

**Notes on Three Dissertation Performances:  
Opera and Recital in the Twenty-First Century**

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts  
(Music: Performance)  
in the University of Michigan  
2022

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## **DEDICATION**

To my two nieces, Lilliana and Aria, who are named after my favorite things (even though I had no say in it), music and nature. You are the future.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to my mentors and teachers at the University of Michigan for their lending of support and expertise, specifically to: Freda Herseth, my committee chair, for her guidance and mentorship through a particularly challenging two years of school and life; Charles Garrett, for his ability to get me thinking about subjects more deeply; Stanford Olsen, who I can always count on for both a laugh and thoughtful advice; Scott Piper for his continual belief in my abilities; and to Lindy Greer, who has encouraged my imagination and “outside-the-box” thinking and given me opportunities to use both. Further thanks to Abbigail Coté and Kirk Severtson who led such a thoughtful and fun production of *Cendrillon* and for the opportunity to sing and investigate such a wonderful character in *Le Prince Charmant*.

Deepest gratitude must also be extended to my piano collaborators, Mahour Arbabian and John Etsell for their wonderful collaborative spirits and their excellent musicianship on my two recitals. Additionally, the support of my colleagues within my doctoral cohort, Chrissy Amon and Colleen Beucher, has been instrumental to my success in the last three years and I cannot imagine any better colleagues and teachers. I am fortunate to have shared this journey with you both.

Without my family, none of this would have ever been possible. To my sister, Laura, and my brother, Zach, many thanks for being the guinea pigs in my first “theatrical productions” which undoubtedly helped my imagination grow. To my parents, Steve and Ellen who taught me so much through their constant love and support. From washing recital prop dishes and building set pieces for the stage, to just showing up for me for my whole life, they both have taught me how to share the best parts of myself through giving my time, attention and consideration to things and people who are important, and I am so grateful. And to Simon, for his love and for reminding me to knock over music stands and be curious about the world around me.

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## ABSTRACT

Two recitals and an opera role were performed in lieu of a written dissertation. The following program notes and character analysis are the culmination of work as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan and represent vocal and stage artistry, creative exploration surrounding twenty-first century performance, and scholarly research in the field of voice performance. The three performances display facility of vocal style in music from the Baroque Era through the Twenty-First Century and include a variety of languages with selections in French, German, Spanish, and English. By bringing traditional music to the stage with creative angles, thinking about new interpretations of performance settings and roles, and exploring repertoire written within the current century, the three performances endeavored to look at how musical performance can continue to evolve in the twenty-first century. The analysis of the operatic role of Le Prince Charmant in Jules Massenet's *Cendrillon* explores the idea of pants roles in nineteenth century opera as a vehicle for twenty-first century gender expression, by not conforming to stereotypical societal roles and providing an avenue for non-binary expression on the opera stage within traditional opera canon. The recital "*Bon Appétit! (and other disasters)*" flipped the traditional recital experience on its head by parodying aspects of televised cooking shows, television commercials and recital performance. It included music from the Baroque through the Twentieth Century, featuring French and German art song and American

compositions, as well as operetta and opera selections while highlighting comedy onstage in recital and seeking to reimagine the recital space for twenty-first century audiences. The third performance, “The Sounds of Reminiscence” featured two pieces by Jake Heggie and looked at twenty-first century musical compositions through composers’ use of pluralism and how Heggie’s specific use of hybrid genre allows for aural recall to layer meaning throughout his works. Recital 1: In lieu of a recital, the role of Le Prince Charmant in Jules Massenet’s *Cendrillon* was performed on November 4 and 6, 2021, at the Power Center for the Performing Arts in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Abbigail Coté, director and Kirk Severtson, conductor. Recital 2: “*Bon Appétit!* (and other disasters)” was performed on December 7, 2021 at the Walgreen Drama Center, Stamps Auditorium in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Mahour Arbabian, piano. Recital 3: “The Sounds of Reminiscence” was performed on March 7, 2022 at the Walgreen Drama Center, Stamps Auditorium in Ann Arbor, Michigan; John Etsell, piano.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**A Twenty-First Century Lens for Gender in Nineteenth Century Opera:**  
**Le Prince Charmant in Massenet’s *Cendrillon***

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

“If there is one ‘constant’ in the structure and theme of the wonder tale, it is transformation.”  
— Jack Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*

In one way or another, we are all familiar with the tale of the innocent girl from the ashes and soot who, by virtue of her inherent goodness and forbearance, becomes an esteemed princess, marrying the prince of the land. The trope is recognizable across history and throughout the world. From early figures of *Peau d’Âne*<sup>1</sup> to the Disney Princess version, the Cinderella story is immortalized by its continued proliferation through centuries of evolution in literature, music, media, and theatre. Even Marian Cox’s collection, from over a century ago, categorized 345 versions of Cinderella stories, spanning the globe and containing significant overlaps in aspects of magic and fairy worlds, plot elements, characters, and moral lessons.<sup>2</sup> While trying to

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<sup>1</sup> Marian Roalfe Cox suggests Perrault’s *Peau d’Âne* or “Donkey-Skin” has links to earlier publications by other sources, like Straparola’s in 1550, and is a fairy-tale with more of a “riches to rags to riches” story, but has connective through lines to later “rags to riches” Cinderella versions, in her book: *Cinderella: Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants of Cinderella, Catskin, and Cap O’Rushes, Abstracted and Tabulated, with a Discussion of Mediaeval Analogues and Notes* (London: Folklore Society, 1893), xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Cox, xxxiv-xxxvi.

investigate the persistent and universal nature of the Cinderella tale in her analysis of modern-day princess culture, Peggy Orenstein notes that the Cinderella story “provides a common language of childhood fun.”<sup>3</sup> Fairytale researcher, Jack Zipes notes that the universal appeal is “the ‘rags to riches’ story with its emphasis on sensitive family issues.”<sup>4</sup> In traditional Eurocentric studies, the most recognizable of these universal childhood tales could be traced back through centuries to versions like Charles Perrault’s 1697 *Cendrillon* (from *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*) or the Brothers Grimm version, *Aschenputtel* (published between 1812-1815 in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*). Both have seen numerous theatrical and musical adaptations since their publication. The more gruesome aspects of *Aschenputtel* come to life in Stephen Sondheim’s *Into the Woods* (1987),<sup>5</sup> while Perrault’s *Cendrillon* fairytale lives on in four operatic compositions of the nineteenth and early twentieth century: Nicholas Isouard (*Cendrillon*, 1810), Gioachino Rossini (*La Cenerentola*, 1817), Jules Massenet (*Cendrillon*, 1899), and Pauline Viardot (*Cendrillon*, 1904).

The key element in all of these variations of the Cinderella story often rests solely in the transformation of the central figure, Cinderella. In many ways, the Cinderella trope of transformation persists mainly on the idea that femininity, in the form of a person who is beautiful, innocent, humble, kind, will be rewarded with esteem, love and societal validation. This proves to be socially problematic in present-day society for its continuation of the superficial parts of the narrative and its feminine stereotyping. In two studies done in the 1990s, this stereotypical view of femininity surrounding beauty and goodness was proven to derail

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<sup>3</sup> Peggy Orenstein, *Cinderella Ate My Daughter* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 23.

<sup>4</sup> Jack Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 97.

<sup>5</sup> “Into the Woods,” Music Theatre International, accessed October 15, 2021, <https://www.mtishows.com/into-the-woods>.

women from personal goals and self-assuredness perspectives that live outside of that stereotype.<sup>6</sup> Yet, if we can look at transformation in another way, by way of a nineteenth-century version, where the Prince Charming character is written for a mezzo-soprano (in Massenet's version, the role is more specifically written for a *falcon* soprano<sup>7</sup>), we can find significance in studying how these characters, who have survived adaptation after adaptation can be presented in a new light and with a twenty-first-century audience in mind. As producers, performers, and artists of work that is mounted in public performance, it rests upon our shoulders to consider why we tell fairytales repeatedly and how we can work in conjunction with the universality of the story, while also considering how to dismantle or redefine the stereotypes that persist and are magnified within them. By studying the setting of a mezzo-soprano<sup>8</sup> or *falcon* as the role of Le Prince Charmant within the story of Massenet's *Cendrillon*, we can transform, not only stereotypical ideals of femininity, but also the stereotypical ideals behind the nature of romantic love on the operatic stage, resetting binary definitions of femininity versus masculinity and making room for the inclusion of "othered" perspectives into the world of the princess fairytale. In looking at gender expressions in opera, analyzing aspects of gendering and fluidity within Massenet's score, and applying those insights to dramatic characterization aspects of public performance in the twenty-first century, this paper will explore why Massenet's *Cendrillon* serves as one example of how to reimagine a nineteenth-century opera through the lens of a twenty-first-century audience, transforming fairytale characters into relevant figures for today.

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<sup>6</sup> Orenstein, *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*, 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> Jules Massenet, *Cendrillon, Conte de fees en 4 actes et 6 tableaux* (Paris: Heugel, 1899), 7.

<sup>8</sup> In recent productions, mezzo-sopranos have sung the role of Le Prince Charmant, notably in Laurent Pelly's version, produced at The Metropolitan Opera in 2018, featuring mezzo-soprano Alice Coote as Le Prince. "Cendrillon," The Met Opera on Demand, accessed October 1, 2021, <http://metopera.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/season/on-demand/opera/?upc=811357019399>.

Prior to the nineteenth century, the common and fashionable practice of writing heroic roles for treble-voiced castrati defined the essence of romantic love in Italian opera, setting a precedent for the treble voice depicting a heroic role. Naomi André notes that the ways in which the castrato's treble sound would blend with the soprano heroine, created a sonic unity in their inevitable overlap and established a precedent for idealized love in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music.<sup>9</sup> Yet, during the middle of the eighteenth century, there was increasing discourse surrounding the castrato's threat to heteronormative procreation and patriarchal structures. Beth Kowaleski-Wallace suggests the castrato represented a romantic love that could exist without procreation and traditional masculinity involving the phallus, the castrato being an expression of sexuality outside of traditional societal expectations.<sup>10</sup> By the middle of the nineteenth century, the castrato voice was no longer in vogue, and even prior, outside of Italy, women were already frequently performing roles written for castrati. And in newer works, the tenor voice started to become the "Romantic ideal," supplanting the sonic unity of previous centuries with the idea of two distinct spheres of existence— the masculine tenor, the hero and the feminine soprano, the heroine.<sup>11</sup> As castrati voices fell out of fashion in society and in opera composition, composers in the nineteenth century began to equate the treble sound with that of a young boy to be depicted *en travesti* rather than the romantic ideal it was before.<sup>12</sup> By later in the nineteenth century, even the female, treble role *en travesti* developed negative connotations, as discussion surrounding female "sexual inversion" began to surface in literature and medicine.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, while not

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<sup>9</sup> Naomi André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early-Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 90.

<sup>10</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, Beth, "Shunning the Bearded Kiss: Castrati and the Definition of Female Sexuality," *Prose Studies* 15, no.2 (1992): 154.

<sup>11</sup> André, *Voicing Gender*, 90.

<sup>12</sup> André, *Voicing Gender*, 92.

<sup>13</sup> Heather Hadlock, "The Career of Cherubino, or the Trouser Role Grows Up," in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, ed. by Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 74.

totally dismissing the use of treble voice across the traditional gender divide, nineteenth-century composers began to view the separate spheres of “tenor/hero” and “soprano/heroine” as the standard, where treble roles sung *en travesti* were secondary to the romantic coupling, too innocent for sexualization and not appropriate for serious romance. Perhaps in addition to reinforcing the gender binary, the male, tenor-voiced hero also preserved the ideals of patriarchal society, whose power rested in procreation and heteronormative love.

Interesting then is Massenet’s use of the *falcon* in the role of Le Prince Charmant in his opera *Cendrillon*. By following the nineteenth-century precedent of youthful, innocent lover as a treble-voiced singer as well as the eighteenth-century ideal of love as captured in the sonic unity of two treble voices, it can be suggested that he depicts the romantic hero and the more sensitive, innocent lover as one, implying a nonbinary sexuality all within the same character. André refers to this aspect of characterization as “hybrid” or the idea that the composer’s music, the selected voicing, and the audience’s ears transform individual characteristics of seemingly different people into a single role.<sup>14</sup> Massenet’s Le Prince Charmant can exist as a hero and a lover, floating between Romantic-era feminine and masculine spheres and continuing an eighteenth-century narrative of sonic union as a representative of idealized romance and sexuality outside heteronormative gender roles.

*Cendrillon* was a triumph at its opening at the Paris Opéra-Comique in 1899,<sup>15</sup> and there is little wonder why. The score boasts a beautiful blend of nineteenth-century operatic elements:

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<sup>14</sup> André, *Voicing Gender*, 92.

<sup>15</sup> Rodney Milnes, “Cendrillon (ii),” in *Grove Music Online*, accessed October 12, 2021. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000008920>.

characteristics of Rossinian ensemble and comedy, Wagnerian chromaticism, nods to Baroque style, and the lyrical elegance renowned in nineteenth-century French opera. Massenet creates a vivid fairytale world that effectively emphasizes many of the complexities of humanity: love, farce, and loneliness. The fluidity of the compositional elements Massenet uses in the score creates a perfect musical palate to allow both ambiguity and flexibility in the character portrayals, merging the inherently transformative properties of the Cinderella fairytale and André's idea of "hybridization."

Of all the characters, Le Prince's musical gestures and character setting as a *falcon* serves this idea the most fully. From Massenet's designation of Le Prince, as a "Falcon ou Soprano de sentiment (ayant le physique du costume),"<sup>16</sup> one supposes that he wanted both a dramatic treble voice, capable of the Romantic feminine vocal prowess of the age<sup>17</sup> and also a singer whose physical appearance could be veiled, ultimately assigning the character qualities of both the masculine and feminine gender spheres. While the other characters can be viewed as typical archetypes – Pandolfe, the gentle father figure, Haultière, the villainous stepmother, Cendrillon, the humble innocent – Le Prince, *en travesti*, and the character's music can be seen as a vehicle for a twenty-first-century ideal that breaks a binary wall.

At first glance, the Prince's entrance aria in the second act ("Coeur sans amour") could be seen as feminine sentiment. Yet the flowery language used here, comparing a heart without love to a spring without roses, as well as the simple, understated melancholy tonality of A Minor, resonates as a model for twenty-first-century gender nonconformity, redefining expressions of

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<sup>16</sup> Jules Massenet, *Cendrillon, Conte de fées en 4 actes et 6 tableaux* (Paris: Heugel, 1899), 7.

<sup>17</sup> Nico Castel discusses how the *falcon* soprano is named after the great dramatic singer of the Romantic era, Marie Cornélie Falcon, known for her many role creations at the Paris Opéra, in *French Opera Libretti, Volume 3* (Geneseo, N.Y.: Leyerle Publications, 2005), 210.

vulnerability as revealed by a princely character. Through this ambiguous and hybrid figure, we simply see a soul, who feels out of place, “othered” in their own world. The orchestral gesture is incredibly sparse, the vocal line unpretentious, especially if we consider the traditional associations of musical hierarchy. We would expect grandeur and pomp, or at least the flash of sweeping gestures, in an entrance aria for a royal character. But the expression is understated, serene, lonely, with accompaniment of viola, cello, and a solo English horn plaintively singing in duet.<sup>18</sup> There is none of the ceremony or pomp that accompanied the musical beginning of the act; no full orchestral grandeur. In fact, this aria sheds the skin of typical heroic splendor and exposes what is left behind: hope for love.

The aria’s middle ground (“Je suis à toi”) offers a statelier anthem and develops a more stereotypically aristocratic gesture. The vocal line with its dotted and double-dotted rhythms suggests martial command, while the transition from common time into triple meter evokes the sense of court dance (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. Excerpt of “Je suis à toi” from Act II, scene 2 aria “Coeur sans amour”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Massenet, *Cendrillon*, 156.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 158.

Additionally, the brightening to A Major in this section from the parallel key of A Minor in the earlier section also gives a sense of transformation within the same person. One public face and one private face, reinforcing Le Prince’s duality.

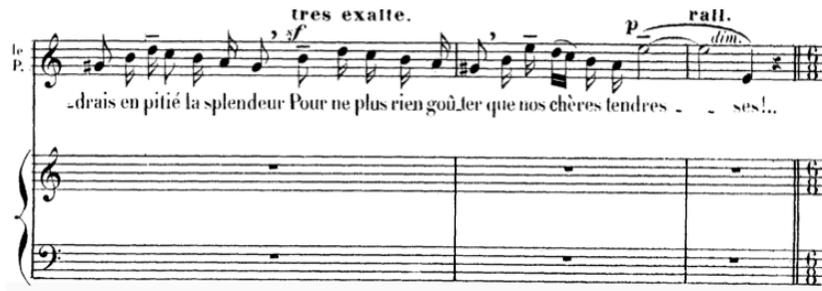
The final recitative that ends the aria (“Ah! si je la voyais”) is noteworthy. After the large final cadence, loudly proclaiming a broken heart, Le Prince continues immediately into an unaccompanied *recitativo* section. While we may never understand Massenet’s exact reasoning for this aria’s unexpected ending, especially as it can feel like an afterthought, it does provide Le Prince with another moment of exposure. The solo voice wistfully sends a wish out into the world (“I would give up all of this grandeur, the riches, the throne, only to share dear tenderness with someone.”). The juxtaposition between Figure 1.2 which shows the final cadence of the aria proper and Figure 1.3, the last line of the solo recitative, displays the differences in even starker contrast.

Figure 1.2. Excerpt of “Mon coeur est brisé... je suis triste et seul!” from Act II, scene 2 aria “Coeur sans amour”<sup>20</sup>

The image shows a musical score excerpt for Figure 1.2. It consists of two systems of music. The first system is a vocal line starting at measure 136, marked *f* and *ten*. The lyrics are "Mon coeur est brisé... je suis triste". Below the vocal line is the instruction "très expressif." The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "suivez." and "et seul!" followed by "en cédant." The piano accompaniment is shown below the vocal line, with dynamics *f* and *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

<sup>20</sup> Massenet, *Cendrillon*, 159.

Figure 1.3. Excerpt of “Pour ne plus rien goûter que nos chères tendresses!” from Act II, scene 2 aria “Coeur sans amour”<sup>21</sup>



The high A on “coeur,” *tenuti* over “brisé” and the *forte* “et seul,” heightens Le Prince’s heroic desperation. It is immediately followed by a lighter moment, ending the scene with tender hope (“pour ne plus rien goûter que nos chères tendresses!”) as the orchestra falls away, not even *secco* or chordal accompaniment underneath. Musically, Massenet places the dual elements of this character’s psychology in bold relief. Seeing Le Prince’s vulnerability, not caught up in heroics, our first impression becomes the character as a complete and honest human. There is something about this aria’s lyrical flow between sections that continually supports gender ambiguity, making its determination almost irrelevant to the character. The aria sheds the skin of typical Romantic masculine heroics and exposes what is behind the facade: a longing to be loved and understood.

Moments after this aria, Le Prince meets Cendrillon. They begin the famous scene where the pair dances away the evening until Cendrillon mysteriously and suddenly disappears at the toll of midnight. In this version, instead of dancing, the couple twirls around one another vocally giving Le Prince further opportunity to display a multi-faceted musical persona. The introduction of the duet “Toi qui m’es apparue” is a nobly romantic gesture. It is what we previously

<sup>21</sup> Massenet, *Cendrillon*, 160.

anticipated in the first moment of introduction from a royal figure. Stately, with an air of ceremony, the descending line “You, who have appeared to me” (“Toi qui m’ es apparue”), reads as a graceful bow, showcasing Le Prince’s formal upbringing. Although, Le Prince quickly transforms his public face of aristocracy to ardent lover with passionate declarations: “o beau rêve enchanteur,” “beauté du ciel venue,” “O Reine” (“beautiful and enchanting dream,” “oh, beauty from heaven,” “oh, queen”). As this introduction section evolves, more fervent pleas come from Le Prince, the regal line ascending in dotted motives: “Par pitié, dis-le moi, par pitié, Toi! Toi...” (Have pity, tell me, have pity. You! You...) Here, after the climactic build-up, the repeated “toi,” is marked *pianissimo*, quickly juxtaposing Le Prince’s proclamation with his vulnerability. Figure 1.4 shows the repetition of “Toi!” where the bass-voiced accompaniment drops away, leaving Le Prince exposed within the *pianissimo* vocal line.

Figure 1.4. Excerpt of “Toi! Toi qui m’ es apparue” from Act II, scene 4 duet<sup>22</sup>

The musical score for the duet "Toi! Toi qui m' es apparue" is presented in two systems. The top system is for the vocal line (Soprano), and the bottom system is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is F# minor (three sharps: F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a "rall." marking, followed by a "a Tempo!" marking and a "Très lent." marking. The piano accompaniment also begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a "rall." marking, followed by a "a Tempo!" marking and a "Très lent." marking. The lyrics are: "...tié! Toi! Toi qui m' es ap - pa - ru - e!".

The concurrent shift to F# Minor alongside the exposed vocal line also alludes back to the tonal melancholy present in vulnerable expressions of “Coeur sans amour” earlier in the act.

As the duet continues, Le Prince earns the title of “*charmant*,” in moments becoming beguiling, and resorting to the charming nature expected of him. Teasing repetitions of

<sup>22</sup> Massenet, *Cendrillon*, 199.

“L’inconnue” (“The unknown”) and the sensual statement, “Comment ta douce lèvre peut-elle la prononcer? Ton oeil candide la dement...” (“How can your sweet lips say that? Your honest eyes betray you...”) awaken the first signs of sensual desire between the pair. With the exception of the commanding heroic moment of “Je te perdrais” (“You would leave me”), the Act II duet showcases Le Prince in nonconforming light, the lyrical and poetic declamations and the sensually sensitive musical moments allow the character to exhibit fluidity.

Le Prince and Cendrillon eventually reach their first moment of sonic unity that André refers to as “idealized love” on Le Prince’s “Prends pitié de mon cœur” (“Have pity on my heart”). At this moment, Cendrillon sings “Sa voix comme une harmonie qui ravit mon oreille” (“His voice is like harmony that delights my ears”) emphasizing the literal harmony of the combined sound. Figure 1.5 illustrates this moment and shows the syncopated bass-clef rhythms, a heart-like throbbing in the orchestra, accentuating the apex of this second-act duet.

Figure 1.5. Excerpt of “Prends pitié de mon cœur!” from Act III, scene 6 duet<sup>23</sup>

The image shows a musical score excerpt for the duet "Prends pitié de mon cœur!" from Act III, scene 6. The score is in 2/4 time and features vocal lines for Cendrillon and Le Prince, and piano accompaniment. The piano part has a syncopated bass-clef rhythm with a heart-like throbbing quality, highlighted by red circles. The vocal lines are in French and include lyrics such as "Sa voix comme une harmonie qui ravit mon oreille" and "Prends pitié de mon cœur!". The score is marked with dynamics like *piu f*, *avec plus de chaleur encore*, and *avec plus de chaleur encore*.

<sup>23</sup> Massenet, *Cendrillon*, 208-209.

There is no octave displacement or distinction of spheres between the voices. As the mingling expressions of passion continue, Cendrillon notices the stroke of midnight on the clock and flees. She leaves Le Prince in despair, questioning his sanity (“Suis-je fou? Quest-elle devenue?”/ Am I mad? What happened to her?”). There is a clear parallel in this duet to the idealized love of eighteenth-century operatic roles found in the union of the treble voices. Moreover, the ways in which Le Prince’s musical gestures underscore aspects outside of “traditional” heroic masculinity, give further evidence for the hybridity of the character and his ability to transform.

When we next see Le Prince, it is in the famous third-act duet, taking place in a mystical and magical realm. The lovers pray, plead, pledge and consummate their love. It is a marriage-like union taking place outside of the typical spheres of reality, between a woman (Cendrillon) and another person (Le Prince) – one who possesses both masculine and feminine aspects. When speaking of the comparable pairing in Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Wendy Bashant indicates that this type of scenario provides “an erotic tension between women who both are, and are not women; the score makes them sound both mythic and human.”<sup>24</sup> The musical textures of this duet are constantly shifting creating tension and otherworldliness in this passionate meeting of characters. Each section representing a different aspect of character psychology and compelling us to see Le Prince transforming constantly.

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<sup>24</sup> Wendy Bashant, “Singing in Greek Drag: Gluck, Berlioz, George Eliot,” in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) 221.

Table 1.1 is an analysis of Le Prince’s musical sections in the Act III duet. It outlines the evolution of the dramatic and musical content as evidence of the multi-layered and hybrid nature of the Le Prince in this scene.

Table 1.1. Sectional breakdown Le Prince’s musical sections in the Act III, scene 6 duet

REHEARSAL NUMBER	TEXT	DRAMATIC CHARACTERIZATION	METER	TONALITY	MUSICAL CHARACTERIZATION
268-270	“Je viens a vous”	Pray	6/8	f#m	Lilting melody with modal character, evokes piety/church music
270-272	“Vous qui pouver tous voir”	Demand	6/8	DM – FM – AM	Flat 6 <sup>th</sup> used as pivots and creates maj/min duality in tonal centers, unsettled
272-274	“Ce bonheur je l’ai vu”	Reminisce	C	AM	Square, simple rhythms
276-278	“Pauvre femme inconnue”	Proclaim	2/4 to 6/8	Transitioning to gm	Repetitive, rapid-fire notes, harmonic transitions create instability facilitate character shift
278-280	Mais celle que j’aime	Expose	C	AbM	Arpeggiated 16 <sup>th</sup> note accompaniment, legato melody, embellished with turns
280-281	Asservissant la terre et l’onde	Demand	C	AbM	Martial, dotted rhythms, trumpet-like marcato ascending arpeggiations
281-282	“Et toi... qui donc es tu m’interrogeant”	Interogate	C	AbM	Lyrical, incessant, repetitive notes, ascending line
282	“Ineffable ravissement...”	Rejoice	C	Ab M	Sparse accompaniment
283-288	Tu me la dit ce nom”	Consummate	12/8	<b>DbM - CLIMAX</b>	Lush 7 <sup>th</sup> chords, pulsating accompaniment, harmonic arrival, lyrical melody
288	“A la branche du chêne enchanté”	Pledge	C	B <sup>°</sup> 7 (chord)	Rapid- recitative style, heroic tessitura (top of staff)
289-292	“Ma Lucette”	Reassure	C	DbM	Lullaby-like, peaceful end of dream

In comparing the dramatic characterization elements chosen with the contextual musical characteristics, it is easy to identify fluidity and transformative aspects of the character, and see how -musically- the scene lends itself to more gender-fluid interpretation. The sections highlighted in gray emphasize the “heroic” musical elements: dotted rhythms, *marcato* markings,

trumpet-like arpeggiations, repetitive rapid-fire notes, *recitativo* declarations in high tessitura. Comparatively, the sections in white present the more sensual, vulnerable, and sensitive musical moments: elegantly ornamented turns over a lyric melody, simple rhythms, legato line, lullaby-like dynamics and harmonic warmth. The visual representation clearly shows the alternation of Le Prince between all of the expressive qualities found in the music.

The scene as a whole should be examined: in particular the evolution of the harmony leading to the arrival of Db Major, the representative climax of the scene. As the four preceding sections, all outlining Ab Major, prolong a sense of dominant function, the arrival at Db Major feels incredibly profound. Again, and as a parallel with the Act II duet, the Ab Major prolongation builds towards the merging of Le Prince and Cendrillon's vocal lines in Db Major section; where, first, they sing in response, then echo shorter phrases in repetition and overlap, and finally, merge into complete unison. The harmony of the Db Major climax, with pulsating seventh chords, underpins the otherworldly character, not the black and white reality of plain consonance, but a world of continual possibility.

While Rodney Milnes believes that the ideal of innocence is highlighted in the two treble-voiced characters, he also describes the magical marriage in Act III as "one of the opera's most succulent themes."<sup>25</sup> It can be argued that the evidence described in this analysis of poetic sensuality in Act II, the succulent music in this Act III duet, and the gender-fluid musical expressions on the part of Le Prince, all show us a character relationship that, as Wallace would say, threatens "the phallic economy."<sup>26</sup> This final duet becomes a mystical moment of suspension: not holding binary definitions, but a magical interweaving of voices and stylistic

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<sup>25</sup> Milnes, "Cendrillon (ii)."

<sup>26</sup> Wallace, "Shunning the Bearded Kiss," 167.

elements depicting a union of two people. Indeed, a union viewed in this way outside of the normative structure would threaten the definition and stereotypes of nineteenth-century feminine sexuality, but in the twenty-first century, this reading gives credence to those who feel unrepresented in fairytale settings, highlighting a different way that love can manifest.

Therefore, with this in mind, it becomes the responsibility of the producers, directors and performers to use this type of analysis to their benefit in making arguments for and productions that are imbued with this sense of twenty-first-century, inclusive musical understanding. After looking at the score, diving into rehearsing the role myself, and discussing with the director our 2021 production of Massenet's *Cendrillon* at the University of Michigan, it became obvious that we were not going to paint Le Prince as stereotypically masculine character. Within that context, Abbigail Coté, director of the 2021 production, says:

“I think the tradition of this piece’s original production primes [it] for diversity and inclusion of gender on stage... since a Falcon soprano originated the role of the Prince, I wanted to pay tribute to that feminine energy. To me, that meant playing up a mix of gender attributes and starting from a view of the character as androgynous. I hope this aim has afforded the performers with the freedom to create the Prince as they see the character.”<sup>27</sup>

Because of this freedom, it became my task as the performer to develop performance tactics that evolved around physicality and intention, in order to find a more fluid character portrayal that was representative of the ambiguity in Le Prince’s music and which our production was aiming to capture. For this, I aligned aspects of the Lucid Body House’s physicality work, as well as dramatic acting principles designed to inform character action through intention verb work.

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<sup>27</sup> Abbigail Coté, email message to author, October 18, 2021.

Lucid Body work is based in understanding the characteristics of your physical, social persona and the areas which you hide from the world (your shadow). Using aspects of Eastern-based energy work and the Jungian understanding of the “face we show the world” and the “face we hide,” the duality and fluidity that ground Lucid Body character work felt important to explore in this role portrayal. For *Le Prince*, I turned to the idea of focusing my physicality on the fourth chakra, the heart, and the second chakra, the sacrum. The second chakra (sacral) in Lucid Body work is the place where desire lives, our emotional wants and our sensuality.<sup>28</sup> The fourth chakra (heart) houses love, compassion and grief.<sup>29</sup> *Le Prince*’s entrance aria encapsulates those two major points: desire/want and love/grief. In working to create parallel articulation in the body, I focused on exposed heart postures: keeping the chest open, finding a long and tall spine, widening the collarbones out, radiating energy from the center of the torso. Particularly in the aria’s middle section “Je suis à toi” and the final recitative moment “Ah!... si je la voyais,” I found the open-heart postures and extended hand gestures that felt authentic to *Le Prince*’s hope for love without evoking a sense of masculine or feminine. In working with the second chakra, “desire/emotional wants,” I wanted to play up the idea of sensuality and yearning in both the second and third act duets. Using grounded positions with planted feet, a wider, more parallel stance, lowering my center of gravity, and leading my walk and movement from the iliac crest (as opposed to my head or chest), I sought to neutralize my walk and remove specifically personal aspects of my own identity. By connecting a character’s emotional journey to physical

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<sup>28</sup> Fay Simpson, *The Lucid Body: A Guide for the Physical Actor* (New York: Allworth Press, 2012), 49-59.

<sup>29</sup> Simpson, 71-80.

representation, a performer can align the two, drawing awareness to the mind-body connection and where in the body emotions are physically expressed.<sup>30</sup>

Interpreting the role beyond physicality, I looked at the dramatic arc of the scenes. If we reference Table 1.1 again, the analysis of the Act III duet, each section possesses a dramatic characterization. Each word is listed as an active verb. From my work with acting methodology, I associated each section of text with an overarching intention verb. Acting instructor, Larry Moss says:

“...as an actor playing a character, you must try to accomplish getting what you want in some specific way. That’s what moves the story forward, and makes it interesting to the audience: the *ways* you get what you want. Call the ways you do that *intentions*, call them *actions*, call them *spinach*... it doesn’t matter. It all comes down to doing active things... [to] get what you want.”<sup>31</sup>

Rather than using adjectives: “she needs to be desirous and innocent” or “he needs to be masculine and heroic,” verbs are associated with action made by the character in a scene; and not being indicative of gender, they indicate the universality of human condition. Moss continues: “Believe me, you do [this] in everyday life.”<sup>32</sup> The idea of intention verb usage is not new to practicing actors, but in this specific context, they help remove prescribed identities. The intentions that parallel the sections in gray do not depict “masculine or heroic” qualities, but verbs chosen for the necessary force exerted in executing the intention. Inherently, verbs like “demand,” “interrogate,” and “pledge” carry more physical and emotional force than “pray,”

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<sup>30</sup> If we can train our bodies to calm themselves, we can also tap into how our bodies physically experience want, grief, trauma, desire, and all because of our vagus nerve network. For further information see: Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 209. He says: “Some 80 percent of the fibers of the vagus nerve (which connects the brain with many internal organs) are afferent; that is, they run from the body into the brain. This means that we can directly train our arousal system by the way we breathe, chant, and move, a principle that has been utilized since time immemorial in places like China and India, and in every religious practice that I know of, but that is suspiciously eyed as “alternative” in mainstream culture.”

<sup>31</sup> Larry Moss, *The Intent to Live: Achieving Your True Potential as an Actor* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006), 35.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

“reminisce,” “expose.” In focusing on Le Prince in terms of the intentional actions that accompany the musical phrasing within the scene, I could step away from trying to create masculine and feminine sections, and look at the dynamic character in arc, seeing it without the binary definitions. Ultimately, this aspect of portrayal was aimed at creating clarity within the character’s story and without accentuating a gendered representation.

Combining the two major aspects of character development (physicality and intentional action) with the ambiguity made evident in the role’s voicing and the score, the role of Le Prince can be interpreted as representative of inclusion in the twenty-first century. As I prepare for performances in my silvery satin suit, let down my long hair in shaggy 1970s style and forget any bother with bindings to disguise my body, stepping into this portrayal of Le Prince feels like one way that a nineteenth-century opera can find its place in the modern world, hopefully allowing many people of all identities to see themselves in the story. Indeed, while other productions utilize pants role singers as Le Prince, at the writing of this paper, I could not find any productions of this opera with specifically noted use of nonbinary or non-conforming identities in any major, international opera house. It was 119 years after its original premiere before *Cendrillon* even made it to the Metropolitan Opera’s stage, arriving in Laurent Pelly’s 2018 production. In Pelly’s production, the third act chorus sprites are costumed in tuxedo suits, a definite distancing from the original iterations of the fairytale figures.<sup>33</sup>

In our 2021 production, aspects besides my role development and portrayal also fed into the idea of traditional opera functioning as a vehicle for transformation surrounding gender. Our production used costuming, specifically in the Act II fashion show, that allowed for gender

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<sup>33</sup> “Cendrillon,” The Met Opera on Demand.

nonconformity to be expressed in the ensemble: groups of four dressed in tailored suits, or kilt-like skirts or shimmering, fringed ponchos, regardless of gender expression. Our sprites too were allowed freedom of character expression as their characters and costumes were based on inanimate objects (needle, zipper, thread, etc.) rather than the traditional female fairy, which gave dramatic freedom to the singers playing the objects come to life. Coté noted in our interview: “What’s so great about [fairytales] on stage is that the archetypes can be adapted to represent modern people on stage in a way that centers a modern life experience or world view within the context of older art forms. I find these sorts of theatrical events deeply humanistic when done well.”<sup>34</sup> Hopefully, our *Cendrillon* production, and future productions too, do just that: endow the story with the human essence of the fairytale, by showcasing them as stories about transformation, people who can transform themselves, and how we transform our own perspectives in watching their stories unfold.

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<sup>34</sup> Abbigail Coté, email message to author, October 18, 2021.

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**CHAPTER 2**  
**“Bon Appétit!” (and other disasters)**

RECITAL PROGRAM

**SARAH BEST, MEZZO-SOPRANO**

**MAHOUR ARBABIAN, PIANO**

*Tuesday, December 7, 2021*  
*Walgreen Drama Center, Stamps Auditorium*  
*8:00 PM*

<p><b>If Music Be the Food of Love</b></p>	<p>Henry Purcell (c. 1659–1695)</p>	<p><b>"Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust"</b> from <i>BWV 170</i>     Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)</p>
<p><b>Klops-Lied</b>  <b>Die Forelle</b>  <b>Ich esse nun mein Brod nicht trocken mehr</b></p>	<p>Kurt Weill (1900–1950)            Franz Schubert (1797–1828)            Hugo Wolf (1860–1903)</p>	<p><b>"Je suis gris"</b> from <i>Chérubin</i>     Jules Massenet (1842–1912)  <b>"Vodka"</b> from <i>Song of the Flame</i>     George Gershwin &amp; Herbert Stothart (1898–1937) &amp; (1885–1949)  <b>"Griserie"</b> from <i>La Périchole</i>     Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880)</p>
<p><b>Pot Roast à la RBG</b></p>	<p>Vivian Fung (b. 1975)</p>	<p><b>Bon Appétit! (part 1)</b>     Lee Hoiby (1926–2011)</p>
<p><b>Food Song #2</b> from <i>Minicabs</i>  <b>Mignon's Lied</b>  <b>Tobacco</b> from <i>Four Encore Songs</i></p>	<p>William Bolcom (b. 1938)            Franz Liszt (1811–1886)            Florence Price (1887–1953)</p>	<p><b>Food Song #1</b> from <i>Minicabs</i>     William Bolcom (b. 1938)  <b>El Manisero</b>     Moisés Simons (1889–1945)  <b>Plums</b>     Lori Laitman (b. 1955)                To a poor old woman                This is just to say</p>
<p><b>La Bonne Cuisine</b>            Plum Pudding            Ox-tails            Tavouk Guenksis            Rabbit at Top Speed</p>	<p>Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)</p>	<p><b>Bon Appétit! (part 2)</b>     Lee Hoiby (1926–2011)</p>

## PROGRAM NOTES

“When you flip anything, you must have the courage of your convictions.” –Julia Child<sup>35</sup>

### I. An “amuse-bouche,” or pre-recital thoughts

What occurs when the sublime becomes the ridiculous? Both the concert recital and the televised cooking show could be deemed examples of idealized perfection. One, the exhibit of artistic perfection within a genre of “challenging, high art” and the other a demonstration of technical perfection by assembling multiple aspects of study within an allotted time, to prove technical proficiency. But who’s to say, which is which? Here is where this recital’s interests lie, the intersection of academic “high art,” alternative presentation, and flipped interpretation.

The idea came to me while singing Lee Hoiby’s *Bon Appétit!* in rehearsal and wondered, “how would you realistically make this recipe in the time allotted?” The answer was plain: “You wouldn’t. You cannot bake, cool and ice a delicate, French gateau in under twenty minutes.” Immediately, I saw flashes of comediennes like Carol Burnett, screwing her face into a grimace

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<sup>35</sup> Harriet Jaine, "Television and Food," *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2014), <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199677337.001.0001/acref-9780199677337-e-2454>.

as another well-intentioned plan fell under, or Lucille Ball, working the assembly line in a chocolate factory, unable to keep the timeline imposed on her. And a light bulb went off. What if the recital flipped itself to become a place that comments on how, amidst beautiful music, technical aspiration, and structured and academic performance, we saw something else: the ridiculous?

The evolution of musical performance styles has been occurring since music itself became an artistic form: music as religious or spiritual worship, music as a pastime, music as a commercially monetized public event, music as private home event, music as an event for the wealthy or aristocratic, musical performances as activist statements. In the early nineteenth century, concert performances in an artist's own name, involving several of the artist's friends began to take shape as a place where an artist could "demonstrate publicly the prominence of one's musical colleagues and patrons" and "gain well-paid teaching engagements."<sup>36</sup> However, it was Franz Liszt who first began to describe these benefit-style concert performances in the mid-nineteenth century –where he also reduced the number of artists who performed alongside him– as recitals, even noting in his correspondence: "how novel it was to give a concert on my own, the concert is – myself."<sup>37</sup> From there, the recital began to develop as a place where a solo performer could be judged on their technical artistry and abilities within the repertory.<sup>38</sup> Yet, as the twentieth century progressed, the standardized recital waned in popularity and failed to launch careers or create hugely commercial successes as it once did.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> William Weber, "Recital," *Grove Music Online*, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23018>.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Weber, "Recital."

Although the televised cooking show had to wait nearly a century after the recital had already begun measuring idealized abilities and popularity, with the advent of television, the cooking show became a place of “utopian fantasy centered on food.”<sup>40</sup> Scholars agree that shows of these types offer “directives for customized style and identity that sustains class signifiers” as well as “class-based taste hierarchies.”<sup>41</sup> The televised cooking show became a place where consumers learned how and what to consume.<sup>42</sup> A parallel could be drawn between this modern-day type of cooking show and the stages of the recital where artists proliferated the Western canon and its techniques as idealized examples of music and artistic achievement for consumption.

The twenty-first century is a space where this continues, where we measure artistry and ideals in constructed performance. Yet, with these thoughts in mind, it offers a chance to reimagine these idealized spaces and utopian fantasies to capture the interest of twenty-first-century audiences. In a 2017 lecture at DePauw’s School of Music, composer and critic Greg Sandow, mentions how classical music in the twenty-first century is changing:

“The change is happening... classical musicians playing in clubs, talking to their audience, dressing less formally, University of Maryland playing *Afternoon of a Faun*, and *Appalachian Spring* from memory and radiantly dancing to the music while they play it, the BBC showing, some years ago, a reality show called “Maestro,” where celebrities competed to be symphony conductors... or how about Kayne West going to a concert of Roomful of Teeth... and liking it so much he asked Caroline Shaw to make a record with him?... These changes show us growing closer to the outside world and the outside world growing closer to us. And we need to be closer to the outside world, because the traditional way we’ve done classical music is fading.”<sup>43</sup>

Sandow goes on to say that data from decades ago indicated there were classical music concerts where 50% of attendees were younger than 35, which seems fascinating to us, because, once,

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<sup>40</sup> Cheri Ketchum, “The Essence of Cooking Shows: How the Food Network Constructs Consumer Fantasies,” *Journal of Communications Inquiry* 29, no. 3 (2005): 218.

<sup>41</sup> Sarah Murray, “Food and Television,” in *Routledge International Handbook of Food Studies*, ed. Ken Albala (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 190.

<sup>42</sup> Ketchum, “Essence of Cooking,” 218.

<sup>43</sup> DePauw School of Music, “Greg Sandow TALK21 The Future of Classical Music,” YouTube, February 9, 2017, video, 21:33, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9GPNz9c0N4>.

classical music was close to the heart of the everyday life of the average person, and this is no longer imaginable.<sup>44</sup> This is investigation to bring music closer to the outside and connect to the everyday heart of people, allows performances spaces to reframe the idealized and utopian as more accessible and relatable. In his book, *Musicking*, Christopher Small approaches the idea of music and its presentation from this different perspective, with idea that:

*“musicking... is an activity in which all those present are involved and for whose nature and quality, success or failure, everyone present bears some responsibility... whatever we are doing, we are doing it together... To music... [reminds us] that all these different activities add up to a single event, whose nature is affected by the ways in which all of them are carried out... and we can begin to explore the meanings that the event as a whole is generating.”*<sup>45</sup>

Small asserts that by approaching music in this way, as a human encounter, including all of its many parts – the audience, the space, the performers, the repertoire, the arrangements – we are able to ask wider questions and examine music outside of tradition.<sup>46</sup> That is my hope for what this recital can be, not devoid of tradition, but a new way to look at it, beyond the traditional.

## **II. The real meat and potatoes**

The recital repertoire selected represents food or food preparation and was also chosen either for length, relative to the idea of “commercial” (excepting only a couple) or for the possibility of some aspect of onstage demonstration. By dividing the recital into “advertisements” and “cooking show elements,” more traditional elements of “recital sets” are preserved in delineated segments, as you would find in a network television production. The cooking show toys with three perspectives of presentation: lecturing, illustrating and demonstrating. With the aid of a slideshow, advertisements which bear both aural and visual

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<sup>44</sup> DePauw School of Music, “Greg Sandow TALK21 The Future of Classical Music.”

<sup>45</sup> Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 10.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 10-11.

elements in television, are also aural and visual here; serving as practical concert application of translations as well as new meanings through imagery and messaging. Additionally, the advertisements are grouped with different associations than traditionally, reflecting the materials or food as a category, say of “libations.” The intention behind this was to rethink how music could be grouped together and provide less traditional continuity within the structure, following a more randomized algorithm of advertisement.

As an introduction to the cooking show-inspired evening, Henry Purcell’s (c.1659-1695) song, “If Music Be the Food of Love,” begins the recital. The text, by Henry Heveningham, is a play on William Shakespeare’s line from *Twelfth Night*. The character Duke Orsino states: “If music be the food of love, play on,” but Heveningham replaces the word “play” with “sing,” changing the action from one outside of the body (playing) to one occurring internally instead (singing). Much like the digestion of food, the listener and performer can digest the music. A strophic setting completes this version, although Purcell wrote other settings of this text.<sup>47</sup>

**If Music Be the Food of Love**  
(Henry Heveningham)

If music be the food of love,  
Sing on till I am fill’d with joy;  
For then my list’ning soul you move  
To pleasures that can never cloy.  
Your eyes, your mien, your tongue declare  
That you are music ev’rywhere.

Pleasures invade both eye and ear,  
So fierce the transports are, they wound,  
And all my senses feasted are,  
Tho’ yet the treat is only sound,  
Sure I must perish by your charms,  
Unless you save me in your arms.

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<sup>47</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 358.

As with any televised show, the plethora of commercial advertisements seems to overwhelm the content of the show itself, and so we encounter “Klops-Lied,” “Die Forelle,” and “Ich esse nun mein Brod nicht trocken mehr” as advertisements. The three pieces represent three German masters whose compositions span the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Kurt Weill (1900-1950), Franz Schubert (1797-1828) and Hugo Wolf (1860-1903), respectively. (They also group nicely as a collection of songs that highlight staples in many Western diets: “meats and carbs.”) Weill’s “Klops-Lied” tells the quirky story of a person eating meatballs. Based on an anonymous text in a Berliner dialect, the atonal piece is entirely through-composed. It was originally written for bassoon and two piccolos in 1927.<sup>48</sup> It is highly indicative of Weill’s avant-garde compositional style. After moving to the United States, Weill primarily focused on writing music in more popular styles, never again returning to Germany or atonal composition.

Franz Schubert is recognized as the “father of the Lied” for his innovative use of the piano and the integration of text meaning and musical treatment. “Die Forelle” offers an example of Schubert’s strophic, *volkstümlich* setting, and piano figures that depict the landscape and character imagery. The burbling brook is heard in the left hand of the piano, the right hand, jumping around, shows the capricious trout. The vocal line carries the light-heartedness and simplicity of a folksong as expected in a *volkstümlich* setting, until the third strophe, when under the text “doch endlich ward dem Diebe,” the tonal center shifts to minor, foreshadowing the trouble ahead for the trout. Schubert chose to leave out the final verse of Christian F. D. Schubart’s poem, in which the trout is revealed as a metaphor for a young girl being caught

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<sup>48</sup> “Klops-Lied,” The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://www.kwf.org/works/klops-lied/>.

unawares by a man. Fitting with our purposes, in Schubert's setting, we see the trout as simply "what's for dinner."

As an admirer of Schubert, a devotee of Wagner, a lover of poetry, and a gifted pianist Wolf's Lieder are highly inventive. Pianist-coach Martin Katz has that noted Wolf's "ability to synthesize music and text in a way that allows both to emerge, not merely uncorrupted, but enhanced."<sup>49</sup> "Ich esse nun mein Brod nicht trocken mehr" is found in Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch*, a collection of songs based on Italian poetry. This piece shows the harmonically clever moments that Wolf places in bold relief. The first half of the song depicts the "Thränen" ("tears") in the dotted rhythms of the piano, the half step chromaticism of the vocal line echoed throughout the piano, and the plaintive minor tonality. By contrast, the second half, where the hope of the singer is revealed, the tonality shifts into a lively Eb Major, with harmonic consonance and *staccato* articulations. The final moment is anthemic, setting up the punchline appropriately, as the girl exclaims her hope to find: "a little, old man, about her own age... of fourteen years old!"

**Klops-Lied<sup>50</sup>**  
(Anonymous)

Ick sitze da un' esse Klops  
Uff eemal klopps!  
Ick kieke, staune, wundre mir,  
Uff eemal jeht 'se uff, die Tür.  
Nanu, denk ick. Ick denk: nanu.  
Jetzt is 'se uff, erscht war 'se zu!  
Ick jehe raus un blikke  
Un wer steht draussen?  
Ikke!

**Meatball-Song**

I am sitting here and eating meatballs,  
at once there is a knock!  
I look around, astounded and wondering,  
and get up to go to the door.  
"Well," think I. I think: "Well."  
Now it's open, but first it was closed!  
I go outside and look to see,  
and who is there?  
Me!

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<sup>49</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song*, 112.

<sup>50</sup> English translation by Sarah Best.

### Die Forelle<sup>51</sup>

(Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart)

In einem Bächlein helle,  
Da schoss in froher Eil'  
Die launische Forelle  
Vorüber wie ein Pfeil.  
Ich stand an dem Gestade  
Und sah in süßer Ruh'  
Des muntern Fischleins Bade  
Im klaren Bächlein zu.

Ein Fischer mit der Rute  
Wohl an dem Ufer stand,  
Und sah's mit kaltem Blute  
Wie sich das Fischlein wand.  
So lang dem Wasser helle  
So dacht' ich, nicht gebricht,  
So fängt er die Forelle  
Mit seiner Angel nicht.

Doch endlich ward dem Diebe  
Die Zeit zu lang.  
Er macht das Bächlein tückisch trübe,  
Und eh' ich es gedacht  
So zuckte seine Rute  
Das Fischlein zappelt dran,  
Und ich mit regem Blute  
Sah die Betrog'ne an.

### Ich esse nun mein Brod nicht trocken mehr\*

\*nämlich, mit Thränen befeuchtet

(Translated to German by:  
Paul Heyse)

From an Italian edition "Canti popolari toscani,  
corsi, illirici, greci, raccolti ed illustrate da  
Niccolò Tommaseo."<sup>52</sup>

Ich esse nun mein Brot nicht trocken mehr,  
Ein Dorn ist mir im Fusse stecken geblieben.  
Umsonst nach rechts und links blick' ich umher,  
Und keinen find ich, der mich möchte lieben.  
Wenn's doch auch nur ein altes Männlein wäre,  
Das mir erzeigt' ein wenig Lieb und Ehre.  
Ich meine nämlich so ein wohlgestalter,  
Ehrbarer Greis, etwa von meinem Alter.  
Ich meine, um mich ganz zu offenbaren,  
Ein altes Männlein so von vierzehn Jahren.

### The Trout

In a light brook,  
Shooting around like an arrow  
In a happy hurry,  
Was a capricious trout.  
I stood on the bank,  
And watched in quiet peace,  
The happy fish's bath  
In the clear water of the brook.

A fisher with his rod  
Came to stand on the bank,  
And saw with cold blood,  
How the fish wriggled about.  
"As long as the water is clear,"  
I thought, "there is no worry,  
He will not catch the fish  
With his rod and hook."

But, finally, for the thief,  
The time was too much.  
He made the little brook dangerously cloudy,  
And before I thought it possible,  
The rod twitched,  
The little fish thrashed on it,  
And I, with a pounding heart  
Watched the whole betrayal.

### I no longer eat my bread dry\*

\*mainly, because my tears make it wet.

From an Italian Edition of: "Popular Tuscan,  
Corsican, Illyrian and Greek songs, collected and  
illustrated by Niccolò Tommaseo."

I no longer eat my bread dry,  
A thorn is stuck in my foot.  
Vainly, I look around to left and right  
And find no one who wants to love me.  
If there were only a little old man  
Who could show me a little bit of love and honor.  
I mean, namely, a well-proportioned,  
Honorable old man close to my own age.  
I mean, to be completely frank,  
A little old man of about fourteen.

<sup>51</sup> English translation by Sarah Best.

<sup>52</sup> Translation and source information gathered from: Donna Bareket Breitzer, "Ich esse nun mein Brod nicht trocken mehr," The LiederNet Archive, accessed November 20, 2021, [https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=20380](https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=20380).

The first cooking segment, “Pot Roast à la RBG,” is by composer Vivian Fung (b.1975) and was commissioned by Jane (who wrote the text) and Jim Ginsberg, Ruth Bader-Ginsberg’s two children, for her eightieth birthday.<sup>53</sup> Born in Canada, Fung’s work is an eclectic mix of styles and textures that showcase her multicultural background.<sup>54</sup> In “Pot Roast,” Fung’s nod to Leonard Bernstein’s driving rhythms and conversational tone of “Plum Pudding” (to be heard later in the program) are complimented with frequent meter changes that emphasize the storytelling and its structure. The sweeping changes from the initial drive of the 2/2 meter to 3/2 allows moments for the singer/chef, to compose herself, sip her coffee and go about the other business of the day. When completed, the task at hand always returns, along with the driving quarter note rhythm in the left hand and eight-note frenzy in the right. The complicated chromatic layering throughout of vocal and piano lines emphasizes the challenge of and determination expected for the recipe at hand. In its calculated and measured structure, with high attention to detail and a little humor, “Pot Roast” is an apt dedication to the incredible RBG.

**Pot Roast à la RBG**<sup>55</sup>  
(Jane Ginsberg)

1. Brown a hunk of brisket in the ovular, reddish-orange cast iron pot received as a wedding present (no doubt from someone who little suspected the rueful purpose to which it would be put.)
2. Add carrots, celery, and red wine, and simmer this mess for a very long time. (While this is simmering, drink some black coffee, read some advance sheets, and tell one of your children to do his or her homework – for the third time.)
3. At the end of the protracted simmering, the contents of the pot will have spattered the sides with a baked-on brownish-black residue. This dubious-looking encrustation is “the best part,” and therefore requires extraction by pouring boiling water down the sides of the pot. (Be careful not to burn yourself during this operation.)
4. Next, remove the former brisket and most of the carrots from the pot, and puree the remaining contents in a blender. (The blender contents are doomed to become “sauce.”)
5. Put the blender in the refrigerator long enough for the fat to rise to the top and congeal. (While you wait for this to happen, drink some more black coffee, eat some prunes, and rewrite your child’s English essay.)

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<sup>53</sup> Vivian Fung, *Pot Roast à la RBG* (New York: Bill Holab Music, 2018), 2.

<sup>54</sup> “About,” Vivian Fung Website, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://vivianfung.ca/biography/>.

<sup>55</sup> Text formatting from: Patrice Michaels, “RBG Event Program Notes,” The Lied Center, accessed November 18, 2021, [https://www.liedcenter.org/sites/default/files/downloads/rbg\\_event\\_program\\_notes-3.pdf](https://www.liedcenter.org/sites/default/files/downloads/rbg_event_program_notes-3.pdf).

6. After the fat has coagulated, remove all fat with a large spoon. (Remember: no fat must contaminate the Pot Roast. This is one of the few culinary commandments handed down by your mother: not a drop of fat disgraced her chicken soup. – Not like that cousin who left “great greasy rings of fat” in her broth.)
7. Slice the former brisket. (Against the grain, and keeping your fingers well out of the knife’s path. The memory of the Roast Ham with Sliced Thumb should serve as sufficient admonition.)
8. Pour the purified sauce over the brisket slices and reheat in the oven (Which you will have lighted soon enough after turning on the gas to avoid an eyebrow-singing conflagration.)
9. Carry forth to the groaning board. (And don’t forget to heat – but not bake – the plates!)

Pairing contemporary and Romantic-era song selections may seem odd, however the next three pieces gel together as a “nostalgic comforts” set. “Food Song #2” from *Minicabs* by William Bolcom (b. 1938) showcases the reminiscences of various styles of foods, which in present-day could arrive at our front doors whenever we wish. In complementary humor, Bolcom plays a musical joke alongside the comic triple employed in the text, highlighting melodic grace, rhythmic flare, and chromatic elements in the French, Mexican and Jewish food categories, respectively.

Of the set, the middle song, “Mignon’s Lied” by Franz Liszt (1811-1886) provides the most extended moment, an aching for home as we remember it. Perhaps distantly akin to holiday advertisements like the Marines’ “Toys for Tots” advertisement<sup>56</sup> or the Coca-Cola commercial where the young girl wishes for Santa to bring her father home for the holiday,<sup>57</sup> we may find ourselves misty-eyed due to their longer sentimental narratives. Liszt’s piece itself can similarly tug at the heartstrings with longing. By containing three sections, in a somewhat strophic AAB form (with an internal three-part structure repeating in each section), Liszt moves through

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<sup>56</sup> U.S. Marine Corps, “Marine Corps Commercial: Toys for Tots –Guard Duty,” YouTube, April 16, 2012, video, 0:31, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRMHNIL0StI>.

<sup>57</sup> Coca-Cola, “Coca-Cola Christmas Commercial 2020,” YouTube, November 9, 2020, video, 2:30, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg4Mq5EAEzw>.

distinct memories of Mignon's<sup>58</sup> homeland and how she could return there. The lush harmonic language within the sections and the expansive piano gestures are indicative of Liszt's affinity for unconventional intervals within the vocal line (like the tritone at the beginning of the first two strophes) and virtuosic piano displays (underscored in Mignon's calls of "Dahin, dahin, dahin").

"Tobacco" from *Four Encore Songs* highlights early television nostalgia of a "jingle" in its conversational tone, memorable text "I like it," and length of time. Composer Florence Price (1887-1953) makes good use of Graham Lee Hemminger's text within the song (fittingly, Hemminger became an ad-writer specializing in tobacco advertising<sup>59</sup>) by not overdoing the musical material. However, the subtle and unexpected harmonic shifts introduced are central to Price's musical language. The section midway through the short piece, "it makes you thin, it makes you lean, it takes the hair right off your bean," offers an interesting progression through an unexpected bVI (Db Major).

**Food Song #2**  
(Arnold Weinstein)

French food– flambé.  
Mexican food– olé.  
Jewish food– oy vay.

**Mignon's Lied**<sup>60</sup>  
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen,  
Im dunklen Laub die Gold-Orangen glühen,  
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,  
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht.  
Kennst du es wohl?

**Mignon's Song**

Do you know the land where the lemon trees blossom,  
Their dark boughs glow with golden-orange fruit,  
A gentle wind blowing from the blue heaven,  
The still myrtles and the tall laurels.  
Do you know it?

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<sup>58</sup> Mignon is a character from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. Her frequent "songs" throughout the novel, in particular, "Kennst du das Land" were frequently set by German composers in the Romantic era. See: Carol Kimball, *Song*, 117.

<sup>59</sup> "Hemminger, Graham Lee (1895-1950)," Representative Poetry Online, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poets/hemminger-graham-lee>.

<sup>60</sup> English translation by: Richard Wigmore, "Mignon's Gesang: Kennst du das Land?," Oxford Lieder, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/907>.

Dahin möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn.

There, with you, oh my beloved, I wish to go.

Kennst du das Haus? Auf Säulen ruht sein Dach;  
Es glänzt der Saal, es schimmert das Gemach,  
Und Marmorbilder stehn und sehn mich an:  
Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, getan?  
Kennst du es wohl?  
Dahin, möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Beschützer, ziehn.

Do you know the house? Its roof rests on pillars;  
The hall shines and the chamber shimmers,  
And the marble statues stand, staring at me:  
What have they done to you, my poor child?  
Do you know it?  
There, with you, oh my protector, I wish to go.

Kennst du den Berg und seinen Wolkensteg?  
Das Maultier sucht im Nebel seinen Weg;  
In Höhlen wohnt der Drachen alte Brut,  
Es stürzt der Fels, und über ihn die Flut.  
Kennst du ihn wohl?  
Dahin, geht unser Weg! o Vater, lass uns ziehn!

Do you know the mountain and its cloudy path?  
The mule searching for its way through the fog;  
The caves where the old brood of dragons live,  
The cliff rocks plunge, and the river runs over them.  
Do you know it?  
There is where our path leads! Oh father, let us go!

### **Tobacco**

(Graham Lee Hemminger)

Tobacco is a dirty weed: I like it.  
It satisfies no normal need: I like it.  
It makes you thin, it makes you lean,  
It takes the hair right off your bean.  
It's the worst stuff I've ever seen;  
I like it.

On the more illustrative side of cooking, Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) offers up *La Bonne Cuisine*, the title a play on Gabriel Fauré's famous song cycle *La bonne chanson*.<sup>61</sup> Recipes from Émile Dumont's 1899 cookbook,<sup>62</sup> condensed and put together by Bernstein himself, form the basis for "instructional" elements in this set, but while capitalizing on humor, the practicality of this cycle as any form of concrete instruction is highly doubtful. The four songs are sandwiched in a fast – moderate – moderate – fast tempo arrangement, beginning and ending the set with flair and showmanship. "Plum pudding" is conversational and driving with moments of passionate declamation interspersed, making this piece a feast for the ears. "Ox-

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<sup>61</sup> Kimball, *Song*, 293.

<sup>62</sup> Dumont's cookbook was titled: *La Bonne Cuisine Française (Tout ce qui a rapport à la table, manuel-guide pour la ville et la campagne* or "Fine French Cooking (Everything That Has to Do with the Table, Manual Guide for City and Country)." From: "La Bonne Cuisine (1947)," Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc., accessed November 18, 2021, <https://leonardbernstein.com/works/view/132/la-bonne-cuisine>.

tails” has the air of Julia Child’s down-to-earth scrutiny. Bernstein uses 6/8 against 3/4 to create a rhythmic pull in the piece, as the singer/instructor admonishes the audience for their pride, calling them out by use of extreme range and varying articulation and dynamic levels. “Tavouk guenksis” seems to be a transliterated version of a Turkish recipe called: Tavuk göğsü, meaning “chicken breast.”<sup>63</sup> The dish is best described as a *blanc-manger*, or sweetened milk pudding, in this case with the addition of shredded chicken breast pulverized within the pudding mixture.<sup>64</sup> Bernstein exploits an exoticized notion of Turkish culture by using the tempo marking *Allegretto alla Turca*, an irregular meter, minor tonality with open fourths and fifths, and grace notes in the vocal line. Whether or not intentional, he remains at a musically superficial level by using exoticized tropes. The final selection “Rabbit at Top Speed,” is unlikely to be prepared with the speed that the song is performed, proving in effect, the ridiculous humor of the set. As the singer/instructor rattles off the recipe, it is a miracle the words can even be pronounced at the speed, let alone any accompanying action occur. *La Bonne Cuisine* displays Bernstein and his mid-century American compositional style, emphasizing his use of metric shifts and interesting tonal language while also exhibiting reductive compositional techniques of othered cultures prevalent throughout Western music history.

### **La Bonne Cuisine**

(English: Leonard Bernstein)

(French: Émile Dumont)

#### **I. Plum pudding**

Now first you take eleven cups of juicy Concord grapes combined with equal parts of extra fine Tokays.

(Be sure they are juicy);

And then you take two cups or so of breadcrumbs into which you melt a pound or so of butter, fat or lard:

(Use Spry, or use Crisco.)

Eleven cups of sugar (either brown or white or powdered);

A glass of milk, and half a glass of Bacardi or brandy; three eggs, and a lemon.

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<sup>63</sup> Michele Humes, “When Meat Becomes Dessert,” *The Atlantic* online, August 20, 2009, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2009/08/when-meat-becomes-dessert/23380/>.

<sup>64</sup> Humes, “When Meat Becomes Dessert.”

Now mustard, powdered cinnamon, and ginger all together making half a teaspoonful of condiment which you combine with half a teaspoonful of table salt.

## **II. Ox-tails**

Are you too proud to serve your friends an ox-tail stew?

You're wrong!

For if you have enough of them you'll find you can make a fine ragout.

Remove the tails which you have used to make the stew, and then you can bread them and grill them and prepare them with a sauce.

You'll find them delicious and different and so tempting.

Are you too proud to serve your friends and ox-tail stew?

## **III. Tavouk guenksis**

Tavouk guenksis, with breast of chicken.

Put a chicken to boil, young and tender and sweet; then in the Arab manner you slice it up into pieces.

Then boil flour and water, and add to it the chicken;

then prepare it as above, in the manner we describe for Mahallebi.

Tavouk guenksis, with breast of chicken.

## **IV. Rabbit at Top Speed**

When you have a sudden guest, or you're in an awful hurry, may I say, here's a way, to make a rabbit stew in no time!

Take apart the rabbit in the ordinary way you do. Put it in a casserole, or a bowl, with all its blood and with its liver mashed!

Take half a pound of breast of pork finely cut (as fine as possible); add little onions with some pepper and salt (say twenty-five or so); a bottle and a half of rich claret.

Boil it up, don't waste a minute, on the very hottest fire.

When boiled a quarter of an hour or more the sauce should now be half of what it was before.

Then you carefully apply a flame, as they do in the best, most expensive cafés.

After the flame is out, just add the sauce to half a pound of butter with flour, and mix together... and serve!

## **IV. Civet à Tout Vitesse**

Lorsque on sera très pressé, voici un' manière de confectionner un civet de lièvre que je recommande!

Dépecez le lièvre comme pour le civet ordinaire:

Mettez-le dans une casserole ou chaudron avec son sang et son foie écrasé!

Un' demi-livre de poitrine de porc (coupée en morceaux); une vingtaine de petits oignons (un peu de sel et poivr'); un litre et demi de vin rouge.

Fait' bouillir à tout' vitesse.

Au bout de quinze minutes environ, lorsque la sauce est réduite de moitié, approchez un papier enflammé, de manière à mettre le feu au ragoût.

Lorsqu'il sera éteint, liez la sauce avec un' demi-livre de beurre manié de farine... Servez.

Like any live television show, things are never predictable. What better way to deal with the ridiculous than the sublime? Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) cannot be mentioned without noting his sacred cantatas, particularly during his prolific time as the Thomaskantor in Leipzig (1723-1750). Bach's overall output was so vast and inventive it is a shame it was not recognized with renown in his own lifetime. The aria "Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust" from the cantata of the same name (BWV 170) presents a scenic respite from the craziness of the outer

world, mediating on the gifts of virtue that can be found internally and rewarded in heaven. The *da capo* aria is beautiful for its creativity as Bach's mastery of reinvention presents the main theme in numerous ways throughout the initial A section and its return in A'. The pastoral meter and the gentle pulse throughout the aria invite the comforts of heaven and the delightful pleasure found there. Like a "hold-for-technical-difficulties" moment, "Vergnügte Ruh" is used here to express a façade of calm while chaos in the television program burbles just underneath.

**Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust**<sup>65</sup>  
(Georg Christian Lehms)

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust,  
Dich kann man nicht bei Höllensünden,  
Wohl aber Himmelseintracht finden;  
Du stärkst allein die schwache Brust.  
Drum sollen lauter Tugendgaben  
In meinem Herzen Wohnung haben.

**Delightful rest, beloved pleasure of the soul**

Delightful rest, beloved pleasure of the soul,  
One cannot find in the sins of hell,  
But rather in the harmony of heaven;  
You, alone, strengthen the weak breast.  
Therefore, shall pure gifts of virtue  
Have their dwelling my heart.

"Libations" snaps us out of our "vergnügte Ruh," beginning with "Je suis gris," an aria, sung by the titular role in the opera, *Chérubin*. The opera by Jules Massenet (1842-1912) is a continuation in the story of Cherubino, a well-known character from W. A. Mozart's opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Now of age, Chérubin celebrates his love of women, the joy of his freedom, and the accompanying intoxication it all brings. Throughout the aria is a reference to "le soleil" ("the sun") being the source of Chérubin's drunkenness, and is a play on the opera's character of the Spanish dancer, L'Ensoleillad. The beauty of Massenet's Romantic style is on full display in this aria with the compound triple meter effectively underscoring the character's either metaphoric or real drunkenness. By adding moments of sustained higher tessitura in the vocal

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<sup>65</sup> English translation by Sarah Best.

line, Massenet's combined effect of the meter and the vocal line leaves the listener in a lilting suspension.

*Song of the Flame* was a reasonably successful 1925 production with music by George Gershwin (1898-1937) and Herbert Stothart (1885-1949).<sup>66</sup> The composers' compositional use of a more operatic vocal style throughout the score was due, in part, to the previous year's smashing successes in the operettas *Rose-Marie* (Rudolph Friml and Herbert Stothart) and *The Student Prince* (Sigmund Romberg).<sup>67</sup> Being about the Russian Revolution, Gershwin and Stothart drew on specific Russian folk songs for some songs in *Song of the Flame*.<sup>68</sup> The piece "Vodka" does not specifically quote Russian folk music as other selections in the show did, but does employ tropes like harmonic minor tonality and the weighted chordal accompaniment. Drunkenness and hiccupping are also alluded to in the accompaniment's grace note figures.

Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) found his most significant achievements in the world of operetta and expanded the world of musical theatre by bringing operetta to the international forefront.<sup>69</sup> *La Périchole*, one of his great successes, tells the story of a street-singer, La Périchole, and her love, Piquillo. "Griserie" ("Topsy Waltz") occurs when La Périchole finds herself a little tipsy after a grand dinner at the Viceroy's palace. Allowing for suspension between the final beat of one measure and the downbeat of the next measure, the singer can play with the level of intoxication. The half step motion in the lines "Ah quel diner," "J'en ai tant bu," "Si ma parole" and "Et si mon oeil," emphasize the wavering of focus, while the oom-pah-pah

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<sup>66</sup> "Song of the Flame," Gershwin Enterprises, accessed November 18, 2021, <http://gershwin.com/publications/song-of-the-flame/>.

<sup>67</sup> Howard Pollack, *George Gershwin: His Life and Work* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 366.

<sup>68</sup> Pollack, *George Gershwin: His Life and Work*, 371.

<sup>69</sup> Andrew Lamb, "Offenbach, Jacques [Jacob]," *Grove Music Online*, accessed November 18, 2021, <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.20271>.

effect in the accompaniment plays up a staggering physical gesture, a reminder for everyone to “drink responsibly.”

**“Je suis gris!”<sup>70</sup>**

(Henri Cain & Francis de Croisset)

Je suis gris!  
Je suis ivre!  
C’est le soleil qui m’a grisé,  
C’est le soleil je suis ivre!

Duc, je suis si content de vivre  
Que je pourrais... vous embrasser.  
J’ai dix-sept ans, cela me grise,  
J’ai dix-sept ans!  
Plus de tuteur! La liberté!  
Je veux faire tant de bêtises  
Que vous serez épouvantés!..  
C’est le soleil qui m’a grisé...  
Je suis ivre!

**“I am tipsy!”**

I am tipsy!  
I am drunk!  
It is the sun that has made me tipsy.  
It is the sun that intoxicates me.

Duke, I am so happy to be alive  
That I could... kiss you.  
I am seventeen years old, that intoxicates me,  
I am seventeen!  
No longer needing a guardian! Such liberty!  
I want to do so many ridiculous things,  
that it will terrify you!..  
It’s the sun that’s made me tipsy...  
I am intoxicated!

**Vodka**

(Oscar Hammerstein II & Otto Harbach)

Of all concoctions alcholic  
I know, but one that’s diabolical.  
I simply thrive on old Champagne and sparkling  
Burgandy  
Whiskey, Cointreau, Moselle  
Or Eau de Vie are just like tea;

But vodka, don’t give me vodka,  
For when I take a little drink  
I forget to think, what a little drink can do to me.  
Vodka, don’t give me vodka,  
For when I take a little nip, I begin to slip  
And I start romancing  
With the man that I am dancing with,

For vodka, makes me feel oddka,  
I go and grab a six-foot two, anyone will do,  
If he’s only wise enough to see,  
I’ll not scream should he kiss me.  
Couldn’t if I would, wouldn’t if I could.  
Vodka, you ruin me!

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<sup>70</sup> English translation by Sarah Best.

### Griserie<sup>71</sup>

(Henri Meilhac & Ludovic Halévy)

Ah! quel diner je viens de faire  
Et quel vin extraordinaire.  
J'en ai tant bu  
Mais tant, tant, tant  
Que je crois bien  
Que maintenant...  
Je suis un peu grise,  
Un peu grise,  
Mais chut!...  
Faut pas qu'on le dise... chut!...  
Faut pas! Chut!

Si ma parole est un peu vague.  
Si tout en marchant je zig-zague.  
Et si mon oeil est égrillard,  
Il ne faut s'en étonner car...  
Je suis un peu grise,  
Un peu grise,  
Mais chut!...  
Faut pas qu'on le dise... chut!...  
Faut pas! Chut!

### Tipsy Waltz

Ah! What a dinner I just ate,  
And what extraordinary wine.  
I drank so much,  
Really so, so, much,  
That I believe,  
now...  
I am a little tipsy  
A little tipsy  
But shh!  
Don't say it... shh!  
Don't! Shh!

If my speech is hazy,  
If my walking is zig-zagged,  
And if my eyes are a little glassy,  
You should not be surprised because  
I am a little tipsy  
A little tipsy,  
But shh!...  
Don't say it... shh!  
Don't! Shh!

The final cooking demonstration of the evening, *Bon Appétit*, is a monodrama by Lee Hoiby (1926-2011). Composed in 1985 for Hoiby's friend Jean Stapleton (of Edith Bunker fame) and drawing text from an actual episode of *The French Chef*, the piece serves as an homage to Julia Child.<sup>72</sup> Hoiby's music is generally characterized as "modern Romanticism, following in the style of Samuel Barber and Gian-Carlo Menotti"<sup>73</sup> and he manages to create a wonderfully fun world in the kitchen of *Bon Appétit*. Through constantly shifting the musical elements, Hoiby evokes moments of Debussy-like impressionism in the harmony and texture. In other places, he humorously quotes famous melodies like "La Marseillaise" and "America, the Beautiful."

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<sup>71</sup> English translation by Sarah Best.

<sup>72</sup> Kathryn Cowdrick, "Bon Appétit!... A Note," Liner Notes for Lee Hoiby, *Two One Act Operas by Lee Hoiby*, Eastman Opera Theatre, cond. Benton Hess, Albany Records TROY1028, 2000, CD, 2-3.

<sup>73</sup> Richard Jackson and Walter G. Simmons, "Hoiby, Lee," *Grove Music Online*, accessed November 18, 2021, <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13189>.

Amidst this, three main motivic features echo throughout the piece and characterize different aspects of “the show.” First, there is an introductory motif, most frequently seen as a new step in the process is introduced. It is marked with square quarter- and eighth-note rhythms in both the accompaniment and voice, has mainly diatonic, arpeggiated movement, and *staccato* markings in the accompaniment. (“Today, we’re going to make chocolate cake” or “Now, the next thing to do”). Second, is a slurred triplet figure, winding chromatically through the accompaniment, which first appears as the butter is introduced, but continues to show up in particularly slippery or liquid moments (chocolate mixing or icing the cake). Finally, the third motivic feature that occurs in highly chromatic passages moving in series of half-step relationships, depicts athletic stirring and egg-beating. The vocal style also combines various components: quasi-recitative moments, lyrical sustained lines and buoyantly articulated sections. The challenge for the performer is not only in the accuracy of the music itself, but also in the demonstration. By novelty of this flipped idea of performance, the demonstrational elements are heightened by comic effects. The idea of chaos in the kitchen, whilst the musical elements remain faultless, is grounded in the idea that Julia Child herself had a sense of self-deprecating humor and enjoyed pranks.<sup>74</sup>

**Bon Appétit!**

(Words: Julia Child

Adapted libretto: Mark Shulgasser)

This is the rich, buttery brown batter for *Le Gateau au Chocolat l'Éminence Brune*.

Today we're going to make choc'late cake.

And it's a very special, very cho'latey, bittersweet, lovely cake.

And for it, you have to have melted choc'late, and melted choc'late you have to do very carefully, or it's going to turn grainy and hard.

Now, we want mocha flavoring.

So, start out with two teaspoons of instant espresso and one quarter-cup of hot water.

And then it's going to have seven ounces of semi-sweet choc'late and two ounces of bitter choc'late.

I like the combination! (*She adds the ingredients.*)

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<sup>74</sup> Cowdrick, “Bon Appétit!... A Note,” 3.

And in they go... and off the heat... and you just stir it around... and then you cover it and go on about your business.

Choc'late is much more complicated than any of us suspect.

When you're going to do a cake, you really have to have a battle plan.

First, start the choc'late, then preheat the oven to three-hundred-and-fifty degrees, and the rack is in the lower middle.

Then get out all of your ingredients and all of your equipment so that you can just go right through the cake.

You don't want to go out and play croquet in the middle, for instance!

And then, the next thing to do is to prepare the cake pan and that means buttering it... thoroughly.

And he waxed paper too.

And then the flour... and then turn the pan... thoroughly.

And knock out the flour on the floor, if you have a self-cleaning kitchen like mine... and this is so the cake won't stick.

When the cake is done, it would be nice to be able to get it out of the pan.

Now, this is a two-pan cake, and it's a very delicate cake.

And like most cakes, it has eggs in it... separated eggs, and that makes it a sponge cake or what the French call a "beeskwee" or biscuit.

And these are United States Grade A large eggs, and you put the yolk into the yolk bowl and the white into the white bowl because if you have any yolk in the white, you'll find that the eggs won't mount up.

Now, we have four egg yolks here, and I'm going to gradually beat in two-thirds cup of this instant super-fine sugar... till they are thick and lemon-colored and they make a ribbon. See there... how it gradually begins to turn thick and lemon-colored.

Now, let's take a look. There! The thick dissolving ribbon!

Now, the choc'late should, in all conscience, be melted... and it is!

What now it going to be in this choc'late is one stick of the best butter, and I can be the whole bus'ness in, because it's nice and soft.

I've got a little pan for the drippies. Now just look at this lovely, silky soft, beautiful sheen. And that's just the way melted choc'late should be.

And if you're very careful about the melting of it, you're never going to have any trouble because you're never overheating it. And that's what's dangerous to do.

And now the choc'late goes into the egg yolks. (*She drops the pan.*) Glub! Well!

And if it's hot, pour it in gradually. (*She tastes.*) Mmmm... It's good enough to eat just as it is!

And stir it all around. Soft and smooth... You don't want the batter to harden up.

Now we're ready to beat our egg whites. So be sure and order an extra set of blades.

Otherwise, at this point, you'd have to wash and dry the beaters.

Frankly, I find that you can beat the eggs just as efficiently with a hand beater as with... anything! So today I'm going to have some fun...

*(Inserted commercial break in this version/ performance.)*

I'm going to have a race between the unlined copper bowl and the machine.

I've got four egg whites here and four egg whites here, and we're going to see who wins. And I think maybe I'll win... because I'm bigger. But I don't know. (*She turns on the electric beater.*)

You want to start rather slowly at first until they foam up. Whites take a bit of time.

They've started foaming. Now add one-quarter teaspoon cream of tartar.

Every good kitchen should have cream of tartar, because you want them to mount seven times their original volume. Smooth and silky... and set it at a moderate speed.

Now I'm going to start in on the copper bowl with a pinch of salt (*She starts whisking by hand.*)

You want the biggest whip in the smallest bowl. Round and round and round...

They'll mount faster at room temperature. And if you're in good physical trim it shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes to beat up your egg whites. Now let's see how our machine is doing.

There are the soft peaks... See... so now we put in a little bit of sugar and turn it up on high. (*Whisks again.*)

And back to the copper bowl. Beat them 'til they make stiff peaks.

They're almost ready... Not quite.... It's holding the whip... We're almost there...

Cooking's just a series of the same old thing: sometimes there's choc'late and sometimes there's fish in it, but the principles are the same.

That's it! See the little peaks that stand up by themselves? Or you can turn it upside down and they stay in the bowl. (*Turns off beater.*) And our machine has probably done exactly the same thing. Yup! See? I don't know who won, but the egg whites in the copper bowl will keep this lovely velvety texture, but the ones in the glass bowl will soon turn granular and lose that lovely sheen. So, if you do them in the machine, you must use them right away!

Now, ready to assemble the rest of the batter. And rather than flour, this cake is going to have cornstarch in it, because choc'late is heavy, and we want a very light delicate cake, almost like a soufflé. So, three-quarters cup of cornstarch and you sift it right into the cup and then sift about a quarter of it into the batter. Stir that in.

Now, particularly in choc'late cake you want to be very sure that your batter is... fairly liquid, or you might have to beat it up again. And take a third of your egg whites and stir them right in to lighten up the batter. And then a little more cornstarch, then put the rest of the egg whites on top. And we're going to alternate folding egg whites and cornstarch. Not as neat as it could be. Now, here is your spatula, and you go down into the mixture and up and over, bringing a little choc'late over the egg whites. Very important part... A scooping motion...rather fast... up and over. The whole mixing business shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes.

Now, ready... into the cake pans! Half in each. Do it eyeball to eyeball... or whatever they say. Push it out to the sides, so it won't hump up... barely half full... and a little bit left for the cook, who would like to lick the pan. (*She does.*) And then bang! Bang! Drop 'em on the counter, just to settle everything. (*She opens the oven door.*) And then right into the oven—diagonally, for air circulation—for fifteen, sixteen, eighteen minutes. And I want you to see... (I hope these are gonna be just right) ...how they look when done. (*Looks inside the oven.*) This is not quite done. I'm gonna put it back again. Let's have a look at *this* one. (*She takes out the other.*) The French choc'late cake is always fairly moist. It shakes a little in the pan. Take a toothpick or something and... it should almost be set at the sides. That's not quite set. So, these need another two or three minutes. Watch them very carefully at this point. They'll puff up, then they sink down. (*She looks again in the oven, then takes out another cake from under the counter and places it on a cake stand.*) They're probably done! Now, this is a very delicate cake, so you'll unmold them right on the cake stand. You may want to chill them a bit before unmolding, and then we'll have a choc'late and butter icing. (*Starts to apply icing.*) And this is exactly the same choc'late mixture, that we had before. Now, we have the top layer, we hope... better too much than too little... nicely and evenly...and it goes around, carefully... This could really be quite a mess! Smooth off that top... And in she goes. (*She walks into the dining area.*) We're just having a cake party today, and I'm going to serve you some. Let's see how that looks. (*She slices a piece.*) See that lovely, soft texture... almost like a soufflé... and it's nicer than a soufflé because it doesn't fall!

And you can serve it with whipped cream if you want to go the whole way! And it's nice with coffee. (*She tastes it.*) So, this is really a wonderful choc'latey and amazingly light, soufflé-like cake that doesn't fall: *Le Gateau au Chocolat l'Éminence Brune*, really one of the best cakes I know. And that's all for today. *Bon appétit!*

A set of “southern delights” offers a diverting moment between sections of *Bon Appétit*, which, as part of the performance interpretation, is divided into segments like it would be in modern-day television programming. Food and music from the warmer climes (Neapolitan cheeses, Cuban peanuts, and fresh plums) tempt the audience. But, if you blink, you may miss William Bolcom's “Food Song #1,” another delight from his *Minicabs*. The piece, clocking in around ten seconds, delivers a humorous query about cheese and pasta. Playfully, Bolcom

utilizes a Neapolitan *tarantella*, highlighting Italian dance origins as a fitting accompaniment when discussing provolone, a cheese with Neapolitan roots.<sup>75</sup>

In 1928, Moisés Simons (1889-1945) a Cuban band leader and composer, wrote music and lyrics for “El Manisero” (“The Peanut Vendor”), sparking a revolution in Latin American musical styles outside of Cuba.<sup>76</sup> “El Manisero” is a *son-pregón*; the *pregón*, a street vendor’s cry, and the *son*, an Afro-Cuban music and dance form combining elements from both African (from enslaved Bantu-speaking people of Central Africa) and Hispanic (from Cuban descent) origins.<sup>77</sup> In Simons’ original iteration of “El Manisero” for his band, Bantu elements are seen in the clave rhythm, a large percussion section (clave, bongos, maracas), and call and response style music, while Hispanic musical elements are seen in the lyricism of the vocal line, use of guitar, and Spanish language.<sup>78</sup>

*Plums* is a short, two-song cycle by Lori Laitman (b.1955). The pieces, “To a poor old woman” and “This is just to say,” feature distinct characteristics of older age and youthful impishness. The *pesante* marking of “To a poor old woman” and the octaves in the left hand of the piano mark the mature gravitas of the woman enjoying the plums, whereas “This is just to say” has a note saying “piano should sound like a tinkling music box,” implying a lighter quality, also apparent in the brisk tempo of the 4/8 meter. Laitman’s intriguing harmonies are showcased throughout “To a poor old woman.” Her use of seventh chords gives lushness to the woman’s evident enjoyment of the plums in the repeated text of “to the one half sucked out in her hand.” Contrastingly, Laitman’s sense of humor pops out in “This is just to say,” as the singer with her

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<sup>75</sup> “Provolone,” Culture: The Word on Cheese, accessed November 18, 2021, <https://culturecheesemag.com/cheese-library/Provolone>.

<sup>76</sup> Ned Sublette, *Cuba and its Music: From First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004), 398.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 333.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 333.

“hand caught in the cookie jar,” apologizes for eating the plums in the icebox. Laitman interrupts the quick flow of 4/8 with single measures of 3/8 as if the singer stumbles to make amends for the crime.

### **Food Song #1**

(Arnold Weinstein)

Are you antipasto or provolone?

### **El Manisero**

(Moisés Simons)

Maní! Maní!  
Caserita no te acuestes a dormir  
Sin comerte un cucurucho de maní.

Que sabrosito y rico esta.  
Ya no se puede pedir mas.  
Ay caserita no me deses ir...  
Porque después te vas arrepentir  
Y va ser mui tarde ya.  
Manisero se va.  
Caserita no te acuestes a dormir  
Sin comerte un cucurucho de maní

Quando la calle sola esta  
Caserita, mi Corazon  
El manisero entona su pregón  
Y si la nina escucha mi cantar  
Llama desde du balcón  
Manisero se va..  
Caserita no te acuestes a dormir  
Sin comerte un cucurucho de maní

Me voy, me voy, me voy!

### **Plums**

(William Carlos Williams)

I. To a poor old woman  
Munching a plum on the street  
A paper bag of them in her hand.  
They taste good to her.  
You can see it by the way she gives herself  
To the one half-sucked out in her hand.  
Comforted, a solace of ripe plums

### **The Peanut Vendor**

Peanuts! Peanuts!  
Little customer,<sup>79</sup> don't go to sleep  
Without eating a cone of peanuts.

How tasty and delicious it is.  
You cannot ask for more.  
Oh, little customer, you don't want me to go...  
Because later you will regret it  
And then it will be too late.  
The peanut vendor is leaving.  
Little customer, don't go to sleep  
Without eating a cone of peanuts.

When the street is empty  
Little customer, my heart,  
The Peanut Vendor sings his song  
And if the girl hears my [his] singing  
Call from your balcony.  
The peanut vendor is leaving.  
Little customer, don't go to sleep  
Without eating a cone of peanuts.

I go, I go, I go!

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<sup>79</sup> *Caserita* can also be translated to “homemaker or housewife.” English translation by Sarah Best.

Seeming to fill the air.  
They taste good to her.

II. This is just to say  
I have eaten the plums that were in the icebox  
And which you were probably saving for breakfast.  
Forgive me, they were delicious  
So sweet and so cold.  
Mm!

### **III. Un Digestif**

When all was said and done, the judgements made about set organization of “advertisements,” program notes, other production aspects (like which stand mixer to use and if I should buy an RBG collar or not wear one), and thinking about the recital space in general (and whether this recital would be derided as academic heresy or embraced for its fun), were not without ample consideration. The effort was made to not simply “mug” for the whole performance, but rather to accompany and infuse the music with new ideas through use of visual cues, messaging, staging, and differentiated spaces on stage, all of which contrasts with more standard interpretations. By flipping things around and examining music with different possible performance interpretations, (most-likely) different than original compositional intentions, I find myself returning again to Christopher Small’s definition of *musicking*, what I see as ultimately an ever-changing, communal process through which we experience music in many different ways. My hope is that this event has been a reminder of both beauty and humor in music across time and genre, whetting your appetite for further imaginative possibilities within the recital space.

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**CHAPTER 3**  
**The Sounds of Reminiscence**

RECITAL PROGRAM

**SARAH BEST, MEZZO-SOPRANO**

**JOHN ETSSELL, PIANO**

*Monday, March 7, 2022*  
*Walgreen Drama Center, Stamps Auditorium*  
*8:00 PM*

**Camille Claudel: Into the Fire**

Prelude: Awakening

Rodin

La Valse

Shakuntala

La petite châtelaine

The Gossips

L'âge mùr

Epilogue: Jessie Lipscomb visits Camille Claudel, Montdevergues Asylum, 1929

Jake Heggie

(b. 1961)

*Intermission*

**At the Statue of Venus**

## PROGRAM NOTES

Collectively, these dissertation performances sought to look at twenty-first century performance in three distinct ways. In the hopes of expanding my own perspective on how performance can evolve by simultaneously embracing tradition and delving into innovation, I first looked at interpreting operatic characters from nineteenth-century opera through the lens of twenty-first-century gender identity; next, I reimagined how we shape performance space and presentation for evolving audiences by flipping the tradition of the recital on its head; and finally, by performing contemporary repertoire written by a living composer, I hope to speak to contemporary perspectives through relatable musical vernaculars. This third and final dissertation performance examines how selecting contemporary repertoire lends itself to a direct sense of musical recall for twenty-first century audiences through their inherent connection to hybrid genre or pluralist compositions.

Tim Rutherford-Johnson observes in his book, *Music After the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture Since 1989*, that musical composition in post-war decades was characterized by its inwardness, the 1980s-1990s by its discovery of composing without constraints, and the twenty-first century by its degree of permissibility, “using everything, in

every combination, as the new norm.”<sup>80</sup> In this way, Jake Heggie’s (b. 1961) compositions for this performance do not rest on a sense of avant-garde, but in the cultivated sound arena of the twenty-first century, one that involves a fusion of musical choices and styles portraying both a contemporary perspective of modern life as well as examining an historical figure.

In his stage and vocal works, Heggie is often known for his blend of styles including: jazz, folk, gospel, musical theatre, popular song, as well as nineteenth-century Romantic Era and twentieth-century modernist elements of composition.<sup>81</sup> In his youth, he was influenced by his musical upbringing surrounding American musical theatre and jazz compositions, then later on when training as a pianist, by compositions of Samuel Barber and Leonard Bernstein.<sup>82</sup> His early study with Ernst Bacon developed his love of text and text-setting.<sup>83</sup> All of which prepared the way for his compositions to effectively merge beautiful melodic writing and dramatic storytelling with a wide variety of stylistic elements and tonal palates.<sup>84</sup> Stage works like his opera *Dead Man Walking* (2000) which has had over 150 productions worldwide, show Heggie’s interest in social justice issues that examine humanity’s extremes of light and shadow, whereas pieces like *To Hell and Back* (2006), written for Broadway singer, operatic soprano and Baroque orchestra showcase his innovative approaches to mixed textures and styles of sound.<sup>85</sup>

In his dramatic works, Heggie has collaborated regularly in his career with the two librettists for the works presented on this program: Gene Scheer (b. 1958) and Terrence McNally

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<sup>80</sup> Tim Rutherford-Johnson, *Music After the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 53.

<sup>81</sup> Meredith Ziegler, “Jake Heggie’s Paper Wings: Feeding the Genre of American Art Song,” *Journal of Singing* 64, no. 3 (2008): 287-288, mentions Heggie’s use of American popular styles (jazz, gospel, pop) while Matthew Sigman, “Composing a Life,” *Opera News* 80, no. 1 (2015): 28, references the allusion in Heggie’s music to specific composers Debussy, Puccini, Bernstein, Gershwin, John Williams, among others.

<sup>82</sup> Melanie Feilotter, “Heggie, Jake [John Stephen],” *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 14, 2022, <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2284605>.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

(1938-2020). Scheer, the librettist for *Camille Claudel: Into the Fire*, is a well-known collaborator of Heggie's both for opera and song compositions, including *Moby Dick* (2010) and *It's a Wonderful Life* (2016), and has also worked with a number of other contemporary composers like Wynton Marsalis (*It Never Goes Away*) and Jennifer Higdon (*Cold Mountain*, 2015).<sup>86</sup> McNally, the librettist for *At the Statue of Venus*, also wrote libretti for Heggie's operatic compositions: *Dead Man Walking* and *Great Scott* (2015) and was known in his own right as a TONY award-winning playwright and librettist for his Broadway works (*Kiss of the Spider Woman*, 1993 and *Ragtime*, 1998), championing stories of marginalized populations, especially the LGBTQ community.<sup>87</sup> Heggie's repeated collaborative partnerships with these two librettists, who both function in range as widely as Heggie himself, highlight his expansive interest in a variety of musical contexts and subject contents.

The programmed music features Heggie's hybrid compositional approach, which is one of the critiques most-often hurled at the composer.<sup>88</sup> This critical view of postmodern pluralism discounts the incorporation of certain writing styles as a lowbrow indulgence for the masses rather than powerful tools for engagement. It is the aim of these notes, however, to highlight his hybrid approach as it stimulates emotional, aural recall for the audience to connect with these human characters. Because of Heggie's simultaneous use of traditional and contemporary vernaculars, particular connections to popularized musical tropes – built on centuries' worth of stage, commercial/radio, and concert works – shine as reference points for the listener. His

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<sup>86</sup> "Bio," Gene Scheer Website, accessed February 16, 2022, <https://genescheer.com/bio/>.

<sup>87</sup> Jesse Green and Neil Genzlinger, "Terrence McNally, TONY-Winning Playwright of *Gay Life*, Dies at 81," *New York Times* (New York, NY), March 24, 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Anthony Tommasini, "MUSIC; A Sudden, Facile Flowering of American Song," *New York Times*, June 11, 2000, and Matthew Sigman, "Composing a Life," *Opera News*, both skew toward disparaging contemporary pluralist techniques in art song writing, describing art song works by contemporary composers like Heggie as "accessible" and "derivative" (Sigman) or "not challenging" and "pandering neo-Romanticism" (Tommasini), the tone suggests undesirability.

specific use of popular song form, musical theatre and jazz idioms, exoticism, dance music (waltz), impressionism, and modernism carves out a place for musical nostalgia that helps guide an audience through the pieces. Tristan Paré-Morin suggests, in “Sounding Nostalgia in Post-World War I Paris,” that nostalgia can be mapped in four paradigms relating to: homesickness/memory of home, regret, possibility for the future, and exoticism.<sup>89</sup> By leaning into each of these paradigms through use of the musical techniques listed above, Heggie repeatedly incites aural memory as a place for listeners to musically recall what has happened in the present moment of performance while also connecting it to a personal point of entry in their own musical understanding for greater comprehension and relation to the work itself.

*Camille Claudel: Into the Fire* was inspired by actual events, artwork by the French sculptor, and by Heggie’s own interest in the artist.<sup>90</sup> Camille Claudel (1864-1943) was said to have been one of the foremost sculptors of the *fin de siècle*, however her mental illness, her gender identity as a woman in the nineteenth century, and her tumultuous romantic partnership with Rodin often clouded the public’s ability to appreciate her artwork on its own merit.<sup>91</sup> The song cycle, originally composed for mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato and the Alexander String Quartet, weaves a journey of reminiscences through Claudel’s life from her own perspective. Taking place on the day Claudel is scheduled to depart for the mental asylum, where she lived

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<sup>89</sup> Tristan Paré-Morin, “Sounding Nostalgia in Post-World War I Paris,” Phd diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2019, <https://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/3399>, 34-35.

<sup>90</sup> Opera Joe McKesson, “Opera Joe Interviews Composer Jake Heggie and Festival Opera General Director Zachary Gordin,” YouTube, July 21, 2021, video, 30:17. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mseNFITghGE>.

<sup>91</sup> Claudine Mitchell, Louise R. Witherell and Susannah Wilson all describe these facets of Claudel’s struggles to be recognized during her life and after her life in their respective articles. Claudine Mitchell, “Intellectuality and Sexuality: Camille Claudel, the Fin de Siècle Sculptress,” *Art History* 12 no. 4 (1989), 419. Louise R. Witherell, “Camille Claudel Rediscovered,” *Women’s Art Journal* 6, no. 1 (1985): 2. Susannah Wilson, “Gender, Genius, and the Artist’s Double Blind: The Letters of Camille Claudel, 1880-1910,” *The Modern Language Review* 112, no. 2 (2017): 362-363.

out the final thirty years of her life, the cycle traces the artist's biography through the sculptures which remain as her legacy; each song named for a different sculpture.

Using harmonics in the original string voicing and large dissonant intervals, "Prelude: Awakening" instrumentally introduces the cycle's harmonic textures, displays its kinship to Debussy's *String Quartet in G Minor*,<sup>92</sup> and unfolds nostalgic undertones through the waltz which "serves as the central dance rhythm of entire piece."<sup>93</sup> The underpinning of the waltz as an ongoing dance partnered with reference to the music of Debussy immediately identifies the music with France as a point of geographic and temporal nostalgia.<sup>94</sup> In "Rodin," as she examines the *Bust of Rodin* (Figure 3.1), Claudel begins to narrate a dream she had the night before. A vocal introduction to the 3-note "Rodin" motif (Figure 3.2) continues the musical relationship from "Prelude." The music is haunting in its chromatic dissonances of tritones and half-step intervals. The combination of the text and the waltz rhythm imply that something is continually out of reach, constantly eluding reasoning or discovery; and is a connection to both Paré-Morin's nostalgic paradigms of possibility and regret.

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<sup>92</sup> It is important to note that Debussy was a personal friend of Claudel's, having kept a cast of her sculpture *La Valse* throughout his life. The musical connection serves as a reference to their friendship. François Lesure and Roy Howat, "Debussy, (Achille-) Claude," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 14, 2022, <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.07353>.

<sup>93</sup> Jake Heggie, "CAMILLE CLAUDEL: Into the Fire," Liner Notes for *here/after: songs of lost voices*, PentaTone Music PTC 5186 515, 2013, CD.

<sup>94</sup> Paré-Morin, "Sounding Nostalgia," 168. "[The waltz] was once one of the most characteristic genres of popular music in France became a symbolic remnant of a better past, as well as a safeguard of French elegance and moral superiority, and consequently acquired an exceptional nostalgic valence."

Figure 3.1. Camille Claudel, *Bust of Rodin*, Bronze, modeled 1888-1892, date of cast unknown, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh



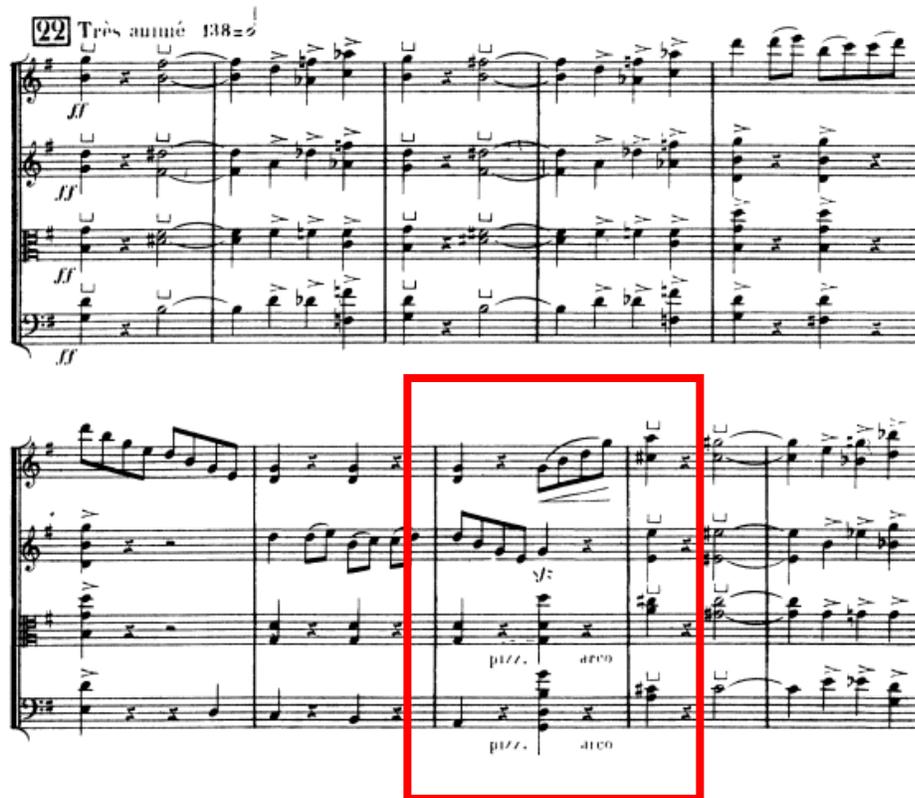
Figure 3.2. Jake Heggie, *Camille Claudel: Into the Fire* 3-note “Rodin” Motif, mm. 35-38<sup>95</sup>



“La Valse” evokes the rhythmic aggression of the fourth movement in Debussy’s *String Quartet in G Minor* by emulating the disrupted sense of meter and divisions in legato, bowed moments and marked, *pizzicato* articulations (Figure 3.3).

<sup>95</sup> Jake Heggie, *Camille Claudel: Into the Fire* (San Francisco: Bent Pen Music, 2011), 3.

Figure 3.3. Claude Debussy, *String Quartet in G Minor*, Op.10, mvt. 4, *Très animé*, *arco* and *pizzicato* markings and rhythmic gestures<sup>96</sup>



Here, Heggie showcases the waltz in three ways: first, recognizably in 3/4 at the vocal entrance, secondly, by camouflaging it in the 6/4 sections that shimmer with arpeggiations, and finally in the rhythmic 3/2 section at the climax of the piece on the lyrics: “Take me! Take me to the place.” The chanteuse-like vocal line imbues the piece with an overt sense of sensuality, while the angular instrumental sections elevate the anger and passion of the piece. Both ardent passion and sensuality can be seen in the statue that bears the same name as this song (Figure 3.4). The wrapped and flying material at the bottom creates fierce movement below the dancers

<sup>96</sup> Claude Debussy, *String Quartet in G Minor*, op. 10 (Paris: Durand & Fils, 1894), 45.

as their bodies, partially nude, entwine in soft embrace at the top of the sculpture, creating a universal image of passion outside of time.<sup>97</sup>

Figure 3.4. Camille Claudel, *La Valse*, Bronze, 1893, Musée Rodin, Paris



*Sakountala/ Shakuntala* (Figure 3.5) is also referred to as *The Abandonment* or *Surrender* and offers Claudel's impression of the Hindu poet Kalidasa's story of Sakountala, a young woman who falls in love with Prince Dushyanta.<sup>98</sup> Pledging his love to her, the Prince offers Sakountala a ring that allows him to remember her, but when the ring is stolen the Prince forgets her. Eventually, after many years, the ring is found and the lovers are reunited.

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<sup>97</sup> "La Valse," Musée Camille Claudel, accessed February 16, 2022, <http://www.museecamilleclaudel.fr/en/node/171>.

<sup>98</sup> "L'Abandon," Musée Camille Claudel, accessed February 16 2022, <http://www.museecamilleclaudel.fr/collections/labandon>.

Figure 3.5. Camille Claudel, *Sakountala*, Bronze, 1886, Musée Camille Claudel, Nogent-sur-Seine



Heggie and Scheer’s musical and dramatic impression of this statue draws a parallel between the lovers in the statue and the tumult of Claudel’s relationship with Rodin by framing it as Claudel’s expression of abandonment by Rodin for his never leaving his long-time mistress, Rose Beuret, to fully commit to his relationship with her.<sup>99</sup> The obvious exoticism used by Heggie in this song calls to mind other Westernized, homogenized interpretations of Asian and Arabian styles. The harmonic minor, melismatic passages, percussive articulations, and the plaintive cries remember centuries of concert music, popular song and musical theatre pieces from Mozart’s “Rondo alla Turca” to “Caravan” (Duke Ellington) or “Arabian Nights” (Alan Menken) while also connecting it to the interest that Debussy and Claudel shared in Eastern art and music.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Rodin had expressed his willingness to leave Beuret and marry Claudel, but ultimately, he never did. Odile Ayrault-Clauze, *Camille Claudel: A Life* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002), 71-72.

<sup>100</sup> Lesure and Howat. “Debussy, (Achille-) Claude,” *Grove Music Online*.

It is alleged that sometime in the early 1890s Claudel was compelled to have an abortion.<sup>101</sup> While there is no evidence that *La petite châtelaine* (Figure 3.6) was actually a sculptural tribute to a lost child, Heggie’s tinkling music box setting with poignantly simple diatonic scales and Scheer’s lyrics paint a picture of the lost child and the solitary life Claudel eventually lived.

Figure 3.6. Camille Claudel, *La petite châtelaine*, marble, 1895, Musée Rodin, Paris



The song’s setting highlights elements of musical theatre and pop ballad tropes. The conversational, dialogic text and the form (A-section minor modality with the major mode shift in the B-section before a return to the A-section) draw on other nostalgic-loss songs from the musical theatre canon of the 1980s-1990s, as in “Castle on a Cloud” (*Les Misérables*, Claude-Michel Schönberg) or “Once Upon a December” (*Anastasia*, Stephen Flaherty), lending an aura of familiarity to the style and sentiment of popular musical styles. It is no wonder, since the

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<sup>101</sup> Ayral-Clause, *Camille Claudel: A Life*, 114.

melody was inspired by a pop tune Heggie wrote while living in Paris in the 1990s.<sup>102</sup>

Additionally, the instrumental thematic material also references the 3-note “Rodin” motif in its intervallic relationships, layering sonic memories for the audience in multiple ways.

Impressionistic style, often attributed to composers like Debussy, is heard in the next song, “The Gossips.” Arpeggiated, glistening chords concurrently resemble the frenetic energy of a creative mind at work and the whispering of voices – perhaps real or imagined. Scheer’s lyrics draw on actual text and ideas sketched by Claudel in her sketchbooks.<sup>103</sup> In her creative period surrounding the creation of *The Gossips* (Figure 3.7), Claudel was interested in everyday images: people on the streets that she would observe in passing.<sup>104</sup>

Figure 3.7. Camille Claudel, *The Gossips*, Onyx marble and bronze, 1897, Musée Rodin, Paris



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<sup>102</sup> From Alford’s transcribed coaching with Jake Heggie. Erin Alexandra Alford, “Remembering Her Passionate Voice: A Performer’s Guide to Jake Heggie’s *Camille Claudel: Into the Fire*,” MM thesis (California State University Long Beach, 2017), 106.

<sup>103</sup> From Alford’s transcribed interview with Gene Scheer. Alford, “Remembering Her Passionate Voice,” 70.

<sup>104</sup> Witherell, “Camille Claudel Rediscovered,” 4.

Scheer and Heggie use the song and its associated statue to create double meaning, representing both the artist's creative mind and her mental decline. After cutting ties with Rodin, Claudel became more closed off from public and frequently claimed Rodin was out to steal her work.<sup>105</sup> The text "It is him?" accuses Rodin as a suspect and the rearranged the Rodin motif in the vocal line provides an additional point of reference for the listener. The buzzing of the music, through the articulations and arpeggiations, paired with the floating, sustained vocal line create a juxtaposition of the body and mind, almost as if Claudel was outside of herself watching her creativity and her own downfall. The recognizability of the impressionistic elements reflects temporally on the historical location of the nineteenth century yet also creates a sonic image of mental noise.

Figure 3.8. Camille Claudel, *L'âge mûr*, Bronze, conceived in 1899, Musée Rodin, Paris



It is curious that the sixth movement, "L'âge mûr," or "Mature Age" (accompanying statue pictured in Figure 3.8) is the one without text. Perhaps this is because the subject's point

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<sup>105</sup> Witherell, "Camille Claudel Rediscovered," 6.

of view could be interpreted in many ways. The sculpture itself depicts a man being pulled in two different directions by two different women. Although there are other interpretations, it is presumed by some to be representative of Rodin being pulled to the left by Rose Beuret and to the right, by Claudel.<sup>106</sup> This movement can also be seen as the signal of time's passing— both musically and historically. While recalling the nostalgic elements of the former songs through the continued use of the 3-note “Rodin” motif and waltz rhythms, Heggie transforms the sound into a more contrapuntal, fugue-like style, “by utilizing Béla Bartók’s ‘Andante tranquillo’ from *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* as inspiration.”<sup>107</sup> The allusion to Bartók’s piece – a piece composed in 1937 during the final decade of Claudel’s life – musically changes the era of sound the listener experiences, which forces a change in auditory perspective to the new era in Claudel’s own life. In multiple ways, it elicits forward progression, moving musically into a different sonority, from suggestions of Debussy to that of Bartók, and temporally signifying the song cycle’s final chapter. This movement could best be seen as a processional of aging, calling upon musical memories surrounding the shift to the modern era of music and Claudel’s movement from creative zest to quiet stillness as the world she once knew slowly changes before her eyes.

The upbeat sounds of the “Epilogue: Jessie Lipscomb Visits Camille Claudel, Montdevergues Asylum, 1929” set a completely different tone than the rest of the cycle. Beginning with the instrumental line, the sonic dawning of day contrasts the sadness of seeing the aged Claudel conversing with her friend and fellow artist, Jessie Lipscomb in 1929. Sixteen years have passed since her first admittance to the mental hospital. Claudel thanks her friend for coming to visit her and remembering her. As Claudel converses with Lipscomb, her vocal line is

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<sup>106</sup> Witherell, “Camille Claudel Rediscovered,” 5.

<sup>107</sup> From Alford’s transcribed coaching with Jake Heggie. Alford, “Remembering Her Passionate Voice,” 109.

much less ardent than in previous songs. The piece emphasizes a vocalism that is more conversational, fragmented. The moments of memory are brought into bold relief with nostalgic returns to waltz sensations, minor modality, and more melodic and soaring vocal lines. In the final moments of the cycle, Claudel is relegated to stillness. Becoming a statue herself, she sits for the picture with Lipscomb (Figure 3.9), thankful to be remembered.

Figure 3.9. Photograph of Camille Claudel, left, and Jessie Lipscomb, right, at the Montdevergues Asylum in 1929



Figure 3.10. Excerpted lyrics by Gene Scheer for *Camille Claudel: Into the Fire*<sup>108</sup>

### 1. Rodin

Last night, I went to sleep completely naked.  
I pretended you were holding me  
But I woke alone again  
Everything burned away  
In the cruel morning light.

Was I dreaming that you loved me  
Though you left me far behind?  
Someone's there  
Hidden in the shadows  
You don't want me to see  
You don't want me to find

In the clay  
I search with my fingers  
To uncover something true  
Rodin! Rodin!  
Was there ever a time  
You wanted me to find you?

There's a secret I have traced  
In your eyes, your brow, your hair.  
Others think they see you  
But, we both know, you're not there.

In the clay  
I search with my fingers  
To uncover something true  
Rodin! Rodin!  
Was there ever a time  
You wanted me to find you?

Rodin?  
Rodin?

### 2. La Valse

The light of day will fade  
And shadows will descend  
No breath can last forever  
No heartbreak truly mend

Again, again...  
Console my eyes with beauty  
Allow me to forget  
That every dance of love  
Is mingled with regret

Take me  
One step closer

One step back  
One step spins  
One step hovers  
Take me!  
Take me to the place for  
unrepentant lovers!

Is it in the spirit?  
Is it in the flesh?  
Where do I abide?  
Console  
Oh console my eyes with beauty  
Allow me to forget  
That every dance of love  
Is mingled with regret...

### 3. Shakuntala

"Shakuntala! Shakuntala!"

He called my name in a whisper  
He called my name in a cry

Before I was a mother  
Before I met the king  
Before he made his promise  
Before I wore his ring  
Before I was forgotten  
Abandoned and ignored  
Before I was denied  
All that I adored  
I did not know who I was.

"Shakuntala! Shakuntala!"

After he had learned the truth  
After all his tears  
Begging my forgiveness  
After wasting many years  
Wishing to reclaim me  
Kneeling at my feet  
He reaches to embrace me  
Will the circle again be complete?

I lean and let him hold me  
His lips familiar yet estranged  
I forgive him utterly  
But in doing so have I changed?

"Shakuntala! Shakuntala!"

<sup>108</sup> Excerpted from score. Jake Heggie, *Camille Claudel: Into the Fire*, (San Francisco: Bent Pen Music, 2011).

Figure 3.10. (Continued)

I hear your whispers  
Your cries  
Oh, I want to take you back, my love,  
But who I was has died!

#### 4. La Petite Châtelaine

Hello, my little one,  
La petite châtelaine

Do you know who I am?  
Do you know who I am?

They say I leave at night  
By the window of my tower  
Hanging from a red umbrella  
With which I set fire to the forest

Hello, my little one,  
La petite châtelaine

Do you know who I am?  
Or the land you come from?  
Where the earth is stained...

I did as he said and returned you to clay.  
Oh, how could I bleed such a blessing away?  
Now I'm forever alone  
With my children of stone.

La petite châtelaine

Can you hear my voice?  
The voice of your mother?

#### 5. The Gossips

What is in my hands?  
What is in my head?  
So many ideas, my mind aches.  
So many ideas, the earth quakes!

People at a table listen to a prayer.  
Three men on a high cart laugh and go to mass.  
A woman crouches on a bench and cries all alone.  
What does she know?  
Does she know three people sit behind a screen  
and whisper?  
What is the secret suspended in the air?  
I know.  
I know.

The halo rusts.  
The light is dim.  
Into the fire!  
Is it him?  
Is it him?  
Is it him?

#### 6. L'Age Mûr (instrumental)

#### 7. Epilogue: Jessie Lipscomb visits Camille Clairdel, Montdevergues Asylum, 1929

Thank you for coming. I thought everyone had  
forgotten.  
Thank you for remembering me.

Four children? Beautiful... beautiful...  
Off to Italy? Beautiful... beautiful...  
You will have wonderful things to eat there.  
Here they are trying to poison me. (I see that they  
don't. I cook for myself.)  
Thank you for remembering me.

Do you remember our studio in Paris? Everything  
moving.  
Two young women, so many ideas. Look at me  
now!  
Oh, Jessie... Every dream I ever had was of  
movement.  
Touching. Breathing. Reaching. Hovering.  
Something always about to change...

A photograph? Just me and you. Yes. I  
understand. I must be very still.

Thank you for remembering me.

In contrast to the first half of the program and “inspired by the great concert *scenas* of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Britten,”<sup>109</sup> Heggie’s *At the Statue of Venus* approaches a woman’s monologue from a comic standpoint: the modern-day blind date. Different than harkening back to the nineteenth century, *Venus* sonically sets the stage for a bustling, modern-day metropolitan city center, like New York. In the accented 5/8 meter and percussive use of the piano, one can hear the crowd bustling along, possibly imagining the crowds on Fifth Avenue outside of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. While no specific locale is mentioned, nor is a specific statue, artist, or version of Venus named in the piece, Antonio Canova’s statue, *Venus Italica* (Figure 3.11) is displayed in one of the galleries of the Met Museum and this author prefers to imagine the setting there. (Possibly because this author herself has, in previous years, awaited blind dates amongst the Met Museum’s statue collections.)

Figure 3.11. Antonio Canova, *Venus Italica*, marble, ca. 1822-1823, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



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<sup>109</sup> Program notes from the score. Jake Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus* (San Francisco: Bent Pen Music, 2005).

One effect of this piece is its intimate universality; the fact that it is vague enough to apply to almost anyone, anywhere while also painting a specific enough soundscape that provides emotional and location-based remembrance. McNally's conversational tone, masterfully cultivated from his years writing theatre libretti, and the ease of the language's colloquial sounds provide familiarity to the text as well. What is more universal than a person overthinking one's outfit while awaiting a date in a busy, public place?

While not formally delineated, the piece flows between recitative-like, plot development sections and emotional aria/song sections, delivering a complete dramatic arc in the way an opera would. A few recurring musical expressions track throughout the piece, accentuating stylistic elements as a hybridity of contextual support. The first is a 5/8-meter motif that recurs throughout the piece (Figure 3.12) and features irregularity in meter common to twentieth-century techniques. Introduced in first bars of the piano, it recurs while Rose waits, while she ponders, and while she wanders the museum.

Figure 3.12. Jake Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus*, 5/8-meter motif, m. 47 <sup>110</sup>



Happening throughout the piece as a signifier of time passing within the context of the metropolitan atmosphere, its jauntiness and angularity provide anxious, energy-packed undertones. Also, the recurrences of this motif in anticipatory moments— as Rose arrives, when

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<sup>110</sup> Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus*, 3.

she decides whether or not to stand up her date, as she wonders where he is– help the audience hear the nervous energy come to life.

A second recurring idiom draws on jazz-like harmony of stacked chords that layer to create augmented intervals (Figure 3.13). This stylistic element usually appears in the dream-wishes associated with the date who has a “sexy voice.” The sensuality of the augmented intervals and lushly rolled major-minor harmonies depict moments of Rose’s day-dreaming about the characteristics of the man she’s going to meet. The allusion to jazz at the same time the sexiness of the voice is mentioned also helps a contemporary listener recall an association with the sensual musical style.<sup>111</sup>

Figure 3.13. Jake Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus*, Jazz/dream idiom, mm. 184-185<sup>112</sup>



By creating a theme that helps signify Rose’s moments of annoyance or overly-critical thought, Heggie encourages aural memory in a third way. The theme (Figure 3.13) is quick, sparse and punctuated with dissonant chords, again referencing more modernist musical styles. As she nervously winds herself more tightly, Rose imagines worst-case scenarios and this musical accompaniment appears again and again – out of annoyance toward her date (who still

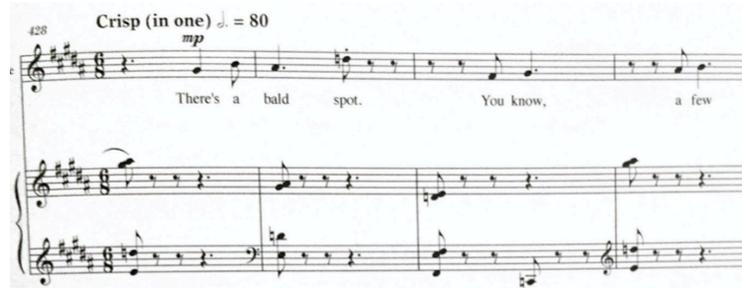
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<sup>111</sup>Jayne Caudwell, “Jazzwomen: music, sound, gender and sexuality,” *Annals of Leisure Research* 15, no. 4 (2012): 393-394. Expressions of sexuality in singing jazz, and the blues in particular, are discussed in Caudwell’s article. Especially noted are the points of reference to major/minor keys as a part of the tonal landscape in jazz and the vocal techniques of the important African-American women (Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Sarah Martin and Memphis Minnie) who fundamentally paved the way for women in jazz. “Through singing the blues, women, from behind the microphone, narrate their sexual sensibilities and subjectivities.”

<sup>112</sup> Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus*, 12.

has not arrived), the people in the museum who are not her date, or in response to over-thinking all of the possible failures that could occur.

Figure 3.14. Jake Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus*, Neurotic/annoyance thematic material, mm. 428-431<sup>113</sup>



Serving as emotional anchors, two larger-scale “aria” sections examine the major dramatic themes within the piece that center around reflection and reminiscence. The first aria section, “Look at all those women,” functions as a commentary on women, by observing women in art and women in life: How women are remembered? How do we see them? And how does Rose, as woman, wish to be seen? Heggie brings back a waltz (as was seen previously in the *Claudiel* as musical through line of nostalgic reflection). Here he uses a jagged, jazz idiom with blue notes and dotted rhythms alongside the 3/4 meter, updating the musical memory to a more contemporary auditory experience. By displacing the grace of the waltz, the accompaniment almost sounds like short aural glimpses of the museum’s sonic landscape, possibly as ambient music. When she delves into the imaginative sphere, wondering what it is like to be source of inspiration for an artistic work, the harmony fills out, becoming more consonant in Eb Major and the vocal line, more lyric. Rose observes that all of the women captured in the art she sees are seen as “masterpieces.” The vocal line, building first to “inspired” and then to “a masterpiece,”

<sup>113</sup> Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus*, 29.

soars. Her return to everyday observation of the women she sees, also returns the music to a more subdued and combined version of the sweeping middle section and the initial, angular waltz – a return from the dream world to reality.

The second aria, “A Lucky Child,” is Rose’s expression of the universal desire to be loved and find connection or safety in another person. Heggie has spoken about this as the central force of the piece – a human’s need for love.<sup>114</sup> The idea is conveyed through Rose’s reminiscence of her childhood, the safety and love she found in her family and specifically, in her relationship with her parents. The lullaby music and the memory-driven text forms a reflective recall for listeners, to their own childhood – perhaps similar, or not at all – to what Rose has experienced. Disguising the 3/4 meter by reducing the bass line in the piano, or removing it altogether in certain places, Heggie shifts the metric drive to the pulsing of the eighth note, the prominent underpinning like that of a heartbeat.

From this point in the second aria to the end of the piece, Rose is immersed in the idea of what makes “handsome” and “happy” and the possibilities for love, connecting the nostalgia of past feelings of love to the possibilities of the future. In contrast to the earlier sections, her mood turns to the optimistic view and the music echoes her uplifted spirit. Heggie, from the point of “Lucky Child” to the end of the piece, plays on the musical theatre and popular music aspects: consonant vocal lines and syncopation, akin to the back-phrasing effect common in contemporary commercial vocal style. These aspects along with McNally’s text (“When I look at him, my heart will smile”) land as familiar characteristics of a belter’s ballad. Eventually, the blind date arrives. And the piece ends there, at the moment of arrival with an unanswered question: how does the date go? We never find out. The piano confirms the uncertainty of the

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<sup>114</sup> Opera Joe McKesson, “Opera Joe Interviews Composer Jake Heggie.”

moment in the last measures by reusing the initial 5/8-meter motif, leaving the listener with several aural memories, but no resolution to the story.

Heggie and McNally observe in their score for *At the Statue of Venus*: “the arts must explore who we are, not just who we were.”<sup>115</sup> Both pieces on this program explore the idea, philosophically and musically, that we are greater than the sum of our parts. By viewing the complexity of human emotion through these two characters’ eyes while hearing the creation of their inner worlds through layers of varying musical styles, motivic recall and nostalgic through lines, these compositions examine historical art, contemporary and traditional music, and universal human emotion all within present-day sensibility of pluralism. These pieces provide multiple points of musical entry for audience members to gain access to the character understanding through an auditory experience that is all at once nostalgically familiar and newly enticing.

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<sup>115</sup> Program notes from the score. Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus*.

Figure 3.15 Excerpted libretto by Terrence McNally for *At the Statue of Venus*<sup>116</sup>

### AT THE STATUE OF VENUS

Libretto by Terrence McNally

A WOMAN enters. Her name is ROSE. She wears well-cut black slacks, low heels and a crisp white blouse with a reasonable cleavage. A modest necklace and earrings complete her look which is best described as open, honest, direct. She stands a moment, looking around and getting her bearings, then looks at her watch and begins to wait.

#### ROSE

The slacks were a mistake. Too late now. Brazen it out. Look him in the eye, make him see what you want him to see. It's not about how you're dressed, it's about who you are, and who I am right now is a woman who wishes she wasn't wearing slacks. Weren't wearing slacks. Wasn't wearing slacks. Weren't. Wasn't. Whatever!

God, I hate that expression. What if he uses it all the time? I'll kill myself.

Meeting a blind date at the statue of Venus, wearing black slacks. Way to go, Rose.

What were my options? The yellow dress? Too cheerful. Black is so severe. The blue Chanel was perfect. But it looks expensive. It was expensive. Why am I suddenly so embarrassed I can afford my own clothes?

I'm too old for this. I haven't felt this way since high school. I'm being judged for all the wrong reasons. What on earth possessed me to wear slacks?

It was a sexy voice: "I'll meet you at the statue of Venus. Let's say five-ish, shall we?"

I liked the "shall we?" The "five-ish" not so much. Don't gay men say "five-ish"? My friends would never do that to me. "You two should meet. You're really perfect for each other. He's a Pisces. You're a Scorpio. You both love the

ballet." Another warning sign? No. Lots of straight men like the ballet. Name one, Rose. Name one. If he's gay it won't matter I wore the slacks.

Look at all those women. Out with friends. Looking at art.

Look at all those women. Happy. Able to be who they are, not meeting a stranger at the statue of Venus.

Was a real woman this artist's inspiration? Or was she imagined?

Look at the way he expressed her beauty.

How must it feel to be idealized and treasured? A woman beyond measure.

I love the way he saw into her heart. Look at all these women!

There's a woman as seen by Titian.

There, another woman as painted by Matisse.

Manet, Monet, Degas,

Warhol, DeKooning, Chagall.

All so beautiful. All inspired.

Who wouldn't want to be loved like that? A source of inspiration.

And knowing someone once saw in you a masterpiece.

A masterpiece. What will he see in me?

Look at all those women. Any other day there I'd be, One of all those women passing by, hardly glancing at Venus.

But not today, I'm trying to see myself the way he'll see me:

A woman. Just a woman in slacks hoping for love.

It's him. It's him! No, it's not. I wish I were dead. No, invisible, so I could be looking at him the way he'll be looking at me.

*(Looking at "the man")*

There's a bald spot. You know, a few hours at the gym wouldn't exactly kill you, either.

You say you voted for who? I just can't imagine why our friends thought I might like you.

It's him. Coming straight toward me.

Oh God, please let it be him. This is the moment.

He's beyond my wildest dreams. This is the one.

There he is, even more handsome than I pictured he'd be.

A face to match the voice on the phone: sexy and gentle.

<sup>116</sup> Excerpted from the score. Jake Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus* (San Francisco: Bent Pen Music, 2005).

Figure 3.15. (Continued)

He's here, though not on time. Not on the minute.  
But now there's no waiting, no more fear,  
He's finally here. And now I can breathe again.  
This is the.

This is a man greeting another woman in slacks. Not  
me.

Life is not fair. But wait, here's another one.

Oh God don't let it be him, this is a nightmare.  
This is exactly what I was afraid of. Run for your life!  
Here he comes. Nowhere to hide and I'm stuck by  
this stupid Greek statue.  
Maybe it's not. Too late, it's him!

The what? The men's room? I wouldn't know. I don't  
work here.

The slacks just make me look like it. Life is not fair.

What if he's been here and gone? Seen me and  
changed his mind?

I've been judged and found lacking without a  
defense.

Well maybe you're not to my liking either, whoever-  
you-are-thinking-your-God-almighty, judging and  
leaving and making me wonder if it's me or the  
slacks as I stand here and wait for a date I don't want  
at the statue of Venus. At the  
statue of Venus! I have a judgment for you: not so  
terrific yourself. I'm leaving.

If I leave now, I'll never know. And where am I  
going?

At night we dream of love, of loving and being loved,  
Like when we were children, if we were lucky, as I  
was.

I knew my parents loved me, and I loved them.

I felt safe and protected.

I knew that morning would always come.

And I knew I was loved.

Oh God, I was a lucky, lucky child.

Sunday night dinners over at Grandma's, we'd all be  
together.

Playing piano, singing along, not in tune or too  
much in measure.

Wrestling with cousins. The stories we'd share. The  
night Randall kissed me.

Then pretending to sleep in the car riding home  
with my father and mother.

Wanting to hear the secrets they'd share.

But mostly just wanting to be carried upstairs in my  
father's arms,

Then he'd kiss me and say:

"Good night, my little pumpkin.

Sleep soundly, my little love.

Angel from heaven.

Star from above." And I'd sleep.

That love is what I'm seeking;

To feel again I am safe and protected.

To wake each morning filled with hope.

And to know I am loved.

Oh God, I was a lucky, lucky child.

Will I know him? Of course I will. He'll be a man I  
can laugh with and be myself with.

He'll be handsome which only means when I look at  
him my heart will smile, and I'll feel happy to the  
tips of my fingers. That's all "handsome" is:  
happiness.

How will he know me? That's easy.

He'll listen for my laughter and be happy to know  
he's the reason I laugh.

He will know the vastness and fullness of my heart.

Together we'll know beauty and drink of it deeply,  
over and over.

We will keep each other hopeful and brave.

Together. We will brave this world together, the rest  
of our days.

I'll meet you at the statue of Venus.

ACCOMPANIST/CONDUCTOR

Rose?

ROSE

Yes?

THE END

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