

Parade of Passions: Notes on Three Performances

By

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DEDICATION

For Brandon, who loves parades.

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Finally, boundless thanks to my family who heard me sing the earliest, the collaborative pianists who have heard me sing the most, and my dearest friends and colleagues who sing with me.

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ABSTRACT

Two recitals and an opera role were performed in lieu of a written dissertation.

The following notes on three dissertation performances, “Ways of Seeing,” “Parade of Passions,” and “Familiar and Well Belovèd,” represent paths through vocal craftsmanship, scholarship and pedagogy as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. The opera role of Alcina, flanked by two vocal recitals, together built experience in a range of languages, styles, cultural contexts and technical developments. Though the works discussed have diverse origins and narratives, there is a distinctive theme of intimacy in each of these projects. In the first recital, “Ways of Seeing,” perception as a dictate of meaning was explored by proposing a new lens through which to “see” or internalize poetry around a common theme of the female body. The idea of a subjective or shifting interior life was explored in the character of Alcina, particularly as it manifested as a diverse array of musical textures offered by Georg Friderich Handel. Finally, intimate space—whether objective, performative or personal—was explored as a conduit for universal connection and belonging in the recital entitled, “Familiar and Well Belovèd,” featuring the music of Johannes Brahms, Samuel Barber and Benjamin C.S Boyle.

Recital 1: “Ways of Seeing.” November 17, 2018, 5:30 pm, Stamps Auditorium, Ann Arbor, MI. Michael McElvain, piano.

Program: “Galathea,” Arnold Schoenberg; “Take, O take those lips away,” Amy Beach; “Pur dicesti o bocca bocca bella,” Antonio Lotti; “Dein blaues Auge,” Johannes Brahms; “Lady when I behold the roses,” William Walton; “Troubled Woman,” Ricky Ian Gordon; “Chanson de mer,”

Pauline Viardot; “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen,” Clara Schumann; “Storia breve,” Ottorino Respighi; “Tus ojillos negros,” Manuel de Falla; “Song to the dark virgin,” Florence Price; “Jane,” Claude Debussy; “El mirar de la maja,” Enrique Granados; “Seit ich ihn gesehen,” Robert Schumann; “The mystery,” Lori Laitman; “Lyric for Truelove,” Undine Smith Moore; “My love in her attire,” William Walton; “Homme au sourire tendre,” Francis Poulenc; “Réversibilité,” Louis Vierne.

Recital 2: In lieu of a recital, the title role in the opera, *Alcina*, by Georg Friedrich Handel was performed on March 28 and 30, 2019, at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater, Ann Arbor, MI. Grant Preisser, director; Stephanie Rhodes Russell, conductor.

Recital 3: “Familiar and Well Belovèd.” April 16, 2019, 7:00 pm, Kerrytown Concert House, Ann Arbor, MI. Michael McElvain, Chao Gao and Joshua Marzan, piano; Jessica Dold, soprano, Samuel Kidd, baritone, Brandon Motz, tenor, and Nicholas Music, tenor.

Program: *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer*, Johannes Brahms; *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Samuel Barber; *Song of Solomon*, Benjamin C.S. Boyle (world premiere).

CHAPTER I

“Ways of Seeing”: The gaze of art in song

Program

Kelly Ann Bixby, soprano

Michael McElvain, piano

November 17, 2018

5:30pm

Stamps Auditorium

I. for pleasure

Galathea (1901)

My love in her attire (1960)

Pur dicesti o bocca, bocca bella

Go, lovely Rose! (1979)

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

William Walton (1902-1983)

Antonio Lotti (1666?-1740)

Ned Rorem (b. 1923)

II. through nature

Dein blaues Auge (1873)

Lady when I behold the roses (1960)

Troubled Woman (1995)

Chanson de mer (1894)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

William Walton (1902-1983)

Ricky Ian Gordon (b. 1956)

Pauline Viardot-García (1821-1910)

III. with desire

Tus ojillos negros (1902)

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen (1844)

Storia breve (1904)

Lyric for Truelove (1975)

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

Clara Wieck Schumann (1819-1896)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Undine Smith Moore (1904-1989)

INTERMISSION

IV. through suffering

Take, O take those lips away (1897)

Song to the dark virgin (1941)

Jane (1882)

El mirar de la maja (1914)

Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867-1944)

Florence Price (1888-1953)

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

V. for understanding

Seit ich ihn gesehen (1840)

Homme au sourire tendre (1950)

The Mystery (1997)

Réversibilité (1919)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Lori Laitman (b. 1955)

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Ways of Seeing: the gaze of art in song

Program Notes

One elemental theme embedded in the 18th-20th century art song canon is the description and symbolism of the female body. *Ways of Seeing: the gaze of art in song* attempts to curate the experience of art song as if it were an exhibition of visual art to illustrate how women, both real and imagined, are seen. By directing our focus into five ways of seeing—for pleasure, through nature, with desire, through suffering and for understanding—this music, so indelibly tied to social constructs of gender, might gain new dimensions.

The program for this recital is modeled after the documentary, *Ways of Seeing*, in which historian and critic John Berger traces how audiences receive and interpret images, from traditional European oil painting to billboard advertisements. Berger uses juxtaposition as a means of teasing out contemporary meaning from historical context, grounding his analysis in the social and political systems that define power and gender. His premise, that “seeing establishes our place in the surrounding world” describes the culturally constructed social roles in which “men *act* and women *appear*.” (Berger, 1979) Because women were first and foremost “a sight,” one that reflected the desires, actions and possessions of a man, Berger posits that a woman “comes to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman.” (Berger, 1979)

This recital is neither a sweeping corrective gesture nor a dismissal of this duality. Instead, the program proposes a fresh context for the female body in song, one that embraces its rich imagery, owns its flaws and engages a “helpful distance in performance practice.” (Solie, 2009) The following songs, primarily from the late-19th or 20th century, are grouped thematically

by how the subjects within them see or are seen, in essence creating a conceptual narrative that transcends the typical programmatic divisions of language, date, poet or composer. The visual images accompanying them are chosen for the same purpose: to present diverse stimuli from which the viewer-listener might cultivate their own meanings.

I. for pleasure

Though he had already taken steps towards the abandonment of triadic harmony in seminal compositions, Schoenberg's position at the Buntes Theater was in service to popular-style cabaret music. "Galathea" is one of eight songs of the *Brettli-Lieder*: the resultant collection of pieces from this short appointment in Berlin. (Neighbour, 2001) The city was a magnet of activity for well-known poets like Frank Wedekind, the author set in this piece. The playful, chromatic ascending phrases burst open at the name, *Galathea*, a word that depending on the mythology means milk-white or sea nymph. The melody, like its narrator, possesses a supple, irresistible urge. Eager to satisfy himself with the pleasure of experiencing each body part, the narrator makes an exception of the lips either as one final rhetorical tease, or perhaps to secure the control already indicated by the diminutive "Kind" and numerous directives against resistance.

Artwork: Max Beckmann, *Reclining Woman*, 1923

Galathea (Frank Wedekind)

Ach, wie brenn' ich vor Verlangen,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Wangen,
weil sie so entzückend sind.

Wonne die mir widerfahre,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Haare,
weil sie so verlockend sind.

Nimmer wehr mir, bis ich ende,

Galathea

Ah, how I'm burning with desire,
Galathea, lovely child,
Just to kiss your cheeks,
Because they're so enchanting.

The rapture that I feel,
Galathea, lovely child,
Just to kiss your tresses,
Because they're so enticing.

Never resist me, till I've finished,

Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Hände,
weil sie so verlockend sind.

Galathea, lovely child,
Kissing your hands,
Because they're so enticing.

Ach, du ahnst nicht, wie ich glühe,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Knie,
weil sie so verlockend sind.

Ah, you do not sense how I burn,
Galathea, lovely child,
To kiss your knees,
Because they're so enticing.

Und was tät ich nicht, du süße
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Füße,
weil sie so verlockend sind.

And what wouldn't I do, my sweet,
Galathea, lovely child,
To kiss your feet,
Because they're so enticing.

Aber deinen Mund enthülle,
Mädchen, meinen Küssen nie,
Denn in seiner Reize Fülle
küsst ihn nur die Phantasie.

But never expose your lips,
Sweet girl, to my kisses,
For the fullness of their charms
Can only be kissed in fantasy.
(Stokes, 2005)

“My love in her attire” is part of the song cycle, *Anon in love* written by British composer William Walton in 1959. Walton’s work spanned both traditional genres of English anthem and experimental orchestral composition. Originally composed for tenor and guitar, the piece has the wit and whimsy of a madrigal. The cycle includes nine songs on the theme of “man in love,” a fitting category for a piece illustrating the potency of the body to excite onlookers and yet maintain distance from the person to whom that body belongs.

Artwork: Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863

My love in her attire (Author Unknown)

My love in her attire doth show her
wit,
It doth so well become her:
For every season she hath dressings fit,
For winter, spring, and summer.
No beauty she doth miss,
When all her robes are on;
But Beauty's self she is,
When all her robes are gone.

“Pur dicesti, o bocca bella,” the earliest-composed piece on the program, not surprisingly reflects one of the more antiquated and exclusive functions of women’s sexuality: to serve, honor

and exalt the status of her lover. Nonetheless the dancelike rhythmic clarity so precisely encapsulates the lilting doubled consonants of the text *bocca bella* that the piece takes on a corporeal, animate presence. The piece is in the typical *da capo* form, reminiscent of Antonio Lotti's operatic writing, wherein the repeated beginning section offers opportunity for elaborate ornamentation. Short, balanced phrases separated by instrumental interludes, word painting and expressive motives (sighing, laughing) serve to illustrate his musical style, grounded in Baroque counterpoint and yet reaching towards Classical qualities of expanded textural balance and melodic prominence. (Hansell, 2018)

Artwork: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *La Ghirlandata*, 1873

Pur dicesti, o bocca bella (Author Unknown) **Surely you have said it, o sweetest of mouths**

Pur dicesti, o bocca bella,
 Quel soave e caro sì,
 Che fatutto il mio piacer.
 Per onor di sua facella
 Con un bacio Amor t'apri,
 Dolce fonte del goder, ah!

Surely you have said it, o sweetest of mouths
 that softest and dearest "yes"
 that forms all of my pleasure!
 To illuminate his name with honor,
 Love has opened you with a kiss,
 Sweet fount of bliss.

“Go, lovely Rose” marks a transition into the vast quantities of song illustrating the female body through floral and aquatic imagery, though ultimately the instructive purpose of the text is to establish the duty of the woman to grant pleasure. It is a deceptively innocent piece by prolific American song composer Ned Rorem, who described the set from which it is excerpted, *Nantucket Songs*, this way:

A subtitle might be “Popular Songs,” insofar as popular means entertaining rather than classically indirect. Indeed, these songs—merry or complex or strange though their texts may seem—aim away from the head and toward the diaphragm. They are, as collegians say, emotional rather than intellectual, and need not be understood to be enjoyed. (Rorem, 1986)

And yet, to understand this poem by 17th century poet, Edmund Waller, is to acknowledge that the shared purpose of the lovely Rose and the woman whom it represents is to offer itself as an object of pleasure for man, that is until its function is met and it can die. The cyclical, triadic

melody intones a type of eternal grace, undergirded by a simple scalar bass; it marks the passage of time, unhindered in its purpose, perhaps even listlessly unmoved by the poem's deeper meaning.

Artwork: John William Waterhouse, *Boreas*, 1903

Go, lovely Rose (Edmund Waller)

Go, lovely Rose—
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die—that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

II. through nature

Numerous iconic literary and artistic aesthetics associate women with water or floral imagery from Greek mythology to Freudian analysis, the Symbolist movement and others. The reflective and life-sustaining aspects of the sea figure especially prominently in poetry and legend where women appear within aquatic contexts as demonic, magical or child-like. The late 19th century German *Jugendstil* movement likewise embodied a rejection of bourgeois conventions and urbanization by embracing a mythic style concerned deeply with man's search

for revelation through nature. In *Jugendstil* tradition, women appear as “unarticulated nature, a being who needs the love of a man to gain a soul. She represents the unfulfilled erotic desires of an inhibited male imagination.” (Ursula, 1997)

Low German poet Klaus Groth and Brahms collaborated for several songs, including “Dein blaues Auge,” a piece embodying some of Brahms’ more sincere and subtle song writing. The unbroken pattern of eighth-notes in the inner voice in a sense represents the intense gaze shared between the two subjects of this poem. The narrator, like a *Jugendstil* actor, sees his own redemptive wholeness and well-being in the reflection of his beloved, a cool respite to the heat and burn of a former relationship.

Artwork: Cecilia Beaux, *Mrs. Albert J. Beveridge*, 1916

Dein blaues Auge hält so still (Klaus Groth) Your blue eyes keep so still

Dein blaues Auge hält so still,
Ich blicke bis zum Grund.
Du fragst mich, was ich sehen will?
Ich sehe mich gesund.

Your blue eyes keep so still
That I can gaze upon their very depths.
You ask me what I want to see?
I see my own well-being.

Es brannte mich ein glühend Paar,
Noch schmerzt das Nachgefühl;
Das deine ist wie See so klar
Und wie ein See so kühl.

A glowing pair burned me once;
The after-effect still hurts.
Yet your eyes are like a lake so clear,
And like a lake, so cool.

As previously demonstrated in the set of songs dedicated to pleasure, Walton again sets a madrigalian text, this time identified as by author John Wilbye. The central illusion of this piece is the confounding substitution of roses for a woman’s lips. If it weren’t for the churning chromatic lines growing in and around this imagery, this poem may be received as more superficial or complimentary. Instead, the scene is hazy and mysterious, a romantic gesture borne out of a disembodied sense of reality, an opportunity for the delicate and haunting sound of a male *false* register for which the sudden dynamic shifts at higher pitches were likely written.

Artwork: Ana Mendieta, *Imagen de Yagul*, 1973

Lady, when I behold the roses sprouting (John Wilbye)

Lady, when I behold the roses sprouting
Which clad in damask mantles deck the arbours,
And then behold your lips, where sweet Love harbours,
My eyes present me with a double doubting.
For, viewing both alike, hardly my mind supposes
Whether the roses be your lips or your lips the roses.

Ricky Ian Gordon's style "dramatizes complex and mature subject material with sophisticated musical means that often stretch beyond the traditional palette of popular and Broadway music." (Housez, 2015) Much of his writing for voice sets American poets, particularly women and people of color, including the iconic Langston Hughes. The halting stillness of the poem is drawn out in Gordon's setting, as if water in two states—frozen and falling—exist simultaneously in the climate of this woman's sadness. Famous portrait artist Amy Sherald's *Saint Woman* poses as a contemporary lens through which to interpret this setting. The intention is to demonstrate an outward poise and inward sorrow in the same way Hughes' homage to traditional imagery is vividly crafted not to adorn or sexualize the body but to subsume natural imagery in the person's emotional state: an alternative use of a feminized idiom.

Artwork: Amy Sherald, *Saint Woman*, 2015

Troubled Woman (Langston Hughes)

She stands
In the quiet darkness,
This troubled woman
Bowed by
Weariness and pain
Like an
Autumn flower
In the frozen rain,
Like a
Wind-blown autumn flower
That never lifts its head again.

Pauline Viardot, a charismatic singer, giant of the theatre and symbol of pan-European culture brought these identities to bear on her compositions. Though she wrote more than 100 songs (in addition to operetta, solo works and popular transcriptions of music by Chopin and Schubert) she is considered a non-professional composer. She achieved a remarkable career as a mezzo-soprano, presided over a famous musical salon and composed and taught in Paris with writer and companion, Ivan Turgenev, until her death in 1910. (Johnson, 2000) Her many gifts for coloration and vocalism are evident in the sweeping charm of *Chanson de mer*, a work that celebrates the qualities of a woman likened to *Néréide*, a mythological sea nymph. The melodic baseline rising out of the depths of the left hand of the piano matches undulating phrases in the voice, both of which rise and fall like the waves they describe, drawing energy from below before crashing on the surface. The sudden, temporary calm of the shift to G major at the end of the piece intones the appearance of *Néréide*, before once again the waves engulf the scene.

Artwork: John William Waterhouse, *Miranda*, 1875

Chanson de mer (René-François Sully-Prudhomme)

Ton sourire infini m'est cher
 Comme le divin pli des ondes,
 Et j'entends crains quand tu me grondes,
 Comme la mer.
 L'azur de tes grands yeux m'est cher:
 C'est un lointain que je regarde
 Sans cesse et sans y prendre garde,
 Un ciel de mer.
 Ton courage léger m'est cher:
 C'est un souffle vif où ma vie
 S'emplit d'aise et se fortifie,
 L'air de la mer.
 Enfin ton être j'entends m'est cher,
 Toujours nouveau, toujours le même;
 O ma Néréide, je t'aime
 Comme la mer !

Song of the Sea

Your infinite smile is dear to me,
 Like the divine folds of the waves,
 And I fear when you scold me,
 Like the sea.
 The azure of your large eyes is dear to me,
 It is an expanse that I seek
 Without ceasing and without taking care,
 A sea sky.
 Your light courage is dear to me,
 It's a brisk breath where my life
 Fills with ease and strengthens
 The air of the sea.
 Finally, your whole being is dear to me,
 Always new, always the same;
 O my Nereid, I love you
 Like the sea.

III. with desire

An underlying motive inside much of poetry written about the female body is the pursuit or after effects of desire. John Berger's assessment of European oil painting likens expressions of sexuality, of desire, to putting a body on display. He continues, "to be naked is to be without disguise, to be on display is to have the surface on one's own skin, the hair of one's own body turned into a disguise...that cannot be discarded." (Berger, 1972) The significance of the choice to paint or illustrate the body as an object on display is that the act itself does not belong to the figure portrayed but is an exercise of the author's desire. Feminist author Teresa de Lauretis puts it this way: "even when it is located, as it very often is, in the woman's body, sexuality is an attribute or property of the male." (de Lauretis, 1987) The pieces in this set speak of different types of desire, borne out of ineffability, deprivation, lust and unrequited passion. Two of the following works set poetry by women which may (or may not) impact where and how desire plays out as a gendered narrative.

An early work of Manuel de Falla, "Tus ojillos negros" may not encapsulate the full richness of his later French-influenced style but is nonetheless a passionate and extensive treatment of Cristobal de Castro's dynamic poetic voice. De Castro and the painter of the artwork displayed, Julio Romero de Torres, were close friends; the former was painted by the latter in the 1920s. The momentary shifts between major and minor in effect create a modal harmonic texture that when combined with the fiery trills in the vocal line evoke an earthy, folk-like idiom. This dynamic tonal landscape mirrors the speaker's antagonistic attraction and repulsion. Both love

and fear housed in the woman's eyes incite turmoil in the observer, further aggravated by the fervent, yet indulgent questioning as to the true meaning behind the look.

Artwork: Julio Romeo de Torres, *Portrait of Maria Teresa Lopez*, 1922

Tus ojillos negros (Cristobal de Castro)

Yo no sé qué tienen tus ojillos negros
Que me dan pesares y me gusta verlos,
Son tan juguetones y tan zalameros,
Sus miradas prontas llegan tan adentro,
Que hay quien asegura que Dios los ha hecho
Como para muestra de lo que es lo bueno,
De lo que es la gloria, de lo que es el cielo.

Mas, por otra parte, ¡son tan embusteros!
Dicen tantas cosas que desdican luego,
Que hay quien asegura que Dios los ha hecho
Como para muestra de lo que es tormento,
De lo que es desdicha, de lo que es infierno.

Y es que hay en tus ojos como hay en los cielos,
Noches muy oscuras, días muy serenos.
Y hay en tus miradas maridaje eterno
De amorcillos locos y desdenes cuerdos,
Y entre sus penumbras y sus centelleos
Brillantes afanes y tus pensamientos,
Como entre las sombras de la noche oscura
Brillan los relámpagos con su vivo fuego.

Luces que parece que se están muriendo
Y que de improviso resucitan luego.
Sombras adorables, llenas de misterio
Como tus amores, como mis deseos.
Algo que da vida, mucho que da miedo.
Yo no sé qué tienen tus ojillos negros
Que me dan pesares y ¡me gusta verlos!

Your black eyes

I don't know what your little black eyes have
To cause me regret, and yet I like to see them,
They are so playful and so cajoling,
Your quick glances reach inside me,
That one is assured that God made them
In order to demonstrate that which is good,
That which is glory, and that which is heaven.

But on the other hand, your eyes are so deceitful!
They say so many things that are contradicted later,
That one is assured that God who made them
In order to demonstrate torment
Misfortune, and hell.

And it is that there are in your eyes as there are in the
skies, nights that are very dark, days very tranquil.
And there are in your glances everlasting understanding
Of crazy loves and wise contempt.
And in between their shadows and their twinkling
Glittering desires and your thoughts,
As between the shadows of the dark night
The lightning sparkles with its vivid fire.

Lights that appear to die,
And unexpectedly revive later.
Diminutive shadows, full of mystery
Like your loves, like my desires.
Something that gives life, much that gives fear.
I do not know what your little black eyes have
To cause me regret, and yet I like to see them!

The ironic turn for which Heinrich Heine is known appears in the final stanza “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen,” a piece that sustains itself on a singular moment in time as a narrator observes a portrait of his lover. It is revealed that the face lovingly being gazed upon is no longer, for unknown reasons, attached to the narrator. The setting by Clara Schumann is one of a

set of three that she presented to her husband on Christmas of 1840, their first as a married couple, following a long and bitter legal battle with Clara's father. The steady pulsing chords effect a serene, even sacred, atmosphere. This singular moment unfolds slowly and deliberately. There is a sense of distance, both in the text and the sparse accompaniment; a treasuring of a past life spent in idyllic happiness, weighted against current pain.

Artwork: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *Lady in Blue*, 1874

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen (Heinrich Heine)

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen
Und starrte ihr Bildniß an,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
Heimlich zu leben begann.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,
Und wie von Wehmuthstränen
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Auch meine Thränen flossen
Mir von den Wangen herab -
Und ach, ich kann es nicht glauben,
Daß ich Dich verloren hab'!

I stood in darkened daydreams

I stood in darkened daydreams
and stared at her portrait long
as that beloved face was
secretly coming to life.

Around her lips there blossomed
a wondrous laughing smile,
and melancholy teardrops -
they glittered in her fair eyes.

Likewise my teardrops welled up
and flowed down mournful cheeks
alas, I can't believe it,
that I am deprived of you!

Italian poet Ada Negri was the first woman to be inducted into the Royal Italian Academy in 1940 under the fascist regime of Mussolini. Her unconventional style, political association, and gender have acted as barriers against positive assessments of her work, but close examination reveals a distinctive, authentic voice on motherhood, marriage, socio-economic struggles and the experience of a literary career. Critic Ruth Shepard Phelps, writing in the early 20th century, described her poetry as

...without art and largely without form...But it is the direct, unforced expression of a deep sincerity that has carrying power...Ada Negri gives to a singular degree the impression of having written in the only way it was possible for her to write, her verse having been forced from her by the power of her feeling and of her impulse to self-expression. (Phelps, 1929)

Like the Heine poem set by Clara Schumann, “Storia breve” re-frames that which precedes the final stanza with its tragic ending. Sight and desire in this poem inhabit different dimensions; it is the narrators vision and the subject’s desire, one does not impel urgency or consummation in the other. There exists an interesting contrast between what “the poet” seems as a dream and what internally the woman truly feels: outwardly she is seen as a calm, cold statue but inwardly she possesses a deleterious heat. It is the woman’s desire that causes her death, leaving us to speculate at Negri’s meaning or motivation. The poem unfolds like prose but retains an internal meter through the repetition of particular sounds, especially vowels, within each line, deftly illustrated by the speech-like, pentatonic melody of Respighi. The ancient, elegiac tone is unmarred by the contemporary romanticism of Respighi’s free-flowing, orchestral accompaniment figures and elegant, restrained vocalism.

Artwork: Albert Joseph Moore, *Silver*, 1886

Storia breve (Ada Negri)

Ella pareva un sogno di poeta;
Vestia sempre di bianco, e avea sul viso
La calma d'una sfinge d'Oriente:

Le cadea sino ai fianchi il crin di seta;
Trillava un canto nel suo breve riso,
Era di statua il bel corpo indolente.

Amò, non fu riamata. In fondo al core,
Tranquilla in fronte, custodi la ria
Fiamma di quell'amor senza parole.

Ma quel desio la consumò... Nell'ore
D'un crepuscol d'Ottobre ella moria,
Come verbena quando manca il sole.

Brief story

She seemed the dream of a poet;
Always dressed in white, and had in her face
The calmness of a Sphinx of the East.

Her silky hair reached her waist;
She trilled a song in her lover's brief smile,
Her indolent body seemed a statue.

She fell in love - but was not loved in return.
Deep in her heart, in her mind, she preserved
The vivid flame of her love without saying
anything.

But she was consumed by desire
In the twilight hour of an October day she died
Like verbena without sunlight.

Florence Hynes Willette was a Midwestern poet whose works evoke strong, simple rural images and an earnest, family-centered humanity. “Lyric for Truelove” is a particularly erotic

poem though not without a sincere core. There is a present tense used in reference to the activity of the lovers in this poem, their desire is not exclusive to a past deprivation or distance. The setting by Undine Smith Moore is similarly unique among her output. Moore was primarily a composer of sacred choral and vocal music, and taught at several colleges including what is now Virginia State University. (Moham, 1997) This piece was written for and dedicated to the former choir director at VSU, Carolyn Kizzie, in 1975. The immediacy of the text is echoed in the sweeping arpeggios, keeping pace with the hastening winds. The active physicality in the poem is a key difference from the stoic, presentational texts representative of older, traditional tropes of women's bodies on display.

Artwork: Romaine Brooks, *Femme avec des fleurs*, 1912

Lyric for Truelove (Florence Hynes Willette)

True love, true love arise for our trysting

A young scented wind hastens by to remind us
The season is on us; the hour is right.

Oh, do you remember an April behind us
When dogwood twined gentle and white?

Your voice was a singing bird caught in the branches,
Your hair a bright river that curved as it fell

An silky your eyelids were, cool as the blossoms,
Your mouth for my thirst was a well.

True love, true love arise for our trysting.

INTERMISSION

iv. through suffering

Unlike seeing the female body at an imagined or temporal distance, the suffering author internalizes direct pain as a causal result of seeing. In this way sight acts as a

phenomenological weapon, a state of penetrable consciousness. This concept is housed in numerous literary and artistic schema, in the words of Leo Treitler in *Music and the historical imagination*, “an ancient mythology that explains human consciousness as divided in two permanently antagonistic parts...a mythology in which reason and sensuality are mutually opposed, and that opposition is characterized by the duality of the masculine and the feminine.” (Treitler, 1989) Much of the content in the following poems present the sensuality of women as powerful and dangerous, a threat to reason or logic. The sight of the body inflicts harm through the act of seeing or being seen—often manifested as light, fire and flame.

Both traditional Western literary traditions and musical-analytical frameworks map this binary opposition of masculine/feminine onto structural contrasts of strong/weak, attraction/repulsion, even normality/abnormality (the “feminine cadence” is one such example of gendered nomenclature, a term used in music theory for a weak or incomplete cadence). (McClary, 2002) For the narrative to be complete, “the masculine protagonist makes contact with but must eventually subjugate the designated [feminine] Other.” (McClary, 2002) And yet, in the following texts, the tension is not always released, neither in satisfaction nor fatality; on the contrary, there is a cyclic, repetitious element in these poems that is often reflected musically.

The text for “Take, o take those lips away” is sung by a nameless boy in Act IV of William Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*. The boy is observed by the character Mariana, betrothed to Angelo, who has since refused to marry her without a dowry. The text describes a jilted lover asking for the return of his/her kisses (notably, a likely method of returning kisses is, in fact, by kissing). Mariana’s symbolic proximity to this song implies her continued attachment to Angelo.

American composer Amy Cheney Beach, arguably the most successful female composer of the 20th century, set “Take, o take those lips away” as part of her set of Shakespeare songs, op 37. Beach was said to have made synesthetic associations between musical keys and colors, of which there is some evidence in this piece. The setting moves through several key areas, rarely dwelling on a definitive cadence until the final bars in E minor. Her “white” key, C major, arrives notably at “the break of day,” a fleeting moment of brightness before the bittersweet establishment of E minor. The fluid and ephemeral tonal shifts seem to evoke the dualistic tug between attraction and repulsion felt by the narrator. Whether the suffering is borne simply from the loss of love or the vacillation between longing and rejection is unclear. Beach chooses to temporarily abandon text in place of a sustained “ah” in the final bars, possibly indicating a sigh or moan, a more visceral expression of sadness or suffering.

Artwork: Georgia O’Keefe, *Nude Series VIII*, 1917

Take, o take those lips away (William Shakespeare)

Take, o take those lips away
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again;
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, sealed in vain.

The life of Florence Beatrice Price is characterized by monumental personal and professional achievement despite perpetual injustices. Her musical gifts gained her entry into the prestigious New England Conservatory in Boston in 1903 where she earned two degrees in performance and teaching. After moving to Chicago she not only won first prize in the Wanamaker Music Competition, but the winning work, her Symphony in E minor, was premiered at the 1933 World’s Fair by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Her writing and reputation flourished as a result of her friendship and collaboration with Marian Anderson, for

whom she composed 50 songs, including the widely acclaimed “Songs to the Dark Virgin,” a piece hailed by the *Chicago Daily News* as ‘one of the greatest immediate successes ever won by an American song.’ (Brown, 2001)

There is a shared complexity in the hybrid style and deeper significance of Langston Hughes’ poem and Price’s setting. Both artists, by virtue of their race, were expected to bridge a perceived gap between sophisticated, European forms, and authentic artistic expressions of their heritage. Hughes’ masterful, musical writing presents “realistic pictures of present-day African Americans in gritty urban areas, but elegantly expresses their attitudes and emotions in imagery that reaches every audience.” (Peters, 1995) Likewise Price gives “equal voice” to both cultural traditions and her training in a piece modeled after art song but possessing aspects of spiritual and jazz idioms.

On its surface “Songs to the Dark Virgin” offers a listener a luxurious, reverent, romantic palette, rich with images of royalty and power. A closer look at how the dark body comes to be seen, however, reveals an anachronistic pairing of ambiguous actors and highly aggressive, violent actions. The identities of the “I,” the “dark virgin” and the “dark one” are mysterious, unspecified as to gender, motive or relationship. Perhaps it is the speaker addressing their very self, seeking to hide or destroy their blackness or feeling as if the destruction is already underway.

Artwork: Toyin Odutola, *A Fertile Country, Mismanaged*, 2013

Songs to the Dark Virgin (Langston Hughes)

I.
Would
That I were a jewel,
A shattered jewel,
That all my shining brilliants
Might fall at thy feet,
Thou dark one.

II.
Would
That I were a garment,
A shimmering, silken garment,
That all my folds
Might wrap about thy body,
Absorb thy body,
Hold and hide thy body,
Thou dark one.

III.
Would
That I were a flame,
But one sharp, leaping flame
To annihilate thy body,
Thou dark one.

Claude Debussy composed *Jane* and more than 20 other songs for his first love, Marie Vasnier, while eking out a living as an accompanist for a singing class. Two years later, though having won the Prix de Rome, he still struggled financially but continued to compose under the influence of a community of symbolist writers and artists. His stylistic progression began in homage to Chabrier and Gounod, through a fast and furious period devoted to—then highly critical of—Wagner, and finally to the international modes, coloristic tonal language and diaphanous textures for which he is ultimately known. *Jane*, as a representative of his juvenilia, marries an elegant and somewhat detached musical language to the Parnassian text of poet Leconte de Lisle. The final ultimatum of projected suffering, “*J’aurai puisé ma mort prochaine*,” is intoned unspectacularly on the bottom of the treble staff, providing a contrast to the high, shimmering refrain of “*Deux beaux yeux m’ont blessé le cœur*,” a range for which his lover, Ms. Vasnier was purportedly well suited. Debussy could have been particularly drawn to this text for its contrasts of light, color and temperature; he was an avid devotee of painting who knew, met and keenly admired and emulated the work of numerous leading turn-of-the-century artists, including Whistler. (Lesure, 2001)

Artwork: James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Pink, Red and Purple*, 1884

Jane (Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle)

Jane

Je pâlis et tombe en langueur:
Deux beaux yeux m'ont blessé le cœur.

I grow pale and fall listless,
Two beautiful eyes have wounded my heart.

Rose pourprée et tout humide,
Ce n'était pas sa lèvre en feu;
C'étaient ses yeux d'un si beau bleu
Sous l'or de sa tresse fluide.
Je pâlis et tombe en langueur:
Deux beaux yeux m'ont blessé le cœur.

Watery crimson rose,
It was not her lip on fire
It was her eyes of a so-beautiful blue
Beneath her flowing tresses of gold.
I grow pale and fall listless,
Two beautiful eyes have wounded my heart.

Toute mon âme fut ravie,
Doux étaient son rire et sa voix;
Mais ses deux yeux bleus, je le vois,
Ont pris mes forces et ma vie!

All my soul was enraptured,
Sweet were her laugh and her voice;
But her two blue eyes, I see it now,
Have taken my strength and my life.

Je pâlis et tombe en langueur:
Deux beaux yeux m'ont blessé le cœur.

I grow pale and fall listless,
Two beautiful eyes have wounded my heart.

Hélas! la chose est bien certaine:
Si Jane repousse mon vœu,
Dans ses deux yeux d'un si beau bleu
J'aurai puisé ma mort prochaine.

Alas! It is most certain:
If Jane rejects my desire,
In her two eyes of a so-beautiful blue
I will go and find imminent death.

Je pâlis et tombe en langueur:
Deux beaux yeux m'ont blessé le cœur.

I grow pale and fall listless,
Two beautiful eyes have wounded my heart.

The gaze in “El mirar de la maja” belongs unequivocally to the female narrator in this poem written by Fernando Periquet, a writer associated with the popular *género chico* literary style. Though the gaze is directed from this narrator to her lover, the feelings of suffering, desire, anger and passion appear to be felt by both. This provocative exchange is fixed in an unrelenting staccato ostinato in the piano over which the fiery vocal line authoritatively plunges. The theatricality of the piece reflects its origin and classification: the *tonadilla* was a short, dramatic piece traditionally performed in costume between the acts of plays in the 17th century. Catalanian composer Enrique Granados often employed archaic Spanish musical forms in his song writing, bonding elements of folk song and dance to rich, programmatic treatment of harmony and

texture, especially as it pertains to his expanded use of the piano accompaniment. Granados drew inspiration for his cultural and coloristic representations from art by his friend Francisco Goya, especially the paintings of 18th century Madrid which “became both the setting and the theme for Granados’ compositions for voice and piano.” (Kimball, 2005)

Artwork: Grace Hartigan, *After Goya*, 1989

El mirar de la maja (Fernando Periquet)

¿Por qué es en mis ojos
tan hondo el mirar
que a fin de cortar
desdenes y enojos
los suelo entornar?
¿Qué fuego dentro llevarán
que si acaso con calor
los clavo en mi amor
sonrojo me dan?

Por eso el chispero
a quien mi alma dí
al verse ante mí
me tira el sombrero
y dícame así:
“Mi Maja, no me mires más
que tus ojos rayos son
y ardiendo en pasión
la muerte me dan.”

The gaze of the beloved

Because my eyes
hold such an intense gaze
in order to avoid
d disdain and fighting
I tend to look away
What fire do they carry inside,
that with only a little passion,
when I look at my lover,
they cause me to blush?

That’s why this fiery man
to whom I gave my soul
when standing in front of me
tosses a hat my way
and says to me:
“my love, do not look at me
anymore
for your eyes are lightning
and burning in desire
they give me death.”

v. for understanding

“The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled...Our vision is continually active, continually moving continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are.” (Berger, 1979) John Berger opens *Ways of Seeing* with these axioms, laying a foundation for his inquiry into the dimensions of sight as they construct knowledge of others, ourselves and the world in which we exist. This recital will close

with songs that search for meaning through contrast and through relationships: they are tools to examine permutable interpretations of historical context and our place within it.

Frauenliebe und -leben, the set from which “Seit ich ihn gesehen” is excerpted, has often been labeled as a paradigm of outmoded and unproductive social constructs of gender. Unlike the heroic or philosophical (mis)adventures of male protagonists in Romantic dramatic song, the “female” narrative is limited to a domestic sphere. Feminist analysis largely rejects the proposition that the *Frauenliebe* poems are “written from a woman’s point of view,” rather they are an *impersonation* of a woman by a man and would have done “cultural work” of helping to establish particular gender ideologies in their time. (Solie, 1993) It is offered here as an experiment to test the elasticity of the space between representation and self-representation. After all, Chamisso’s text and Schumann’s setting offer a way of seeing, or rather, of not seeing, as the subject seeks meaning from a state of shock— here, blindness —a disappearance that encompasses not only the world around her but parts of herself. The cyclical chordal accompaniment, the heartbeat or mythic *eternal feminine* pulse of the piece synchronizes with the final repetition of text, *Seit ich ihn gesehen / Glaub' ich blind zu sein*. Though this accompaniment figure frames the piece—in fact, frames the entire cycle, as it returns in the final song—perhaps there is an interpretation in which the continuous, emblematic harmonic progression becomes less cage and more mantra, an utterance with the potential of connecting to a deeper signification of what is true and what is imagined.

Artwork: Leonardo da Vinci, *Study of Woman*, 1490

Seit ich ihn gesehen (Adelbert von Chamisso) **Since I saw him**

Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub' ich blind zu sein;
Wo ich hin nur blicke,
Seh' ich ihn allein;
Wie im wachen Traume

Since I saw him
I believe myself to be blind,
where I but cast my gaze,
I see him alone.
as in waking dreams

Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,
Heller nur empor.

his image floats before me,
dipped from deepest darkness,
brighter in ascent.

Sonst ist licht- und farblos
Alles um mich her,
Nach der Schwestern Spiele
Nicht begehrt' ich mehr,
Möchte lieber weinen,
Still im Kämmerlein;
Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub' ich blind zu sein.

All else dark and colorless
everywhere around me,
for the games of my sisters
I no longer yearn,
I would rather weep,
silently in my little chamber,
since I saw him,
I believe myself to be blind.

The pure line, economy of form and vivid color of the paintings of Henri Matisse provided some of the greatest inspiration for Francis Poulenc's song writing. Matisse said of his own work: "the entire arrangement of my picture is expressive: the place occupied by the figures, the empty spaces around them, the proportions, all that has its share." (Tranchin, 2007) The transfer of these aforementioned characteristics could be said of Poulenc's setting of "Homme au sourire tendre," from the song cycle *Le Fraicheur et le Feu* (The Coolness and the Fire) by Paul Éluard. The piece, like the poem, is a litany: a patterned recitation that proceeds without undue movement or dramatization. Poulenc was especially sensitive to how Éluard's poetry appeared on the page, emulating the degree of spacing, order and rhetorical inflection. For this reason the two final lines of the poem differ in elocution and melodic shape. The sense of perception in this poem is enigmatic: the clarity and surety with which the Man and Woman are ascribed specific features becomes a trial for the poet, a test of his understanding of (and ability to capture) humanity.

Artwork: Henri Matisse, *The Conversation*, 1909

Homme au sourire tendre (Paul Éluard)

Man with the tender smile

Homme au sourire tendre
Femme aux tendres paupières
Homme aux joues rafraîchies

Man of the tender smile
woman of the tender eyelids
man of the freshened cheeks

Femme aux bras doux et frais	woman of the sweet fresh arms
Homme aux prunelles calmes	man of the calm eyes
Femme aux lèvres ardentes	woman of the ardent lips
Homme aux paroles pleines	man of abundant words
Femme aux yeux partagés	woman of the shared eyes
Homme aux deux mains utiles	man of the useful hands
Femme aux mains de raison	woman of the hands of reason
Homme aux astres constant	man of the steadfast stars
Femme aux seins de durée	woman of the enduring breasts
Il n'est rien qui vous retient	there is nothing that prevents you
Mes maîtres de m'éprouver.	my masters from testing me.

One of the most prolific contemporary composers of song, Lori Laitman set five poems by Sara Teasdale in her song cycle, *Mystery*, of which this song is a part. This lyrical, luminous piece lies at the heart of the concept for *Ways of Seeing*, presenting a final query with a directness and honesty that transcends time, style, language and context. Laitman captures the gravity of this moment by setting it apart as a simple rising scale, carrying it into final bars of ultimately unresolved chords and yet not estranged. In this poem Teasdale offers the most sincere exchange of seeing and being seen than we've heretofore encountered. She examines a relationship between seer and seeing rather than a reaction to it, uncovering a consequence of perception that is critical and potentially unanswerable.

The Mystery (Sara Teasdale)

Your eyes drink of me,
 Love makes them shine,
 Your eyes that lean
 So close to mine.
 We have long been lovers,
 We know the range
 Of each other's moods
 And how they change;
 But when we look
 At each other so
 Then we feel
 How little we know;
 The spirit eludes us,
 Timid and free—
 Can I ever know you
 Or you know me?

Louis Vierne is largely known as a composer for organ, the dexterity and drama of which is recognizable in the turbulent piece, “Réversibilité,” from his *5 poèmes de Baudelaire*. A highly skilled organist himself, Vierne was passed over for appointment as a professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire after studying and volunteering there for nearly two decades. His professional disappointments compounded other tragedies in his life, including losing his son and brother in World War I, and recurring health afflictions. Vierne was in fact born blind and only barely recovered the ability to distinguish objects, faces and letters during the course of his life. For these reasons, and in combination with the teeming passion of Baudelaire’s poem, this piece is an achievement by uniting sound with sense, sight with hearing. The nearly sanctified idol of the poem, a symbol of happiness, goodness and beauty, is challenged to bear the tortured soul of the narrator. The incredulity of this voice is embodied in the perpetual motion and search amidst cascading key areas. There is an unsurpassable density of imagery as the Angel is seen in all senses: as an emotional engine, a physical beauty, a spiritual power. What is left but to worship?

Artwork: Gustav Klimt, *The Virgin*, 1913

Réversibilité (Charles Baudelaire)

Ange plein de gaieté, connaissez-vous l'angoisse,
 La honte, les remords, les regrets, les ennuis,
 Et les vagues terreurs de ces affreuses nuits
 Qui compriment le cœur comme un papier qu'on froisse?
 Ange plein de gaieté, connaissez-vous l'angoisse?

Ange plein de bonté, connaissez-vous la haine?
 Les poings crispés dans l'ombre et les larmes de fiel,
 Quand la vengeance bat son infernal rappel,
 Et de nos facultés se fait le capitaine?
 Ange plein de bonté, connaissez-vous la haine?
 Ange plein de beauté, connaissez-vous les rides,
 Et la peur de vieillir, et ce hideux tourment
 De lire la secrète horreur du dévouement
 Dans les yeux où longtemps burent nos yeux avides?
 Ange plein de beauté, connaissez-vous les rides?

Ange plein de bonheur, de joie et de lumières,
 David mourant aurait demandé la santé
 Aux émanations de ton corps enchanté;
 Mais de toi je n'implore, ange, que tes prières,
 Ange plein de bonheur, de joie et de lumières!

Reversibility

Angel full of gaiety, do you know the anguish,
 The shame, the remorse, the regrets, the troubles,
 And the vague terrors of those awful nights
 That crush the heart like a scrunched up piece of paper?
 Angel full of gaiety, do you know anguish?

Angel full of goodness, do you know the hatred,
 The clenched fists in the shadow and the bitter tears
 When vengeance beats its infernal call to arms
 And makes itself the commander of our faculties?
 Angel full of goodness, do you know hatred?
 Angel full of beauty, do you know the wrinkles,
 And the fear of growing old, and that hideous torment
 Of reading the secret horror of devotion
 In those eyes where our eager eyes drank for so long?
 Angel full of beauty, do you know of wrinkles?

Angel full of happiness, joy and light,
 The dying David would have asked for health
 When presented with the emanations from your enchanted
 body; But from you, angel, I beg only your prayers, Angel
 full of happiness, joy and of light.

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CHAPTER II

“Parade of Passions”: The Magic and Music of Alcina

“Alcina...may serve as a model for how an operatic role works when, as is usual, it is conceived as a parade of passions...Each of these aria functions has its own repertory of musical resources, and it would be scarcely an exaggeration to claim that they comprise all the musical riches of the age.” (Kimbell, 2016)

As the musical landscapes of Alcina’s arias shift between chamber style, continuo song, and fully orchestrated dramatic *scena*, so too her power surges, suspends, drains and finally succumbs. These varied textures act as the internal messaging of Alcina’s complex emotional life, especially as it gains in contrast against her idealized, enchanted external world. She has populated her island with rich flora and fauna, all of it the transfigured forms of former lovers she once lured, possessed and eliminated. *Alcina*, one of Handel’s enduring masterpieces, synthesizes the long-established cultural condemnation of witchcraft with an astounding variety of musical color and dramatic impetus. Through Handel’s parade of shifting textures, Alcina’s passions begin to isolate her from both the supernatural world of her own making and the righteous reality of her antagonists. She is the witch: socially rejected and morally unredeemable. Alcina cannot transcend the role she plays within the narrative as the evil “other,” despite having “learned to love” and “losing as a result.” (Harris, 2003). In the allegorical world of *Alcina*, love truly conquers all.

Though by the third decade of the eighteenth century, Europe was “poised to rid itself of witch-lust,” the traditions of demonizing and executing women for allegations of black magic, or acting as instruments of the devil, were deeply implanted in religious, cultural and social mores. (Pietropaolo, 2003) Plots engaging the supernatural or mythological, especially those with a

moralistic core, were particularly popular as operatic source material during the cutthroat competition between Handel and the Opera of the Nobility in the late 1730s. In some cases, the warring factions set nearly identical stories to directly combat rival productions. Following the premiere of *Alcina* in 1735 the Opera of the Nobility produced *Sabrina*, and the English opera company produced *Comus*. Each of these plots, “include a sorcerer or sorceress who captivates members of the opposite and turns them into wild animals.” (Harris, 2003) Enacting the battle between virtue and pleasure was a reliably entertaining narrative, especially for audiences accustomed to engaging with similar binary vices in their own lives, often propagated by the church and political institutions.

The clear opposition between good and evil, order and disorder, is embodied by *Alcina*, the sorceress, and *Bradamante*, the Christian heroine as they battle over the soul of *Ruggiero*, whom *Alcina* has captured and bewitched. The tension between these moral poles was embedded into European culture by centuries of “profound anxiety” on the part of religious authorities against that which was deemed “unnatural and abnormal.” (Coudert, 2008) To preserve and protect its sanctified orthodoxy, Christian institutions in particular (from both Reformation and Post-Reformation eras) “deployed all the resources available from natural philosophy and theology to vindicate the goodness of God and the truth of the Bible.” Included in these resources was a rich strain of “witch theories,” messages propagated to sustain “divinely ordained, patriarchal social order.” (Coudert, 2008) A mix of theological justification and perfidious misogyny, such theories persisted, resonating as religious, political, domestic and artistic truths for hundreds of years.

For Handel to draw dramatic power from the polarization of these women, *Alcina* must first be established as the central figure in a world of deviant sexual pleasure and indulgence. In

her opening aria, “Di, cor mio,” the audience is not met with a wild, incantatory rite but an alluring, sensual exercise in instrumental and vocal interplay, evocative of a tightly woven chamber music piece. As Alcina invokes the various locations where her and Ruggiero consummated their love, the vocal line is echoed by a duet in the oboes and doubled in the first and second violins (Figure 2.a).

The image shows a musical score for the aria "Di, cor mio" from the opera Alcina. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are for oboes, the third for a violin, and the bottom two for a vocal line. The vocal line includes lyrics in Italian and German. The music is in G minor and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked with a 'p' (piano) at the beginning.

Figure 2.a. “Di cor mio” excerpt from *Alcina*

The symbolically woody and naturalistic sound of the paired oboes is evocative of the pastoral landscape Alcina describes: “*mostra il bosco, il rio, il fonte*” (show them the woods, the spring, the stream). This musical and lyrical landscape draws the audience into an “eternal spring, devoid of conflict and populated by individuals whose only care is the fulfilment of simple desires.” (Pietropaolo, 2003) Alcina’s vocal line is undergirded by a metrically clean, *galant* orchestration in the continuo. Though she is in complete command of this consort she is ostensibly also a member; the lengthy vine of short, cellular rhythmic and melodic motives may follow her lead, but they also wrap her inside of her own device. The assertion of Alcina’s passion for sexual pleasure and control in “Di, cor mio” represents a crucial “ontological continuity between the protagonist and her landscape.” (Pietropaolo, 2003) Handel exposes Alcina as intricately responsible for and defined by her hedonistic, supernatural world.

The fallibility of Alcina’s designs begin to be revealed in her subsequent aria, “Si, son quella.” For this purpose Handel employs a strikingly sparse texture consisting of the voice, continuo and solo cello. Bearing resemblance to the construction of “Di, cor mio,” short, roughly 2-bar melodic cells open the aria, followed by a longer *obbligato* melody in the cello. As the cello weaves between the short, expressions of text, there is a sense of serpentine, underhanded strategy; what is said is immediately re-contextualized by an echo of what may be implied.

(Figure 2.b)

The musical score for the opening of the aria "Si, son quella" from Alcina is presented in three staves. The top staff is for the voice (ALICINA), the middle for Bass, and the bottom for Pianoforte. The tempo is marked "Andante larghetto". The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Si: son quel - la! non più bel - la, / Ja, die Glei - che! doch nicht schön mehr,". The accompaniment consists of a cello-like line in the Bass and a harpsichord-like line in the Pianoforte.

Figure 2.b. “Si son quella” opening from Alcina

Amidst suspicion that Ruggiero’s somewhat erratic behavior is due to the presence of the two strangers, known to the audience as a disguised Bradamante and Melisso, Alcina seeks to reassert her enchantment over Ruggiero. However, Alcina is portrayed as significantly vulnerable, and possibly without access to the full range of her powers, as the presence of the orchestra is brief, and delayed until an 8-bar ritornello at the end of the A section. Alcina’s interplay with the voicing of the orchestration develops a layered psychology that transcends the simple structure of a romantic ode. Handel’s use of a continuo-song style in “Si, son quella,” reveals a protagonist focused on absolute control but quietly struggling against an unseen boundary. As the vocal line snakes its way to a peak, when the vocal line hovers over A5 and G#5 in a culminating fermata, the solo cello and harpsichord simply realize downbeats, fading away to leave the Alcina floating above, precarious and tender.

Mournful and entrancing, the aria stops short of inspiring true empathy for Alcina largely due to the caustic text which appears in the B section. She is momentarily exposed as the enemy the narrative requires her to be while also revealing that her hold on Ruggiero is tenuous enough to need more aggressive repair. Hoping to provoke guilt and subversion from her target, the B section provides this new insight into her tactics:

Chiedi al guardo, alla favella, se son quella, dillo ingrato al tuo core mentitore, che mi vuole rinfacciar.	Ask my gaze, my words if I am she, say it, ungrateful one, to your lying heart, that wants to reproach me.
---	---

Hardly the seductive cooing of “Di, cor mio,” the text informs the listener that despite the beauty of form in the world of Alcina, that its heart is essentially cruel. Forms of insidious evil such as this would have been familiar to Handel’s Covent Garden audience of 1735. Conceptions of underhanded evil at work, largely ascribed to the devil, were codified not only by religious diatribes but also medical and scientific texts. In his 1716 book, “The Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery and Witchcraft,” physician Richard Boulton explained it this way:

“...by such Means; these Servants of the Devil pretend to make Men and Women love or hate; the Devil himself disposing the corrupted Affections, of those God permits him to work upon, which way he will.”

Alcina’s need to re-ensnare the love and will of Ruggiero through “Si, son quella” thus reveals not only a divinely approbated work of evil, but also indicates the subtle diminishment of her power in so doing.

Growing clarity about the betrayal and escape of Ruggiero triggers another critical degree of loss for Alcina. Handel indicates a new phase of Alcina’s introspection by assigning new, symbolic significance for the short, motivic building blocks utilized in “Di, cor mio” and “Si, son quella.” These 1- or 2-measure melodic fragments have largely established Alcina’s control; first

over her environment and second, over her lover. In the monumental aria, “Ah, mio cor,” Handel uses the units for a new purpose: as cries of emotional pain and accusation.



Figure 2.c. “Ah mio cor” excerpt from *Alcina*

Alone, she primarily addresses herself (“ah! mio cor, schernito sei!”), and then the gods (“nume d’amore”), with whom her transaction has gone awry. As her routine of pleasure and conquest is threatened, Alcina is suddenly forced to self-examine: she cries out in short 1- or 2-bar exclamations. Nearly every phrase begins on its highest pitch, many of which also occur on the downbeat (read: strongest beat) of each measure. (Figure 2.c) A heartbeat figure provided by a clipped, sequential pulse of homophonic strings, combined with a disjunct, descending arpeggiated figure in the *bassi*.



Figure 2.d. “Ah mio cor” opening from *Alcina*

Alternating chromatic chords undergird a rising pattern of descending steps in the upper strings, contributing to a sense of burdened movement. (Figure 2.d) The series of suspensions on the downbeats of each of the opening five bars enact a simultaneous arrival and propulsion

forward; local tonicization inevitably pulls towards another chromatic alteration, and the cycle repeats. The result: an innermost chamber of ache, distress and incredulousness. Her heart is literally exposed: visible to the eye and audible to the ear through the pulsing heartbeats written into in the score.

The battle between Alcina’s former and current self—between the lustful witch and the woman in love—is encapsulated in a highly dramatic *accompagnato* recitative wherein she begins to acknowledge the loss of her magical power attributed to the enchanted ring given to Ruggiero by Atlante. Lady Mary Granville, an aristocratic friend and patron of Handel, previewed the scene and described it in her correspondence and autobiography, published in 1861:

Yesterday morning my sister and I went with Mrs. Donellan to Mr. Handel's house to hear the first rehearsal of the new opera Alcina. I think it the best he ever made, but I have thought so of so many, that I will not say positively 'tis the finest, but 'tis so fine I have not words to describe it. Strada has a whole scene of charming recitative — there are a thousand beauties. Whilst Mr. Handel was playing his part, I could not help thinking him a necromancer in the midst of his own enchantments.
(Llanover, 1861)

A casual but insightful operatic connoisseur, Lady Granville identifies this particular moment, Act 2: Scene XIII, as noteworthy. The orchestral embodiment of Alcina’s spells up to this point has been minimal – much of the supernatural scene-setting thus far has been relegated to incidental music originally written for the scandalous (and rather French) addition of dancers. This *accompagnato*, the extended opening to Alcina’s aria, “*Ombre pallide*,” represents the most extensive scene “involving pagan rites or black magic...these were as effective as audience-pullers in the seventeenth century as they are today.” (Colvin, 1993)

Handel capitalizes on this attraction and twists expectations to an even greater advantage by promising magical activity and then not delivering it. The highly chromatic recitative begins with a series of pained utterances from Alcina. As the harmony weaves its way through secondary key areas, often prepared by weak, diminished leading-tone chords rather than dominants, Alcina alternately decries the betrayal of Ruggiero and pledges continued love. The only first, clear authentic cadence in B minor (the indicated key) occurs after Alcina’s decisive, “sei traditore!” What follows, a rapid G-major scale, presages a true incantation; Alcina invokes her spirits, and, with a second flourish in C minor from the orchestra, commands that they hear her prayer and trap Ruggiero on the island. However, instead of a rush of diegetic sound (thunder crash, rushing wind, swirling spirits), the suddenness comes in the form of a palpitating D major triad, and Alcina questions, “Ma, ohimé, Misera! E quale insolita tardanza!” (but, woe, misfortune! Why this unusual delay?). The dramatic instruction in the score reads, “guarda d’intorno” (she looks around). One can imagine a similar reaction in the theater in 1735.

The image shows a musical score for a recitativo accompagnato. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for Violins I and II (concertini), and the bottom staff is for the vocal line. The lyrics are: "Vi cer-co, Ich ruf' euch, e via_sconde-te? und ihr verbergt euch?". Above the vocal line, there is a performance instruction: "(sdegnata.) zürmend.".

Figure 2.e. Recitativo accompagnato, “Ah Ruggiero crudèl” from *Alcina*

The dramatic potency of this moment is couched in its simplicity and strong musical allegory. The orchestra is essentially silenced; Alcina has lost her connection to her power. Though the melody is doubled in the upper strings for the next eight measures, there is no other instrumental element present in the score. (Figure 2.e) The aria that follows, “Ombre pallide,”

employs the same wandering figure of doubled melody with no bassline, though this time in longer, twisting melismas. The aria is desperation and paranoia personified – harmonically insecure and without regular intervallic patterns: “ombre pallide lo so m’udite; d’intorno errate, evvi celate / sorde da me, perché? perché?” (pale shadows, I know you hear me, you hover around me and conceal yourselves, deaf to my words, why? Why?). Alcina has become estranged from the woman she once was, a stranger on her own island.

The two-pronged attack advancing on Alcina is thus comprised of an external and an internal force. The Christian heroine, Bradamante, has successfully reunited with Ruggiero, who has been provided with the ring which saps Alcina’s power. Alcina herself has admitted in a short but critical recitative that she loves Ruggiero still, despite his treachery (Act 3, Sc. ii). The witch remains vilified and the wife remains virtuous. These “extreme manifestations of two types of the feminine” represent the forces against which Alcina’s character struggles. (Colvin, 1993) Her final aria, “Mi restano le lagrime” possesses the final terms of her defeat. The aria is written in the relentlessly angular key of F# minor, notably a tritone away from the key of C, regarded as the key of purity, simplicity and natural order. In the design of tonal harmony, Alcina exists at the furthest possible pole from goodness and reason. In contrast to the paranoia and panic of “Ombre pallide,” here Alcina appears strikingly lucid as she accepts that she has offended the gods and they will not hear her pleas. It is only in the B section that she reveals a darker proposition:

Potessi in onda limpida	Into the clear waters I could
Sottrarmi al sole, al di;	Escape from the sun
potessi in sasso volgermi,	I could turn myself into stone
Che finirei così	And in this way end
La pena mia crudel.	My cruel sufferings

This funereal final aria provides the damning evidence of Alcina's rejection from both her supernatural world and the world of reason. With her magic gone she has lost her lover, her universe, and herself. What remains is death. Curiously she explores two methods of suicide: the first rather human (drowning), the second supernatural (turning into stone). The idea of drowning hearkens to a deeper symbolism of spiritual cleansing or reckoning, a trope that would likely have had subtle implications to Handel's audience. That this baptismal act would lead to her demise relates to the phenomenon of burning witches which reached its peak late in the 17th century. The ritualized cleansing doubles as destruction. The second method, turning herself into stone, is a more direct reference linking her past offenses to the manner of her death. In this case, the tools that have enabled Alcina's survival become the weapons of her elimination. To this end, in Handel's version of this popular story, adapted from the epic poem *Orlando Furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto, Alcina does not engage directly with the combat that ensues outside of her castle walls but rather with this internal and spiritual dissolution of her power. The pleasures she has sought have led her to an ultimate punishment.

As summarized by a London newspaper, "the Opera of Alcina affords us a beautiful and instructive Allegory: the Character of Alcina's Beauty, and Inconstancy proves the short Duration of all sublunary Enjoyments, which are lost as soon as attain'd." (Harris, 2003) However, Handel's diverse musical riches imbue Alcina with expressive potential that dares to cross the boundaries of her supernatural realm into the world of true human emotion. Distinctly characterized as the witch, a symbol of evil, she is ultimately unredeemable. However, her path from sorcery to sincerity is more complex than first appears. Alcina's sins are great, her taste for pleasure distasteful, and yet, she comes to know herself as one capable of love, perhaps even

fidelity. Her parade of passions may not include penance, but one may wonder if it is her sorcery or her growing self-knowledge that is perceived as the greater threat to order.

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CHAPTER III

“Familiar and Well Belovèd”: Brahms, Barber and Boyle

Program

Kelly Ann Bixby, soprano

April 16, 2019

7:00pm

Kerrytown Concert House

I. *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer* Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Verzicht, O Herz, auf Rettung
Finstere Schatten der Nacht
An jeder Hand die Finger
Ihr schwarzen Augen, ihr dürft nur winken
Wahre, wahre deinen Sohn
Rosen steckt mir an die Mutter
Vom Gebirge Well auf Well
Weiche Gräser im Revier
Nagen am Herzen fühl
Ich kose süß mit der und der
Alles, alles in den Wind
Schwarzer Wald, dein Schatten
Nein, Geliebter, setze dich
Flammenauge, dunkles Haar
Zum Schluß: Nun, ihr Musen, genug!

Michael McElvain and Chao Gao, piano. Jessica Dold, soprano,
Samuel Kidd, baritone, and Brandon Motz, tenor

II. *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Michael McElvain, piano

III. *Song of Solomon* (world premiere) Benjamin C.S. Boyle (b. 1979)

Joshua Marzan, piano and Nicholas Music, tenor

“Familiar and Well Belovèd”: Brahms, Barber and Boyle

Program Notes

The final line of James Agee’s text, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* reads, “and those receive me, who quietly treat me as one familiar and well-belovèd in that home.” In the works offered in this recital, “Familiar and Well Belovèd,” there is an element of home, of intimacy, of individual voices projecting shared human experience. Johannes Brahms’ *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer* are written in a popular style and bonded to modest folk poetry, drawn from Russian, Polish, Turkish and Hungarian traditions. Intended to be played as *Hausmusik*, or informal performance within the home, the waltzes are nonetheless infused with characteristically lush textures and complex formal designs. They became “the chief source of Brahms’ personal wealth,” occupying public concert programs throughout Germany, often featuring renowned pianists and singers. (Olsen, 2001) Numerous instrumental and choral arrangements of the piece were released through Brahms’ publisher with disgruntled approval from the composer, who nonetheless promoted their broad appeal (and his own success).

Samuel Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, based on a prose poem by James Agee, opens wide into a view of the world through the eyes and mind of a child, telescopically moving from points of immediate clarity to existential curiosity. Critics and listeners appreciated *Knoxville*’s representation of Americanness, and debated to what extent it embodied Barber’s particular brand of neo-romanticism. One of the composer’s most successful works, the “lyric rhapsody” has produced decades of historic performances, most notably by Eleanor Steber, Evelyn Lear, Leontyne Price, Dawn Upshaw and Renée Fleming. Though distinctive, Southern,

small-town details weave through the narrative, the piece transcends a singular place through nostalgic remembrances of the joys and mysteries of everyday life.

Few texts are interpreted as variously as those found in the Hebrew and Christian books of worship. The speculative origin and authorship of *Song of Solomon* exists in contrast to the deep familiarity of its often-excerpted text, including “set me as a seal upon your heart.” Adapted as a song cycle for soprano and tenor, listeners are invited to consider the anonymous and yet vivid personhood of the female protagonist as she searches for her *well-belovèd*, Solomon. The decadent and agile musical language of Boyle seamlessly partners with the text; they are both equally passionate, lyrical and unexpected.

Boyle, Barber and Brahms each craft an aspect of the familiar into outward, universal expressions of vitality, adoration and wonder. As a triptych, this recital of song and chamber music explores intimate spaces, and the sublime, spiritual worlds into which they open.

Part I:
Neue Liebeslieder Walzer
Johannes Brahms, 1875

A number of contradictory attributes unexpectedly coalesce to form the legacy of Johannes Brahms. Though fastidious about his workspace, he appeared in public in notoriously wrinkled suits. He amassed a significant fortune due in large part to his shrewd business sense but, once his fee was acquired, he seemed far less concerned over maintaining it, leaving stacks of money uncounted—or disbursing it surprisingly generously. (Geiringer, 2006) The musical voice of Brahms has also provoked conflicting interpretation. He held a strong “belief in the greater value of much music earlier than his own time,” and mastered early music structures such as the fugue, canon and motet. A dedicated scholar, Brahms also pioneered the preservation and authoritative publishing of the music of Bach, Palestrina, Schütz and Schubert, among others.

(Musgrave, 1983) And yet, Brahms' penchant for motivic variation, unexpected harmonic modulations and complex rhythmic structures have inspired counter-arguments in favor of Brahms as defying a strictly "classical romanticist" label (as he was once described by Richard Wagner). In his contentious 1947 essay, "Brahms the Progressive," Schoenberg cited the composer's use of asymmetric phrases as possessing a "logic, economy and power of inventiveness which build melodies of so much natural fluency." (Musgrave, 1983) It is the wealth of original ideas and the complexity and richness of their development that ultimately delineates Brahms' work as a synthesis of roughly three centuries of formal tradition, encompassing polyphony, folk music and dance.

The *Neue Liebeslieder* waltzes, Op. 65, are emblematic of this synthesis and also aptly embody contradictions tied to their genre and function. Nearing the apex of a prestigious career, Brahms released the precursory *Liebeslieder*, Op. 52, in 1869. Of this work he said, "I would like to believe that particularly domestic quartet singing has been taken up again to a not inconsiderable degree through my work in the medium." (Hamilton, 2014) As a concert work, the success of Op. 52 was unquestionable, appearing in public arenas all over Germany, often engaging the talents of illustrious musicians. The popularity of the piece as a domestic art can be traced both by the frequency of its mention in the correspondence of friends and patrons, as well as the proliferation of arrangements for varied performing forces. (Hamilton, 2014) The Ettlinger sisters, Anna, Rudolphine and Emma, daughters of high court advocate Dr. Veit Ettlinger, were fond of their father's honored guest who visited regularly with his friend and *Hofkapellmeister*, Hermann Levi:

"Often we were fortunate to hear Brahms and Levi play the piano four hands; among their offerings were the Hungarian Dances done with such captivating fire as I was never to hear them again, and

the *Liebeslieder* – even without the voices – performed with enchanting grace.” (Geiringer, 86)

Curiously, this casual account alludes to a persistent incongruity between the work’s definitive genre and performance practice. The letter acknowledges that the *Liebeslieder* were performed to great acclaim as a four-hand piano piece with no voices. This episode is representative of a fairly common occurrence, evident from the proliferation of published non-vocal arrangements released in the years following the original score. Though one learns more about Brahms’ business practices than his music in his letters, the correspondence between Brahms and his publisher Fritz Simrock also brings to light the composer’s conflicted approach to the work:

“Under no circumstances should they be printed in the first instance without vocal parts. People must see them just so. And hopefully this is a *Hausmusik* piece and will be sung a great deal very quickly. If 2 or 1 years is too long for you, we could publish the piece without voices, just for found-hand piano, over the course of the winter.” (cite: letter of august 31, 1869 to Simrock, *Briefe* IX 80-1)

Further confusion was prompted by the cover page of the original release which read: “Lovesongs: Waltzes for piano with four hands – and voice ad libitum” which seemed to suggest that the parts for voice were optional, or at the very least, flexible. (Hamilton, 2014) In a potentially corrective gesture, Brahms published the *Neue Liebeslieder*, Op. 65, under the description: “Waltzes for four singers and piano for four hands.” (Figures 6 and 7) This new description presents a clearer hierarchy than its predecessor, asserting that this second work in the series unequivocally belongs to a vocal genre.

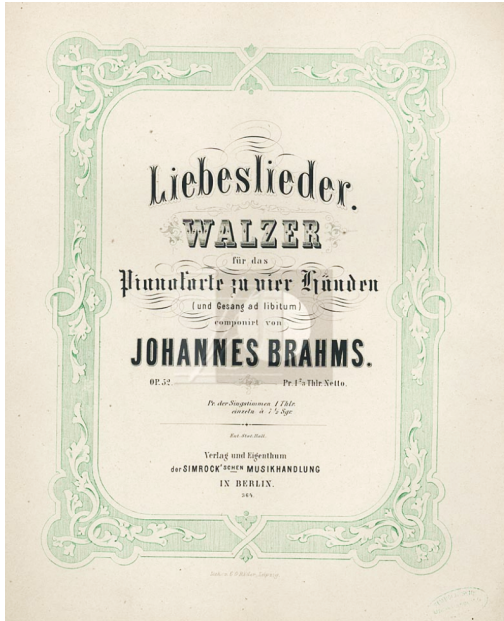


Figure 3.a. Title page of *Liebeslieder Walzer*, Op 52, first edition. Berlin: N. Simrock, 1869.

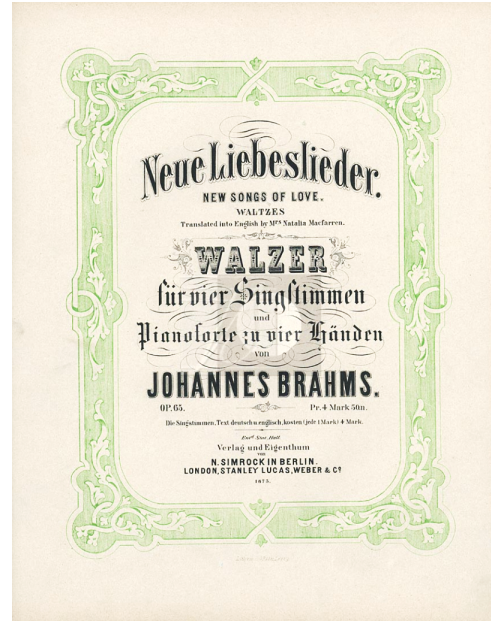


Figure 3.b. Title page of *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer*, Op. 65, first edition. Berlin: N. Simrock, 1875.

The indeterminate quality of the waltzes both fueled their widespread popularity and also obscured their function. At present they seem to exist in an elusive sub-category of Brahms' vocal music, overshadowed by works for solo voice or choral music, long-removed from the intimate tradition of music-making in the home:

“Thus the *Liebeslieder* teeter on the brink between infinite performative flexibility and a sense of *Werktreue* (‘faithfulness to the work’) that seems particularly unusual for a piece aimed at a *Hausmusik* audience. The skill with which Brahms has written the opus puts it in the position being ‘high-art’ entertainment music, and his attitude to its dissemination mirrors this apparent contradiction. (Hamilton, 299)

In their original form as a vocal quartet with four-hand piano, the *Neue Liebeslieder* offer a cohesive, dramatic and engaging approach to song performance that merits authentic replication. The pieces “are of special interest in the oeuvre of a composer who wrote no music for staged drama, but who is represented in every other major nineteenth-century secular genre.” (Atlas, 1992) The fifteen songs are linked seamlessly by key, mood and structure and aligned in

a taut series of vignettes. The primacy of form, rhythm and motive, essential to Brahms' style, is condensed into miniature scenes, often between one and two minutes in duration. Largely symmetrical, the work can be divided into two groups of seven songs, with an epilogue. The scheme of tonal relationships (Figure 3.c) indicates a design based primarily on thirds, extrapolating impetus from shifts between relative major and minor keys.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Subgroup 1	a	a	F	d	d	F	C	-
Subgroup 2	Eflat	g	G	G	g / G	E	a	F

Figure 3.c. Summary of key relationships in *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer*

Each subgroup begins and ends with a quartet and contains four solos internally (or one duet, in the case of #13, “Nein, Geliebter, setze dich mir so nahe nicht!”). Layers of rhythmic repetition occur on the micro and macro level: only slight variations in tempo between the pieces serves to establish an overriding pulse to the work, especially within each subgroup, that propels the motion ever forward. The element of four hands at the piano forms a richly-voiced vertical texture in the accompaniment figures as well as a broad landscape of percussive gestures that impel consistent drive, energy and lilt.

The depth, color and dynamism in the *Neue Liebeslieder* prevent it from existing as a trivial parlor piece. The shifts of tone are drawn sensitively from the texts: poems translated by Georg Daumer and collected in his *Polydora, ein weltpoetisches Liederbuch* (1855). Brahms often set folk poetry alongside professional literary voices, as is the case in the waltzes. Songs 1-14 draw on texts from *Polydora*, representing folk poems translated from Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Turkish and other languages. The text for #15, “Zum Schluß,” was inserted by Brahms as an epilogue, sourced from the elegy *Alexis und Dora* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. (Stark, 1998)

The texts evoke vivid images and environments as well as prototypical sentiments on love, loss and separation. The sweeping contrary motion in the opening of “Verzicht’, O Herz, auf Rettung,” plunges the listener instantly into the “Liebe Meer,” the sea of love. The foreboding unison in the quartet breaks apart into an openly voiced chord as the boats smash upon the shore, “zertrümmert am Gestad umher.” This moment is just one example of the “performative partnerships” in the work, wherein the musical and verbal gesture “realize the [dramatic] argument mimetically,” creating a complex and engaging expressive unity within each movement and across the set. (Atlas, 1992) Cohesion is also curated through the thematic development of melodic motives, exemplified in the arias for soprano and tenor.

Descending stepwise motion, employed throughout, is naively introduced in the first soprano arias, #3 and #6, and is echoed again in the tenor aria, #10, as they lament lost or ill-fated love. In #9, this stepwise motion morphs into half steps, in parallel motion with the bass, embodying the trepidation in the text: “fassen ein ganzes wonneberaubtes Leben entlang” (to bear the thought of a whole lifetime devoid of bliss). The unpretentious motive is also manipulated in subtle but constructive ways; from this kernel Brahms forms sequences, diversifies counterpoint and inverts cells to create numerous passages propelled by contrary motion. The lush / immediate emotional landscape of the piece is served by the ways in which unassuming figures are structurally, finely, and infinitely manipulated, then joined in layers upon layers of color.

Part II:
Knoxville, Summer of 1915
Samuel Barber, 1947

Unlike the *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer* which emerged from a confluence of contradictions, Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* was borne of correlations. Barber had earned early notoriety in his twenties during his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, PA with the premieres of his cello sonata, and *Dover Beach*, a work for baritone and string quartet. The former won him his first Prix de Rome and a Pulitzer travel scholarship to study abroad. Upon his return to the United States in 1936 Barber advocated for premieres of his work with Boston Symphony conductor, Sergei Koussevitzky, a champion of new music. A decade later, now an established composer, Barber was approached by Eleanor Steber, a singer with a similar objective in mind: to promote her career with a commission for the Boston Symphony under the baton of Koussevitzky. Steber was the first American singer to commission a piece with this particular scoring, and though Koussevitzky envisioned a three-part symphony, the idea of an orchestrated work featuring soprano gained traction once Barber took hold of the text by James Agee. (Heyman, 1992)

In an oft-quoted interview during the intermission of the radio premiere of *Knoxville* with Eileen Farrell, Barber describes his attraction to Agee's text:

I had always admired Mr. Agee's writing, and this prose poem particularly struck because the summer evening he describes in his native southern town reminded me so much of similar evenings when I was a child at home. I found after setting this that Mr. Agee and I are the same age, and the year he describes, 1915, was when we were both five. (Dickinson, 2010)

The parallel experience of the writer and composer went further: the four personages that make appearances in the text ultimately set in *Knoxville* include a mother, father, uncle and aunt, "the

latter two described as ‘an artist’ and ‘a musician’ respectively—an uncanny match with Barber’s own family.” (Taylor, 2008) Both men also cited a notable ease and expediency of the compositional process. For Barber, total compositional time numbered only five days. For Agee, the text was a result of one of his “exercises” in which he challenged himself to write autobiographically and improvisatorially, without any extensive editing or deliberate re-crafting. The entirety of *Knoxville*, he claimed, took roughly an hour and a half. (Heyman, 1992)

Perhaps more significant than the coincidences surrounding *Knoxville*’s conception, however, is the mystic universality the piece offers. For Barber to attach his own personal history so closely with the memories Agee evokes in the text is both charming and strange—they were born in different parts of the country, into different socio-economic spheres, into essentially different lives. And yet, the prose offers up images with such clarity of feeling, such a simple, recognizable belonging that the leap into one’s own experience is hardly difficult or unusual. *Knoxville* transcends place, rather, it is an environment of nostalgia, “a state of lost innocence, which, as its subsequent reception has showed, has proved an enduring site of cultural memory.” (Taylor, 2008)

The vignettes linked together by Agee travel through gradations of immediacy and introspection. Intended to be from the perspective of a child, the prose is enlivened by bold, colorful and noisy details—elements of lived experience that would trigger a young, curious, observational mind. The streetcar moans, crackles, curses, whines; the bell stings, rises, faints, lifts. Agee’s narrator also engages the other senses of sight, taste, touch, smell. The tactile and sonorous sections of text are then contrasted with expansive, existential statements such as “and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth,” and in closing, “and those receive me, who quietly treat me as one familiar and well-belovèd in that home; but who will not, no will not, not

now, not ever tell me who I am.” Barber summarized it aptly in the aforementioned interview: “You see, it expresses a child’s feeling of loneliness, wonder, and lack of identity in that marginal world between twilight and sleep.” (Dickinson, 2010) The text is infused with a childlike fascination in which the empirical and abstract exist on equal planes. This affect partially accounts for its accessibility; the “spiritual adulthood” possessed by the narrator aligns both innocence and wisdom in a way that transcends time and place. (Taylor, 2008)

Barber’s musical language and structure takes on these qualities of expansive, childlike wonder, bold detail and timeless atmosphere. As the prose poem contains diverse inflections, some patterned, some highly rhythmic and still others sweeping, so Barber’s treatment of the text is declamatory but lyric. The quasi-recitative style begins in partnership with a 12/8 lullaby topos; rocking and folksong-like in its simple mirroring between A and F# minor. (Taylor, 2008) The listener is invited into a gentle idyll where a pastoral opening of woodwinds introduces a pattern of three ascending eighth notes in the flute, breezily regenerating, soft and unhurried. The pentatonic melody in the voice overlaps this theme without instigating any tension or asserting undue emotionalism. The texture is simultaneously humid and dry; long, connected phrases echoing the melody in the upper strings arch over a spare, separated bass. Considered a master of orchestral color, Barber’s instrumental language goes beyond word-painting, it gives intangible dimension and temperature to the scene inside the narrative, as if it were a film, or dream. These cinematic and often bluesy qualities are often described as classifications of Barber’s most “American-sounding” piece. The tasting, touching, seeing and hearing of Agee’s text bring about a “synaesthetic quality” to Barber’s setting, “transforming the banality of everyday noises into music.” (Taylor, 2008) Soprano Leontyne Price who performed and recorded the work in 1984, alongside the premiere of Barber’s *Hermit Songs*, said it this way:

You can hear the streetcar, the horns, and everything; you can smell the strawberries. As always, we southerners would lie on quilts on the grass at night and hear all those strange noises of summer. (Dickinson, 2010)

The memorable streetcar motive (Figure 3.d) which opens the second section of the five-part rondo form begins in the piccolo and clarinet, as if from a distance. It is then passed around the orchestra as if traveling through the streets themselves, into the horns, the upper and lower strings, and woodwinds.



Figure 3.d. Streetcar motive, excerpt from *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*

This theme, like the lullaby motive, returns in various iterations throughout the work. The world Barber creates is both specific and eternal, in one moment electrified with objects and sound and in another stretched across multitudes, as in the line “now is the night, one blue dew” which famously ascends to a high Bflat, marked pianissimo. In that moment, the streetcar motive softly and surreptitiously flits through different instruments underneath the soprano, moving down the street, and fading into memory.

Part III:

Song of Solomon

Benjamin C.S. Boyle, 2019 (world premiere)

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In the early summer of 2018, in a small coffee shop off of cobblestoned Germantown Avenue in Philadelphia, Benjamin Boyle and I met to discuss the possibility of a song cycle for

soprano that would premiere at my final dissertation recital. In a sort of poetic show-and-tell, we each brought names and poems of our favorite authors, spreading them out on the dream board-cum-café table. Nearing the end of this presentation, Benjamin mentioned that on his compositional “bucket list” was the Song of Solomon found in the Hebrew and Christian religious texts. We were both attracted to the evocative and provocative narrative, its literary style and unique voice within the scope of scripture. What follows are excerpts of an interview I conducted in March 2019 for the purpose of gaining insight into his process and style, and the significance of this astounding text.

*

KB: “So, to begin, why this text?”

BB: “Well, there’s no simple answer except that I’ve loved it my whole life. I’ve come across this the way many people do...flipping through the Bible and then realizing...I’m reading this and having feelings. And then from there I looked up the history of it and it’s fascinating. Of course, the challenge with this was assembling it as a libretto. That’s the hardest part. I probably spent literally more time doing that than writing notes.”

KB: “How did you conceive of these movements?”

BB: “The trick with this text is that it’s all *good* – meaning like everybody is happy with everybody most of the time, and that works well with choral pieces but it doesn’t make a good song cycle; for that you need a beginning, a middle and an end, you need some drama to happen. It can’t be all love and roses because there’s not enough contrast. I took the two episodes which are really narrative in the book, the two times she goes out to look for Solomon and made those the pillars which everything else is based around.”

KB: “So for choral pieces, the text is more easily used as excerpts?”

BB: “Yes, they’re often short texts, very consistent, very catchy; you can imagine the sentiment being said by a bunch of humans at one time.”

KB: “There’s a universality to the sentiment.”

BB: “Yes. Also remember that in the original text there’s three characters, and it’s not very clear who is saying what all the time. The other challenge is that its chronologically out of order, so then, half the struggle with the libretto is to put it into an order that makes sense, in a narrative form.”

KB: “So, how do you accomplish that?”

BB: “I don’t actually use whiteout but it’s like that – I’ve got the whole thing in front of me and you can immediately eliminate 50% of it based on what is repetitious. I do a lot where I write it out (I know, old fashioned), I actually write it out and try to memorize it. All these tricks to see what flows best. Some people say...don’t change what the author did. First of all, we have no idea who wrote this and it could have been many different authors. I think as long as you maintain the spirit of what the author had in mind...then you’re perfectly free to create or change. People forget that *Dichterliebe* is 16 songs and that the set of poems is 63, Schumann carefully crafted those 16 poems to make that cycle. Remember, in music, a little bit of text goes a long way. You don’t need that much.

KB: “I’m in a Handel opera right now so I know exactly what you’re talking about.”

BB: “Exactly. And it’s kind of shocking about the final version that made it into the Bible, and I know there is disagreement about why certain books got in. This one I think is just very surprising because it’s so totally different from the others. It’s so clearly describing what it’s describing that I think it’s hard for some to accept the obvious sexual imagery. And setting an iconic text is a tall order. I’ve never set a Requiem because Fauré’s is so awesome that I get overwhelmed.

With some of these texts it’s easy to get overwhelmed, but I try not to think about that. I know there are so many great settings. Not only singing it, but playing it—it’s unavoidable, but I don’t think that matters. All those connotations can actually help you in the long run. It’s already been floating around up there forever. With Hart Crane, for example, I literally had to look at that text every day until I finally figured out what it meant. But I’ve been thinking about this text since I was a kid, so I already have like a long mnemonic history with it.”

KB: “So which came first, the soprano asking for the commission or the idea of setting primarily the woman’s voice in the text? Did that impact your decision to put the female voice at the center of the narrative?”

BB: “That’s a good question. I liked looking at the poetry from the female protagonist’s point of view, because you know, we don’t know anything about her, we don’t even know what her name is. But everybody knows who Solomon is. There are always these great lines, especially in the 6th movement, where she says I have this garden but Solomon must have thousands. So the inequality is interesting given how 50% of the lines are coming out of her mouth. She has all these moments where I know that, ‘I’m just a little concern to you,’ and yet, she has all the most poignant lines. When there’s a vagueness of character that gives you a lot of license as a singer to make it your own character rather than playing a stereotype, and gives the composer more freedom.”

KB: “Can you talk about your use of mixed meter?”

BB: “In my teaching I see young students have this problem with the tyranny of the bar line. And it can come from two things: one, writing on the computer which I would never do because when you write on the computer you have to fill in bars rather than have a complete open canvas in front of you. (Figure 11) The second thing is that kids grow up listening to popular music which is metrically boring.

I think: how can I be free with my rhythms? When people see my music for the first time they might think, wow look at all these time signatures, this looks really hard, but when they actually play it they realize it just flows. Just play the eighth notes. And I think that’s because through art song settings especially as a genre it really gives you an opportunity to free up those metrics. The flow of the language can be matched, syncopated or not, to a more fluid metric. Not everything is iambic pentameter. Especially with a text like this, it doesn’t rhyme, there’s very little repetition, it’s prose. There’s no need to force that into a box.”

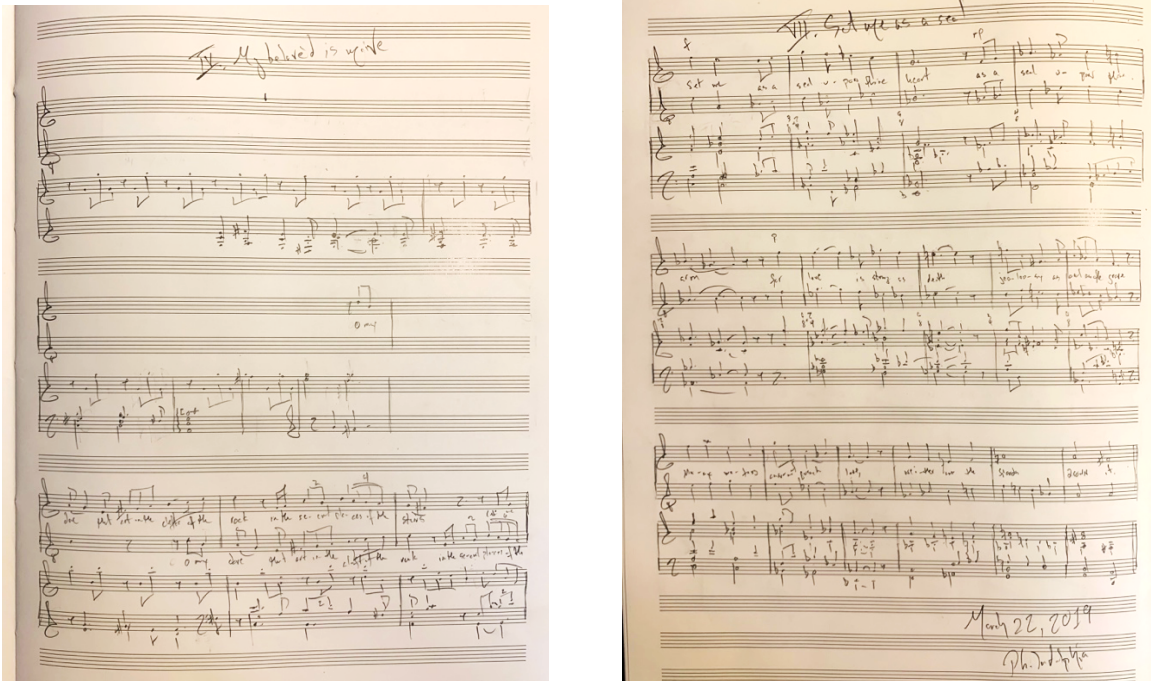


Figure 3.e. Manuscript of *Song of Solomon*, by Benjamin C. S. Boyle (2019)

KB: “For me, a bar of 6/8 and a bar of 5/8 feel different, the breath is different, the way you organize the diction is different, there’s an individual identity to each bar that is borne out into the entire phrase. When I see the metrical marking, it’s a movement trigger. There actually might be some fluctuation in tempo in that. So, is there ever a risk of the tyranny of the eighth note?”

BB: “Maybe. I’m always flexible with tempo. The metric just gives you more information. Music doesn’t live on downbeats, but the music, the motion comes from the offbeat. Our brains

are pattern-matching machines...so we don't need to express those downbeats. Now, mixed meter plus syncopation does require downbeats. That's the dichotomy – simple metrics and complex overlay rhythms or the opposite, but you can't do both. The [barlines] are there with purpose."

KB: "How do you define your style?"

BB: "Everyone asks me that, but I don't know if that's for me to do. I know which terms I don't like. I don't like neoromantic...because of all the styles, romanticism never went away. Obviously, I studied in the Boulanger tradition so my harmonies are highly influenced by that which is the same tradition that Ravel studied in: Copland, Barber, Stravinsky. But that's not a style—it's not that all those composers sound *like this*, it's more like a fluidity of knowledge in counterpoint and harmony. Boulanger taught the same thing to Bernstein as she did to Quincy Jones and Philip Glass. It's a set of tools."

KB: "Can you talk about the half step motive?"

BB: The motive itself is contrapuntal by nature which just means it gets woven into the fabric in different ways. The two pitches that are most important are Re and Mi-flat. It's the split sound of B natural and B sharp: if you look in bar 6 in movement 6, in the key of B they make a major and minor third; in the key of G they make a flat six. In measure 12: now they're being used melodically. Even the super climax in bar 23 – the loudest moment in the piece – this is the most dissonant form of E and Eflat I can give you. You don't have to look very hard.

I've always loved musical language that lives in a grey area. I've always had this motto: "never sit on the comfy chair." Fauré is the king of that, 'wow I wasn't expecting that but it's a lot better than what I thought it would be.' And it's an example of how the Boulanger principles apply: being very conscious of tendency of pitch. Meaning, I know exactly what this pitch wants to do when I present it to you in this way and I'm either going to give you what you want or give you what you don't think that you want, but you control those elements very carefully. The other Boulanger thing is the control of harmony through doubling and spacing, her famous quote is "harmony is the art of doubling and spacing," which is antithetical to American harmony training."

By choosing which pitch is doubled you're basically saying that those pitches are more important. It's like gravity in space – big objects pull the small objects towards them. A lot of the tricks in harmony is that if you hear a chord that is weakly doubled, you feel a little uneasy about it, and then something follows that is stronger. That's what rhetoric is. Spacing gives you sonority – Brahms is the master of this. When you play Brahms you know you're playing Brahms, it doesn't feel like anything else.

KB: "Yes, it's delicious. You're playing and all of a sudden the fourth finger of your left is really important, and you think "wow, the fourth finger of my left hand is really important!"

BB: “Exactly. Because what he likes to do is stack smaller intervals at the low end of the keyboard which is very idiomatic Brahms. Now, he’s not a 20th century composer so he doesn’t have that dial in which movement moves between the less sonorous or more sonorous. Barber, in that perfect generation after Stravinsky thinking about ‘what was to be done,’ he knew he could turn that dial up and down, and did so expertly. Like Poulenc.”

KB: “Poulenc doesn’t quite turn a dial as much as he flips a switch.”

BB: “Right! Barber has this ability...he’ll intentionally make things very weak and then create something very strong. That is not a 19th century technique.”

KB: “In your dreams is there another phase to this piece?”

BB: “There’s no doubt that this could be orchestrated and turned into a cantata. I remember when we were first talking about it we floated the idea of adding a small chorus, but now that it’s constructed this way it would be hard to add choir. There’s text that’s supposedly by the people of Jerusalem, at first I thought it would be interesting to offset that as women’s choir, which is always a great sound. It could have been interesting to have that as a sort of commentary. Instead, when you don’t have that, the pianist is the commentary, which I think, as a composer gives you a lot more freedom, instead of feeling like you always have to set text. Remember, text is always foreground. If you are saying text, they’re in the foreground. If you want them in the background, you just give them “ah” like *Daphnis and Chloe*. It changes everything about how the piece would have been designed.

KB: “What part is your favorite?”

BB: “I love writing canons. There’s some line by Copland that I always misquote that is something like, “just because you wrote a canon doesn’t mean it needs to be heard.” The two canons aren’t exact inversions – they’re close, but you don’t want to be mathematical about it. When you look at a Bach fugue that’s the reason behind real and tonal answers.

Texts and Translations

Part I: *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer* By Johannes Brahms (1871)

Russian, Turkish, Hungarian and Polish folk poetry translated into German by Frederick Daumer
in *Polydora: A World-Poetic Songbook* (1855).
All English translations are from Richard Stokes *Book of Lieder* (2005).

1. Verzicht

Verzicht, o Herz, auf Rettung,
dich wagend in der Liebe Meer!
Denn tausend Nachen schwimmen
zertrümmert am Gestad umher!

2. Finstere Schatten der Nacht

Finstere Schatten der Nacht,
Wogen- und Wirbelgefahr!
Sind wohl, die da gelind
rasten auf sicherem Lande,
euch zu begreifen im Stande?
Das ist der nur allein,
welcher auf wilder See
stürmischer Öde treibt,
Meilen entfernt vom Strande.

3. An jeder Hand die Finger

An jeder Hand die Finger
hatt' ich bedeckt mit Ringen,
die mir geschenkt mein Bruder
in seinem Liebessinn.
Und einen nach dem andern
gab ich dem schönen,
aber unwürdigen Jüngling hin.

4. Ihr schwarzen Augen, ihr dürft nur winken

Ihr schwarzen Augen, ihr dürft nur winken;
Paläste fallen und Städte sinken.
Wie sollte steh'n in solchem Strauß
mein Herz, von Karten das schwache Haus?

1. Renounce

Renounce, o heart, all hope of rescue,
when you venture on the sea of love!
For a thousand boats drift
and founder on the shore around!

2. Dark, nocturnal shadows

Dark, nocturnal shadows,
waves and whirlpool peril!
Can they who calmly linger
safely on the shore
ever understand you?
He alone can do so
who drifts in the stormy desolation
of high seas,
miles away from the shore.

3. On the fingers of either hand

On the fingers of either hand
I wore the rings
my brother had given me
in affection.
And one after the other
I gave them to the handsome
but worthless young man.

4. With your dark eyes a mere gaze is needed

With your dark eyes
a mere gaze is needed –
palaces will fall
and cities sink.
How in such a skirmish
should my heart,
that frail house of cards,
stay standing?

5. Wahre, wahre deinen Sohn

Wahre, wahre deinen Sohn,
Nachbarin, vor Wehe,
weil ich ihn mit schwarzem Aug'
zu bezaubern gehe.
O wie brennt das Auge mir,
das zu Zünden fordert!
Flammet ihm die Seele nicht --
deine Hütte lodert.

6. Rosen steckt mir an die Mutter

Rosen steckt mir an die Mutter,
weil ich gar so trübe bin.
Sie hat recht, die Rose sinket,
so wie ich, entblättert hin.

7. Vom Gebirge Well auf Well

Vom Gebirge Well auf Well
kommen Regengüsse,
und ich gäbe dir so gern
hunderttausend Küsse.

8. Weiche Gräser im Revier

Weiche Gräser im Revier,
schöne, stille Plätzchen!
O, wie linde ruht es hier
sich mit einem Schätzchen!

9. Nagen am Herzen fühl

Nagen am Herzen fühl ich ein Gift mir.
Kann sich ein Mädchen,
ohne zu fröhnen zärtlichem Hang,
fassen ein ganzes wonneberaubtes Leben entlang?

10. Ich kose süß mit der und der

Ich kose süß mit der und der
und werde still und kranke,
denn ewig, ewig kehrt zu dir,
o Nonna, mein Gedanke!

11. Alles, alles in den Wind

Alles, alles in den Wind
sagst du mir, du Schmeichler!
Alle samt verloren sind
deine Müh'n, du Heuchler!
Einem andern Fang' zu lieb
stelle deine Falle!
Denn du bist ein loser Dieb,
denn du buhlst um alle!

5. Guard, good neighbor, guard

Guard, good neighbor, guard
your son from harm,
for with my dark eyes
I intend to bewitch him.
Ah, how my eyes blaze
to inflame him!
If his soul is not kindled
your cottage will catch fire.

6. My mother pins roses on me

My mother pins roses on me,
because I am so distressed.
She's right to do so: the rose withers,
when stripped of leaves, like me.

7. From the mountain, wave on wave

From the mountain, wave on wave,
the torrential rain teems down,
and I would dearly love to give you
one hundred thousand kisses.

8. Soft grasses in the glade

Soft grasses in the glade,
a quiet and pretty spot!
How blissful it is
to recline here with a lover!

9. I feel a poison gnaw at my heart

I feel a poison gnaw at my heart.
Can a young girl,
without yielding
to tender affection,
bear the thought
of a whole lifetime devoid of bliss?

10. I sweetly caress this girl and that

I sweetly caress this girl and that,
grow taciturn and ill,
because always, always my thoughts
return, o Nonna, to you!

11. Everything you tell me

Everything you tell me, flatterer,
is wasted breath!
All your efforts are wasted,
you hypocrite!
Set your snares
for another victim!
For you are a wanton thief,
wooing all and sundry!

12. Schwarzer Wald, dein Schatten

Schwarzer Wald, dein Schatten ist so düster!
Armes Herz, dein Leiden ist so drückend!
Was dir einzig wert, es steht vor Augen;
ewig untersagt ist Huldvereinung.

13. Nein, Geliebter, setze dich

Nein, Geliebter, setze dich
mir so nahe nicht!
Starre nicht so brünstiglich
mir ins Angesicht!
Wie es auch im Busen brennt,
dämpfe deinen Trieb,
daß es nicht die Welt erkennt,
wie wir uns so lieb.

14. Flammenauge, dunkles Haar Flammenauge,
dunkles Haar,

Knabe wonnig und verwogen,
Kummer ist durch dich hinein
in mein armes Herz gezogen!
Kann in Eis der Sonne Brand,
sich in Nacht der Tag verkehren?
Kann die heisse Menschenbrust
atmen ohne Glutbegehren?
Ist die Flur so voller Licht,
daß die Blum' im Dunkel stehe?
Ist die Welt so voller Lust,
daß das Herz in Qual vergehe?

15. Zum Schluss: Nun, ihr Musen, genug!

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)
Vergebens strebt ihr zu schildern,
Wie sich Jammer und Glück wechseln
in liebender Brust.
Heilen könnet die Wunden ihr nicht,
die Amor geschlagen;
Aber Linderung kommt einzig,
ihr Guten, von euch.

12. Dark forest, your shadows

Dark forest, your shadows are so somber!
Your suffering, poor heard, so oppressive!
The one thing you value stands before you,
But a happy union is forbidden forever!

13. No, my love, do not sit

No, my love, do not sit
so close to me!
Do not gaze so fervently
into my eyes.
However much your heart might burn,
subdue your desire,
that the world might not see
how we love each other!

14. Fiery eyes and dark hair

Bold, adorable young man,
with fiery eyes and dark hair.
You are the cause that sorrow
has entered my poor heart.
Can the burning sun turn to ice,
can day turn into night?
Can an ardent human heart
breathe without passion's glow?
Is the meadow drenched in light,
for the flower to grow in the dark?
Is the world so full of pleasure
for the heart to perish in grief?

15. Envoi

Enough, now, ye Muses!
You strive in vain to show
How joy and sorrow alternate
in loving hearts.
You cannot heal the wounds,
inflicted by Love;
but assuagement comes from you alone.

Part II: Knoxville: Summer of 1915
By Samuel Barber

Epigraph: *We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville Tennessee in that time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child...*

...It has become that time of evening when people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently and watching the street and the standing up into their sphere of possession of the trees, of birds' hung havens, hangars. People go by; things go by. A horse, drawing a buggy, breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt; a loud auto; a quiet auto; people in pairs, not in a hurry, scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body, talking casually, the taste hovering over them of vanilla, strawberry, pasteboard and starched milk, the image upon them of lovers and horsemen, squared with clowns in hueless amber.

A streetcar raising its iron moan; stopping, belling and starting; stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan and swimming its gold windows and straw seats on past and past and past, the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it like a small malignant spirit set to dog its tracks; the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen, faints; halts; the faint stinging bell; rises again, still fainter, fainting, lifting, lifts, faints foregone: forgotten. Now is the night one blue dew.

Now is the night one blue dew, my father has drained, he has coiled the hose.
Low on the length of lawns, a frailing of fire who breathes...
Parents on porches: rock and rock. From damp strings morning glories...hang their ancient faces.
The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the air at once...enchants my eardrums.

On the rough wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there... They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near. All my people are larger bodies than mine...with voices gentle and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds. One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home. One is my mother who is good to me. One is my father who is good to me. By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night.

May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away.

After a little I am taken in and put to bed. Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-belovèd in that home: but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am.

Part III: *Song of Solomon*
By Benjamin C.S. Boyle (world premiere)

I. Let him kiss me

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.
Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers
A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.
As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

II. Rise up my love

My beloved spake, and said unto me,

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

III. I sought him, but I found him not

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.
I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

IV. My beloved is mine

O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

V. I opened to my beloved

I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh,
My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door
I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him.

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.

VI. My vineyard is before me

O Solomon, my vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.

Make haste, my beloved, O Solomon.

VII. Set me as a seal

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm:
for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave.
Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

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