

William Grant Still's *Highway 1, U. S. A.*: A Character Analysis of Mary;
Ophelia Lieder;
and Songs of the African Diaspora

by

Amanda Lenora Green-Turner

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Louise Toppin, Chair
Professor Naomi André
Associate Dean Mark Clague
Associate Professor Caroline Helton
Professor Daniel Washington

Amanda Lenora Green

noragree@umich.edu

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8453-3458

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DEDICATION

My support system: Anthony, Terry, Wanda, Amber, Zavyor, and Theresa

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ABSTRACT

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

The following notes on three dissertation performances, William Grant Still's *Highway 1, U. S. A.*: A Character Analysis of Mary, "Ophelia Lieder," and "Songs of the African Diaspora," were used as complementary aids to vocal craftsmanship, scholarship, and pedagogy as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. The operatic role of Mary, along with two vocal recitals, together built experience in a range of languages, styles, cultural backgrounds, historical contexts, exposure to a host of repertoire that is rarely performed, and technical developments. All projects were designed to elevate my interest in art songs of African Americans and the African Diaspora, as well as my interest in opera theater character development.

Recital 1: In lieu of a recital, the opera role of Mary in *Highway 1, U.S.A.* by William Grant Still was performed on April 15, 2019, 8:00 p.m., McIntosh Theater, Ann Arbor, MI. Dr. Louise Toppin, director; Jabarie Glass, conductor.

Recital 2: "Ophelia." January 21, 2020, 8:00 p.m., McIntosh Theater, Ann Arbor, MI. Nicholas Roehler, Pianist; Adellyn Geenen and Julia Fertel, actresses; Scott Johnson, Jr. and Marco Chen, clarinetists; Caleb Georges, viola; Gabrielle Hooper, cellist; Darianna Videaux Capitel, double bassist.

Program: *How Should I Your True Love Know; Tomorrow is St. Valentine's Day; And He Will Not Come Again; I Loathe That I Did Love*, arr. John Hullah; *Ophelia* monologue; *Fünf Ophelia – Lieder, Wie erkenn, ich dein Treulieb vor andern nun?; Sein Leichenhemd weiß wie Schnee zu sehn; Auf Morgen ist Sankt Valentins Tag; Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloss; Und konnt er nicht mehr zurück?*, Johannes Brahms; *Sigh No More, Ladies*, R. J. S. Stevens; from *Quatre Chansons de Shakespeare*, Op. 28, No. 3, *Chanson d'Ophélie*, Ernest Chausson; from *Вокально-инструментальная сюита*, Op. 127, (Romance-Suite) *Песня Офелии* (Song of Ophelia), Dmitri Shostakowitsch; *Ophelia Lieder* Op. 67, *Wie erkenn ich mein Treulieb vor andern nun?; Guten Morgen, 's ist Sankt Valentinstag; Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloss*; Richard Strauss; *Gertrude Monologue*; from *Tristia* Op. 18-No. 11, *La Mort d'Ophélie*, Hector Berlioz; *How Should I Your True Love Know; 'Tis Valentine's Day*, Roger Quilter; *Sigh No More, Ladies*, Peter Warlock; *How Should I Your True Love Know; Valentine's Day*; William H. Henderson; *Ophelia's Lament*, Thomas Pasatieri

Recital 3: “Songs of the African Diaspora.” March 9, 2020, 7:30 p.m., Stamps Auditorium, Ann Arbor, MI. Nicholas Roehler, piano; Benjamin Jackson, violin; Michael Ayala, Viola

Program: *Mama mia; Sul margine d'un rio*, Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges; “Six Creole Songs;” *Aurore Pradère; Gardé Piti Mulet Là* (Musieu Bainjo); *Belle Layotte; Dialogue d'Amour; Aine, dé, trois, Caroline; Quand mo-té jeune* (Bal fini), Maud Cuney Hare; “Three Dunbar Poems;” *Compensation; Theology; Dawn*, Betty Jackson King
“Borderline” *Night: 4 Songs; Fragments; Kid Stuff; Poppy Flower; Borderline; Where Have You Gone; Gethsemane; Religion; Now that He Is Safely Dead; End*, David Baker; *Thula baba; Ngiphileleni; Prayer; Caro Mio Ben*, Carlos Simon

CHAPTER I

William Grant Still's *Highway I, U. S. A.*: A Character Analysis of Mary

William Grant Still (1895–1978) is known as the “Dean” of African American composers. A composer of serious music, he is the first African American to have conducted and have his work, the *Afro-American Symphony*, performed by a major symphony orchestra in 1931. He is also the first African American to have had one of his operas, *Troubled Island* (1937–1949), performed at an American opera company, City Opera in New York.¹ Born in Mississippi and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, Maestro Still is considered to be a composer of the Harlem Renaissance. He composed symphonies, vocal works, chamber music, ballets, choral works, film scores, commercial and operas, approximately two-hundred works altogether. During the height of his career, he moved from New York to Los Angeles, California in 1934 to pursue his love for writing opera.

His operatic influences include George Chadwick, who was heavily influenced by Richard Wagner; Edgar Varèse, who was influenced by the avant-garde; and W. C. Handy, an African American composer who influenced the commercial music of Blues by fusing other African American genres in his music. Maestro Still was also familiar with the works of Giacomo Puccini, Richard Wagner, and Gian-Carlo Menotti. Maestro Still was not a pianist and he composed directly for the orchestra. Using his knowledge of playing orchestral instruments. As he once described on March 12, 1954 in letters to Don Voorhees: “Thus, I let my work teach

¹ Gayle Murchinson and Catherine Parsons Smith, *Oxford Grove Music Online: William Grant Still* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

me American popular and folk music; and from the commercial arranging I had to do, I evolved my own style of orchestration. In this field I am entirely self-taught.”²

In partnership with his second wife, Vera Arvey, as his librettist for the majority of his works, William Grant Still produced eight operas. His stories gravitate to subject matters of North America and the southern states, Spanish America, and Africa. In his autobiography, Still refers to his ancestors and scattered blood line mixed with Irish, Scotch, Spanish, Indian (using politically correct terms, Native American), and ‘legally Negro’ (African American). He was proud of his African American heritage, which is evident in his music. In his own words: “Certainly Negro music is one subject I know, by instinct and by study, and the use of a racial idiom in higher forms of musical composition seems to have been an important part of my work.”³

His southern heritage is reflected in one of his most popular operas, *Highway 1, U. S. A.* (1962). The original opera, *A Southern Interlude*, was written in 1942. Still had tried many times to get major opera companies to perform it, but the score was repeatedly rejected. He was adamant about there being no racial issues reflected in the storyline. Instead, we find out that Still’s voice speaks of the values of relationships and love within the community. By using the example of his opera *Highway 1, U. S. A.*, we will see how William Grant Still teaches African American and American history through his protagonists and antagonists, where Bob (the naïve, hardworking owner of a gas station), Mary (his long-suffering wife), Nate (Bob’s educated brother), and Aunt Lou (their elderly neighbor) make up the common family of America’s southern folk.

² Quoted in Beverly Soll, *I Dream a World: The Operas of William Grant Still* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 2005), 68.

³ William Grant Still, *My Life, My Words* (Arizona: The Master-Player Library, 2011), 121.

Still composed *Highway 1, U.S.A.* by choosing a place of interest, researching the people and customs, then developing a plot and skeleton for the libretto. Verna Arvey, a pianist and journalist, was the librettist. Still was very appreciative of having a librettist who was also a musician. According to Beverly Soll, who wrote the book *I Dream a World: The Operas of William Grant Still*: “Having at his side a collaborator who was intimately aware of the composer’s thoughts and feelings, a helpmate with whom he shared common feelings and ideals, significantly changed the way the composer worked, giving him control over the development and organization of the plot and ultimately over the text as well.”⁴ Verna Arvey was of Russian Jewish descent, which broke social barriers. She was hired as his publicist, but soon after his first marriage was annulled, they married in Mexico to circumvent the laws against interracial marriages in their home state of California, and twenty-nine others of the United States, in 1939. Still was careful throughout this opera to show a loving marital relationship, successful personal interactions, and support for the aspirations and ambitions of the characters. He also showed that although the characters are simple people, they had the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully.

About the Music

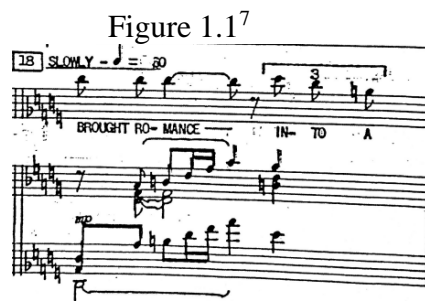
In creating the role of Mary in Still’s *Highway 1, U.S.A.*, Still was very meticulous in his directions to the musicians. Referring to Rehearsal 40 of the score, which is Mary’s second and final aria of the first scene, there are instructions such as IN STRICT TIME – ♩ = 69. This section includes an Adagio marking. A little farther into the score, a measure before Rehearsal 41, there

⁴ Soll, *I Dream a World: The Operas of William Grant Still*, 32.

is the tempo marking of A LITTLE FASTER – ♩ = 80. Throughout the scene, there are directions that read “freely,” “strict,” or “colla voce.”

Still credited Puccini as a model for *A Southern Interlude/Highway 1, U. S. A.*⁵ In the same aria (“I don’t know what will help”), we start to see Puccini-like recitatives that are stretched out melodically.⁶ He uses the device of accompanied recitatives to move the scene along. The Puccini-like gestures, which require the singer to sing over an entire orchestra, suggest that the role of Mary should be sung by fachs such as lyric, full-lyric, and spinto sopranos.

When Still wanted to express conflict and emotion, he used a method frequently employed by composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A motif, G# A# Bb C# Db, part of an octatonic scale, occurs throughout the opera, sometimes with different pitches depending on the key. Bob’s aria, in the form of a *scena* that is through-composed, holds the love motif, as seen in the figures below. The theme also appears in the introduction of the opera.



The extended use of G# A# Bb C# Db suggests the intensifying of Mary’s anxiety. This motif appears when conflict arises. On many occasions, it is completed with an augmented-

⁵ Ibid., 15–16.

⁶ William Grant Still, *Highway 1, U. S. A.* (Los Angeles, CA: William Grant Still Music Company, 1962), p. 46.

⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

⁸ Ibid, p. 18.

major-major progression. Rehearsal 42 reveals Mary's greatest fear is that Nate will take Bob away from her. We hear "Oh Bob, can't I make you understand" in the first aria in a minor key, which transitions into a sad motive expressing that "He'll never understand" in her second aria two measures before rehearsal 44. This section presents a cabaletta to the end, where Mary confesses her hatred for Nate. The audience finally finds out why she is frustrated. The next scene will provide the reasons for her frustration, which prevent her and Bob from living a better life.

Arvey and Still would engage in written notes until the partnership of music and text coincided. As Soll has described:

Likewise, the composer made suggestions to the librettist for "more dialogue," in several places actually writing in new text in his own hand. Hand-drawn, single staves are scattered throughout with very short theme fragments as well as passages of several measures, harmonic suggestions of one and three chords, unpitched rhythmic fragments, and verbal instructions such as "try combining love no.1 & Nate no.5" and "love—low—this rhythm" and "have a sort of vamp here." These notations, in a variety of combinations, continue throughout the entire libretto, providing themes, progressions, and musical suggestions that serve as a framework for the opera.⁹

Historical Context and Ideology

William Grant Still is considered a composer of the Harlem Renaissance. He was a colleague to many of the icons we know such as Langston Hughes (who was the librettist for *Troubled Island*, Alain Locke (the editor of *The New Negro*), and many others. During this time, as African Americans were free and educated enough to speak their voice, there were two opposing ideas about education and the life of the Black race. While the older generation, who lived through the American Civil War (1861–1865) and the Reconstruction Era (1865–1877),

⁹ Soll, *I Dream a World*, 209. My suspicion is that the two motifs are expressed in Rehearsal 41, where Mary is panicking about losing Bob's love to her brother-in-law (in the vocal score on p. 48).

was fixed upon the words and ideas of Booker T. Washington (1856–1915); the new generation began to agree with the ideas of W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), a Harlem Renaissance activist. This became known in history as “The Great Debate.”

Booker T. Washington was an icon for the African Americans who were among the last generation born into slavery. He had excelled from his humble beginnings to be a member of the black elite. He was an advisor to presidents and was willing to help the African American succeed in a time of hatred among the white and black races. He learned to placate the white race by gaining an education and forming a philosophy on how the southern states could work together to rebuild a prospering South. The philosophy was called the *Atlanta Compromise* (September 1895). His argument suggested that the black race should rely on whites temporarily. Washington proposed that if the white race would fund African American schools, businesses, and domestic services, then African Americans would comply and work together to build a better and richer Southern region of the United States:

The Civil War had brought financial ruin to the Southern States; there was neither money nor means to build school houses and maintain schools. In some respects, in spite of their poverty and their ignorance, the freedmen were in a better situation than their former masters. They had, at least, the physical strength and training for rough work of the fields and it was this kind of labor that was necessary to make a beginning.¹⁰

African Americans could look at this idea in two different ways. The pessimistic view considers Booker T. Washington as the advocate for continuing to work as the enslaved people of the past, while the contrary view is that Mr. Washington had the answer of the time. In hindsight, he used his philosophy to elevate Black America to take the next step.

¹⁰ Booker T. Washington, *Industrial Education and the Public Schools* (Sage Publications Inc., 1913), 219–232.

In the eyes of the “New Negro,” compromising was unacceptable. W. E. B. Du Bois challenged Washington’s views with his philosophy in his essay “The Talented Tenth”:

The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.¹¹

DuBois charged Black Americans to rely on themselves and build up a people that could save themselves. He saw that Washington’s plan only helped financially, and that the underlying problems still existed because Black Americans were not receiving a proper education. Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. He had the opportunity to study abroad, and when he returned to the U.S., he was the first African American to earn a doctorate at Harvard University. Dr. Du Bois was and is the perfect example of the “exceptional man,” and among “The Talented Tenth” of which he spoke.

In *Highway 1, U. S. A.*, the characters Bob and Nate had a mother who had a dream for her family to live a better life. We can assume that she would have been born in the South hearing the words of Dr. Du Bois. It is her belief that fuels Nate, the antagonist, in his arrogant behavior. Nate is intended to be the “exceptional man,” but the plot takes an unexpected turn.

The common ground upon which Dr. Du Bois and Mr. Washington could agree is the fact that schools of the South were in poor condition. The colleges were not performing at the collegiate level (which meant teachers being trained were inadequately prepared as educators), and this contributed to the problem of poor education in public schools. Both DuBois and Washington agreed that all African Americans were not prepared for college but expressed their solutions in different ways. Dr. Du Bois wrote: “The most interesting question, and in many

¹¹ W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth,” in *The Negro Problem* (New York, NY: James Pott and Company, 1903) 46.

respects the crucial question, to be asked concerning college-bred Negroes, is: Do they earn a living? It has been intimated more than once that the higher training of Negroes has resulted in sending into the world of work, men who could find nothing to do suitable to their talents.”¹²

What happens if there is no “exceptional man” willing to take up the mantle? This opera puts this question to light. *Highway 1, U. S. A.* highlights the two models of “The Great Debate.” There is Bob, who is a wholesome fellow. He works hard to provide for his family. Although he is uneducated, he has a business and has learned of life’s challenges in the vocational sense. His values mirror Booker T. Washington’s ideals. Nate, on the other hand, reflects W. E. B. Du Bois’s ideals. He is educated, quick, and witty. He knows how to use his words to get what he wants and has the qualities to be the great man that builds the community. The problem is that Nate does not live up to Du Bois’s ideals, as he does not use his talents for the good of the community.

The Villain

The fact that Nate uses his talents to aid him in his selfish behavior is the conflict of our story and the most important aspect of his character. Nate is Bob’s younger brother and is supposed to be the model of the “exceptional man.” He has gone to college and the opening scene refers to his graduation as the main event. Bob and his mother held Nate in high regard because of his intelligence. Bob sings in his aria:

She had her dream of a son with learning, a child who would send our name forth over all the world, whose words would command respect, whose deeds would win wide acclaim. Her life had no other meaning; in her mind that prayer lingered constantly. She had her dream of a son with great knowledge: when she passed away she called me to her side

¹² Ibid.

and made me promise to help Nate make his way in the world, to serve his keen brain with my brawn.¹³

This idea fuels Bob's low self-esteem, and Nate manipulates him. Instead of Nate using his education for the betterment of the community, we find that he uses his intelligence to take advantage of his older brother. Bob has promised to grant his mother's dying wish to take care of Nate. The request weighs so heavily on him that he has taken all of the money in his savings account to help Nate attend college. Furthermore, Nate deceives Bob into thinking that he needs Bob's support now more than ever; however, it is clear to see Nate's true personage as he is lazy, sly, and selfish.

The Real Exceptional Man

Now that the image of the "exceptional man" has been distorted, on whom do we count to save the story? Who saves the community, namely Bob, from what should have been the savior of the black race? What if one of those exceptional men happened to be an exceptional woman? What would that look like? William Grant Still supplies the answer in this opera, the final one in his catalogue. Mary, the wife of Bob and co-owner of the gas station, is the protagonist in this one-act opera. She represents all the good in Bob's life, and through her we see the heart of the story. Still uses Mary to showcase the emotional issue that Black America was combating in regard to the "Great Debate" of W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. She is the culmination of the two ideals in female form and is sacrificed to enlighten the world about what is ultimately important in life.

¹³ Still, *Highway 1, U. S. A.*, pp. 8–9.

Setting

The opera is set in the 1950s in a small town in the South. The original opera was entitled *A Southern Interlude* (1942), as mentioned above, and revised under the name *Highway 1, U.S.A.* (1962). Still had submitted this piece to opera companies such as La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, and Punch Opera, and to such contests as the Alice M. Ditson Fund contest, but the score was always returned and rejected. Although it took twenty years of such efforts, the opera was finally performed at the University of Miami on May 11, 1963 by Dr. Fabien Sevitzky and his associates. The title was changed to *Highway 1, U. S. A.* to ensure that the opera was not judged because of racial issues of the time.¹⁴

The loving couple is the epitome of good people; everyone in the community knows and loves them. They are churchgoers, hard-working business owners, loyal friends, and good with money, and their success brings them popularity. They own a gas station along the famous U. S. Highway 1 that stretches from Key West, Florida to Fort Kent, Maine. The couple lives on the land where the business is planted. Nate has been living with the couple since his mother died. Bob and Mary have been supporting him through college. Now, it is time for Nate to find a job and make a life of his own.

Who is Mary?

Mary is a woman who is ambitious, goal-oriented, practical, and an advocate for progress. She seems to have more of a type-A personality because she is constantly working. She runs the household, cooks, cleans, and supervises the station when her husband is away for other functions. Aunt Lou, who is Bob and Mary's best friend and lives next door to them (played by a

¹⁴ Soll, *I Dream a World*, 209–213.

mezzo-soprano), gives the only information of Mary's past in her aria: "Once a little child she lay in my arms and grew up clinging to my skirts: no one was ever more beloved. One day God took the child as he had given her!"¹⁵ As close friends, they tell each other their secrets and cherish their friendship.

There is evidence that Mary is from the South, not only because of the setting of the opera, but because of her short opening aria, "Mister Fox," a story of the African fable of Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox. A slightly different version is told in Gullah folktale with a cat and rat.¹⁶ The Gullah people live along the Southeastern coast of America, in the states of North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The Gullah people carry the history of African Americans from enslavement in the seventeenth century. Due to the tradition of storytelling, many of the African stories were passed down from generation to generation. Although the stories have been adapted and changed over the years, they still hold great morals that have been spread all over the world. William Grant Still choosing to open the opera with this African fable, invoking a rural southern setting. Moreover, this gesture affirms the greater African diaspora.

The libretto provides evidence that Mary is particular and organized because she knows where everything is. She tries to be on time for events. She is always hard-working, and it brings her joy when she gets to run the filling station by herself. Due to the autobiographical information that William Grant Still provided, which has been confirmed by his daughter Judith Anne Still, Mary can be construed as a portrait of Still's mother, Carrie Still Shepperson. Still wrote of his mother: "Her standards for me were so high — because she made up her mind that I

¹⁵ Still, *Highway 1, U. S. A.*, pp. 43–45.

¹⁶ Emory S. Campbell, *Gullah Cultural Legacies* (Hilton Head, SC: Gullah Heritage Consulting Services, 2008), 61–62.

must accomplish something — that I, as a boy, sometimes rebelled. Today I’m infinitely grateful.”¹⁷

After the death of Still’s father, Carrie showed herself to be an independent woman. She believed that the key to freedom was education. Her legacy lived in financing a library for the Colored people of Little Rock, Arkansas.¹⁸ As Judith Still has written: “Those who remember her, oddly enough, have difficulty describing her. They say that she was attractive, that she was of medium height, straight of stature, and that her voice was cultured. Beyond that, they will say only that, when she walked into a room, everyone snapped to attention. Like Melville’s Ahab, she was magnetic and predominant. She exercised discipline fully and without favoritism.”¹⁹ Mrs. Shepperson wanted William to become a doctor of medicine, and although he started his studies at Wilberforce University in pre-medicine, he became a great musician instead.

There is also the theory that Mary is informed by what William Grant Still desired in a wife after experiencing a troublesome first marriage with Grace Dorothy Bundy. In his autobiography, Still described his marriage and the many years of trying to make the union work. Upon many occurrences, infidelity, dishonesty, excessive spending, and mental illness were present in the relationship. He endured this for twenty-two years (1915 to 1937) and finally had it annulled before marrying his second wife.²⁰

Verna Arvey can also be seen as a model for Mary. The perfect partnership followed the horrors of his first marriage. Still described their relationship as “a deep friendship and

¹⁷ Still, *My Life, My Words*, 32.

¹⁸ Judith Still, *William Grant Still: A Voice High-Sounding* (Flagstaff: The Master-Player Library, 1990), 9; This is an essay reprinted by permission of *Forum* magazine at the University of Houston (XV, Spring 1977, 60–65), of the *Phi Delta Gamma Journal* (XLIII, May 1981, 40–45), and of *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* (XLII, Spring 1983, 37–46).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Still, *My Life, My Words*, 235.

professional association...we found that our thoughts and emotions were identical on many subjects.”²¹ Arvey devoted her life to being with him, producing a good family. Many of her writings, as she was also a journalist, were about him and his work.

The three women described above were instrumental in Still’s life. Primarily, his mother, Carrie Still Shepperson, provided him with a foundation of resilience, support, and intellect to navigate through life. Secondly, Grace Dorothy Bundy provided him with experiences and heartache, giving him a will to appreciate life better. Finally, Verna Arvey supplied him with the love and support that he needed to boost his career, providing him with the happy life he always had wanted. The models of Carrie Shepperson and Verna Arvey comprise the characteristics of the role of Mary, the “exceptional woman.”

Mary’s Objectives and Obstacles

Mary’s objective is to keep Bob on track with the goals he has set for his life. She wants a successful marriage and a business, and she provides the support her husband needs to achieve that goal. In Mary’s first aria, “Oh Bob, can’t I make you understand?”,²² she expresses her love for Bob and her desire to have a better life with nice clothes and a real home. She has always wanted Bob to be successful in the world and truly believes that he deserves it.

As stated previously, the antagonist of this opera is Bob’s younger brother, Nate. Bob has been taking care of Nate ever since their mother died. Bob has promised to honor his mother’s dying wish, but it takes a toll on his marriage. This problem weighs on Bob’s conscience, making him neglect Mary and her desires. His humble approach is negatively affecting their marriage as he tries to hold on to the dream of his mother. Mary’s frustration is revealed in her

²¹ Ibid., 226.

²² Still, *Highway 1, U. S. A.*, pp. 13–16.

first complete aria which she begins with a recitative statement, “You were right to keep your promise to your mother. But now it’s over. Now there’s an end to years of waiting, and the start of things long planned.”²³ Her plea comes in the form of an A B A’ aria. She further stresses that Nate should be able to take care of himself. The desires of Bob and Mary have been put on hold because of the so-called needs of Nate that demand their money, time, and energy.

As the plot thickens, Mary’s objective changes to exposing Nate’s vindictive ways. She states this at the end of her second aria, “I don’t know what will help!”²⁴ Mary is successful at unmasking Nate’s agenda in the second scene but is hurt badly in the process. Nate and Mary are at home alone talking, and we learn through their dialogue that Nate is very arrogant. As the discussion progresses and Nate boasts about his education and disregards the community of uneducated people, Mary decides to entrap him by luring him to express his real feelings and puffing up his ego. To her surprise, Nate expresses that he is in love with her in his aria, “You’re wonderful, Mary.”²⁵ Nate makes a pass at Mary, which she laughingly rebuffs in another short aria, “Oh, you fool!”²⁶ Nate in a fit of rage stabs Mary for rejecting his advances, thereby leaving Mary as the sacrificial lamb.

In order to end the opera in a civil manner, all of Nate’s devices are exposed. Bob sees that Nate has been taking advantage of him. Fortunately, Mary wakes up and testifies that Nate assaulted her, and he is carried off to jail. The opera ends in a beautiful duet in which Bob apologizes, and they live happily ever after.

²³ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 46–54.

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 76–78.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 79–82.

Conclusion

This Harlem Renaissance composer had a view of America that expanded past the racial barriers. Still and his wife, Verna Arvey, expressed that philosophy through their opera, *Highway 1, U. S. A.* and other operas they produced together. Still believed in building up African American culture by reconstructing the value of education and including the uneducated African American, giving his vocation just cause. The valid concerns in the story are relatable, and Still uses the nineteenth- and twentieth-century compositional techniques, such as through-composed forms, to do so.

Mary is modeled after the hard-working, intelligent women who shaped and supported William Grant Still throughout his life. Any person who has the opportunity to play this role should portray an exceptional woman, one who can make things happen even when there is an obstacle blocking success. One may realize that the ideals of the past, such as Booker T. Washington's *Atlanta Compromise* and W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Talented Tenth*, were valid, but they only were helpful for a period of time. In future interpretations of this opera, the timeline through Black American history can be applied to make all the characters more relevant. Although the people of the Harlem Renaissance looked to the "exceptional men" to save Black America in crisis, Still pointed the audience to the "exceptional woman" who almost sacrificed her life to expose the men abusing the title, like the character Nate, thereby making her the savior.

Program: Ophelia

Lenora Green-Turner, Soprano
Nicholas Roehler, Piano
Tuesday, January 21, 2020
Moore Building, McIntosh Theatre
8:00 p.m.

How should I your true love know
Tomorrow is St. Valentine's Day
And he will not come again
I loathe that I did love

arr. John Hullah (1812–1884)

Ophelia Monologue

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)
arr. Lenora Green-Turner

Adellyn Geenen, actress
please hold applause after monologue

Fünf Ophelia – Lieder, WoO 22

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Wie erkenn, ich dein Treulieb vor andern nun?
Sein Leichenhemd weiß wie Schnee zu sehn
Auf morgen ist Sankt Valentins Tag
Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloss
Und konnt er nicht mehr zurück?

Sigh No More, Ladies

R. J. S. Stevens (1757–1837)

Chanson d'Ophélie

Ernest Chausson (1855–1899)

from *Quatre Chansons de Shakespeare*, Op. 28, No. 3

Песня Офелии (Song of Ophelia)

Dmitri Shostakowitsch (1906–1975)

from *Вокально-инструментальная сюита*, Op. 127

(Romance-Suite)

Intermission

Ophelia Lieder, Op. 67

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Wie erkenn ich mein Treulieb vor andern nun?
Guten Morgen, 's ist Sankt Valentinstag
Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloss

Gertrude Monologue

Julia Fertel, actress

La mort d'Ophélie from *Tristia* Op. 18, No. 11

Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)

How Should I Your True Love Know

Roger Quilter (1877–1953)

'Tis Valentine's Day

Sigh No More, Ladies

Peter Warlock (1894–1930)

How Should I Your True Love Know

William H. Henderson (1941–2003)

Valentine's Day

Ophelia's Lament

Thomas Pasatieri (b. 1945)

Program Notes: Ophelia

The role of Ophelia, although small, in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1603), shows a feminine reaction to the dilemma presented by her family and her lover. She is a young woman who suffers from being caught in the middle of her family's disputes and debauchery. Her symbolic gestures, such as singing in public, which are counter to the norms for women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, allude to her state of insanity as depicted by Shakespeare. The many opinions on the development of this character have intrigued composers and compelled them to set her short monologues to music. This complex character became the model for future strong female operatic characters who exhibited madness, such as Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Elvira (*I Puritani*), and Amina (*La Sonnambula*).

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Ophelia is the sister of Laertes, who is Polonius' son. Polonius is chief counselor to the king (Hamlet's father), who has just been murdered by his brother, Claudius. While Hamlet should have been next in line for the crown, Claudius marries Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, which makes them king and queen instead. Ophelia, who is in love with Hamlet, is told to suppress her affections for him by giving back his love letters. This gesture, demanded by Polonius and Claudius, is a pretext to spy on him, in response to Hamlet showing up at Ophelia's room half-dressed and behaving irrationally at the beginning of Act II.²⁷

This action suggests that Hamlet is in a state of madness. Because Ophelia has returned his letters, one can assume that he is distraught by her rejection, which helps us to understand why Hamlet so rudely and violently rejects Ophelia in Act III, Scene I when she tries to reconcile with him. Hamlet's rejection, therefore, leaves Ophelia distressed because she is in love with him. Hamlet reveals that Claudius is his father's murderer publicly by commissioning a play to

²⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (London: Blackie and Son Limited, 1902), 48–50 (Act II, Scene 1).

tell the story. Gertrude confronts Hamlet in her chambers and during the ensuing fight Polonius is hiding behind a tapestry in the room. Hamlet, in his rage, kills Polonius thinking that it is Claudius. Hamlet's level of madness increases as he is being taunted by his father's ghost, which further makes him come unhinged.

This unforeseen accident leaves Ophelia deranged, making her free to say whatever she pleases. In "The Silencing of Lucia," Mary Ann Smart references Catherine Clément's idea that madness is a way of escape. While feminist views on opera sometimes are negative, this feminist view is a positive one. Clément goes on to say that madness is an outlet of creative anger providing "a woman a means of escape from a patriarchally repressive society."²⁸ Although this idea is referring to the character of Lucia in Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*, there are similar traits that one should consider with Ophelia. These similarities include being forced not to be with the man she loves, the standard of being treated as property to fulfill the family's wishes, and being expected to act in a manner deemed proper by society in the early seventeenth (Ophelia) and nineteenth (Lucia) centuries .

According to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, mannerisms and behavior for women in the seventeenth century were prescribed by men. Among those customs, "[g]entlewomen were not supposed to sing in public: Ophelia's songs show that she has forgotten all social restraint. The songs that contain references to her father are also bawdy and highly inappropriate [...]."²⁹ The monologues of Ophelia use a series of popular songs from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The discussion that follows progresses in order through the monologues as Shakespeare presented them.

²⁸ Mary Ann Smart, "The Silencing of Lucia," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (July 1992), 119; Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis, 1998), 89.

²⁹ Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, "Madness In Shakespeare's Plays" (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 2019), <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/blogs/music-and-madness-shakespeares-plays/>.

The first of Ophelia's songs that is presented contrary to convention of formal manners (i.e. sung out of turn) is:

How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.

Here we find that Ophelia's state of mind is juggling two ideas or situations that have occurred in her life. The first is her love for Hamlet and the other is the death of her father, Polonius. In the first verse, she questions herself in the first two lines; then answers herself immediately in the second set of lines. This verse seems to depict her confused state as if it were an announcement. As she continues, she sings the second verse directly at Queen Gertrude after the latter questions her in this psychotic state:

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

This verse shows her bewildered disposition while shifting through reality and remembrance. The distorted picture given here is that her father is in the grave upside down. The third verse reads:

White his shroud as the mountain snow,
Larded with sweet flowers
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

In verse three, Ophelia continues to remember her father in the grave. The important symbolism with the color white in this verse alludes to his innocence, which recalls the injustice of his murder. Flowers also hold significance to Ophelia. Although it is not yet revealed what kind of flowers they were (which will be revealed when she returns in the same act and scene),

her father is covered in “sweet flowers” that go with him and with his departure, and thus go her feelings of true love toward Hamlet. This brings us back full circle.

The next song is an old ballad from the play *Edward I* (1593) by George Peele, one of Shakespeare’s predecessors.³⁰ The original song is called “Who list to lead a soldier’s life.” It is fitting that Shakespeare would use this song for a woman who is just following orders as she was told, like an obedient soldier.

Figure 2.1³¹



The words Ophelia sings, “Good morrow ’tis St. Valentine’s Day,” are a variation of this song. Thomas d’Urfey (1653–1723), another composer and playwright, included this ballad in his collection of 500 songs in six volumes called *Wit and Mirth: Or Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1698–1720).

To-morrow is Saint Valentine’s day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose, and donn’d his clothes,
And dupp’d the chamber-door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.

³⁰ Tom Kines, *Songs from Shakespeare’s plays, and popular songs of Shakespeare’s time* (New York: Oak Publications, 1964), 33.

³¹ William Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, Vol. 1, (London: Cramer, Beale & Chappell, 1855–56), 144.

By Gis and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fie for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed.
So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.

These words speak directly to the relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet, which unleashes all her feelings and secrets involving him. In the first stanza, she speaks of herself as a maid in waiting. The next stanza suggests that their relationship had progressed in a sexual manner: "Let in a maid, that out a maid / Never departed more." The third stanza displays her anger and intense emotion with the situation. "By Gis and by St. Charity" is a phrase that alludes to taking God's name in vain, as Charles Mackay has described: "*Gis* or *geas* in Keltic signifies a charm, an incantation, a vow a declaration of truth, and also a guess or conjecture; and possibly the true meaning of 'By Gis and by St. Charity' is not 'by Jesus and St. Charity,' but 'by my *troth*, by my vow.'"³² There are two archaic exclamations to take note of: "Alack," which is an expression of regret or dismay, and "Fie," which is used to express disgust or outrage. This vulgar language, expressed by a lady of the court, was scandalous. In this display of profanity, she curses young men that use women for sexual favors. Finally, the fourth stanza refers to a conversation between Ophelia and Hamlet. It reveals that before they were intimate, Hamlet promised to marry her. The last two lines express her regret. In Thomas Pasatieri's setting, the two lines are given to Hamlet instead of Ophelia: they become the hurtful words that caused her mental state of madness.

³² Charles Mackay, *A Glossary of Obscure Words and Phrases in the Writings of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (London: Sampson Low, Martson, Searle and Rivington, 1887), 50.

In the next lines that Ophelia speaks, she snaps back to reality. She starts speaking in a more formal manner, suggesting that the reality of her confession brings her back to the present.

She commences to make a proper exit, finally showing sadness with the lines:

I hope all will be well. We must be patient:
but I cannot choose but weep,
to think they should lay him i' the cold ground.
My brother shall know of it:
and so I thank you for your good counsel.
Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies;
good night, good night.

After her formal exit, King Claudius reflects on her current condition. Queen Gertrude, still there having witnessed the event, is mortified. There is also the entrance of Laertes, who has returned from France to learn the news of Polonius's death and his sister's mental state. After Laertes has been briefed, Ophelia returns to sing another song:

They bore him barefaced on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And in his grave rain'd many a tear:—
Fare you well, my dove!

You must sing a-down a-down,
And you call him a-down-a.
O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false
steward, that stole his master's daughter.

In the song of Ophelia, she again intermingles her father's death and the truth of his murder with sarcasm and sadness. "Nonny" is a slang word used commonly in many English ballads of the time, which means "fool" or "foolish." It appears that she is using this word sarcastically to discard her opinions in order to obey her brother and father.

The next lines of Ophelia's monologue present the truths of every character in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Shakespeare cleverly uses the symbolism of flowers to reprimand and clarify the entire play. She charges Laertes to avenge their father. She confronts King Claudius

and Queen Gertrude over their infidelity. She even implicates herself about her relationship with Hamlet and her depression regarding the death of her father. I have used bold heading to show direction according to my interpretation of the monologue.

To: LAERTES

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,
love, remember: and there is pansies. That's for thoughts.

To: KING CLAUDIUS

There's fennel for you, and columbines:

To: QUEEN GERTRUDE

There's rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it
herb-grace o' Sundays: O you must wear your rue with
a difference.

To: HERSELF

There's a daisy: I would give you
some violets, but they withered all when my father
died: they say he made a good end,—
[Sings]
For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.³³

Ophelia is seen as an innocent bystander who is naïve, but due to her confrontation, it is proven that she knows more than anyone. This happens in Ophelia's second entrance in Act IV, Scene V.³⁴ She gives flowers with symbolic meanings, yet there is no direction of who the recipient for the flowers will be during the character's delivery. We can only assume that Ophelia gives each flower accordingly.

³³ *My Robin is to the Greenwood Gone* William Ballet's *Lute Book* (c. 1600), a Renaissance popular song that dates back to 1586.

³⁴ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 115.

Figure 2.2

Character	Flowers – Meaning
Laertes	Rosemary – Remembrance Pansies – Thoughts
King Claudius	Fennel – Flattery Columbines – Anxiousness, Foolishness
Queen Gertrude	Rue – Grace
Ophelia	Rue – Clear Vision Daisy – Innocence, Hope Violets – Loyalty, devotion, faithfulness, modesty ³⁵

In Ophelia’s last song, she expresses her sadness and anger one final time. She is distraught over the unrequited love of Hamlet and the murder of her father. Before she leaves, she summarizes the events that led her down a path of insanity.

And will he not come again?
 And will he not come again?
 No, no, he is dead:
 Go to thy death-bed:
 He never will come again.
 His beard was as white as snow,
 All flaxen was his poll:
 He is gone, he is gone,
 And we cast away moan:
 God ha’ mercy on his soul!
 And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi’ ye.

The next song in the program deviates from Ophelia’s monologues and is sung by the Gravediggers (clowns). The song is meant to provide comic relief or shock (whichever comes first to any given viewer) about Ophelia’s death. The first line of text, “I loathe that I did love,” is changed in John Hullah’s arrangement. The original words written by Shakespeare are given alongside the composer’s adaptation here:

³⁵ Catherine Boeckmann, *Flower Meanings: The Language of Flowers* (New York: Yankee Publishing, Inc. 2019), <https://www.almanac.com/content/flower-meanings-language-flowers#flower-meanings>.

Original: <i>He digs and sings</i>	John Hullah's version:
In youth, when I did love, did love, Methought it was very sweet, To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove, O, methought, there was nothing meet.	I loathe that I did love, did love, In youth that I thought sweet. As time require for my behove, Methinks they are not meet.

The version of the poem that you see here was written by Thomas Lord Vaux, published in 1557. The original tune comes from *Now Ponder Well* or *The Children in the Wood*.³⁶

The Composers and Their Settings

John Pyke Hullah (1812–1884) was an English composer and music teacher responsible for reviving many ballads, and he was understood to be a most respected pedagogue of his time. Because of his interest in the revival of Shakespeare's plays, he is remembered today for his work reviving the Ophelia lute songs.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) wrote *Fünf Ophelia – Lieder*, WoO 22 for Olga Preicheisen, Josef Lewinsky's fiancée (both were famous actors), for a performance of *Hamlet* in Prague on December 22, 1873. The songs were published after Brahms's death by musicologist Karl Geiringer in 1934. There is speculation that the works were left unfinished at his death and therefore that they were finished by Geiringer. Olga may have performed the music *a cappella* with accompaniment during rehearsals. This setting seems to depict the innocence of Ophelia. The first instance of madness appears in the first song as represented by an uneven time signature, $\frac{4}{4} \frac{3}{2}$. Besides the subtle instability of the meter, the fourth song presents quotations from

³⁶ Kines, *Songs from Shakespeare's plays*, 35.

Bonny sweet Robin. The translation of the text is a combination of all five of Ophelia's Shakespearean songs.

Richard John Samuel Stevens (1757–1837) describes the sentiment of forgetting your woes and troubles well in his ballad “Sigh No More, Ladies.” I chose his setting to explain how Ophelia's affections (representing those of all womanhood) were disregarded. He uses embellishments and a light-hearted tempo to create the mood. Although these words are not included in Ophelia's monologue, they were also written by William Shakespeare in his comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598–1599). R.J.S. Stevens was known for his settings of Shakespeare's songs.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh nor more;
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never;
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny;
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into. Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, ladies, sing no mo,
Or dumps so dull and heavy;
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy.
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into. Hey, nonny, nonny.

Chanson d'Ophélie is among *Quatre Chansons de Shakespeare*, Op. 28, No. 3 (1896) by French melodie composer, Ernest Chausson (1855–1899). This beautifully set recitative uses

parts of Ophelia’s songs “He is dead and gone lady” and “White his shroud as the mountain snow.” Chausson’s influence of Jules Massenet and his love for Richard Wagner’s works demonstrate his love for drama. Representing the dramatism of Shakespeare’s works, Chausson also supplies in this set his interpretations of “Come away, come away death” from *Twelfth Night* and “Take, O take those lips away” from *Measure for Measure*. In this last piece, Chausson chooses to end the set using a recitative-like art song that concludes with a mournful ending.

<p>Il est mort ayant bien souffert, Madame; il est parti; c’est une chose faite. Une pierre à ses pieds et pour poser à sa tête Un tertre vert. Sur le linceul de neige à pleines mains semées Mille fleurs parfumées, Avant d’aller sous terre avec lui sans retour Dans leur jeunesse épanouie Ont bu, comme une fraîche pluie, Les larmes du sincère amour.</p>	<p>He is dead, having suffered much, Milady He is dead, having suffered much, Milady; He is gone, that is a fact. At his feet a stone and at his head A grass-green turf. On the snow blanket are plentifully sewn A thousand scented flowers, Which, before going with him into the earth without return, In their bright youth Drank, as if fresh rain drops, The tears of true love.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Translation by Maurice Bouchor</p>
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Dmitri Schostakowitsch (1906–1975) creates his Shakespearean setting with the last stanza in “To-morrow is St. Valentine’s Day,” starting at “Quoth she, before you tumbled me.” “Ophelia’s Song” is the first in this set of *Seven Romances on Poems by Alexander Blok*, Op. 127. This twentieth-century composer is known for his contended political status during the Soviet Union, and he uses the powerful words that Ophelia speaks, “You promised me to wed,” which (in my interpretation) reflect on the issues in remembrance of the October Revolution. Alexander Blok (1880–1921), a symbolist poet also a revolutionary in his early

years, takes the stanza and elaborates on its meaning by expanding the focus to lands other than Denmark.

Разлучаясь с дево́й ми́лой, дру́г, Ты́ кля́лся мне́ лю́бить!... Уезжа́я в кра́й по́стылый, Кля́тву да́нную храни́ть!...	When you left me, my dear friend you promised to love me You left for a distant land, and swore to keep your promise!
Там, за Дание́й сча́сливой, Бере́га тво́и во м́гле... Ва́л се́рдитый, го́ворли́вый Мо́ет слё́зы на ска́ле...	Beyond the happy land of Denmark, the shores are in darkness... The angry waves wash over the rocks...
Ми́лый во́ин не ве́рне́тся, Ве́сь оде́тый в се́ребро... В гробе́ тя́жко вско́лыхне́тся Ба́нт и че́рное пе́ро...	My warrior shall not return, all dressed in silver... The bow, and the black feather will restlessly lie in their grave.
	Translation by Anne Evans

Richard Strauss's setting of Ophelia's monologue is rather descriptive of his relationships at the time. *Ophelia Lieder*, Op. 67, along with three settings of poems by Goethe, were written under contract for Bote & Bock. As Strauss and the publishers were not on good terms, the composer neglected to complete his contract for more than ten years. He completed the Ophelia songs in 1918. He also knew madness first-hand because of his mother's mental illness, which landed her in and out of institutions. This setting is written in an expressionist style leaving room for dramatism.

The direct relationship between Ophelia and Gertrude is that of opposites. Gertrude is seen as disloyal and dishonest due to her marriage to Claudius. She is also described as self-sacrificing and impulsive. The most fascinating feature in the play is that no one is innocent or

guilty. Instead, there are many questions left unanswered. Is Gertrude truly sympathetic about the death of Ophelia, or is she delivering her monologue as a means to cover up her guilt?

Hector Berlioz's *La mort d'Ophélie* comes from a set of three movements called *Tristia*, Op. 18. The first movement, *Méditation religieuse* (1831), was written for a six-part chorus and small orchestra with poetry by Thomas Moore. The third movement is called *Marche funèbre pour la dernière scène d'Hamlet* (1844, revised in 1848). *La mort d'Ophelia* (1842, revised in 1848 for female chorus and orchestra) is the second movement, a ballad based on Gertrude's response to Ophelia's death. Take note of the recurring "Ah" theme. It appears initially at the end of the first verse, where it can be interpreted as a sigh from Gertrude. When it returns in the piano, it appears as a reflection or memory. On its third and final occurrence, we realize that it was Ophelia's song.

La mort d'Ophélie	The death of Ophelia
<p>Auprès d'un torrent, Ophélie Cueillait, tout en suivant le bord, Dans sa douce et tendre folie, Des pervenches, des boutons d'or, Des iris aux couleurs d'opale, Et de ces fleurs d'un rose pâle, Qu'on appelle des doigts de mort. Ah!</p>	<p>Beside a stream, Ophelia, Following along the bank, gathered, In her soft and gentle lunacy, Periwinkles, buttercups, Iris the colour of opal, And those pale, rose-coloured flowers They call Dead Men's Fingers. Ah!</p>
<p>Puis élevant sur ses mains blanches Les rians trésors du matin, Elle les suspendait aux branches, Aux branches d'un saule voisin; Mais, trop faible, le rameau plie, Se brise, et la pauvre Ophélie Tombe, sa guirlande à la main.</p>	<p>Then, lifting in her white hands The happy treasure of the morning, She hung them from the branches, From the branches of a nearby weeping willow; But too weak, the branch bends, [Then] breaks, and poor Ophelia Falls, her garland in her hand.</p>
<p>Quelques instants, sa robe enflée La tint encor sur le courant, Et comme une voile gonflée, Elle flottait toujours, chantant, Chantant quelque vieille ballade,</p>	<p>For a while, her swollen dress Bore her on the current, And like a full sail, She kept floating, singing, Singing some ancient ballad,</p>

Chantant ainsi qu'une naïade Née au milieu de ce torrent.	Singing like a water-sprite Born in this stream's domain.
Mais cette étrange mélodie Passa rapide comme un son; Par les flots la robe alourdie Bientôt dans l'abîme profond; Entraîna la pauvre insensée, Laisant à peine commencée Sa mélodieuse chanson. Ah!	But this strange song Faded, as rapidly as a sound, For the waves soon made her dress heavy And down into the depths Dragged the poor senseless girl, Leaving her melodious song Hardly yet begun. Ah!

Roger Quilter (1877–1953) enjoyed setting Shakespeare's texts. In these renditions of Ophelia's songs, he takes popular tunes of old and adds a fresh accompaniment unrelated to her madness. "How should I your true love know?" (1933) is found in Quilter's Op. 30 as the third song of a set of four, using Shakespeare's texts from different plays. "'Tis Valentine's Day" (1917–1910) can be found in his collection of sixty songs. Peter Warlock (1894–1930), a contemporary of Quilter, used a less diatonic harmonic approach. Warlock instead uses chromaticism and frequently shifting time signatures. The song is upbeat and humorous, just like the men being described.

Another composer who depicts Ophelia's unstable personality through the flux of time signatures is African American composer William H. Henderson (1941–2003). He wrote *Five Songs for Soprano & Piano* to texts from Shakespeare's plays. His use of jazz harmonies brings out the personality of Ophelia in a playful, disjunct fashion. Henderson was known as a composer of works for orchestra, films, chamber music, and solo instruments.

Our beloved American composer Thomas Pasatieri (b. 1945) does a wonderful job of presenting Ophelia's monologue in a melodramatic setting. Pasatieri was a child prodigy and lover of opera who chose to transform the monologue into an operatic scene. The scene goes back and forth between recitatives and the popular old tunes heard at the beginning of the

program. He does a beautiful job transitioning between the moods of the piece which creates a musical landscape of Ophelia's world for the audience.

Although there are many interpretations of Ophelia's monologues, there is one factor that remains clear: music was her source of expression. In Leslie C. Dunn's essay, "Ophelia's Songs in *Hamlet*: Music, Madness and the Feminine," a question arises. If Ophelia were not "mad," would she have been heard? And for that matter, since music is the device through which she chose to express herself, we must consider that it was meant to be heard. Dunn explains the patriarchal control during the Renaissance era that suppressed emotional experience.³⁷ There are moments in *Hamlet* where Hamlet himself, Laertes, and Gertrude indirectly shun the display of emotions by covering up their true feelings.³⁸ Ophelia's character demonstrates the epitome of emotional expression and should be noticed simply because she does not restrain herself. This action of expression through music is what has become dramatized in opera. An aria appears when the character has no other way to express themselves or tell an important part of the story. This is what takes place in *Hamlet*. The many composers on this program saw fit to give Ophelia a voice, whether it be through the popular lute songs and ballads of the time or through their own voice. Each composer researched Ophelia and wrote their own interpretation based on what they thought was important and needed to be articulated. There is one thing, however that remains constant: Ophelia's voice is still valid.

³⁷ Leslie C. Dunn, "Ophelia's Songs in *Hamlet*: Music, Madness and the Feminine" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1994), 56–57.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 60–63.

Program: Songs of the African Diaspora

Lenora Green-Turner, Soprano
Nicholas Roehler, Piano
Monday, March 9, 2020
Stamps Auditorium, Walgreen Drama Center
7:30 p.m.

Mama mia
Sul margine d'un rio

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-George (1745–1799)

Six Creole Songs

Aurore Pradère
Gardé Piti Mulet Là (Musieu Bainjo)
Belle Layotte
Dialogue d'Amour
Aine, dé, trois, Caroline
Quand mo-té jeune (Bal fini)

Maud Cuney Hare (1874–1936)

From *Three Dunbar Poems*

Compensation
Theology
Dawn

Betty Jackson King (1928–1994)

Intermission

Borderline

Night: 4 Songs
Fragments
Kid Stuff
Poppy Flower
Borderline
Where Have You Gone
Gethsemane
Religion
Now that He Is Safely Dead
End

David Baker (1931–2016)

Thula baba
Ngiphileleni from *Kiyankomo*

Bertha Egnos (1913–2003) & Basil Gray (1904–1989)
Phelenani Mnomiya (b.1960)

Prayer
Caro Mio Ben

Carlos Simon (b. 1986)

Program Notes: Songs of the African Diaspora

“Diaspora” refers to a large group of people that have the same or similar cultural backgrounds. These large groups are dispersed throughout the world, spreading their culture and beliefs. This recital is a musical representation of composers from the African diaspora. These rarely performed works contain various elements of Africanism: either the composer or poet is of African descent, the subject matter is depicting concepts of the African diaspora (past, present, or future), they use musical elements from the traditions that developed from African music (jazz or African rhythms), or the works are from the continent of Africa. This recital celebrates the creativity, skill, culture, and history rooted in the African diaspora.

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–1799) was an Afro-Caribbean born in Guadeloupe. Although he was born out of wedlock, his father, George Bologne de Saint-Georges, nurtured Joseph to become a skilled swordsman, which relegated him to a noble status in Paris. Not only was he a great fencer, Saint-Georges was also a virtuoso violinist, conductor of the leading symphony in Paris, and a colonel in the French Revolution. Saint-Georges’s string quartets were among the first music for this combination of instruments to be published in France.

Although he was a prolific opera and song composer, the two songs on tonight’s program represent the small output of his vocal works that have survived. They are diatonic and relatively simple songs of the era and contain classical traits of *arioso*. Certain characteristics suggest the construction of an aria. First, he made frequent use of *appoggiaturas* and ornamentation in the return of the **A** section in “Mamma Mia.” Second, he mentions elements of mythical creatures in “Sul margine d’un rio,” where he refers to his lover as a nymph who speaks to the Goddess of

love. Many early operatic librettos are centered around myths, the most popular being that of Orpheus, whose story tells us about the power of music. The mention of mythical creatures is not uncommon in operatic stories, whether the character is from a mythical story or is speaking figuratively.

Saint-Georges was a native French speaker, yet he wrote these songs in Italian, which is the clue assertion that he was leading toward composing an aria. During the classical period, the language stayed true to the genre, traditionally. If the piece was written for the church, it was usually in Latin. If the composer was writing secular or folk songs, they would be in the vernacular language spoken by the composer, while an opera would be in Italian. The manuscript of these songs contain are grammatical errors, and with the assistance of Professor Kirk Severtson, we have corrected the language, with much respect to the composer. The original texts are as follows:

Andantino

Mama mia non mi grida te
Vi diro la verita
Un garzon di fresca et ade
Mi chiedea la carita
Ta la la...

Sempre intorno a me veniva
A preghar e a sopirar
Voi capite, Mama mia
Chi il dovetti consolar
Ta la la...

Larghetto

Sul margine d'un rio
Vicino all'erbe ni fiori
Ninfa dormir veggia io
Che parla dea d'amour

Quanto: a mi piace
La rara sua belta
Io perderò la pace
Quando si destera

In the translations, you will find the corrections of the grammatical errors that will be performed.

<p>Andantino</p> <p>Mamma mia non mi gridate, vi dirò la verità. Un garzon di fresca etade, Mi chiedea la carità.</p> <p>Ta ta la...</p> <p>Sempre intorno a me veniva A preghar e a sopirar Voi capite, Mamma mia Chi il dovetti consolar.</p> <p>Ta la la...</p>	<p>My mother dear, don't yell at me. I tell you truth. A boy, young with age Asked me for my hand.</p> <p>Ta ta la...</p> <p>He always came around me Begging and sighing You understand, my dear mother, I had to console him.</p> <p>Ta la la...</p> <p>(Rough translation)</p>
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<p>Larghetto</p> <p>Sul margine d'un rio Vicino all'erbe mi fiori Ninfa dormir veggo io Che parla dea d'amor.</p> <p>Quanto: a me piace La rara sua belta Io perderò la pace Quando si destera.</p>	<p>On the edge of the river Near my herbs and flowers I see a sleeping nymph That speaks to the Goddess of Love.</p> <p>How much: I like it, His rare beauty, I will lose peace When he wakes up.</p> <p>(Rough translation)</p>
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Maud Cuney Hare (1874–1936) is one of the first female African American musicologists. As she was taught to be proud of her black heritage, much of her research centered around folklore, musical traditions, and the black race. She is the first musicologist to study Creole music, for which she traveled throughout South America and the Caribbean.

The *Six Creole Folk-Songs* were copyrighted in 1921. Her thorough work tells us that Creole is a [group of mixed-heritage people (Cuney Hare used the term “mixed blood”) in

Louisiana and the bordering southwestern states. The music combines African rhythms, the French influence in language, and Spanish dances.³⁹ The term Creole can be explained in three ways. There are the Creole as a people, Creole language, and Creole music. During the time of colonization, the mixture of French, Spanish, African, Native American, and South Asian culture made up a “melting pot” of peoples now identified as the Creole people. There are many areas around the world that have gone through this process of mixed cultures, such as Brazilians, the people of Haiti, the Gullah folk, and Caribbean islanders. The common factor of the Creoles is that they are deeply rooted in African traditions. The Louisiana Creole is among the most famous of our American cultures. Many people assume that the term Creole signifies the mixing of races, and the mixed-race children are the result of cohabitation of diverse people, but the concept of Creole is about the many cultures in one area.

Cuney Hare’s focus was on the music that was created by the Creole people of Louisiana, and what came out of their intermingling. These folk songs were produced from stories and common occurrences within the culture. There are no known specific authors or poets that contributed to the songs that you will hear, due to the nature of how folk songs are passed down through generations. Cuney Hare has done her best to explain the origin of the Creole folk songs by telling her audience about the nature of the historical gatherings. Her writings tell us that in the early days, as late as 1855, it was a custom to use the old Place Congo as an out-of-door dance hall and rendezvous. Free persons of color and members of the white race would gather from two until nine on Sunday afternoon.⁴⁰ She goes on to write about the different instruments, such as drums, marimbas, quills, etc. A choir with a solo leader was also present.

³⁹ Maud Cuney Hare, *Six Creole Folk-Songs* (New York: Carl Fischer, 1921), p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Cuney Hare is adamant about the rules of French pronunciation. The basic rules of French diction apply to the Creole language, but African and Spanish words appear throughout the music. We also find that “while there are but few religious songs, there are many of satire and sarcasm, ridicule and mockery[,] many of which sprang into being at carnival time, and far more love songs that are to be found among any other folk-song offerings of America.”⁴¹

Aurore Pradère is in the form of the “Counjai,” which is a love song. The word derives from an African dance called Koundjo, which is danced with African drums.⁴²

Aurore Pradère	Aurore Pradère
Aurore Pradère, belle 'ti fille, C'est li mo oulé, c'est li ma pren.	Aurore Pradère, pretty girl, She's just what I want, and her I'll have.
Ya moun qui dit li trop zolie, Ya moun qui dit li pas polie; Tout ça ya dit, (Sia!) bin fou bin, C'est li mo oulé, c'est li ma pren.	Some say that she's too pretty, quite, Some folks they say she's not polite; All this they say—Pshaw! I'm no fool, Oh she's what I want and her I'll have.
Li pas mandé robe mousseline, Li pas mandé déba brodé; Li pas mandé soulier prinelle, C'est li mo oulé, c'est li ma pren.	She does not choose a muslin gown, She does not ask for 'broidered hose, She does not want prunella shoes; Oh she's what I want, and her I'll have.

Gardé Piti Mulet Là (Musieu Bainjo) is a satirical song. Many of the Creole songs were sung with this element of humor. Cuney Hare specifies that this song comes from a plantation on St. Charles Parish, Louisiana.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Maud Cuney Hare, *Negro Musicians and Their Music* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1936), 108.

⁴³ Cuney Hare, *Six Creole Folk-Songs*, p. 7.

Gardé Piti Mulet Là (Musieu Bainjo)	See The Little Mulatto (Mister Banjo)
Gardé piti mulet là, “Musieu Bainjo,” La com’ li insolent! Chapeau sul’ côté, Soulié qui fait “cric-crac.”	See the little mulatto, “Mister Banjo” Hasn’t he a saucy air! Hat cock’d on one side, New shoes that go “cric-crac.”
Gardé piti mulet là, “Musieu Bainjo,” La com’ li insolent! Foular á la pouche La canne á la main.	See the little mulatto, “Mister Banjo” Hasn’t he a saucy air! Kerchief in his vest, Walking-cane in hand.

Belle Layotte is another love song, but this one is sung and danced to a form of dance called the “Calinda.” As Cuny Hare wrote: “This African dance is known in all Creole countries, but popular in Louisiana and the French West Indies. As danced in Martinique and in Haiti, the men twirl canes or sticks and imitate a fight. The dance is also known as ‘Caliendo’ perhaps with Spanish influences.”⁴⁴ You will notice that in the set of Creole songs, there are two pieces that are set to the “Calinda” dance. The similarities between the two songs include the rhythms of the dotted eighth-sixteenth-eighth-eighth figure in the bass clef and the eighth-note triplet eighth-eighth figures in the treble clef, played simultaneously. Both of these songs also share similar themes, as they depict varying aspects of relationships.

“Belle Layotte” and “Dialogue d’Amour” show marked differences. “Belle Layotte” is a song about happily received love and is written in a major key, and “Dialogue d’Amour” describes a dangerous love and is written in a minor key. Another difference is that the character of “Belle Layotte” is the only person singing. “Dialogue d’Amour” presents two characters that should be represented in its performance. Another special note about the Creole language

⁴⁴ Cuny Hare, *Negro Musicians and Their Music*, 99–100.

relevant to this piece, as Cuney Haney reported, is that “[t]he Spanish Creoles of Louisiana when inter-married with the French, spoke the French Creole language in preference to the Spanish language.”⁴⁵ Knowing this, the final interjection of happiness should probably be pronounced in the Spanish language.

Belle Layotte	Beautiful Layotte
<p>Mo déjà roulé tout la côte, Pancor ouar pareil belle Layotte. Mo roulé tout la côte, Mo roulé tout la colonie; Mo pancor ouar griffonne la, Qua mo gout comme la belle Layotte. Mo déjà roulé tout la côte, Pancor ouar pareil belle Layotte.</p>	<p>I have sailed all along the shore, There is none like my belle Layotte. I sail along the shore, I have roamed the country o’er; But I find no mane so dear, As that of my own belle Layotte. I have sailed all along the shore, There is none like my belle Layotte.</p>
<p>Mo déjà roulé tout la côte, Pancor ouar pareil belle Layotte. Jean Babét, mon ami, Si vous couri par en haut, Vous mande belle Layotte. Cadeau la li té promi mouin. Mo déjà roulé tout la côte, Pancor ouar pareil belle Layotte.</p>	<p>I have sailed all along the shore, There is none like my belle Layotte. Oh, Jean Babet, my friend, If you to her I should send, Ask of her the lover’s knot She promised me my belle Layotte. I have sailed all along the shore, There is none like my belle Layotte.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Translation by Mrs. Jean Paul Selinger⁴⁶</p>

Although still a love song, “Aine, dé, trois, Caroline” expresses longing for one’s lover. We would expect to hear slow and mournful music, but this song is written in the upbeat dance form of a “Counjai,” originating in St. Charles Parish. We see an example of the Creole phrases being changed in accordance with French, as Cuney Hare reported: “‘Ça, Ça, yé’ is from the French ‘Qu’est ce’. ‘Qui ça, ça, yé’ therefore translated as ‘What’s the matter’.”⁴⁷ Cuney Hare thought H. E. Krehbiel (American musicologist and newspaper critic) said it best: “[I]n its way the song

⁴⁵ Cuney Hare, *Six Creole Folk-Songs*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

‘Caroline’ sheds light on the tragedy as well as the romance of the domestic life of the young Creole slaves. Marriage, that state of blissful respectability denied to the multitude either by law or social conditions.”⁴⁸

Aine, dé, trois, Caroline	One, two, three, Caroline
<p>Aine, dé, trois, Caroline Ça, Ça, yé comme ça ma chère! Aine, dé, trois, Caroline Ça, Ça, yé comme ça ma chère! Papa di “Non”, Maman di “Oui”, C’est li m’oulé, c’est li ma pren. Ya pas larzan, pouè acheté cabanne, C’est li m’oulé, c’est li ma pren.</p>	<p>One, two, three, Caroline What is the matter with thee? One, two, three, Caroline What is the matter with thee? Papa says, “No”, Mama says, “Yes,” ’Tis he [whom] I want and him I’ll have. No money has he, a cabin to buy. ’Tis he I want, and he wants me.</p>
<p>Aine, dé, trois, Caroline Pas paré comme ça ma chère! Aine, dé, trois, Caroline Pas paré comme ça ma chère! Sam’di l’amour, Dimanch’ marie, Lundi matin, piti dans bras. N’a pas couvert’, n’a pas de draps, N’a pas a rien, piti dans bras.</p>	<p>One, two, three, Caroline Do not talk that way, my Dear. One, two, three, Caroline Do not talk that way, my Dear. Saturday love, Sunday to wed, Monday morn, baby in arms. There is no quilt, no little bed, Not anything, Baby in arms.</p>

“Dialogue d’Amour” (a song of mockery) will feel familiar if you have heard George Bizet’s popular aria from the opera *Carmen* (1875) known as the *Habanera*, which is a popular Cuban dance. Cuney Hare quoted an earlier version of Grove’s dictionary to explain:

“According to Grove’s dictionary, ‘A habanera is a Spanish dance of an older origin than its name implies, having been introduced into Cuba from Africa by the Negroes, whence it was naturally imported into Spain. It is sometimes called Contradanza Criollo (Creole country-dance). It has a short introduction of two parts of eight or sixteen bars of which the first is in a minor key and the second in the major. This form is not always strictly followed.’ Although coming from Havana, the city of its birth and name, the ‘habanera’ is known in the folksong of Brazil, Mexico, and, in fact, in much of the folk music of Central and South America.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Maud Cuney Hare, *Negro Musicians and Their Music* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1936) p. 110-111

This song is also written in the dance form of a “Calinda”. It was usually played with drums and castanets. Again to quote Cuney Hare: “Money of silver is commonly used in the south, that of gold or paper: sugar-cane plantations are a principal source of wealth in this section.”⁵⁰

Dialogue d’Amour	Dialogue of Love
Si l’amou à vous si grand, Michié la, Faut donné plain l’argent.	If your love can be so great, my dear Sir, Then give me your silver
Toutes mes cann’ sont brulées, Mariann’, Et je suis ruiné.	All of my cane is burned, Marianne, And ruined am I.
Si cann’ à vous brulé Michié la, L’amou à nous flambé!	If plantations are lost, my dear Sir, (if your cane is destroyed) Then Love is lost in flames!

“Bal fini” is a farewell song presented at the close of the dance in “Place Congo.”

Accompanied by drums, the people would process with this thought in mind: “Good times” pass, so be happy while life lasts.

Quand mo-té jeune	While I was young,
Quand mo-té jeun’ Mo-té jonglé Michieu A c’t’heur mapé vini vieux, Mo-pé jonglé bon Dieu.	While I was young, Merry was I, dear Sirs; And now when I am old, I still will merry be.
Mo-pé jonglé bon temps passé, Mo-pé jonglé bon temps passé, Mo-pé jonglé bon temps passé, Mo-pé jonglé bon temps qu’est passé.	I will be gay for pleasure flies, I will be gay for pleasure flies, I will be gay, “good times” pass away, I will be gay, “good times” pass away.
Le bal fini, bonsoir, Messieurs, Le bal fini, bonsoir, Mesdam’ M’allé parti, La, la, la, la, la!	The dance is done, Goodnight, Messieurs, The dance is done, Goodnight, Madames, I go, I go! La, la, la, la, la!

⁵⁰ Cuney Hare, *Six Creole Folk-Songs*, p. 21.

Double consciousness is a concept that many African Americans learned to adopt. The term was coined by W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963), an African American socialist and historian of the Black Elite, in his collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).⁵¹ It refers to Blacks having to be a different person or have different mannerisms outside of their own homes and cultural environment. Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906), one of the most prominent African American writers, was very successful at writing poetry that exemplified this concept. His words express such contrasts when revealing the true message of each poem that you will hear set by Betty Jackson King (1928–1994). King was a composer known for her vocal works, but she was also a conductor, pianist, and teacher. Her works provide a colorful, abstract that blends the expression of double consciousness in words and sounds.

Her musical language in the first song of the set, “Compensation,” is a good example of the complicated nature of double consciousness. She uses the twelve-tone technique, with the following tone row: F G# B F# D# E A# G C# D A C. Another way of looking at this would be in its twelve-tone numerical form (i.e., P₀ = 5 8 e 6 3 4 t 7 1 2 9 0), which may be compiled into a matrix.

⁵¹ W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Penguin Books, 2018).

Figure 3.1⁵²

	I ₀	I ₃	I ₆	I ₁	I ₁₀	I ₁₁	I ₅	I ₂	I ₈	I ₉	I ₄	I ₇	
P ₀	5	8	e	6	3	4	t	7	1	2	9	0	R ₀
P ₉	2	5	8	3	0	1	7	4	t	e	6	9	R ₉
P ₆	e	2	5	0	9	t	4	1	7	8	3	6	R ₆
P ₁₁	4	7	t	5	2	3	9	6	0	1	8	e	R ₁₁
P ₂	7	t	1	8	5	6	0	9	3	4	e	2	R ₂
P ₁	6	9	0	7	4	5	e	8	2	3	t	1	R ₁
P ₇	0	3	6	1	t	e	5	2	8	9	4	7	R ₇
P ₁₀	3	6	9	4	1	2	8	5	e	0	7	t	R ₁₀
P ₄	9	0	3	t	7	8	2	e	5	6	1	4	R ₄
P ₃	8	e	2	9	6	7	1	t	4	5	0	3	R ₃
P ₈	1	4	7	2	e	0	6	3	9	t	5	8	R ₈
P ₅	t	1	4	e	8	9	3	0	6	7	2	5	R ₅
	R ₀	R ₃	R ₆	R ₁	R ₁₀	R ₁₁	R ₅	R ₂	R ₈	R ₉	R ₄	R ₇	

This prime row is played in the introduction and then stated backwards. This is known as the retrograde (i.e., 0 9 2 1 7 t 4 3 6 e 8 5). Although she uses elements of twelve-tone theory, which was popular during the era of her composition, King juxtaposes the atonal accompaniment with a singable melodic line and text on African American themes, thus exemplifying double consciousness. King does not continue to use this compositional technique throughout the cycle, but utilizes many other theories that similarly seem to contradict themselves.

The form of the piece is ABA' (ternary form). The music's definition of "compensation" is shown through many different opposing theories, starting with how King spells the notes. Often in the accompaniment, the same notes are played, but are respelled enharmonically. In her part writing, she breaks the parallel fifths rule in the transitions between verses. There is a reoccurring uneasy feeling in the partnership between the melody and the accompaniment. She uses oblique and contrary motion at the beginning of the A sections, but parallel and contrary motion at the end. In the B Section, we are presented with the contrast of augmented and minor chords, played simultaneously. This creates a clashing, dark, and mournful mood. The only time we have a definite key is when the word "God" is sung. This occurs twice on long notes, as if

⁵² Matrix Calendar, musictheory.net, accessed March 28, 2020, <https://www.musictheory.net/calculators/matrix>.

God is the only constant on which the performer has to rely. King wanted the performers and the audience to understand that double consciousness is a complicated way of living.

Her next piece, “Theology,” interprets double consciousness in a different way. The piano begins with a bright introduction, which paints the picture of a perfect world using diatonic scales and progressions. Chromaticism presents a change of mood before the line, “The upward longing of my soul doth tell me so.” King is hinting that something is not quite right with the statements that the character is saying. After this section, there is another change to the minor key. “Heaven” (presented in the major key) and “hell” (presented in the minor key) are musically depicted as opposites. The punchline is delivered using musical elements of the blues genre.

“Dawn,” which was the first of the songs to be copyrighted (in 1973, rather than 1990 for the remaining two), is artistically dramatic. In its narrative, the creation of dawn is described. King paints majestic figures with magically stacked chords in both hands in the [A] section. Paul Laurence Dunbar uses colors and mystical creatures to show contrast in the [B] section, with the text “Bent down and kissed the sleeping night.” “Angel” is associated with heavenly things and a “Sprite” is associated with earthly things. “White” contrasts with “Night,” showing the concept of light and dark. The colors of blushing, which personify night, are reds, oranges, and pinks, which bring light to the surface, again in the [A] section. The sunrise is depicted by the rise of the vocal line.

David Baker (1931–2016) referred to himself as eclectic but essentially romantic.⁵³

Eclecticism in music is the ability to write in many styles and marry them in a high form of

⁵³ Monika Herzig and Nathan Davis, *David Baker: A Legacy in Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 177.

expression. This was popular after World War I, and even more so after World War II. David Baker was a composer and jazz theorist who was particularly attached to the black experience.⁵⁴ This is mostly because he grew up during the Great Depression and lived through the Civil Rights Movement. An accomplished composer, jazz musician, and academician, Baker found himself the head of the jazz department at Indiana University in 1966.

1965 marks the beginning of the Black Arts Movement that lasted until the early 1970s. This movement was another African American “renaissance,” which gravitated to the Black Power Movement.⁵⁵ This was a time when African Americans spoke their minds and confronted the contradictions of the elder generation versus the younger generation. As Larry Neal, a scholar of African American Theater, has written, the blues (or African American musical traditions in general) “were about survival on the meanest, most gut level of human existence.” David Baker used such traditions in his compositions along with Western forms and mediums, such as “quartal chords and harmony, quartal-secundal harmony, mixed-interval chords, quintal chords, polychords, bitonality, mixed modality, split chords, clusters, cluster harmony, atonal harmony, and even some twelve-tone passages. At the heart of his music is the full vocabulary of jazz that he draws on at will, especially bebop and later styles, but also including rock, gospel, Latin rhythms, and especially the blues.”⁵⁶

Baker’s cycle *Borderline* (1972) is meant to create a musical experience that speaks to bold statements, emotional states, and events African Americans have faced. He used the poetry of six writers of the Harlem Renaissance and their intellectual descendants to give voice to these ideas: Langston Hughes (1902–1967), Frank Horne (1899–1974), Mari Evans (1923–2017),

⁵⁴ Horace J. Maxile Jr., *On Vernacular Emblems and Signification in David N. Baker’s The Black Experience* (University of Illinois Press, 2014), 223.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁵⁶ Herzig and Davis, *David Baker*, 175.

Arna Bontemps (1902–1973), Conrad Kent Rivers (1933–1968), and Carl Wendell Hines, Jr (b. 1940). Mari Evans and David Baker worked closely together during her time of residence at Indiana University from 1971 to 1978 and Baker set several of her poems, directly speaking to the black experience, to music. This masterwork is a set of twelve movements. It was originally written for soprano, string quartet, and piano, with ten pieces for soprano and string quartet with two more for piano solo.

This set of South African repertoire is dedicated to all my South African friends, with whom I had the pleasure of working in the summer of 2012 in a production of Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars* at the world-renowned Glimmerglass Festival in upstate New York, directed by Tazewell Thompson. It was such an amazing experience, and to my surprise a momentous event in the history of classical music of the African Diaspora. With the help of my colleague, Goitsewang Lehoibe, I have come to know and familiarize myself with South African pieces that will expand the study of the ever-changing African Diaspora.

In studying new music of a different language, the best approach with which to begin is by learning the simplest forms of music. In many cases that would be in the folksong genre. Folksongs reflect the essence of musical traditions of a culture. "Thula baba" is a traditional South African lullaby written in the Xhosa language. The Xhosa language, along with the Zulu language that will be sung in the following selection, is a Nguni language developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, derived from Bantu languages that can be traced back to the Khoisan-speaking peoples of South Africa.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ *Nguni People*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Internet" last updated April 17, 2014, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nguni#ref700540>.

These languages are vowel-based, using pure vowels instead of diphthongs. It is also similar to the Italian language with regard to the general rule of the stresses on the penultimate syllable. Another element is the Nguni “clicks.”⁵⁸ In this lullaby, there is one specific click out of three prominent ones, the “x” click, which is formed by the tip of the tongue behind the top teeth, and a sort of suction of the middle sides of the tongue. The others are the “c” click, a “sweet” or “soft” click formed by a sort of suction action at the tip of the tongue, and the “q” click, a “hard” click formed with the tip of a cupped tongue on the alveolar ridge. When the suction action of the tongue is released, it makes a loud sound that has pitch. Another note from my colleague is the need for tasteful slurring throughout the lullaby, as this is a part of the South African tradition as well.

Thula baba	Hush baby
Thula, thu, thula baba thula sana, Thul’u mam’uzobuya ekuseni;	Hush, hush, baby, hush my little one Be quiet, mommy will be back in the morning.
Sobe si thini xa baye besho yo Bethi buyela ubuyele kha ya.	We will all say come back home, There’s a star that shines for you.
Thula, thula, thula sana Thula, thula standwa sam;	Hush, hush baby Hush, hush my love.
Sobe si thini xa baye besho yo Bethi buyela ubuyele kha ya.	We will all say come back home, There’s a star that shines for you.

Staying abreast of current events, one learns that South Africa has been a hot topic in the world of opera. During my experience at the Glimmerglass Festival, there was an amazing representation of talent that came to characterize the somewhat recent abolition of the apartheid that was depicted in Weill’s *Lost in the Stars*. Upon reading excerpts from Dr. Naomi André’s

⁵⁸ Naomi André, *Black Opera: History, Power, Engagement*, 1 ed., (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2018) muse.jhu.edu/book/62875, 159.

Black Opera: History, Power, and Engagement, I realized that, while I did not know it at the time, I had had the honor of being a part of history: “[T]he vantage point has shifted; it is now South Africa that gets to redefine opera on its own terms through its adaptations of Western operas in South African settings and the creation of new South African operas.”⁵⁹

The next selection is from an opera that is based on a historical time in the Zulu kingdom of Mpande. It highlights dances and rituals of their traditions, now displayed for all the world to see. This piece is written in the isiZulu language, which is vowel-based like the Italian language but with fewer “clicks,” although the “clicks” still exist in the alphabet. The difficulties are double consonants that start with “n” and “m” such as, Ngiphileleni and Mgazi. There are also double consonants, which are foreign to English speakers, that are formed using “hl” and “dl.” The latter are cognates produced by placing the tip of the tongue on the alveolar ridge, positioning the body of the tongue over the hard palette and exhaling from the soft palette. An airy sound is produced on the sides of the tongue. The combination “hl” is heard as an unvoiced sound, and the “dl” combination is a voiced sound. As another general rule, “h” is always its own aspirated sound.

This aria is from a one-act opera called *Ziyankomo and the Forbidden Fruit* (2014) by Phelelani Mnomiya. It is a story based on actual historical people and events. The librettist, Themba Msimang, has written about a forbidden love affair between a warrior of royal blood named Ziyankomo and King Mpande’s concubine Gabisile.⁶⁰ From my research, Ziyankomo is a folkloric character, which leads me to believe that the lovers are fictional. This aria is sung by Gabisile. She and Ziyankomo have been discovered in their infidelity and Ziyankomo is taken

⁵⁹ Ibid., 170.

⁶⁰ Christine Kennedy, *Compelling and exquisitely scored indigenous opera*, (Johannesburg: Business Day 2012)

away. The elders put him on trial to determine whether or not he will be put to death. Gabisile is greatly distraught. This is her final aria before she commits suicide.

Ngiphileleni?	Why should I Live?
Ngiphileleni, ngaphandle kwakho? Iyin'impilo, ngaphandle kwakho? Wen'owadela impilo ngothando lwami Mgazi.	Why should I live? What am I living for without you? What is life without you? You sacrificed life for my love, my dear.
Luyin'uthanda, buyin'ubuhle yin'injabulo ngaphandle kwakho?	What is love, what is beauty, what is happiness without you?
Ngihlangabeze, sengiyeza; Ngibambe ungihole. Ngibambisise ungangidedeli. Ngibambe ngengalo. Namhlanje, ngizinkelakuwena.	Come meet me halfway, I'm coming. Hold my hand and lead me. Hold me tight, don't let me go... Hold me by my arm, Today I'm giving myself to you.

Dr. Carlos Simon (b. 1986), a fellow alumnus of the University of Michigan, is quickly gaining prominence in the music industry. He writes from his experiences of home and the church. "Prayer" uses a text written by Langston Hughes. Although Hughes was not a preacher, or even religious, this particular poem in Dr. Simon's setting reads like a sermon. Written in C# minor, there is a beautiful ascending melody supported by the simplicity of a jazzy chord progression. The character simply speaks/sings an uplifting text. Because the melodic line starts immediately on the third scale degree and rises to the fifth, the audience experiences a slight sense of urgency. The preacher calls upon people who are suffering, encouraging those who are in a low state of mind. The accompaniment seems to rumble the souls of whomever the preacher is addressing, just as the musician in a gospel church would do.

The final piece on the program is a well-known Italian aria by Giuseppe Giordani (1751–1798). Using the existing text and melodic line, Dr. Simon has created an arrangement with a

colorful harmonic accompaniment infused with gospel chord progressions, reminding us of the atmosphere created in the African American church.

<p>Caro mio ben</p> <p>Caro mio ben, credimi almen, senza di te languisce il cor.</p> <p>Il tuo fedel sospira ognor. Cessa, crudel, tanto rigor!</p>	<p>My dear beloved</p> <p>My dear beloved, believe me at least, without you my heart languishes.</p> <p>Your faithful one always sighs; cease, cruel one, so much punishment!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Translation by John Glenn Paton</p>
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These last two pieces are meant to encourage and soothe the audience. I charge the listener to realize that the rich and distinguished history of African American art song is in good hands as composers like Dr. Carlos Simon are continuing to engage with it. They are making statements that highlight our African roots and include the traditions of the earlier generations without losing their own voice. In conjunction with the upcoming generation in America, Africans, including South Africans, are flourishing within the genre of the classical art song. They are reminding the black race about their true history through the devices of folksong, art song, and opera. This helps enrich the African Diaspora even more, bringing this collective experience in the musical arts full circle. Although the African Diaspora is vast, this connection to the music and continent of Africa will always be the unifier that brings it together.

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