

DAVID GUION AND THE GUION COLLECTION

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by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the memorabilia of David Guion which were sent to Baylor University in 1971. The story of his life and accomplishments is reconstructed from the available material. The Guion Collection, of which the memorabilia are a part, is housed in the Treasure Room of the Crouch Music Library, Baylor University. Chapter 1 is a descriptive listing of the material.

Chapter 2 is in two parts. The first part establishes Guion's reputation as a composer and the popularity of his music. The second part is a brief history of the Guion family and a biography of David Guion up to 1914. A member of a large family, he was raised in West Texas, and the memories of his childhood were to be an influence during the entire period of his creativity.

Early recognition of his musical capabilities marks the beginning of years of piano study with the hopes and dreams of becoming a concert pianist. His two years in Europe studying with Leopold Godowsky were fulfilling and exciting, but his plans for further study were terminated because of World War I.

The most active and successful period of Guion's life is related in chapter 3. Returning to the United States he began teaching, but soon discovered that composing was his real

joy. With the success of his music publications, he decided to end his teaching career and go East. Guion arrived in New York in the summer of 1930, and within six weeks was the star of his own stage production in the Roxy Theater. From that time on his personal appearances, radio programs, and associations with the artists of that era kept him occupied and happy. His happiness was interrupted in 1934 when a copyright lawsuit was brought against his song "Home on the Range."

Details of the lawsuit and the arguments concerning the origin of "Home on the Range" are given in Chapter IV. The court declared the song to be in public domain, but this did not settle a disagreement that erupted in 1945. John Lomax, a folk-song collector, wrote an article claiming "Home on the Range" as actually his song and that Guion had plagiarized it. The battle between Guion and Lomax raged for many years with no real conclusion as to the facts.

Chapter 5 discusses briefly the type of music Guion wrote, its characteristics, and stylistic trends. His music consists largely of arrangements and transcriptions of cowboy songs, Negro spirituals and folk songs, and fiddlers' tunes. Original works include a number of art songs, religious solos, some piano works, and the orchestral suites.

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Guion's music and memorabilia arrived at the Cotton
 Music Library, Baylor University, on 6 April 1971. The music
 is cataloged and shelved in the Fannie Holmley Moore treasure
 room of the music library. The memorabilia, also stored in

¹ David Guion File, Development Department, Baylor
 University, Waco, Texas.

² Ibid.

CHAPTER I

THE GUION COLLECTION

Baylor University acquired the collection of David Wendell Guion, a native Texas composer, in February, 1971. In a contract and will Guion named Baylor as the recipient of his lifework and possessions.¹

The Guion Collection is comprised of five sections.

- I Guion Music (original manuscripts and publications)
- II Memorabilia
- III Household items--four-bedroom home of Early American heirlooms, and a Baldwin grand piano
- IV Paintings--grandfather, John Guion of Mississippi by Gilbert Stuart. Oils by Drysdale, Vives-Atsara, Reneau-Bassett, Frank Reaugh, Florence Sharp, Alexander Clayton, Auterdonck, and others
- V Glass collection--140 items of decorative Limoges, Sandwich, Pressed, Vaseline, Amber, Cranberry, Satin Venetian, and handblown glass
Sixty-six pieces--Museum set of Blue-flow English Ironstone
Antique pewter items, old Sterling and English silver, and all household items.²

Guion's music and memorabilia arrived at the Crouch Music Library, Baylor University, on 6 April 1971. The music is cataloged and shelved in the Fannie Holmsley Moore Treasure Room of the music library. The memorabilia, also stored in

¹David Guion File, Development Department, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

²Ibid.

the Treasure Room, are the main reference source for this thesis.

The newspaper and magazine clippings, business and personal letters, and miscellaneous items in the memorabilia are divided into four broad areas. The material in the four divisions is overlapping, repetitive, and often contradictory. It is not cataloged according to regular library procedure, but it does provide a way to put Guion's story into chronological order. The divisions are: (1) Guion's ancestors and early years; (2) his experiences in New York City; (3) performances of his music; and (4) the "Home on the Range" controversy.

The bulk of the clippings collected by Guion often lack a date or name of a newspaper. He subscribed to a news service bureau, and hundreds of small items written about him or mentioning his name are in the file. A few of the articles pertain to relatives of Guion who achieved a certain amount of fame in their own chosen field. One is a cousin, Gene Raymond Guion, who, as a movie actor, was known as Gene Raymond.

The first division of the memorabilia is mainly newspaper and magazine articles of Guion's background and his early accomplishments. It also includes personal letters written during this early period of his life. Guion wrote to his mother while he was in Europe, and the hopes, the aspirations, and the exciting events in his life are shared with her. These letters, as well as others, reveal the many facets of Guion's personality and his devotion to his mother.

(unpublished manuscript). Permission was given by Mr. Guion to use material from his manuscript for this thesis.

His sister's account of the family history, a part of the first division, is a valuable source of information. Neil Guion spent many of her last years gathering information about the history of the Guion family. Before her death in 1965, Wade Guion, a younger brother, had promised to publish the story. When he was ready to fulfill the promise, he could not find the original manuscript. He reconstructed the family history from her notes.³ The forty-eight page book, privately published for the family, contains family pictures, dates, and an interesting account of the Guion ancestors.

Because of the nature of the material, it was decided to place the unpublished memoirs of David Guion in the first division of the memorabilia. Entitled "My Memoirs" or "O Bury Me on the Lone Prairie Where the Coyotes Howl and the Wind Blows Free,"⁴ the manuscript is divided into two parts and is filled with anecdotes about himself and his family, the memoirs of a man proud of his heritage and his life. Guion wrote the material in 1969-70, but has since expanded the original. These additional pages are in the files of the Development Office of Baylor University.

The second division of the Guion memorabilia concerns his performances in New York and his recognition as a composer. The news items, many out of New York papers, include reports

³Neil Guion, Neil's Guion Saga, with a Preface by Wade Fentress Guion (Wimberly, Texas: n.p., 1970), p. i.

⁴David Wendell de Fentresse Guion, "My Memoirs" (unpublished manuscript). Permission was given by Mr. Guion to use material from his manuscript for this thesis.

of his cowboy stage production Prairie Echoes presented at the Roxy Theater. An interview of Guion by the New York Times titled "Texas Musician 'Makes' Old Broadway On Very First Try,"⁵ is one of the many articles written of his success in New York. There are advertisements from the entertainment sections of the New York papers which list Guion's stage production Prairie Echoes as one of the main features in the Roxy Theater presentation during the week of 25 July 1930.

After his success at the Roxy Theater, Guion began a series of radio programs. There are newspaper radio-logs that list the time of his program, a box of fan mail from his radio audience, and copies of the radio scripts used for the broadcasts (see Plate 1).

Although the performance was in Chicago, material concerning his concert with Paul Whiteman is included in this section. Guion's letters to his mother at this time are of particular interest. His description of working with Whiteman and Ferde Grofé, who orchestrated Guion's composition Shingandi, relates the problems and situations that arose with the Chicago concert.

The clippings about his Carnegie Hall performance, his appearance in the Madison Square Garden show, "Night of Stars,"⁶ and the many concert programs listing Guion as a performer,

⁵New York Times, 9 August 1930.

⁶Personalities of stage, screen, and radio presented "Night of Stars" under the auspices of the United Palestine Appeal. Guion wrote in his "Memoirs" (p. 13) that he appeared in this show for seven years.

Plate 1. First page of radio script.

(NOTE TO ANNOUNCER: Make local announcements every fifteen minutes except on dramatic programs which depend on a succession of thought.)

WEAF

TIME: ()

"DAVID GUION AND ORCHESTRA"()
10:30 - 11:00 P. M.FEBRUARY 3, 1932WEDNESDAY1. SIGNATURE --- TURKEY IN THE STRAW --- ORCHESTRAANNOUNCER:

The National Broadcasting Company, pays its respects to American music, this evening, in presenting the fifth of a series of programs, in which the world famed Composer-Pianist-Narrator and Lyricist, David W. Guion -- spelled G-U-I-O-N who has arranged so many songs and dance tunes of the cowboy, frontiersman, sailor and Southern negro life, as well as tunes of his own making, will not only play for you, but will tell you how he came to collect, arrange and write some of these numbers. Mr. Guion will be assisted by Paul Ravell, baritone, and orchestra under the direction of Leon Rosebrook, Mr. Guion and Mr. Ravell are both native sons of the great Southwest. Look out, folks, here they come!

SOUND OF HORSES' HOOF IN A DISTANCE--THEN NEARER AND NEARER--PISTOL SHOTSMR. RAVELL: Whoopla!MR. GUION: Set 'em a-fire!2. THE BOLD VAQUERO --- GUION AND RAVELLMR. GUION: GIVES COWBOY YELL---AAAAAAAAAA-HAY-COOOOOOOOOO-HOO,COW-BOYS IN TOWN!READS POEM --- "IN TEXAS"

I'm thinkin' tonight of the wide open range, etc.etc.

3. HOME ON THE RANGE --- GUION AND RAVELL

give a graphic picture of his busy life in New York. The New York newspapers called him the "cowboy-composer." His transcriptions of cowboy tunes and the format of his radio programs all perpetuate this image. One newspaper story describes in detail the Western décor of his Greenwich Village apartment.

Guion's royalty contracts with different publishing firms are in the collection. The contracts signed with G. Schirmer, Inc. during the 1930s are co-signed by Gustave Reese, head of the publication department. In the next decade there are contracts with Carl Fischer, Inc. Reese, who had moved to Fischer, is again the signer on the royalty agreements. There are numerous business letters from Reese to Guion during that twenty-year span. He often added a personal note in the correspondence: "Hope you are found out soon and that the County Sheriff chases you back to New York where the various crooks of G. Schirmer find your company congenial. Birds of a feather flock together."⁷

Division number three of the memorabilia, concerning the performances of Guion's music, has in it concert programs, clippings, and radio programs listing one or more of Guion's compositions that were used in the performance. Lawrence Tibbett, John Charles Thomas, Edwin Hughes, and Mabel Garrison are among the artists who often included a Guion song or arrangement in their programs. The majority of the programs date from the thirties, the most popular period of Guion's music.

⁷Gustave Reese to David Guion, 9 December 1932.

The fourth category of the collection contains material relating to the "Home on the Range" controversy. A copyright suit brought against the broadcasting networks and Guion involving "Home on the Range" is only the beginning of a complicated story of the origins of this song. Guion wrote many letters of protest and explanation to friends and magazine publishers trying to prove that he was the composer. A few of the articles written on the subject have added comments by Guion written in the margins or across the top. It is obvious that Guion was angry when he wrote them. There is a booklet from the state of Kansas explaining, to the apparent satisfaction of Kansans, who really wrote "Home on the Range" and why it is the Kansas state song. Again Guion's opinion of the validity of this claim is written across the cover. The controversy flared up anew in 1961 in connection with a television show. The material reveals a bitter fight over a song that is now accepted and known as an American folk song.

Five scrapbooks were sent to Baylor along with the boxes of memorabilia. Each scrapbook is identified by a Roman numeral. Scrapbook I contains business correspondence from music publishing companies. There are letters from such artists as Percy Grainger and Alma Gluck Zimbalist. The subject matter of the letters is either praise of Guion's music or promises to include certain compositions of his in their concerts.

Marriage congratulations, mostly from friends in New York, are in the middle section of the scrapbook. Guion married

Marion Ayres 15 September 1921; however, the marriage ended in divorce about a year later.

The last part of the book is correspondence from the acquaintances he made while he was in Austria. Several letters are in German. His friends were then soldiers in the Austrian army, and, from the standpoint of World War I history, their remarks are worth reading.

Scrapbook II is filled with articles about Guion collected from newspapers and the musical magazines. Most of it is a duplication of the material already cataloged. Scrapbook III contains mementos of his sojourn in Vienna; programs of the concerts he attended, calling cards of friends, theater ticket stubs, and picture postal cards. It is a scrapbook carefully kept to preserve happy memories in Guion's life.

The Texas Federation of Music Clubs proclaimed the week of 29 January to 4 February 1950 as David Guion week in Texas. During this period, Guion received an honorary doctorate degree of music from Howard Payne College.⁸ Letters of proclamation, news clippings, and letters of acceptance from colleges to attend the ceremonies at Howard Payne College are kept in Scrapbook IV. Scrapbook V is a photograph album. Family pictures are in the book and large photographs of Gene Raymond and his wife, Jeanette McDonald, have a prominent place. Besides the studio portraits in the scrapbook, there are many snapshots of

⁸Collegian (Brownwood, Texas), 26 January 1950, p. 1.

Guion's friends, his home in Pennsylvania, his pets, and relatives.

Guion's fifty-acre estate in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, which he named Home on the Range, was his show-place, a source of great personal pride. He described it as "a beautiful house of twelve rooms, a patio, and several large screened porches."⁹ The photographs of the house and grounds bear out his description and make it understandable why he fought long and hard to keep the property. The Army Corps of Engineers notified Guion that his property, along with his neighbors', was to be claimed for a water and recreation project in the Delaware River Basin by 1967. He wrote that "I fought-- we all fought, but it did no good."¹⁰ Guion finally sold his property to the government and moved to Dallas in 1965.¹¹

A folder kept separate from the four large divisions contains letters Guion received from famous personalities. Many of the letters are old and fragile. There are four letters from the White House. Three were written by M. S. LeHand, private secretary of Franklin D. Roosevelt: one expresses appreciation from the president for an autographed copy of "Home on the Range" that Guion had sent to him; another grants permission for Guion to dedicate a song to President Roosevelt

⁹Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 31.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹"Noted Composer Returns to Texas," Dallas Times Herald, 5 November 1965.

¹²Letter to David Guion, 16 April 1958.

(it does not state the name of the song); the third is a note of thanks for the congratulatory telegram he sent on the president's birthday. The fourth letter, from Mrs. Roosevelt, is a brief response concerning a ballet. It also is written and signed by a secretary.

Letters from James Melton, Lawrence Tibbett, and John Charles Thomas are brief notes of friendship. Humorous and informative letters from Charles Wakefield Cadman and Percy Grainger give an insight into the personalities of these two men. Grainger wrote often while he was on tour describing the favorable reaction of the audience to Guion's music. The letters indicate that Grainger obviously liked his music and enjoyed playing it. There are three letters from Bing Crosby. When Crosby and his wife, Kathryn, were expecting a child, Guion wrote a song appropriate for the occasion. In appreciation Crosby wrote that "Kathryn and I were delighted with the little song you sent us, dedicated to the expected arrival. Of course, we're pulling for a little girl so we can change the lyric to 'Little Girl Crosby.'"¹²

Due to the vast amount of available material, decisions had to be made on the basis of interest and relevancy. Portions of the memorabilia consisting of information which is of interest only to close friends or members of the Guion family have not been used in this thesis.

Even more important than the previously discussed material is the music cataloged in the Crouch Music Library.

¹²Bing Crosby to David Guion, 16 April 1958.

It is stored in sixteen cartons, each identified by a library call number. There are also eighteen large conductor scores. Baylor does not have a complete set of the original manuscripts of those works. Guion transcribed many of his songs and piano works for the orchestra, and a number of these transcriptions in original manuscript are in the collection; however, the original manuscripts of the piano and song compositions are located elsewhere. There will be further discussion of the music in chapter five.

Ninety-two recordings of Guion's music, of which twenty-five are 78 r.p.m. and the remaining sixty-seven 33-1/3 r.p.m., are housed in the Treasure Room of the music library. Among the recording artists are Percy Grainger, John Charles Thomas, Robert Merrill, Byron Janis, and James Melton.

Two books, both about Guion's ancestors, are also stored in the Treasure Room. The first is an annual report on the history of the state of Mississippi, the major part of which is devoted to the papers and letters of Major Isaac Guion, the great-grandfather of David Guion. The first printing of the "Military Journal of Captain Isaac Guion, 1797-1799," kept by Major Guion during his army service in Mississippi, is an appendix to the report.¹³ The second book is the Translations

¹³Dunbar Rowland, Seventh Annual Report of Director of the Department of Archives and History of the State of Mississippi (Nashville, Tenn.: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1909).

of a Few of the Spiritual Songs,¹⁴ a book of poetry written by Jeanne Marie Guion, a French Quietist writer born in 1648. After attending several convent schools, she married a rich invalid of the name Guyon in 1664. Twelve years later he died leaving her with three small children and a considerable fortune. She became attracted to the mystical life, and, from 1681, was one of the main apostles of Quietism, a religious movement active in France, Italy, and Spain during the seventeenth century. Madame Guion's complete works appeared in forty volumes (1767-91).¹⁵

It took two years to read and sort all the material described above. David Guion's biography and his contribution in music gradually emerged from the thousands of clippings, letters, and mementos accumulated and saved during his lifetime. His great sensitiveness and deep emotions are portrayed in the handwritten notes and comments made on the margins of many portions of the memorabilia. The chapters that follow are the product of that material and its study by the writer.

¹⁴Madam Guion, Translations of a Few of the Spiritual Songs, trans. Wm. Cowper (Newport-Pagnel [England]: J. Wakefield, 1801).

¹⁵Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1963 ed., s.v. "Guyon, Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Mothe."

CHAPTER II

ANCESTORS AND THE EARLY YEARS

On 22 November 1931 a concert of contemporary American music was presented by Paul Whiteman and his orchestra at the Studebaker Theater in Chicago, Illinois. Two works on the program were listed as premieres. They were Ferde Grofé's Grand Canyon Suite and David Guion's Shingandi, A Primitive Ballet, with Guion playing the piano part in his own composition. Other works on the program were Grofé's tone poem Knute Rockne and George Gershwin's An American in Paris.¹ The concert was well received, and David Guion was particularly pleased with the response of the audience to his music. He sent a telegram to his mother in Dallas, Texas: "BIG OVATION FOR PRIMITIVE BALLET WENT OVER GREAT ENCORED WITH TURKEY IN THE STRAW LOVE TO ALL. DAVID GUION."² The Chicago Herald Examiner ran a short article in the following Sunday issue announcing that Paul Whiteman's orchestra would present a special NBC coast-to-coast broadcast that evening from 10:15 to 11:00. The two numbers chosen for the broadcast

¹"Paul Whiteman in Concert Sunday," Chicago, Illinois American, 20 November 1931.

²David Guion to Mrs. John I. Guion, 22 November 1931.

were Grofé's Grand Canyon Suite and Guion's Shingandi.³ Radio was then the mass entertainment medium, and to have a composition performed coast-to-coast by a famous orchestra was an enviable achievement.

At that time David Guion considered Shingandi his most ambitious work.⁴ His career as a composer had been established several years before its performance, but his earlier compositions were of an entirely different nature. His arrangements of Negro spirituals had been performed and accepted on the concert stage. Mabel Garrison, a soprano of the Metropolitan Opera, sang his song "De Ol' Ark's A'Moverin'" (1918) around 1920 which soon became a concert-hall favorite with other singers and a recorded best seller.⁵ Guion's piano transcriptions of two old fiddlers' breakdowns, "Turkey in the Straw" (1919) and "Arkansas Traveler" (1921), were being played by Percy Grainger in his many piano concerts in the United States and Europe.⁶ Grainger wrote Guion: "I cannot tell you how much I admire your arrangement 'Turkey in the Straw'. What you have done could not possibly be better done it seems to me."⁷

³Chicago Herald Examiner, 29 November 1931.

⁴David Guion to Erno Rapee of Radio-Keith-Orpheum Corp., New York, n.d. Rapee was the orchestral conductor at Roxy Theater.

⁵"University Gets Original Scores," Dallas Morning News, 26 April 1960, sec. 1, p. 12.

⁶Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 17.

⁷Percy Grainger to David Guion, 22 January 1920, New York.

⁸Jane Russell to David Guion, 4 January 1935.

Olin Downes, the eminent American music critic, reported in the New York Times that Vladimir Horowitz, in his first recital of the season at Carnegie Hall, played David Guion's "Harmonica Player" for one of his encores. Downes wrote that "the piece so delighted the audience that crashing applause silenced the last measures of the music."⁸

A short stage production, Prairie Echoes, was introduced at the Roxy Theater, New York City, in the summer of 1930. The show featured David Guion and his own arrangements of cowboy tunes and hoedowns.⁹ Most of the numbers in Prairie Echoes were familiar to the audience, but one cowboy song being performed in the East for the first time caught the attention of the public. The song was "Home on the Range." A few months after President Franklin D. Roosevelt's inauguration in 1933, this song was presented in a national network program as the favorite tune of the president,¹⁰ and several years later Gene Raymond, Guion's cousin, wrote him: "I read that the President requested only two songs at his New Years party--'The Continental' and 'Home on the Range.' Congratulations again!"¹¹

David Guion had a strong belief in regional music. He said in an interview:

⁸Olin Downes, New York Times, n.d.

⁹Program, Roxy Theatre, Weekly Review, July 1930, p. 13. Although Roxy Theatre was a movie house, live stage performances offered before the movie were a regular part of the entertainment.

¹⁰Dallas Morning News, 17 May 1933.

¹¹Gene Raymond to David Guion, 4 January 1935.

The significant fact for us is that the Southwest is the very center of American native music. The negro, the cowboy, the Indian, the pioneer are the sources of our folk music; and we have them all as no other section has. . . . The opportunity is preeminently ours to give appreciation and assistance to what is and will come to be recognized as the music of America.¹²

It is apparent from reading his personal letters and memoirs that Guion's environment, family, and childhood were major factors in his style of writing. His love of the outdoors, his deep respect for the Negro race, and his own religious beliefs are manifest in his compositions and arrangements. Close family ties and a great pride in his heritage are also important characteristics of Guion. In order to understand and know this composer, it is necessary to trace briefly the Guion family history. This has been made possible by Guion's memoirs, and his sister Neil's own account of the Guion ancestors which was mentioned earlier.

The Guion family descends from ancient French nobility. The "chateau, La Roche-Guyon, Normandie on the Seine,"¹³ was built in the year 600 by a Seigneur Guy Guion, and was occupied by a Guion descendant as late as 1937.¹⁴

David Guion's family trace their ancestry in America from Louis Guion, born in La Rochelle, France, in 1630. Louis, a French Huegenot escaping from religious persecution, came to America during the years 1686-87. He and his family, along with

¹²Mabel Cranfill, "David Guion," The Texas Monthly, October 1929, p. 308.

¹³Neil Guion, Neil's Guion Saga, p. 1.

¹⁴Ibid.

other Huegenots, settled in a New York colony and called it New Rochelle after his birthplace.¹⁵

Isaac Guion, David's great-grandfather, entered the service in 1775 and became a captain in the United States Army in 1792. Under his command, the army took possession of the military posts held by the Spanish along the Mississippi River. They also forced Spain to evacuate the city of Natchez. The flag of the United States was raised over the territory by Captain Guion on the morning of 30 March 1798. From that time to 6 August 1798, Captain Guion was in command of the territory until the arrival of the legally appointed governor.¹⁶

Guion's grandfather, John Isaac Guion, a lawyer active in politics, was a member of the Mississippi state senate from 1848 to 1850. During regular session in 1850, the president of the senate became ill and John Guion was elected president pro tempore. The governor of Mississippi resigned soon afterward and Guion became acting governor of the state, 3 February 1851. John Isaac Guion, Jr., David's father, was born in the executive mansion in Jackson, Mississippi, 4 January 1852.¹⁷

John Guion, Jr. studied law and was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Mississippi in 1873.¹⁸ He came to

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 4-8.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 9-11. Further information about the Guion family in Mississippi may be found in Dunbar Rowland, History of Mississippi, 2 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1925), 1:324, 341, 734; 2:419.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 11.

Texas after the Civil War, and married Matilda Armour Fentress of San Saba, 5 June 1876.¹⁹ He settled in Ballinger, Texas, in 1886. His law practice flourished, and he was respected for his knowledge of law and practice of fair play in all of his cases.²⁰

Judge Guion²¹ was appointed to the Board of Regents of the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College. He served in this capacity for eight years, the last four as president of the board. The chapel building at that school, Guion Hall, was named in his honor.²²

David Wendell Guion, one of nine children, was born in Ballinger, Texas, 15 December 1892.²³ Music was very much a part of the Guion home. His sisters played the piano and his mother loved to sing. Among Guion's earliest childhood memories are the songs his mother sang to him. In his memoirs, he says: "It was from my Mother and the Fentress Clan, that I inherited my talent. My father could scarcely carry a tune."²⁴

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 17-18.

²⁰Ibid., p. 30.

²¹Ibid., p. 17. John Guion was county judge in San Saba, Texas, for two years. He never ran for another office, although, according to Neil Guion, in later years his friends wanted him to run for governor of Texas.

²²Ibid., p. 37.

²³Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians and Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians give the birthdate as 1895, as do many articles and clippings. Guion personally went through many of the clippings and corrected the date. His sister, Neil, also lists the date of birth as 1892.

²⁴Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 3.

There were other musical influences in his early life. The Guions had several Negro servants, and David's nurse, Neppie, sang spirituals and Negro melodies while she cared for him. She often took him to her own church on Sunday mornings, an experience which was later to become an inspiration for many of Guion's arrangements of Negro spirituals and his own compositions. After Neppie's death, a young man named Andrew took charge of young Guion. He played the guitar and, like Neppie, sang many of the old Negro songs. Guion credits them for giving him his great interest and love of Negro music.²⁵

Another Negro servant who had an influence on Guion's musical background was Elijah Cox. "Ol' Coxy," as everyone called him, sang and played the fiddle. His music was different in nature and style from the spirituals. It was from "Ol' Coxy" that Guion first heard the old fiddlers' tunes, "Turkey in the Straw" and "Arkansas Traveler."²⁶

Guion's musical ability was discovered at an early age, and the decision was made to start his musical training. He first studied piano with Charles J. Finger²⁷ until Finger moved to Arkansas. Although she is not mentioned in the Guion memoirs, young David continued his studies with a Mrs. M. F. Horton. Only brief mention is made of her in several of the news clippings,

²⁵Ibid., p. 5.

²⁶Ibid., p. 6.

²⁷Charles J. Finger was later to become a well-known writer of travel and adventure stories.

making it difficult to determine when she taught him. The only specific item found in the Guion Collection is the program of a concert sponsored by the Illinois Conservatory of Music, performed 3 October 1907. Mrs. Horton and David Guion are both listed as performers. There is a statement at the bottom of the program: "Master David Guion has been a pupil of Mrs. Horton for a number of years. He will continue his study with Mr. Oberndorfer in the Conservatory."²⁸

Guion attended Whipple Academy, a preparatory school operated as a department of Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois, during the school year 1907-08. There is no record of him as a former student at the Conservatory.²⁹ A statement by Guion in his memoirs explains why he did not continue his studies in Jacksonville. He wrote:

Of course, there were young students at the Academy, but after classes I had to go to my room--practice two hours, then spend my evening alone. I was never so miserable in all my life, but I stuck it out for a year then returned home.³⁰

Returning to Texas, Guion studied with Wilbur McDonald at the Polytechnic College, Fort Worth, Texas, up to the time of McDonald's death. In order for him to continue his musical education, Guion's father agreed to send him to Europe. Guion

²⁸Program of a Faculty Concert, Illinois Conservatory of Music, 3 October 1907.

²⁹Letter from Charles M. Bellatti, Director of Alumni Affairs and Public Information, Illinois College, Jacksonville, Illinois, 17 September 1973.

³⁰Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 13. Guion, 26 December 1912, Vienna, Austria.

chose Vienna, where Leopold Godowsky was director of the Vienna Royal Conservatory of Music. He had heard Godowsky perform in this country and was very anxious to study piano with him.³¹ Guion sailed for Europe that fall in 1912.

He wrote his mother soon after arriving in Vienna. The letter was one of discouragement. At one point in the letter, he wrote:

Things are not like I pictured them and I can't help feeling a little disappointed, but I still feel and know that it is in me to make a pianist and all I can do is to work and hope for the best and try and over come all disappointments and discouragements that meet me.³²

A letter written to his mother in December of that same year was twenty-eight pages long. It was a cheery letter, describing the friends he had made and the many concerts he had attended. He wrote that he missed home, "but I wouldn't go home if the ticket was given me for I just must finish and I want to stay here till I do."³³

Unfortunately, this was not to be, as World War I erupted in the summer of 1914, and Guion was forced to return to the United States. This was surely a time of disappointment. After a brief adjustment period, Vienna had become his second home. It was difficult to leave his friends, the concerts, and parties. Above all, his piano training was to stop, at least, in Europe.

³¹Ibid.

³²David Guion to Mrs. John I. Guion, 14 September 1912, Vienna, Austria.

³³David Guion to Mrs. John I. Guion, 26 December 1912, Vienna, Austria.

Guion wrote "I hated to have to return home and give up this wonderful experience. But there was nothing else to do. . . ." ³⁴ When he came back to Texas he soon found his life moving toward his true destiny, working and composing in a field he enjoyed the rest of his life, American music.

³⁴Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 15.

CHAPTER III

COMPOSER AND PERFORMER

It was difficult for Guion to leave Europe and the stimulating environment of Vienna, but future events in his life were to prove equally exciting and rewarding as those happy years abroad.

Guion returned to the United States in 1914, and the following year he began his teaching career as head of the music department of Daniel Baker College in Brownwood, Texas.¹ It was during this time that he began to compose,² and after one year at Daniel Baker, he made his debut in Dallas, not only as a pianist but also as a composer. His performance was a revelation to guests of the Dallas Art Association, and the comments after the concert were complimentary to him and to his talent. His program included works of Brahms, Bach-Busoni, and Chopin.

¹E. Froude [?] to David Guion, 28 February 1935. The dates of Guion's different positions during his teaching career from 1915 to 1929 vary in the many sources found in the memorabilia. There is a letter from an editor of a London magazine, Town and Country Review, asking Guion to correct any errors found in the enclosed biographical sketch of him which they wished to print. Since corrections were made, it is assumed that the dates given in the article are reliable.

²"Joint Recital of Guion and Morrell in Original Works Heads WFFA's Sunday List," Dallas Morning News, 28 April 1929.

The encores were his own compositions, Waltz in D Major and Etude de Concert.³

Guion felt he was "getting nowhere as a pianist or composer"⁴ and he resigned his position at Daniel Baker College in 1917. By that time Guion had written many songs and piano compositions, and, anxious to have them published, he began to make short trips to New York to contact various music publishers. It was on one of these trips that he met Nora Bayes, a blues singer. She listened to his songs, liked them, and asked him if he would write a special song for her to sing in the George M. Cohan Review. His "The Old Maid Blues" (1917) was featured on Broadway by Miss Bayes in 1918.⁵

Guion took his arrangements of fourteen Negro spirituals to M. Witmark and Sons, and they accepted and published the entire set in 1918. His career as a composer was launched, and he stated in his memoirs that he began writing music seriously at that time.⁶

G. Schirmer, Inc. was the next publisher to accept Guion's compositions. O. G. Sonneck, head of G. Schirmer's publication department wrote: "It will please you to hear that Mr. Rudolph Schirmer . . . has taken a decided personal interest

³"Guion Recital Delights Music Critics of Dallas," unidentified news clipping.

⁴Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 16.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

¹¹Cranfill, "David Guion," Texas Monthly, p. 314.

in your work. He believes in you and your talent and should dislike it exceedingly to see you publish your music with any other house."⁷

Not only was his music being published, it was being performed. In other correspondence Sonneck said: "Sunday Sophie Braslaw sang 'Greatest Miracle of All' and had to sing it three times in succession!"⁸ His piano arrangement of "Turkey in the Straw," published in 1919, became successful in a relatively short time. One of the people responsible for the success of this work and Guion's later piano compositions was Percy Grainger. In 1920 he played this number on many of his concert tours, and twenty-two years later he wrote: "I am playing 'Turkey in the Straw' all the time and expect to include 'Arkansas Traveler' and 'Sheep and Goat' in my new recital programs."⁹

But with all this acclaim and recognition Guion still continued his teaching. His next position was with the Fairmount Conservatory in Dallas from 1918 to 1921, after which he was an instructor with Southern Methodist University from 1921 to 1924. In 1926 he joined the Chicago Musical College Faculty,¹⁰ where he taught piano and a class for the correct dialect and interpretation of Negro spirituals.¹¹ He had signed

⁷O. G. Sonneck to David Guion, 19 May 1919.

⁸O. G. Sonneck to David Guion, 11 November 1919.

⁹Percy Grainger to David Guion, 4 December 1942.

¹⁰E. Froude [?] to David Guion, 28 February 1935.

¹¹Cranfill, "David Guion," Texas Monthly, p. 314.

a five-year contract with the school, but feeling that he had little time left for composing, he broke the contract after two years. During the summer months of the two years in Chicago, he was head of a music colony in Estes Park, Colorado.¹² In 1928 he returned to Dallas and was director of the Southwestern School of Fine Arts for one year.¹³ This was Guion's last teaching position.

In 1930 he decided to go to New York to see his music publishers and investigate possibilities for his future. Before leaving Dallas, he wrote to S. L. (Roxy) Rothafel, the director of the Roxy Theater, requesting an audition when he arrived in New York. Roxy sent back word that he would be glad to see Guion and hear his music. The two men had a successful meeting. Rothafel liked the music and immediately began plans for a Texas ranch stage setting, using cowboys and a cowgirl ballet. The show was to be introduced by an orchestral prelude featuring Guion at the piano playing "Turkey in the Straw." A day or two later the idea was put into rehearsal and the following week Prairie Echoes was presented for the first time on 25 July 1930. Guion had been in New York only three weeks.¹⁴

Prairie Echoes was the last one of the eight short stage productions on the program. It was sixteen minutes long and

¹²Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 29.

¹³E. Froude [?] to David Guion, 28 February 1935.

¹⁴"Texas Musician 'Makes' Old Broadway On Very First Try," New York Times, 9 August 1930.

¹⁵New York Times, 27 July 1930.

performed just before the movie.¹⁵ Guion was assisted by the Roxy Symphony Orchestra, the Roxyettes, and the Roxy Male Chorus. After the opening piano number, the program was "The Bold Vaquero" and "Home on the Range," with Harold Van Duzee, tenor; "The Harmonica Player," with a comedy dancing skit as a stage background; and "The Cowboy's Meditation" with John Gurney, baritone. The thirty-two Roxyettes did a dancing imitation of galloping broncs to Guion's "Texas Fox Trot."¹⁶

Variety wrote "In Prairie Echoes an honest attempt has been made to catch western atmosphere,"¹⁷ and the Times reported that Guion had proved that here was a wealth of racy and native music in America aside from jazz and its various forms.¹⁸

Guion and his cowboy music caught the attention of the big radio networks and their sponsors. During his week at the Roxy Theater, he was engaged by NBC to appear on an all-Guion coast-to-coast radio program called the "General Motors Hour." The broadcast had to be done between shows at Roxy Theater. Rothafel had his chauffeur drive Guion, with a motorcycle police escort, to and from the NBC studios on Fifth Avenue. Guion recalls:

I had only fifteen minutes to get from Roxy's theatre to NBC--and for once in my life I stopped all traffic on Fifth Avenue, going and coming, with police whistles and sirens blowing--and there I was in full cowboy regalia and grease

¹⁵Schedule, Roxy Theater presentation.

¹⁶New York Times, 27 July 1930.

¹⁷New York Variety, 30 July 1930.

¹⁸New York Times, 27 July 1930.



Plate 2. David Guion in cowboy costume.

paint on my face. But I made it! From there on I had plain sailing, and the offers and engagements began to come my way.¹⁹

Further engagements did come. In August he appeared on NBC's "Eveready Hour" and on 21 September 1930 he was guest artist on NBC's "Metropolitan Echoes."²⁰

In July 1931 Guion began a musical series over the New York radio station WOR, a Mutual affiliate. The program, "Hearing America with Guion," was on the air thirty-two weeks.²¹ One clipping stated: "This was not a novel program but the way in which it was handled was different, and the whole manner of the presentation went to make an ingratiating and not soon to be forgotten half-hour."²²

The next radio series was one with NBC which featured Guion's compositions, and his music was performed by a concert orchestra, baritone Paul Ravell, and Guion. This weekly broadcast used the same pattern as the previous program over WOR, only the title was changed. The thirty-minute program, "David Guion and His Orchestra,"²³ was heard on WEAJ for thirty-eight weeks.²⁴ Plate I in chapter 1 is a page of the script from one of those radio programs.

¹⁹Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 31.

²⁰"David Guion on Network for Two More Broadcasts," Dallas Morning News, 9 August 1930.

²¹Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 12.

²²News clipping, Newark, New Jersey, 23 August 1931.

²³"Guion to Start Music Series in December," Chicago Daily News, 19 November 1931, p. 28.

²⁴Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 12.

Several interesting observations have been made about Guion's radio shows. One reporter wrote that he was the first to use cowboy sound effects over radio, such as cowboy yells and the sound of horses' hoofs.²⁵ Another reported, "to Guion belongs the credit of giving impetus to the present vogue of cowboy songs throughout the land."²⁶

Whether Guion was the first to use cowboy sound effects on radio might be open to question, but there was no doubt that Guion and his music was gaining popularity with the New York audiences. In a year and a half he gave eighty-eight all-Guion programs in New York.²⁷ John Charles Thomas surprised the audience in his Town Hall concert in December by including several American Negro spirituals and cowboy tunes, including Guion's "All Day on the Prairie" and "Home on the Range." Guion, who was present at the concert, was acknowledged by Thomas and introduced to the audience.²⁸ His piano transcriptions and spirituals had become popular through the twenties, and now the cowboy songs were beginning to receive equal popularity in the thirties.

Being referred to as a Southwestern composer or cowboy-composer was a definite factor in generating interest and acceptance of Guion's music, but his range of composition was larger

²⁵"Social Tid-Bits," Texas Press Clipping Bureau, Lufkin, Texas, 29 January 1950.

²⁶Daily Times Herald (Dallas), 27 October 1933.

²⁷"Highlights of the Week on the Radio," Boston Sunday Post, 3 January 1932.

²⁸New York Times, 1 December 1930.

than normally believed. Before he went to New York, he had composed the three-movement ballet suite, Ballet Primitive. This composition for two pianos was performed by Guion and Harlan Pettit at the Dallas Little Theater, 12 January 1930.²⁹

When Guion went back East, he took his two-piano version to Paul Whiteman, who liked it and immediately made plans to have it transcribed for orchestra. Ferde Grofé, who was responsible for many of Whiteman's arrangements, worked for more than a year orchestrating Guion's ballet, which was renamed Shingandi.³⁰

As mentioned before, Whiteman and his orchestra performed in Chicago's Studebaker Theater, 22 November 1931, with Guion as guest artist. The program interest was centered in two new compositions by Grofé and Guion's Shingandi, A Primitive Ballet. Variety wrote: "David Guion, . . . interpreted 'Shingandi' on the piano, proving himself as able at execution as at creation."³¹ Guion was delighted with the events of the evening, and at 4:00 A.M. following the concert he wrote his mother of the thunderous applause and the many curtain calls he made.³²

His ballet and Grofé's suite were to be broadcast the following Sunday over NBC from Chicago,³³ and he wrote of the

²⁹ Dallas Morning News, 13 January 1930.

³⁰ Dallas Morning News, 22 November 1931.

³¹ Variety, 24 November 1931.

³² David Guion to Mrs. John I. Guion, 23 November 1931.

³³ Chicago Herald Examiner, 29 November 1931.

happenings in the week before the radio performance. His mood of jubilation had changed to despair. The radio show was to be only forty-five minutes long, which meant some cuts would have to be made in order to fit into the time allowed. Whiteman wanted Grofé's Grand Canyon Suite played in its entirety, and he asked Guion to delete a portion of each movement of his work. Guion was so upset that he considered not having it performed at all, believing that the cuts made in his music destroyed it. He expressed his deep anger and disappointment to his mother: "This has taken all the life out of me and I want to get back to N. Y. as soon as possible. . . . Maybe some day I'll get accustomed to being knifed."³⁴

He soon came out of his despair, for the next note written to his mother a few hours before the broadcast was to inform her happily that his ballet would be played with no changes. He had finally refused to let it go on the air as it was, and was ready to leave when Grofé came to see him. He assured Guion that everything had been worked out and Shingandi would be played as written. Grofé agreed to omit one of the five numbers of his suite, and Guion wrote that they "should have in the first place, as his is entirely too long for the air."³⁵ The broadcast went on as scheduled. Shingandi and four movements of the Grand Canyon Suite were heard for the first time on radio.

³⁴David Guion to Mrs. John I. Guion, 26 November 1931.

³⁵David Guion to Mrs. John I. Guion, 29 November 1931.

Shingandi was later performed at an American music festival in Richmond, Virginia, by the Washington Symphony with John Powell as pianist. The third performance was in the Dallas Summer Pop Concert at the Fair Park Bowl, 21 August 1932.³⁶

Guion had hopes of his primitive ballet being more than a concert work and had written a libretto to accompany it. The music was to describe the tribal rites of African warriors. In 1932 Guion signed a contract with Roxy Theater for a New York production. The ballet was to have magnificent stage settings and two hundred Negro dancers. However, two weeks after the contract was signed, Roxy Theater went into the hands of a receiver and the New York premiere was cancelled.³⁷

It was not until the following year that Guion was finally to see Shingandi on stage for the first time. Theodore Kosloff, the choreographer, and members of the Kosloff Ballet presented the ballet 19 November 1933, at the Fair Park Auditorium in Dallas. Guion, along with Harlan Pettit, played the two piano parts with the orchestra.³⁸ Kosloff presented it the second time in San Diego, 19 August 1938, the Hollywood Bowl on 17 September 1938,³⁹ then later at Grauman's Chinese Theater, and three performances in Mexico City.⁴⁰

³⁶"'Shingandi' at Bowl Sunday Brings Memory of Premiere at Little Theater in 1930," Dallas Times Herald, n.d.

³⁷Dallas Morning News, 17 August 1932.

³⁸"Kosloff Gives Dallas Rarest of Afternoons," Dallas Morning News, 20 November 1933.

³⁹Theodore Kosloff to David Guion, 23 August 1938.

⁴⁰Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 20.

Things were going well for Guion in New York. "I couldn't ask for more. My compositions were being published, and featured by world artists, as fast as I could write them."⁴¹ Not only had President Roosevelt named Guion's "Home on the Range" as one of his favorite songs, he had granted the music publishers permission to print this fact on their sheet music.⁴² Such famous singers as Bing Crosby, John Charles Thomas, Lawrence Tibbett, and Morton Downey singing and recording "Home on the Range"⁴³ made it a highly successful song. At the peak of its popularity, a copyright lawsuit involving thousands of dollars was brought against Guion and others. The lawsuit and related events will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

Other songs, however, were equally popular. In a letter Lawrence Tibbett asked Guion: "Did you hear me sing 'Sail Away for the Rio Grande' last week? It seems to me that I am singing more Guion songs on my programs than anything else! More power to you."⁴⁴ And in the same year John Charles Thomas wrote: "Dear Tough Cowboy: Thanks for your letter. You will be hearing Ride, Cowboy, Ride very soon again. We had many many calls for it at NBC."⁴⁵

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²"Deer and the Antelope Not playing this Time," Dallas Morning News, 6 October 1945, p. 7.

⁴³Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 20.

⁴⁴Lawrence Tibbett to David Guion, 13 December 1934.

⁴⁵John Charles Thomas to David Guion, 14 November 1934.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Program, Carnegie Hall.

Carnegie Hall contracted Guion to perform in the fourth program of a series called "Odd Series of Entertainments for Children and Young People." The series, sponsored by the United Parents Association of New York, was given on Saturday mornings to audiences of young people. Guion was to appear on a joint recital with Te Ata and her Indian Group, she to have the first thirty minutes of the program and Guion the remaining time.⁴⁶ The contract with Carnegie Hall read thus:

A performance by David Guion consisting of a program of cowboy songs, presented in cowboy costume; together with the "Cavaliers Quartet," who will sing cowboy songs rehearsed under the direction of the Artist. The Producer agrees to furnish cowboy costumes for the Quartet only. It is understood that this program will last a minimum of thirty (30) minutes.⁴⁷

The contract further stated that he was to receive one hundred and seventy-five dollars for the performance.⁴⁸

The program, "Cowboy Songs by David Guion and His 'Singin' Cowboys,'" was performed Saturday morning at 11:00, 17 November 1934. Guion played "Turkey in the Straw," "Sheep an Goat Walkin' to the Pasture," "Arkansas Traveler," and "The Harmonica Player." The remainder of the program was done by soloists or the quartet singing his cowboy tunes with Guion accompanying on the piano, twelve numbers in all.⁴⁹

In 1935 Guion wrote a transcription of a Texas folk song, "The Yellow Rose of Texas," especially for the celebration

⁴⁶Program, Carnegie Hall.

⁴⁷Contract, Carnegie Hall and David Guion.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Program, Carnegie Hall.

of the Texas Centennial planned for 1936. He sent a telegram to President Roosevelt asking permission to dedicate the song to him. The morning after he sent the wire, Guion received a phone call announcing that the President wanted to speak to him. Roosevelt said: "Mr. Home-on-the-Range, you asked my permission to dedicate your song, 'The Yellow Rose of Texas' to me. Officially, no. Unofficially, yes. Go ahead!" Guion immediately called his publishers, G. Schirmer, Inc., and told them the good news. The dedication to Roosevelt is printed across the top of the cover page of the sheet music.⁵¹

Several hundred copies of the song were sent to the centennial, but no one knows what became of them. Neither Guion nor his publishers could locate the music, and he contends that "my song, so far as I know, has never been sung in Texas."⁵² The "Yellow Rose of Texas" that was so popular a number of years ago has the same words, but they are set to a different melody by Mitch Miller and Don George.⁵³

Guion was engaged to write the theme song for Cavalcade, the stage production of the Texas Centennial in Dallas from 6 June to 29 November 1936. The original composition "Cowboy Love Song," was the opening number and was to set the mood for

⁵⁰Guion, "My Memoirs," pp. 42-43.

⁵¹David W. Guion, "The Yellow Rose of Texas" (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1936).

⁵²Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 43.

⁵³Ibid.

the performance.⁵⁴ A Dallas paper wrote: "The theme song . . . bids fair to be a tremendously popular ballad."⁵⁵

In 1937 Guion purchased fifty acres in the Pocono Mountains of eastern Pennsylvania. He commuted to New York almost every weekend for many years, but eventually the trips became fewer, and he made only two or three in a year. Guion was very happy in the years he lived on his "Home on the Range" estate. Remodeling, furnishing his home with antiques, gardening, and entertaining weekend guests kept him busy. He expressed his attitude with these words: "I loved every minute of my life there; . . . never was I happier, or more active in my work."⁵⁶

With all the interests and duties of his country home, he still composed and made guest appearances. In 1942 Percy Grainger wrote Guion of plans to organize a four-month tour for a Steinway Sextet. The agent in charge of the tour had asked Grainger to suggest other pianists, and he wanted Guion to join them. "It would be a treat if you and I could be together on tour for several months, would it not?"⁵⁷ Unfortunately, there is no further information in the memorabilia as to whether Guion joined the sextet or not.

⁵⁴Program, Texas Centennial Exposition, Dallas, 1936.

⁵⁵Dallas Morning News, Souvenir Centennial Edition, 7 June 1936.

⁵⁶Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 32.

⁵⁷Percy Grainger to David Guion, 4 December 1942.

⁵⁸House on Chronicle, 3 February 1932.

The Houston Symphony Orchestra, with Efrem Kurtz conducting, presented Guion's Texas Suite, 5 February 1952.⁵⁸

The Houston Symphony Society had decided to replace their annual Texas composer's competition with a commissioned work by Guion.⁵⁹ Ima Hogg, a member of the Society, asked Guion to accept the commission and be her guest in Houston at the performance.⁶⁰ The symphonic suite is divided into fourteen sections, each musically depicting a different locale of Texas. John Rosenfield of the Dallas Morning News called them tone-scapes.⁶¹ One section of the suite, "Buffalo Bayou Song," was dedicated to Ima Hogg, whose home Bayou Bend, is located on the banks of the Bayou. The entire suite was dedicated to the Houston Symphony Society.⁶²

Guion had expected G. Schirmer, Inc. to publish his orchestral suite. When they refused, he believed that they were not honoring his contract. He received a long letter from the head of the publication department giving their reasons for not publishing Texas Suite. It was explained in detail that the rising costs of engraving, paper, printing, and binding would cost thousands of dollars if they published only four movements from the suite. Furthermore, the bulk of the present

⁵⁸"The Passing Show," Dallas Morning News, 19 January 1952.

⁵⁹"Guion's 'Texas,'" Newsweek 34 (February 1952): 90.

⁶⁰Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 22.

⁶¹"The Passing Show," Dallas Morning News, 19 January 1952.

⁶²Houston Chronicle, 3 February 1952.

market for such material was centered in high school and college orchestras, and they did not feel Guion's work was suitable for use by such groups.⁶³

However, thirteen years later, Carsan, Inc., and Carsan Records, Inc., of Houston acquired the publishing and recording rights to Texas Suite. The Houston Summer Symphony recorded the suite in the summer of 1965, and the symphonic arrangement was available for sale or rental in the fall.⁶⁴ This was believed to be the first recording for the Houston Summer Symphony and, also, a premier presentation of Texas Suite on tape or record.⁶⁵

During that same summer the Houston All-City Symphony Orchestra, consisting of one hundred and five musicians from junior and senior high schools in Houston, included the suite in their repertoire while on tour throughout Europe.⁶⁶

When Guion finally had to sell his property in Pennsylvania to the government for a dam and recreation project, he moved back to Dallas in 1965 and bought the home where he and his mother had lived years ago. Since then he has received a number of honors, one bestowed by the Texas Legislature in 1969.⁶⁷ The resolution, read by Speaker Gus Mutscher,

⁶³ Nathan Broder to David Guion, 12 September 1952.

⁶⁴ Ballinger Ledger, 3 June 1965, sec. one, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Houston West Side Reporter, 19 August 1965, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Ballinger Ledger, 3 June 1965, sec. one, p. 5.

⁶⁷ "Texas Legislature Honors Composer of Western Songs," Irving (Texas) Daily News, 16 May 1969.

commended Guion "for his stewardship of his great talent that has brought pleasure to people throughout the world and pride in his Texas origin to all his fellow Texans."⁶⁸

Guion received further recognition and honor from Runnels County where his home town, Ballinger, is located. Runnels County Day, designated to be a countywide observance, was to coincide with the release of the book This Is My County by Mrs. George Poe. Guion, who was the featured guest for the occasion, wrote a song for the celebration. The song, "Runnels is My County, My Home Sweet Home," tells the saga of Runnels County.⁶⁹

President Richard Nixon spent five historical days in the People's Republic of China, February 1972, visiting with the dignitaries of that country. A formal banquet was held in the Great Hall of the People, and while Nixon and Premier Chou En Lai were exchanging toasts, a military band played American music in honor of their guest.⁷⁰ The Chinese had selected compositions they believed to represent American tradition, and two of the works were "Home on the Range" and "Turkey in the Straw."⁷¹

⁶⁸"Resolutions Honor Pair of Dallasites," news clipping, Austin Bureau, n.d.

⁶⁹"Runnels to Have its Day-It's Saturday," San Angelo Standard Times, 13 September 1970.

⁷⁰"Five Eventful Days in Peking," U.S. News and World Report 82 (March 1972): 20.

⁷¹"Talk of the World," Atlas 21 (April 1972): 16.

When Guion learned that his music had been performed for the president, he autographed a copy of each of the compositions and planned to send them to Premier Chou En Lai. The Dallas Post Office informed him the United States could not send mail to China, so he wrote President Nixon and asked if the music could be sent through diplomatic channels. The request was granted,⁷² and Guion received the following message from the President:

Your works as a distinguished composer have immensurably enriched the spirit and life of our country. I know that I am joined by countless fellow citizens in applauding the joy you have brought to their lives and the honor you have earned through the world on my recent trip to China. We were all made aware of your important part in the heritage of the U.S. when at the formal Banquet in the Great Hall in Peking the orchestra played "Home on the Range." The fact that this song has become so representative of America is the finest tribute that can be paid to your talent [sic]. Mrs. Nixon and I want you to know that we are among your many admirers, and that we hope you may derive growing satisfaction in the years ahead from the knowledge that you have gladdened and uplifted the hearts of so many people.

Richard Nixon⁷³

Guion later wrote a friend: "I had another call from the White House, this morning--telling me my autographed music to Chou En Lai is on its way to him."⁷⁴

In 1972 a recital presenting the songs of Guion was given in Roxy Grove Hall, Baylor University. Suzan Thompson,

⁷²Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 50. Added material, Development Department, Baylor University.

⁷³Richard Nixon to David Guion, 10 April 1972. Copy of telegram, Development Department, Baylor University.

⁷⁴David Guion to Lois Murray, 31 April 1972, Development Department, Baylor University.

soprano, Richard Robinson, tenor, Daniel Pratt, baritone, and Sanford Margolis, pianist, were the performing artists from the Baylor School of Music. Guion was there as special guest at the recital and the reception afterward in the Memorial Drawing Room.⁷⁵

Tapes of this concert were taken to Russia by Mrs. Lois Murray Strain to present to G. Fedosov, general secretary of the Institute of Soviet-American relations, in two ceremonies at the University of Moscow and the Kremlin. Mrs. Strain, who at that time was professor of English at Baylor and an assistant to Baylor's vice-president for development, had received approval earlier in the year for the idea from both Secretary of State William Rogers and Soviet Union Embassy Counselor Valerian Nesterov. The United States State Department believed that the gift of the tapes would be a factor in promoting communications and good will between Americans and the people of other countries. Mrs. Strain presented the tapes during the time she was in Moscow, July 30 through August 3, in her three-week European tour. Traditional songs of Guion's such as "Home on the Range," "The Yellow Rose of Texas," "In Galam," and "All Day on the Prairie," were among the numbers on the tapes.⁷⁶

Baylor University School of Music honored Guion with another recital in 1973. Again the vocal soloists (Daniel

⁷⁵Program, "The Songs of David W. Guion," 25 June 1972.

⁷⁶"Russia Will Hear Guion Songs," Dallas Morning News, 27 July, 1972, p. A16.

Pratt, Suzan Thompson, Carol Mayo, mezzo-soprano) were from the music school.⁷⁷ The main interest and attraction of the recital was that the accompanist was David Guion. Appropriately, the encore was "Home on the Range."

The honors accorded Guion, both at home and abroad, are the culmination of a career filled with realised dreams of fame, fortune, and achievement.

⁷⁷Program, "The Songs of David W. Guion," 8 July 1973.

CHAPTER IV

THE "HOME ON THE RANGE" CONTROVERSY

New Yorkers first heard Guion's "Home on the Range" in his stage production in 1930. John Lomax wrote of a radio official who announced that during the first six months of 1934 the song held first place among all favorites on the radio circuits of the United States. Just as the song was at the top, all radio stations were warned in June 1934 not to include "Home on the Range" in their programs.¹ A suit for infringement of copyright had been filed in a New York court for five hundred thousand dollars against Guion and thirty-four other individuals and corporations, including the National Broadcasting Company and many large publishing houses. "No other single ballad in the history of song literature was ever valued at so much money."²

William and Mary Goodwin of Tempe, Arizona, who had brought the suit, claimed that Goodwin had written the words of the song, "An Arizona Home," and his wife, the melody. The copyright for the song had been registered 27 February 1905.

¹John A. Lomax, "Half-Million Dollar Song," The Southwest Review 31 (Fall 1945): 3.

²Ibid.

The Goodwins declared that their song, "An Arizona Home," was the "parent" of "Home on the Range."³

Samuel Moanfeldt, a New York lawyer, was employed by the Music Publishers Protective Association to investigate the Goodwins' claim and try to determine, if possible, the origin of the words and tune.⁴ In February 1935 Moanfeldt began investigating various claims or related information in Missouri, Colorado, and Arizona, finally ending his search in Smith Center, Kansas.

There he found the poem "Western Home" in a 19 February 1914 issue of the Smith County Pioneer which was reprinted from an 1873 issue of the same paper. The man who wrote the poem was Dr. Brewster Higley. Pioneers of the community signed affidavits to the effect that the author of the poem was Higley and that Dan Kelley had written the music for the words. Both men were early settlers in Kansas.

Moanfeldt then located Clarence Harlan, who had settled in Smith Center in 1871. Harlan stated that he and his brother had learned and played the song then known as "Western Home," now called "Home on the Range," since 1874. He sang the tune just as he remembered Dan Kelley, his brother-in-law, had

³Ibid.

⁴Kirke Mechem, "Home on the Range," The Kansas Historical Quarterly 17 (November 1934): 314.

composed it. It was recorded and produced as evidence in the investigation.⁵

Lawyer Moanfeldt was satisfied and wrote in his report to the MPPA:

It is the opinion of your investigator that there is no basis whatever to the claims made by the Goodwins and that the plaintiffs in this case contributed nothing whatsoever either to the verse or tune of "Home on the Range" or "Western Home" as it was sometimes known.⁶

The Goodwins withdrew their suit and renounced the claim.⁷

From the evidence presented, the court ruled that all versions of the song stemmed from 1871; therefore, "Home on the Range" was in the public domain except for formal concert arrangements.⁸ Even though the song was ruled public domain, Guion wrote that his arrangement of "Home on the Range," was only off the air a few weeks, sheet music continued to sell, records were made, and the royalties never stopped.⁹

John A. Lomax's magazine article, "Half-Million Dollar Song," seemed to have much more impact on Guion than the lawsuit did.¹⁰ In 1908 Lomax was in San Antonio searching for cowboy songs. The proprietor of the Buckhorn Saloon told him

⁵ Ibid., pp. 336-37.

⁶ Mechem, "Home on the Range," p. 339.

⁷ Lomas, "Half-Million Dollar Song," p. 4.

⁸ John Rosenfield, "Arizona Home Also on Range," Dallas Morning News, 18 July 1964, p. 4.

⁹ David Guion to Dr. I. E. Nickell, 1961.

¹⁰ Lomax was one of the founders of the Texas Folklore Society and was at one time president of the American Folklore Society.

of a Negro singer who had been a camp cook for years and traveled the Chisholm trail many times. Lomax found the man and recorded the tunes that he sang. One was "Home on the Range." From the recording, Henry Leberman, a blind music teacher at the State School for the Blind in Austin, wrote down the music.¹¹ "This music, printed in the 1910 edition of Cowboy Songs, made up the core of the tune that became so popular."¹²

Oscar J. Fox of San Antonio first put the song into sheet-music form in 1925; five years later Guion's arrangement was published. During the next six years eight other publishers issued the song in different arrangements. Lomax contended that they all closely followed the words, tune, and order of stanzas as he had first printed them in his book in 1910, and that only Fox had asked permission to use the material from Cowboy Songs.¹³

The magazine article continued with a review of the Goodwin claim and the Kansas version of the origin of the song. There was still another story. A few years before the Goodwins brought their suit, the Paull-Pioneer Music Corporation had printed the sheet music, "The Colorado Home," which, according to the publishers, was the original of "Home on the Range." They said that the song was written in 1885, the music by C. D. (Bob) Swartz, and the words by Bill McCabe, Bingham

¹¹Lomax, "Half-Million Dollar Song," pp. 1-2.

¹²Ibid., p. 2.

¹³Ibid., p. 7.

Graves, C. D. Swartz, "Jim," and others. This group of storm-bound prospectors put the song together in Junk Lane Hotel near Leadville, Colorado.¹⁴

Lomax believed that the Arizona and Colorado versions, with the variances in the text and melody between the two, were fragments of the song, along with the tune which had been picked up from the moving population of the West in both states and issued as original compositions.¹⁵

According to Lomax, the entire known record of the real "Home on the Range" began with Steve Gaddy, an emigrant passing through Fort Stockton, Texas, who sang the song to soldiers (no one knows where he first heard the song). Gaddy traveled on and the song moved out in all directions from Fort Stockton. Six years later Dr. Higley and Dan Kelley of Kansas wrote out the words and music and taught it to their friends. Their song was never published, but Lomax doubted that the words and melody were original. Then in 1885 Swartz and his friends in Colorado wrote "Colorado Home," which had only a resemblance to the original song. Next the Goodwins of Arizona set down the tune, added a few words to the text, and secured a copyright in 1905. The version sung to Lomax in Texas was recorded in 1908, forty-one years after the song was first heard at Fort Stockton.¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., p. 4. Samuel Moanfeldt investigated "Colorado Home" and came to the conclusion that the song had been written earlier than 1885.

¹⁵Lomax, "Half-Million Dollar Song," p. 4.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 7.

During the ten-year period between 1907 and 1917, when Lomax was most active in his search for cowboy songs, he picked up many fragments of the words to "Home on the Range." Even before he heard the melody for the first time, he received scraps of words by mail from various contributors, ranging from a single line to several stanzas. The sharp variations in text convinced Lomax that the song was passed around by word of mouth. When he put "Home on the Range" together for his book, he selected the text from the numerous versions which had been sent to him from widely separated sections of the country.¹⁷ "It is an interesting fact to note that all present claimants to ownership of 'Home on the Range' follow precisely the text that I put together from miscellaneous sources and printed in Cowboy Songs in 1910."¹⁸

Lomax does admit in his article that the arrangement Guion wrote in 1930 came at the right moment and swept the country, and that Guion's name would always be connected with "Home on the Range." However, he did say that Guion used the exact text from Cowboy Songs and followed the same tune except for certain changes.¹⁹ "The song as I first printed it is the version known today--the words precisely, the tune slightly tinkered with by song writers."²⁰

¹⁷Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 6.

²⁰Ibid., p. 7.

Naturally, these statements were not to go unchallenged by David Guion. It was his belief that the melody printed in Lomax's Cowboy Songs was actually the same melody that he had re-written much earlier. As far back as he could remember there were other tunes written to the verses of "Home on the Range," but, not liking the earlier melodies, he wrote his own, using very little of the known tunes. He also changed the rhythm and tempo. When he was young, this song and others of his were often played and sung by him or friends at social gatherings. The songs did get around to other localities, either by friends or by people who were employed by his father. Ol' Coxy, an employee of the Guions, learned the tune from Guion, and, as Ol' Coxy was a frequent visitor of the Buckhorn Saloon in San Antonio, he thought it possible that the man who had sung "Home on the Range" for Lomax had actually learned it from Ol' Coxy.²¹

In 1908 Guion went to see Lomax, hoping to show him several manuscripts of his unpublished songs including "Home on the Range." They had a brief meeting, but Lomax was not interested in seeing any of them. This was two years before Cowboy Songs was published.²²

When Guion decided to publish "Home on the Range" in 1930, he wrote a melody of his own to the third stanza. It

²¹David Guion to Kenneth E. Crouch, 27 February 1948.

²²"Deer and the Antelope Not Playing this Time," Dallas Morning News, 6 October 1945, p. 7.

was the added "Guion melody" that he believed made the song world famous.²³ Not all agreed about the worth of the added "Guion melody." Mechem wrote in the Kansas Historical Quarterly that "Guion wrote a tune of his own for the stanza which begins 'Oh, give me a land.' This added melody has not met with any general acceptance."²⁴ In the booklet Guion had underlined the last statement and written "Ha-ha!" in the margin, obviously disagreeing.²⁵

Guion created a contrast to the other verses by placing his melody (Example 1) in a higher range. The two lines are exactly the same with the exception of measures 28 and 32 which vary in the rhythm.

Example 1. "Home on the Range," David W. Guion
(G. Schirmer 35811, mm. 26-34).

Guion melody

Oh, give me a land Where The bright dia-mond sand Flows
lei-sure-ly down The stream, Where The grace-ful white swan Goes
glid-ing a-long Like a maid in a heav-en-ly dream;—

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²³David Guion to Kenneth E. Crouch, 27 February 1948.

²⁴Mechem, "Home on the Range," p. 331.

²⁵Ibid.

John Rosenfield wrote Guion that the fight about "Home on the Range" had just started,²⁶ and he was right. Guion read in the 25 March 1946 Dallas Morning News that Paramount Pictures had taken an option on Lomax's book, Adventures of a Ballad Hunter, with Bing Crosby to play the role of Lomax. He assumed that the picture would be based on "Home on the Range," and that they would present Lomax's version of the origin of the song. Guion wrote Paramount Pictures his opinion of the controversy. He realized he could not prevent the use of the song, but he informed the studio that if they based the story on the success of the song in which he insisted Lomax had no part, then that would be another matter. Guion's personal note at the bottom of the letter was: "This matter was dropped by Paramount."²⁷

An uproar over the song began again in 1961. On his television show, Perry Como announced "Home on the Range," a song written in Texas by a Texan. This aroused an immediate response from Dr. I. E. Nickell, a former Kansas legislator, who stated it was not true. The song was written by Dr. Higley in the 1870s and was now the state song. Nickell had himself introduced the bill to the state legislature, and it had become the official state song of Kansas in 1947. Nevertheless, the

²⁶ John Rosenfield to David Guion, 19 October 1945.

²⁷ David Guion to Paramount Pictures, Inc., 30 April 1946.

²⁸ Interview with David Guion, Dallas, Texas, 3 March 1975.

research department of the Como television program still maintained that Guion was the composer.²⁸

Guion sent a special delivery letter to Dr. Nickell refuting the statement that the "Home on the Range" melody was written by a Kansan. He wrote that he had never disputed the fact that the words of "My Western Home" might have been written by Dr. Higley, but he did not believe that the melody composed by Kelley was the same as his. He further argued that the original words and music written in Kansas in 1873 should have been the song which the state claimed ownership and should be named "My Western Home."²⁹

Guion wrote:

I once secretly made a visit to the state of Kansas, under a nom de plume, of course, and wearing dark glasses. And there I found in all museums, libraries, colleges, schools, and public buildings, a brochure of the state flower and state song. There, as big as life, note for note, was an exact replica of my G. Schirmer, Inc. song, "Home on the Range," in the key of F (original copy) as I had written it. It was all there, except my name and the name of the publisher.³⁰

With the passing of time, the dispute has become less important, except to one man, David Guion. "It is my own tune. No one else had written it, as far as I know."³¹ His theory as to how Lomax might have heard his melody is plausible. The

²⁸"Kansas Lose Their Home," San Angelo Standard, 8 December 1961.

²⁹David Guion to Dr. I. E. Nickell, 16 December 1961.

³⁰Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 23.

³¹Interview with David Guion, Dallas, Texas, 3 March 1975.

tune by Dan Kelley of Kansas was never written down,³² only the recollection of the song sixty-one years later was recorded and presented as evidence.

The text is another matter. There are variances in the poem "My Western Home" and what Lomax called his conglomerate version of "Home on the Range," printed in Cowboy Songs (see Plate 3). The text of Guion's arrangement is verses one, four, six, seven, and the chorus from John Lomax's poem. Stanza six is set to Guion's added melody.

Guion explained that he let the world think his song was a cowboy tune because he knew others had been written to the words of "Home on the Range," and because he believed the words to be in public domain.³³

Where I made my mistake, when I published "Home on the Range," was in calling it an "arrangement" and listing it as a Texas Cowboy Song. But at that time I wanted to give my native state, Texas, credit for the melody. . . . Then too, there was the Lomax copyright of 1910, and later the Fox arrangement. I felt I had to list my song as an "arrangement." That was foolishness on my part and has since caused me many a headache.³⁴

The one undisputable fact of the situation is that it was Guion and his arrangement that made "Home on the Range" so well-known. The music arranged by Oscar Fox in 1925 failed to register. As a partner in the enterprise, Lomax admitted the sale was small. Edward N. Waters, Assistant Chief of the Music

³² Mechem, "Home on the Range," p. 337.

³³ David Guion to Kenneth E. Crouch, 27 February 1948.

³⁴ Guion, "Various Notes for the story of 'Home on the Range,'" n.d.

Plate 3. John A. Lomax's poem "Home on the Range" and its antecedent.

8

John A. Lomax

The Western Home

(The Kansas version that settled the half-million dollar lawsuit.)

Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam,
Where the deer and the antelope play.
Where never is heard a discouraging word
And the sky is not clouded all day.

A home, a home,
Where the deer and the antelope play.
Where never is heard a discouraging word
And the sky is not clouded all day.

Oh, give me the gale of the Solomon vale,
Where light streams with buoyancy flow;
On banks of the Beaver, where seldom if
ever,
Any poisonous herbage doth grow.

Oh, give me a land where the bright diamond
sand
Throws light from its glittering stream;
Where glideth along the graceful white
swan
Like a maid in her heavenly dream.

I love these wild flowers in this bright land
of ours;
I love, too, the curlew's wild scream.
The bluffs of white rocks and antelope flocks
That graze on our hillsides so green.

How often at night when the heavens are
bright
By the light of the glittering stars,
Have I stood there amazed and asked as I
gazed
If their beauty exceeds this of ours.

The air is so pure, the breezes so light,
The zephyrs so balmy at night.
I would not exchange my home here to range
Forever in azure so bright.

Home on the Range

(Conglomerate version printed in *Cowboy Songs* in 1910.)

Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam,
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word,
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

CHORUS

Home, home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play.
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word,
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Where the air is so pure, the zephyrs so free,
The breezes so balmy and light,
That I would not exchange my home on the
range
For all of the cities so bright.

The red man was pressed from this part of
the West,
He's likely no more to return
To the banks of Red River where seldom if
ever
His flickering camp fires burn.

How often at night when the heavens are
bright
With the light from the glittering stars,
Have I stood here amazed and asked as I
gazed
If their glory exceeds that of ours.

Oh, I love these wild flowers in this dear land
of ours,
The curlew I love to hear scream,
And I love the white rocks and the antelope
flocks
That graze on the mountaintops green.

Oh, give me a land where the bright diamond
sand
Flows leisurely down the stream,
Where the graceful white swan goes gliding
along
Like a maid in a heavenly dream.

Then I would not exchange my home on the
range,
Where the deer and the antelope play;
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

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Texas.

Division, the Library of Congress, wrote to Lomax: "My personal opinion is that the Guion version, with regard to form and harmonic setting, is superior and more artistic than Fox's. . . . Guion's creative contribution must be limited to the splendidly suitable setting he gave to the old melody."³⁵ Examples 2 and 3 clearly illustrate the difference in the way the two composers treated the song.

John Rosenfield's words aptly express the opinion of many about Guion's "Home on the Range":

What you did for "Home on the Range" is without parallel in American music. No other composer that I know of has so successfully transmuted a real folk sentiment into an art song. "Home on the Range" is lodged into the American heart. . . . Abroad the song is taken as a classic of a broad phase of Americana. What more could anybody ask of a composer? And the song they sing is your projection of that song and nobody else's.³⁶

³⁵Lomax, "Half-Million Dollar Song," pp. 6-7.

³⁶John Rosenfield to David Guion, 19 October 1945.

Example 2. "A Home on the Range," Oscar J. Fox (Carl Fischer, Inc. 23352-5, mm. 13-16).

Home, home on the range, Where the
deer and the an - te-lope play

From A HOME ON THE RANGE - John A. Lomax and Oscar J. Fox
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CHAPTER V

GUION'S MUSIC

Example 3. "Home on the Range," David W. Guion
(G. Schirmer 35811, num. 11-14).

Home, home on the range, Where the deer and the an-te-lope

play;

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Louis Reid, *New York American*, 13 January 1932.

Guion, *My Memoirs*, p. 48.

CHAPTER V

GUION'S MUSIC

Guion began his career as a pianist and teacher, but these activities did not satisfy his creative urge. He had a need to express himself further by writing music as well as performing it. As far back as he could remember, he had listened to cowboy ballads, spirituals, and folk songs, and he knew there was a wealth of material in those songs. The arrangements he wrote were meant to enhance these melodies, and he was desirous that others know and love them as he did. He did not change the tunes,¹ but merely added appropriate and artful accompaniments.

Much of his original work reflects the pleasant memories and associations of his youth. He spent most of his adult life in the East, but the inspirations and ideas for his compositions came from the Southwest. Self-taught in composition, Guion believed his ability was a natural gift, and his talent had to be expressed as only he could. He wrote that "evidently someone had to write Guion and I did!"²

¹Louis Reid, New York American, 13 January 1932.

²Guion, "My Memoirs," p. 48.

His music is primarily for voice and piano. Spirituals, Negro folk songs, cowboy tunes, and religious works comprise the major part of his vocal compositions. For the piano Guion wrote small, intimate pieces, and a few of these, such as his piano arrangements of "Turkey in the Straw" and "Arkansas Traveler," are orchestrated. The larger works for orchestra are suites with a descriptive title for each movement or division. Most of Guion's original compositions are programmatic, based on incidents or scenes remembered from his past.

"Hopi Indian Cradle Song" (1918), his first song to be published, is a melody that came to him while improvising at the piano. Louis Untermeyer,³ a friend in New York, provided the title and words.⁴ Guion's publication of "Bold Vaquero" (1918), gave him the distinction of being the first composer to treat a cowboy ballad as an art song.⁵

The Negro spirituals have simple, uncomplicated accompaniments. Many consist of a single chord at the beginning of each measure. Guion apparently did not want a busy and chromatic accompaniment to detract from the melody. He believed that the spirituals had a deep religious foundation and were not intended to be humorous. In his instructions printed on the sheet-music, he warned that any singer who tried to inject

³Louis Untermeyer, a renowned poet, writer, and lecturer, by 1969 was author and editor of more than ninety volumes of prose and verse.

⁴Dallas Morning News, 14 October 1923.

⁵"David Guion Famed Collector of Folk Music, Tells About Chanties, Songs, and Melodies," Dallas Times Herald, 4 December 1932, p. 4.

humor into his interpretation of the song destroyed its value and significance.⁶

The spirituals are strophic with a recurring refrain, and the words are written from his early experiences with the Negro dialect. It is interesting to note that Harry T. Burleigh's arrangement of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," published a year before Guion's version of the same song, did not use dialect as did Guion's.⁷

The old spirituals are kept intact, with no added melodies or modulations for contrast or variety. In "I Sees Lawd Jesus A Comin," Guion did add a note after each phrase which is to be sung like a sigh, but this is only an effect and does not alter the melody.⁸

Guion is much more demanding of the artist in his piano compositions. "Sheep and Goat" (1922), a transcription of an old fiddlers' tune, begins with the melody and simple triadic chords for the accompaniment. The tune is then repeated an octave higher and has a full chordal texture. Major-minor seventh chords are prevalent in both hands. Often the chords for the left hand span the interval of a tenth, which means that the average player must roll the chords in order to

⁶David W. Guion, "John de Bap-a-tist," (New York: M. Witmark and Sons, 1918).

⁷Harry T. Burleigh, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," (New York: G. Ricordi and Co., 1917). Burleigh was a composer of songs and arranger of Negro melodies, who received recognition of conspicuous achievements as a representative of the Negro race.

⁸David W. Guion, "I Sees Lawd Jesus A Comin," (New York: M. Witmark and Sons, 1918).

play them. The harmony and rhythm are conventional and predictable. These general characteristics are typical of his other "hoe-down" arrangements.⁹

The Mother Goose Suite (1932) is a series of short piano pieces based on seventeen nursery tunes by J. W. Elliott.¹⁰ The rhyme is printed at the top of each song. Chords built on the triad with the root doubled an octave higher are predominant in the musical structure of many of the pieces. Number 7, "Pussy, Cat, Pussy Cat," has a surprising feature. The right hand has the key signature of E flat major and the left hand is in the key of E major. This bitonality is the only example found in Guion's music of a real departure from his usual compositional style.

Guion's instructions for tempo and expression are not given in traditional terminology, and the pieces should be interpreted with this in mind. Throughout the nursery tune Number 11, "Ding, dong, bell, Pussy's in the Well," the performer is instructed to play one phrase "bashfully," another "reproachfully," and still another "churchy," while the final cadence is to be played "sobbingly."¹¹ There are enough

⁹David W. Guion, "Sheep and Goat Walkin' to the Pasture," (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1922).

¹⁰The Mother Goose nursery rhymes were set to original music by James William Elliott (1933-1915), for the song book Mother Goose (New York: G. Routledge and Sons, 1872).

¹¹David W. Guion, Mother Goose Suite (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1932). This suite was orchestrated by Wallingford Riegger and premiered in a special radio program over WFAA, Dallas, in 1935.

dynamic markings to indicate what the composer wants, and so the added descriptive terms seem superfluous and even confusing.

Guion wrote two small orchestral works, Prairie Suite, in memory of his mother, and Pastoral, dedicated to Percy Grainger. Prairie Suite is based on a single theme throughout the three movements, I, Morning; II, Afternoon; and III, Evening.¹²

Texas Suite is Guion's largest orchestral work. It is in fourteen sections and is forty-five minutes long. Seven of the fourteen sections are based on previously published tunes of Guion's. Each melody is a key to a certain geographical part of Texas. They are: (1) "Prairie Dusk" (West Texas), (2) "Square Dance" (San Angelo), (3) "Buffalo Bayou Song" (Houston), (4) "The Scissors Grinder" (Dallas), (5) "Lonesome Song of the Plains" (Pecos County), (6) "Wild Geese over Palestine" (East Texas), (7) "Camp Meetin' Along the Brazos" (Houston), (8) "I'on Bars" (Huntsville), (9) "Buck and Wing Dance" (South Texas), (10) "Prairie Woman" ('Lonely' Panhandle), (11) "Ride, Cowboy, Ride" (West Texas), (12) "Country Jig" (Runnels County), (13) "West Texas Cakewalk" (Brownwood), and (14) "High Steppin' Lula Belle May Ida Brown of Lyons Avenue Steps Out" (Houston).¹³

"Prairie Dusk," the first movement of Texas Suite, is soft and lyrical which begins and ends with a recording of

¹²Pastoral and Prairie Suite are in manuscript form and have no dates.

¹³"The Passing Show," Dallas Morning News, 19 January 1952.

crickets chirping, a mockingbird call, and a coyote howling in the distance. "High Steppin' Lula Belle" is a picture of social life among the Negroes who live on Lyons Avenue in Houston.¹⁴ Guion calls for a lively "hepcat" tempo and rhythm, a slow striptease tempo, and a lively boogie-woogie tempo. Lula Belle May Ida Brown, whose actions are described by the foregoing music, is killed at the end of the number. In the fifth measure before the final cadence, a snare drum plays a short series of notes imitating the gun shots. A note at the bottom of the last page in the orchestral score states: "Composer prefers pistol shot, if possible preceded by a woman's scream."¹⁵

Texas Suite consists mainly of straightforward melodies accompanied by simple diatonic harmonizations. The rhythmic pieces are based on dance rhythms generally associated with the Southwest.

Shingandi, originally for two pianos and later orchestrated, is in three movements. The first movement is marked "savage," the second is slow and expressive, and the third movement is to be played rhythmically and "savagely," with increasing excitement. The directions for the two-piano score again are unusual. For example, at one point the pianists are asked to play the music "murderously." Another marking is "as if writhing in pain." The musical passage at the beginning of the work is to be played "rhythmically (weird)." The story written

¹⁴"Guion Suite Due Premier," Daily Times Herald, Dallas, 22 January 1952, p. 8.

¹⁵David W. Guion, Texas Suite, a photostat copy of the original manuscript, Moody Library, Baylor University.

for this music is about African natives, their ritual dances, witch doctors, and human sacrifices, and Guion's instructions for the performance reflect the content.

Shingandi opens with tremolo chords for several measures, then moves into a driving rhythmic pattern to set the musical picture of an African native dance. The meter is regular with normal accent marks. Triadic chords with doubled root, often in both hands, are prevalent throughout the ballet, and open-fifth chords moving chromatically in parallel motion, along with some cluster chords, are common. The dynamics range from very soft to ffff.¹⁶

Baylor University has only a part of Guion's printed music and original manuscripts. In 1960 the Texas Federation of Music Clubs established a manuscript archive of Texas in the Dallas Public Library. There were three conditions for acceptance of a manuscript: (1) a composer must have been a resident of Texas at some time or his work must be concerned with Texas; (2) it must be an original autographed manuscript; and (3) a composer must be invited by the archives committee to submit the manuscript. Guion was among the first to be invited, and he submitted "Home on the Range."¹⁷

During that same year he presented eighty-two of his compositions, fifty-two of them original manuscripts, to the

¹⁶David W. Guion, Shingandi (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1932).

¹⁷"Music Archives Instituted Here," Dallas Times Herald, 7 February 1960, E5.

Dean of the Fine Arts Department at the University of Texas in Austin. The collection contained songs Guion had not submitted for publication.¹⁸ The list of the music at the University of Texas obtained by the Baylor Development Department is given here, and added comments by the composer have been included in the compilation (see Appendix A).

In 1963 he donated several more manuscripts to the archives in the Dallas Public Library. A list of these manuscripts was included in the Guion Collection (see Appendix B).

Combining the list from the University of Texas, Dallas Public Library, and the music cataloged at Baylor University, it is still possible only to estimate the number of Guion's works. There appear to be twenty-eight piano compositions, three orchestral works, thirty-two art songs, and fifteen cowboy ballads.

A brief explanation is necessary concerning the opera Suzanne listed in Appendix A. In the early 1930s Guion applied for a fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation.¹⁹ In the application he stated that he and Marie Wardall Lussi had begun work on an unnamed drama with music in the early part of 1928. The libretto, written by Miss Lussi, dealt with the development of the Negro race from slavery to the present day, with Louisiana to be the setting and background of the music drama.

¹⁸"Guion Will Give Manuscripts to Texas U.," Dallas Morning News, 25 February 1960, sec. 2, p. 6.

¹⁹In his résumé Guion wrote of a possible production of Shingandi at Roxy Theater which would place the time either in 1931 or 1932.

Guion had composed "Five Imaginary Early Louisiana Songs of slavery," with the play in mind. The five songs were: "To the Sun," "Mam'selle Marie," "Voodoo Gal," "De Massus an' de Missus," and "In Galam." Because of the delay in finishing the project, he decided to have the songs published in 1929. It was his hope that with the fellowship he could finish the research in Louisiana, and do the final writing of the music drama in some congenial place such as Europe, preferably Paris.²⁰ There is no information in the Guion Collection to indicate that the fellowship was granted, or that the opera was completed.

Music publishers and performers are constantly looking for fresh material that will appeal to an audience and to a buying public. Guion entered the field with compositions that did both. For a time his music was sung and played by well-known artists, recognized by a United States president, and studied by young aspiring pianists and singers. But the style of popular music undergoes continuous change. Much of what was popular twenty or thirty years ago is now considered dated. This has happened to the music of David Guion, and it has happened to other composers. While his music may never regain the popularity it once had, it may continue to find some favor, as have certain popular folk songs which are enjoyed by the American public from one generation to the next.

²⁰Guion, Résumé for application to the Guggenheim Foundation, n.d.

APPENDIX A

MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINTED COPIES IN THE FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS IN AUSTIN

Works for piano

Arkansas Traveler (Old Fiddlers' Breakdown). Concert Ink
Transcription by David W. Guion.
[Copy of Original Manuscript]

Barcarolle Español
[Original Manuscript 1936. 1936, Sept. 1st]

Country Jig (An Original Tune)
[Original Manuscript. 1933]

Rag Crazy
[Original Manuscript. Later published as Jazz
Scherzo. Written at the age of 9--Ballinger,
Texas]

Turkey in the Straw
[Original Manuscript. Written Ballinger, Texas--
1910--at age 18. Change the ending said the
publisher, I did! D.W.G.]

Valse Arabesque
[Original Manuscript. Copyright secured 1923]

(Orchestral works in two-piano score)

Ally Tunes

I Brudder Sinkiller and His Flock of Sheep
[Original Manuscript]

II The Lonesome Whistler
[Original Manuscript]

III The Harmonica Player
[Original Manuscript]

Ballet Primitive "Shingandi"
[Original Sketch. Primitive African Ballet]

Ballet Primitive "Shingandi." Piano I, Piano II
[Published by G. Schirmer, Inc.] Ink

Songs for solo voice and piano

All Day on the Prairie (Texas Cowboy Song)
[Ballinger, Texas, 1909. Original Manuscript]

The Bell-Buoy. Lyric by Jessie B. Rittenhouse. Ink

The Bell-Buoy. Words by Jessie B. Rittenhouse.
[Original Manuscript]

The Bold Vaquero (Texas Cowboy) 1906
[First cowboy song ever to be published and sung in
public. Original Manuscript. Written in 1906--
Ballinger, Texas, when I was 14 years old.]

Chloe (Negro Wail). Words & Music by David W. Guion.
[Original Manuscript. Copyright April, 1929] Ink

The Cowboy's Dream. Words and Music by David W. Buion.
[Original Manuscript]

Cowboy's Meditation (Texas Range Song). Tune and Words
from the Notebooks and Collection of Charles J. Finger
[Copy of Original] Ink

Cowboy's Meditation
[Original Manuscript. Copyright 1925]

Texas Cowboy's Meditation Ink
[Copy of Original]

The Crucifixion, or At the Cry of the First Bird.
From Ancient Irish Poetry
[Original Manuscript. Copyright 1921. On final
page: "The Crucifixion" Copyright 1923]

Embers. Words by Jessie B. Rittenhouse. To Helen S.
Woodruff. [Copy of Original. Copyright by
M. Witmark & Sons] Ink

The Ghostly Galley Ink
[Copy of Original]

The Ghostly Galley. Words by Jessie B. Rittenhouse.
[Copy of Original]

A Heartbreak
[Original Manuscript]

- Home on the Range (Texas Cowboy Song) In remembrance of
[Written at age of 16--1908--Ballinger, Texas.
1st Manuscript]
- I Sees Lawd Jesus A Comin. To Neppy, my old black Mammy.
[Copy of Original. M. Witmark & Sons, Owners of
Copyright]
- Jubilee. Written for and dedicated to Oscar Seagle.
Collected and arranged by David Guion.
[Copy of Original]
- Lif' Away (Negro Wail). Words & Music by David W. Guion.
[Original Manuscript]
- Negro Wail. Words & Music by David W. Guion.
[Later published as Lif' Away. Original Manuscript]
- Life and Love. [Words by?] Marie Wardall.
[Original Manuscript]
- Life and Love. [Words by?] Marie Wardall.
[Original Manuscript]
- Lil' Black Rose. Lyric by Marie Wardall.
[Original Manuscript]
- Little Joe the Wrangler (Texas Cowboy Song). Composed
and Arranged by David Guion.
[Original Manuscript]
- Little Pickaninny Kid
[Original Manuscript]
- Lonesome Song of the Plains
[Copy of Original]
- Lonesome Song of the Plains [Words by?] Grace Noll Crowel.
[Original Manuscript]
- Love Is Lord of All
- Mary Alone. Poem by Lucile Isbell Stall.
[Original Manuscript. One of the best songs I ever
wrote! D.W.G. 1921. 5/18/21]
- My Own Laddie [Without text]
[Original Manuscript. Words written later--
published later]
- O Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie (The Dying Cowboy).
Arranged by David W. Guion.
[Copy of Original. Witmark, Owners of Copyright]

Ink

- O Carry Me Back to the Lone Prairie. In remembrance of
Will Rogers.
[Original Manuscript. Copyright 1935]
- O' My Lawd, What Shall I Do? (Darkey Song)
[Original Manuscript]
- De Ol' Ark's A-Moverin'
[Original Manuscript or Sketch]
- Ol' Paint (Cowboy Song). Arranged by David W. Guion.
[Original Manuscript. Copyright 1931]
- Old Maid Blues. Sung by Nora Bayes. Words by Web Maddox.
[Written in 1910--Ballinger, Tex. Copyright 1917 by
David W. Guion. Copy of Original]
- One Day. Words by Marri Lussi.
[Original Manuscript. April 26th, 1937]
- Praise God I'm Satisfied (Taken from one of the oldest of
the unwritten Negro hymns)
[Copy of Original]
- Prayer During Battle
[Copy of Original. Original song written at the age
of 10--Ballinger, Tex. Words added later in 1917.
Copyright 1917 by David W. Guion] Ink
- Rabbit's Foot ("Gettin' Over the Blues"). A Negro Oddity.
Words by Louis Weslyn. Music by David Wendel (Guion!)
[Original Manuscript from which "Jazz Scherzo" was
made. Written at the age of 9--Ballinger, Tex.]
- Resurrection. [Words by?] Marie Wardall.
[Original Manuscript]
- Return. Words by Jessie B. Rittenhouse.
[Original Manuscript. Published by Schirmer]
- Roll Along, Little Dogies
[Original Manuscript]
- Run, Mary, Run! Words and Music by David W. Guion.
[Original Manuscript]
- Sail Away for the Rio Grande. Arranged for Voice with Piano
Accompaniment by David W. Guion. Original tune and words
from the collection of Charles J. Finger.
[Original Manuscript. Copyright 1925]
- Sinner, Don' Let Dis Harvest Pass. Collected & arranged by
David W. Guion.
[Copy of Original. Witmark, Owners of Copyright]

This Night Can Never Come Again! [Words by?] Marri Lussi.
[Original Manuscript]

What To Do With a Drunken Sailor (Sea Chanty) [(Sailor Chanty)
is given instead of (Sea Chanty) in title on first page
of music. The first title is taken from a cover.]
[Original Manuscript]

When The Work's All Done This Fall (Cowboy Song). As Collected
and Arranged by David W. Guion.
[Copyright 1930]

When You Go. Lyric by Jessie P. Rittenhouse
[Copy of Original] Ink

When You Go. [Dedication?]
[Original Manuscript]

Wrong Livin' (A Slow Drag). Words and Music by David W. Guion.
[Original Manuscript]

The Yellow Rose of Texas. Words & Music rewritten by
David W. Guion.
[Original Manuscript. 1930]

Creole-Creola. Book and Lyrics by Marie Wardall.
[Copy of Original. Copyright by David W. Guion]

Loss. To Armour Fentress Guion. Words by Jessie B. Rittenhouse.
[Original Manuscript. Copyright 1918 by Boosey & Co.]

Songs from the opera "Suzanne"
Book and lyrics by Marie Wardall.

In Galam
[Copy of Original] Ink

In Galam
[Original Manuscript] Ink

In Galam
[Original Manuscript]

Mam'selle Marie
[Copy of Original. One of my best and one I love! D.W.G.] Ink

Mam'selle Marie
[Original Manuscript] Ink

Mam'selle Marie
[Original Manuscript]

- De Massus an' de Missus
[Copy of Original] Ink
- De Massus an' de Missus
[Original Manuscript] Ink and pencil
- To the Sun
[Copy of Original. Copyright 1920 by David W. Guion] Ink and pencil
- To the Sun
[Original Manuscript. Later re-written & published by G. Schirmer, Inc. (all five numbers)] Ink
- To the Sun
- Voodoo [Gal]
[Copy of Original] Ink
- Voodoo Gal
[Original Manuscript] Ink
- Voodoo Gal
[Original Manuscript]
- Song, printed copies
- Holy Bible. To Neppy, my old black Mammy. Collected and arranged by David Guion. Witmark, Copyright MCMXVIII
- Satan's A Liar An' A Conjur Too. To Irene McNeel
Collected and Arranged by David W. Guion.
Copyright MCMXVIII. Cover: Darkey Spirituals Collected and Arranged by David W. Guion.
- You Jes' Will Git Ready, You Gwine A Die. To Sally Hill Scaife.
Collected and Arranged by David W. Guion. M. Witmark & Sons.
Copyright MCMXVIII.

APPENDIX B

MANUSCRIPTS IN THE DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

MUSIC MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Songs for solo voice and piano

Chloe (Negro Wail)

Dark Rivers

Home on the Range

Lef' Away. (Negro Wail) Words and music by David W. Guion.

Lonesome Song of the Plains. Grace Noll Crowell. David W. Guion.

Mary. Marie Lussi. David W. Guion.

Texas Cowboy's Meditation. (Copyright G. Schirmer, Inc. 1930)

Piano music

Staccato Concert Etude

Two pianos

Ballet Primitive (Shingandi)

Darkey Spirituals

Hark, From de Tombs

Holy Bible

I Sees Lawd Jesus A-Comin'

John De Bap-a-tist.

Jubilee

Little David

My Little Soul's Gwine A-shine

Nobody Knows de Trouble I Sees

Poor Sinner

Satan's a Liar an' a Conjur Too

Sinner, Don' Let dis Harves' Pass

Some o' These Days

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

You Jest Well Git Ready, You Gwine A-die

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