

**Music Performance Dissertation**  
**By**  
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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts  
(Music: Performance)  
at the University of Michigan  
2018**

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**DEDICATION**

To my parents, Kevin and Melissa Daugherty.

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## ABSTRACT

One operatic role and two vocal recitals were performed in lieu of a written dissertation.

The operatic role was Count Almaviva in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. The necessities of the performance demonstrated knowledge of classical style, controlled vocal technique, carefully crafted dramatic intention and stagecraft, and proficiency in Italian. The first recital was a review of vocal works by living American composers, based on poetry that expressed a multitude of diverse experiences throughout American history. The second recital, *Songs of the Lost*, was an homage to the lost generation of WWI in preparation for the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, using only musical sets containing either music or poetry written by a combatant in that conflict.

December 11th, 2017 at 8:00 PM, in McIntosh Theatre. Accompanied by César Cañón. John Musto, *Shadow of the Blues*, poetry by Langston Hughes: "Silhouette", "Litany", "Island", "Could be". Tom Cipullo, *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*, poetry by Billy Collins: "Desire", "Embrace", "Cancer", "Flames", "Putting Down the Cat", "Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House". David DiChiera, *Letter to Sarah*, based on a letter by Sullivan Ballou: Featuring Benjamin Thauland, Trumpet. Steven Mark Kohn, *American Folk Song Arrangements*, set to traditional American texts: "Ten Thousand Miles Away", "Poor Wayfaring Stranger", "Wanderin'", "The Farmer's Curs't Wife", "Hell in Texas".

March 23rd and 25th, 2018 in Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre. Conducted by Martin Katz. Directed by Grant Preisser. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. Role performed: Count Almaviva.

April 20th, 2018 at 8:00 PM, in McIntosh Theatre. Accompanied by Landon Baumgard. Gabriel Fauré, *L'horizon chimérique*, poetry by J. de la Ville de Mirmont: "La mer est infinie", "Je me suis embarqué", "Diane, Séléné", "Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés". George Butterworth, *Six Songs from a Shropshire Lad*, poetry by A.E.

Housman: “Loveliest of Trees”, “When I was One and Twenty”, “Look Not in My Eyes”, “Think No More Lad”, “The Lads in Their Hundreds”, “Is My Team Ploughing”.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, Songs of Travel, poetry by Robert Louis Stevenson: “The Vagabond”, “Let Beauty Awake”, “The Roadside Fire”, “Youth and Love”, “In Dreams”, “The Infinite Shining Heavens”, “Whither Must I Wander”, “Bright is the Ring of Words”, “I Have Trod the Upward and the Downward Slope”

**RECITAL 1 PROGRAM**

**John Daugherty, Baritone**

**César Cañón, Piano**

*Friday, December 11, 2017  
Moore Building, McIntosh Theater  
8:00 PM*

**Shadow of the Blues**

John Musto (1954)

Silhouette  
Litany  
Island  
Could be

**Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House**

Tom Cipullo (1956)

Desire  
Embrace  
Cancer  
Flames  
Putting Down the Cat  
Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House

*Intermission*

**Letter to Sarah, based on a letter by Sullivan Ballou**

David DiChiera (1935)

Featuring Benjamin Thauland, Trumpet.

**American Folk Song Arrangements**

Steven Mark Kohn (1957)

Ten Thousand Miles Away  
Poor Wayfaring Stranger  
Wanderin'  
The Farmer's Curst Wife  
Hell in Texas



## RECITAL 1 PROGRAM NOTES



Fig. 1.1 *Nighthawks* by Edward Hopper

## Program Notes

**John Daugherty, Baritone and César Cañón, Piano**  
**Benjamin Thauland, Trumpet**

## **Silhouette: Songs of Living American Composers**

### **Why...**

Why program a recital of non-operatic vocal music, all by living composers, all from the United States?

Contemporary composition is enjoying a ‘boom’ within the United States. Across genres, living American composers have been seeing their works performed with increasing regularity and in ever more diverse settings. Alongside its large-scale operatic and symphonic counterparts, the solo song or vocal chamber work is no exception. Settings of American poets by American composers have exponentially increased, to the point that the catalogue is now beginning to shadow the great song-writing tradition of Britain.

In a period when the national discourse of the United States is perceived as increasingly fractious and bilious, the cultural indications of our nation’s artistic output take on increased significance. From the second half of the 20th century onwards, many of the most prominent instances of American song composition have centered around a common theme: the examination of our national heritage, and the multitudes of personal legacies within it. The natural intimacy of song inherently allows an opportunity for performers to examine the history, the pride, and -- at times -- the national conscience of The United States; all in a level of detail, appreciation, scrutiny, or affection not often afforded by other musical forms. Tonight, all four of these introspective themes will be present.

## **John Musto: *Shadow of the Blues***

### **-Poetry by Langston Hughes**

John Musto is one of America's most prolific Art Song composers; in addition to four operas, three works for solo voice and orchestra, and four vocal chamber works, he has published thirteen song collections (one of which is for singer and guitar), and nine "various" songs.

Musto's appreciation for American pop-music idioms is a signature mark of his song output, and he is one of American composition's most subtle craftsmen in the inclusion of musical Americana. The Brooklyn-born son of a jazz guitarist, Musto's poetic inspiration derives from sources as diverse as Langston Hughes and Robert Frost to Elizabethan poetry. An active and highly respected performance pianist as well as a composer, Musto frequently collaborates with his wife, soprano Amy Burton, in performances of his own works.

In this song collection, the blues does not make its aural appearance until nearly the very end. The great muse of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes, developed a style of writing poetry which was significantly influenced by jazz and blues aesthetics. Syncopation, slang, and irregular phrasing are all devices used in these four poems, and were meant to recall the improvisatory nature of jazz. Rather than being explicit throughout the collection in his use of blues rhythms and harmonies, Musto chooses to bring out Hughes's poetic structure, saving a taste of the blues for the fourth and final song, "Could be".

## **Tom Cipullo: *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House***

### **-Poetry by Billy Collins**

Rather than examining our nation's past, *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House* (named after the poem upon which the final song is based) celebrates life in our nation's present.

Tom Cipullo's settings of these six poems capture the full gamut of wit and profundity which their author, two-time US Poet Laureate Billy Collins, is capable of. Famed for the accessibility and relatability of his poetry, Collins creates vignettes that span from the sublime to the ridiculous. Cipullo masterfully captures each poem in both its overall effect and its specific details, delivering each poetic punchline with musical devices so attuned to the text's whims that it almost seems as if the words could not have existed independently of their musical setting. From the almost unbearable joys of true love, by way of beloved cultural icons run amok, to moments of inexpressible sadness and intimacy, this song collection represents one of contemporary composition's finest instances of text-setting and societal engagement.

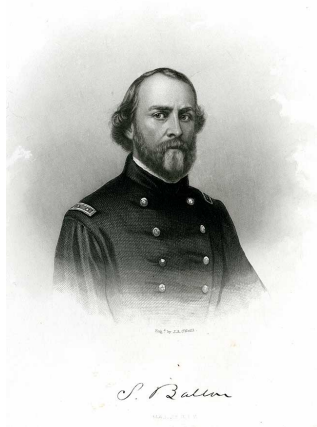


Fig 1.2 Portrait of Sullivan Ballou

### **David DiChiera: *Letter to Sarah***

#### **-Setting of a letter written by Major Sullivan Ballou, to his wife Sarah, July 14, 1861**

The son of Italian immigrants, Dr. David DiChiera is one of American vocal music's most tireless contributors and promoters. In addition to his own vocal works, Dr. DiChiera is the founder and former general director of two opera companies, including the now acclaimed and beloved Michigan Opera Theater. As the president of Opera America in 1979, Dr. DiChiera established a grant program for supporting new operatic composition which has been integral to the American compositional expansion. Dr. DiChiera's catalogue of composition includes the neo-romantic opera *Cyrano*, multiple song collections, and a sacred cantata for organ, choir and soloists.

In 1861, Major Sullivan Ballou of the Second Rhode Island regiment wrote to his wife Sarah (then twenty four years old and the mother of two sons) from Camp Clark near Washington. This letter never reached Sarah, but has become a ubiquitous cultural reference point for selflessness and adherence to principle. Sullivan Ballou was killed a week after writing the letter, in the First Battle of Bull Run.

Sarah never remarried; she passed away in 1917 at the age of eighty. Sullivan and Sarah Ballou are buried beside each other in Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, Rhode Island.

## **Steven Mark Kohn: *American Folk Song Settings***

### **-Traditional American Texts**

Composer and lyricist Steven Mark Kohn has a compositional resume spanning as many musical types as any other composer in the established song repertoire. How many song composers could be named who have published three sets of American Folk Songs, *and* have scored a television commercial for Arby's (among others)? In addition to his musical compositions, Kohn's credits include the libretto for "The Three Redneck Tenors" and a faculty position in composition at The Cleveland Institute of Music.

The premier of Kohn's three volumes of American Folk Song settings was given by two members of the faculty at the University of Michigan, Martin Katz and David Daniels, in Carnegie Hall. Operatic in their scope and texture, the affection and appreciation which these songs exude for their respective origin narratives is infectious. These traditional text sources range from immigrant sailor songs, to well renowned religious tunes, to farcical explanations for our continent's less hospitable climates.

-I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to the members of my committee, for being so giving with their time and expertise; to professor Stephen Lusmann, for all of his guidance and patience over the past four years; and to my magnificent collaborator and friend, César Cañón: I wouldn't be here without you.

**OPERATIC ROLE IN LIEU OF RECITAL:  
COUNT ALMAVIVA IN MOZART'S *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*  
CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

*“E l'onor mio... Dove diamin l'ha posto umano errore”*

A Character Analysis of the role of Count Almaviva from W.A. Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte's *Le Nozze di Figaro*: A case for the sympathetic Count

John Daugherty, Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice

According to opera director Grant Preisser, Count Almaviva is the most pivotal character in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and the most complex. He is a fixed point, around which the rest of the players must maneuver and scheme; and as a result, it is the Count who must change in order for the resolution of the drama to be achieved.

But how, in the final ten or twenty seconds of dramatic action which occur in the opera, can such a change be made convincing? How can a figure whose track has been decidedly in one direction suddenly turn and seek resolution without causing the discerning viewer to titter a bit, and say “you see, that’s opera for you”? Is the dramatic framework provided by Mozart and Da Ponte at this point in the opera simply that elementary?

Certainly, Count Almaviva can be portrayed as a villain; a cold aristocrat, who cares for nothing besides the satiation of his most immediate desires (perhaps with a somewhat dense intellect). Within this more stock character reading, the Count takes on something of the traditional mantle of the dramatic antagonist; and in the final moments, when the countess takes his hand and says to him “più docile io sono, a dico di sì (I am more kind than you are, and I will say yes)” in forgiveness, it renders the preceding hours of drama somewhat numb. In this case, our hypothetical sceptic could indeed be forgiven for sighing and rolling his eyes; for why would a woman who has shown the strength of character which she has up to this point, accept such a rapid and seeming insincere change of heart? After around two hours of compelling and humorous drama, built on situations that most would be able to see as reflecting their own experiences to at least some degree, this improbable reversal by the antagonistic Count seems badly out of place.



It becomes necessary from the beginning, then, for Count Almaviva to be at least somewhat sympathetic as a character in order that the rest of the less opaque characters are given their full due. But is this a purely dramatic necessity, not built into the libretto and score in the first place?

Mozart and Da Ponte produced only three operas together; but within the operatic canon, those three works are held up as the pinnacle of what levels of human interest and dramatic delicacy can be achieved by the art form. As men, neither Mozart nor Da Ponte were lacking in either intellect or a certain roguishness; and it seems unlikely that they would have crafted such an intricate tale of intrigue, only to provide an easy solution at the end without any support in the earlier stages of the drama. The onus then falls upon the conscientious singing actor to find and bring out moments crafted into the score and libretto, from his first entrance to his last, which make the Count not merely interesting, but relatable and even (at moments) likeable.

Much has been made of *Figaro's* history as a socio-critical exhibition. Certainly, the creators differentiated their aristocratic characters from the common-birth counterparts through musical forms and the built-in ability of the Italian language to denote formality. As is to be expected in interactions between a master and servants, the pronouns which elevate the Count above the other main characters (except the Countess) follow the traditional use of “voi” and “tu” as social delineators. For one example, in the Count’s very first line, he addresses Susanna as *tu*: “Susanna, tu mi sembri agitata e confusa”; and Susanna addresses him in return as *voi* or *vi*: “ch’io vi lasci qui solo?” The elevated nature of the aristocrats is also demonstrated by the way in which despite their marriage they maintain their formality with each other, as opposed to Figaro and

Susanna. It was the nature of even intimate aristocrats to maintain the appearance of rank when speaking to one another (which makes the Count's eventual and blatant disregard for the Countess's privacy even more impetuous and unseemly in nature).

In addition, Mozart sets the Count and his bride apart from all others by his use of form in their respective arias. Where the commoners of the opera all sing arias based on a folk-like A-B-A structure, the Count and Countess both sing arias in an Andante-Allegro form (a precursor to the Bel Canto era's *Cavatina e Cabaletta*), indicating their increased complexity of personality and desires.

Despite these separations which distinguish the Count as feudal lord from his subjects, he isn't so unaffable that he won't discuss or even gossip with them. For instance, in the Act I trio, the Count is happy to recount to Basilio and Susanna the fruits of his morning's sleuthing, having discovered Cherubino philandering with the young Barbarina; and while the Count's drawn out explanation of his own cleverness in having revealed the scamp ideally sets up a laugh-worthy, second reveal of the same lad for the audience, it also serves to create the impression of a young aristocratic man who is not so emotionally cold that he refuses the company of most of the human beings around him. As the opera progresses, the Count continues to emerge as a man who'd rather match his wits to those of others rather than snap his fingers and cause his will to be done ("Diabolica astuzia! Ma fingere convien" *Devilish cunning! But I will play along*).

Thus, when viewed as a younger aristocrat (who only a play earlier was cavorting with Figaro as bosom friends in the pursuit of the fiery Rosina) who hasn't lost all interest in his subjects as human beings, the Count's sudden and passionate jealousy over his wife's supposed lover takes on a new and more relatable tinge. Rather than taking on

the somewhat predictable rage of an alpha male who feels challenged and dishonored, he now seems as if he's made the common human mistake of ascribing to others the moral faults with which he himself is afflicted. He knows that he has stains upon his own character; so he immediately jumps to the conclusion that his wife must be unfaithful in the same manner. However, his very vehemence now carries a continuing desire for the Countess and a genuine pain at the thought of losing or sharing her affections. After finding nothing in her closet, his pleas of "guardatemi" must be genuine, and somewhat flirtatious; he asks briefly for forgiveness, but quickly changes to an appeal to her affection for him by breaking their formality and calling her "Rosina"; Figaro's subsequent entrance, and the reawakening of the Count's defensiveness, is most truly to the disadvantage of the Countess.

The Count now seems less like a man only bent on sensual satisfaction, or purely addicted to the power of bending any woman that he can find to his will (so far, we know his wandering eye has taken a shine to both Susanna and the juvenile Barbarina). With these cues of human error displayed, the Count seems more like a young man struggling to overcome his insecurities, both in the stability in his social position (keeping in mind the atmosphere of the opera's source material), and in his own ability to overcome his own shortcomings. Everything has changed since his marriage; the adventure is largely over, and happily-ever-after has set in. His philandering now seems less like the actions of physical desire, and more an attempt to continue proving himself to himself.

This relatable frailty is further substantiated by the Count's opening recit of Act III, possibly his most defining moment: "and my honor... Where the devil has my human frailty placed it?" His worry, both that his own powers of scheming will not be up to the

task and that he will finally overstep himself and lose the Countess, fuels his rage in the following aria; less an assertive knowledge in his own power to win in the end regardless of circumstances, the Count seems to be artificially bolstering himself against a wave of self doubt and loathing, lashing out with insults (“vile oggetto”, “mentecatto”) unlike any he has yet used to describe his subjects. This fragility is further enforced during the wedding when he receives the invitation to a tryst, which leads him to act in such a giddy manner that Figaro remarks on his unseemliness and he pricks himself with the pin sealing the envelope. A man as secure in the knowledge that he would eventually achieve his goals as he had stated in the aria’s *Allegro Assai*, would not be so surprised and excited at the indication that it actually might happen.

By the time the count has met the Countess disguised as Susanna in the Garden, he has so thoroughly succumbed to his desire to achieve outside confirmation that he is essentially a schoolboy again, panting and impatient. When presented with Susanna disguised as the Countess cavorting with Figaro, however, it falls away in an instant; his full, passionate character flares back into life. The games have ended; he sees that his true prize, the real indication of his value, has abandoned him. In this moment, the Count seems to be the least reasonable to an audience member; and for that, he is at his most pathetic. When the deception is revealed, he is again confronted with the reality that his assumption of his wife's adherence to the same vices as his own is false. As opposed to his brief moment of contrite sentiment in the Act II finale, however, he is now so relieved to be proven wrong that all he has left is to surrender himself fully to the judgement of another, perhaps for the first time in his adult life. Thankfully for him, and for every audience member who has ever wronged someone to any degree, his flaws cannot

completely outshine his other qualities. With a slight touch of condescension, the Countess nevertheless admits to her continued love for him; and had he not displayed such intensely erratic and furious responses to his perceived personal tragedy, it is doubtful that she would have seen the substance to motivate her continued desire for him.

For as much of an ensemble piece as *Le Nozze di Figaro* is, the human relatability and plasticity of the Count's portrayal in any production of the opera lends credence to every other character's potential complexity and dimensionality. He cannot be merely an adversary; he must be a protagonist as well.

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## RECITAL 2 PROGRAM

**John Daugherty, Baritone**

**Landon Baumgard, Piano**

*Friday, April 20, 2018*

*Moore Building, McIntosh Theater*

*8:00 PM*

**L'horizon chimérique**

Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924)

La mer est infinie  
Je me suis embarqué  
Diane, Séléné  
Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés

**Six Songs from a Shropshire Lad**

George Butterworth (1885 - 1916)

Loveliest of Trees  
When I was One and Twenty  
Look Not in My Eyes  
Think No More Lad  
The Lads in Their Hundreds  
Is My Team Ploughing

*Intermission*

**Songs of Travel**

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)

The Vagabond  
Let Beauty Awake  
The Roadside Fire  
Youth and Love  
In Dreams  
The Infinite Shining Heavens  
Whither Must I Wander  
Bright is the Ring of Words  
I Have Trod the Upward and the Downward Slope

RECITAL 3 PROGRAM NOTES

# Songs of the Lost



Fig. 2.1 1918 *Crashed Aeroplane* by John Singer Sargent

Music and words by combatants  
of the First World War

John Daugherty and Landon Baumgard

## L'Horizon chimérique (The Illusory Horizon)

Music by Gabriel Fauré, poetry by Jean de la Ville de Mirmont

### 1: La Mer est infinie...

The sea is boundless, and my dreams are wild.  
The sea sings in the sun, as it beats the cliffs,  
And my light dreams are overjoyed  
To dance on the sea like drunken birds.

The wave's vast motion bears them away,  
The breeze ruffles and rolls them in its folds;  
Playing in their wake, they will escort the ships,  
Whose flight my heart has followed.

Drunk with air and salt, and stung by the spume  
Of the consoling sea that washes away tears  
They will know the high seas and the bracing brine;  
Lost gulls will take them for their own.

### 2: Je me suis embarqué...

I am embarked on a ship that dances  
And rolls from side to side, and pitches and sways.  
My feet have forgotten the land and its ways;  
The supple waves have taught me other cadences  
Lovelier than the weary rhythm of human songs.

Living among you, ah! have I a soul?  
My brothers, I have suffered on all of your continents.  
I want nothing but the sea, nothing but the wind;  
To rock me like a baby in the trough of the waves.

Out of the port, which is no more than a faded image,  
The tears of leaving burn my eyes no longer.  
I do not remember anything of my last goodbyes...  
Oh my sadness, my sadness, where have I left you?



### 3: Diane, Séléné...

Diana, Selena, moon of lovely metal,  
You reflect to us upon your desert face,  
In the eternal boredom of the star's quietude  
The regret of a sun whose loss we mourn.

Oh moon, I covet your clarity,  
Insult to the vain turmoil of poor souls,  
And my heart, ever weary and ever restless,  
Aspires toward the peace of your nocturnal flame.

### 4: Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés...

Tall ships, we loved you, never counting  
Gain or loss. Against the evening sky  
You loom into the sunset, canvas mounting.  
Empty we stand, forlorn, the port and I.

The sea has sped you onward to your own fate.  
Our feet are rooted here upon the sand.  
Your soul with chains we never dared to weight.  
You yearn for places where I'll never stand.

A landsman, I, and my desires are here.  
Your call at midnight leads me to despair.  
You thrive on winds that fill my heart with cold fear  
I long for foreign shores that I will never dare.



Fig 2.2 *Whitby Fishing Boats* by John Singer Sargent



Fig 2.3 *Note in Blue and Opal* by James Abbott McNeill Whistler

**“...For I have great departures unfulfilled within me.”**

The three periods of Fauré’s song composition, early, middle and late, are now a well-established metric among performers and musicologists alike. His early style, typified by songs such as “Lydia” and “Ici-bas”, reflects the influence of early French *Mélodie*; often strophic, they are tunefully sentimental and largely based off the work of the Parnassian poets. Fauré’s songs from his middle period evolved in style along with French poetry, and as the symbolist movement gained traction Fauré produced songs of increased harmonic and structural complexity, such as “Spleen” and “Clair de lune” (Verlaine). By the time he had been made the director of the Paris Conservatoire, Fauré had begun to write songs with increasingly sparse textures and harmonic ambiguity; and of the vocal works from his late period, *L’Horizon chimérique* was his very last.

One of the principle marvels of this cycle of four songs is the way in which the music of Fauré, then seven-seven years old, synchronizes so beautifully with the poetry of a much younger man. Jean de La Ville de Mirmont was twenty-seven years old in 1914, when he died at the front; *L’Horizon chimérique*, a collection of his forty-one poems, was published posthumously in 1920. Fauré had been explicit in his refusal to write any music celebrating

the victory of the Allies in 1918. However, his uncharacteristic choice of leaving the poet's every word unaltered in his setting of the text indicates a certain level of admiration and perhaps even a desire for commemoration. Certainly, if Fauré had not chosen these poems by which to end his illustrious career of songwriting, it is doubtful whether the promise shown by Jean de La Ville de Mirmont (an early casualty of a long war) would even be known today.

## Six Songs from a Shropshire Lad

Music by George Butterworth, poetry by A. E. Housman



Fig. 2.4 *Home Fields* by John Singer Sargent

**“And since to look at things in bloom, fifty springs are little room...”**

Now sometimes credited with inventing “Britishness” through the sheer impact of his poetry, A.E. Housman in fact considered his most important work to be his emendation of classical texts. Though initially a sluggish seller, his collection of poems titled *A Shropshire Lad* became ubiquitous; so much so that a special miniature edition was created at the outbreak of the war to be able to fit in the breast pocket of every British uniform.

George Butterworth would hardly have needed to carry his copy with him to the front, his familiarity with the collection having led him to set six of these poems to music in 1911. They are among the rather small number of his works which he did not destroy before departing for the front. Retiring and self critical, Butterworth had been dissuaded early in life from pursuing music by his father, a banker, who probably also suspected his son of homosexuality. He was educated in England's most prestigious institutions, including Eton, Oxford and then the Royal Conservatory of Music. His great friend Ralph Vaughan Williams prized Butterworth's judgment, and among other composers of the same generation admired Butterworth's early compositional maturity.

Coming to adulthood in the period after the downfall of Oscar Wilde and age of decadence in 1895, Butterworth followed Housman in their generation's effort to construct for themselves a new and distinctly British sensibility. This entailed an adherence to a minimalist masculinity, crafted around the image of pastoral England. An avid collector of British folk songs and dances, Butterworth predicted that "If ever the opportunity occurs for a truly national production of ballet or opera, the success of the undertaking will rest in the hands of those who have mastered the technique and absorbed the spirit of our English dances and songs."

George Butterworth joined the British army in 1914, within the first month of the conflict. He received an officer's commission in 1915, and received the Military Cross for valor during the battle of the Somme in 1916. Two months after receiving this award, he was killed in action. He was awarded a second Military Cross posthumously, for the courageous action in which he died.

Tellingly, Butterworth's father only learned of his son's military decorations after he was buried; and his superior officers only learned of his status as an admired and promising young composer after the war.

## Songs of Travel

Music by Ralph Vaughan Williams, poetry by Robert Louis Stevenson



Fig. 2.5 *Mount St Quentin* by Arthur Streeton

**“And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.”**

Of the pair, Butterworth’s friend and admirer Ralph Vaughan Williams took somewhat longer to find his voice as a composer; however, his long life and prodigious catalogue of works would go on to bestow upon him the title of “the founder of the nationalist movement in English music.”

Vaughan Williams’s reverence for music from every caste of society, designed for any occasion, has led to his being compared to Bartók and Kodály and their nationalistic work preserving the Hungarian folk idiom. From folk music to the baroque masters, and from liturgical forms to the dramatic stage, Vaughan Williams embraced it all; apart from his art songs, his output includes nine symphonies, five operas, ballet and even film scores. Despite a very privileged upbringing (one in which, unlike Butterworth, his interest in music was much encouraged), Vaughan Williams was a socialist and maintained a very egalitarian

outlook throughout his life, viewing music to be the right of every human being and not purely that of the elite. This philosophy would have a profound effect upon his entire compositional career.

Having completed his studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Vaughan Williams went to study with German composer Max Bruch; indeed, at this time Great Britain could essentially be regarded as a music province of Germany. He would later study orchestration with Ravel in 1909; and it was in the period between these two apprenticeships that he wrote some of his most prominent song cycles, including *The House of Life* and *Songs of Travel*.

The song cycle takes its title from a collection of poems written by Scotsman Robert Louis Stevenson, penned during the last year of his life on the island of Samoa. Born with weak lungs and a deeply restless spirit, Stevenson spent the forty-four years of his life wandering the globe in search of a climate in which he could survive. His pursuit of a married Californian woman led him from Paris to Edinburgh to San Francisco via New York, the rigors of which almost ended his life repeatedly; after their eventual marriage, they moved from a shack in Silverado to London to Scotland and back to New York before departing for the South Pacific. Stevenson was writing the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston*, a work imbued with a love of his native Scotland, when he died; and *Songs of Travel*, published a year after his death, reflects the poet's inner conflict at being denied a life in his native land.

Vaughan Williams first wrote what would become the seventh of nine songs in 1901, and built the cycle around it culminating in 1904. Vaughan Williams, despite being forty two years of age, served on the French front in the war first as an ambulance driver and then as an artillery officer. The damage his hearing sustained as a result developed into near total deafness at the end of his life, which was also one of his most compositionally fruitful. Vaughan Williams never explicitly commemorated the war in his later compositions; however, his *Pastoral Symphony* of 1921 is largely viewed as a remembrance of his comrades (and colleagues) who did not survive. Vaughan Williams lived to see his compositions define the British musical sound, and passed away peacefully in 1958 at eighty-six years of age.

On November the 11th, the western world will commemorate the centenary of Armistice Day. Many songs have been written to explicitly illustrate the horrors of conflict and denounce those who instigate it; but it behooves those of us, who have not done, to hear and read the creations of those who have. Perhaps, through investigation of the beauty and eloquence that the entire world stands to lose through military conflict, increased care will be taken before calling for the ultimate sacrifice.

**Acknowledgements:**

I want to express my sincere thanks to Tal Benatar and Chelsea Gallo for their assistance in producing this recital; to every member of my doctoral committee, for their invaluable gifts of time, expertise and advice; to Landon Baumgard, whose skill and patience have been my continual salvation since January; and most especially, to Professor Stephen Lusmann, whose mentorship and instruction have been constant sources of inspiration and encouragement over my five years here at the University of Michigan, which I number among the best times of my life.