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Scholarly Program Notes on the Graduate Vocal Recital of Madalyn Mentor

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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES ON THE GRADUATE VOCAL RECITAL OF
MADALYN MENTOR

by

Madalyn Mentor

B.A., Berea College, 2011

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Music

School of Music
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES ON THE GRADUATE VOCAL RECITAL OF
MADALYN MENTOR

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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Music

in the field of Vocal Performance

Approved by:

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Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

MADALYN MENTOR, for the Master of Music degree in VOCAL PERFORMANCE,
presented on April 12, 2013, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES FOR THE GRADUATE VOCAL RECITAL OF
MADALYN MENTOR

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Jeanine Wagner

This document presents scholarly program notes on the Graduate Vocal Recital of Master of Music in Vocal Performance candidate Madalyn Mentor. The document is organized into six sections or chapters, each presenting biographical information on the composer, history on the pieces, and musical analysis and interpretation of the pieces. The works presented are as follows: four songs by Claude Debussy, namely *Mandoline*, *Clair de Lune*, *Chevaux de Bois*, and *Apparition*; “Mi chiamano Mimi” from Giacomo Puccini’s *La Bohème*; Franz Schubert’s *Auf dem Strom*; “Gold is a Fine Thing” from Douglas Moore’s *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; four spirituals, namely “Come Down Angels” by Undine Smith Moore, “Give Me Jesus” arranged by Moses Hogan, “Walk Together Children” by Byron Motley, “Ain’t a dat Good News” by Charley Lloyd Jr.; and “Amor” from William Bolcom’s *Cabaret Songs*.

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CHAPTER 1

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

French composer Claude Debussy came from a modest family. Born in St Germain-en-Laye on August 22nd, 1862, Debussy's father and mother ran a small china shop before moving to Paris in 1867. Debussy was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire in 1872. Although a good student, Debussy did not win top honors in many of his classes, forcing him to give up the hope of becoming a piano virtuoso. Having more success in harmony, Debussy began to compose basic melodies and compositions in 1879 on texts by Alfred de Musset.¹ In 1880, Debussy was employed by Mme von Meck, patron of Pyotr Tchaikovsky, and traveled with her as a pianist to places such as Florence, Venice, Vienna, and Russia.² After returning from Russia, Debussy was filled with a desire to expand his studies and once more entered the Paris Conservatoire. In addition, he also became an accompanist for voice lessons taught by Victorine Moreau-Sainti. During his work for Moreau - Sainti, Debussy met Marie-Blanche Vasnier, who captured his interest romantically. Although Vasnier was married and Debussy's senior, the young composer dedicated some twenty-three songs to her.

In 1884 Debussy won the prestigious *Prix de Rome* with his cantata *L'enfant prodigue*. He had been the runner up for this honor once before, and with his eccentric style, the win surprised some of his contemporaries. Debussy winning the *Prix de Rome* meant many things

¹ Simon Trezise, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*. (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), xiv.

² Piet Ketting, *Claude-Achille Debussy* (Stockholm: The Continental Book Company A.B., 1949), 12.

including the fact that the composer would have to live and create in Rome, Italy. Growing up and developing in Paris had created a love in Debussy not only for the city itself, but the intellectual climate he experienced there. However, in 1885, Debussy departed for the Villa di Medici where he spent his time in Rome. After a little over two years, Debussy returned to Paris. In a letter to Mme. Vasnier, his constant contact throughout his time in Rome, he wrote, “I’d rather do twice as much work in Paris than drag out this life here.”³

Printemps, a work for chorus and orchestra, was premiered that same year in Paris. This piece marked the beginning of Debussy’s Impressionistic tendencies. Discussing the work and Debussy, the Secretary of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* said,

He has, on the contrary, a marked – perhaps too marked – tendency to cultivate the strange and unusual. He clearly has a strong feeling for colour in music which, when exaggerated, causes him to forget the importance of clarity in design and form. It is very much to be hoped that he will be on his guard against that vague ‘Impressionism’ which is one of the most dangerous enemies of truth in any work of art.⁴

This extreme reaction to *Printemps* stemmed from Debussy’s tendency to reject any established rules that interfered with his goals. In trying to achieve the idea of Spring, he used themes that were neither entirely major or minor, four to five keys in a sequence, whole-tone scales, plagal cadences, common chords together with seventh chords, sequences of ninths and major thirds, and the voice as an instrument, hinting at vocalise – like passages.⁵ In attitude, Debussy simply wanted to express the feeling of Spring from the viewpoint of rebirth and growth of life without direct representation.

³ Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1963), 33.

⁴ Stefan Jarocinski, *Debussy: Impressionism and Symbolism*, (London: Eulenburg Books, 1976), 11.

⁵ *Ibid*, 12.

Settled in Paris once again, Debussy attended cafés and salons, mingling and befriending symbolist thinkers of the time. In 1889 Debussy went to the Universal Exhibition where he heard Javanese gamelan. Departing from his previous Wagnerian influences, the composer met Erik Satie and began a nearly thirty-year friendship, riddled with both love and hate. In 1890, the poet Mallarmé asked Debussy to write for a work centered around the poem *L'après-midi d'un faune*. Although the full project was never completed, Debussy's *Prélude à l'après – midi d'un faune* was performed in 1894.

Pelléas et Mélisande, a drama by Maeterlinck, was Debussy's next major project, started in 1893. Although finished long before the 1902 premiere, Debussy continued to make changes to the score. After the premiere of his opera and delving into critical writing, Debussy took some time away just to compose. From 1902 to 1904 he yielded many works, including the second series of *Fêtes galantes* on the poetry of Verlaine, and the beginning of *La Mer*, an orchestral work.

Debussy travelled to London several times to conduct his music, and became a favorite there. He also travelled to Vienna, Budapest, Turin, Moscow, and St. Petersburg and was influenced by Elgar and Strauss. 1913 brought a collaboration with Nizhinsky and Diaghilev on the ballet *Jeux*, bringing Debussy into “not only the polytonal technique of Stravinsky and Milhaud, but to the twelve-tone system of Schoenberg.”⁶ During this time Debussy also produced *Trois poems de Stéphane Mallarmé*, demonstrating the composer's tendency to go in many directions at once with his sound, using mystical themes, and hinting at his explorative style.⁷

⁶ Lockspeiser, *Debussy*, 99-100.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

Debussy returned to Paris in 1915, plagued with cancer. The composer underwent surgery in December of that year and wrote a few more instrumental works. His last public performance appearance was in 1917, in 1918 he took to his house permanently, and he died on March 25th, 1918 as Germany attacked Paris during World War I.

“No musician of any nationality...had greater mastery in creating the mysterious alloy of music and poetry than Debussy. Not only in the prosody of the literary text but in the rhythm of the speech, for which he has prodigious instinct, but also because he attained the deepest concordance between the poetic idea and the musical idea.”⁸

The coordination between words and music can be challenging for the interpreter. Sincerity in one often is sacrificed for sincerity in the other. Debussy made the union more organic, using the words to influence the music, and vice versa. Often, this meant irregular phrase length and fluid tonality. Debussy’s use of extended techniques showed his Impressionistic tendencies to the fullest, representing the ideas of the text rather than directly quoting it.

Mandoline, composed in 1882 or 1883, was a setting to text by Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), one of Debussy’s favorite Symbolist poets. Poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) ushered in the symbolist movement with his *Les Fleurs de mal* in 1857. In the Manifesto of the Symbolists, the author Jean Moréas states, “Charles Baudelaire must be considered the true founder of this new movement.”⁹ Mallarmé, Verlaine, and Rimbaud, elaborated on Baudelaire’s symbolist ideals. The three aforementioned poets led the Symbolist movement to the forefront of the times, and caught the attention of many composers such as Debussy. The Symbolist ideals were not about direct representation, rather:

⁸ Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970), 154.

⁹ Jarocinski, *Debussy: Impressionism and Symbolism*, 65.

A choice of the most suggestive correspondences among the analogies which exist between words, and sounds and their atmosphere – a choice which tends to create a harmonious poetic substance which acts upon the imagination, not only through its meaning, but also through its sound.¹⁰

Mandoline was composed when Debussy was either twenty or twenty-one. The poem came from Verlaine's set "Fêtes galantes", often likened to the feeling and atmosphere of 18th century French paintings, especially those of Jean Antoine Watteau (1684-1721).¹¹ The scenes showed groups of people, elegantly dressed standing in great parks or tableaux, often listening to a mandolin or lute. In the text of *Mandoline*, some of these characters were mentioned by name – Tircis, Aminte, Clitandre, and Damis. Verlaine often pulled traits from Italian Commedia dell'Arte in his characters.

From the introductory measures, Debussy sets the mandolin referred to in the text musically with a *sforzando* tuning pitch then quintal harmonies alternating staves. These first measures sound like a mandolin being tuned, getting ready before the song begins. The alternating, plucked – like accompaniment continues throughout most of the song. Debussy uses extended techniques typical of his compositional style such as chord planing and pentatonic scale passages throughout the piece. At the end of the first stanza, Debussy uses tone painting with the vocal line moves downward in a chromatic line on "beneath the singing branches" and the accompaniment follows suit with a chord planing passage. The third stanza departs from C Major to E Major while luxuriously describing the rich clothing and joyous mood of those assembled in the scene. The accompaniment is a bit more fluid in this third stanza, but returns to the strummed chord feeling in the fourth and final stanza. As in the beginning, the final stanza returns to C Major, and finishes with the same tuning note heard in the beginning. The 'la,la,la'

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song*, 121-122.

in the vocal line at the end of the piece, alluding to the plucking of a mandolin, should be varied in style an articulation depending on the rhythm and tessitura.¹²

Mandoline

Les donneurs de sérénades
Et les belles écouteuses,
Échangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses.

C'est Tircis et c'est Aminte,
Et c'est l'éternel Clitandre,
Et c'est Damis qui pour mainte
Cruelle fait maint vers tendre.

Leurs courtes vestes de soie,
Leurs longues robes à queues,
Leur élégance, leur joie,
Et leurs molles ombres bleues,

Tourbillonnent dans l'extase
D'une lune rose et grise,
Et la mandoline jase
Parmi les frissons de brise.

Mandoline

The serenaders
and the lovely listeners
exchange sweet nothings
beneath the singing branches.

It is Tircis and Aminte,
and the eternal Clitandre,
and Damis, who for many
a cruel fair one writes many a tender verse.

Their short silken doublets,
their long trailing dresses,
their elegance, their joy,
and their soft blue shadows.

Whirl in the ecstasy
of a pink and grey moon,
and the mandolin chatters
amid the quivering of the breeze.¹³

Claire de Lune, written in 1882, also features text by Paul Verlaine. This song belongs to a collection of four songs published posthumously in 1926 under the title *Quatre Chansons de Jeunesse* and dedicated to Mme. Vasnier. The other songs in this collection are *Pantomime*, *Pierrot*, and *Apparition*. As a Symbolist poet, “Verlaine transposes, with astonishing felicity, the slightest sounds of Nature into an extraordinary musical poetic language.”¹⁴ Debussy sets Verlaine’s idea of the sad, aloof moonlight with chromatic and modal writing. The hints of minuet rhythm suggest the lovers dancing. Debussy keeps the setting simple, highlighting the

¹² Ibid., 159.

¹³ Ibid., 157-158.

¹⁴ Jarocinski, *Debussy: Impressionism and Symbolism*, 66.

emotion of the poetry and the lovers' doubt of their happiness. Even in celebration, the lovers seem sad, "and their song mingles with the moonlight." Debussy uses whole tone and pentatonic ideas to illustrate the unsettled feeling of the characters and the moonlight. It is apparent that Debussy wrote this song for his first patron and lover with its soaring, melodious lines and floating tonality. Mme Vasnier, Debussy's muse of twenty-seven songs before 1884, had a high and floaty quality to her voice.¹⁵ The long soaring phrases and large leaps to high notes seen in this piece as well as *Apparition* would have suited the voice of Mme Vasnier quite well, but can often give singers difficulty. Debussy's writing dictates a calm, easy approach to the phrase and clarity of text, not to be overwhelmed or over sung.

Clair de Lune

Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et
bergamasques,
Jouant du luth et dansant, et quasi
Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques!

Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur bonheur,
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune.

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,
Qui fait rêver, les oiseaux dans les arbres,
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les
marbres.

Moonlight

Your soul is a chosen landscape
to which maskers and revelers bring
delight,
playing the lute and dancing, and almost
sad beneath their fanciful disguisers.

While singing in the minor key
of victorious love and the propitious life,
they do not seem to believe in their
happiness
and their song mingles with the moonlight.

With the calm moonlight, sad and beautiful
which brings dreams to the birds in the
trees
and makes the fountains sob with ecstasy,
the tall slender fountains among the marble
statues.¹⁶

¹⁵ Jane F. Fulcher, ed., *Debussy and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 109.

¹⁶ Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song*, 181.

Chevaux de bois was composed in 1888 in a set of six chansons called “Ariettes oubliées” or “Forgotten Airs” with text by Verlaine.¹⁷ The Verlaine poem tells of a Flemish country fair, reminiscent of his days wandering the countryside as a vagabond with Rimbaud.¹⁸ The song, in the rough form of a rondo with the refrain of “tournez, tournez” unifying the piece, illuminates the picture of old wooden horses on a merry-go-round. This picture brought about both musically and textually, alludes to the early *Mandoline*, another pairing of Debussy and Verlaine.

Illustrating the hustle and bustle of the scene of a country fair are florid arpeggiated passages in the upper accompaniment in addition to steady chordal and chromatic lines in the lower accompaniment. The tempo alludes to the motion of the merry-go-round, turning quickly, then gradually slowing to a halt. The piece gathers speed as the intensity grows but never quite runs away with itself. Different characters viewed by the poet at the fair are described musically: the excited children looking for sweets, the stealthy pickpocket, and the pale mother. As evening falls, the whirling wooden horses begin to slow, and a church bell can be heard distantly, calling the children home to supper as the sky is dotted with stars. The tempo lessens, and the end, while harmonically and melodically similar, is half the speed it was before, signaling the end of the piece and the close of the fair. While each verse varies harmonically, the refrain of “tournez, tournez” unifies the verses throughout the piece.

Chevaux de Bois

Tournez, tournez, bons chevaux de bois,
Tournez cent tours, tournez mille tours,
Tournez souvent et tournez toujours,
Tournez, tournez au son des hautbois.

Merry – Go – Round

Turn, turn, fine merry – go – round,
turn a hundred times, turn a thousand times
turn often and go on turning,
turn to the sound of the oboes.

¹⁷ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, MI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006) 192-193.

¹⁸ Lockspeiser, *The Master Musicians Series: Debussy*, 128.

L'enfant tout rouge et la mère blanche,
Le gars en noir et la fille en rose,
L'une à la chose et l'autre à la pose,
Chacun se paie un sou de dimanche.

The rubicund child and the pale mother,
the lad in the black and the girl in the pink,
the one down to earth the other showing off
each one has his Sunday pennyworth.

Tournez, tournez, chevaux de leur cœur,
Tandis qu'autour de tous vos tournois
Clignote l'œil du filou sournois,
Tournez au son du piston vainqueur !

Turn, turn, merry – go – round of their
hearts
while around all your whirling
squints the eye of the crafty pickpocket
turn to the sound of the triumphant cornet

C'est étonnant comme ça vous soûle
D'aller ainsi dans ce cirque bête
Rien dans le ventre et mal dans la tête,
Du mal en masse et du bien en foule.

It is astonishing how intoxicating it is
to ride thus in this stupid circle,
with a sinking stomach and an aching head,
heaps of discomfort and plenty of fun.

Tournez, dadas, sans qu'il soit besoin
D'user jamais de nuls éperons
Pour commander à vos galops ronds
Tournez, tournez, sans espoir de foin.

Turn, gee – gees, without any need
Ever to use spurs
To keep you at a gallop,
turn, turn, without hopes of hay.

Et dépêchez, chevaux de leur âme
Déjà voici que sonne à la soupe
La nuit qui tombe et chasse la troupe
De gais buveurs que leur soif affame.

And hurry, horses of their souls,
already the supper bell is ringing,
night falls and chases away the troop
of gay drinkers famished by their thirst.

Tournez, tournez ! Le ciel en velours
D'astres en or se vêt lentement.
L'église tinte un glas tristement.
Tournez au son joyeux des tambours !

Turn, turn! The velvet sky
is slowly pricked with golden stars.
The church bell tolls a mournful knell,
turn to merry beating of the drums.¹⁹

Apparition, the final song in the set *Quatre Chanson de Jeunesse*, was composed in 1884 with text by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898). This piece was among the collection of pieces published posthumously and dedicated to Mme. Vasnier. Mallarmé, with his poem *Apparition*, wanted to bring the focus of his poetry to symbol and allusion, rather than direct representation. In 1864, the poet wrote “Full of terror, because I have invented a language which must of necessity emerge from a very new kind of poetry, whose aim I might define briefly as being to

¹⁹ Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song*, 166-167.

paint, not the thing itself, but the effect it produces.”²⁰ This quote by Mallarmé embodies the ideas of the Symbolist movement, and the ideals Debussy was attracted to. Debussy’s *Apparition* brings Symbolist and musical Impressionistic techniques together to embody Symbolist ideas in music.

A tonal center is not directly established, and resolution points do not occur as expected. Debussy picks out items in Mallarmé’s poem such as the sad moon, the dying violets, and the perfumed stars, and unifies them with a feeling on E major. However, the tonality is not solidly E major throughout as Debussy inserts progressions like F Major to D minor to Bb major.²¹ With progressions like these, Debussy never resolves them to the unrelated E Major, giving the motion of the piece a floating sensation rather than a forward moving feeling. The poetry itself is rather amorphous, with uncertainty as to whether the speaker is in the past or present, and who or what this “apparition” really is. To perpetuate this dreamlike state, Debussy continues the arpeggiated motion in the accompaniment. With building chromaticism, a Bb pedal tone, and whole tone scalar passages, Debussy builds to the much-anticipated climax on “appeared” in measure 40.²² Instead of the resolution perhaps to E Major that the listener expects, Debussy moves immediately into G major. This avoidance of a stable, consistent tonality speaks to the Symbolist and Impressionist nature of Debussy and his compositional style. Debussy ends his piece with an

²⁰ Jarocinski, *Debussy: Impressionism and Symbolism*, 66.

²¹ Tristan Hons, “Impressions and Symbols: Analysing the Aesthetics of Debussy's Practices within His Fin-de-Siècle Mosaic of Inspirations,” *Nota Bene: Canadian Undergraduate Journal of Musicology* vol. 3, issue 1 (2010), <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca> (accessed March 10, 2013).

²² *Ibid.*

ascending sequence of chords, hinting at the “perfumed stars” in the heavens, twinkling and sparkling as the accompaniment does the same.

Apparition

La lune s'attristait. Des séraphins en pleurs

Rêvant, l'archet aux doigts, dans le calme
des fleurs

Vaporeuses, tiraient de mourantes violes
De blancs sanglots glissant sur l'azur des
corolles.

-- C'était le jour béni de ton premier baiser.
Ma songerie aimant à me martyriser
S'enivrait savamment du parfum de
tristesse

Que même sans regret et sans déboire
laisse

La cueillaison d'un Rêve au coeur qui l'a
cueilli.

J'errais donc, l'oeil rivé sur le pavé vieilli

Quand avec du soleil aux cheveux, dans la
rue

Et dans le soir, tu m'es en riant apparue

Et j'ai cru voir la fée au chapeau de clarté

Qui jadis sur mes beaux sommeils d'enfant
gâté

Passait, laissant toujours de ses mains mal
fermées

Neiger de blancs bouquets d'étoiles
parfumées.

Apparition

The moon was saddened. Seraphims in
tears

dreaming, bows at their fingers, in the calm
of filmy flowers

Threw dying violas of white sobs
sliding over the blue of corollas.

It was the blessed day of your first kiss;
My reverie, loving to torture me,
wisely imbibed its perfume of sadness

That even without regret and without
setback

leaves the gathering of a dream within the
heart that gathered it.

I wandered then, my eye riveted on the
aged cobblestones.

When, with light in your hair, in the street

and in the evening, you appeared to me
smiling

and I thought I had seen the fairy with a hat
of light

who passed in my sweet dreams as a
spoiled child,

always dropping from her carelessly closed
hand

a snow of white bouquets of perfumed
stars.²³

²³ Margaret G. Cobb, ed., *The Poetic Debussy: A Collection of His Song Texts and Selected Letters* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1994), 86-87.

CHAPTER 2

GIACOMO PUCCINI

Giacomo Puccini was born in Lucca, Italy on December 22, 1858. Puccini studied music in Lucca at the Istituto Musicale Pacini from, first with his uncle, then with Carlo Angeloni. The death of his father put financial strain on Puccini's family, and he took choir and church organist jobs.

At the age of sixteen, Puccini's compositions were mostly religious music. However, in 1876 the young composer's teacher introduced him to the opera *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi. From that moment, Puccini's focus became predominantly opera. In order to pursue a career as an opera composer, Puccini moved to Milan, the Italian mecca for opera. In Milan, Puccini studied at the conservatory, first with Antonio Bazzini, then under Amilcare Ponchielli.²⁴ In 1880, Puccini composed his choral work *Messa a quattro voci*. The *Messa*, written while the composer was still young, foreshadowed what Puccini was going to contribute to the opera world.

In addition to his studies and composing, Puccini attended many operas at La Scala, and through the performances of Verdi, Gounod, and Bizet, Puccini gathered French influences for his later works. Puccini graduated from the conservatory in 1883 then returned to Lucca to see his family and compose. In 1884, Puccini's first opera *Le Villi* with libretto by Ferdinando Fontana, premiered and was a success. Encouraged, Puccini composed *Edgar*, again with Fontana and premiered it in 1889. This opera, however, did not garnish praise.

A failure at that point in Puccini's career could have spelled the end for the composer. Puccini's next opera *Manon Lescaut*, with text by Giuseppe Giancosa and Luigi Illica premiered

²⁴ William Weaver, *Puccini: the Man and his Music* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977), 8-9.

in 1893, and received much acclaim. From the success of *Manon Lescaut*, Puccini began forming ideas for his next, and arguably most well-known opera, *La Bohème*. Constantly plagued with doubt as a composer, Puccini slaved over the piece, and even left the subject for a time in pursuit of something else. However, *La Bohème* was premiered in 1896 after much turmoil on the part of the composer and librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica. The libretto was based on a series of short stories published serially entitled *La Vie de Bohème* by Henry Murger. This composer and librettist team, in addition to *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème*, created *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly* as well.

Puccini went on to produce many of the most famous and performed operas in the repertoire including *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La fanciulla del West*, *La Rondine*, *Il Trittico*, and *Turandot* (left unfinished at the time of Puccini's death). In 1924 in Brussels, Belgium, Puccini succumbed to complications treating throat cancer. Leaving a legacy behind him, the composer remains one of the largest contributing factors to opera.

Puccini's operas center around the emotional journeys taken by the characters, and how that is expressed in music. His melodies, much like Verdi, are "pregnant" with emotion and feeling.²⁵ Whereas Verdi would contrast these overly emotional moments with more subdued moments elsewhere, Puccini kept his tension high with forward moving phrases. Puccini's melodies, whether sung or played in the orchestra, fully embody the emotional state of the character and tell the story. The focus on character development and emotion is evident throughout Puccini operas, and often manifests like a character motif. The use of dramatic pauses increase tension and heighten the moment. Puccini also creates drama with purely instrumental

²⁵ Donald Jay Grout and Hermine Weigel Williams, *A Short History of Opera* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 491.

music, telling the story without words. An example of this instrumental storytelling appears in *Tosca*, after Tosca has killed Scarpio.

Musically, Puccini was drawn to and influenced by the constantly expanding harmonic ideals of the time. Parallel chords, chromaticism, pentatonic and whole-tone scales, modal writing, and unique key relationships are evident throughout Puccini's writing, often evoking exoticism or departure from the expected. Although Puccini employs many different harmonic and melodic devices, what the composer does best is use them together to create a musical atmosphere. In operas such as *Turandot* and *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini uses lyric writing with pentatonic and modal elements to set the mood musically.

La Bohème tells the story of young bohemian artists living in Paris. Puccini, when first living in Milan, lived a life of little money and humble means, much like these characters. The realism of the characters, situations, emotions, and conversations show the composer's Verismo tendencies. Puccini's opera is not classified as a verismo opera such as Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* or Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, but it does exhibit verismo characteristics.²⁶

The aria *Mi chiamano Mimì* comes towards the end of the first act of *La Bohème*. The opera opens with Rodolfo, a young poet, in the apartment he shares with his three Bohemian friends in Paris. His friends depart, but Rodolfo stays to work on some writing. There is a knock on his door, and it is his frail, beautiful neighbor Mimì asking for a light for her candle. Eager to oblige, Rodolfo lights the candle, but it continues to go out (perhaps with the aid of the characters at times). In the confusion, Mimì loses her key, and the two search for it, all the while getting to know each other. Rodolfo sings his aria *Che gelida manina*, and Mimì, nervous but interested in the poet, sings *Mi chiamano Mimì*, or They Call me Mimì.

²⁶ Nicholas John, ed., *La Bohème* (London: John Calder, 1982), 8.

Mimi begins her aria tentatively, with only a single violin cue to start. The first theme of this character is expressed as she tells Rodolfo that her real name is Lucia, but everyone calls her Mimi. She tells Rodolfo she is a seamstress, and loves to create the flowers of Spring. As she describes her favorite season, the theme changes and the accompaniment becomes more lush and supportive. This second theme sends Mimi into a place of reverie that Puccini captures with a forward moving, legato line. Realizing how vulnerable she has become, Mimi returns to the first theme hurriedly, repeating the first few words, “Mi chiamano Mimi.”

With nervous excitement, Mimi continues, telling Rodolfo of her lonely life living all alone. The accompaniment depicts her nerves with light, staccato movement. As if she cannot resist her own vulnerability, Mimi once again sings of springtime, and this time completely loses herself in her reverie. The accompaniment is thick and builds with the vocal line with increasingly high eighth – note motives. The climax of the aria comes as Mimi describes her favorite flowers, and descends when she admits the flowers she creates have no scent. After this great explosion of emotion and expression, the timid Mimi once again retreats, saying she does not know what to tell Rodolfo about herself, she is simply his neighbor.

Puccini’s expressive writing and melodic style is evident throughout Mimi’s aria. Her timid nature gives way to a passionate expression of love as the accompaniment swells and fills the spaces. The lyrical Puccini comes through in this aria and this opera, and portrays emotion in text and music alike.

Mi chiamano Mimi

Sì. Mi chiamano Mimi,
 ma il mio nome è Lucia.
 La storia mia è breve.
 A tela o a seta
 ricamo in casa e fuori.
 Son tranquilla e lieta
 ed è mio svago far gigli e rose.
 Mi piaccion quelle cose
 che han sì dolce malia,
 che parlano d'amor, di primavera,
 che parlano di sogni e di chimere -
 quelle cose che han nome poesia.
 Lei m'intende?

Mi chiamano Mimi.
 Il perchè non so.
 Sola, mi fo il pranzo da me stessa.
 Non vado sempre a messa,
 ma prego assai il Signore.
 Vivo sola, soletta
 là in una bianca cameretta:
 guardo sui tetti e in cielo.
 Ma quando vien lo sgelo
 il primo sole è mio...
 il primo bacio dell'aprile è mio!
 Germoglia in un vaso una rosa...
 foglia a foglia la spio!
 Così gentile il profumo d'un fior!
 Ma i fior ch'io faccio, Ahimè!
 non hanno odore!

Altro di me non le saprei
 narrare.
 Sono la sua vicina c
 he la vien fuori d'ora a importunare.

They Call Me Mimi

Yes...They call me Mimi,
 but my name is Lucia.
 My story is brief:
 On linen or silk
 I do embroidery at home and outside.
 I am quiet and cheerful,
 and my hobby is making lilies and roses.
 Those things give me pleasure
 which have so much sweet charm,
 which speak of love, of springtimes,
 which speak of dreams and of fantasies –
 those things which are called poetry.
 Do you understand me?

They call me Mimi.
 Why, I don't know.
 Alone, I make meals at home by myself.
 I do not always go to mass
 but I pray to a great deal to the Lord.
 I live alone – all alone –
 there, in a clean little room;
 I look out on the rooftops and the sky.
 But when the spring thaw comes
 the early sun is mine...
 the first kiss of April is mine!
 A rose blooms in a vase...
 petal by petal I watch over it!
 How delicate, the scent of a flower!
 But the flowers that I make, alas,
 do not have fragrance!

I would not know how to tell you anything
 else about me.
 I am your neighbor
 who comes unexpectedly to interrupt you.²⁷

²⁷ Robert L. Larsen, ed., *Arias for Soprano* (Milwaukee, WI: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1991), 18-19.

CHAPTER 3

FRANZ SCHUBERT

“I have come into this world for no purpose but to compose.”²⁸ Franz Schubert said this about himself, and composed continuously during his tragically short life from 1797-1828. Born in Vienna to schoolmaster Franz Theodor Florian and his wife Maria Elisabeth Katherina Vietz, Franz Schubert was one of four surviving children. He learned violin from his father and piano from his brother Ignaz. Quickly, Schubert progressed in his studies and surpassed what his father and brother could teach him musically. In 1806, Schubert began studies with Michael Holzer including piano, violin, organ, singing, and harmony. Holzer said about Schubert, “If I wished to instruct him in anything fresh, he already knew it. Consequently I gave him no actual tuition but merely conversed with him and watched with silent astonishment.”²⁹

The education Holzer gave Schubert quickly ceased to challenge him, and in 1808 Schubert joined the ranks of the imperial court chapel as a choirboy. The appointment also meant admission to the Imperial and Royal City College, or the Stadtkonvikt boarding school under the tutelage of established musicians such as Antonio Salieri, Joseph Eybler, and Phillip Körner.³⁰ This challenging environment served the young Schubert well, and he excelled quickly. Schubert composed, studied, made acquaintances, and was introduced to composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn.

²⁸ Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 52.

²⁹ Maurice J. E. Brown, *The New Grove Schubert* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1980), 2-3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

During this time of his life, Schubert came to greatly admire the poet Goethe, and produced one of his best-known works, the song *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, in addition to nearly 150 other Goethe songs.³¹ Schubert liked many poets such as Johann Mayrhofer (a relationship that was very important to Schubert), Schiller, Klopstock, Ossian, Kosergarten, and Goethe. His productivity yielded thirty songs set to poems by Goethe, including the memorable *Erlkönig*. *Erlkönig* is one of Schubert's most well-known songs or Lied, showing the composers skill with timbre depicting multiple characters, climactic moments, and harmonic complexity.

During 1816 – 1817, Schubert yielded a great deal of Lied by Goethe. In 1817, Schubert also met popular baritone Johann Michael Vogl, and until the composer's death, the two worked and travelled together. In 1818, Johann Carl Esterházy contacted and employed Schubert to teach his daughters at their summer home. Although glad for the employment, Schubert soon grew tired of the appointment, and often felt like an outsider and out of place. The following summer of 1819, Schubert travelled with Vogl. However, Schubert was arrested with his friend, both suspected of being enemies of the government. While Schubert's friend was put in detention, the young composer was let off with a warning because of his position as a registered teacher. These happenings no doubt only furthered Schubert's discomfort of being an outcast.

Although Schubert had feelings of loneliness and being an outcast, he also had a great many people who admired and respected him. Around 1820, Schubert and his friends began gathering at various people's houses for "social evenings." These gatherings, or "Schubertiads" as they came to be known, were a time for social activities, primarily music. The caliber of the evening was high, both intellectually and musically. The portrait of Schubert sharing his music with friends gathered around is one of controversy. While this was the image portrayed, it is

³¹ Christopher H. Gibbs, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xi.

interesting to note that there was little to no documentation of what actually transpired.

Examining the people who attended these gatherings, namely poets, scholars, and students, it is hard to believe that topics other than music were not discussed. It is thought that perhaps the name “Schubertiad” was given to cover up politically charged subject matter and discussion.³² At a time when the great salons were declining, these “Schubertiad” gatherings sought to bring together forward thinking people of all kinds to discuss politics and intrigue.

By the end of 1822, Schubert had descended into illness and could not leave his father’s house. The next six years of Schubert’s life leading up to his death were full of highs and lows. The nature of his affliction, which is now believed to be syphilis, did not confine him to bed entirely. The sickness Schubert suffered had stages, allowing the composer to still perform and attend concerts at some points, and at others seclude him to sickbed. In 1823, although suffering, Schubert completed his eighth opera, *Die Verschworenen* and the song cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* on poems by Müller. In 1824, Schubert went on his annual trip to Zeliz for the summer, which would prove to be his last time. His stay with the Esterházy family proved to be good for his health. Later that year however, his health worsened once again, and he entered into the second stage of syphilis. In a letter to his friend Leopold Kupelwieser he wrote, “...every night when I go to sleep I hope never to wake again, and each morning I am only recalled to the griefs of yesterday.”³³

In 1827, it was rumored that Schubert met his ailing idol Beethoven just a week before Beethoven’s death, although accounts are varied. It is known that Schubert was a torchbearer in

³² Ernst Hilmar, *Franz Schubert In His Time* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1985), 30.

³³ Otto Erich Deutsch, ed., *Franz Schubert’s Letters and Other Writings* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1974), 78.

the great composer's funeral, and grieved for the loss of the man he admired. 1827 was the same year Schubert wrote his song cycle *Winterreise* on poetry by Müller, the same poet as his previous cycle *Die schöne Müllerin*. This cycle of songs showed a side to Schubert full of darkness and misery. Written about a year before his death, this dark song cycle expresses many of the emotions Schubert may have been feeling. Throughout his entire life, even during his ailing final days living with his brother Ferdinand, Schubert lived with other people or in lodgings that were not his own. In addition to constantly moving from place to place, the composer also fought poverty and debt. In 1828, in an effort to raise money for the struggling composer, Schubert's friends helped put together a concert entirely of his works known as "Franz Schubert's Invitation Concert."³⁴ Poet Bauernfeld wrote to Schubert:

Do you want my advice? Your name is upon all lips, and every new song of yours is an event... Your friends are enchanted with them, but as yet no art dealer will buy them, and the public still has no idea of the beauty and grace that slumber in these works. So take a running start, master your inertia, give a concert next winter... The public will compete for tickets. And even if you don't become a Croesus at one blow, a single evening will at least be enough to cover your expenses for a whole year. You can repeat such an evening annually.³⁵

The concert, held on March 26, 1828, was a success. Sadly, it was the only one given during the composer's life, and was dwarfed by the coming of the great violinist, Paganini, to Vienna. The program included the first movement of a string quartet in G, songs *Der Kreuzzug*, *Die Sterne*, *Fischerweise*, *Fragment aus dem Aeschylus*, *Ständchen*, Trio in E-flat, *Auf dem Strom* for tenor with horn obbligato, *Die Allmacht*, and *Schlachtlied* for double male chorus.³⁶ The

³⁴ Brown, *The New Grove: Schubert*, 62.

³⁵ Robert Haven Schauffler, *Franz Schubert: The Ariel of Music* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Song, 1949), 185-186.

³⁶ Brown, *The New Grove: Schubert*, 62.

proceeds from this concert, meant to sustain the composer, were spent quickly. So, with his finances in disarray and his health in a poor state, Schubert moved in with his brother Ferdinand in September.

This last move proved to be his final relocation. Schubert died on November 19th, 1828 in the home of his brother. Leading up to his final days, the composer drifted in and out of reality. At times he called out for his idol Beethoven, believing he was already in the afterlife with him. In a moment of calm, Schubert told his brother, “Here, here is my end.”³⁷ English writer William Cobbett wrote of Schubert’s death:

The possibilities of his future as a composer, dating from that moment, transcend the bounds of human prevision. He already composed the C Major Quintet, the most romantically conceived work in all chamber music, and had shortly before begun seriously to study counterpoint. Material was accumulating for the composition of masterpieces to come, and one can imagine the vistas of supreme beauty were opening out before his inspired gaze while the darkness was closing around him. The soul of every true musician aches at the thought that this newly begun chapter in his artistic life was fated to come to a premature end.³⁸

The song *Auf dem Strom*, for voice with horn obbligato, was written for Schubert’s concert on March 26th, 1828. Schubert planned this concert exactly one year after Beethoven’s death. A great lover of Beethoven, Schubert no doubt saw this as a tribute to his idol. In addition to honoring the memory of Beethoven, Schubert wanted to present himself as a successor. With more concerts such as this in his future plans, Schubert had no idea it would be the only one of his short life.

³⁷ Robert Haven Schauffler, *Franz Schubert: The Ariel of Music* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Song, 1949), 192-193.

³⁸ Schauffler, *Franz Schubert: The Ariel of Music*, 193.

Schubert used the text of the poet Ludwig Rellstab for *Auf dem Strom*, and it tells the story of loss and being parted from someone, either through physical distance or death. Schubert, separated from Beethoven through death, saw in Rellstab's verses a connection to the deceased composer. Rellstab's poem consists of five stanzas with eight lines each. Over the course of the poem, the narrator sets sail for the sea with no specified destination, missing and longing for the lover who is parted from them. Whether the text is taken literally or as an allusion to the death and separation of a loved one is not specified. In essence, the interpretation can be left up to the individual reading or performing the work. The stanzas of the text are arranged into rough groupings based on meaning; I, III, and V speak about the woman who is gone, and II and IV look to the future.³⁹ The comparison of land and water is noted as well, with stanzas I, III, and V speaking about land or heaven, and II and IV about water respectively.⁴⁰ Poetically, the stanzas are further differentiated with II and IV having a continuous subject, and I, III, and V changing topics halfway through.

Schubert, known for his marriage of text and music and his skill for bringing out text in music, formed his composition around Rallstab's structure. The piece itself is loosely classified as a song with horn *obbligato*, purely for the fact that Schubert let the text guide him in his form. This can be seen in the key structure the composer uses. For the odd verses, Schubert writes in E Major for the first half, but in I and III, changes to the relative minor key of C# around line five. This change in key is dictated by the change in text subject in line five of stanza I and III. Along the same lines, stanzas II and IV are in C# minor solidly, contrasting the E major sections nicely. This minor key helps illustrate the gloomy outlook the narrator has for the future.

³⁹ Eva Badura – Skoda and Peter Branscombe, eds., *Schubert Studies: Problems of style and chronology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 28.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Musically, Schubert does not repeat material for verses I, III, and V, because the text itself changes. However, for II and IV, he repeats musical material mirroring the text. Going a step further, halfway through the first stanza, Rallstab's verse speaks of the "skiff" departing. Schubert takes this textual idea and realizes it musically. The composer departs from E major, much like the ship, and on the text "And yet, longing keeps drawing back," moves towards tonicizing G major. As the key seems to be changing, the sound is brought back to E major by a leading D# in the bass, coinciding with the text "A tear-darkened gaze."⁴¹ This lingering figure is repeated in the verses, with the exception of verse III.

Verses IV and V are similar to I and II. One exception comes in stanza IV with the voice and horn in octaves, and the piano assuming their parts from verse II. This emphasis of the bass line embodies the text, talking about melancholy feelings and a cold storm.⁴² The union of the voice and horn create a beautiful but often chilling and longing sound. In collaboration with the arpeggiated piano part, the combination of timbres illustrates Rallstab's verses and Schubert's composition accurately. Schubert's choice of horn could also be seen as a tribute to Beethoven, who wrote well and often for horn such as his Wind Quintet Op 16 and Horn Sonata Op 17.⁴³

Schubert's loss of his idol Beethoven can be heard and seen throughout this piece. In this composition, it is clear to see a water motive in his repetitive triplets. This element can be likened to the third song in Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*. With a story about loss, love, and saying goodbye, Schubert again connected his composition to Beethoven. Both composers

⁴¹ Ibid., 27-29.

⁴² Ibid., 30.

⁴³ Graham Johnson, "Auf dem Strom," Hyperion, <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/tw.asp?w=W1661> (accessed March 12, 2013).

structured their coda sections similarly, with high placement of the voice and ending on the third scale degree after allusion to the opening melodies of the piece.⁴⁴

In addition to sharing themes with *An die ferne Geliebte*, musical parallels can be heard in stanzas II and IV with Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, second movement funeral march. The first two stanzas are very similar, and after that, the general structure of Schubert's second stanza follows that of Beethoven. The interludes with horn and piano without text demonstrate the passing of time, suggesting the lifetime of someone, presumably Beethoven, passing by.

Whether Beethoven and Schubert had a relationship beyond the younger composer idolizing the elder is not known for certain. However, Beethoven's secretary and first biographer, Anton Schindler, said that he showed the ailing Beethoven some of Schubert's songs in 1827.⁴⁵ It is said that Beethoven admired the songs shown to him. Knowing that someone as influential in his life appreciated his work brought great joy to Schubert, as well as encouragement.

As his life was coming to a close, Schubert looked to the future. The composer did not stop composing, even from his sickbed and seclusion. What else could have come from the composer will never be known, but his love of music and his love for Beethoven comes forth in *Auf dem Strom*.

Auf dem Strom

Nimm die letzten Abschiedsküsse,
Und die wehenden, die Grüße,
Die ich noch ans Ufer sende,
Eh' dein Fuß sich scheidend wende!
Schon wird von des Stromes Wogen
Rasch der Nachen fortgezogen,
Doch den tränendunklen Blick
Zieht die Sehnsucht stets zurück!

On the River

Take these last good – bye kisses
And my waving farewells
That I send shoreward
Before your steps turn away.
Already the skiff is hurriedly withdrawn
Before the river's current.
And yet, longing keeps drawing back
A tear – darkened gaze.

⁴⁴ Badura – Skoda and Branscombe, eds., *Schubert Studies: Problems of style and chronology*, 40.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

Und so trägt mich denn die Welle
 Fort mit unerflehter Schnelle.
 Ach, schon ist die Flur verschwunden,
 Wo ich selig Sie gefunden!
 Ewig hin, ihr Wonnetage!
 Hoffnungsleer verhallt die Klage
 Um das schöne Heimatland,
 Wo ich ihre Liebe fand.

Sieh, wie flieht der Strand vorüber,
 Und wie drängt es mich hinüber,
 Zieht mit unnennbaren Banden,
 An der Hütte dort zu landen,
 In der Laube dort zu weilen;
 Doch des Stromes Wellen eilen
 Weiter ohne Rast und Ruh,
 Führen mich dem Weltmeer zu!

Ach, vor jener dunklen Wüste,
 Fern von jeder heitern Küste,
 Wo kein Eiland zu erschauen,
 O, wie faßt mich zitternd Grauen!
 Wehmutstränen sanft zu bringen,
 Kann kein Lied vom Ufer dringen;
 Nur der Sturm weht kalt daher
 Durch das grau gehobne Meer!

Kann des Auges sehndend Schweifen
 Keine Ufer mehr ergreifen,
 Nun so schau' ich zu den Sternen
 Auf in jenen heil'gen Fernen!
 Ach, bei ihrem milden Scheine
 Nannt' ich sie zuerst die Meine;
 Dort vielleicht, o tröstend Glück!
 Dort begeg'n ich ihrem Blick.

And so the waves carry me
 Away with unmerciful speed.
 Already the meadow has disappeared
 Where I blessedly found her.
 Gone forever, blissful days!
 Hopelessly dies away the mourning
 Over the beautiful homeland
 Where I found her love.

See how the shoreline flies by,
 And how it attracts me,
 Draws me with inexpressible bonds
 To land there at the cabin,
 To linger there in the bower;
 But the river's waves hurry on
 Without rest or peace
 And carry me to the ocean!

Alas, before that dark wilderness,
 Far away from any bright coast,
 Where no island can be seen,
 O, how a trembling dread seizes me!
 Tenderly to bring tears of melancholy
 No song can penetrate from the shore;
 Only the storm blows cold
 Through the gray, tossing sea!

Since my eyes' yearning search
 Reaches the shore no more,
 Not I look to the stars
 There in that holy, distant place.
 O, by their soft light
 I first called her mine;
 There perhaps, consoling fortune,
 There I meet her gaze.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ibid., 26-27.

CHAPTER 4

DOUGLAS MOORE

Great American composer and music educator Douglas Moore was born on August 10, 1893 in Long Island, New York. In addition to being a magazine editor, Moore's mother was a great lover of music, and ran the choral society in their community. At the age of thirteen, Moore went away to school, where he studied piano, among other things. The young composer disliked his piano lessons because he had to play scales and specific exercises, however, when he made up his own melodies he was delighted. In retrospect, the composer said, "I should have been sent to a conservatory."⁴⁷ However, at eighteen, Moore entered Yale, and in his junior year, decided to focus solely on music. During his time there, he met and impressed professor Horatio Parker, who took him as his composition pupil.

The beginning of World War I drove the young musician to enlist in the U.S. Navy. During his time in service, Moore began composing and caught the attention of the folk singer John Jacob Niles. *Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* was published in collaboration with Niles in 1921, and brought Moore into the public eye for the first time.⁴⁸ After serving in WWI, Moore travelled to Paris and studied with Vincent d'Indy and Charles Tournemire.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Joseph Machlis, *American Composers of Our Time* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1963), 43.

⁴⁸ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Moore, Douglas Stuart," (by Andrew Stiller), <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed March 25, 2013).

⁴⁹ "Ballad of Baby Doe (Moore) Mini Guide," *International Bibliography of Theater and Dance with Full Text* (2007), <http://ehis.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu> (accessed March 25, 2013).

In 1924, Moore wrote the orchestral suite *Pageant of P.T. Barnum*, based on his memories of the circus as a child. This piece foreshadowed Moore's "American" writing style. The following year, Moore returned to Paris and studied with famed teacher Nadia Boulanger. His studies focused on the fundamentals he had missed due to his late start in music education. Upon his return to the United States, Moore joined the Music Department of Columbia University, where he eventually became the Chair, remaining there until 1962. From his experiences and lectures, he wrote two comprehensive books, *Listening to Music* and *From Madrigal to Modern Music*. Moore eventually became influential in the development of American music as an educator, composer, and champion of the arts.

As a composer, Moore was influenced by his country and its native writers. When speaking on the style of European composers, he said, "I cannot believe that they are likely to be appropriate or becoming for us."⁵⁰ Moore respected the European traditions, having studied them in great length, but thought that for an American composer, American style and heritage were the guidelines. He found inspiration in American literature with his orchestral piece *Moby Dick* after Herman Melville's novel.⁵¹ Pictures of Moore's American scene were illustrated in *Village Music* and *Farm Journal*, as well as his use of American poets such as Stephen Vincent Benét, Vachel Lindsay, and Archibald MacLeish.

Early in his career Moore said, "I've always liked setting words better than any other form of composition, and I've always had a passion for the theater."⁵² This enthusiasm for acting and setting text led Moore into opera composition, which eventually became his legacy. With an

⁵⁰ Machlis, *American Composers of Our Time*, 48.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 49.

intense attention to American speech patterns and a love of theater, Douglas Moore contributed to the underdeveloped arena of American opera. Early Broadway and operetta also influenced Moore in his composition of opera, especially Gilbert and Sullivan.

The idea of American opera in itself was relatively new and abstract. Composers such as Gian Carlo Menotti, Samuel Barber, Virgil Thomson, and Carlisle Floyd navigated away from the European traditions and focused on an American sound, much like Moore. Floyd's *Susannah* and Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe* embody the American opera idea with use of musical atmosphere. These operas use American heritage such as square dance melodies, folk songs, and hymns. *The Ballad of Baby Doe* demonstrates Moore's melodic and tuneful style while staying true to his American style and heritage. Without directly quoting folk songs, Moore creates a musical atmosphere musically with traces of folk, political, and dance music.

The folk opera *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, written in 1956, remains Moore's best – known composition. Many of Moore's works were classified as lighter operetta or musical theater pieces, and did not gather acclaim. The story of the opera is based on real people and real events, with a libretto written by John Latouche (1914-1956). Taken from the life of Horace Tabor and Baby Doe Tabor, Moore sets a true American story to music. The composer stuck to a melodic style anchored in tonality during a time where many composers were exploring atonal music, serialism, and Expressionism. In his efforts to express the idea of Americana, Moore uses waltz cadences for sentimental moments, folk dance tunes, authentic Western costumes and scenery, all paired with diatonic and tuneful melodies.⁵³

The Ballad of Baby Doe was premiered on July 7th 1956 at the Central City Opera House

⁵³ "Ballad of Baby Doe (Moore) Mini Guide," *International Bibliography of Theater and Dance with Full Text* (2007), <http://ehis.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu> (accessed March 25, 2013).

in Central City, Colorado. After some revisions, *Baby Doe* was premiered in New York on April 3rd, 1958 by the New York City Opera. The characters and premise of the opera are real, and although some liberties have been taken, Moore stays true to the people and events. Moore embodies the idea of the West with his characteristic rugged individual trying to make his or her own way.

The story begins in Leadville, Colorado in 1880. Horace Tabor is a wealthy and successful businessman. He has built an opera house, contributed to the town, and maintains several endeavors including silver mines. While talking among his friends, Horace meets Baby Doe, a young woman who has left her husband in Central City and come to Leadville. Horace's wife Augusta urges him to amend his rowdy ways, live a simple, frugal life, and not to put all his fortune in silver. Distracted by Baby Doe, Horace brushes his wife aside, and later confesses his love for Baby Doe. Consumed by guilt, Baby Doe vows to leave Leadville, and when confronted by Augusta, tells her she will depart. However, Horace convinces Baby Doe to stay, and Augusta learns Horace means to divorce her. Augusta leaves, Baby Doe divorces her husband, and Horace and Baby Doe travel to Washington D.C. to be married.

While in Washington D.C., Horace gains a seat in the Senate. The battle between the gold and silver monetary standard is in full swing, jeopardizing the new couple's fortune. Back in Denver, Horace and Baby Doe are surrounded by scandal, but they do not let it ruin the love they have. Augusta, in a show of good faith, warns Baby Doe that the gold standard will become law. Baby Doe, momentarily convinced, expresses her concern to Horace, however, he convinces her silver will win in the end.

Time passes and the gold standard does indeed win, ruining Horace. Baby Doe finds Horace on the stage of his opera house, close to death. Horace makes Baby Doe promise she will

always keep the Matchless Mine and always believe in silver. She promises, Horace dies, and Baby Doe makes her way to the Matchless Mine. The real Baby Doe Tabor kept watch at the Matchless Mine for 36 years after the death of Horace, and was found there having died of cold.

The “Silver Aria” or “Gold is a Fine Thing” occurs at the end of Act I. After Baby Doe’s wedding to Horace, he and some of the men at the celebration argue about which standard is better, gold or silver. Determined to support her husband, Baby Doe expresses her feeling on the matter in this glorious aria. She says that gold is showy and fine, but silver is the stuff of dreams, and it is what will unite the country.

Douglas Moore’s melodic writing style is clearly exemplified in this aria. The beginning exclamation of “Please gentlemen, please” is Baby Doe trying to gather the attention of those around her. A tremolo figure in the orchestra paired with a highly placed descending line gives Baby Doe’s opening line a sense of urgency. Following the first three measures, however, the mood changes, and Baby Doe begins to compare gold and silver. When mentioning gold, the melody is grounded and straightforward, with two phrases that are almost sequential. Following these phrases, Baby Doe begins to express that she is a “child of the moon.” The accompaniment raises in tessitura and achieves a floating feeling with sixteenth note passages. Throughout the aria, when the moon is being mentioned, the accompaniment sits higher and has many arpeggiated or scalar passages.

Moore writes this aria to sound and feel like it is floating. With constantly changing meters and syntax that extends over barlines, a rhythmic pattern is hard to establish. It is clear that the moon and silver exist in a dreamlike state for Baby Doe, and Moore uses high tessitura and placement in the voice and accompaniment for this purpose. In the upper accompaniment,

the pattern of four sixteenth notes set high above the staff is repeated when Baby Doe is talking about the moon and silver. This figure lends a “twinkling” sound to the texture.

As the aria continues, Baby Doe talks about all the places she sees silver. To her, silver is the country she lives in, the people she sees, the landscape that surrounds her, and even the very earth she stands on. Moore draws a comparison between silver and the ideals of America. Baby Doe feels that silver is in the very core of her soul and of her dreams. The climax of the aria comes on a high C#, sustained on the word “core.” While the voice floats on this note, the accompaniment sits in the staff as opposed to above it as it has been throughout the piece. A *portamento* down an octave from the high C# leads into a held final note for the voice on “of dreams” while the accompaniment (flute in the orchestra) has running sixteenth note figures descending to an A major cadential point.

The arias in *Baby Doe* stand out with their beautiful melodic lines, diatonic movement, and perfectly placed climaxes. Douglas Moore was a lover of theater and text in addition to music. This aria uses music, text, and drama to fully embody Baby Doe and what she stands for in life.

CHAPTER 5

SPIRITUALS

The genre of spirituals can be a broad one. The form stems from the African practice of taking parts of hymns, folk and popular songs, and minstrel songs, and using them to create new songs.⁵⁴ This tradition originated as an oral one, using music to express the religious views and feelings of African Americans. Early spirituals were held in religious spaces such as churches or cabins after a religious service, often referred to as “camp meetings.”⁵⁵ Growing out of the African circular dance and praise form “ring shout” and Anglo-American hymnody, the spiritual was created.⁵⁶ The exact beginning of the spiritual as a genre is not agreed upon, but the 19th century brought a solidified form.

Spirituals have many defining characteristics, both in text and music. Syncopation is one of the most important aspects of the spiritual. Whether the melody itself or the accompaniment is played off of the beat, it is seen in a large part of spirituals. Complex rhythms show the dance influences that contributed to the genre. Another characteristic of the spiritual, and sometimes a result of their syncopation, is word stress. Often the text in spirituals is accented unlike natural speech patterns, and on the weak beats of the music. Musically, the pentatonic scale is defining of the form as well.

⁵⁴ Earl L. Stewart, *African American Music: An Introduction* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 21-22.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵⁶ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Spiritual,” (by Sandra Jean Graham), <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed March 31, 2013).

Textually, spirituals often keep with the Southern black dialect of Civil War times. Some examples of this dialect are replacing “th” with “t” or “d”, making “that” into “dat.” Also, in words ending in “ing” the “g” is dropped and the word “singing” becomes “singin.”⁵⁷ The form of a spiritual usually involves a verse and a refrain, or a call – and – response figure. This can be seen in choral arrangements with repeated refrains, or with a lead voice calling out a line and the group responding together.

Spirituals began as an oral tradition, but gathered renown and awareness through touring group performances and established composers using them in their own compositions. The Fisk Jubilee Singers of Fisk University travelled under the direction of George L. White and performed traditional arrangements of spirituals.⁵⁸ Famed Czech composer Antonin Dvořák was a great lover of spirituals, and was inspired by one of his students Henry T. Burleigh at the National Conservatory of Music in New York City.⁵⁹ This work with spirituals inspired composers to use and experiment with the genre. Some of these include Henry T. Burleigh, Robert Nathaniel Dett, William Grant Still, John Carter, Adolphus Hailstork, Charles Lloyd, Moses Hogan, and many others.⁶⁰

Come Down Angels (Trouble the Water) is a traditional tune arranged by Undine Smith Moore (1904 – 1989) in 1978. The form of this song adheres strictly to the refrain – chorus structure common in spirituals. The refrain of *Come Down Angels* is introduced in the beginning of the piece, then repeated once before the first verse. After the first verse, the refrain is repeated

⁵⁷ Stewart, *African American Music: An Introduction*, 25.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

again, followed by the second verse. The refrain returns again, then leads into a showy finish to the song with climactic high notes and high intensity. Throughout the piece, syncopated rhythms dominate in the voice as well as the accompaniment. The vocal line has few to no even rhythms, and is very repetitive. The accompaniment throughout has syncopated rhythms against straight rhythms, keeping the texture interesting to the ear.

Give Me Jesus is a well known traditional spiritual tune arranged by Moses Hogan (1957 – 2003). Hogan was one of the leading interpreters of spiritual and gospel music, both in solo and choral literature. This strophic piece offers ample opportunities for embellishments and stylization. The music is repetitive with different verses, and Hogan's arrangement is simple but beautiful. The voice adheres to straight rhythm throughout the piece. In between the verses, the accompaniment has short interludes embellishing the melody. During these interludes, the singer has time to pause and change mood or feeling for the next verse. This spiritual, while slow and simple, delivers a poignant message through interpretation and text.

This setting of the common text *Walk Together Children* is an *a capella* piece with melody by Byron Motley. The song presents the opportunity for artistic interpretation and personal choices. The rhythm and melody, while important to the integrity of the piece, can be lengthened or shortened for variation and style. The melody is repetitive with some embellishments written and some suggested. The dialect for the piece is noted in instances such as “gwinter” instead of “going to.” Also, irregular word accents such as emphasizing the second syllable of “tire” occur throughout the piece due to syncopated rhythms. Without an accompaniment, this spiritual relies on the interpretation of the singer, and can be shaped accordingly.

Ain't a dat Good News, arranged by Charles Lloyd Jr. (b.1948) is another example of a strophic setting of a popular spiritual text. Dialect is very important to the style of this piece, such as replacing the “th” of “that” with “d” resulting in “dat.” The vocal line and accompaniment begin simply, and as the verses go on, gather more rhythmic and melodic complexity. The piece builds as it goes, entertaining the listener and keeping a forward motion. This lively spiritual is a great, light ending to a set.

CHAPTER 6
WILLIAM BOLCOM

American composer William Bolcom was born on May 26, 1938 in Seattle, Washington. Eager to expand his studies in composition and piano, Bolcom studied with Darius Milhaud at Mills College, Leland Smith at Stanford University, and Milhaud and Oliver Messiaen in Paris at the Conservatory.⁶¹ With teaching positions upon his return to America at the University of Washington (1965-66) and Queens College (1968) in New York, Bolcom began to develop his style.⁶² From 1968-70, the composer spent his time in residence at Yale University, and began teaching at the University in 1973 until retirement in 2008.

After meeting and marrying mezzo-soprano Joan Morris in 1973, Bolcom and Morris presented numerous recitals and concerts together. The couple performed programs of popular music, show tunes, cabaret and ragtime inspired songs, as well as works by Bolcom himself.⁶³ In addition to performing, Bolcom composed his own music in many forms including chamber works, opera, choral works, cabaret music, and symphonic music.

William Bolcom received education from great composers like Milhaud and Messiaen. The composer refers to Charles Ives as his first influence, as well as his strongest. In his music, Bolcom blends popular styles with more academic, classical forms. Bolcom said, "I hope to embrace an enormous emotional range in music: from the sublime to the ridiculous, often both at

⁶¹ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Bolcom, William," (by Steven Johnson), <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed March 30, 2013).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ William Bolcom, "Biography," William Bolcom, <http://williambolcom.com/index.php?contentID=1011> (accessed March 30, 2013).

once, and everywhere in between.⁶⁴ Traces of Expressionism and 12-tone serialism can be heard in compositions of Bolcom in addition jazz and musical theater styles.

Bolcom won a Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for *12 New Etudes for Piano*, and in that same year, received a Grammy Award for his *Fourth Symphony*.⁶⁵ Inspired by William Blake, Bolcom set his poems to music in the large work for chorus, orchestra, and soloists. This work entitled *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, composed in 1984, remains one of the composer's best known vocal works. His operas received acclaim, some including *McTeague*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *A Wedding*. Bolcom was involved in the ragtime revival in New York City in the 1970's, and that style of theatrical and free music has always appealed to him.

The collection of songs called *Cabaret Songs* shows the drama that Bolcom brings to his music. Arnold Weinstein contributed the text for this collection, and says it is an, "elusive form of theater – poetry – lieder – pop – tavernacular – prayer."⁶⁶ The songs in the collection, true to Bolcom in the blending of theatrical style and classical composition, illustrate specific characters.

Amor, the last song in the first volume of *Cabaret Songs*, tells the story of a lighthearted, nonchalant girl. Wherever she goes, her good looks disrupt those around her, whether they are policemen, a court judge, or a choir. Marked as light, rhythmic, and in a Pachanga tempo (a Chilean dance), this piece has a playful sense about it. With heavy use of syncopation and rhythmic variance, the song moves quickly. Bolcom's musical theater, jazz, and popular music influences combine to musically illustrate the youth of the young heroine.

⁶⁴ Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 320.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 321.

In accordance with the Pachanga rhythm, most of the song is in 4/4. The few sections Bolcom changes the rhythm stand out in contrast rhythmically as well as harmonically. The accompaniment either plays the melody, or mirrors what the voice does in the beginning of the song. As the scene unfolds, however, the piano becomes more complex with syncopated rhythmic patterns in the left hand, and alternating on the beat/off the beat patterns in the right hand.

As the character in the song meets various people, each one is astounded by her appearance, and expresses how they feel by shouting “amor!” Each time, she is surprised, and eventually begins to simply scat, singing nonsense syllables over syncopated rhythms in the accompaniment. However, her disruptions of everyday town life bring her into court before a judge. Taken with the young heroine, the judge whispers “amor” and sends her on her way. As she is fleeing town, she hears a church choir singing “amor.” Bolcom sets the climax of the song suspensefully when describing what the choir is singing. With a *ritardando* leading up to a fermata on the “a” of “amor,” it almost sounds as if the choir is singing “Amen.” However, with the *a tempo* comes the second syllable of “Amor” and the young girl scats and “amors” her way out of town with light, rhythmic accompaniment.

Bolcom depicts the playful, surprising adventure of a young girl in a new place with jazz and gospel elements, theatrical accompaniment and vocal pairing, and playful rhythms in *Amor*. The composer and his wife still actively perform, and Bolcom still contributes music today that blends popular and classical elements. Using his influences, he creates a theatrical snapshot in a light, entertaining song.

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