruments seem more fitting to a Dwarven hymn. In the middle of the *Song of Durin*, there is a percussive B-part (3:30), which has no counterpart in *Jerusalem*. This part with a steady anvil beat (3:44) most likely represents the craftsmanship of the Dwarves and the work of Durin's folk, or Longbeards as they called themselves during the founding of Moria and after. This part is followed by the last verse (4:15), which brings the piece to present time and mourns the loss of the splendour of the old days.

Caspar Reiff, who wrote the arrangement to the melody written by Peter Hall, confirms the music of Elgar being an inspiration for the *Song of Durin*:

> *The Song of Dúrin [sic!] calls for grandeur. Peter Hall made the melody and asked me to do an "Elgarian arrangement". I had a look on the score of Elgar's first Symphony in A Flat Major, Op. 55 - and pretty much did the same as Elgar in the arrangement.* (Reiff, e-mail 2).

If we consider Tolkien's goal to create a mythology for the English with his works and think of the craftsmanship that went into the great English cathedrals (Ely Cathedral, the "ship of the fens", comes to mind) as well as the importance of the style of Elgar and his contemporaries for English music, choosing a style modelled after English sacred music fits very well into Tolkien's plan. The Dwarves represent craftsmanship, ambition and in a way, through their many dealings with other cultures as builders and merchants, are a counterpart to the British Empire – but without its darker sides, as it seems. During *The Lord of the Rings* many places built by Dwarves are mentioned, so they appear to have had a monopoly on stonework, or at least were the most talented craftsmen in Middle-earth. Mithril seemed to be under their sole control, and with the exception of the tunnels deep beneath Moria (which, according to Gandalf, were carved by "nameless creatures")[13], they also are the only race extensively building structures beneath the surface. We can hardly count Hobbit holes in this category since these are set into hills and do not have multiple storeys.

The Ensemble's version of the Song, with its use of late romanticist English sacred music, uses the style to evoke the picture of the Dwarven race as noble, ancient and very high-cultured professional craftsmen with a great sense of tradition and honour, proud of their history and longing to make their culture shine again like it did in their glory days. In this way their way of thinking is different from the Elves': These maintain that their time is gone after the Third Age and leave. Their songs speak of the West and of former times, but never with the aim of bringing back those days, only to remember them as a thing long

[13] These form a mystery because Gandalf maintains that they are older than Sauron. If this were true they needed to be Maiar (just like Sauron and Gandalf, for that matter), because Sauron was already before the physical world was created. One theory would be that they are related to the „Watcher in the water". Either way, nothing whatsoever is known of them.

since gone, never to return. The Dwarves think the other way and want to still do great tasks. They are also eager and ready to seize new opportunities to create works surpassing even their greatest deeds of old: When Gimli encounters the Glittering Caves of Aglarond, he describes it as something "such as the mind of Durin could scarce have imagined in his sleep" (LotR, 547). He contradicts Legolas, who does not all like the thought of hordes of Dwarves marching into the caves and marring everything, and refers to Durin's days:

> *None of Durin's race would mine those caves for stone or ore, not if diamonds or gold could be got there. [. . .] We would tend those glades of flowering stone, not quarry them. [. . .] a small chip of rock and no more, perhaps, in a whole anxious day [. . .] We should make lights, such lamps as once shone in Khazad-dûm [. . .].* (LotR, 548).

These lamps seem to be a special achievement for the Dwarves; not only does Gimli extensively describe the way in which his people would bring light into the dark halls, but also does the *Song of Durin* refer to these lamps. Again it is obvious to point out the similarities to the art of architecture, where light is an important factor to consider. This very much rings true also for cathedrals, which use light to increase the perception of depth and to highlight important parts of the building. Lastly, Dwarves lay much importance on tradition, a trait they share with most religions. After considering all these facts, choosing a style very similar to late-romanticist (orchestral) sacred music for this culture makes sense and by its connotations gives the *Song of Durin* another layer of meaning – one that arguably fits with Tolkien's ideas.

The motion picture, on the other hand, concerns itself more with the current state of Khazad-dûm. The back-story of how the place came to be as well as Gimli's song itself are not present in the film. This material was probably cut because it did not contribute anything important to the actual story – from a dramatic point of view, in the film the whole Moria sequence basically only serves to show the beginning dissolution of the Fellowship: The characters debate about whether to take this way at all after failing at the Caradhras, with the decision ultimately lying with Frodo, foreshadowing the breaking of the Fellowship later when he and Sam depart for Mordor alone. Gandalf fights Durin's Bane (the Balrog) and dies, only to be sent back later because his

mission was not yet fulfilled. But even though the *Song of Durin*, as it is presented in the book, is left out of the motion picture, the film nevertheless has its own *Song of Durin*. Dubbed *Durin's Song* by Adams, it is sung by male voices while the Fellowship wanders through the depths of the Dwarrowdelf. The song is written and sung in Neo-Khuzdûl[14] and its content as such is not accessible to the audience. It is here given in English:

Durin who is Deathless[15] Eldest of all Fathers Who awoke To darkness Beneath the mountain Who walked alone Through halls of stone (Adams, 176).	Durin who is Deathless Lord of Khazad-dûm Who cleaved The dark And broke The Silence This is your light! This is your word! This is your glory! The Dwarrowdelf of Khazad-dûm!

As we can see, the text is noticeably different from Tolkien's text and only introduces Durin and his awakening as well as detailing the importance of Khazad-dûm. The audience is never told of this as the song is only translated in Adam's liner notes for the complete recordings. For information about the musical features and the intention of the song in the film, we will draw upon Adams himself:

> *Shore's music rumbles muscularly but distantly, low strings and male voices gathering like a brewing storm over steady pacing in percussion. These are the tones of the Dwarves, a music of edges and corners, hewn stone and etched rock. A ghostly chorus sings for all those who lost their voices in the Dwarves' ruined deeps [. . .] MORIA's music is among the most cheerless in* Fellowship's *score.* (Adams, 176).

[14] Neo-Khuzdûl is the Dwarven language invented by linguist David Salo for the film trilogy, based on Tolkien's few genuine Khuzdûl words. The designation as given to the language used in the film to set it apart from the Khuzdûl vocabulary present in the legendarium.
[15] The attribute "deathless" refers to the title "Durin the Deathless".

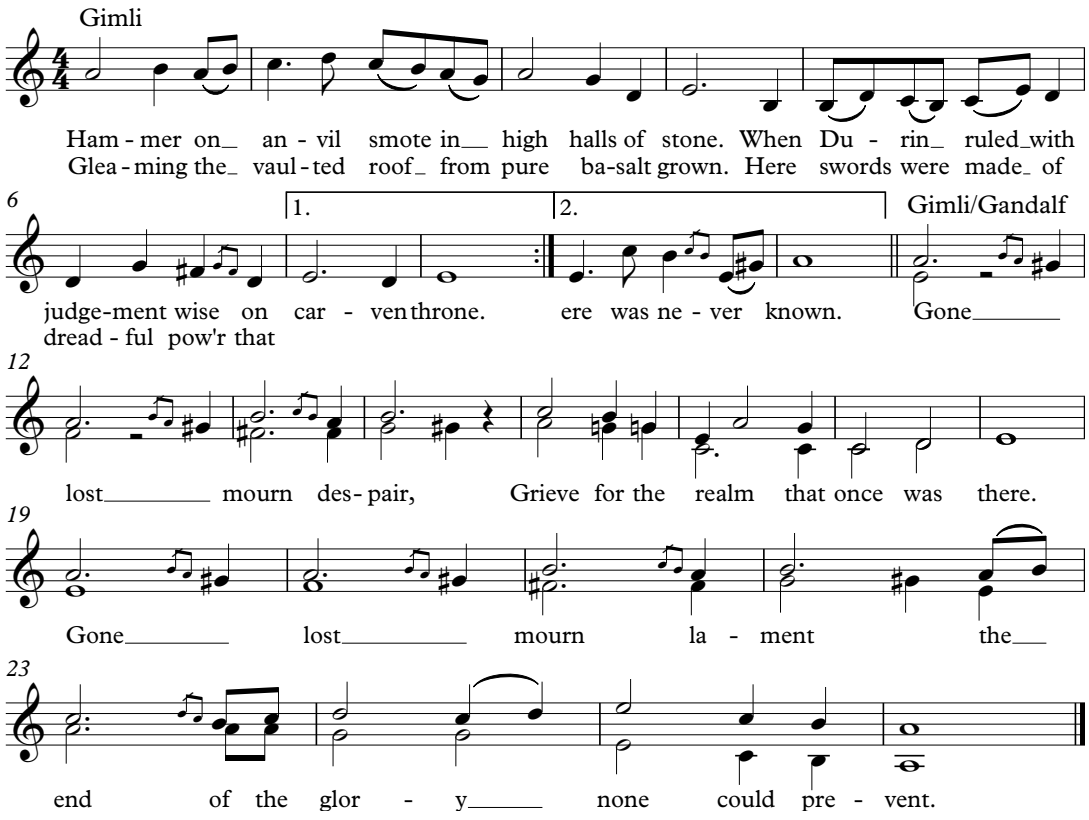
This use of a song about Durin is diametrically opposed to the way the song works in the book and is one example where elements need to be changed when transferring a book to the silver screen. The tonal language of "Shore's Dwarves" is built around the present day situation of Moria – apart from the fact that there obviously are no Dwarves around to sing the song, this presents a logic fallacy: The Dwarves do not know about the nature of the evil that has befallen the Dwarrowdelf, because no one has ever seen the Balrog and lived to tell the tale. Even Gandalf expresses his hope that there may still be Dwarves in Moria and Gimli is eager to go there. It is likely that Gandalf has some inkling as to what may be waiting in the deep (after all he is a Maiar himself and very familiar with Balrogs, which are Maiar, too), but he does not express his thoughts and Gimli clearly is very much surprised to find out about the nature of Balin's death. King Thrain, who after retaking Moria earlier warned of what lies waiting there, does not seem to have realised that it was a Balrog. So there are no songs mourning "those who lost their voices", as no one knows of their fate. We can assume that Shore did not envision all Dwarven music to mourn fallen comrades or to speak of other terrible events. Unfortunately, there is no other music of Dwarvish origin in the film, so we do not know how the filmmakers would have imagined Dwarven music for happy events to sound like.

The stage version of *The Lord of the Rings* also has a song that deals with the former glory of Moria, called *Lament for Moria*. The mere presence of such a song is interesting to note: Given the time constraints of a stage show, cutting a description of a member of a race that has no important part of the plot at all seems like a logical conclusion. But again we can observe the principle at work on which the creators based their decisions: To stay true to Tolkien's vision without feeling compelled to take everything into the show in its original wording. The culture of the Dwarves clearly was important to Tolkien. Not only does Gimli tell us a lot about his race with the *Song of Durin*, but we also get a lot of information about the Dwarves' mind-set with his musings about the Glittering Caves of Aglarond and numerous other insights about Dwarven culture.

The state Khazad-dûm is in at the time of the book is presented as a result of both the destructions by the Balrog as well as by plunderings and the use of the

place by Orcs. Dwarves did not live in “darksome holes”, as the author takes great care to assure us. We can assume that the creators of the stage musical realised this and therefore decided to devote an entire musical number to the topic, not just a side note, not to speak leaving it out completely.

Once again the original text by Tolkien is not used, but a new text is created, drawing on Gimli’s song with a duet by Gimli and Gandalf. This suggests that the song sung by the two is well known in the universe of the stage show, similarly to its status as a representative song in the book; otherwise Gandalf would not have been able to join in.



transcription (excerpt): Lament for Moria, LotR M, Track 8.

Apart from the fact that Gimli here is suddenly a tenor and therefore does not at all “chant in a deep voice” (LotR, 315), the meaning of the song follows the book quite closely. Gimli was probably made a tenor due to the fact that Gandalf and Saruman are basses. Like the *Song of Durin* from the book, the *Lament* deals with the former times and laments their passing, contrary to the motion picture, which laments the fallen Dwarves and therefore shifts the focus away from a display of Dwarven culture to an underscoring of the current situation in the plot. The Lament itself is a slow, hymn-like song, very sad and melancholic, but

not pessimistic. It merely states the facts, but does not try to alter anything. On the contrary: It is expressly mentioned that no one could have prevented the things that happened. This suggests that maybe in the musical the Dwarves saw what happened as an accident. As they did not know of the Balrog, this is likely and would explain the making of such songs as a form of remembering the past. Just as the song in the book, here the *Lament* serves as a means to inform the reader/spectator of the background of the culture Gimli belongs to – with only the literally "darksome holes" of Moria infested by Orcs present, it is important to show the recipient the way the place would be like in better times.

4.1.5 Lament of the Rohirrim

Tolkien Ensemble, *Lament of the Rohirrim,* TE CD 3, Track 9, 3:07.

We have previously seen on the example of the *Song of Durin* how Tolkien characterized the Dwarven culture by evoking similarities to sacred architecture and thought, most notably Cathedrals (use of light, general architectural features, …) as well as values and socio-economic features (tradition, economic status as builders and craftsmen,…). Similarly, the Rohan culture draws heavily from the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Mercia, as Jason Fisher explains (Fisher, 7). We have already touched on Tolkien choosing to represent the Rohirric language as Old English. The oral culture of the Rohirrim is very similar to Mercian culture, too: "The Rohirrim sing and chant using an alliterative verse structure which is strikingly similar to that found in Beowulf [. . .] indeed the greater portion of surviving Old English poetry" (Fisher, 7). Fisher in detail explains the workings of alliterative poetry as well as general features of Old English epics (of which Beowulf is of special interest in regards to Tolkien, due to his great influence on criticism of the text). For our task at hand, one special feature reigns supreme:

> *While [. . .] the many other works [. . .] of the Old English corpus are usually thought of as poems by today's literal standards, they were really closer to* songs*, meant to be performed, chanted or sung, accompanied by the Anglo-Saxon harp.* (Fisher, 9)

We have already dealt with the harp (possibly coming from the Elves originally) as the most important musical instrument in Middle-earth. To see the importance of music for the lives of the Rohirrim, we shall have a look at the

Tolkien Ensemble's rendition of the *Lament of the Rohirrim*, which was briefly mentioned when looking at instrumental music in 3.2.3. Aragorn sings the song when approaching Edoras with Gimli and Legolas, first in Rohirric (without the text given), then in Westron. Similar to the Song of Durin, the song speaks of the times of Eorl the Young, who built the Golden Hall, which goes back to the mead halls of the old epics.

> *Where now the horse and the rider? Where is the horn that was blowing?*
> *Where is the helm and the hauberk, and the bright hair flowing?*
> *Where is the hand on the harpstring, and the red fire glowing?*
> *Where is the spring and the harvest and the tall corn growing?*
> *They have passed like rain on the mountain, like a wind in the meadow;*
> *The days have gone down in the West behind the hills into shadow.*
> *Who shall gather the smoke of the dead wood burning,*
> *Or behold the flowing years from the Sea returning?*
>
> (LotR, 508).

The Tolkien Ensemble in their rendition of the song chose to not use any of the instruments mentioned to be employed by the Rohirrim. The lament begins with a solo plucked guitar introduction, maybe meant to represent the style of harps used by the people of Rohan, to set it apart from the Elvish or Dwarven harps. At 0:28, a string quartet plays a drone while the guitar plucks broken chords. This accompaniment stays the same over the course of the song with short melodic fills inserted between lines. The song does not group the lines into stanzas by means of a repeating melody, but instead has the singer declaiming the song with free use of melodic arches. The last two lines (2:05) are only accompanied by sparse guitar accents using arpeggiated chords. Only after the end of the poem the strings come in again, together with plucked broken guitar chords, which ends the song. The song gives us a good insight into Rohan culture: Right at the beginning, we find the mention of the "horse and the rider", probably referring to Eorl the Young and his trusted steed Felaróf, the latter the ancestor of the Mearas and thus central to Rohan culture. Of the two musical instruments mentioned, the horn comes first – most likely in order to differentiate the Rohirrim from the Elves, who also use harps. The "hand on the harpstring" features in the same line as the "red fire", suggesting the use of the

instrument in the hall for the accompaniment of epics. Again this makes the connection to Mercia. The song laments the days gone by similarly to the *Song of Durin* and is widely known among the Rohirrim ("So men still sing in the evening"). It is likely that the song was performed accompanied by harp at the fire. Fisher names five types of songs in the Anglo-Saxon corpus: Heroic music primarily consists of epics, such as Beowulf or the Song of Eärendil, even though this song is not Rohan. He states that in the book the prose descriptions of battles fit into this category, as well. Martial music (horn battle calls and spears clashing in the book, primarily) are only mentioned in prose, as well. Elegiac verses on the other hand are represented as music, most notably the Lament for Théoden. Gnomic verses, mainly riddles and recorded wisdom, are not present in Rohan music, but there is no reason to doubt their existence. Ecclesiastic music finally is completely absent from the book (Fisher, 15).

Music certainly plays a large role in Rohan society; in fact it is so important that immediately after Théoden's death, a lament is composed for him. Snowmane, his horse (presumably one of the Mearas, too), was buried on the battlefield with a poem set as inscription on his grave. This shows the intertwining of music/poetry and love of horses in Rohan culture; the two are inseparable and one of the traits making the Rohan culture unique. Of the Mearas it was said that some were able to understand the language of men. It stands to reason that if we had access to any more poems from Rohirrim authors, we would find horses feature prominently in them as self-conscious and independent characters.

4.1.6 A Walking Song

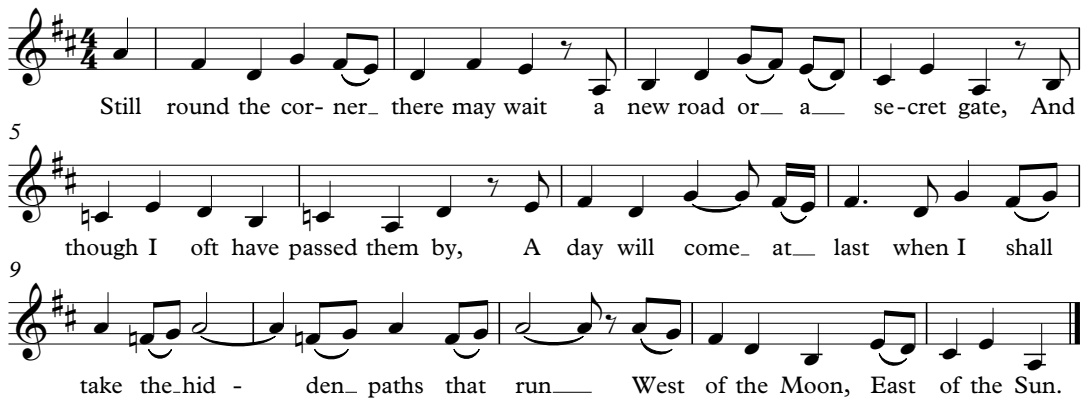
Tolkien Ensemble, *A Walking Song (I),* TE CD 1, Track 4, 2:49.
Tolkien Ensemble, *A Walking Song (II),* TE CD 4, Track 16, 1:38.
Howard Shore, *The Sacrifice of Faramir,* LotR RotK CD 2, Track 4, 4:08, from 2:35.

On the way to Buckland, the Hobbits sing yet another walking song. The words are again attributed to Bilbo, but to "a tune that was as old as the hills" (LotR, 77). The text only speaks of the Hobbits humming the song, not actually singing it. Maybe the tune was very well known, but to a different text, which only Frodo knew. He could have started singing it and, after realising that the others sang different lyrics or just hummed along, followed their lead. When writing the *Red Book*, he then wrote down the words.

Upon the hearth the fire is red, Beneath the roof there is a bed; But not yet weary are our feet, Still around the corner we may meet A sudden standing stone That none have seen but we alone. Tree and flower and leaf and grass, Let them pass! Let them pass! Hill and water under sky, Pass them by! Pass them by!	Home is behind, the world ahead, And there are many paths to tread Through shadows to the edge of night, Until the stars are all alight. Then world behind and home ahead, We'll wander back to home and bed. Mist and twilight, cloud and shade, Away shall fade! Away shall fade! Fire and lamp, and meat and bread, And to bed! And then to bed!
Still around the corner there may wait A new road or a secret gate, And though we pass them by today, Tomorrow we may come this way And take the hidden paths that run, Towards the Moon or to the Sun. Apple, thorn and nut and sloe Let them go! Let them go! Sand and stone and pool and dell, Fare you well! Fare you well!	(LotR, 77)

The version by the Tolkien Ensemble is a folk song, heavily influenced by English Folk music and, once again, very catchy. The line-up consists of plucked bass, rhythm guitar, mandolin, accordion and fiddle. While in the context of the book this performance would not be realistic, this version fits very well with the stylistic assumptions we made when discussing Hobbit music: It has a striking similarity to Traditional Folk and indeed includes a mandolin, an instrument likely played by Hobbits. We can take this song as one example where the Ensemble strived to capture the general sound of the kind of music Hobbits liked: Happy, exuberating songs about everyday life. Other songs from the category, also similarly set to music by the Ensemble are the *Bath Song*, the *Drinking Song* and *There is an Inn*, an adaption of which for the stage show we will look at later (see 4.2.1).

The choice for using this particular song as an example for Hobbit music was the significance of the song in the book: The second verse of the song is sung a second time to the same setting by Frodo, but with a slightly different text he supposedly made up himself and much slower, immediately before leaving to the Grey Havens (LotR, 1028):



transcription (excerpt, first part): A Walking Song (II), TE CD 4, Track 16.

The verse refers to the Straight Road, the way to Aman open only to the Elves as a grace of the Valar. Few mortals were allowed to take it, including Bilbo, Frodo and Sam. Sam would only depart years after Frodo, but because he, too, was a ring-bearer, he was granted the passage. For Frodo to sing this song (and not one of the numerous walking songs known to Hobbits with some of them most certainly written by Bilbo) serves as a retrospective of how his quest started: When he sang the song on the way to Buckland, his group was a part of what

later would become the Fellowship. Now that he is leaving, the process is reversed: The other three Hobbits are staying, he leaves.

This version of the song is accompanied only by guitar and mirrors the events of the book: When Frodo has finished his stanza (0:46), a soprano comes in with the beginning of the *Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel* (see 4.1.7). Frodo is singing slowly, reminiscing how his quest started and knowing that his last journey would now begin.

If we go back to our findings of the subject matters the music of Hobbits largely dealt with, we will remember Pippin being asked by Denethor to sing him a song. Pippin apologised to his master that he did not think there were any songs befitting "great halls and evil times" (LotR, 806) and in the book, he is spared the ordeal and does not have to sing any song. In the film he is less fortunate and required to sing a song. He then sings some lines from the *Walking Song* adapted by Philippa Boyens:

> *Home is behind.*
> *The world ahead,*
> *And there are many paths to tread*
> *Through shadow to the edge of night*
> *Until the stars are all alight*
> *Mist and shadows, cloud and shade.*
> *All shall fade.*
> *All shall fade.*
>
> (Adams, 300).

The piece is called *The Edge of Night* in the film (Adams, 300) and initially sung without accompaniment by Pippin. Adams describes its use in the film: "Gently, the orchestra enters, building tearing dissonances behind Pippin's simple Hobbit tune. [. . .] The Orcs release their first volley of arrows, and the orchestra suddenly cuts off, abandoning Pippin to finish his final syllable alone" (Adams, 300). In the film, the simple Hobbit travel tune is given a new meaning: The soldiers, sent to their doom on a suicide mission by the deranged steward, are far from home, too, just like the Hobbits the song was originally sung by. The original song speaks of mist and cloud as undesirable, albeit natural and

perfectly normal phenomena on the road fading away to make room for a cosy home and a nice, warm bed:

> *Mist and **twilight**, cloud and shade,*
> ***Away** shall fade! **Away** shall fade!*
> *Fire and lamp, and meat and bread,*
> *And to bed! And then to bed!*

Pippin's rendition from the movie has a slightly changed wording and instead interprets the mist and clouds as the fear, pain and anger of the last few minutes of the soldiers' lifes:

> *Mist and **shadows**, cloud and shade.*
> ***All** shall fade.*
> ***All** shall fade.*

The simple life of a Hobbit expressed by this easy to remember melody clashes with the big battles ordered by people greedy for power (Sauron and the orcs sent by him) or with a broken mind due to the sheer pressure of their knowledge (Denethor with his Palantír). One should also note the replacement of "twilight" from the song in the book with "shadow" in the film (printed bold above). The "shadow" most likely refers to the shadow of death looming over the soldiers, not to the natural shadow created by the "twilight" from the poem. In the movie, all the soldiers are well aware that they were riding never to return, which is what Pippin's song expresses: They are riding into the shadow, into their death, which happens when "the stars are all alight" – the Orcs attack at night. Lastly, the way this change in meaning between the two versions of the same song is brought forth is by altering just one word: "Away" becomes "All" (again printed bold), which at that time is more than fitting. Not only is the life of the soldiers about to fade, but also the hope for Minas Tirith and the whole civilised world. We learn that Denethor secretly has a Palantír, one of the ancient Seeing Stones, with whose help Sauron was able to influence him and destroy his sanity. The song foreshadows this development and suggests that all hope is lost.

4.1.7 Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel

Tolkien Ensemble, *Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel (I),* TE CD 1, Track 5, 5:32.
Tolkien Ensemble, *Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel (II),* TE CD 2, Track 3, 2:10.
Tolkien Ensemble, *Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel (III),* TE CD 4, Track 17, 6:07.
Tolkien Ensemble, *Sam's Invocation of the Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel,* TE CD 3, Track 17, 1:33.
Donald Swann, *I Sit Beside The Fire,* Swann, 29-30.

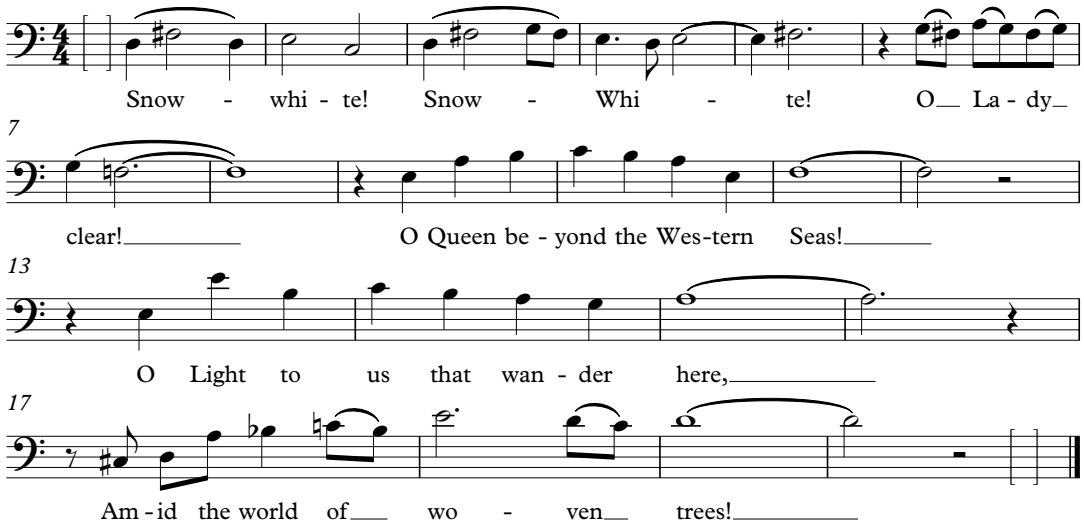
The *Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel* is heard a number of times in the book: In the *Fellowship of the Ring*, the company hear Elves singing it after the Hobbits sang the *Walking Song*. The Elves sing it in Sindarin, but in the book the text is given in Westron (English),"as Frodo heard it" (LotR, 79):

Snow-white! Snow-white, O Lady clear! O Queen beyond the Western Seas! O Light to us that wander here Amid the world of woven trees! Gilthoniel! O Elbereth! Clear are thy eyes and bright thy breath, Snow-white! Snow-white! We sing to thee In a far land beyond the Sea.	O stars that in the Sunless Year With shining hand by her were sown, In windy fields now bright and clear We see your silver blossom blown ! O Elbereth! Gilthoniel! We still remember, we who dwell In this far land beneath the trees, Thy starlight on the Western Seas. (LotR, 79).

The hymn refers to the Vala Varda, who had, among many other names, been given the title "Elbereth Gilthoniel" by the Elves. Her role in Middle-earth can best be described as a goddess of light, though there is nothing that suggests her actively taking part in the physical world. In *The Lord of the Rings* she is of some importance not only in her function within the larger cultural and religious framework, but also because her invocation serves as a powerful weapon against the dark forces: When the Hobbits and Strider are attacked on top of Weathertop by the Nazgûl, Frodo exclaims "O Elbereth! Gilthoniel!" (LotR, 195). According to Aragorn, "More deadly to him [the Nazgûl] was the name of Elbereth." (LotR, 198). Sam also calls her name when battling Shelob.

The *Hymn* being the first Elvish poetry heard by the Hobbits marks not only the importance of this particular piece, but also the importance of music in general in the context of different cultures meeting. Peter Wilkin remarks that "The first encounters between mortals and Elves that occur in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* are all initiated by the hearing of poetry and music." (Wilkin, 48).

The Tolkien Ensemble has set all the versions of the poem to music, including Sam's invocation of Elbereth. Similar to the other songs with multiple versions, the different versions are numbered. The *Elven Hymn To Elbereth Gilthoniel (I)*, whose circumstances are described above, begins with a heavily reverberated violin solo preceded by orchestral chimes. Double bass and a guitar come in (0:17), the latter clearly associated with High-Elvish harp music by being played in a very harp-like, plucked style. The violin plays long melodic arches over the steady arpeggiated pattern of the guitar with the double bass providing sustained bass notes. A solo singer sings the four stanzas of the hymn (from 0:57), with the third stanza separated from the second by a violin interlude (2:31-3:13). The text is unchanged, only in the second and fourth stanzas the first exclamation (Gilthoniel! / O Elbereth!) is repeated to make the text fit better to the melody.



transcription (excerpt): Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel (I), TE CD 1, Track 5.

The second time the hymn is sung is in Rivendell: After Bilbo presented his poem about Eärendil the Mariner (see 0) and Frodo and Bilbo leave for some

quiet place to talk, “a single clear voice rose in song” (LotR, 238). This version is sung in Sindarin and is the longest coherent text in the novel.

> *A Elbereth Gilthoniel*
> *silivren penna míriel*
> *o menel aglar elenath!*
> *Na-chaered palan-díriel*
> *o galadhremmin ennorath,*
> *Fanuilos, le linnathon*
> *nef aear, sí nef aearon!*
>
> (LotR, 238).

The Elves in Rivendell seem to have had solo singers. We do not learn who the singer is, presumably not Elrond and certainly not Arwen, as the latter is speaking with Aragorn at that time, but it is likely that Elrond had minstrels that sang these songs upon his request. After all, this is a song to maybe the most important Vala, so undoubtedly professional singers would have been employed. Like in the book, the Ensemble’s version, *Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel (II)*, is monophonic and unaccompanied. Sung by a solo soprano with heavy reverberation it is very much reminiscent of plainsong, stylistically similar to Namárië (see 4.1.1).

As mentioned earlier when looking at the *Walking Song* (see 0), when Frodo has finished his verse, Elves can be heard singing the hymn to Elbereth. This version, called *Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel (III)* on the recording by the Tolkien Ensemble, seamlessly follows the *Walking Song* and stylistically is very different from any of the previous renditions: Over the whole piece, a mixed choir hums sustained chords over the solo singer singing the verses, with the words sung melismatically over very long arches. Despite the briefness of the poem, the rendition takes about six minutes. After the solo soprano has sung the first four lines of the poem (2:22), they are repeated with her being backed by part of the choir in unison. The next two lines are sung by part of the choir in unison with the soloist singing the first line of the poem repeatedly (4:40). The melodic phrase sung by the soloist is identical to the beginning of *Galadriel’s*

Song of Eldamar (see 4.1.11). The last line of the poem is sung repeatedly by the soloist, while the choir repeats "beneath the trees".

Sam's Invocation of the Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel was clearly recorded as a highly stylised version of the events. The book describes Sam's invocation very differently from the rendition by the Ensemble: The song begins with a choir of Elves chanting "Gilthoniel A Elbereth!" corresponding to the "music of the Elves as it came through his sleep in the Hall of Fire in the house of Elrond" (LotR, 729). Then Sam sings the remainder of the song to a plucked guitar accompaniment in a very relaxed and laid-down manner (0:20) – exactly the opposite of the description in the book, where "his tongue was loosed and his voice cried in a language which he did not know". Midway through his verse, a soprano soloist comes in, probably signifying the help of Elbereth (0:48). The rendition by the Ensemble best fits an operatic performance of the events, but falls short as a literal representation.

Donald Swann in his song cycle has set the poem to music as part of *I sit beside the fire* (see 4.2.5). In its musical properties it very much resembles English folk music and does not appear to specifically make any concessions to what may be described as "Elvish" musical properties. In fact, the hymn uses the same melody as the titular song of the cycle, *The Road Goes Ever On* (Swann 1). The hymn is accompanied by guitar and modulates from D major to Eb major. Why Swann chose to include the hymn as a part in this song and did not follow the book setting it after the *Walking Song*, we can only guess. In fact, he did not set the *Walking Song* to music at all. According to him, combining the two songs "felt was not improper" to Tolkien himself (Swann, vii), but there is no further information given. The use of the melody of the first song of the cycle for the hymn likewise does not appear to be logical and again there is no information to be found about the reasons.

4.1.8 Frodo's Lament for Gandalf

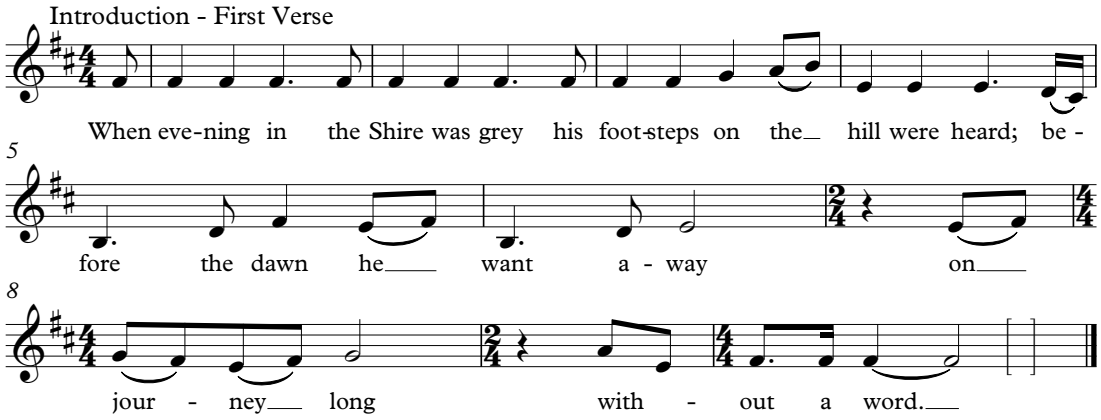
Tolkien Ensemble, *Frodo's Lament for Gandalf,* TE CD 2, Track 11, 5:47.

After Gandalf seemingly died in the battle with the Balrog, Frodo tried to put his grief into words while at Lothlórien and composed a song about Gandalf. Even though Frodo was not completely satisfied with the result and found it to pale compared to the Elven laments he heard at the time, Sam found it quite apt, but suggested a verse about Gandalf's fireworks as an addition.

When evening in the Shire was grey his footsteps on the Hill were heard; before the dawn he went away on journey long without a word. From Wilderland to Western shore, from northern waste to southern hill, through dragon-lair and hidden door and darkling woods he walked at will. With Dwarf and Hobbit, Elves and Men, with mortal and immortal folk, with bird on bough and beast in den, in their own secret tongues he spoke. A deadly sword, a healing hand, a back that bent beneath its load; a trumpet-voice, a burning brand, a weary pilgrim on the road.	A lord of wisdom throned he sat, swift in anger, quick to laugh; an old man in a battered hat who leaned upon a thorny staff. He stood upon the bridge alone and Fire and Shadow both defied; his staff was broken on the stone, in Khazad-dûm his wisdom died. [Sam's verse] The finest rockets ever seen: they burst in stars of blue and green, or after thunder golden showers came falling like a rain of flowers. (LotR, 359).

This is one of the rare examples of songs composed during the journey and clearly written and performed for the culture of the writer himself. Since Frodo spoke Westron as his mother tongue, the English version present in the book is as near as we can possibly get to the original. The song was no translation and it did not need to be accessible to any outside party. We can therefore assume that

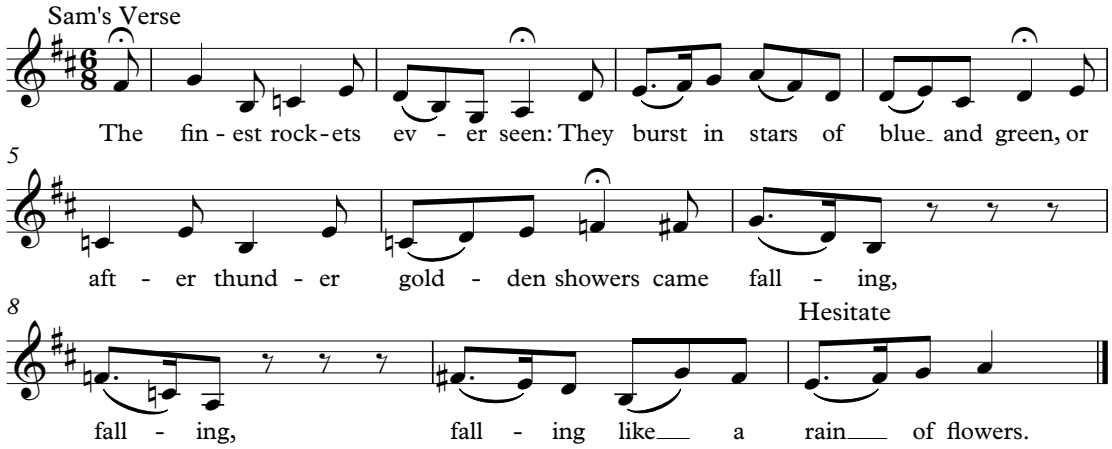
the style of the song was Frodo's personal way of composing, of course heavily influenced by the general features of Hobbit music. Likewise Sam's verse clearly is his own work, visible not only in content, but also in using a different rhyme scheme. Frodo describes the Gandalf he knew – a battered old man, a bit weird, usually very kind, but who could be angered quite easily which made his true power briefly visible. It is unlikely that Frodo had any idea who Gandalf actually was, so the song can be seen as his personal memory of "the wizard". Sam of course was most impressed by the fireworks, a trademark of Gandalf in the Shire, so it is not surprising that he wrote a verse about Gandalf's fireworks.



transcription (First Verse): Frodo's Lament for Gandalf, TE CD 2, Track 11, from 0:40.

As for the style of the song, the version by the Tolkien Ensemble should come very close to a Hobbit lament: The instrumentation is identical to the Hobbit folk songs written by the ensemble; even a mandolin is included. The song is slow and sad, as fitting to a lament, but it nevertheless keeps the optimism inborn to Hobbits. Frodo in a very simple manner recalls "his" Gandalf, as does Sam. The song, though not accompanied in the book, maybe was given an accompaniment later by Frodo when he wrote it down in the *Red Book*. It would then be this version that is presented by the Tolkien Ensemble. The lament starts with a solo violin, beginning over a low double bass drone. The accordion comes in with long notes at 0:24, taking over from the basses, and the guitar plucks arpeggiated chords while Frodo sings the first stanza (0:40). After a brief interlude (1:08), and the similar second stanza, the third stanza begins quite cheerfully (1:44), following typical Hobbit nature, and then goes back to the former style. The last two stanzas by Frodo are structured identically, with

Gandalf's battle with the Balrog again being more cheerful, emphasizing the courage of the wizard, rather than his apparent failure.



transcription (Last Verse): Frodo's Lament for Gandalf, TE CD 2, Track 11, from 4:27.

Sam's stanza (4:23) goes back to the Hobbit folk style used in the *Walking Song* and other renditions by the Ensemble, but at the end again returns to the violin intro from the beginning of the piece. Frodo in the piece, influenced by Elvish music, creates a lament that is sad, mourning the death of his comrade and friend, yet at the same time keeps the optimism that is inborn to any Hobbit, it seems. The rendition by the Ensemble does this justice.

4.1.9 Tom Bombadil's Song / Ho! Tom Bombadil

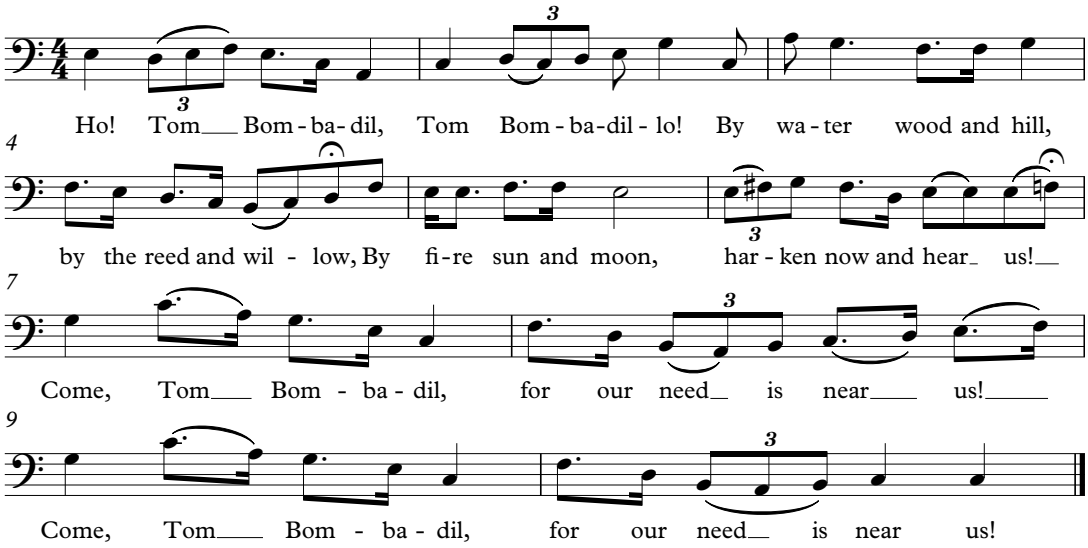
Tolkien Ensemble, *Tom Bombadil's Song (I),* TE CD 1, Track 10, 5:41.
Tolkien Ensemble, *Ho! Tom Bombadil (I),* TE CD 1, Track 14, 0:56.
Tolkien Ensemble, *Ho! Tom Bombadil (II),* TE CD 1, Track 16, 0:45.
Tolkien Ensemble, *Tom Bombadil's Song (IV),* TE CD 1, Track 17, 2:55.

Tom Bombadil, who was cut from the motion picture, is one of the most musical characters of the book. Additionally, he is also one of the most mysterious characters, too. His wife simply describes him as "the master" and when asked directly, Tom only says that he was the first to dwell in Middle-earth. He even maintains that he was there before Melkor arrived (LotR, 131), but it is likely that he just said this to make clear that he has been there for a very long time, since Melkor clearly was the first being to enter the physical world. There are many speculations about the nature of Tom Bombadil, the most daring one being that he is Ilúvatar himself. Regardless of his nature, he certainly is very powerful and uses music as a means to invoke his power. While his music serves as a kind of spell, apparently, he also likes to sing nonsense rhymes as well as songs about himself.

The Hobbits meet him in the Old Forest, when Merry and Pippin are trapped inside the Old Willow-man. He comes nearer, singing a nonsense song, then sings about him bringing his wife some water-lilies. In the book he then frees the trapped Hobbits and leads them to his house, singing along the way, but not always audible to the Hobbits, because he keeps moving away from the Hobbits and coming back a short while later. Before reaching the house, his wife Goldberry sings a stanza, which ends right when the party arrives at the threshold. The Tolkien Ensemble has combined these different parts of Tom's song into one continuous song, including Goldberry's stanza, named *Tom Bombadil's Song (I)*. Stylistically, Tom's part is very much like the Hobbit folk music we have had a look at earlier: The guitar provides the rhythmic backing together with an accordion, with Tom singing a joyful, upbeat tune. Goldberry's stanza (2:41) uses the same melody, but is much slower and very ethereal with great use of reverberation. Her part is followed by a solo violin interlude at 3:19, which most likely is to suggest the wonder the Hobbits felt when entering Tom's house. Goldberry then sings short, textless percussive phrases accompanied by harp, followed by longer sustained passages, both of which have no counterpart

in the book. At 5:15, she concludes with the last two lines of her stanza. Tom's song mainly serves to introduce the Hobbits to him and his wife and home, as well as to give them some rest – and possibly add a moment of comic relief to the story – before sending them on their way again. Frodo's dream of Gandalf at the top of Orthanc foreshadows the future events and suggests that Frodo's task will not be finished soon. The wondrous appearance of Tom also adds some credibility to his function as deus ex machina during the Hobbits' encounter with the Barrow-wights.

This is also where Tom's music shows supernatural qualities: Tom taught the Hobbits a rhyme to sing when in need of his help. Called *Ho! Tom Bombadil (I)* on the recording of the Ensemble, the song begins with a short guitar introduction. Tom sings the rhyme (0:10), repeating the last line. In the book the Hobbits repeat the song after Tom, but this is not present on the recording.



transcription (melody): Ho! Tom Bombadil (I), TE CD 1, Track 14.

The second time this rhyme is sung is at the Barrow-downs, when Frodo sings it to call Tom: "In a small desperate voice he began: Ho! Tom Bombadil! and with that name his voice seemed to grow strong: it had a full and lively sound, and the dark chamber echoed as if to drum and trumpet." (LotR, 142). The rendition of Frodo's song by the Ensemble *Ho! Tom Bombadil (II)* has Frodo faintly and clearly mortally afraid singing over a low drone with cymbal effects. The last line fades away into nothingness – very different from the description in the book. In fact, the song leaves the listener wondering whether or not the song did work at all. Tom's song when answering the call for help, *Tom Bombadil's Song*

(IV), is identical to his previous song in melody and instrumentation. His actual chant to banish the Barrow-wright employs a more serious tone and is performed over a steady accordion pulse (0:44). Again the Ensemble did not incorporate the descriptions from the book: There is not sign of the ”cry” mentioned in the book, nor do we hear the “long trailing shriek” (LotR, 142) of the Barrow-wright vanishing. Tom’s last stanza (1:42), awaking the Hobbits, again uses the melody and style of *Tom Bombadil’s Song*.

4.1.10 The Eagle's Song

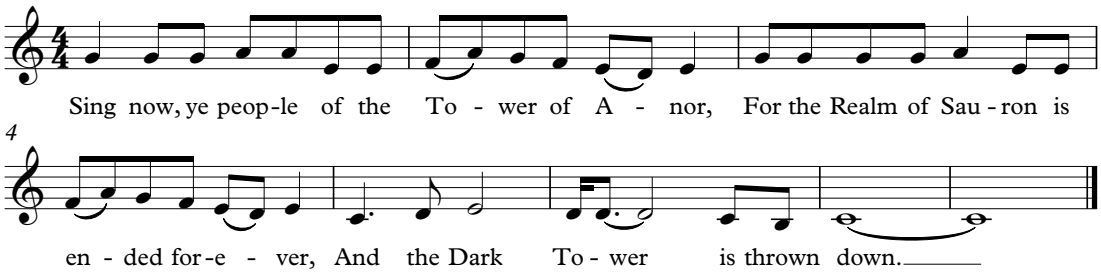
Tolkien Ensemble, *The Eagle's Song (I),* TE CD 4, Track 13, 3:24.
The Lord of the Rings Musical, *The Final Battle,* LotR M, Track 16, 3:22, from 2:06.

After Frodo has succeeded in his task and the ring is destroyed, the glad tidings are brought to Minas Tirith by one of the mighty Eagles, who already played a major role both in *The Hobbit* as well as in *The Lord of the Rings*, when Gandalf was rescued from atop Orthanc and later from the peak of Silvertine by Gwaihir. The song is notable in that the Eagle in *The Lord of the Rings* is the only occurrence of an animal clearly speaking or even singing. The text says that the Eagle "came crying", so we cannot say whether he spoke or sang. Regardless, his song made the victory over Sauron known to the whole city.

Sing now, ye people of the Tower of Anor, For the Realm of Sauron is ended for ever, And the Dark Tower is thrown down. Sing and rejoice, ye people of the Tower of Guard, For your watch hath not been in vain, And the Black Gate is broken, And your King hath passed through, And he is victorious.	Sing and be glad, all ye children of the West, For your King shall come again, And he shall dwell among you All the days of your life. And the Tree that was withered shall be renewed, And he shall plant it in the high places, And the City shall be blessed. Sing all ye people! (LotR, 963).

The Tolkien Ensemble clearly saw this song not as a mere report of a winged messenger bringing good news from the battlefield, but as a victory hymn. The rendition shows striking parallels to the *Song of Durin* (see 0): Both songs use a large symphonic orchestra and are heavily modelled on late-romantic English sacred music in the style of Elgar. Most of what we have said about the *Song of Durin* and its intentions also holds true for the *Eagle's Song*. In its style it is clearly marked as a representative song celebrating the victory over Sauron, in this case not representing a particular race, but all the races of Middle-earth –

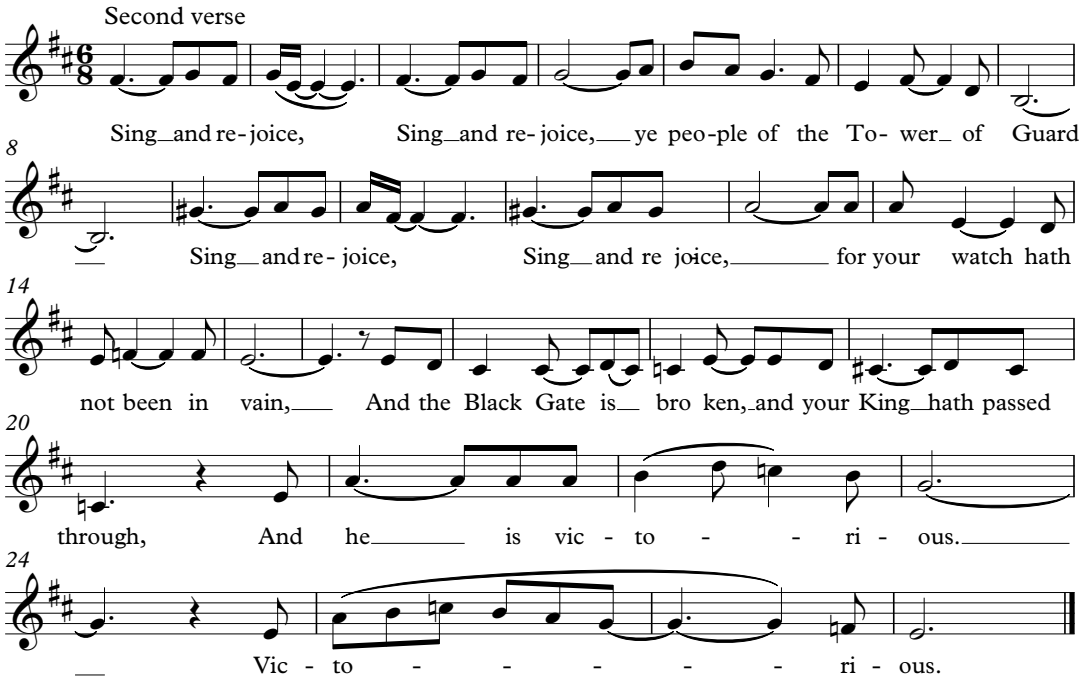
supposedly even the numerous races that aided Sauron, for they were deceived by him. After the Battle of the Hornburg the captured enemy soldiers were surprised of the generosity of the Rohirrim and maintained that their masters told them lies. In the book nothing suggests that the people sang the same song as the Eagle after he relayed his message, though it is confirmed that they did indeed sing. The version by the Ensemble suggests this, though: After the introduction with signalling trumpets, evoking the trumpets of Gondor frequently mentioned in the text, the solo bass vocalist sings the first stanza (0:07):



transcription (refrain): The Eagle's Song, TE CD 4, Track 13.

This is then repeated by a mixed chorus in a four-part setting, probably representing the population of Minas Tirith (if the song is meant to represent the original performance in Minas Tirith), or all the free peoples of Middle-earth (if the Ensemble intends to represent the song as a victory song commonly sung by people to celebrate the victory over Sauron). After a repetition of the introduction and a modulation to the dominant of the dominant[16], the Eagle then sings the second stanza (0:44), with the phrase "sing and rejoice" repeated in the second line.

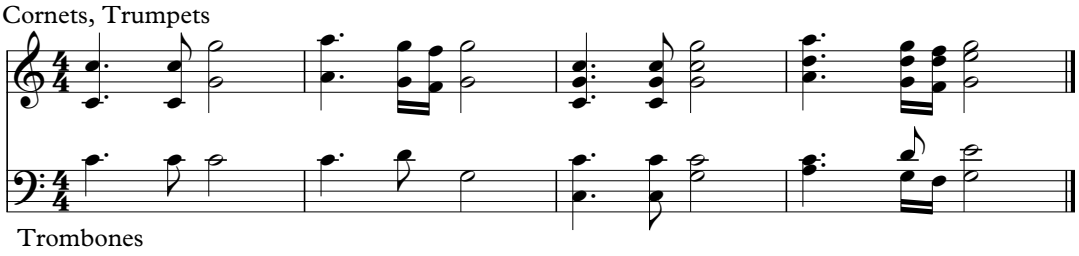
[16] the most frequent case of a secondary dominant



transcription (verse 1): The Eagle's Song, TE CD 4, Track 13.

The choir then repeats the first stanza as a refrain. The third stanza (1:46), describing the king coming back, again is sung by the Eagle, but with the choir repeating single phrases in the background. The last stanza follows without the refrain being sung again (2:32). Finally, both the choir and the Eagle sing the refrain one last time. The song closes with a repeated "Sing all ye people!" and ends with the exclamation "Sing!".

The content of the lyrics speaks for the use of the song as a representative piece about the beginning of the reign of King Elessar: Not only is his coming directly referred to, but also the renewing of the White Tree. The line "And he shall plant it in the high places" refers to the King not only bringing Gondor back to glory, but also to the re-establishing of the kingdom of Arnor. This is supported by the use of a signal call played by the trumpets both as an introduction as well as an interlude between verses and chorus. Reduced to only the signal call, this is what it looks like:

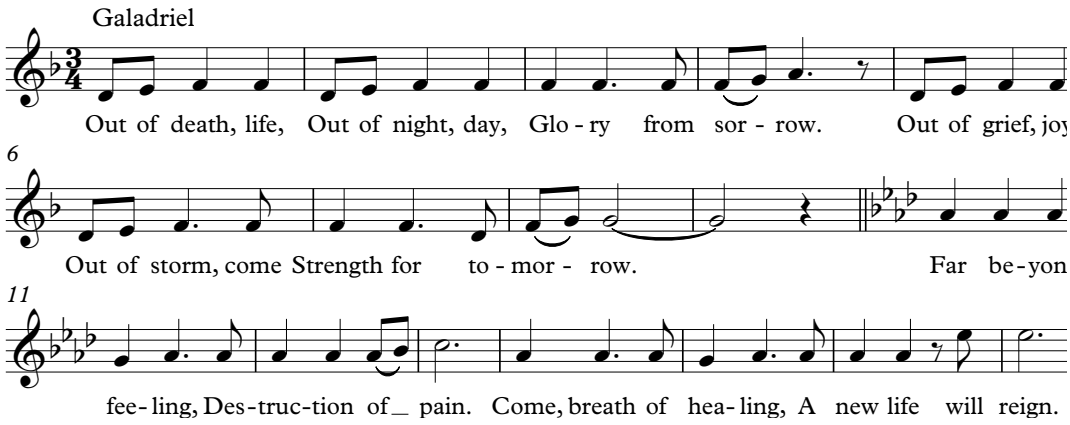


transcription (signal call): The Eagle's Song, TE CD 4, Track 13.

Musically, as with the *Song of Durin*, it is unlikely that Middle-earth music completely sounded like Elgar. We may excuse this by seeing it as an outcome of the focus of the Tolkien Ensemble: To bring across the general ideas and concepts from the songs and poems, translated into modern musical idioms. For a celebration hymn that needs to be very festive, while at the same time having an air of eternity (after all those songs are hopefully remembered for centuries, as per Sam's wish on the way to Mount Doom), the choice of sacred music, which by its very nature conveys such a sense of tradition and perseverance, seems prudent.

The stage show has a similar moment of reflection and appreciation of the moment Sauron is vanquished: In the musical number *The Final Battle*, showing the destruction of the Ring in the Crack of Doom, Galadriel sings what can be described as a relieved comment to the fortunate outcome (at 2:06), when the Ring is destroyed. While most of the text is unique to the song, four lines from the song *Wonder* are included, which in turn is based on Galadriel's *Song of Eldamar* from the book (see 4.1.11):

> *Out of death, life, Out of night, day*
> *Glory from sorrow.*
> *Out of grief, joy, Out of storm, come*
> *Strength for tomorrow.*
>
> (LotR M, Track 15)



transcription (excerpt): The Final Battle, LotR M, Track 16.

While the lyrics are completely different from the *Eagle's Song*, they nevertheless convey the same sense of relief. The "breath of healing" possibly refers to the White Tree, the re-establishing of the kingdom of Arnor or simply to the rebuilding of the free world in general after the reign of Sauron is over. The last line ("A new life will reign") can be taken as a reference to the reign of King Elessar. Galadriel in this musical therefore takes the role of the eagle messenger in the book. We can even find musical parallels to the way in which the song is structured both in the musical and the *Eagle's Song*: If we leave out the underscore in the stage show where the Ring is destroyed and begin with Galadriel's entrance, her singing the verse solo is similar to the Eagle singing the "refrain" in the *Eagle's Song*. In the *Eagle's Song*, the refrain is marked as such by being repeated by the choir representing the people; in the musical the refrain is recognized because the listener has heard it before – in the song *Wonder*. Galadriel then sings the last two lines while the choir repeats the chorus underneath her singing. Both songs show the culmination of the efforts of the Fellowship – we might even interpret the line "destruction of pain" in the musical as an allusion to Sméagol, who is now liberated from the destructive force of the Ring and finally has peace.

4.1.11 Galadriel's Song of Eldamar

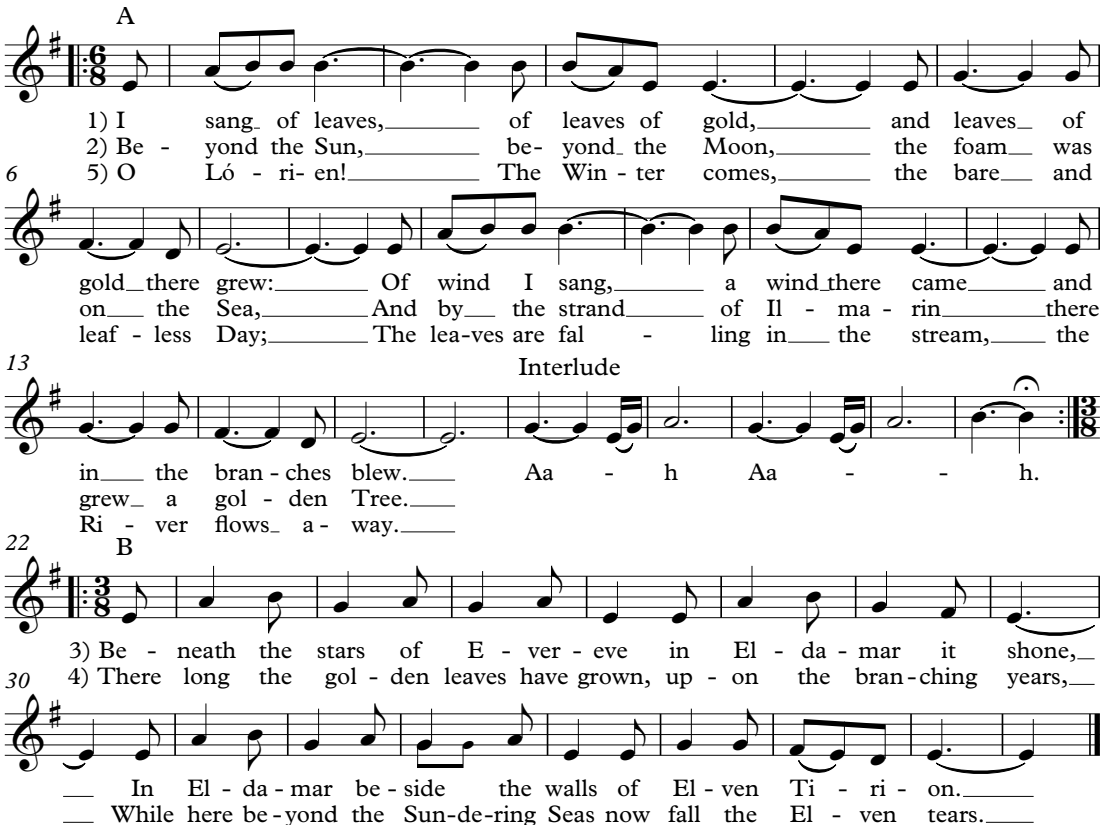
Tolkien Ensemble, *Galadriel's Song of Eldamar (I),* TE CD 2, Track 12, 6:25.
The Lord of the Rings Musical, *Wonder,* LotR M, Track 15, 4:56.

One of the many songs of Elvish origin, the *Song of Eldamar* is sung by Galadriel on her boat when the Fellowship leaves her realm. Galadriel stands on her boat and holds a harp in her hands. While it is nowhere stated that she played the harp, it is likely that she did – why else should she choose to carry it around with her? She sings a song before inviting the Fellowship to a farewell meal on the water.

> *I sang of leaves, of leaves of gold, and leaves of gold there grew:*
> *Of wind I sang, a wind there came and in the branches blew.*
> *Beyond the Sun, beyond the Moon, the foam was on the Sea,*
> *And by the strand of Ilmarin there grew a golden Tree.*
> *Beneath the stars of Ever-eve in Eldamar it shone,*
> *In Eldamar beside the walls of Elven Tirion.*
> *There long the golden leaves have grown upon the branching years,*
> *While here beyond the Sundering Seas now fall the Elven-tears.*
> *O Lórien! The Winter comes, the bare and leafless Day;*
> *The leaves are falling in the stream, the River flows away.*
> *O Lórien! Too long I have dwelt upon this Hither Shore*
> *And in a fading crown have twined the golden elanor.*
> *But if of ships I now should sing, what ship would come to me,*
> *What ship would bear me ever back across so wide a Sea?*
>
> (LotR, 372).

The Tolkien Ensemble has set the song to music as *Galadriel's Song of Eldamar (I)*, the piece being a good example of the Ensemble's perception of Elvish music. The harp mentioned in the text is present in the song and Galadriel's voice certainly sounds "sad and cool" (LotR, 372). The Ensemble wrote a sad, reminiscent melody, accompanied by plucked harp and string pads, evoking the movement of the water and the steady rustling of the trees of Lothlórien. Incorporating the harp as mentioned by Tolkien was part of creating the realism of the performance, as Reiff notes: "If a specific instrument is mentioned by Tolkien to "be a part of the actual performance in the book" we use it in our

interpretation (like Galadriel and harp)." (Reiff, e-mail 1). The song is built from single verses, each comprising of two lines. The first five of these are set to music in the form of AABBA. The melody of the A verses is introduced by a solo violin at the beginning of the piece: The first three bars are played twice, then the violin plays rhythmically similar phrases.



transcription (lines 1-10): Galadriel's Song of Eldamar, TE CD 2, Track 12.

After Galadriel's verses (beginning at 0:45) as shown above in the excerpt follows a long interlude, with her singing textless long arches (3:24). The song closes with the last two verses in AA form.

The only textual change from the book is the insertion of an "aah"-bridge between the sentences. Thinking back to the highly skilful origins of music in Middle-earth in the First Music, we can see the use of the A/B model as a remnant of this high musical culture. The theory of reverse development supports this: The *Song of Eldamar* supposedly is an old song, so it makes sense that it is more oriented towards the former, higher form of music than for example Bilbo's walking song(s), which are of recent origin and not so much rooted in the traditional culture of such an ancient race as the Elves.

The song is gets some importance in the book as a foreshadowing of Galadriel's voyage into the West at the end of *The Return of the King*. There she indeed finds a ship to bear her "back across so wide a Sea". The song not only foreshadows this event, but also makes it clear that she, like presumably most of her kind, has a deep longing to go to the West and see the Blessed Realm. The song therefore underscores the notation of the passing of the Elves (see 0 for a song dealing with this subject matter), a process that has long since started when the events of the book take place. After the three Elven Rings, one of which (Nenya) Galadriel was a keeper, have lost their power after the fall of Sauron, their bearers (Elrond, Galadriel and Gandalf) return with them to the West. Apart from Galadriel's personal wish to see the Blessed Realm again, her song also points to the influence of music in Middle-earth, originating in its creation through the First Music – it is no coincidence that Galadriel chose to sing this particular song, knowing perfectly well that none of her listeners at the time knew about either its content or its significance (maybe with the exception of Aragorn, who may have had an idea of what she was singing about). Nevertheless, she sang this song to them, a clear example of music being intricately weaved into everything that happens in Middle-earth. Contrary to Namárië (see 4.1.1), she sang in Westron, so the characters were able to understand the words.

Galadriel's song is the only poem from the book of which significant portions were used in the stage show in their original wording. After Sam calls for the aid of Galadriel in Shelob's lair, she appears and with her light scares Shelob off. It is likely that she helped Sam by singing a spell from afar, because she is not physically present on the occasion. She then sings the song *Wonder*, clearly in Lothlórien, whose beginning is based on the *Song of Eldamar*, using some lines from the poem and adding new ones. Words taken from the *Song of Eldamar* are printed bold:

> ***I sang of leaves, of leaves of gold, and leaves there grew***
> ***Of wind I sang, a wind there came and in them blew***
> *Lothlorien*
> *In light I wove a secret land of timeless joy*
> *My perfect child no mortal hand could dare destroy*

Lothlorien

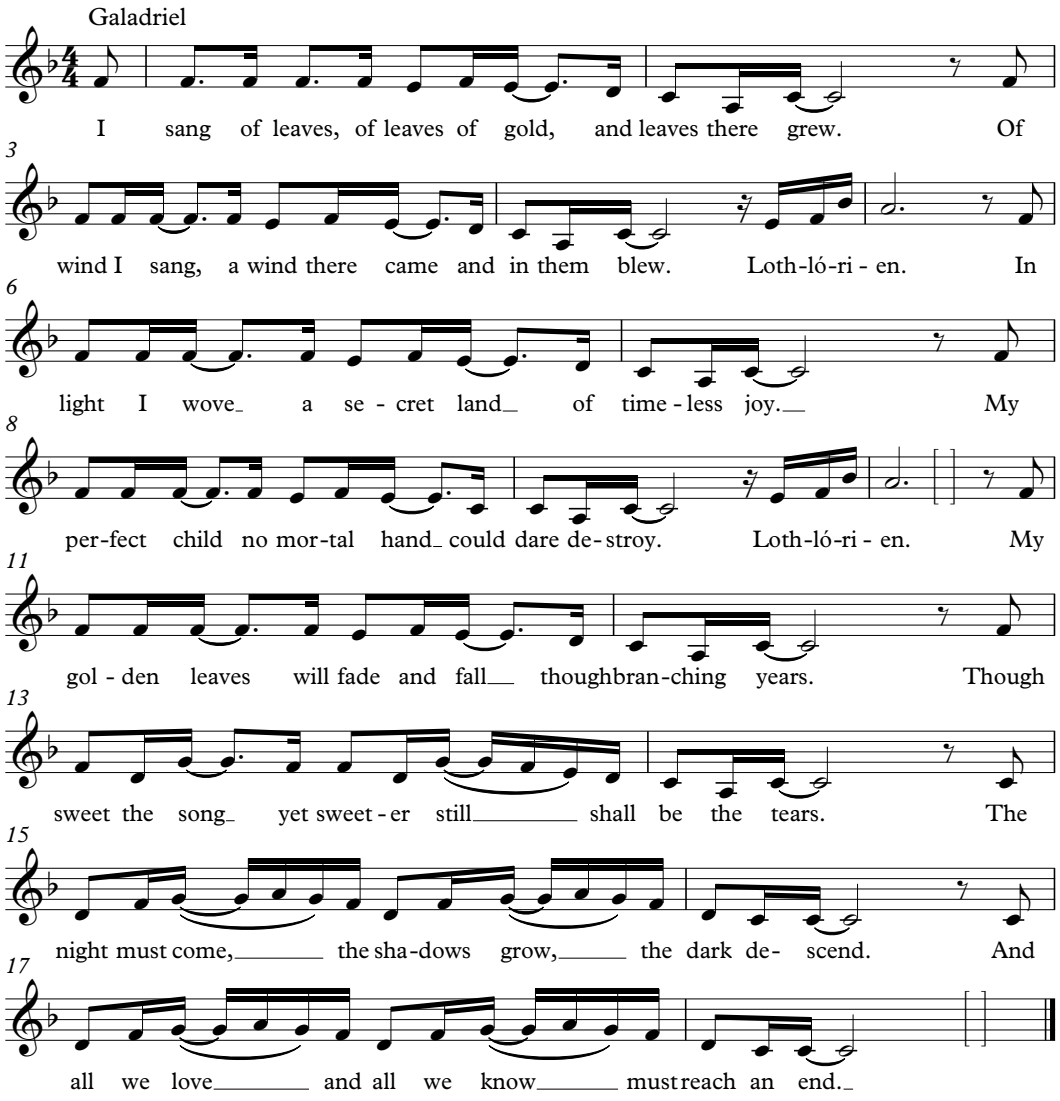
[. . .]

*My **golden leaves** will fade and fall through **branching years***
Though sweet the song yet sweeter still shall be the tears
The night must come, the shadows grow, the dark descend
And all we love and all we know must reach an end
[. . .]

(LotR M, Track 15).

In both the book and the musical, Galadriel sings of creating the world around her ("I sang of leaves and leaves there grew"), but while in the book she speaks of the Blessed Realm, the stage show suggests that she sings about the creation of Lothlórien. This may be due to the fact that the Fading of the Elves in the stage show is not as fleshed out as in the book: Galadriel in both leaves Middle-earth, but there is no detailed explanation where exactly she goes to and that she originated from there. Book and musical both lament the end of the Elven kingdoms, but the song from the musical pushes the sorrow for the end of the influence of the Elves in the background in favour of interpreting the passing of the Elves as a part of the new world after the defeat of Sauron.

The way in which the stage show approaches the music is similar to the Tolkien Ensemble: Both songs share an inherent sadness, but it is notable that *Wonder* is in a major key, contrary to the E minor of the *Song of Eldamar*. *Wonder* begins with a harp, too, again suggesting that Galadriel sings the song in Lothlórien. We do not have a highly melodic introduction as in the case of the *Song of Eldamar*, but instead the harp plays arpeggiated chords, backed by the string ensemble. Here is Galadriel's part, conforming to the lyrics extract given above.



transcription (excerpt): Wonder, LotR M, Track 15.

The song then continues, leading into the part also used in *The Final Battle* (see 0):

Though worlds will die and worlds will grow
Out of death, life, Out of night, day, glory from sorrow
Out of grief, joy, Out of storm, comes strength for tomorrow
Out of dust, gold. Out of fire, air, comfort forsaken
Out of rage, calm, Out of loss, find, glory awaken

Shine forever, Beacon of light
Blaze in the air, vanquishing night
Sing forever, proud and strong
Anthem of life, conquering song

Though tides of fate, onward run
The song of hope, once begun,
Will evermore Remain.

(LotR M, Track 15).

Wonder stresses the positive aspects of the narrative: While everything seems very dark and grim, with Sauron on the move, seemingly unstoppable, there still is hope. The "song of hope" mentioned here not only refers to the actual *Song of Hope*, one of the musical numbers in the stage show, but can also be seen in a wider context: The literal song of hope, the music central to the whole physical world will continue to sound as long as Eä exists. As Ilúvatar has hinted to during the performance of the First Music, everything that happens (even Melkor's most gruesome deeds) is in its essence rooted in His thought and therefore part of His plan. So from a grand perspective, hope always remains. This overall plan is what is likely referred to by the "tides of fate". The stage show, by including these allusions to the First Music, both stresses the general importance of music in Middle-earth as well as the significance of the actions taken by the protagonists not only for their immediate timeframe, but also in the grand scheme of the ages. The end of the War of the Ring marks the end of the Third Age and the beginning of the Fourth Age (the Age of Men). Galadriel's songs (both in the book and the stage show) confirm the Passing of the Elves and ultimately their passing as the logical and inevitable outcome of this process: While it is sad that the time of the Elves has ended, it is inevitable and something the Elves knew was coming for a long time.

4.1.12 The Ent's Marching Song

Tolkien Ensemble, *The Ent's Marching Song,* TE CD 3, Track 7, 2:19.

Entish music is described in relatively great detail in *The Lord of the Rings* – we learn a number of songs as well as are able to get an idea of the general sound of Entish music. As with most of the songs of races other than the Hobbits, all the songs present are translations into Westron. In the case of the Ents, the differences between a song in Westron and the Entish original are most likely profound, as both languages do not seem to have very much in common. Treebeard tells the Hobbits that a name in his language tells the complete life story of its bearer. It stands to reason to assume that songs in the Entish language would be similarly detailed and take a long while to perform – this really is to show that Ents are everything but "hasty". They become quite hasty, though, after Merry and Pippin have managed to convince them to go to war against Saruman. The Ents sing a war song while marching to Isengard. The origin of this song cannot be fully determined: Merry and Pippin are able to understand it and there is nothing that suggests Treebeard is translating for them, so the Ents sing in Westron. They, however, clearly sing together. This raises a question: Who invented the song and taught it to them immediately before going to war? Either someone indeed did this, or they have some sort of telepathic link, possibly through their roots.

Regardless of how they learned the song, from the description of Ent music we have analysed already when investigating the general sound of music along with what Tolkien tells us, we can draw a number of conclusions about this particular song: A "marching music began like solemn drums, and above the rolling beats and booms there welled voices singing high and strong" (LotR, 484). We have already established that Ents used their bodies to make drum-like sounds, which is what "solemn drums" means. Their bodies are of wood, with good resonating and sound amplifying properties. Depending on where they hit their bodies with their hands, different tonal colours could be brought forth. The "rolling beats and booms" suggest that they used different sounding percussive sounds; with many different kinds of trees, as described my Merry and Pippin, the Ents were capable of a wide range of different sounds, making the overall music probably very similar in sound to a modern wooden percussion ensemble. Above those drum beats the Ents sang. Even though the

text speaks of "high" voices, it is hard to imagine hearing sopranos; after all there are no female Ents present. The description most likely refers to the Ents being agitated and singing with raised, ringing voices.

> *We come, we come with roll of drum: ta-runda runda runda rom!*
> *We come, we come with horn and drum: ta-runa runa runa rom!*
>
> *To Isengard! Though Isengard be ringed and barred with doors of stone;*
> *Though Isengard be strong and hard, as cold as stone and bare as bone,*
> *We go, we go, we go to war, to hew the stone and break the door;*
>
> *For bole and bough are burning now, the furnace roars - we go to war!*
> *To land of gloom with tramp of doom, with roll of drum, we come, we come;*
> *To Isengard with doom we come! With doom we come, with doom we come!*
>
> (LotR, 485).

The Tolkien Ensemble in its version of the *Ent's Marching Song* closely follows the description from the book: The piece begins with drum rolls played on a large tom ensemble, gradually getting louder as the Ents approach. After those introductory rolls, the drums switch to a rhythmic marching pattern (0:09), while the choir of the Ents sings the first two lines of the song in unison and parallel fifths. A trombone signal in unison refers to the "horn" from the song (0:38), then Treebeard addresses the Hobbits with the same words as in the book: "Hoom, hom! Here we come with a boom, here we come at last! Come, join the Moot! We are off. We are off to Isengard!" (LotR, 485). Christopher Lee's voice perfectly fits Treebeard and makes his rendition of Treebeard's words extremely lifelike – of the whole cast of the Tolkien Ensemble, his portrayal of Treebeard is arguably the best.

The Ensemble has grouped the remaining six lines of the song into two groups of three lines each, reflected in the listing above. The last syllables of the first two lines of each group are repeated, otherwise there are no textual changes made. Brass signals separate the two groups with the Ents again singing in unison and parallel fifths. All the time the underlying drumbeat keeps going. The piece has the feel of a marching song and by following the book closely is a very accurate image of the Last March of the Ents.

4.1.13 Oliphaunt

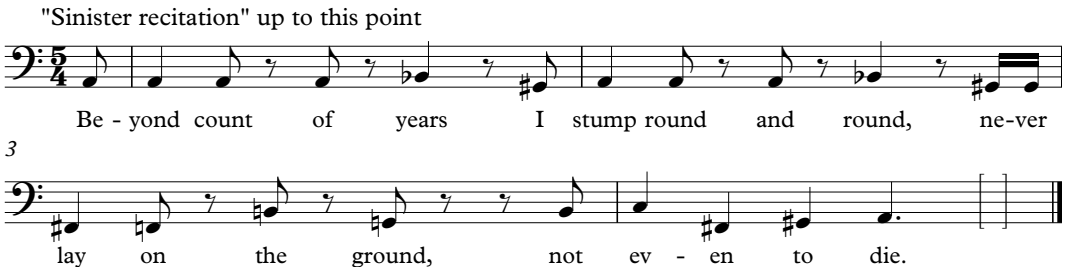
Tolkien Ensemble, *Oliphaunt,* TE CD 3, Track 16, 2:18.

Sam Gamgee at several times in the story expresses his wish to see an oliphaunt. These creatures, resembling large elephants and called mûmakil by men, were employed in war in much the same manner as war elephants. Sam asks Gollum about them and when Gollum does not know the word, he recites an old rhyme from the shire:

Grey as a mouse, Big as a house, Nose like a snake, I make the earth shake, As I tramp through the grass; Trees crack as I pass. With horns in my mouth I walk in the South, Flapping big ears. Beyond count of years I stump round and round, Never lie on the ground, Not even to die.	Oliphaunt am I, Biggest of all, Huge, old, and tall. If ever you'd met me You wouldn't forget me. If you never do, You won't think I'm true; But old Oliphaunt am I, And I never lie. (LotR, 646)

Sam recites the poem; he clearly does not sing it, but it is not impossible that Hobbits did sing it to a tune at the campfire. The song has an oliphaunt talking about himself in the manner of a fantasy animal, most visible at some of the claims of the animal in the song: Obviously oliphaunts will lie down to die, but for the message of the poem, this and all the other claims serve to lift the animal up to a legendary status – after all no Hobbit has seen one for a very long time. We must also see the claim “big as a house” in relation to the average height of a Hobbit. From the description of the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, we can gather that they were considerably larger than modern elephants, large enough to put a tower-like structure on their back for warfare, but certainly not as big as a house.

As such, the oliphaunt poem must not be taken too seriously, which is also reflected in the Tolkien Ensemble's version. Syncopated low brass with bass drum accents represent the steps of the animal. Composer Peter Hall describes the style of the song up to the line "Beyond count of years" as a "sinister recitation".



transcription (excerpt): Oliphaunt, TE CD 3, Track 16.

The song continues in the manner of a sprechgesang (0:44); there are clearly determinable pitches, but the articulation is much more loose than in conventional singing. Low trombone glissandi evoke the oliphaunt's trumpet calls and add to the comic effect of the song.

After the line "not even to die" (1:00), the style and mood of the song changes: Chimes introduce the second half of the song, whose beginning has a very light tone and in its style resembles the work of the British duo Flanders & Swann[17], most notably their song *The Hippopotamus*, which deals with an animal quite similar to the oliphaunt. As noted before, Caspar Reiff states, that Swann's music did not serve as a inspiration, but *Oliphaunt* may very well be a case of sub-conscious inspiration due to the Flanders & Swan songs being widely known. For a short time, the song uses a waltz rhythm, and then at 1:35 returns to the brass accompaniment from the beginning.

We have to question the authenticity of the performance, again: When speaking the rhyme on the way to Mordor, Sam did not have any instruments with him, and he did not sing it. Therefore the rendition by the Tolkien Ensemble cannot represent his performance. It is more likely that the Ensemble wanted to record the piece as it was regularly performed in the Shire. In this case the instrumentation is questionable. While we do not have any detailed information

[17] The duo consisted of singer Michael Flanders (1922-1975) and composer Donald Swann (1923-1994), the latter being the composer of the "The Road Goes Ever On" song cycle.

about the instruments played by Hobbits, we should be able to rule trombones and tubas out due to their size. The situation is similar to what we have already discussed with guitars: The average Hobbit would have had great difficulties playing those instruments. In the case of this particular piece by the Tolkien Ensemble, it is most likely that the Ensemble chose to cater to the expectations of the listener; the onomatopoetic trumpet calls of the oliphaunt represented by brass glissandi as well as its loud steps on the ground go in line with the experience of the listener – this is how heavy animals like elephants are commonly represented in music. The music of *Oliphaunt* therefore is much less a representation of Sam's rhyme, but more one of what it would sound like if a modern listener were to compose such a song.

4.1.14 Farewell we call to hearth and hall

Tolkien Ensemble, *Farewell Song of Merry and Pippin,* TE CD 1, Track 8, 3:08.

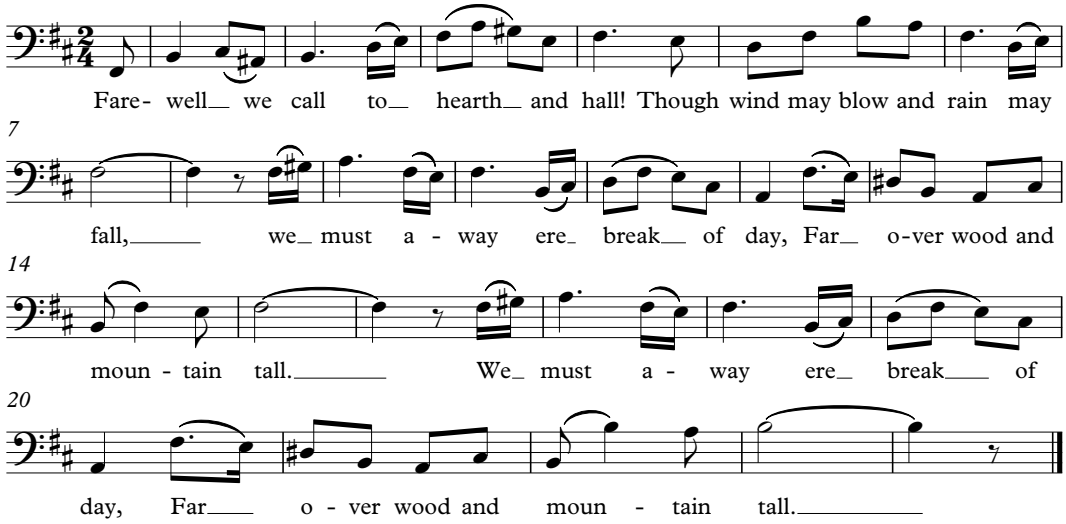
When discussing Dwarvish music we have already made the observation that all the songs given in the books were intended for outsiders to hear and therefore most likely adapted to their expectations. The *Song of Durin* is a prime example for such a song created only for outsiders as a tool of representation (see 0). We simply need to accept the fact that we do not have a single "private" Dwarven song performed only between Dwarves.

The unique trait of the Dwarven culture to actually adapt music to outside listeners, however, in itself is worthwhile to explore. We can see the lack of genuine Dwarvish songs as a chance to take their music as an example of cultural interaction. For this end there is a very fortunate finding to make, only mentioned briefly in passing: Before leaving Crickhollow, Merry and Pippin sing a song, which "made on the model of the dwarf-song that started Bilbo on his adventure long ago, and went to the same tune" (LotR, 106). From this we not only learn that Merry and Pippin used the same melody, but also that the song was based on the model of the dwarf-song – the song referred to here is probably *Far over the misty mountains cold*. That song is much longer, but it could be that Merry and Pippin wrote their lyrics just before they sang the song and simply did not have more time or found three and a half verses to be absolutely sufficient.

Farewell we call to hearth and hall! Though wind may blow and rain may fall, We must away ere break of day Far over wood and mountain tall. To Rivendell, where Elves yet dwell In glades beneath the misty fell, Through moor and waste we ride in haste, And whither then we cannot tell.	With foes ahead, behind us dread, Beneath the sky shall be our bed, Until at last our toil be passed, Our journey done, our errand sped. We must away! We must away! We ride before the break of day! (LotR, 106)

The song clearly refers to the path the Hobbits would soon after embark on: Their destination, Rivendell, is mentioned and the "dreading foes" refer to the Ringwraiths (or Black Riders, as the Hobbits at that time did not yet know about the nature of the riders).

Because we know that the melody and the general model of the song are identical with the dwarf-song, but with a new text by Hobbits, it stands to reason to see what this combination of cultures brought forth. The Tolkien Ensemble has made a version of the song, called *Farewell Song of Merry and Pippin*, which in its tonal language is heavily oriented toward what we have observed as typical Hobbit music, but with a few unique twists that may be remnants of the Dwarvish origin of the song. The three full verses with four lines each are sung to the same melody. Here is the first verse:



transcription (first verse): Farewell Song of Merry and Pippin, TE CD 1, Track 8.

The piece begins with an introduction of a solo violin playing the melody once through, but jumping directly from bar 8 to bar 17. The violin is accompanied by an accordion as well as what seems to be a twelve-string guitar. The singer then sings the first verse with identical instrumentation (0:19). The only textual change in all verses from the book is the repetition of the last two lines of every verse. The guitar strums a chord on every beat, which could be a part of the Dwarvish origin of the song. Maybe Bilbo heard the Dwarves play this way when they sang the song – Thorin's harp would have been suitable for that task – and told Frodo of this stylistic characteristic of Dwarvish music. Frodo in turn may have told Merry and Pippin. In the second verse, a snare drum comes in (0:55),

playing rolls. This element could hark back to Bombur's drum. It is unlikely that he had a snare drum, but for a travel or marching song, the use of one makes sense. The drum is used even more prominently in the third verse (1:31), along with a closed hi-hat. These percussive elements, if indeed modelled after the music the Dwarves made at Bilbo's "unexpected party", give us an idea of how Dwarvish popular music (as opposed to more or less classical representative music like the *Song of Durin*) may sound: A catchy melody, suitable for chanting and with clear accents, as to be heard in large halls of stone, with a rather percussive accompaniment. Percussive instruments of all sorts could have been used, but we may imagine Dwarves to use quite a lot of metal percussion. With the quite complex mechanics of a hi-hat, they probably did not use this specific instrument, but they could have used some sort of cymbals or even bells.

The inclusion of the last verse with only two lines departs from the model of the dwarf-song from *The Hobbit* (2:10). We should lean towards not interpreting too much into this slight change – is seems as if the Hobbits merely wanted to have a nice ending to their song, which is actually supported by the way in which the Tolkien Ensemble dealt with these lines: They are sung not to the same melody as the first three verses, but instead after an instrumental interlude in the style of a horn call. Maybe Merry and Pippin with these lines alluded to the sound of the horn-call of Buckland, which was only sounded in dire need. After all they had found out about Frodo's mission; bringing the Master Ring to a safe place, while being hunted by Ringwraiths in their opinion certainly counted as dire need and required a solid send-off. This also is the only part of the song where two singers (according to the book Merry and Pippin) sing together, partly in unison, partly in harmony. The piece ends with a repetition of the introduction (2:20) with added percussion and then fades away with the accordion played octave changes over the rhythm section.

Sadly, we need to be very careful when trying to apply any characteristics of the song to Dwarvish music in general. As mentioned before, the original song, *Far over the misty mountains cold*, very likely is an invention of Thorin and company. They wrote the lyrics and maybe even the melody. Again we need to remember the way all the material was passed on to us in the *Red Book*. Bilbo wrote down

the words and the tune, probably some time after the actual events. We need to rely on his memory and hope he wrote everything down correctly, not accidentally mixing the Dwarven song with characteristics of Hobbit music. There is a bigger likelihood of such mistakes in the case of this song, because it probably was not widely known. The *Song of Durin*, on the contrary, certainly was. As one of the big representative songs of the Dwarven culture, a lot of people would have heard it, increasing the chances of readers of the *Red Book* spotting mistakes.

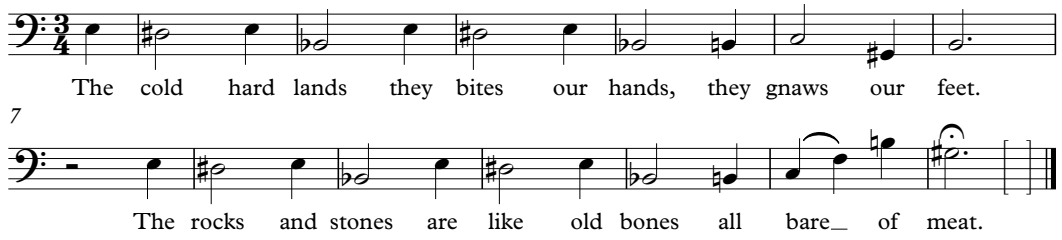
4.1.15 Gollum's Song

Tolkien Ensemble, *Gollum's Song / Riddle,* TE CD 3, Track 15, 3:45.

Gollum undoubtedly is one of the most interesting characters in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien masterfully characterises him as a victim of his addiction to the ring on the one hand, and at the same time as a ruthless planner and highly intelligent schemer on the other hand. In a way he is very much comparable to a drug addict, who will do anything to get whatever substance he might need to serve his addiction. Gollum is a creature to be pitied, while at the same time being one of the most loathsome creatures in the book – primarily through his scheming. Sam calls these two sides of his personality "Slinker" and "Stinker", which are represented by two musical themes in the films (Adams, 40).

As such, it comes as no surprise that the Tolkien Ensemble's version of *Gollum's Song* is based on this aspect of his personality, too. While on the way to Mordor with the Hobbits, Gollum performs a sort of half-riddle, "sometimes even croaking in a sort of song" (LotR, 620).

The cold hard lands, they bites our hands, they gnaws our feet. The rocks and stones are like old bones all bare of meat. But stream and pool is wet and cool: so nice for feet! And now we wish – [spoken] Ha! Ha! What does we wish? We'll tell you He guessed it long ago, Baggins guessed it.	Alive without breath; as cold as death; never thirsting, ever drinking; clad in mail, never clinking. Drowns on dry land, thinks an island is a mountain; thinks a fountain is a puff of air. [sung] So sleek, so fair! What a joy to meet! We only wish to catch a fish, so juicy-sweet! (LotR, 620).



transcription (excerpt): Gollum's Song / Riddle, TE CD 3, Track 15.

The text of the song tells us quite a lot about Gollum/Sméagol: He, like the Hobbits, not particularly enjoys the journey to Mordor and he likes water, coming from a culture of water-dwellers himself. Even after all the years of being addicted to the Ring and trying to get it back, he still has retained elements of his personality. The thing he wishes for, a fish, of course refers to the riddle he asked Bilbo in *The Hobbit*. Indeed he uses nearly the same wording as when meeting Bilbo. The content of the riddle also shows his distorted view on the world: When he thinks of a fish, what he likes about it is that it is "cold as death" and will drown on land – but we still may say that he very much enjoys eating fish, a remnant of his true personality. By these hints to Gollum's past and insights into his way of thinking, Tolkien makes the character more accessible to the reader. The same is achieved by Gollum's unique mode of speaking (i.e. using the third person singular for third person plural forms, "bites") and adding "–es" to most plural forms ("hobbitses" instead of "hobbits", for example).

The rendition of the song/riddle by the Tolkien Ensemble is accompanied by guitar plucking alternating high and low notes in a steady, slow pulse. The use of a guitar, again which is seen by composer Caspar Reiff as a kind of "Hobbit-lute" refers to Sméagol's origin: He once was a Hobbit of the river-folk, which also explains his love for riddles. The guitar refers to his good side supressed by his Gollum side. The first lines up to "And now we wish" are sung in a manner very similar to Gollum's way of speaking in the motion pictures. The brief dialog where Gollum addresses the Hobbits is included in the rendition (1:06). After this, Gollum speaks the actual riddle of the fish until he comes to the point of his prey: The lines from "So sleek, so fair!" (2:38) are sung to the same melody as the beginning of the song, which we can interpret as showing a rest of "hobbitness" in him: Even though the journey is hard, he still sees the few

positive aspects, in this case the prospect of a “juicy fish”. The Ensemble therefore approaches Gollum in much the same manner as the motion picture by stressing his Sméagol side more. In the film this is done by repeatedly showing heated arguments between Sméagol and Gollum, whose personalities are clearly separated.

4.2 Musical Adaptions From the Book

While it is the focus of this paper to analyse musical renditions of texts from *The Lord of the Rings*, there are a number of notable pieces that are not directly based on a particular text from the book. These pieces in one way or another represent what we can describe as the "Spirit of Tolkien" by stressing important aspects from the narrative. We will look at a number of these aspects with one particular, representative piece each.

4.2.1 Stage Show Hobbits: The Cat and the Moon

The Lord of the Rings Musical, *The Cat and the Moon,* LotR M, Track 4, 3:56.

Hobbit music without doubt is the most accessible music in the book and the one that immediately evokes a mental image of how it might sound in the mind of the reader. This mostly comes from the detailed descriptions of the places it is performed at, which are familiar to anyone reading it. Most notably in this respect are the drinking songs and other songs performed at inns. The similarity of Hobbit culture to the rural English culture of the 19th century automatically evokes a similarity of the music, which we find confirmed by most renditions of Hobbit songs.

In *The Lord of the Rings* stage musical, the Hobbits sing an exuberant nonsense song called *The Cat and the Moon*, which is heavily inspired by Tolkien's song *There is an Inn*, which is sung at the same location in the book. The stage show song, which serves to introduce Hobbit culture and provide comic relief after the Hobbit's encounter with the Nazgûl, takes the a cue from Tolkien's song and is centred around the Man in the Moon, who comes down to earth to drink. In Tolkien's song, the Man in the Moon drinks far too much and there has to be found a way to get him back to the moon ere the sun rises. The fiddle-playing cat manages to wake him up and indeed he is back in time with the sun wondering why everyone goes to bed even though day has just begun.

The musical does away with the backstory and has the moon itself come down to drink. The moon then sleeps for the remainder of the song with the song while the cat keeps playing. It is interesting to note that Tolkien's poem has the cat playing a five-string fiddle, while the sage show's cat has to be content with a

three-stringed instrument – possibly a hint to the proficiency of the animal because some parts from the song which uses the fiddle quite heavily would be very hard with only a three-stringed instrument. Either way, the song contrary to Tolkien's poem does not serve to actually tell a story, but only to introduce general Hobbit culture. Additionally, it is one of the few ensemble numbers of the stage show, where a sizable number of actors are on stage. Ensemble numbers as the big showpiece of any stage musical serve an important part in entertaining the audience. To choose this particular situation for the only true dance number in the show makes sense and, judging from Tolkien's description of how Hobbits celebrate, manages to include this element present in any stage show in a way true to the book.

The text of the song largely consists of nonsense rhymes with the song living from the folk accompaniment and the dance routine:

> *[FRODO]*
> *There's an inn of old renown where they brew a beer so brown*
> *Moon came rolling down the hill one Hevnsday night to drink his fill.*
>
> *[PIPPIN/MERRY]*
> *On a three-stringed fiddle there played the Ostler's cat so fair*
> *The horned Cow that night was seen to dance a jig upon the green.*
>
> *Called by the fiddle to the middle of the muddle where the*
> *Cow with a caper sent the small dog squealing.*
> *Moon in a fuddle went to huddle by the griddle but he*
> *Slipped in a puddle and the world went reeling.*
>
> *Downsides went up- hey! Outsides went wide.*
> *As the fiddle played a twiddle and the Moon slept till Sterrenday.*
> *Upsides went west- hey! Broadsides went boom.*
> *With a twiddle on the fiddle in the middle by the griddle*
> *And the Moon slept till Sterrenday.*
>
> *[. . .]*
>
> *Fi-fo-fiddle-diddle*
> *[FRODO, each line repeated by the CROWD]*
> *Hey-yey-yey-yey-oh-ho*
> *Hey-hey-din-gen-do*

Hoo-rye-and-hott-a-cott-a ho
Hott-a-cott-a-hotta-ko
Fi-fo-fiddle-diddle-hi-ho
Ho fiddlee-ding-galli-do
Hoo-rye-hoo-rye oops-oops- ay!
Hotta-cotta-hotta-cotta-mi-fo-fo
Hotta-cotta-hotta-cotta-hotta-cotta-hotta-cotta-hotta-cotta-hotta-cotta-mi-fo-fo!

[. . .]

(LotR M, Track 4).

When Frodo is asked to sing a song, the fiddle begins with a slow pulse of a minor seventh leading to an octave. Frodo sings the first lines and the fiddle quickens to a rolling pattern in 16th notes as Merry and Pippin take over (0:20). When Frodo and Sam join in at 0:31, the full folk ensemble of guitar, bass and bouzouki comes in. The remainder of the song serves as an acrobatic number with the whole inn joining in eventually when Frodo sings rhythmic phrases repeated by the hobbits in the inn (2:45).

The Cat and the Moon serves as an example how a topic can successfully be adapted to the requirements of a given medium without sacrificing the integrity of the overall story and the believability of the world. The musical cliché of exuberant dance number here was satisfied in a way true to the source material; here the medium of the musical could bloom with such a dance number, while it would have been wholly inappropriate to do so on the ascent to Mount Doom with Frodo singing “Oh the Ring is so heavy, I cannot carry it anymore”, as the producers note (Russell, 71).

4.2.2 Friendship: Now and for Always

The Lord of the Rings Musical, *Now and for Always,* LotR M, Track 12, 4:49.

Thinking of the individual journeys of the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* and their changes over the course of the book, Samwise Gamgee stands out. Appearing to be little more than Frodo's gardener and possibly his sidekick-to-be at the beginning of the book, at the end of the narrative his relationship with Frodo has made him far more than that. Of the interactions between the characters in the novel, Sam's and Frodo's relationship is the most interesting: Frodo, of a much higher social standing than his friend, nevertheless accepts him as a true friend without looking down on him. Sam never falters in his loyalty to Frodo and is instrumental in helping Frodo achieve his goal. The underlying concept of friendship and loyalty, their value on the journey and the dissolution of social differences to the point where only these two values remain are very evident in the book. Tolkien's decision to record the journey of Frodo and Sam (and of course of Gollum) in one continuous narrative strand instead of interweaving it with the actions of the rest of the fellowship only adds to this.

The motion picture trilogy lays much focus on the relationship between the two Hobbits, using a significant amount of screen time to show their interactions and makes their scenes not only some of the most memorable, but also emotional corner points of the movies: We just need to think of Sam helping Frodo the last few steps at Mount Doom: "I can't carry it for you... but I can carry you!". The medium of film with its presence of pre-fabricated images directly addressing the reader manages to convey such scenes very efficiently by slowing down the actual time and focussing on this particular moment.

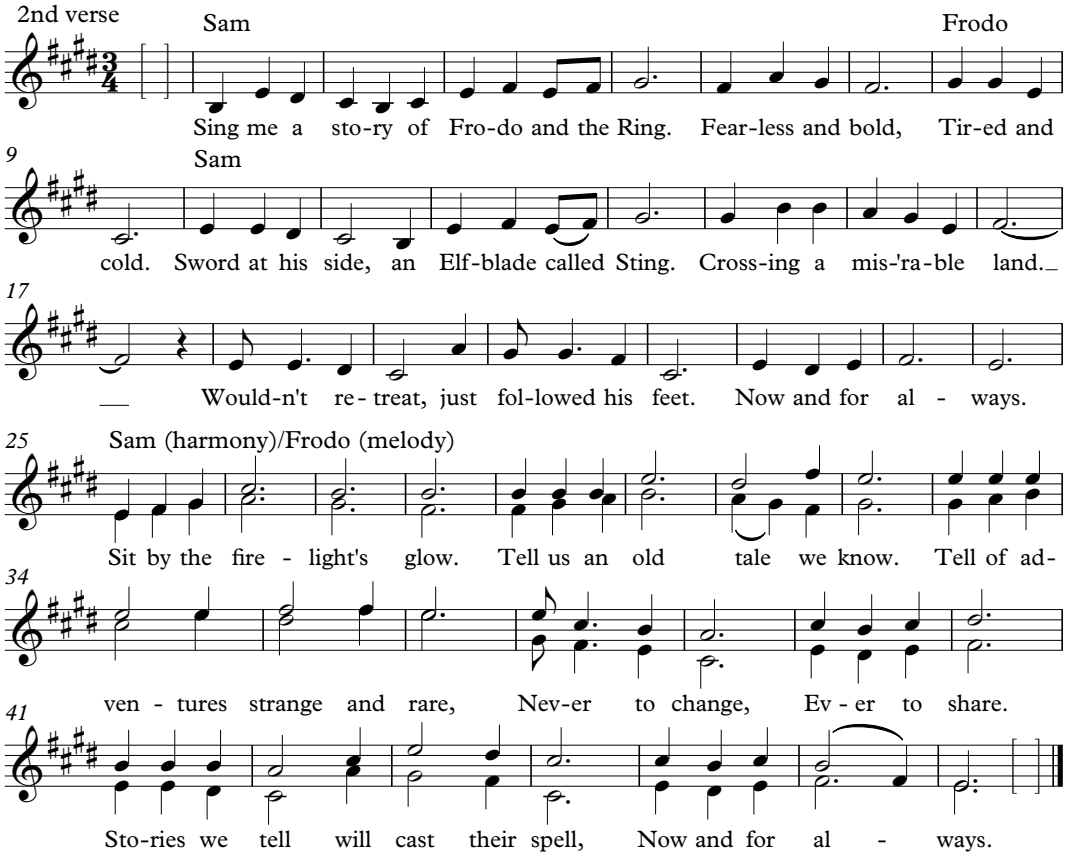
Musical theatre again in this respect has a number of unique possibilities because it allows for live interaction between characters and due to the presence of the actors on the stage can address the audience directly. As such it comes as no surprise that *The Lord of the Rings* stage show devotes a complete musical number just to show the friendship between Frodo and Sam. In addition, the number also serves as basis for a song about the duality between Sméagol/Gollum and links him with his Hobbit heritage (see 4.2.3).

The song, called *Now and for Always*, is a duet between Frodo and Sam sung on their way to Mordor. It builds on the premise from the book of Sam wondering

whether or not maybe people would make songs and tales about "Frodo and the Ring". The song begins from an underscore drone and is accompanied by guitar mainly, with strings providing chordal pads and an accordion paying interludes as well as harmony notes from the second verse on. The text speaks of what a song about their adventure could be about and is a very "down to earth" Hobbit song. The first verse, sung by Sam (0:38), serves as a characterisation of Hobbits in general:

> *Sing me a story of heroes of the Shire*
> *Muddling through, brave and true*
> *Stubborn as bindweed and tough as old brier*
> *Never too showy or grand*
> *Year after year they persevere*
> *Now and for always*
> *Harfoots who planted, and Stoor folk who ploughed*
> *Bred to endure, slow but sure*
> *Fallohide blood in your veins makes you proud*
> *Sturdy and steady they stand*
> *True to their aim to stay the same*
> *Now and for always*
>
> (LotR M, Track 12).

After the chorus (1:52), which is sung in unison by Sam and Frodo after the first verse, the second verse deals with the events of the stage show.



transcription (second verse + chorus): Now and for Always, LotR M, Track 12, from 2:03.

In the second chorus (2:29), the hobbits sing in two-part harmony with Sam providing the harmony part above the lead in a manner similar to *The Road Goes On* (see 0). After a brief interlude, Sam falls asleep and Frodo sings a third verse about Sam and the importance of their friendship (3:26):

> *Sing me a tale of the bravest of them all*
> *Comrade and guide, at my side*
> *Stouthearted Sam who wouldn't let me fall*
> *Holding my life in his hand*
> *True to the end, no finer friend*
> *Now and for always*
>
> (LotR M, Track 12).

This verse represents the underlying theme of friendship the stage show is based on. Without the two Hobbits working together, the Ring would not have been destroyed. Gollum/Sméagol playing his sad part in the events only adds to this: His Hobbit side was at least strong enough to not murder the Hobbits in

their sleep, even though the eventually lost the battle with the Ring – as did Frodo. *Now and for Always* in a way represents the significance of the book as a tale of courage and friendship, which proves that sometimes the Good indeed will win.

4.2.3 The Tragic Villain: Smeagol / Gollum's Song

The Lord of the Rings Musical, *Smeagol,* LotR M, Track 13, 4:10*.*
Howard Shore, "*Long Ways To Go Yet",* LotR TTT CD 3, Track 14, 8:06, from 1:14*.*

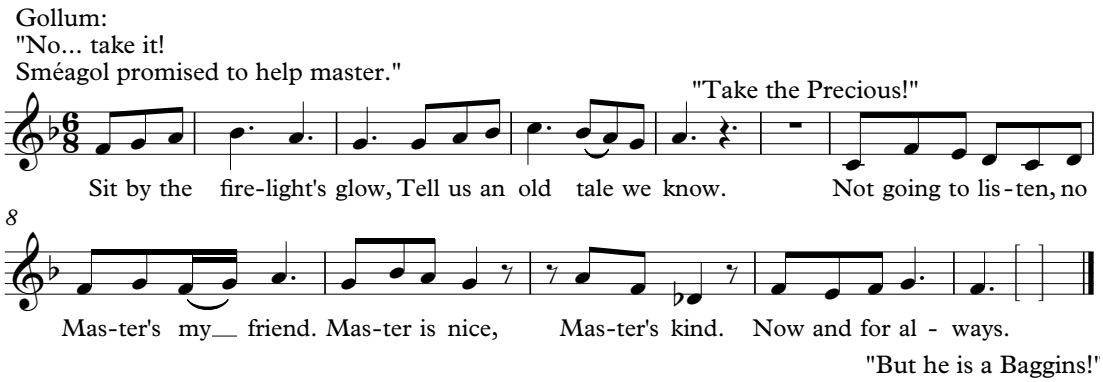
We have already discussed Gollum's love of riddles as well as his view of the world on the basis of the Tolkien Ensemble's version of *Gollum's Song* from the book. Gollum is an evil creature with a very malicious agenda, but one at the same time cannot help but to pity him. Tolkien furthers both these aspects of Gollum by having his original self as Sméagol resurfacing several times in the story, leading to heated battles between Sméagol and Gollum. Furthermore, Gollum has completely stopped referring to himself as a single person, he speaks of himself as "we". It appears that only after Frodo's mention of his real name he began to remember his former self and to doubt the moral validity of his plan to kill Frodo and Sam. We can therefore assume that "we" refers to him and the ring, which he truly sees as a part of himself. This is backed up by his behaviour when finally reunited with the ring at the Cracks of Doom:

> *"'Precious, precious, precious!' Gollum cried. "My Precious! O my Precious!' Ands with that, even as his eyes were lifted up to gloat on his prize, he stepped too far, toppled, wavered for a moment on the brink, and then with a shriek he fell. Out of the depths came his last wail* Precious*, and he was gone."* (LotR, 946).

The only time when Gollum ever refers to himself as "I" is when he is talking about the Ring. So when he wins his "prize" back, he is as happy as a wretched creature like him could possibly be. His behaviour - most notably his plan to kill the Hobbits by means of Shelob even though his true self (Sméagol) is aware of the evilness of the plan and tries to stop him from executing it – suggests that he is completely controlled by the Ring. The "we" would then refer to Gollum

driven by the Ring, not to his true self, which seems to have lain completely dormant until Frodo reawakened it by saying Sméagol's name.

Schizophrenic characters and their actions and interactions with their "other side" are a classical device not only in literature, but also in all visual arts extending to music theatre. As such it is not surprising that *The Lord of the Rings* stage production stresses this aspect of Gollum's personality and makes it the driving force of the character. Gollum has his own song, aptly titled *Smeagol*[18], which immediately follows Frodo's and Sam's duet *Now and for Always.* After Frodo sings his verse about Sam, he falls asleep during the chorus and Gollum finishes the song. After a brief interlude, he continues to sing:

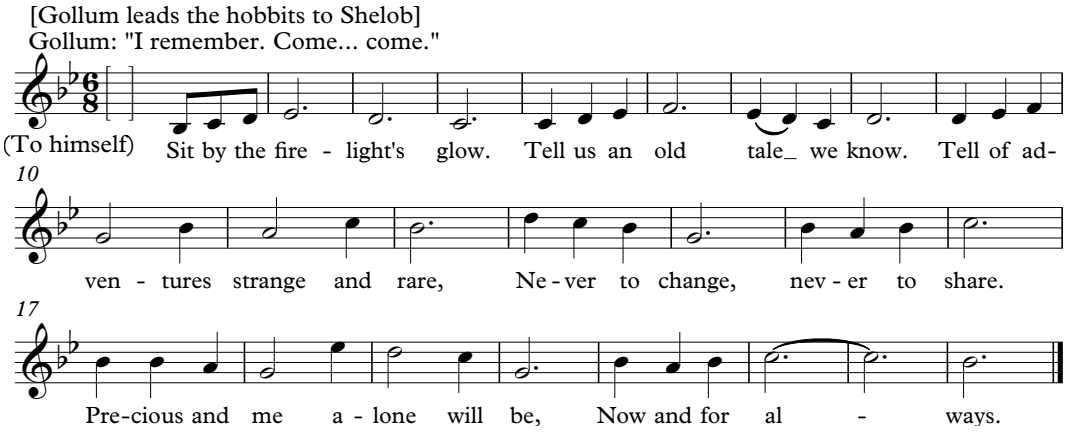


transcription (beginning): Smeagol, LotR M, Track 13, from 0:26.

Sméagol repeats the central line from the Hobbits' song, but is interrupted by his Gollum personality urging him to take the chance and try to get rid of the Hobbits (0:33). The two personalities are clearly discernible and we can see Sméagol's struggle – he does not want to hurt Frodo, but ultimately looses against Gollum. The two argue while the Hobbits are asleep. Gollum eventually wins by shouting down Sméagol and maintains that "we hate Bagginses", because they (meaning Bilbo) stole his "precious" (0:52). There seems to be a bit of hope for Sméagol to gain the upper hand when he remarks that Frodo promised to free him if he led them to Mordor. This section has Gollum dancing to a musical underscore heavily drawing on Hobbit folk music, suggesting his past as a hobbit (1:51). But Gollum trashes his hopes and calls him a coward (2:50). Sméagol says that "we change" because his master is nice to him (2:58). Right at that moment Sam intervenes and accuses him of "sneaking", allowing

[18] The spelling without the accent is indeed used throughout the stage production.

Gollum to resurface and lead the way on. Like in the book and film, Gollum then has an inspiration how to kill the Hobbits: "She" will help, meaning Shelob.



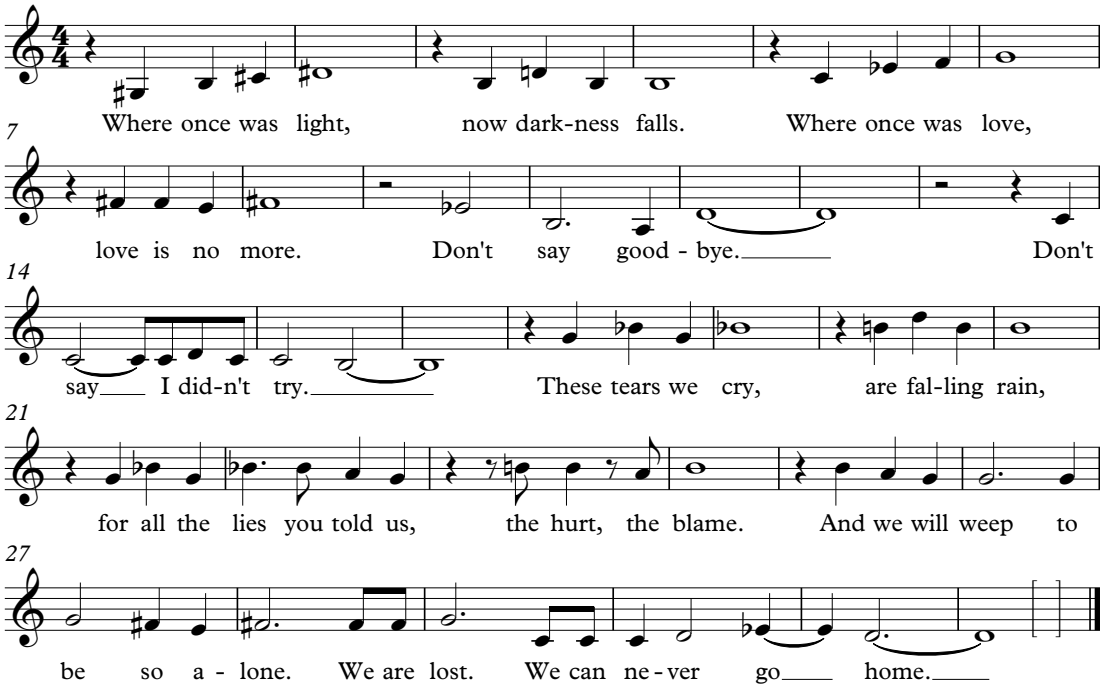
transcription (continued): Smeagol, LotR M, Track 13, from 3:28.

While clearly Sméagol sings the first repetition of the Hobbits' chorus (he secretly wishes he could be part of them and probably remembers past times), after Sam's intervention, his Gollum side has completely taken over. Gollum turns the meaning of "Never to change" completely around: While in the Hobbits' song it stands for staying true to each other, for friendship and loyalty, Gollum interprets it as not deviating from his set goal to win back the Ring and not giving to reason and accept that Frodo could indeed be his friend. The line "never to share" confirms this decision to not trust anyone. Gollum's mind had been poisoned by his "Precious" for too long. In *Smeagol* we encounter a tortured and broken creature tragically fighting and loosing a battle against his longing for the Ring. The use of both the melody of the Hobbit song, as well as the instrumentation, which evokes Sméagol's origin as a Stoor hobbit, add to the tragedy of the creature. When Gollum falls into the Cracks of Doom at the end of the stage production, clutching the Ring in utter delight, his sad life comes to an end – presumably, for him, a good one even.

In the motion picture trilogy, during the End Credits each of the films has a song inserted before the final score suite[19], which deals with a topic from that particular film. The songs from *The Two Towers* as well as *The Return of the King* we will look at in some detail. With Gollum playing such a big role in the second

[19] The End Credits suite usually consists of a coherent piece using all the important themes and musical ideas from the film. Alternatively, a large part of the credits is commonly used for a (commercial) song. On some major films, the End Credits sequence is so long that both can be extensively used, as is the case with LotR.

film (he is only briefly seen in the first film and only appears as a major character in *The Two Towers*), it comes as no surprise that he is the subject of this film's song, sung by a female voice. *Gollum's Song* draws the picture of Gollum as a sad being tortured and corrupted by the Ring, very similar to his portrayal in the stage show. Contrary to the musical, though, it is less the actions he is driven to by the Ring that the song focuses on, but rather his plain misery. Gollum is no evil creature, he is a victim.



So in the end,	Take back the lies,
I'll be, what I will be.	The hurt, the blame.
No loyal friend was ever there for me.	And you will wait,
Now we say goodbye.	When you face the end alone.
We say, you didn't try.	You are lost.
These tears you cried,	You can never go home.
Have come too late.	You are lost.
	You can never go home.

transcription: "Long Ways To Go Yet", LotR TTT CD 3, Track 14, from 1:14.

The song immediately follows the final scene of the movie with no separation from the actual score. It begins with Gollum being addressed in the second person plural. Presumably Gollum sings the song about himself and once again

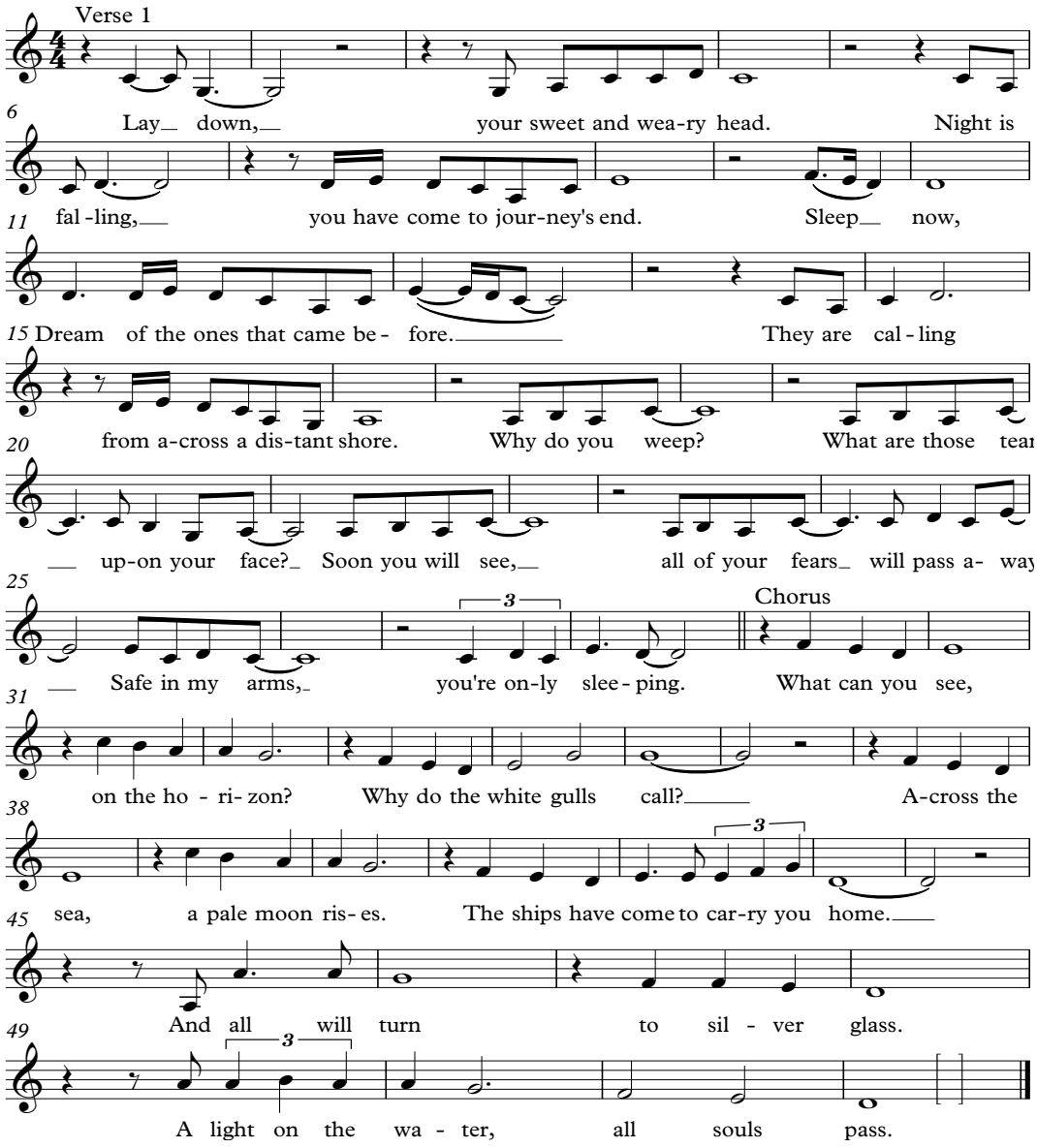
speaks of himself in this way. The second part of the song then switches to the first person singular (from 2:30). As Adams notes, "this [the song] marks an important turn for the character; it highlights the point at which Sméagol begins to adopt Gollum's views" (Adams, 265). Indeed up to this point, the nice personality of Sméagol had been prevalent, with the final film being centred on his Gollum side.[20] The song itself serves as a description of Gollum's situation by directly referring to his past life as a hobbit. The "you" the text addresses in the line "for all the lies you told us" may be the Ring itself. Having alienated Sméagol from everything and everyone (even from himself!) and having made him a puppet of the will of his "Precious", the Ring has made sure that "We [Sméagol] are lost". From "We say, you didn't try" on, the focus changes: No longer does Gollum refer to himself, but here we get an outside view of Gollum's situation, accusing him of not trying hard enough to resist the Ring. "These tears you cried have come too late" – the Sméagol buried deep inside Gollum could have repented earlier. A harsh judgement, but one that ultimately shows the whole tragedy of Gollum.

[20] Contrary to Tolkien's book, the encounter with Shelob does only take place later in the third film, thus rendering the Gollum from the film up to this point a much nicer character than in the book.

4.2.4 The Passing of the Elves: Into the West

Howard Shore, *Days Of The Ring,* LotR RotK CD 4, Track 7, 11:10, from 0:42.

Another End Credits song is *Into the West* from *The Return of the King*. Performed by a female singer, the song brings Middle-earth in context with the larger world of Arda. In a way it can be likened to an adaption of the subject matter of Galadriel's *Song of Eldamar* (see 4.1.11), because, like that song, it deals with the West and the journey there. Sung at the beginning of the End Credits sequence with a brief orchestral interlude after the last scene of the film, it refers back to Frodo sailing to the West on an Elven ship from the Grey Havens. The text speaks about the repercussions of Frodo's task and of his wounds that were too deep to be healed. While Sam remained in the Shire, Frodo took up the offer to travel the Straight Road. As he says: "But I have been too deeply hurt, Sam. I tried to save the Shire, and it has been saved, but not for me." (LotR, 1029).



Hope fades	[Chorus]
Into the world of night	
Through shadows falling	And all will turn
Out of memory and time	To silver glass
Don't say: „We have come now to the end“	A light on the water
White shores are calling	Grey ships pass
You and I will meet again	Into the West
And you'll be here in my arms	
Just sleeping	

transcription: “Days Of The Ring”, LotR RotK CD 4, Track 7, from 0:42.

To write a song about the repercussions of the Evil brought to Middle-earth by Sauron would certainly go very much in line with Tolkien's thoughts. There is a pronounced sadness in the ending of the book; despite having saved the Shire, having conquered Sauron and once again established order and peace in Middle-earth, still at lot is lost forever. The days of the Elves draw to a close, a large number is leaving Middle-earth. Frodo is unable to just continue his life – the Ring has destroyed something in him forever. Tolkien himself wanted to build on the repercussions of the War of the Ring to show that not everything was perfect again by writing a sequel to the book dealing with a secret dark cult. Even though the sequel was abandoned very early, it still shows that Tolkien did not envision the world of the Fourth Age to be a perfect one.

The text of the song closely follows the description of Frodo's journey on the Elven ship, up to the inclusion of the "silver glass" and the "white shores", which are directly taken from the last account of Frodo:

> *And then it seemed to him that as in his dream in the house of Bombadil, the grey rain-curtain turned all to silver glass and was rolled back, and he beheld white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise.* (LotR, 1030).

It also puts the events in Middle-earth in the context of all of Arda: As evil and gruesome Sauron had been, his reign nevertheless was constricted only to a part of the world. There still are places free from the shadow. For his merits Frodo was given the grace of Valar to travel to the Blessed Realm, where he would be free from the shadow of the past.

Musically, the melody of the song *Into the West* had been previously presented as the Grey Havens theme (Adams, 354). When the song begins after Sam's final scene (0:42), a tinkling guitar, very reminiscent of a harp, introduces it. This may be what Reiff refers to as "hobbit-size lute" and in this context represent both Frodo's heritage as a hobbit as well as the Elvish harps. The song, while sad and melancholic, nevertheless has a strong optimistic drive. "You and I will meet again". We can interpret this verbatim as the Frodo and his best friend Sam being reunited some day in the future. Sam, having been a ring-bearer himself, albeit only for a brief time, would be granted the favour to travel to the Undying

Lands later, as well. Even though the feature film and the stage show do not have any connection save for being based on the same literary text, this is maybe the best and artistically most beautiful and rewarding example of Tolkien's spirit at work. What ultimately count are friendship and loyalty.

4.2.5 Translation to Sindarin: I sit beside the fire

Tolkien Ensemble, *Bilbo's Song,* TE CD 2, Track 8, 3:33.
Donald Swann, *I Sit Beside The Fire,* Swann, 25.
Howard Shore, *Bilbo's Song,* LotR RotK CD 4, Track 8, 2:58.

Before the Fellowship leaves Rivendell on their quest to destroy the Ring, Bilbo sings a song called *I sit beside the fire*, which speaks about the things he has seen in the past and how much he longs to hear the tales of people that have seen all the things he did not have a chance to see. The Tolkien Ensemble recorded the song as *Bilbo's Song*. This song, which falls in line with the other renditions of Hobbit songs by the Ensemble and features a male soloist accompanied by a rapidly plucked guitar, has a strong air of longing: The style of the rendition with the very fast guitar playing evokes swiftly walking feet and can be seen as an expression of Bilbo's secret wish to go out on adventure again. Because enough of Bilbo's songs have been addressed in this paper, we will forgo any further analysis and just leave it with this mention for completeness' sake.

Donald Swann also set the poem to music in his song cycle. His version is notable for the inclusion of the *Elven Hymn to Elbereth Gilthoniel* (see 4.1.7), but otherwise very similar in tone and style to his version of the *Old Walking Song* (see 0), so it will not be discussed in detail here.

Much has been written in this paper about translations from one language to the other and about the difficulties of actually every poem being a translation from Westron into English. As such it seems fitting to have a look at one last musical rendition of a song from *The Lord of the Rings* taking the translation issue in a completely new direction: For the End Credits sequence of the *Return of the King* film, a rendition of *I sit beside the fire* was added, which is not present in the theatrical release. For this rendition, the text of the song was translated to Sindarin by linguist David Salo and is sung by a boy's choir accompanied by

string orchestra and plucked harp. The song is very slow, reminiscent and even a bit sad. Its importance for the Music of Middle-earth does not lie in its musical properties; it lies in its placement and existence: Just like the whole story started with a Hobbit giving a magnificent feast, it ends with a song by the very same Hobbit. We could see the Sindarin translation as a version of the Song Bilbo wrote on the way in the West with the Elves. It is also very significant that the very last impression from the film is Bilbo singing a song, thinking of his past adventures, of course referring to *The Hobbit*. Adams calls it "a final canticle of Middle-earth by Howard Shore" (Adams, 357).

One musical property of *I sit beside the fire* stands out in the context of the film: The song is sung by a boys choir, which has a hidden significance. The most important use of treble voices occurs in *The Two Towers*, after the Entmoot has decided not to go to war (a deviation from the book) and Treebeard is aroused by the destruction of the forest the Hobbits show to him. When the Last March of the Ents begins, a boy's choir sings a poem by Philippa Boyens in Sindarin. A solo treble comes in, singing the Nature's Reclamation Theme (Adams, 119). The treble voice in the film scores is associated with the (good) forces of nature – just as the waters of the Isen cleanse the Ring of Isengard, so figuratively, do the treble voices stand for the good forces in Middle-earth conquering the evil. So to have *Bilbo's Song* sung by a boy's choir makes a connection to the other uses of treble voices in the films and links the tales of the War of the Ring with the whole of Arda. The song, if seen together with *Into the West*, draws two opposite aspects of Middle-earth: *Into the West* deals with the large repercussions of evil, the Doom of Mandos and the wounds that will never heal; *Bilbo's Song* is concerned with the tales of the little people that make a big difference – on a universal scale we might say. After all the Ring-bearers are the only mortals are allowed the entry to the West!

Bilbo, with whose adventure everything started, literally has the last word. How better could the viewer get a send-off from a world so much infused with music and poetry than by a song from the Ring-finder himself, sung in the language of the First-born and giving hope for Bilbo's first adventure to see the light of the Silver Screen? Ending *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy in this way undoubtedly is one of the greatest nods to the author ever given and clearly a sign that the

creative team of the films was keenly aware of the importance of music for Middle-earth.

Amendt-Raduege quotes Tolkien saying that the "real theme of *The Lord of the Rings* [is] death and immortality" (Amendt-Raduege, 114). The heroes of the tale go to the West, most of them to die, because the mortal Hobbits will be mortal there, too – and Bilbo's days are coming to and end. But they also will be immortal, forever remembered in expressions of culture, or, to say it in Sam's words: "Worthy of remembrance".

5 Conclusion

Looking back on this paper, it should have become clear that music indeed is an important part of how Middle-earth works. To sum it up again in a few brief sentences: Of all ways of trading information, preserving cultural identity, passing it on and making it available to other parties not directly partaking in the specific cultural background, music is the one most prevalent and most important in Middle-earth – and presumably the whole of Arda. This stems from music being the foundation from which the physical world is derived: The music of the Ainur ("First Music") became physical form as per Ilúvatar's doing. With everything that is and everything that happens foreseen (we might say "composed") in the First Music, every possible event is part of that music, as such directly linking musical expression into the world. In a world made from music, music naturally is present in and through anything, making music a natural means for all the cultures of Middle-earth to express themselves.

The existence of evil in the world, through Melkor's doings, adds another layer. Even though Ilúvatar stated that even Melkor's dissonance was part of His plan, Melkor nevertheless after the creation of Arda was able to – within certain boundaries – follow his own agenda. This is what we might explain as the Free Will; Ilúvatar willingly did not prevent any of His creations to act against His will. Now to explain why even the Valar and Maiar were not able to exactly foresee the unfolding of all future events – even though everything was foreseen in the First Music – we can stay within the terminology of music and apply one of its features to Arda: The creation of the physical world and all the actions the Valar/Maiar went to undertake from then can be likened to a musical performance of a piece. Even though Ilúvatar composed the music, so to speak, the aforementioned free will allowed the Valar and Maiar to interpret it in their unique ways, just like an artist does in a musical performance.

Because music is central to the very core of Middle-earth, all the cultures of Middle-earth possess a rich musical culture (even including Orcs, as we have seen). The Music of Middle-earth seems to be based on the First Music, which in turn is not only present in the physical world ("the sound of water"), but has also been passed on by the Valar themselves to the Elves in the Undying Lands.

Their influence now seems to have made the musical cultures of Middle-earth largely compatible to each other because they are ultimately derived from the same source. In both *The Lord of the Rings* as well as *The Hobbit*, characters frequently sing songs or pass on messages by means of a song or poem. Some cultures, like the Dwarves, use songs as a means of representation to outsiders. Oral tradition seems prevalent; repeatedly characters express their hopes that their deeds will be "worthy of a song".

As such, the Tolkien Ensemble's endeavour to create modern versions of the songs and poems makes perfect sense and actually supports the narrative by giving it back its original medium. The motion picture trilogy for the same reason uses vocal music or parts, but with some exceptions outlined before does not use the original songs and poems. What it does, however, is take certain aspects from the narrative and further explain and extend them by means of a piece of music. Both *Gollum's Song* and *Into the West* are examples of this: They take an aspect, in both cases transcending the boundaries of the film – *Into the West* refers to the Undying Lands, which are not directly explained in the film; *Gollum's Song* speaks about Gollum's past, which is only very briefly shown – and using music explain this aspect further.

The stage show is in a special situation: Because it by its very nature lives by its music, for its portrayal of a music-based world the medium lends itself naturally. Indeed the stage show stresses some important aspects that are apparent in the book, but not as clearly outlined, namely the use of music as a natural means of communication just as spoken language. The music in the stage show was meant to be the regular day-to-day music of the characters, a part of their life.

Setting Tolkien's poems to music, or creating poems based on his ideas brings Middle-earth and its inhabitants to life. It allows the tale to become livelier by filling one gap of passing on information: Just like the spoken word of a text forms an important part in bringing across information, so do vocal and instrumental music. To add one more layer to the legends of Arda certainly is something Tolkien would approve of – in fact he did with Swann's music – especially considering his intention to with his Legendarium create a mythology for the English.

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