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Marjorie Coombs MacGibbon Ball, M. J.'s protegee: ...And the lessons were 50 cents--50 cents a lesson. And of course I went to see him, and he just said, "There's a lot of things wrong with your voice. You're very nasal. We've got to get a lot of that out." But he wanted to take me on. So that was it.... What I got from Mosey Ballah was: first of all, he took all the nasal quality--I used to sing through my nose. Which is fine--I had a lovely head resonance, fine, but too much of it. He wanted to get some of that nasal quality out, so we worked on that ex? tremely hard. To the point where I lost my nasal--a lot of the nasal quality was gone. He said, "My God! Now we have to work get? ting some nasal quality into your voice." He worked on .that with me, and it worked. It was great.... He placed my voice where it should be. You know, there's such a thing as "voice plac? ing," and he placed it just where it should be. And also gave me this...terrific breath control. Which you have to have, too. If you're studying voice seriously, you must have a great capacity for carrying over a long phrase without breaking it. And that's one thing he did. He didn't give me so much repertoire. Being a man, sometimes I think--he gave me a lot of good things, but not so much in the classical as I got later on from my second voice teacher. (Why, now, do you think that's the .case, being a man?) Well, I think Mr. Ballah probably received a lot of his training, I understand, from an Eng? lishman who was here at the time, a very good teacher. And possibly because he was on an island, and I don't know just where else he studied.... So therefore, he had a great male repertoire. And he was quite a man. He had a lovely, lovely bass voice. And he'd sing all these things like "Old Man River," "Momma's Little Baby Loves Short'nin' Bread." A lot of these type of songs. He was extra good at those because he just sang--he used to say to me, "Marjorie, if it doesn't come from your heart, forget it. No matter what you sing, sing from your heart." A lot of people give up; they sing words.... We got to be so close to the family that we went there for parties. This had nothing to do with the students, just parties with his family: Joe and Theresa and Aggie--the whole crowd of them. We spent a lot of time at the Ballah home, so we know how good they were, how generous, how kind. I remember--my first baby died. And I came home from the hospital, a few days after the baby was born. And I remember Mr. Bal? lah coming to see me in my home--you know, I was still in bed--my mother was looking after me. And how kind and considerate-- brought me a beautiful bouquet of flowers, he and Mrs. Ballah--and sat--not too long, but just to let me know that they were thinking of me. And I thought, you know, that--they were just lovely people. Just lovely, lovely people. KIERAN BALUVH CONTINUES to do; I haven't got enough time to do it in. But that's the way he produced his shows. And people moved for him; they moved fast. When he said, "Move," they moved. Mum would often tell us stories about, in Louisbourg. She said, "Your father--his whole life was music. He would come home-- close the store up"--and they lived up above the store--11 o'clock at night. I guess, 10 o'clock in Louisbourg in those days. And that was late, then. Once the doors were closed, that's when he started singing. She said there'd be 4 of them down there. You



know, singing. And no piano, no accompaniment--just harmonizing. Just raw harmony, you know, faking it all the way. "And when they were all done," she said, "aw, I'd be dying to go to sleep. At 12 o'clock they'd all come upstairs, I'd have to cook a big meal for them. Feed them then. They'd be starving." They sang every night like that. And then sometimes it would be a rehearsal for a quartet that's going to sing some? where, and they would be practicing in the store after--when nobody was coming in to buy anything--maybe 9 o'clock in the even? ing. But she'd say, "Oh, and I'd have to cook, and I'd feel my eyes closing on me." But he was a good cook, too. When she'd get too tired, she said, he'd give in some nights, say, "You go to bed, Mary," and