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'Let the People Sing': J.B. Priestley and the significance of Music

J.B. Priestley's first paid publication was a 'topical skit' *Secrets of the Ragtime King*, published in *London Opinion* on 12 December 1912. He received a guinea in payment and also gained the appreciation of his father who, whilst no expert on ragtime, was proud of his son's appearance in print. Looking back over 50 years later, Priestley recalled a disturbing inspiration for the article. He described how he and his friends, who usually spent their time enjoying the musical variety of Bradford, would sometimes travel to Leeds when they wanted 'more cosmopolitan entertainment'. One evening they heard the ragtime trio 'Hedge Brothers and Jacobsen' playing at the Empire, an event which still shocked Priestley half a century later. 'It was as if we had been still living in the nineteenth century and then suddenly found the twentieth century glaring and screaming at us. We were yanked into our own age, fascinating, jungle-haunted, monstrous.' The friends were of course used to 'robust and zestful' singing in the music hall, but 'the syncopated frenzy of these three young Americans was something quite different.' Looking back he suggested that 'out of those twenty noisy minutes in a music hall came the fragmentary but prophetic outlines of the situation we find ourselves in now', including the decline of Europe, the 'domination of America, the emergence of Africa, the end of confidence and any feeling of security, the nervous excitement, the frenzy, the underlying despair of our century.' Whilst these were large claims to make from such a brief experience of ragtime, it was characteristic of Priestley's writing to make dramatic points in this manner, and the intervening half-century undoubtedly influenced his perspective. However it also illustrated how seriously Priestley took the social significance of music, even going as far as to suggest that contemporary music could be 'prophetic' revealing 'great and

terrible events' that might happen and that politicians and historians 'do not keep their ears open in the right places.'¹

In recent years Priestley has attracted more attention from historians, helping to establish him as an important writer and commentator on Englishness.² However, whilst academic research has been focused on the different forms his writing took, including the literary and theatrical elements of his work, as well as the subject matter from politics through to theories of time, there has been almost no attention paid to Priestley's relationship with music. This article will explore Priestley's interest in music, the significance of his critical engagement with different musical forms, what this reveals about his complex relationship with popular culture, and how his writing fitted into ongoing debates about culture during the twentieth century. The paper will also underline the significance of music as historical source, including the growing interest in the role music has played in British life.

Priestley was writing at a time of great economic, cultural and technological change in the world of music. McKibbin and Nott have shown how popular music became increasingly important in the interwar years, as music production and consumption moved from mainly local settings to a more commercial, large scale and Americanised juncture. From radio (including the BBC) to the Mecca dance halls, young people in particular embraced popular music, with dancing, playing gramophones and cinema becoming an important part of leisure activities. The popularity of music reflected a more democratic side of mass culture, at the same time raising concerns about Americanisation and cultural decline.³ As Nott has pointed out, elements of an English idiom remained, even if standardisation was becoming more

common.⁴ Le Mahieu also looked at the differing responses of the cultural elite towards the emerging mass culture, including music, in the interwar years.⁵

The above are part of a growing historiography of British music that has covered, among other areas music and politics, national identity as well as modes of listening, and representations of music.⁶ There has been particularly vibrant writing on jazz including a notable recent contribution by McKay who has written about politics, race and gender within the world of British jazz. He suggested among other things that jazz was a global music that spread with Americanisation, and could be read as ‘hegemonic and counter hegemonic at the same time’.⁷ Of additional relevance to this paper there has been research into the role of music in other writer’s life and work: the most obvious example of this being Philip Larkin. We now have a much better idea of the importance of jazz in Larkin’s life and writing, and an understanding of his dislike of modernist art, but his more ambivalent relationship with modern jazz. Above all Larkin is noted as having written well about music, and this paper will suggest that the same could be said about Priestley.⁸

Priestley’s writings also fitted into contemporary debates about the rise of more commercialised popular culture. Adorno had notably been dismissive of jazz seeing it as ‘the very antithesis of the modernist project in music to which he was committed’.⁹ Other critics on the left were able to take a more careful view of popular music, including Eric Hobsbawm, who writing in 1956 as Francis Newton, explored the role of jazz within mass culture. He suggested that jazz was a subcultural form, combining commercial and artistic elements that had become a global force, but in the process retained its energy and creativity. Significantly he offered a more positive

view of popular culture, which he saw as less one dimensional and more nuanced than many other Marxists.¹⁰ Hoggart's remarkable *The Uses of Literacy* (1950) is often taken as being dismissive of broader mass culture, and Priestley could have written 'society comes nearer to the danger of reducing the larger part of the population to a condition of obediently receptive passivity.'¹¹ However, the book was much more subtle than some of the other critiques, avoiding nostalgic and simplistic comparisons between good and bad, and as Hall pointed out, offering a more complete view of culture as 'making sense' of how people thought and spoke, their values and social actions as opposed to the culture as the 'ideal court of judgement....which animated the tradition from Arnold to Eliot' and beyond.¹²

Priestley could also be more considered in his approach to the mass society than he sometimes seemed. As a writer who coined the term 'Admass' to describe post war society, Priestley often offered a withering critique of Americanised mass culture, which he described as 'the great invader'.¹³ However he could also offer a deeper analysis. Towards the end of *English Journey* (1933), Priestley reflected on the different Englands he has seen on his journey, including 'Old England' which had beauty but had 'long ceased to earn its living', 'Nineteenth Century England' which had seen social division, poverty and environmental destruction, and modern England of by-passes and new leisure pursuits. Priestley argued that the latter belonged 'more to the age itself than to this particular island', and had been born in America. 'Care' needed to be taken as 'you can easily approve or disapprove of it too hastily' and it was 'essentially democratic'. However its cheapness was 'both its strength and its weakness' and it lacked 'zest, gusto, flavour, bite, drive, originality'.¹⁴ Priestley's mixed feelings about the emerging mass culture was also apparent when he viewed

the rise of television in the 1950s. In *Journey Down a Rainbow* (1955) he produced a witty and ascerbic account of the opening of Houston television station KTRK in 1954, which he suggested served ‘whatever brand of treacle the mob currently prefers’.¹⁵ However, Priestley, who had presented his popular BBC radio ‘postscripts’ broadcasts during the war, wrote for BBC television and after its opening in 1955, Independent television, and he could be positive about the new medium, even going so far as to suggest that he preferred writing for television than the theatre.¹⁶ This paper suggests that Priestley’s writings on music fit into this more interesting approach to popular culture. Whilst he wrote most often about classical musical forms, and could be dismissive of what he saw as commercialised musical forms, he wrote positively about music hall and community based popular music, and even sometimes about jazz.

It is important to establish that Priestley wrote frequently about music in an engaged and interesting way. Music played a role in many of his novels, his plays, and his memoirs and non-fiction. He promoted his own chamber concerts, wrote an Opera libretto, as well as an account of a tour of Florida with the London Symphony Orchestra.¹⁷ He was also an assiduous listener to music for most of his life, and was an amateur musician. Bradford offered a rich musical experience for the young Priestley. Although smaller than Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool, he suggested Bradford ‘devoted more time, money and attentive appreciation to music than most industrial towns.’ Something he put down to the relative wealth to size of the city, Yorkshire’s love of music and the influence of German-Jewish merchants who migrated to the area.¹⁸

Priestley was particularly drawn to classical music, especially the symphonies of the nineteenth century - 'a century that knew how to make music' and Bradford offered a rich variety in this regard.¹⁹ Leading orchestras, musicians and conductors, including the Halle orchestra and Nikisch with the London Symphony Orchestra played in the city, and he also heard trios by Kreisler 'then at his best', Casals and Bauer. Bradford also had its own symphony orchestra, and Priestley recalled that whilst the performances weren't always perfect in this largely unrecorded age, they had energy and creativity and he 'hardly ever missed a concert of importance.'²⁰ This city had also produced Frederick Delius, the son of German exiles, who Priestley had a strong regard for.²¹ This was not classical music as enjoyed only by the elite, but as a more popular art form.

The musical world of Bradford was captured in fiction in one of Priestley's best novels, *Bright Day* (1946), where he 'made a musical family a symbol of magical attraction.'²² The novel began with the main character, disillusioned Hollywood screen writer Gregory Dawson, who was staying in a Cornish hotel to try and finish a film script, hearing the slow movement of Schubert's B Flat Major Trio. This brought back memories of his pre-1914 Bradford youth in a Proustian manner: 'the thin ribbon of sound pulled back curtain after curtain', and helped him recognise two other guests at the hotel, now ennobled as Lord and Lady Harndean, as Malcolm and Eleanor Nixey.²³ As Dawson revisits the past during the novel, he recalls the Nixey's arrival in 1913 at the same point in a performance of the Schubert Trio, their entrance captured in the text: 'and then there were two strangers standing in the doorway, among the splinters of Schubert', anticipating their disruptive role in the events that are about to unravel.²⁴ The rich musical culture of pre-1914 Bradford plays an

important role in the novel, sealing Dawson's connection with the ultimately tragic Alington family. His attendance at a Music Society concert in the Gladstone Hall to hear the Halle Orchestra play Wagner, Strauss and Brahms, saw him move into the orbit of this seemingly glittering family.²⁵

Classical music also played an important role in other works. For example in *Time and the Conways* (1937) the darkening mood of the play is captured by the movement from popular song at the start, through Schumann's 'Der Nussbaum', culminating in Brahms's 'Wiegenlied' (Cradle Song) at the end of the play.²⁶ Music played an even more central role in the experimental *Music at Night* (1938) which was written for the 1938 Malvern Festival, and saw a socially mixed group listening to a new concerto by the fictional composer, David Shiel, which drew them into what Priestley described as 'deeper and deeper levels of consciousness', where 'time is expunged' and the past is acted out in a different light. The action in the play corresponded with the performance of the concerto.²⁷

In a less experimental mode Alan Strete, returning from the war to the family home Swanford Manor, in *Three Men in New Suits* (1945) hears a recording of Mahler's 'Das Lied Von Erde' coming from his Uncle Rodney's room. As they discussed the music, Rodney told him that the 'real world' was 'finished', and that 'these fellas - Mahler, Elgar, Delius, and the rest of 'em - knew it years ago.' Their meeting ended with Strete and Rodney listening to Elgar's 'Cello Concerto', which caught the former's own sense of confusion at returning home. 'The rich dark flood of the Elgar came pouring out, but certain doubts could not be drowned or forgotten. From an

ocean of vintage port and regret, lousy-home-sickness and Madeira, the tide foamed darkly up the beat ; but the trip wires and mines remained....^{'28}

Music offers a seemingly life enhancing dimension in Priestley's second novel, *Angel Pavement* (1930), also illustrating the non-elite nature of classical music, when the troubled cashier at Twigg and Dersingham, Smeeth, eases his worry about work and family problems by listening to classical music. Early in the book he listens to the radio, and on hearing Mendelssohn 'sank in his chair, and the sharp lines of his face softened....Mr. Smeeth a magically drowned man, worried no longer and was happy.'²⁹ Later in the novel, after receiving news that he will be getting a pay rise, he on impulse attends a concert at the Queen's Hall. Fearing it might be too high brow, and not enjoying the experimental first piece, he is gradually won over by Brahms' first symphony, leaving him 'more excited and happy than he had done when he had heard about the rise'. Having navigated the world of the concert hall, he reflected that 'a lot of this symphony concert stuff was either right above his head or just simply didn't mean anything to anybody. But what was good *was* good.'³⁰ Towards the end of the novel, Smeeth planned to see 'the dark but splendid adventure' of the symphony again, but has to delay his visit due to work commitments. However, the power of music cannot withstand the shock of the news that the firm has collapsed, and the devastated Smeeth fails to catch the end of the concert and 'had done with Brahms and Co for a long time, perhaps for ever.'³¹

A more permanent transcendence was provided by Elgar's 'Introduction and Allegro' in *Festival at Farbridge* (1951), which is one of Priestley's most effective uses of music in his fiction. Near the end of the novel, Laura Casey, in an almost

metaphysical reverie reflecting on the wonder of impact of the Festival she has helped organise, hears the opening bars of the second movement drifting from the open doors of the Corn Exchange where an orchestra is rehearsing. ‘It was as if far-away voices, noble and dreamy, were pronouncing the benediction she had already vaguely felt, were blessing for ever, so that she could not forget, the brilliant warm street and its image of time.’ Priestley suggests she remembered this moment later in troubled times, when she ‘felt the stream of life running free again, flashing in the sun, as it had done in that high summer of the Festival...’³² Elgar’s music plays a similarly important role in the play *The Linden Tree* (1948), when Professor Linden, forced into retirement by his University and not valued by his students or most of his family, hears his daughter Dinah, the one member of his house to have any enthusiasm for life, play the first movement of the Cello Concerto – a piece of music already utilised, as we have seen, in *Three Men in New Suits*. Linden is moved by the performance acknowledging the sadness of the music and the sense of ‘a kind of long farewell’, but that ‘a little miracle’ had occurred. ‘Young Dinah Linden, all youth, all eagerness, saying hello and not farewell to anything... unseals for us the precious distillation, uncovers the tenderness and regret, which are ours now as well as his, and our lives and Elgar’s, Burmanley today and the Malvern Hills in a lost sunlight, all magically intertwined.’³³

Priestley wrote more widely about Elgar in his later non-fiction books, underlining his interest in the composer’s music. He suggested that the ‘nostalgic’ and conservative label attached to Elgar underplayed the complexity of his work, which was very English, but sometimes transcended the Edwardian age. ‘There is in him and his music all the rich confusion of this age, the deepening doubt, the melancholy whispers

from the unconscious, as well as all the hope and glory.’³⁴ Priestley particularly liked Elgar’s first symphony which offered ‘delectable variety’ in its opening, while its third movement ‘seems to me to be one of the great adagios of all time.’ Whilst his American friends ‘can like it or lump it’, Priestley felt that the symphony offered ‘deep Englishness in all its various moods’.³⁵ Indeed Priestley argued elsewhere that the Englishness of Elgar’s work was only really understood by British conductors like Boult, Barbirolli and Beecham, whilst foreign conductors often misunderstood ‘the shape and flow of him’.³⁶ It may be here that Priestley’s enthusiasm for Elgar gets the better of him. Elgar scholar Matthew Riley has argued that Priestley ‘had a rare understanding of Elgar’s music, and gift for responding to it with engaging prose’, but that he fitted Elgar into his own essentialist view of Englishness.³⁷ It has been noted elsewhere that Priestley’s passionate espousal of a radical Englishness, forged in his Bradford upbringing, democratic, embracing the vibrant and creative agency of the English people could sometimes be selective, especially in the years following the second world war.³⁸

Priestley also wrote about classical music in his non fiction writing. For example, *Particular Pleasures* (1975) had a variety of interesting pieces on various classical composers, alongside Elgar. These included Berlioz, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Faure, Debussy and Mahler. On Berlioz’s ‘Symphonie Fantastique’, Priestley suggested that the first three movements were uneven, however the fourth which was inserted from an unpublished opera, he found more effective and powerful. ‘I feel it has nothing to do with the Paris of the 1820s, when it was first composed’. He continued ‘It is prophetic sound. It is dreadful music, removed from all compassion, of the modern totalitarian state, marching the whole human spirit to the place of execution. And this

was genius at work, warning us in time.’³⁹ *The English* (1973) offered a sophisticated history of the nation’s music, challenging the German view that Nineteenth century England was a land without music. Instead Priestley pointed out the importance of Church music from the fifteenth century, madrigals in Elizabethan and Jacobean homes, Purcell, ballad operas, and the popularity of Handel’s *Messiah* in the West Riding in the years before 1914. This was a land full of music.⁴⁰ Articles from the *New Statesman*, collected in *Outcries and Asides* (1974) began with praise of ‘music of any quality’ which ‘is too good for us’.⁴¹ Meanwhile *Delight* (1949) offered a number of musical insights including a tribute to the great conductors he had seen. Of Richter, Walter, Toscanini and Beecham he wrote ‘my dear *maestros*, in spite of wars, bombs, taxes, rubbish and all, what a delight it has been to share this world and age with you!’⁴²

Priestley’s non-fiction writings on classical music illustrated an emotional engagement with, and a deep knowledge of, the music. Scowcroft has pointed out that Priestley was ‘noteworthy’ for his ‘advocacy of Mahler and Bruckner, Elgar even, decades before they found, or in Elgar’s case, re-found popularity in English concert halls.’⁴³ Priestley’s interest in classical music also extended to a more direct involvement in the music itself. On one level this involved private and occasional performance of classical material, particularly when younger,⁴⁴ however Priestley also promoted his own three day chamber music festivals at his Brook Hill house on the Isle of Wight in the 1950s. The festivals attracted around 150, including some eminent performers who Priestley claimed liked playing at Brook Hill.⁴⁵ Priestley threw his heart into the festival and clearly enjoyed the event. His daughter, Mary, wrote in 1958 to Priestley’s old Cambridge friend Edward Davison that ‘Daddy is in

the middle of his music festival, just now striding around in an exquisite..dressing gown, moving the grand piano because tonight's concert will be Reginal Kell, the clarinetist doing the Brahms.'⁴⁶ Priestley later told Davison that Kell played 'like a 14 stone angel', and that the hall had now returned to normal 'after three nights of little chairs and music stands.'⁴⁷ The festival was held in September for ten years, and Priestley was so enamoured with the experience that, writing in the *New Statesman* in 1955, he suggested that the model could form part of a 'lifeboat' for middle class arts enthusiasts who he argued were being so poorly served by the mass society that had no interest in the finer arts. Not only was the music better, but he suggested that 'satisfaction' was gained by organising their own festivals. 'I commend this music-in-the-country-house to everybody who cares about the art', he wrote, and it didn't cost 'a penny of public money.'⁴⁸ It did require a wealthy benefactor with access to a country house though.

Priestley also had contact with classical composers. In 1939 Benjamin Britten wrote his first and one of his longest theatrical scores for Priestley's *Johnson over Jordan*.⁴⁹ Priestley also worked with Sir Arthur Bliss. The two became acquainted in the 1920s when they lived near each other in Hampstead Heath, and had met quite frequently sharing conversation and an occasional game of tennis. They saw less of each other in the following years, but meeting at the Cheltenham festival in 1945, Bliss asked Priestley to write a libretto for an opera. Priestley came up with *The Olympians*, based on the legend of the how former deities from Olympus became strolling players travelling round Europe for eternity, but once a century finding their powers restored for a few hours on midsummer's night. Bliss and Priestley got on well during the two years that it took to put the opera together, both sharing an interest in creating a large

scale work that would show the British could do opera on a grand scale. A full orchestra, large chorus and ballet were included, and the libretto and story, set in the south of France in 1836, was humorous and dramatic. Priestley found the libretto relatively easy to write as Bliss wanted irregular lines, rather than regular rhymes. The opera was accepted by the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1947, but was not produced until 29 September 1949, when it was chosen to open the 1949-50 season. It was only the second British opera, the first being Britten's *Peter Grimes*, to grace the stage at the ROH. However it was not a great success. Priestley later recalled that it was under-rehearsed, with a strong first act, but poorly prepared third act. Differences in the production team didn't help, and events conspired against the production, with the Royal Ballet unable to perform the ballet sequence, sending their junior dancers instead. The run was short lived, with mixed reviews, although Priestley was pleased that critics Ernest Newman and Ian J. Dent were more positive.⁵⁰

Priestley and Bliss also remained on good terms, and indeed Priestley wrote to Herbert Morrison in late 1949 putting Bliss forward for a knighthood.⁵¹ Priestley would later write about how he and Bliss got on well, but the latter would never let him discuss music on the grounds that 'he knows about music, and I don't', although this 'never prevented him from telling me about literature.'⁵² The opera was not performed again until 21 February 1972 when it was broadcast live on BBC radio. Priestley, interviewed in the interval of the broadcast by Gareth Lloyd Evans, remained positive about the opera, particularly Bliss's score.⁵³

Priestley also had a strong connection with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1940 he told Mary that he had helped save the orchestra after they had approached him to organise a benefit concert, which he duly did.⁵⁴ He then joined the LPO advisory council in 1947.⁵⁵ By 1967 Priestley was planning a book on the London Symphony Orchestra's forthcoming summer tour to play at the Second Florida International Music Festival at Daytona Beach in Florida. Priestley was a big fan of the rejuvenated LSO, telling Davison that they were 'a marvellous orchestra now, mostly made up of young, keen men (it is self-governing) whose whole attitude is very different from the reluctant grumbling of older types of players, young men who are crazy to play and play, rehearse and rehearse.' The opportunity to travel with the orchestra was appealing, as it would enable him to write about the meeting of classical music with the mass culture of Daytona Beach, even though the visit took some planning.⁵⁶

Priestley's account of the tour, his longest work on music, *Trumpets over the Sea* (1968), was readable, humorous and knowledgeable. His respect for the musicians and music shines through, as does his sometimes grumpy unease at the heat and the excesses of Floridian culture. Things got off to a bad start when the air conditioning broke adding to a list of faults in their rented house, and he later had his hand slammed in a car door, was bitten by insects, and to his chagrin found the concert hall was alcohol free.⁵⁷ Less than impressed by the commercial nature of the area, the 'the wild daftness' of the Festival was brought home when he first saw the orchestra rehearsing in shorts, sandals and other beach gear. However it is the music that consistently comes to the rescue in the book to balance out the bemused and sometimes critical response to Florida.⁵⁸

The first concert, conducted by the new LSO principal conductor Istvan Kertesz, had a mixed repertoire including Vladimir Ahskenazy playing Beethoven's Fourth piano concerto offering a 'splendidly unusual performance', although Priestley was less impressed with the audience who he suggested lacked enthusiasm.⁵⁹ Returning to this issue when considering the second concert, conducted by the 'prodigious' Andre Previn, and including the young Itzhak Perlman who produced a 'magnificent' performance of Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto, he suggested the response of the audience whilst it might seem appreciative had a 'hollowness, a faintly chilly indifference, as if the people were outside the essential experience, just tasting it'. Echoing his ongoing critique of American mass culture, presented most effectively in *Journey Down a Rainbow*, he concluded 'all of which, I feel is peculiarly characteristic of American life in the urban and ex-urban middle income brackets.'⁶⁰

The concerts continued, including one conducted by his old friend Bliss, and Priestley also joined a visit to Solano orange grove, where his fellow Bradfordian Delius had lived for nearly a year. A reflective Priestley believed that Florida left its mark on Delius, including the St. John's River at Solano. Despite Delius moving on relatively quickly, Priestley believed 'the river still flows through the dusk of his music.'⁶¹ The book concluded with Priestley mounting a sound defence of the symphony orchestra which despite some people saying is nearly dead, 'is gigantically and astoundingly alive. And without reducing a single town to ruins, without slicing off an arm or leg anywhere, it has now conquered the world. It has done it not by munitions but by magic.'⁶² His regard for the LSO had been reinforced by his experiences in Florida, but went back to when the orchestra under Nikisch played St. George's Hall in

1914.⁶³ Praising the young musicians who made up the contemporary LSO and their self governing ethos, he concluded that places like Daytona were not the ideal setting for a symphony orchestra, and called instead for summer music festivals in every British town.⁶⁴

Priestley's interest in, and love of, classical music contrasted with his attitude towards some forms of popular music, particularly ragtime and jazz. As we saw earlier Priestley's first published article was a skit on ragtime, and the music played a similarly negative role in Priestley's other works, often being tied in with commercialisation, unwelcomed aspect of Americanisation and more generally the insecurity of the modern world. In *Bright Day* Gregory Dawson remembers attending a party given by the Nixey's, where a perspiring 'fat man' was 'rattling out ragtime' on the piano. Recalling the banality of the lyrics - 'Dog-gone, yew'd better begin -an' play a leetle tune on your vi-o-lin', the music acts as a soundtrack to Dawson's unease at the Nixey's falseness and the sleazy atmosphere at the party.⁶⁵ In *Lost Empires* (1965) Richard Herculastle's sinister music hall artist uncle Nick, who has just witnessed the American 'Ragtime Three' rehearsing, describes them as 'a bloody din'. The musicians counter, telling Nick that 'you're out of date on these new numbers Pop', to which Nick responds after admonishing them for calling him Pop, 'I shared a bill for months with 'Hedges Brothers and Jacobsen' who brought the songs over, 'and they were a bloody din then too.' An obvious reference to Priestley's own first experience of ragtime.⁶⁶

In *Angel Pavement* Smeeth's seventeen year old daughter Edna is depicted unflatteringly as being fickle and self centred. Returning from the cinema with her

friend Dot, they are singing a number from the movie 'jazzing about and rolling their eyes', and Smeeth considers his daughter's generation as being only interested in Hollywood movies. 'They're getting jazzed out of their little heads' he suggests. Edna's mother criticises her for mocking Smeeth's visit to the classical concert at the Queen's Hall that has so surprised and moved him, telling her 'Some people like a bit of good music, even if you don't. We're not all jazz-mad.' Jazz signifies a similar weakness when Turgis, who becomes obsessed with the manipulative Lena Golspie, first visits her flat and hears 'the sound of a gramophone playing jazz' as he knocks.⁶⁷ This approach to ragtime and jazz was perhaps best summarised in *Let the People Sing* when Czech Professor Kronak visits the American owned United Plastics factory at Dunbury, the owners of which are seeking to take over the town's concert hall. The sales manager at the factory tells Kronak that people don't use the hall and are not as interested in music as in the past. Kronak responds that the people of Dunbury were lost in a 'world of clamorous machines and its organisation of mechanical little tasks', which were 'draining away their spirit of initiative, making them passive instead of active and creative'. He continued 'they drift from the work factory to the amusement factory. Instead of music there is now the strange horrible sound of the cinema organ, or the barbaric din of the jazz bands, both of which play on the nerves and do nothing for the heart, the mind, the spirit.'⁶⁸

This view of jazz as a 'barbaric din' of no artistic merit that contributed to the cultural deracination of the modern world, was repeated in Priestley's non-fiction. In *Journey Down a Rainbow* Priestley is taken on a Saturday night visit to a Dallas club called 'Cell Block 7' which had doormen in convict dress. Having already eaten an 'Admass' Steak meal, Priestley was feeling somewhat overwhelmed, and the jazz

band 'Cell Block 7 Boys', which included students from the University, played so loud that he suggested no one could hear themselves think 'the sheer noise produced by these young maniacs... would have blasted the ear-drums of a mammoth on heat.' Priestley was bemused to learn that this was one of the most popular night spots for young people in Dallas, leaving him wondering whether 'total insanity... was just around the corner.'⁶⁹

One of Priestley's companions told him that this was not particularly high quality jazz, but the Yorkshireman was no more impressed when he saw Stan Kenton at the Music Hall in Houston. Priestley took exception to the title of the concert - 'Stan Kenton's Second Festival of Modern American Jazz' - which he felt reflected Kenton's role as a 'portentous master of ceremonies.' And the music did little for him, as he suggested that it lacked melody and was impossible to dance to. Kenton was playing innovative music at the time, but this clearly didn't impress Priestley who mocked the seriousness of the performance. Kenton he explained would 'look as if he were about to lecture on T.S. Eliot, clear his throat in a donnish way, and then signal to his boys to boom and blast the hell out of us.' To Priestley's weary surprise the audience seemed to be enjoying the concert, and a confused Priestley was left asking 'Is there a new art form somewhere here or is the Western mind breaking down?'⁷⁰

Even when classical music met Jazz, Priestley was less than enthused. During the Daytona Beach visit he attended a trio chamber concert with Previn on piano as well as conducting. The repertoire included Poulenc's 1963 Sonata for Benny Goodman. This was 'full of cheek, satire and jazz memories... It was music, good music too, we might say, in its impudent aspect.' In contrast Priestley was far more enthusiastic

about the Brahms, Bach and Debussy which was also played at the concert. Unlike the 'good' but 'impudent' Poulenc, the Bach D minor partita 'flowed and cascaded, danced and glittered and sang'.⁷¹

And yet Priestley could occasionally be more ambiguous about ragtime and jazz. In *English Journey* he described a discussion with a young lecturer about how certain Durham pit villages have a 'a passion for jazz bands', with adult and children's bands and parades. The book is a measured but angry account of the hardship and deprivation he found on his travels, and his comment is considered, believing that the interest in jazz was 'a desperate attempt to bring some colour into the life of the place.' The use of 'desperate' in this statement is significant, however this is balanced to some extent by the uplifting element of colour, although it is further qualified by the writer adding 'after a week or two there, I think I should be blowing through a paper-covered comb with the noisiest of them.'⁷² Priestley was more positive 30 years later when he recalled returning to France in 1918 on a 'fantastic American ship that might have been fetched from the Mississippi'. Priestley was one of a small number of officers on board with thousands of American troops, who amazed the author with their seeming absence of rank and were like 'a vast bunch of Kiwanis or Shriners who might have been off on a river picnic'. A big band 'with more than its share of those gleaming suasophones, blared and clashed out ragtime' from the upper deck. The lack of subtlety, including the volume of the music was clearly an issue for Priestley, but this meeting with ragtime and wider American culture 'seemed a hell of a way to sail to a war but not completely ridiculous, not without a suggestion of something more generous and heart-warming, much closer to the democracy we boasted about on our side, than anything we had known before.' He concluded 'on

that daft but not altogether inglorious troopship, I realised afterwards, I was for the first time in America.’⁷³

Jazz made an appearance in *The Good Companions* (1929) which was Priestley’s breakthrough novel, and followed the fortunes of the Dinky Doos theatrical troupe. By 1929 Jazz was only in its infancy, but the book offered a more considered analysis of jazz, which stood in marked contrast with most of his later comments on the art form. After describing a member of the troupe, Jerry Jersingham rehearsing, with ‘a plaintive and rather nasal croon’ alongside his tap dancing, the narrator reflected that ‘Jazz which had begun as an explosion of barbaric high spirits, a splash of crimson and black on a drab globe’ was now more ‘civilised’ including ‘sentiment and cynicism’, ‘melancholy’ and ‘its insistent rhythms were like the soft plugging of those great machines that now keep whole populations waiting upon them...and in its own crude, jiggling, glancing fashion, as it sang with a grin and shrug of home and love to the crowds of of the homeless and unloved, it contrived to express all the sense of baffled desire and the sad nostalgia of the age.’ Priestley concluded ‘History which attends to folk songs as well as migrations of people had produced this jazz.’⁷⁴

This is an interesting view of jazz, which saw it as ‘crude’ but also, in these terms, more sympathetically reflecting the modern world, compared to the more negative views of jazz as a harbinger of destructive modernity presented in much of his other work. Jazz would of course change with the world it reflected, and Priestley’s dislike of the latter would increase accordingly. As for the *The Good Companions*, it would later become a play, film, television series and most successfully as a stage musical.

The musical opened in July 1974 with music by none other than Previn, lyrics by Johnny Mercer and book by Ronald Harwood. A strong cast was led by Judi Dench and John Mills, and a soundtrack album was later released. Previn whose ‘first love was jazz’ had previously had a successful career across the genres, including a number of highly regarded jazz albums in the 1950s, before becoming associated with the LSO and his increased popularity with the BBC series *Andre Previn’s Music Night*. The score for *The Good Companions* musical was well received, but had only a few jazz inflections.⁷⁵

Jazz could also be occasionally seen in a non-threatening, non-serious light, as captured in an article published twenty years later in *Delight* (1949) when Priestley, depressed by reading William Vogt’s *Road to Survival*, described how he purchased and began playing piano rolls of ‘jazz from the best period’ the late 1920s, including ‘The Doll Dance’, ‘Tiptoe through the Tulips’ and ‘Piccolo Pete’. These had all been popular novelty songs that had grown out of ragtime. This ‘delicious nonsense’ brought back ‘various dreamlike fragmentary memories of when and where I first heard them’ allowing him to momentarily forget about the state of the world. In this reading however jazz was ‘delicious nonsense’ not a threatening force, nor as emotionally serious as other forms of music.⁷⁶ In the same book, Priestley celebrated dancing, suggesting that although he was ‘reluctant’ to take the dance floor, he was proficient and could out dance younger men. ‘It is to the rhythm that we delightedly bind our bodies’, he wrote, underlining his occasional interest in the most obvious manifestation of jazz in the widespread popularity of dancing mid century.⁷⁷

So although Priestley could occasionally see jazz and ragtime in a more favourable light, overall he saw it as a troubling manifestation of the Americanised modern world. And this extended to other forms of American popular music, with classical emigre musicians he met in Texas in 1955 being seen as ‘outside Admass’, whilst Tin Pan Alley and Broadway, which gave America so many great show tunes, described as ‘Admass at its worst, a commercial jungle’.⁷⁸ By the 1960s Priestley had little time for the recent explosion in popular music; something which is captured in *It’s an Old Country* (1967) when Tom, out walking in London, comes across ‘under a street lamp four long haired young men, two of them banging guitars, swaying and singing something obscene, all of them drunk.’⁷⁹

However, Priestley could also be more positive about popular music, providing he saw it as being creative and not overproduced. On his night out in downtown Dallas, Priestley having left Cell Block 7 and visited a strip club, then ended up at a bar where a singer and pianist sang about ‘lost farms, Dixie, old Ireland, anything’, and displayed ‘no real talent’. About to leave, Priestley went upstairs and heard a talented Mexican singer who ‘sang one little song after another, the warmth of the earth and real life upon it came through to us’. This ‘was art, unpretentious, humble but authentic art’, and the Mexican musician ‘was still remembering and being nourished by a life before and outside Admass.’ Priestley added that ‘Perhaps soon he will become a big success, one of the ornaments of Hashadmass, no longer Mexican, nor yet truly American’, manufactured and marketed ‘he will be able to do a thousand things he cannot do now’. But, Priestley asked, ‘will he be able to bring warmth and life into a cold empty dining room at two in the morning?’⁸⁰

‘Hashadmass’ was where the mass society ‘turned everything into one tasteless hash... a characterless mush’ mixing different styles and removing them their national or cultural context. Priestley argued that ‘what was honest and soundly rooted in American life is thrust aside’ and that the same was happening in Britain as ‘it arrives with Admass.’⁸¹

In Priestley’s eyes one of the most obvious example of organic and more creative popular song could be found in music hall. Bradford had two music halls, and Priestley was a regular attender, enjoying the theatre, comedy and music on offer.⁸² This was culture rooted in local community, and Priestley celebrated it in *The Good Companions*, whilst the darker *Lost Empires* focused on music hall performers. Popular English song, some of which was drawn from the music hall, was presented positively in various other works. When Theodore Jenks visits Brant Manor which was being rented by Hookwood and Travone, makers of light alloy products, Priestley again contrasted American and English music. Jenks takes a dim view of American music being played across the workshop floor thinking ‘hell might be something like this’, whilst the evening’s entertainment included two girls ‘who sang mournfully about Alabama, and then when they were encored, sang mournfully about Kentucky.’ The only act to impress Jenks was Old Luffy who ‘had not much of a voice’ and ‘often forgot the words’ but sang ‘musical hall ditties’ and old ‘rural ballads’ which moved the audience to raptures, including Jenks, who is inspired to take more interest in Farbridge, and get involved in the Festival.⁸³ Entertainment National Service Association performers at the Elmdown Aircraft Company factory in the wartime novel *Daylight on Saturday* (1943) similarly inspire the workforce with a music hall routine which lifted the spirits producing ‘an air of release and an innocent happiness’

and hinted at ‘a mysterious promise...of man’s ultimate deliverance and freedom, a whisper of his home-coming among the stars.’⁸⁴ The magical capacity of popular song also helped inspire the people of Dunbury to reclaim their town hall, including the newly written ‘Let the People Sing.’⁸⁵

Priestley also turned his own hand to the performance of more popular music, firstly in Bradford with his friend George, before the latter went to Cambridge.⁸⁶ A few years later during the First World War, Priestley recalled two types of songs – ‘drivel’ from the home front and more genuine unofficial songs sung troops on the front line, which he believed represented ‘pure genius’ that was ‘entirely English’.

Convalescing in a Rutland hospital after being wounded, Priestley put together a concert party that played a mixture of popular classical, music hall and comedy songs. Recalling the different characters in the troupe, including a Durham miner, an east ender and a southerner whose family had links to the music hall, Priestley argued that although they may not have been that good, ‘between us we made something, breaking the fixed consumer attitude. And I take this, whatever the politicians and advertising men may say, to be the right way to live.’⁸⁷ As with the amateur involvement in classical music and the chamber music festivals, Priestley saw the involvement in the organisation and performance of arts events as a particularly vital and vibrant contrast to the rising tide of the mass society.

Priestley was also troubled by the presentation of music through the mass media, including television, which he was more sometimes more sympathetic towards. After watching the Halle perform Holst’s ‘The Planets’ on BBC television, Priestley complained that the coverage spoilt the music by concentrating on close ups of the

conductor and orchestra, when they could have shown images planets or stars. ‘This is really shooting *Neptune*’ he argued.⁸⁸ Priestley also questioned the way television used and sometimes misused classical artists. In his polemical account of the inauguration of Channel KTRK, Priestley complained about performers who made more money for appearing than ‘Shakespeare, Rembrandt and Beethoven together earned in their lifetimes’. The show itself bemused Priestley with an orchestra, dancers dressed as black cats and a chorus of sopranos and contraltos. The master of ceremonies was a tenor who had worked for the Metropolitan Opera House, and introduced various acts, including ‘a mezzo from the Met’ who sang alone and in a duet with the tenor. Priestley didn’t pull his punches, suggesting she ‘wasted a magnificent voice and years of training on popular rubbish’ Perhaps unsurprisingly the only act that Priestley enjoyed was a comedian called Wences who reminded Priestley of music hall.⁸⁹

One response to the rise of the mass society was the search for new more experimental forms of music. However although Priestley had written experimental plays in the 1930s and 40s, he had little time for avant garde music of any genre. We have already seen this with Priestley’s response to Stan Kenton, but he was equally critical of classical music. In part this was because he didn’t like cooler, more minimalist works, preferring passion, beauty and vision. Writing about Faure’s later work Priestley wrote ‘The truth is I have a coarse palate. I enjoy all the things Faure left out. I don’t want my music stripped bare but all dressed up, preferably going somewhere very pleasant.’⁹⁰ Priestley also saw elements of the avant garde as wanting to replace the orchestra with ‘four pianos, brass and percussion sections, and five tape-recorders.’ More seriously he argued ‘they may also want, perhaps without

being consciously aware of it, to hasten the process of disintegration of our society and to ally themselves with various de-personalizing, de-humanizing factors already at work in it.’⁹¹ Far from liberating the listener, in this reading, avant garde music could become part of their subjugation.

In Priestley’s last published volume of autobiography he played down his musical knowledge, suggesting he was only ‘vaguely musical’. He recalled playing music when younger, and then becoming ‘a fairly early gramophone enthusiast’, who as well as listening to records when he finished writing, attended many concerts. Sadly he admitted that this was no longer the case and ‘now in my eighties I have moved away from music.’⁹² However the elderly author was underselling himself. Priestley, was an important figure in twentieth century British intellectual life, wrote widely about music, displayed a detailed knowledge and understanding of classical music, and some more popular forms. Music played an important role in key novels, plays and non fiction, often acting as a way of unleashing or illustrating human potential, or at the other end of the scale signifying human weakness. And Priestley wrote well about music too, bringing a novelist’s touch to the subject.

What Priestley had to say about music also gives us an important insight into his wider relationship with culture in general, and the evidence presented here contributes to our understanding of the importance of music in a writer’s life and work, and the way music can reflect social and cultural values. Priestley was suspicious of the mass society and the commercial musical forms that it produced. However he could also be

more subtle, and sometimes inconsistent, in his judgements, even seeing value in jazz and ragtime. And although Priestley's love of classical music comes shining through in his writing, he was also open to forms of popular music, particularly that originating in the music hall or folk traditions. Thus the Mexican singer in Dallas, like the music hall performers or musical performances put together by Priestley and others, all drew on local activity and control rather than more commercial and centralised forms. At the heart of Priestley's vision was a democratic belief in the value of creative activity to the individual and the community, and the way this could be threatened by commodified art, rather than any sense of high versus popular culture.

Priestley's writing on music and popular culture more generally fitted into a wider debate in Twentieth Century Britain about the role of the mass society including Americanisation, conformity and materialism. Priestley's work should be considered as an important contribution in this regard, alongside the work of others like Adorno, Hoggart, and Hobsbawm. The latter may have offered a more significant theoretical challenge to the left's take on popular music, and Hoggart a clever redefinition of what we mean by culture, but Priestley was a novelist and playwright, not an academic or theoretician. He wrote with energy, creativity and passion. Writing in the *New Statesman* in September 1953 he suggested that even if the citizens of country 'are comparatively poor, have few possessions, no gadgets, no great organisation, but contrive to live zestfully, laugh and love, still enjoy music and talk, then that country has succeeded.'⁹³ Priestley wanted to let the people sing, play and listen to music drawn from their own experiences.

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- ¹ J.B. Priestley, Margin Released: A Writer's Reminiscences and Reflections (London, Heron Books, Orig. London, Heinemann, 1962), pp.66-7.
- ² John Baxendale, J.B. Priestley and English Culture (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007); Roger Fagge, The Vision of J.B. Priestley (London, Continuum, 2012); Maggie Gale, J.B. Priestley (Abingdon, Routledge, 2008)
- ³ Ross McKibbin, Classes and Cultures: England 1918-51 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.386-418; James Nott, Music for the People: Popular Music and Dance in Interwar Britain (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002).
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p.233.
- ⁵ D.L. Mahieu, A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communications and the Cultivated Mind Between the Wars (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988).
- ⁶ See Simon Frith's various works, including Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998); Dave Russell, Popular Music in England, 1880-1914 (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997); Brian Longhurst, Popular Music and Society (London, Polity, 2007); On politics, see for example, Robin Deneslow, When the Music's Over: The Politics of Pop (London, Faber, 1989), and more recently Dorian Lynskey, 33 Revolutions Per Minute: A History of Protest Songs (London, Faber, 2012). On national identity see, for example, Iren Morra, Britishness, Popular Music and National Identity: The Making of Modern Britain (London, Routledge, 2013), and Matthew Riley, Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- ⁷ George McKay, Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2005), p.11.
- ⁸ See B.J. Leggett, Larkin's Blues: Jazz, Popular Music and Poetry (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1999); McKay, Circular Breathing; pp.16-17; Alan Plater's foreword and Palmer and White's introduction to Richard Palmer and John White, Jazz Writings: Essays and Reviews, 1940-84 (London, Continuum, 2004 edn.), pp. xi-xxxii.
- ⁹ On Adorno's approach to popular music, see Robert W. Witkin, Adorno on Music (London, Routledge, 1998), pp.160-80. Quote, p.170.
- ¹⁰ Francis Newton, The Jazz Scene (London, Penguin, 1961 edn.) pp.1-22. On the significance of this work, see Philip Bounds, 'From Folk to Jazz: Eric Hobsbawm, British Communism and Cultural Studies', Critique: Journal of Socialist Theory 40, 4 (2012), pp. 575-93.
- ¹¹ Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working Class Life (London, Transaction Publishers, 1957) p.244.
- ¹² Stuart Hall, 'Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* and the Cultural Turn', International Journal of Cultural Studies, 10, 1 (2007), pp. 39-49.
- ¹³ J.B. Priestley with Jacquetta Hawkes, Journey Down a Rainbow (London, Heron Books, n.d.: Orig. London, Heinemann, 1955), p.xi
- ¹⁴ J.B. Priestley, English Journey (London, Heron Books, n.d.; Orig., London, Heinemann, 1930), pp. 397-406.
- ¹⁵ Priestley, Journey Down a Rainbow, p. 201.
- ¹⁶ Fagge, The Vision of J.B. Priestley, pp.101-05.
- ¹⁷ J.B. Priestley, Trumpets over the Sea: Being a Rambling and Egotistical Account of the London Symphony Orchestra's Engagement at Daytona Beach Florida in July-August 1967 (London, Heinemann, 1968)
- ¹⁸ J.B. Priestley, The Edwardians (London, Heinemann, 1970), pp.132-3.

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- ¹⁹ Priestley, Trumpets over the Sea, p.27 The full quote was ‘There is much to be said against the nineteenth century, and now we have been saying it for a long time. But this was a century that knew how to make music.’
- ²⁰ Priestley, Margin Released, pp.28-9.
- ²¹ J.B. Priestley, The English (London, Penguin edition, 1975 Orig London, Heinemann, 1973), pp.149-50; Priestley, Trumpets over the Sea, pp.90-94.
- ²² J.B. Priestley, Delight (London, Heron Books, n.d. Orig., London, Heinemann, 1949) pp.58-60.
- ²³ J.B. Priestley, Bright Day (London, Penguin, 1951. Orig., London, Heinemann, 1946), pp.11-13.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.104.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-5.
- ²⁶ Priestley, Plays I (London, Heron Books n.d. Orig. published as The Plays of J.B.), pp. 131, 178, 197
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.xi, pp.339-399; Gareth Lloyd Evans, J.B. Priestley – The Dramatist (London, Heinemann, 1964),pp.136-47.
- ²⁸ J.B. Priestley, Three Men in New Suits (London, Heinemann, 1945), pp.22-28.
- ²⁹ J.B. Priestley, Angel Pavement (London, Heron Books, n.d. Orig. London, Heinemann, 1930) , p.88.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.294-5.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*,pp.547-8; 590-1.
- ³² J.B. Priestley, Festival at Farbridge (London, Heinemann, 1951), pp.552-3.
- ³³ Priestley, Plays I, p.450.
- ³⁴ Priestley, The Edwardians , pp.138-9; The English, p.149. J.B. Priestley, Particular Pleasures (London, Heinemann, 1975), pp.80-2.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.82.
- ³⁶ The English, p.149.
- ³⁷ Matthew Riley, Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.146-52.
- ³⁸ Fagge, The Vision of J.B. Priestley, pp.63-91.
- ³⁹ Priestley, Particular Pleasures, pp.59-61.
- ⁴⁰ Priestley, The English, pp.140-7.
- ⁴¹ J.B. Priestley, Outcries and Asides (London, Heinemann, 1974) , p.1.
- ⁴² Priestley, Delight, pp.81-2.
- ⁴³ Philip Scowcroft, ‘Music and J.B. Priestley’ <http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2001/Sept01/Priestley.htm> (Visited 16 March 2014)
- ⁴⁴ J.B. Priestley, Margin Released: A Writer’s Reminiscences and reflections (London, Heron Books, n.d., Orig. London Heinemann, 1962), pp.4-5; Delight, pp.41-2. Amateur music making also played in important role in Bright Day, pp.78-83, 135-7.
- ⁴⁵ Priestley to Edward and Natalie Davison, 9 October 1953, J.B. Priestley Correspondence with Edward Davison, Unat Za Mss., Beinecke Library, Folder 3. [Davison Correspondence hereafter]. The musicians stayed at Brook Hill. Priestley, Particular Pleasures, pp.67-8.
- ⁴⁶ Mary Priestley to Edward and Natalie Davison, n.d. [1958], Davison Correspondence, Folder 4.
- ⁴⁷ Priestley to Davison, 14 September 1958, *ibid.*

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- ⁴⁸ Priestley, 'Rough Sketch of a lifeboat', originally published in the *New Statesman*, 1 October 1955, reprinted in J.B. Priestley, Thoughts in the Wilderness (London, Heinemann, 1957), pp.141-7.
- ⁴⁹ Vincent Brome, J.B. Priestley (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1988), p.239. Lloyd Moore, Review of Britten, Piano Concerto/Johnson over Jordan Suite (Naxos, 2005, 8.557197)
http://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.557197&catNum=557197&filetype>About%20this%20Recording&language=English#
(visited 16 March 2014)
- ⁵⁰ J.B. Priestley in conversation with Gareth Lloyd-Evans, BBC Radio Broadcast, 21 February 1972 (British Library, Sound and Moving Image C1398/0767 C1). Brome, J.B. Priestley, pp.114,293-4, 298-300. Judith Cook, Priestley (London, Bloomsbury, 1997), pp.202-3.
- ⁵¹ Herbert Morrison to J.B. Priestley, 13 December 1949, A.D, Peters Files, J.B. Priestley Papers, Harry Ransom Research Center, Austin, Box 2, Folder 3, Austin. Morrison told Priestley it was too late for the current year, but Bliss would be considered the following year. Bliss was duly knighted in 1950.
- ⁵² Priestley, Trumpets over the Sea, p.29; Particular Pleasures, pp.99-100.
- ⁵³ J.B. Priestley in conversation with Gareth Lloyd-Evans. Highlights of the 1949 performance, with an introduction by Priestley, were broadcast on the BBC World Service in September 1949 (British Library, Sound and Moving Image, 2039)
- ⁵⁴ Priestley to Mary Priestley, 26 July 1940. J.B.Priestley Papers, Box 1, File 3.
- ⁵⁵ Cook, Priestley, p.222; Brome, J.B. Priestley, p.332.
- ⁵⁶ Priestley to Davison, 6 Feb 1967; 22 Feb 1967; 9 April 1967; 27 May 1967. Davison Correspondence, Folder 5.
- ⁵⁷ Priestley, Trumpets, pp1-3; 43-4; 60.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.22-7.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.31-33.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-3; 90-4.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p.137.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp.141-2.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp143-60.
- ⁶⁵ Priestley, Bright Day, pp.144-5.
- ⁶⁶ J.B. Priestley, Lost Empires; Being RIchard HERNCASTLE'S Account of His Life one th Variety Stage from November 1913 to August 1914 Together with Prologue and Epilogue (London, Heinemann, 1965), pp.195-6.
- ⁶⁷ Priestley, Angel Pavement, pp.318, 290, 295 and 348.
- ⁶⁸ J.B. Priestley, Let the People Sing (London, Mandarin, 1996. Orig., London, Heinemann, 1939), p.191.
- ⁶⁹ J.B. Priestley with Jacquetta Hawkes, Journey Down a Rainbow (London, Heron books, n.d. Orig. London, Heinemann, 1955), pp.127-8.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.212-4.
- ⁷¹ Priestley, Trumpets Over the Sea, pp.48-50.
- ⁷² J.B. Priestley, English Journey (Lonodn, Heron Books, n.d. Orig., London, Heinemann, 1933), pp.335-6.
- ⁷³ Priestley, Margin Released, pp.124-5.
- ⁷⁴ J.B. Priestley, The Good Companions (London, Heinemann, 1929), pp.290-1.

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- ⁷⁵ Priestley to Peter Davison, 27 June 1973, Davison Correspondence, Folder; Brome, J.B. Priestley, pp. 467-8; Richard Cook and Brian Morton, The Penguin Guide to Jazz Recordings (London, Penguin, 2006), pp. 1079-81. See Bruce Elder on ‘The Good Companions’ musical soundtrack. <http://www.allmusic.com/album/the-good-companions-mw00001216> (visited 16 February 2014)
- ⁷⁶ Priestley, Delight, pp.99-100.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.206-8; McKibbin, Classes and Cultures, pp.390-99.
- ⁷⁸ Priestley, Journey Down a Rainbow, pp.138-40.
- ⁷⁹ J.B. Priestley, It’s an Old Country (London, Heinemann,1967), p.24.
- ⁸⁰ Priestley, Journey Down a Rainbow, pp.134-7.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., pp.51-3.
- ⁸² Priestley, Margin Released, pp.28-9.
- ⁸³ Priestley, Festival in Farbridge, pp..86, 96-8.
- ⁸⁴ J.B. Priestley, Daylight on a Saturday: A Novel about an Aircraft Factory (London, Heinemann, 1943), pp.100-108.
- ⁸⁵ Priestley, Let the People Sing, pp.199-204.
- ⁸⁶ Priestley, Margin Released, pp.4-5.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.114-16. Priestley also remembered entertaining restless troops in Glasgow, who has survived a torpedo attack, and were awaiting a train back to London. Priestley played the piano and lead the choruses ‘and they were still there, roaring away, when at last we could announce their train was now ready for them.’, Ibid., p.115.
- ⁸⁸ Priestley, Particular Pleasures, pp.94-5.
- ⁸⁹ Priestley, Journey Down a Rainbow, pp.95-201.
- ⁹⁰ Priestley, Particular Pleasures, pp.79-80.
- ⁹¹ Priestley, Trumpets over the Sea, p.136.
- ⁹² J.B. Priestley, Instead of the Trees: A Final Chapter of Autobiography (London, Heinemann, 1977) , pp.138-40.
- ⁹³ Priestley, Thoughts in the Wilderness, pp.5-7.