

(Sage) SONGS ABOUT LIFE (!)



(and Thyme....)

by

PRISCILLA McLEAN

Seven Uncommon Songs

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***for Soprano and Piano***

***MLC PUBLICATIONS***

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## INTRODUCTION

These songs, while addressing the heady issue of life and death, are primarily meant to be fun to sing. While the musical content is the prime reason for their existence, the composer wrote them to stretch her voice in range, breath control, flexibility, dramatic delivery, and to work with several kinds of extended vocal techniques.




For the voice student (or teacher), these can be used as "warm-up" songs and/or recital pieces. The piano part has been written specifically so that the vocalist with some piano technique could perform her own accompaniment during practice. During a recital, however, an accompanist should be used.

A sketch of each song's vocal techniques:

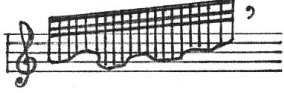
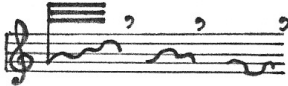



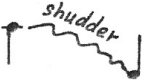
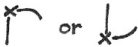

- Song #1: a vocalise and practice on breath control and timbre changing possibilities.
- Song #2: Vocal range expanding by use of glissandi (glides).
- Song #3: lyrical singing and breath control, range expanding
- Song #4: exploration of jazz scat singing and use of vocal improvisation.
- Song #5: serious dramatic (classical) singing.
- Song #6: exploring speech and singing, changing timbre on one pitch, range expanding, vocal trills and tremolos.
- Song #7: use of timbre and range to stretch dramatic possibilities. This song is a musical play all in itself!

*Above all, these songs, along with their thoughtful messages, will give delight and pleasure to anyone singing or listening to them!*

## PIANO: PEDALLINGS

- Ped. or P.I.  = Common loud pedal (furthest one on right).
- P.II.: *Sost. Ped.*  = Sostenuto pedal (middle). Depress notes given, then pedal (given notes will hold while future notes will not). If pedal is not functional or missing, use P.I. in a half-position.
- P.III. (*Soft Ped.*)  = Soft pedal (furthest one on left).

## NEW NOTATIONS

1.  = Follow contour of line while musically "laughing" very fast notes. Take short rest at v.
2.  = Same as above, written usually for short groups of notes.
3.  = Alternating hands play 5ths (l.h.) against triads (r.h.), within range of pitches indicated, in any order. Continue doing this until arrow stops (→).
4.  = Approximate pitch
5.  = Glissando: glide in direction of line drawn.
6.  = Broken glissando, using "h"'s in a kind of tremolo, like a shudder.
7.  = Slight gliss down/up (also called "slur" or "bend").
8. "White tone" = Without vibrato, or "non-vib".
9.  = Sing syllables as fast as possible on one pitch, like a tremolo.

*It is important for the singer to follow the vocal directions given in the songs, as these songs explore a wide range of sound, and are most interesting when sung as animatedly and accurately as possible.*

# (Sage) SONGS ABOUT LIFE (!) (and Thyme....)

by

## PRISCILLA McLEAN

\*Stopwatch  
(approximate  
timings)

### "Life is Just a Bowl of ....."

[00] Sing - laugh

*mm-* (laugh with mouth closed)

*Rapid tempo*

*pp*

P.III (soft Ped.)

*mm-* *mm-* *mm-* *mm-* *mp*

[Cont. B's →] (:10)

*hih-hih* *hih-hih*

("laugh" - open lips, teeth slightly apart.)

range alternate [9] → Continue same style of alternating hands, in range given. 2-8 note patterns, any direction. Jerky style.

Soft Ped. (III)

*mf*

*hih-hih* (gradually open mouth and increase range)

(r.h.: white Keys)

Cont. →

(B's) [9] (l.h.: black Keys)

III:

\* Stopwatch only for rehearsal.

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(:30)

*f* *ff*

ha----- (shrieking laughter) Ah (hahaha...) ah ah (ha)

range  
(P's) [9] Cont.

alternate

P.III lift up off *mf* *f* (always under voice)

(:42-45)

(hahaha) ah wa hahaha... wa ha-  
(shudder-portamento) (very nasal, like a parrot)

become nasal

*f*

(P's) [9] *p*

P.III

\* Purse lips, tongue flat + raised, like German umlaut, + nasal tone. (1:00)

(J J J J J) (f) (f) (f) (f) (f) (f) (shudder-portamento)

ha-ha-ha \*wih ih ih ih ih wa-hahaha.....

(P's) [9] (*p*)

(P.III)

(full voice) [one long breath: 10 sec.] [♩=80] *f*

Ha! Ah Ah

(higher range) [♩=80]

(P's) [9] *mf* P.II *b̄* *b̄*

3.

(speak jauntily)

*mf* There was an old singer who lived in a shoe.

*mp*

She had so many pitches, She didn't know what to do ...

*p* [No Ped.]

*mp* *sf* (p to sf) Sing: lightly, like vocalizing  
 one long breath - insanity!

[spread lips] [?] [?]  
 Hoo hoo hoo --- heheheh -- Ho-o-o-ah, Haha, haha ---

\* mimic rhythm of singer as closely as possible, using same patterns as before.

ha hoo hoo  
 ah haha---hee--hee ha hoo ha ha... improvise, using all vowels  
 (ha, hee, hoo, ho, etc): alternate between vocalizing style and humorous short turns.

Cont. mimicing singer's rhythm →

(pp to mp) play under volume of voice. L.H.

(Continue improvising) →

(white keys only)

(mimic singer) → Cont. mimicing rhythm of singer (black keys only) →

Madly vocalize:  
2 long breaths' worth

hoo hoo haw ha

3 sec.

f

hahaha-----

3 sec.

mf

(F-F)

Play continuously →

(Quick breath)

Real laughter

5 sec.

Hahaha.....hahahahaha (breathe in (slow down) very noisily)

off

Moderato

Allegro

8va-----

mf

f

p

5

5

Very staccato, like a big joke!

5.

# Dreams — Reality (?)

Priscilla  
McLean

Text: Anon.

*(white tone)*  
*mf*

*Lightly*

Aw ———,

*(mf)*

*(Tightly purse lips:  
dark, heavy tone)*

Aw ———, oo ———, oo ———,

*(mf)* *(Gaily - normal singing)*

There was a young man from Pe -

*(crazily)* *(normally)*

-ru ah oo (oo), Who

(emphatically)

gliss: up (smooth)  
down (shudder)

smooth shudder shudder smooth

dreamt he was eat-ing his shoe — wa-oo-wa-oo-wa!

(almost like a quack)

(white tone)

uwa uwa wawa wawa wawa wawa wawa wawa Ah —————>

→...vibrato... (mf)

Ah — oo — wa — oo — He

*f*

woke in the night ————— in a ter-ri-ble fright

legato

7.

Meno mosso

*f* (full voice... towards heavy white tone →)

*sub p*

*ff* *f*

P.II: Sost. Ped.   
 P.I: Ped.

.. (white tone)

*dim.*

*pp*

secure:   
 P.II   
 (silently)

(cont. white tone)

*mf* (spooky, white spacy tone)

And found it was perfectly

*mp*

P.II.



8.

*(matter-of-fact speech tone)*

*mf*

True — !

(P.II)

*is Life Just One Big --- ?*

(P.M.)

*Priscilla McLean*

[♩ = 69-72]

*P* *lamenting tone, emotionally* *mf*

Oo — Ah —

8va. —

*p to mp*

(Ped.) P.I.

*mf* *(mournfully)* *(sighing)*

Ah — Ah —

8va. —

*gliss.*

*Ped. cont.*

9.

(long sigh) *mf*

Ah Where

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, starting with a whole note 'Ah' followed by a long, descending melisma marked '(long sigh)'. The melisma ends with a half note 'Where' marked *mf*. A dashed line labeled '8va' indicates an octave shift for the melisma. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment in bass clef, featuring a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and block chords in the left hand.

do we go when we die

*Ped. cont.*

The second system continues the musical score with three staves. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics 'do we go when we die' under a long melisma. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) continues with the same eighth-note accompaniment and block chords. The instruction '*Ped. cont.*' is written below the piano part.

*Gliss* ? oo -

*sub. p*

*Ped. cont.*

The third system consists of three staves. The vocal line (top staff) features a glissando marked '*Gliss*' leading to a question mark '?' and then a long note 'oo -' marked *p*. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) continues with the eighth-note accompaniment and block chords, with the instruction '*sub. p*' written below the piano part. The instruction '*Ped. cont.*' is written below the piano part.

ah Ah

*mf*

*Ped. cont.*

The fourth system consists of three staves. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics 'ah Ah' under a long melisma. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) continues with the eighth-note accompaniment and block chords, with the instruction '*mf*' written above the piano part. The instruction '*Ped. cont.*' is written below the piano part.



*f*

*mf*

Do our

*mp*

*mol-e-cules* ————— *get up* ————— *and*

*mp*

*f*

*mf*

*fly* ————— ? *Do they dance* ————— *in the air?*

*mp*

*mf* (*speak*)\* (*sing*)

*Dance!* \* *in the air!* Then \* *scat-ter* ————— *h-h-here*

*mp*

*Ped. cont.*

\*Singer may be freer with rhythm here.

11.

*meno mosso rit. ... meno...*

*f*

and there — aw-oo-aw-oo-tyaotutututu-there—

(d) gliss: bumpy  
smooth smooth

(8va) gliss.

*meno mosso*

*f*

Ped.

*A Tempo* [ $\text{♩} = 69-72$ ]

*mf* *oppressed: white tone*

Is our life just one

*p*

(loco) play: inevitable, as doom

*f* *mf* *mp*

gliss. bend gliss.

(d) *p*

big sigh — ? oo

*slow gliss*

*p*

gliss.

\*no roll.

mp Ah mp Ah

This system contains the first three measures of the piece. The vocal line begins with a half note 'Ah' in the key of D major, marked *mp*. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand. The second measure contains another 'Ah' vocal line, also marked *mp*.

(exhaustedly) Ah gliss

This system contains measures 4 and 5. The vocal line in measure 4 is marked *(exhaustedly)*. In measure 5, the vocal line features a glissando ('gliss') leading to an 'Ah' vocal line. The piano accompaniment continues with intricate textures, including tremolos and sustained chords.

mp (d.) pp very slow gliss Ah

This system contains measures 6 and 7. The vocal line in measure 6 is marked *mp*. In measure 7, the vocal line features a 'very slow gliss' leading to an 'Ah' vocal line, which is marked *pp*. The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *p* in measure 6 and *pp* in measure 7, with a final chord marked *pp*.

13. *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow* .....

[♩=120-126] *Always sing very lightly\** Priscilla McLean

*(semper staccato)* *mf* *non vib....vib.*  
Dee oop de ah ————— Scubadooba

*non vib.* *stacc.* *non vib....vib.*  
dee badatadadadladladladl-doo

*non vib.* *stacc.* *f Broadway-style: speak-sing*  
yadadadadoo-pa! ————— Here to-day and

*vib....* *mf*  
gone to-mor-row —————, Patadldoo-pa

\* Scat-style: soprano can invent other scat syllables, if desired.

Pa tadl doopa —————, Deedl deedl deedl deedl deedl deedl

The first system consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a melodic phrase 'Pa tadl doopa' followed by a long sustain line, then a series of eighth notes 'Deedl deedl deedl deedl deedl deedl'. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

*f non* ..... *add vib.* ... *heavy vib.* *mf*

wa ————— ! Dabadaba

The second system continues the vocal line with 'wa' followed by a long sustain line and an exclamation mark, then 'Dabadaba'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Performance markings include dynamics *f non*, *add vib.*, *heavy vib.*, and *mf*.

*think:* (J. E) *non vib... vib.* *bend*

dabadaba yoo-padoopa dee —————, So why be

The third system features the vocal line with 'dabadaba yoo-padoopa dee' followed by a long sustain line and the text 'So why be'. The piano accompaniment includes a *mp* marking. Performance markings include *think:* (J. E), *non vib... vib.*, and *bend*.

(wail) → *bend* *(growly under-voice)*

filled with sor-row? ————— tadlladl -

The fourth system features the vocal line with 'filled with sor-row?' followed by a long sustain line and 'tadlladl -'. The piano accompaniment includes a *p* marking. Performance markings include *(wail) →*, *bend*, and *(growly under-voice)*.

15.

*mp*  
ladlladl Tadlladl Tadlladl Tadlladl, yadlladl doodl doodl,

The first system consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a series of eighth-note patterns, followed by a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines in both hands.

*f* Ah! ———— *mf* *slur* dee-up dee-ah ————! *mp* Gone

The second system features a vocal line with a dynamic shift from *f* to *mf* and *mp*. The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes and various chordal textures.

to-mor-row, *mf* Tid-dlee-oopa toopa toopa Tee! — *p* *non vib.*

The third system shows a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes and a melodic line. The piano accompaniment features chords and a dynamic shift from *mf* to *p*. The instruction *non vib.* is present.

*bend* (quitteral shudder) *non vib. . . . . vib. non vib.*  
hih ———— Here to-day!

The fourth system includes a vocal line with a *bend* instruction and a melodic line with a *quitteral shudder* effect. The piano accompaniment features chords and a dynamic shift from *mf* to *p*. The instruction *non vib. . . . . vib. non vib.* is present.

..... vib.

! Tee-da-lee-up-a-dub-ba-doo !

*Piu mosso* \* Cadenza: Singer can completely improvise in scat-style here, or follow below as guide.

\* doodleup, doo-wa tiddleoo-pa scooba dooba doo-

Fast Tempo [♩=200]

Fast [♩=200]

wa scoobee doo doodleadoopa da-ba

15-30 second improvisation

daba [Sing, whisper, speak-sing, go into low voice range, repeat previous fragments: ex: "dubba-doo," "pa-tadldoo," "doo-wa," "scuba," etc...]

\* add: add: add:

\* Play chords in any order, using previous line as guide. Gradually add other chords (in boxes) at times. Use plenty of rests.







# What Reason Why?

*P.M.*

*Priscilla McLean*

[♩ = 58]

The first system of the musical score is in 3/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 58. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest followed by a half note G4, then a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The piano accompaniment starts with a half note chord of G4-B4-D5 in the right hand and a half note chord of B3-D4-F4 in the left hand. The lyrics "What" are written under the vocal line.

*p*

8va-----

8va-----

What

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal line has a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a half note B4, and a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment continues with similar chords. The lyrics "rea son why Earth" are written under the vocal line.

rea son why Earth

8va-----

8va-----

The third system continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal line has a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a half note B4, and a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment continues with similar chords. The lyrics "and sky" are written under the vocal line.

*mp*

and sky

8va-----

8va-----

The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment. The right hand has a half note chord of G4-B4-D5, and the left hand has a half note chord of B3-D4-F4. The lyrics "and sky" are written under the vocal line.

*p*

8va-----

8va-----

19.

*p* *mp* *mf*  
The rea - son be - ing

*f* *mf* *be.*  
for our see - ing

*p* (*sotto voce - contemplative*)  
And is that  
*sub. pp*

(*speak*) (*sing*) *pp*  
rea - son for our be - ing?

*Speak: low-pitched voice*  
*mp*

And is that reason for

our being? *rit...*

P. M.

Merry-go-round... Life is a

Priscilla  
Mc Lean

$\text{♩} = 132-138$

*pp* *mf* Tremolo: flub lips w. tongue

Timing (no barlines) is in seconds.

Ah

*mp* Cont. repeating arpeggio

Ped. → hold down continuously



*mf* [45] *f*  
 ....nasal tone ... very nasal..  
 Ah — ee — eee — eeee

Ped. →

*mp*  
 breathe in noisily ... become sob Choking sob-speech: nasally  
 Other rounds have a painful sting!

Continue in same manner  
*(mp)*

Ped. →

[1:00] *mf*  
 (2-3 sec.) full voice  
 Woo — ah — oo

Ped. →

*f* (1:10)  
 Speak: rapturously  
 -wah —, Then there are the beautiful horses

Ped. →

23.

[1:15]

*mp* *f* *slide* *slide* *slide*

bobbing, ee—yah— ee—yah—

The first system shows a vocal line with a whole note followed by a measure of rests, then a melodic phrase with three slides. The piano accompaniment consists of a series of chords in the left hand, mostly triads and dyads, with some grace notes.

*Improvise, as before*

Ped. →

[1:30]

*slide* *very slow slide* Ah Ah Ah—

— ee ah —

*Continue in same manner*

The second system features a vocal line with a long note, a 'very slow slide', and three 'Ah' notes. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady harmonic accompaniment.

Ped. →

[c. 1:35]

*mf* *speak-sing* *bend* *bend* *bend*

The world whirls by —

*add:*

The third system has a vocal line with three bends and the lyrics 'The world whirls by'. The piano accompaniment includes a box labeled 'add:' with a note and an accent.

Ped. →

*f* *speak: loud, crassly realistic* [1:50] *mf*

Not Noticing! woo-o-o-o-o tk-a-tk-a-tk-a-tk-a

*Continue in same manner*

The fourth system features a vocal line with a long note and the lyrics 'Not Noticing! woo-o-o-o-o tk-a-tk-a-tk-a-tk-a'. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady harmonic accompaniment.

Ped. →

[c.1:55] *roll r's* → [2:00] *slow bend*

tya tya tya tya tya tya-a-a-a-a, Krrrrr — er

*Cont.* (mp)

Ped. →

*f speak-sing*

you cling to the poles wanting to

*Continue*

Ped. →

[c.2:10] *(trill-like)* *(very lightly)*

spr(ing) ya-ee ya-ee ya-ee ya-ee ya-ee

(mp)

Ped. →

[c.2:20] *be-shudder* *mf full voice*

yahh-h-h-h-ing! And the mu-sic

*Cont.*

Ped. →

25.

[c. 2:30]

(speak)

(sing)

And the mu-sic con-tin-ues

(mp)

Ped. →

(speak)

[2:45]

con-tin-ues to sou —

Cont.

Ped. →

nd.

rit. . . . .

Ped. —————

Piano: hold down  
until next song →



...and the Music Continues to Sound!

P.M.

Priscilla McLean

Waltz time: Moderato

Life is a Mer-ry go-round.

*mp*

Ped.

(Sing always playfully, lightly)

Some-times you win a brass

Ped.: Cont.

ring — Other rounds have a pain — ful

*p*

sting. Oo Other rounds have a painful

(speak)

*p*

27.

*(happily)* *rit.*

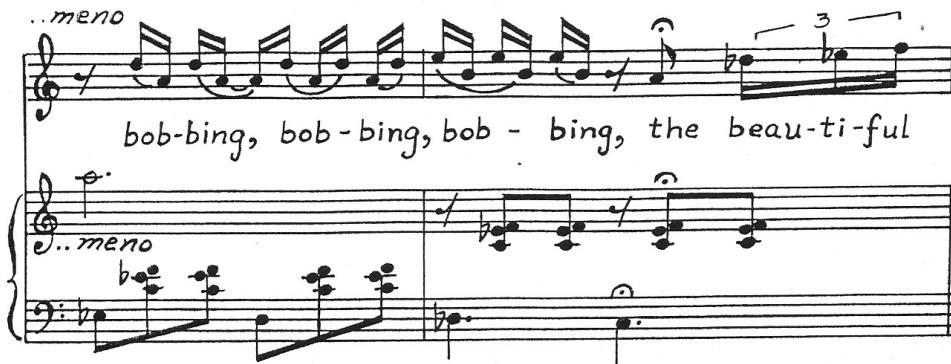
sting. Then there are the beau-ti-ful hors-es



*..meno*

bob-bing, bob-bing, bob - bing, the beau-ti-ful

*..meno*



*accel.* *A Tempo*  
*slight bend*

hors — es! *A Tempo* And the fa-ces —

*accel.*



some lit with fire! Some lit with fire



*shudder-sing*  
some sob-bing  
*(moan-sing)*  
sob bing.

*(sing-speak dizzily)*  
The world whirls by  
*bend*

*(full voice)*  
The world whirls by — (hhh) — not no-ticing.

You cling — to the poles, you cling  
*bend*

to the poles *bend* wanting to spring *3* (*shudder*)

*gliss.*

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of the piece. The vocal line begins with a quarter note on 'to', followed by a quarter note on 'the', and a half note on 'poles' with a 'bend' instruction. The piano accompaniment features a descending bass line with chords in the right hand. The second measure has a triplet of eighth notes on 'wanting' and a half note on 'to' with a 'gliss.' instruction. The third measure has a quarter note on 'spring' with a '3' triplet and a '(shudder)' instruction.

spring *bend*

*gliss.*

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures. The vocal line has a quarter note on 'spring' with a 'gliss.' instruction, followed by a half note with a 'bend' instruction. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar descending bass line and chords.

(*speaking*)  
While the mu-sic —, the mu-sic,

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth measures. The vocal line has a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note on 'While', a quarter note on 'the', a quarter note on 'mu-sic' with a dash, a quarter note on 'the', a quarter note on 'mu-sic' with a dash, and a quarter note on 'the'. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line with chords.

while the mu — sic — — — — — con —  
gva — — —

Detailed description: This system contains the fifth and sixth measures. The vocal line has a quarter note on 'while', a quarter note on 'the', a quarter note on 'mu' with a dash, a quarter note on 'sic' with a dash, and a quarter note on 'con' with a dash. The piano accompaniment continues with a descending bass line and chords.

tin-ues to sound, the mu-sic  
(8va) gliss.

This system shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a long note with a glissando line above it. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

con-tin-ues to sound, the mu-sic  
(8va) gliss.

This system is similar to the first, with a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a long note with a glissando line above it.

\* Repeat once: Voice fades to ppp.  
con-tin-ues to sound, the mu-sic  
(8va) gliss.  
\* Repeat once: piano fades to pp.

This system includes repeat signs and dynamic markings. The vocal line has a long note with a glissando line above it. The piano accompaniment has a bass line in the left hand.

(8va) slow gliss.  
rit. . . . .  
ppp

This system shows the final part of the piece. The vocal line has a long note with a glissando line above it. The piano accompaniment has a bass line in the left hand and a right hand with chords. The piece ends with a *ppp* marking.