

Summer 7-2-2015

Scholarly Program Notes

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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES

by

Jenna Mee Dosch

B.A., Luther College, 2013

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Music Degree

School of Music

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

August 2015

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES

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Jenna Mee Dosch

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

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Southern Illinois University Carbondale

July 2, 2015

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

JENNA MEE DOSCH, for the Master of Music degree in Music, presented on JULY 2, 2015, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Professor Timothy Fink

This document is a collection of biographical and musical information that serves to inform the audience about the music presented at the graduate recital of Jenna Mee Dosch and Richard Lisenby. The works discussed include classical and musical theatre repertoire composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Lehár, Edouard Lalo, Gilbert and Sullivan, Stephen Sondheim, Gary Geld, Stephen Flaherty, Adam Guettel, and Jason Robert Brown.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
ABSTRACT	i
CHAPTERS	
CHAPTER 1 – Mozart	1
CHAPTER 2 – Lehar	3
CHAPTER 3 – Lalo	5
CHAPTER 4 – Gilbert and Sullivan	7
CHAPTER 5 – Stephen Sondheim	9
CHAPTER 6- Gary Geld	16
CHAPTER 7- Stephen Flaherty	18
CHAPTER 8- Adam Guettel	20
CHAPTER 9- Jason Robert Brown	22
BIBLIOGRAPHY	25
VITA	29

CHAPTER 1

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART'S "ALLES FÜHLT DER LIEBE FREUDEN"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's (1756-1791) early musical talent was remarkable: he was composing by age five. His father Leopold Mozart, an accomplished violinist, noticed his son's emerging talent and abandoned his career to train Wolfgang. Young Mozart spent his childhood touring Europe performing for various courts, becoming a court musician in Salzburg at age 17. Although his time in Salzburg was prolific for his composing, he grew dissatisfied and moved to Vienna permanently, establishing his family there.

Mozart's work was epic in both scope and content. He composed over 600 works in a multitude of genres including operas, symphonies, concertos, piano solos, and chamber music. Mozart was particularly fond of opera, which is conspicuous his mastery of *opera buffa*, *opera seria*, and *Singspiel*. Six of his twenty operas are consistently seen in opera houses today, one of which is *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*).

Mozart finished composing *The Magic Flute* in 1791, with libretto by Emmanuel Schikaneder. *The Magic Flute* premiered on September 30, 1791 at Schikaneder's Theater auf der Wieden and was conducted by Mozart himself from the keyboard. The first performance was met with lukewarm approval, but gained more praise after the second performance. Thereafter, *The Magic Flute* quickly became a success which was a delight to Mozart in the final weeks of his life.¹ *The Magic Flute* contains folk-style and both comedic and serious elements, with the characters of the opera comprised of

¹ Hermann Abert, Stewart Spencer, and Cliff Eisen, *W.A. Mozart* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 342.

both high and low class ranking. *The Magic Flute* embraces the tradition of *Singspiel*, which consists of a story with songs interspersed with spoken dialogue. *Singspiel* translates literally to “sing-play,” which is evident in the aria “Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden.”

“Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden” is scored for piccolo, flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, and strings. This aria is sung by Monostatos, a chief of slaves. He comes upon Pamina, the daughter of the Queen of the Night, who is asleep in a garden. The aria begins with rapid sixteenth notes in the second violins, cello, and bass outlining the harmonic structure. Monostato’s melody is played by the piccolo, flute, and first violins, and it is marked *allegro* and *pp*. This is an interesting marking as it is difficult for any orchestra to achieve Mozart’s desired effect as the piccolo doubling both flute and first violins inevitably increases the volume. The beginning of Monostatos’ melody flickers around the key of C major, touching on the other scale degrees. The melodic structure in general is chaotic and disorganized, and Monostatos’ phrases are irregular. This reflects Monostatos’ awkward invocation to the moon to turn away so he can kiss the unconscious Pamina. The compositional structure of “Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden” heightens the frantic characterization of Monostatos while it simultaneously utilizes the structure of simple *singspiel* style.

CHAPTER 2

FRANZ LEHÁR'S "LIPPEN SCHWEIGEN"

Franz Lehár (1870-1948) attended the Prague Conservatorium, where he studied violin with Antonin Bennewitz. He was introduced to Antonin Dvorák while he was a student, and showed Dvorák some of his compositions. Dvorák encouraged Lehár to pursue composition, but the Prague Conservatorium allowed for a singular focus of either performance or composition. Lehár took his degree with violin and proceeded to become orchestra leader and chorus master of The Joint Municipal Theatres of Barmen-Elberfeld in the Rhineland. Through this job, Lehár was able to pass into the world of theatre.² Franz Lehár is most recognized for his operettas, the most successful and best known being *Die Lustige Witwe* (*The Merry Widow*).

The libretto was written by Viktor Léon and Leo Stein. The score was initially to be composed by Richard Heuberger. Heuberger had prevented Lehár from receiving the post of conductor to the Vienna Municipal Orchestra because of his supposed lack of knowledge of waltzes. Heuberger, however, struggled himself with composing waltzes and was unable to find inspiration for the composition of *The Merry Widow*, and the job was given to Lehár.³ *The Merry Widow* is comprised of three acts and tells a story of a rich widow and her countrymen's attempts to keep her money in the principality by finding her the correct husband.

The Merry Widow premiered in Vienna on December 30, 1905 at the Theater an der Wien. The audience was enthralled with the performance, since there arguably had

² W. Macqueen-Pope and D. L. Murray, *Fortune's Favourite; the Life and times of Franz Lehár* (London: Hutchinson, 1953), 23.

³ *Ibid*, 42.

not been music of this power or color before in operetta. They were particularly enthusiastic about the seductive, slow waltz "Lippen schweigen."⁴

"Lippen schweigen" is a waltz duet between the widow, Hanna, and Count Danilo, the First Secretary. The introduction is orchestrated for four-part strings and begins with a sustained, luxurious violin solo that is also the widow's melody. The cello provides a counter-melody as the string bass plays the downbeat of the waltz pizzicato. The tempo is rubato until Danilo's line enters, and a moderately brisk waltz tempo is established.

His vocal line is doubled in the violins while the rest of the strings provide the rhythmic accompaniment. He sings "violins whisper," which is reflected with the soft doubled violin line. Hanna's line begins much like the opening, with the same melody and a fluid rubato tempo. She sings "with every waltzing step" as the tempo slows. The cello plays a counter-melody just as it accommodated the violin solo line. The two characters proceed to waltz to a swelling recapitulation of Danilo's line played by the strings, with added woodwinds and harp. The couple closes the duet reiterating their love to each other, as there is an accelerando in the orchestra. The strings toy chromatically back and forth before a final tremolo that stresses the trembling, whirlwind declaration of love between the two characters.

⁴ Ibid, 45.

CHAPTER 3

ÉDOUARD LALO'S "VAINEMENT MA BIEN AIMÉE"

Édouard Lalo was born January 27, 1823 in Lille and died April 22, 1892 in Paris. Lalo was born into a military family and was discouraged from studying music. His early musical training began at the conservatory in Lille, but he transferred to the Paris Conservatoire when he was sixteen to study composition and violin. Lalo began composing in the 1840's, but abandoned composition to play viola with the Armingaud-Jacquard Quartet after experiencing a lack of publication and performance of his music. Lalo married Bernier de Maligny, a contralto, who performed his songs and inspired his first opera, *Fiesque*. Lalo unsuccessfully attempted to bring *Fiesque* to the stage. He gave up on *Fiesque* during the mid 1870's and took up Édouard Blau's libretto about the mysterious flooding of the medieval Breton city of Ys at the same time. This libretto interested Lalo as his wife's family originated from Brittany and he visited the region often. Lalo drafted the opera *Le Roi d'Ys* (*The King of Ys*) in 1875, but was unable to have it staged until 1887. It premiered by the Opéra-Comique May 7, 1888 to wild acclaim and ran one hundred performances within a little over a year.⁵

Le Roi d'Ys is a three act opera that is based on the Brittany legend of the drowned city of Ys. The King of Ys has two daughters, Margared and Rozenn. Margared is betrothed to a Prince who was a former enemy, but she is in love with a knight, Mylio.

⁵ Steven Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin De Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 238.

Mylio loves Rozenn, and on their wedding day, Margared has the sluices opened and waves flood the city. Half of the citizens drown and Maragared commits suicide.

"Vainement, ma bien-aimée" is scored primarily for strings, with added woodwinds. This aria is sung by Mylio on the day of his wedding to his wife-to-be. He is forbidden from seeing her in her chambers so he sings to her from outside, begging for a glimpse as the procession is about to begin. The piece begins in A flat major with an expressive, romantic solo cello line. The strings provide light accompaniment under Mylio's recitative, expressing his torment in not seeing her. The solo cello line is played once more, this time in the key of the aria, A major. The cello line gives way to woodwinds as a *poco accelerando* begins. The woodwinds are staccato, majestic, and grandiose, hinting toward the upcoming wedding procession. The woodwinds then decrescendo and as Mylio begins to sing, the accompaniment changes to pizzicato strings. The tempo slows as Mylio states he is determined to stay by her closed door.

The meter changes to 3/4 and the strings and flute play a swelling legato line. There is a rallentando over Mylio singing, "I shall stay here forever," and the meter changes back to 2/4 and the procession-like accompaniment returns for the second verse. Mylio sings about her kind heart and how he will see her soon. The tempo stretches as he sings about her hand reaching out toward his and the meter changes to 3/4 once again. The ending tempo of the aria is marked *lento* as he sings, "If she does not appear soon, I alas shall die."

CHAPTER 4

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN'S "A WAND'RING MINSTREL I"

Sir William Schwenck Gilbert (1836-1911) and Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842-1900), were born and died in London. Gilbert attended Great Ealing School where he wrote plays for the school. Sullivan had learned every band instrument by age eight and started composing soon after. Gilbert and Sullivan first collaborated in 1871 on *Thespis*, which mixed political satire and opera parody. Gilbert and Sullivan's theatrical partnership created fourteen comic operas between 1871 and 1896. The pair introduced content and form that influenced the development of musical theatre throughout the 20th century. Their best known works include *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *The Mikado*.

The Mikado (1885) is comprised of two acts and is one of their most frequently performed pieces. Set in the fictional Japanese town of Titipu, it focuses on a man Ko-Ko who is promoted to Lord High Executioner. Ko-Ko loves Yum-Yum, but she is in love with Nanki-Poo, a disguised musician and the son of the emperor of Japan.

Nanki-Poo sings "A Wand'ring Minstrel I" in the beginning of Act I as he introduces himself to the town as a traveling musician, while actually searching for Yum-Yum. It is a five part piece which allows the character to show off his skills. The time signature and tempo marking vary with each persona Nanki-Poo embodies. He begins singing as the minstrel, with the accompaniment scored much like a mandolin plucking. As Nanki-Poo transitions to being sentimental, the time signature switches to 3/4 and the tonality flirts between major and minor. Nanki-poo then sings about patriotism and the time signature changes to 4/4 with a spirited feel. The military march transitions to a

2/4 time signature as Nanki-poo sings as a sailor and the accompaniment has a jaunty feel. He returns to his opening statement of being a minstrel and closes the song musically the way it opened.

CHAPTER 5

STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Stephen Joshua Sondheim (1930) began studying piano at age six. Sondheim's parents divorced in 1942 and he moved with his mother to Doylestown, Pennsylvania, which was near the summer residence of Oscar Hammerstein. Stephen became friends with Oscar's son, Oscar Hammerstein II, and he formed a father-son relationship with Oscar himself. Sondheim wrote his first show *By George* at age fifteen and had it evaluated by Hammerstein. The two spent the next four years working together in what was the most defining time in formulating Sondheim's style. In an interview, Sondheim stated that he learned virtually everything from Hammerstein. "I learned from him how to tell a story and so on, and how to structure a song. He taught me the use of rhyme, and oh, everything. About character. Inconsistencies. Concision. What is effective on the stage, all kinds of things really."⁶

While attending Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, Sondheim performed duties in the preparation and rehearsals of *South Pacific* and *The King and I*. He graduated with honors and went on to study composition with Milton Babbitt. Sondheim later composed scripts for television. He wrote music and lyrics to his first musical *Saturday Night* in the early 1950s, but it was not produced after the lead producer died in 1955. Shortly after, Sondheim auditioned for Leonard Bernstein by playing his *Saturday Night* score and was offered the position of lyricist for the show *West Side Story*. Sondheim wanted to compose the music as well as the lyrics and

⁶ Stephen Sondheim, "Interview: Stephen Sondheim, Award-winning Composer and Lyricist," *Academy of Achievement*, July 5, 2005. Last modified April 28, 2008, <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/printmember/son0int-1>.

didn't want the job, but he took it at the urging of Hammerstein, who advised him that it would offer him the chance to get started on Broadway with top professionals.⁷ *West Side Story* was produced in 1957 and Sondheim followed this success by collaborating with Arthur Laurents on *Gypsy* which was produced in 1959.

Sondheim sought work where he could use both his musical and lyrical skills. He wrote music and lyrics for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in 1962 and won a Tony Award for Best Musical. He followed with two less successful musicals, *Anyone Can Whistle* and *Do I Hear a Waltz*. The 1970s were a musically productive time for Sondheim, composing for *Company*, *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *Pacific Overtures*, and *Sweeney Todd*. These musicals, save *Pacific Overtures*, all won Sondheim Tony Awards. All five were directed by Hal Prince. Sondheim again collaborated with Hal Prince on *Merrily We Roll Along* in 1981.

Sweeney Todd (1979 with book writer Hugh Wheeler) is based on the 1973 play of the same title by Christopher Bond. Sondheim attended the play and approached Hal Prince with the idea. The subject matter is frightening, and Sondheim searched early on for a musical language appropriate to the material. He discovered that one of the most effective devices in scary movies is continuous music, so he began to think in terms of constant underscoring with music full of unresolved dissonances that cause

⁷ Martin Gottfried, *Sondheim* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1993), 45.

suspense.⁸ The story of *Sweeney Todd* is about a man named Benjamin Barker, alias Sweeney Todd, who returns to London, England after fifteen years of banishment on trumped-up charges. Seeking revenge on the judge who banished him, Sweeney is a barber who murders some of his clients, turning them into meat pies, with the help of his landlady Mrs. Lovett and a simpleton boy they have acquired, Toby.

“Not While I’m Around” is sung by Toby to Mrs. Lovett. It is in the key of A flat Major and begins with sparse strings and harp. This is the primary instrumentation, with occasional woodwind and french horn lines. It is set in common time marked *molto rubato*, and is in AABA form. Toby begins by singing “Nothing’s gonna harm you, Not while I’m around.” The melody is legato and particularly memorable. Martin Gottfried said about Sondheim’s writing: “If melody is the musical element that connotes emotion, “Not While I’m Around” is the singular Sondheim song that seems driven not by its harmonies but by its melody. The melody is so stirring that it seems perfectly able to carry on alone, unexplained, unexploited, and unsupported by harmony. And when harmony does arrive it seems almost *demande*d by the turn of melodic phrase.”⁹

The B section abruptly modulates to A major and B major. It is marked *piu mosso, sempre rubato* and changes to 3/4 time. This quicker tempo suits Toby’s lyrics as he becomes increasingly protective of Mrs. Lovett, whom he calls “mum.” The return to the A section is marked *tempo primo* and modulates back to A flat Major. The last line of the song is the same as the first, and the instrumentation returns to the thin strings and harp, ending with a pizzicato bass note.

⁸ Ibid, 125.

⁹ Ibid, 142.

Sondheim's next two musicals *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Into the Woods* were both in collaboration with book writer and director James Lapine. *Into the Woods* (1987), Lapine had a notion of taking Grimm's fairy-tale characters and intertwining them in a wooded setting, where many of the stories take place. The story takes place in a fairytale time and focuses on a childless baker and his wife, who are told by a witch that they will be able to conceive only if they can find her four objects: a cow as white as milk, a cape as red as blood, hair as yellow as corn, and a slipper as pure as gold. Throughout their quest, the Baker and his Wife encounter Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and Jack, all who become part of their stories. While the Baker and his Wife achieve their goal at the end of the first act, and the second act deals with the consequences of what they did to get there.¹⁰

"Giants in the Sky" is sung by Jack, a young adventurous boy. Jack has just returned from his journey to the top of a beanstalk and recounts his adventure to the Baker. It begins in A flat Major on a tonic chord with an added seventh. Both chords are notated in the treble clef. Jack sings after the chord "There are Giants in the sky!", followed by a chord cluster notated entirely in the bass clef. Sondheim arranges the opening chords this way, depicting Jack in the sky with the treble clef and the booming giant with the bass clef. After Jack's initial declaration, the orchestration provides a syncopated motive that accompanies the majority of his verses. The tempo broadens

¹⁰ Stephen Sondheim, *Look, I Made a Hat: Collected Lyrics (1981-2011) with Attendant Comments, Amplifications, Dogmas, Harangues, Digressions, Anecdotes and Miscellany* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 57.

as Jack reaches the chorus. Each time Jack sings the chorus, a melody echoes him in the strings. This same melody is sung by the witch to her daughter, Rapunzel, in an effort to protect her. Her text of the melody is “Don’t you know what’s out there in the world?” Her message is foreshadowing to Jack, as he just stole gold from the giant. Jack’s stealing triggers the giant’s wife to destroy their village, and Jack’s mother dies as a result.

Sunday in the Park with George was written in 1984. This was Sondheim's first collaboration with James Lapine. The story is based on Georges Seurat’s famous pointillistic painting, *Un dimanche après-midi à l’Île de la Grande Jatte (A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte)*. Act One concerns Seurat and the sacrifices he makes in order to complete his painting. Act Two portrays the artistic crisis experienced by his great-grandson, an American conceptual artist in his forties, named George.¹¹ The concept for *Sunday in the Park* began with Lapine and his use of the painting in a play he directed called *Photograph*. Sondheim mentioned his choice of painting and how it always looked like a stage set. Lapine then observed that no one in the painting was looking at anybody, it is as if they're hiding from each other. He stated the main character, the artist, was missing. Sondheim felt that was the moment the story began. "It's about a man who controls the landscape. Once you say the artist is the main character, then you know at least one of your themes is going to be about creativity. The other interesting thing, was that pointillism does exactly what we were trying, or we were trying to do what pointillism does, which is take this image and that

¹¹ Ibid, 3.

image-meaning emotional images, character, et cetera-and make them so they all finally come together and make a whole that tells a story."¹²

"Finishing the Hat" embodies the concept of pointillism, as the entire song is made up of incomplete sentences until the very last stanza. "Finishing the Hat" is sung by George in the second half of Act One. Dot, the woman George has been seeing, is now seeing a new man, Louis. Although it is clear Dot loves and misses George, she tells George that Louis needs her in a way he never did and has decided to remain with Louis. It is composed in the key of G flat major and metered in common time, though the syncopated middle lines blur any strict sense of meter. It is orchestrated for piano, strings, harp, woodwinds, French horn, trumpet, trombone, triangle, and synthesizer. It begins with *arco* strings and a triangle strike as George says that Dot was always going to leave him. The tempo picks up with added woodwinds as George reflects on her lack of understanding, and how no one has ever understood him. There is a *poco rallentando* as he sings "But if anybody could..." and the piano takes over the orchestration and provides major third harmonies for the rest of the piece. George then sings about "finishing the hat," or continuing on with his art as opposed to other distractions. He sings "How you watch the rest of the world from a window" and the accompaniment stops flowing and holds a tenuto dotted half note with harmonic suspension. This occurs three more times throughout the song as he sings the word "window." The entire piece is rich with lush harmonies contributed by harp, strings and woodwinds, mingling with the constant piano line. The instrumentation of the harmonies is ever-changing, which is reflective of his stream of consciousness, as well as

¹² Stephen Sondheim, "Interview."

pointillism. He ends by singing “Finishing a hat . . . Starting on a hat . . . Finishing a hat...Look, I made a hat...Where there never was a hat ... ” George is justifying his lack of participation in life with the importance of his art.

CHAPTER SIX

GARY GELD'S "THE ONLY HOME I KNOW"

Gary Geld's (1935) parents passed away when he was three years old, and he grew up in an orphanage in Clifton, New Jersey. He studied composition and piano at Juilliard, also receiving a Business Administration degree from New York University in 1957. Geld formed a collaboration with playwright Peter Udell and began to write popular music. He experienced much success with pop music and was awarded multiple gold records. Shortly after moving to Los Angeles, CA in 1968 follows the British pop invasion, Geld received a call from producer Philip Rose who was interested in having Geld compose for a musical adaptation of the Ossie Davis play, *Purlie*. *Purlie* debuted in 1970, awarding Geld both a Tony and Grammy nomination. Geld and Udell continued to collaborate writing their next musical *Shenandoah*.

Shenandoah was written in 1974 with music and lyrics by Geld and Udell, and a book by Udell, Philip Rose, and James Lee Barrett. It premiered in East Haddam, Connecticut in 1974 and moved to Broadway, opening January 7, 1975. *Shenandoah* ran for a total of 1,050 performances. The musical tells the story of Charlie Anderson, a pacifist widower living in Virginia during the Civil War who refuses to participate in the war, until he is forced to by the abduction of one son and the death of another.

"The Only Home I Know" is sung by a Corporal in the war during Act Two. Traditionally sung by multiple soldiers as a solo and chorus, it has been adapted for solo voice. It is composed in D minor in common time and is marked *Andante Rubato*. It is written in AABA format and originally orchestrated for guitar, strings, harmonica, and chorus. The reduced orchestration is extremely sparse consisting mostly of rolled

chords on downbeats as the corporal reminiscences about his home that is surely longing for him. The simple harmonic structure and singable melody are both recognizable factors of Geld's composition of popular music.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STEPHEN FLAHERTY'S "OUR CHILDREN"

Stephen Flaherty (1960) began studying piano at age seven, later studying composition at University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Flaherty moved to New York in 1982 and joined the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop, there he met Lynn Ahrens, who would become his longtime collaborator. Flaherty and Ahrens produced their first show, a children's show, called *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Their next musical produced was *Lucky Stiff*, produced Off-Broadway in 1989, and their first Broadway musical was *Once on this Island* in 1990. The two have gone on to write many successful musicals in contrasting styles including *Ragtime*, *Seussical*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life*, *The Glorious Ones*, and *Rocky the Musical*.

Ragtime premiered on December 8, 1996 with a book by Terrence McNally. It is based on the 1975 novel of the same name by E. L. Doctorow, which explores American culture at the turn of the 20th century. McNally's story follows the lives of a white protestant upper-class family, an African-American couple, and some Eastern-European Jewish immigrants as their lives intersect while as they all try to find success in America. It closely focuses on: Mother, the white housewife; Coalhouse, an African-American musician; and Tateh, a European-Jewish immigrant artist.¹³

"Our Children" occurs in Act Two and is sung by Tateh and Mother. Violence has prompted Father to move their family to Atlantic City. Upon their arrival, the family

¹³ "Ragtime," *Ahrens Flaherty: The Official Website*, accessed May 23, 2015, <http://www.ahrensandflaherty.com/theatre.html>.

encounters a film crew led by Tateh, who has renamed himself “Baron Ashkenazy.” Tateh’s daughter and Mother’s son become fast friends, sparking a friendship between Mother and Tateh. The song is composed in 3/4 meter in D Major. It opens with a simple waltz reminiscent of a calliope. Mother and Tateh take turns singing of their children playing and laughing. As they start to sing together their vocal lines are doubled and the simple waltz-like bass line shortens to running eighth notes. The tempo broadens and the key modulates to E flat Major as they sing “There they stand, making footprints in the sand.” They then sing “Two small lives, silhouetted by the blue, one like me and one like-” followed by a break in the orchestration, and they sing “you” on beat two of the following measure. This perfectly mimics their hesitation at their growing unspoken, undeniable connection.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ADAM GUETTEL'S "HOW GLORY GOES"

Adam Guettel's (1964) father Henry is a film executive and his mother Mary is a writer/composer and daughter of composer Richard Rodgers. Adam grew up singing as a boy soprano for both the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera. Graduating with a degree in composition from Yale University in 1987, his first show was a version of *A Christmas Carol*, written with his friend Tina Landau in 1991. He was discovered by producing director Marjorie Sarnoff, who commissioned Guettel and Landau to write *Floyd Collins*. Following *Floyd Collins*, Guettel composed *Myths and Hymns* and the critically acclaimed *The Light in the Piazza*, which won Tony awards for Best Original Score and Best Orchestrations. Guettel's work is lesser known as much of it has been performed by nonprofit theatres. His work fit the growing number of musicals in the 1990s whose scale, tone, or subject matter is more suited to the aesthetics, spaces, and audiences of the nonprofit theatres than to the large commercial houses.¹⁴

Floyd Collins premiered at the American Music Theater Festival in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1994 and moved to Off-Broadway in New York on February 9, 1996. It is based on real events which took place in and around Sand Cave, Kentucky in 1925. Floyd was a local cave owner and operator who was attempting to discover a new cave that would prove his theory that many caves in the region were part of one, giant underground system. In the midst of exploring, he became trapped in Sand Cave, 150

¹⁴ Miranda, Lundskaer-Nielsen, *Directors and the New Musical Drama: British and American Musical Theatre in the 1980s and 90s* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 102.

feet below the ground. What began as a small rescue attempt erupted into a national crisis, drawing attention of an estimated 20,000 onlookers. The site became a carnival of sorts and Collins was all but forgotten. He died underground and was rescued a mere three days following.¹⁵

“How Glory Goes” is the final scene in *Floyd Collins*. Floyd ponders what heaven could be like as he faces the reality of his imminent death. It is orchestrated for piano, strings, and guitar. It is loosely written in B flat major, as the harmonies frequently chromaticize and modulate. The reduced orchestrated accompanying rhythm for the majority of the song consists of steady eighth notes in the right hand and a syncopated dotted eighth rhythm in the left hand. The constant eighth notes are reflective of the time ticking by in Floyd’s final conscious moments. It is marked *piano*, and the light, ethereal, and soft underscoring represents Floyd’s ideas of heaven.

¹⁵ Ibid, 3.

CHAPTER NINE

JASON ROBERT BROWN

Musical theatre composer, lyricist, and playwright Jason Robert Brown (1970) is recognized as one of Broadway's smartest and most sophisticated writers since Stephen Sondheim. *Sweeney Todd* and *Sunday in the Park with George* were two of his biggest influences and Brown has said, had it not been for them, he would have joined a rock band. Brown attended the Eastman School of Music for two years. His rhythmically challenging piano reductions evidence Brown's skill as a pianist. He often serves as music director, conductor, pianist, and orchestrator for his own productions.

Brown made his Broadway debut with *Parade* on December 17th, 1998. It is based on the 1913 trial of Jewish factory manager Leo Frank, who was accused and convicted of raping and murdering his thirteen year old employee, Mary Phagan. The trial was sensationalized by the media and aroused anti-Semitic tensions in the state of Georgia. After conviction, Leo Frank was taken to a prison in Milledgeville, Georgia, where he was kidnapped by a lynching party. He was then taken to Mary Phagan's hometown of Marietta, Georgia where he was hanged from an oak tree.

"It's Hard to Speak my Heart" is sung by Leo at the end of the first act. Leo is allowed to give a personal statement as the trial is concluding. He offers a heartfelt plea, begging to be believed, but it is not enough and he is found guilty. Brown said of Leo, "He was very hard to find musically, to figure out how he sang. Some people suggest a problem with the show now is that Leo doesn't sing enough, but I can't imagine him singing more than he does. He always seemed to me to be a very

buttoned-up, closed person, someone who doesn't naturally sing."¹⁶ "It's Hard to Speak my Heart" is composed in E Major and in common time. It is orchestrated for piano, strings, woodwinds, english horn, and trombone. It begins with steady open E major quarter notes on piano, indicative of Leo's heart beating. The instrumentation increases as Leo's statement grows in urgency.

The Last Five Years explores a five year relationship between Jewish rising novelist Jamie Wellerstein and struggling actress Cathy Hiatt. Cathy's story is told in reverse chronological order (beginning the show at the end of their marriage), and Jamie's story is told in chronological order (starting just after the couple first met). Jamie and Cathy do not directly interact, except during their wedding duet, which is also the center of their two timelines. "The Schmuel Song" is sung by Jamie as they celebrate their first Christmas together. He tells her an elaborate story he has written about an old tailor named Schmuel and his dream of sewing the perfect dress. The clock on the wall encourages Schmuel to follow his dream and Schmuel reluctantly begins to see. As he sews, the clock rewinds time and Schmuel becomes young and marries a girl who wears his perfect dress. Jamie relates this story to Cathy and her dream of becoming an actress. He gives Cathy her Christmas present, a watch, and promises to support her in following her dream.

It begins in F sharp minor and the meter changes from 4/4 to 7/8 and 2/4. The song consists of three characters, Schmuel, the clock, and the narrator (Jamie). Jamie lays the groundwork of the story as the narrator and the accompaniment is staccato and eastern European folk-sounding. The narrator sections are orchestrated for pizzicato

¹⁶ Jason Robert Brown, interview by Gregory Bossler, *Jason Robert Brown*, last modified November 1, 1999, <http://jasonrobertbrown.com/1999/11/01/jason-robert-brown/>

strings and guitar. The clock sections are orchestrated with guitar, electric bass, and piano. It is written in 4/4 time and has a grooving rock feel.

13: *The Musical* was the first and only all teenager cast and band in the history of Broadway. The show focuses on Evan Goldman and his navigation of the complicated social circles of a new middle school. "Bad Bad News" is sung by Eddie, Malcom, Simon, and Richie. The four, and their friend Brett, form the group of popular boys at school. Brett has been ditching his friends to spend time with his girlfriend, Lucy, and the four adolescents complain that she is nothing but trouble.

"Bad Bad News" is scored for piano, electric guitar, and electric bass in A major and in 12/8 time. It is composed in standard pop verse-chorus form. The song is simple and playful in nature, which allows the four boys' lyrics to stand out.

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Scholarly Program Notes

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