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Scholarly Program Notes on the Graduate Voice Recital of Emily Davis

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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES ON THE GRADUATE VOICE RECITAL OF EMILY
DAVIS

by

Emily Davis

B.A. Music, Luther College, 2013

B.A. History, Luther College, 2013

A Research Paper

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

Department of Music
in the Graduate School
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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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:

Dr. David Dillard, Chair

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Graduate School
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EMILY DAVIS, for the Master of Music degree in VOCAL PERFORMANCE, presented on March 22, 2015, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES ON THE GRADUATE VOICE RECITAL OF EMILY DAVIS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. David Dillard

An in-depth study of the repertoire on the Vocal Recital of Master's Candidate Emily Davis, this research paper contains biographical information about each composer, background on the larger works, and musical analysis of individual pieces. The repertoire discussed includes: Mozart's *Exsultate, jubilate*; *Zwei Gesänge*, Op. 91 by Brahms; "Les Papillons", "Sérénade italienne", and "Le Colibri" from Chausson's *Sept mélodies*, Op. 2; "Salce, salce" and "Ave Maria" from *Otello* by Verdi; Amy Beach's *Three Browning Songs*, Op. 44; "They Say It's Wonderful" from *Annie Get Your Gun* by Irving Berlin; and "A Trip to the Library" from Bock and Harnick's show *She Loves Me*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ABSTRACT	i
CHAPTERS	
CHAPTER 1 – W. A. Mozart	1
CHAPTER 2 – Johannes Brahms	4
CHAPTER 3 – Ernest Chausson	10
CHAPTER 4 – Giuseppe Verdi.....	15
CHAPTER 5 – Amy Beach	23
CHAPTER 6 – Irving Berlin	28
CHAPTER 7 – Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick.....	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	34
VITA	37

CHAPTER 1

W. A. MOZART

Born in 1756, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed in almost every genre during the Classical era. A child prodigy, Mozart studied piano and violin, and completed his first compositions at the age of five. In attempts to further his son's career, Mozart's father, Leopold, toured Mozart around Europe performing and composing for audiences. During an early trip to Milan, Mozart found success in writing operas, and composed *Lucio Silla* (1772) starring famous castrato Venanzio Rauzzini as Cecilio. Rauzzini heavily contributed to the opera's well-reception, and to showcase his vocal abilities, Mozart wrote the solo motet *Exsultate, jubilate* (K. 165). One of two solo motets Mozart composed during his life, *Exsultate, jubilate* premiered at Milan's Theatine Church on January 17, 1773 during Mass. Because Mozart's early Italian operas are seldom performed, this motet best represents Mozart's early vocal style to contemporary audiences.¹

The form of *Exsultate, jubilate* follows the contemporary Italian motet, defined in a treatise by Johann Joachim Quantz in 1752: a sacred solo cantata including two arias, two recitatives and ending with an Alleluia. Like J.S. Bach's solo cantata for soprano, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, Mozart omitted the second recitative, transitioning from the second aria immediately into the Alleluia.² Originally orchestrated for strings, continuo, French horn and oboe, Mozart substituted flutes for oboes in a revised edition after returning to Salzburg in 1779. The first aria, a lively, virtuosic movement, blends Baroque ritornello form with sonata form

¹ Konrad Küster, *Mozart: A Musical Biography*, trans. Mary Whittall (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 26.

² *Ibid.*, 27.

standardized during the Classical era with a Psalm-like text praising the Lord. A calming recitative is followed by a prayer to the Virgin Mary, slower in tempo, without horns and oboes, and in sonata form. Completing the motet, the Alleluia, in a quasi-rondo form, includes extended coloratura passages which demonstrated Rauzzini's vocal agility.³ Vocal motet forms became the basis on which Mozart composed instrumental concertos, a prominent genre in Mozart's compositional output.

The extended orchestral introduction includes both major melodic themes repeated throughout the aria. The first, beginning on the tonic pitch and descending a fourth, is found in the retrograde when the vocalist enters, providing pleasant voice exchange and counterpoint between soloist and accompaniment. After the opening statement of the vocal melody cadences in the tonic, Mozart utilizes the subdominant as a transition to the dominant. A half-cadence in the dominant followed by the second theme perfectly mirrors the orchestral introduction. This section includes extended coloratura passages at the conclusion of the phrase, "Let the heavens sing with me", symbolizing a universal invitation and each of the three melismas occur after this phrase of text adding continuity to the aria. The opening vocal melody appears in the dominant key and the same transitional melody in the subdominant is used to return back to tonic. Leading into the final cadenza, the accompaniment changes from harmonic support to open octaves, setting up the ending of the aria. The postlude repeats the last six measures of the introduction, adding a dimension of symmetry to the aria. Like much of his music, Mozart recycles the same melodies multiple times within a single movement, and slight variations across multiple

³ Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe, ed., *The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 294-295.

tonalities add musical interest. The orchestra provides harmonic and contrapuntal support to the lively vocal melody capturing the essence of the exuberant text.

Exsultate, jubilate,

O vos animae beatae
exsultate, jubilate,
dulcia cantica canendo;
cantui vestro respondendo
psallant aethera cum me.

Text author unknown

Rejoice, be glad,

O you blessed souls
Rejoice, be glad,
Singing sweet songs;
In response to your singing
Let the heavens sing forth with me.

Translation by Elizabeth Parcells

CHAPTER 2

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born in Hamburg on May 7, 1833, Johannes Brahms was one of the most prolific German composers of the 19th century. As a boy he studied violin with his father who played double bass at the Hamburg State Theater. This early exposure to music launched his education in piano with Otto Cossel and theory and composition with Eduard Marxsen. A collector of manuscripts, Brahms diligently expanded his interests to history, visual arts, and literature. It was music, however, in which Brahms excelled the most and 1848 marked his public debut as a pianist in Hamburg. At the age of 19, he commenced his composition career while touring with the Hungarian violinist Eduard Remenyi, meeting several notable musicians including Joseph Joachim, Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, and Robert and Clara Schumann. During Brahms' first visit to Vienna in 1862 he fell in love with the city and remained there until his death in 1897. Later in his life, after the death of Robert Schumann, he taught piano to Princess Friederike and conducted the choir in the court of Lippe-Detmold. Despite these engagements, Brahms continued composing several of his large works and continued throughout the end of his life.

As a composer, Brahms mastered every large form except for opera, which he never attempted. His compositional style reflected Romantic Era lyricism, but Brahms tended to write in Classical forms because of their rigor and symmetry. The symphonies of Beethoven served as models for Brahms' larger forms of chamber and orchestral music, the songs of Schubert and Schumann influenced his smaller piano works and *lieder*.⁴ Universally, Brahms demonstrated his skill at developing musical material throughout a piece. Other composers took from

⁴ George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51879> (accessed November 12, 2014).

Brahms' compositional style systematic construction of movements, and economy and richness of style because Brahms' music contained both freedom and strictness in forms, musical line, textures, and rhythms.

Brahms' vocal works displayed a dichotomy of simplicity of melody, yet complexity of composition. He composed nearly 200 *lieder* between 1853 and 1896, many of which included an emotional intensity and expressive impact that is unique to his compositions. Strong base lines provide contrapuntal interplay between voices, and inner voices enrich chromatic inflection, typical of the romantic era. Brahms used varied strophic forms and included many folk characteristics. In addition to solo *lieder*, Brahms arranged 100 folk songs, and incorporated folk and dance idioms.⁵ Despite the folk influences, however, Brahms' songs are highly sophisticated, refined, and polished. He selected texts by lesser known, mediocre poets that left room for enhancement by the musical setting. Once he selected a poem, Brahms recited it aloud until he felt effortless in communicating its message and the meter, rhythm and form flowed inevitably out of the spoken message. He explored themes of passionate love, unrewarded faithfulness, loneliness, longing for home, and passing of life. Like most German Romantic *lieder*, the texts compare nature and natural objects with the emotions of the human heart.

Joseph Joachim, prominent violinist and violist of his day, developed a close personal friendship with Brahms in 1853. After meeting in Hanover, the two quickly became close friends and stayed in contact. In February of 1863, Joachim wrote to Brahms about his new fiancé, mezzo-soprano Amalie Schneeweiss, a close musical partner. While their marriage started out lovely, by 1880 Joachim wrongfully suspected his wife of having an affair with Fritz

⁵ Ibid.

August Simrock, Brahms' primary publisher. Ultimately, the marriage fell apart and Brahms' testimony against Joachim brought the end of their friendship and professional relationship. It was for Joachim and Amalie that Brahms wrote two songs for contralto, viola, and piano, with the intention that they not be published, but simply songs the three friends could perform together. Later in his career "Gestillte Sehnsucht" and "Geistliches Wiegenlied" were published as Op. 91.

"Gestillte Sehnsucht", published first in the set, was composed years later than the second. Brahms hoped that making music together again would remind Joachim and Amalie of happier times, but was unsuccessful in his endeavor. The text of "Gestillte Sehnsucht", by well-known German poet Friedrich Rückert, contrasts a golden evening in the countryside to restless feelings of love.⁶ The viola is the first to carry the melody over the top descending arpeggiated chords in the piano, and creates a sense of anticipation rhythmically. Contrasting melodically and rhythmically, the vocal melody intertwines with the viola line while the piano supplies harmonic structure. The wind in the second stanza is represented by the active viola line which in turn completes the melody after the cadence of the vocal line. Dramatically switching to the minor mode, the third stanza changes character to agitation and distress as the text expresses the torments of lost love. The harmonic rhythm speeds and the piano and viola contrast with two-against-three rhythms. Musically beginning the same as the second stanza, the fourth stanza cadences in the minor mode as the text references falling into sleep, analogous for death. The final two stanzas are melodically identical to the beginning in both the voice and viola with a rhythmically augmented final phrase. Closing in a peaceful, soothing manner, the viola and

⁶ A. Craig Bell, *Brahms-The Vocal Music* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 237.

piano finish out the piece in the major mode leaving a sense of hopeful resolution, a tactic unsuccessfully employed by Brahms to bring Joachim and his wife back together.

Gestillte Sehnsucht

In gold'nen Abendschein getaucht,
Wie feierlich die Wälder steh'n!
In leise Stimmen der Vöglein hauchet
Des Abendwindes leises Weh'n.
Was lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein?
Sie lispeln die Welt in Schlummer ein.

Ihr Wünsche, die ihr stets euch reget
Im Herzen sonder Rast und Ruh!
Du Sehnen, das die Brust beweget,
Wann ruhest du, wann schulmerst du?
Beim Lispeln der Winde, der Vögelein,
Ihr sehnenen Wünsche, wann schlaft ihr ein?

Ach, wenn nicht mehr in gold'ne Fernen
Mein Geist auf Traumgefieder eilt,
Nicht mehr an ewig fernen Sternen
Mit sehndem Blick mein Auge weilt;
Dann lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein
Mit meinem Sehnen mein Leben ein.
Text by Friedrich Rückert

Stilled Longing

Steeped in a golden evening glow,
how solemnly the forests stand!
In gentle voices the little birds breathe
into the soft fluttering of evening breezes.
What does the wind whisper, and the little birds?
They whisper the world into slumber.

You, my desires, that stir
in my heart without rest or peace!
You longings that move my heart,
When will you rest, when will you sleep?
By the whispering of the wind, and of the little birds,
You yearning desires, when will you fall asleep?

Alas, when no longer into the golden distance
does my spirit hurry on dream-wings,
when no more on the eternally distant stars
does my longing gaze rest;
Then the wind and the little birds
will whisper away my longing, along with my life.
Translation by Emily Ezust

Brahms composed “Geistliches Wiegenlied” after the birth of Joachim and Amalie’s first son in 1864, who they named Johannes in honor of their friend.⁷ The viola begins with the melody of the German lullaby, “Josef, lieber Josef mien,” harkening to Jesus’ birth and Joachim’s paternal instinct. The voice and piano melodies, inversions of the viola’s hymn, provide lovely counterpoint and create continuity between the voices. Just as in the first song, there is a contrasting B section which changes in tonality, meter, and mood. The piano, viola, and vocal melody work together in a trio-like fashion, with each part being equally interesting, independent, and important. The agitation foreshadows Christ’s death and suffering, with an intensity that is in stark contrast with the rocking feeling of the initial melody. A complete iteration of the opening section follows, but with different text. The final repetition of the

⁷ Bozarth.

ritornello, “stillet die Wipfel, es schlummert mein Kind” ends the vocal melody followed by an abbreviated restatement of the opening hymn melody in the viola.

Geistliches Wiegenlied

Die ihr schwebet
Um diese Palmen
In Nacht und Wind,
Ihr heiligen Engel,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.

You who hover
Around these palms
In night and wind,
You holy angels,
Silence the treetops!
Here sleeps my child.

Ihr Palmen von Bethlehem
In Windesbrausen,
Wie mögt ihr heute
So zornig sausen!
O rauscht nicht also,
Schweiget, neiget
Euch leis und lind;
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummer mein Kind.

You palms of Bethlehem
In the roaring wind,
How can you today
Bluster so angrily!
Oh roar not so,
Be still, bow
Softly and gently;
Silence the treetops!
Here sleeps my child.

Der Himmelsknabe
Duldet Beschwerde;
Ach, wie so müd er ward
Vom Leid der Erde.
Ach nun im Schlaf, ihm,
Leise gesänftigt,
Die Qual zerrinnt,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.

The child of heaven
Endures discomfort;
Oh, how tired he has become
Of earthly sorrow.
Oh, now in sleep,
Gently softened,
His pain fades,
Silence the treetops!
Here sleeps my child.

Grimmige Kälte
Sauset hernieder,
Womit dur deck ich
Des Kindleins Glieder!
O all' ihr Engel,
Die ihr geflügelt
Wandelt im Wind,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.

Fierce cold
Comes rushing,
How shall I cover
The little child's limbs?
Oh, all you angels,
You winged ones
Wandering in the wind,
Silence the treetops!
Here sleeps my child.

Adaptation by Emanuel von Geibel

Translation by Lawrence Snyder and Rebecca Park

Despite the fact that Brahms did not intend to publish the two songs as a set, they share several commonalities. The only two songs Brahms wrote for contralto, viola, and piano, “Gestillte Sehnsucht” and “Geistliches Wiegenlied” both highlight the specific abilities of the voice and viola, which are musically equal. Similar ranges of the two instruments allowed

Brahms to more easily pass melodic material between them. While the texts are by different poets, descriptions of the wind blowing through the trees unite the two songs and both pieces shift to a minor mode when the text changes to themes of suffering, pain, and a lack of rest. Brahms found success in providing musical symmetry to unite the compositions, yet enough contrast that the lengthy pieces retain interest.

CHAPTER 3

ERNEST CHAUSSON

Born in Paris on January 20, 1855, Ernest Chausson started his musical education at a young age, studying the works of the great Romantic composers. Because of minimal encounters with other children during his upbringing, Chausson encountered highly cultural experiences at a young age. After completing a degree in law, he entered the Paris Conservatoire at the age of 25 to study instrumentation with Jules Massenet, a prominent opera and art song composer. Soon after, Chausson left the Conservatoire to study privately with César Franck, who influenced Chausson's use of small forms. During his career, Chausson composed symphonies, concertos, opera, choral music, and chamber works, but he is most known for his *mélodies*, which span his entire compositional output. Along with music, Chausson enjoyed literature and drawing, and was a refined literary writer. He was most at ease when working with smaller forms, thus the sophistication needed for French *mélodie* suited him well.⁸ Unfortunately a bicycle accident ended his life at the age of 44, depriving musical and literary circles of what was to come.

Influenced by his teachers, Massenet and Franck, distinct characteristics identify Chausson's *mélodies*. Supported by harmonic richness, melodic lines often begin in a lower range and ascend gracefully, often returning to the initial pitch. Chausson used altered scale degrees, notably the flat sixth and seventh, to create particular moods that reflect the text. He turned away from heavy Romanticism and returned to Classical expressions, especially in forms and tempos. There is a Classical-like balance and simplicity to his *mélodies* along with

⁸ Jean-Pierre Barricelli and Leo Weinstein, *Ernest Chausson: The Composer's Life and Works* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 119, 121.

Romantic harmonic and melodic construction. Because of Chausson's literary expertise, the rhythms of the vocal line respond to the natural speech patterns of the poetry, and phrase structure proceeds naturally from the text.⁹ Accompaniment figures generally contain one unifying element, sustaining the mood of the piece throughout the *mélodie*. Chausson selected texts containing elegiac and mournful qualities, often with an indirect sense of suffering. While his early *mélodies* have a detached quality, his later works contain deeper, more expressive features. "Les Papillons", "Sérénade italienne", and "Le Colibri", all part of Op. 2 (1880), are characteristic of Chausson's first compositional period and contain shapely melodic lines and elegant harmonies, but lack the depth of feeling of his later works.

"Les Papillons", third in the set *Sept mélodies*, contrasts with other Chausson songs because of its sprightly, lively mood. The through-composed *mélodie* remains in the major mode without a hint of sadness; the metaphorical death is one of pleasure. Fluttering figures of constant sixteenth notes in the piano successfully represent butterfly wings, and internal anticipation¹⁰ The piano launches the song and does not pause until the phrase 'Fleur de mon âme, et j'y mourais,' dissolving into thin air by ascending to the top of the keyboard at the end. While primarily providing harmonic support and setting the musical mood, the chromatic passages in mm. 11-14 add another dimension of color to the simple *mélodie*.¹¹ Melodically, Chausson utilizes repeated pitches before a large interval to highlight important words, and brilliantly sets the question 'Dites, savez-vous où j'irais?' ending the phrase with an ascending

⁹ Ralph Scott Grover, *Ernest Chausson: The Man and His Music* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980), 69.

¹⁰ Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970), 93.

¹¹ Barbara Meister, *Nineteenth-Century French Song: Fauré, Chausson, Duparc, and Debussy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 181.

interval to properly inflect the sentence. Overall, the *mélodie* captures the lighthearted, carefree nature of the poem and provides lovely contrast in the set.

Les papillons

Les papillons couleur de neige
Volent par essaim sur la mer;
Beaux papillons blancs, quand pourrai-je
Prendre le bleu chemin de l'air?

Savez-vous o belle des belles,
Ma bayadère aux yeux de jais,
S'ils me voulaient prêter leurs ailes,
Dites, savez-vous, où j'irais?

Sans prendre un seul baiser aux roses,
A travers vallons et forêts,
J'irais à vos lèvres mi-closes,
Fleur de mon âme, et j'y mourrais.

Text by Théophile Gautier

The Butterflies

The snow-coloured butterflies
fly in swarms over the sea;
Beautiful white butterflies, when can I
take the blue path of the air?

Do you know, O fairest of the fair,
my dancing girl with the jet black eyes,
if they would lend me their wings,
tell me, do you know where I would go?

Without taking a single kiss from the roses,
across valleys and forests,
I would go to your half-closed lips,
flower of my soul, and there I would die.

Translation by Winifred Radford

As in “Les Papillons”, the piano accompaniment plays a major role in setting the mood of “Sérénade italienne”. In the opening two measures, triplet figures represent the rocking of the waves on the sea. The melody in the left hand introduces a two-against-three feel that continues in the vocal line for the remainder of the stanza. Chromatic figures that deviate from the rocking of the waves reflect the text ‘d’air,’ meaning breeze, and ‘voiles,’ sails. The sudden change to A-flat major in m. 21, coupled with more rapid piano figuration, expresses a sparkling quality of inward desires as the boat on the sea picks up speed.¹² Characteristic of Chausson’s early compositions, the opening melody is repeated in m. 27, after the musical climax, with variations in accompaniment to signify a change in the character’s emotional state. Chausson blended the melodic outline of the opening motive with the constant sixteenth notes of the previous section to reference early sentiments with the increased anticipation of new-found love. The postlude,

¹² Ibid., 184.

descending arpeggiated chords followed by an ascending scale to the final cadence, summarizes the emotional highs and lows expressed in the *mélodie*.

Sérénade Italienne

Partons en barque sur la mer
Pour passer la nuit aux étoiles.
Vois, il souffle juste assez d'air
Pour enfler la toile des voiles.

Le vieux pêcheur italien
Et ses deux fils, qui nous conduisent,
Écoutent mais n'entendent rien
Aux mots que nos bouches se disent.

Sur la mer calme et sombre, vois,
Nous pouvons échanger nos âmes,
Et nul ne comprendra nos voix,
Que la nuit, le ciel et les lames.
Text by Paul Bourget

Italian Serenade

Let us sail in a boat over the sea
to pass the night under the stars,
See, there is just enough breeze
to inflate the canvas of the sails.

The old Italian fisherman
and his two sons, who steer us,
listen but understand nothing
of the words which we speak.

On the sea, calm and dark, see
our souls may commune,
and none will understand our voices
but the night, the sky and the waves.
Translation by Winifred Radford

The last of *Sept mélodies*, “Le Colibri,” is one of Chausson’s most lyrical and overtly emotional songs.¹³ Unfolding in an effortless way, melodic material passes between voice and piano, especially at the end of vocal phrases. The piano introduction, based on an A-flat pedal tone, obscures tonality until the voice enters over a D-flat major triad. The bass line descends almost an octave before cadencing on the dominant in m. 10, providing fluid counterpoint against the gracefully ascending melodic line, characteristic of Chausson’s early period. Most interesting in this *mélodie* is the 5/4 meter which pushes the music from one measure to the next with the feeling that the sixth beat is missing, especially in descending eighth note melodies.¹⁴ In a roughly ternary form, the harmonic scheme of the first section returns at the end with a varying rhythmic pattern to fit the text. The texture also indicates form, as block chords give way to rolling descending arpeggios at the first musical climax on the word ‘vers’ before returning to

¹³ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005), 179.

¹⁴ Meister, 186-187.

blocked chords. Harmonically and melodically, the middle section beginning at m. 21 echoes the four measure piano introduction, extending the A-flat pedal to the cadence on A-flat⁷. The poetic climax appears on the next phrase, ‘Qu’il meurt,’ acting as a secondary musical climax and transitional phrase into the reiteration of the opening theme. Ending settled and harmonically complete, the postlude contains rolled chords in the tonic key, concluding the set calmly.

Because of its meter, chromatic harmonies, lyrical melodies, and ternary construction, “Le Colibri” is musically sophisticated for Chausson’s early compositional period.

Le colibri

Le vert colibri, le roi des collines,
Voyant la rosée et le soleil clair
Luire dans son nid tissé d’herbes fines,
Comme un frais rayon s’échappe dans l’air.

Il se hâte et vole aux sources voisines,
Où les bambous font le bruit de la mer,
Où l’açoka rouge aux odeurs divines
S’ouvre et porte au cœur un humide éclair.

Vers la fleur dorée il descend se pose,
Et boit tant d’amour dans la coupe rose,
Qu’il meurt ne sachant s’il l’a pu tarir!
nectar!

Sur ta lèvre pure, ô ma bien-aimée,
Telle aussi mon âme eut voulu mourir,
Du premier baiser qui l’a parfumée.
Text by Leconte de Lisle

The Hummingbird

The green hummingbird, the king of the hills,
seeing the dew and the bright sun
shining into his nest, woven of fine grasses,
darts into the air like a ray of light.

He hurries and flies to the nearby springs,
where bamboos make a sound like the sea,
where the red hibiscus with its divine fragrance
unfolds the dewy brilliance at its heart.

He descends to the golden flower, alights,
and drinks so much love from the rosy cup,
that he dies, not knowing if he had exhausted its

On your pure lips, O my beloved,
likewise my soul wished to die,
of the first kiss which perfumed it.
Translation by Winifred Radford

CHAPTER 4

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Born in October of 1813, Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi is most famous for his 30 operas. His last two, *Otello* and *Falstaff*, bring together elements of his composing throughout his career, and signal a change from the customary form of action-then-reflection to music as continuous drama. *Otello* was Verdi's attempt to break with the past and produce a new, modern conception of musical drama while still incorporating traditional Italian operatic elements. *Otello* premiered at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan on February 5, 1887 and was later revised for French audiences in 1894.

His prominence as an operatic composer was well established by the time the suggestion arose to use Shakespeare's *Othello* as the subject of another opera. The idea originated from Giulio Ricordi, the young director of the large Italina publishing house, who joined librettist Arrigo Boito, in promoting avant-garde artistic movements. In June of 1879 the two suggested using the story of *Othello* for an operatic libretto, and by the end of the year Boito finished a first draft. His libretto included new rhythmic devices in the text and a firm dramatic thread that continued throughout the duration of the story.¹⁵ Conductor Franco Faccio supported the work of Boito and Ricordi, and he suggested approaching Verdi to compose the opera. When Verdi first heard from Faccio and Ricordi about Boito's libretto, he was reluctant knowing Rossini had written a successful *Otello* already. In a letter to Ricordi, Verdi expressed his personal hesitance because if he read the libretto and liked it, he would feel committed to writing it. Conversely, if he did not care for Boito's work, Verdi would be reluctant to tell Boito. Once Verdi finally

¹⁵ Roger Parker, *The New Grove Guide to Verdi and His Operas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 215.

agreed to read it, Boito re-wrote large sections of his libretto because he wanted it to be as perfect as possible before handing it to Verdi. Verdi traveled to Milan to meet Boito and purchased his libretto without making a commitment to write the opera.¹⁶ After his decades of popularity, Verdi's critics accused him of being old-fashioned, but the prospect of writing an opera based on an avant-garde libretto was exciting. Once the writing commenced, Verdi conceded to Boito when disagreements arose because Boito was younger and brought fresh ideas to the long established composer. While not the most popular opera in Verdi's time, *Otello* has proven to be one of the most universally respected of Verdi's operas.

The constant flow of dramatic action made possible by the libretto set *Otello* apart from Verdi's earlier operas. In the primitive stages of composition, Verdi followed his established process, first writing musical sketches, which led to a 'skeleton score' and finally full orchestration. He composed in a series of intensive bursts, taking a significant time to finish the opera. Within the score Verdi included many components of traditional Italian opera such as a storm, drinking song, love duet, oath duet, mad scene and suicide all while fitting within the context of the dramatic story. New ideas organically arise out of previous action with a single structure of through-composed music comprising each act. Boito wrote the libretto in such a way that the verses followed the rules of Italian prosody, but could be read in a variety of verse meters which gave them the flexibility of prose. Verdi skillfully used this prose-like libretto and composed music that reflected the subtle changes in mood and emotion. Because the text does not follow a strict metric pattern, neither does the music, creating a stronger tie between music and text. Setting text to music extends time, which forced Boito omit many details from the

¹⁶ William Weaver, ed. *The Verdi-Boito Correspondence* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), lvii, lx, lxiv.

original Shakespeare play.¹⁷ However, Verdi was able to fill in some of those details of setting and character development through music adding a new level of dimension to the opera not found in the spoken play. It was the combination of Boito's dramatically based libretto and Verdi's ability to set the libretto in a flexible way which created a work that contained traditional Italian components but gave a fresh perspective to operatic composition.

Boito's story focuses on Othello, a great military leader who returns home after defeating the Turkish empire. His wife, Desdemona, defies her father, a Venetian senator, to marry Othello, and the first act of the opera ends with a passionate duet between the two lovers. Othello declares that he wishes to die in that moment of ecstasy and kisses his wife three times. However, in act two, Othello becomes irate as untrue rumors spread from Iago, Othello's officer who is jealous of Othello's fame, that Desdemona was seen with Cassio, Othello's captain. Iago stole a handkerchief from Desdemona and hid it among Cassio's belongings to incriminate both Cassio and Desdemona for infidelity. Othello's anger increases when Desdemona, unaware of Iago's perfidy, expresses to her husband that she hopes Cassio will be reinstated. To further his cause, Iago tells Othello that he overheard Cassio mumbling in his sleep about Desdemona. Othello confronts his wife about her supposed affair, but Desdemona's denial only furthers Othello's fury. After overhearing Cassio talk about his relations with a woman (Bianca) and seeing him pull out the handkerchief that Iago planted earlier, Othello swears vengeance on Desdemona because he believes her infidelity will bring the end of his glory and fame. Together, Othello and Iago decide that Desdemona will die strangled in her bed. Threatening Desdemona with a terrible curse, Othello dismisses his troops at the end of act three. Act four opens with

¹⁷ Sandra Corse, *Opera and the Uses of Language: Mozart, Verdi, and Britten* (Cranberry: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1987), 71.

Desdemona in her bedchambers with her handmaiden, Emilia, contemplating her impending death. She recounts a story her mother told of Barbara, a heartbroken young woman who sat outside weeping by the willow tree. Giving Emilia one final goodbye, Desdemona prays for the last time and lies down in bed. Othello enters her room and kisses his wife three times just as he did in their previous love duet. On the third kiss, Desdemona awakens and is suffocated by Othello. It is only after her death that Iago's scheme is exposed and, realizing his mistake, Othello stabs himself, falling next to his dead wife. As he lies dying, Othello attempts to kiss Desdemona three times again, but is unable to complete the third kiss before taking his final breath.¹⁸ The tragedy ends with the two lovers lying dead next to each other.

The opening of act four includes a lengthy orchestral introduction as Desdemona reflects on her impending death. Coming to terms with the tragedy of her situation, Desdemona asks Emilia to bury her wedding veil with her. Desdemona recounts the Willow Song that her mother's maid, Barbara, used to sing after her husband left her. As Desdemona begins to sing, the same melody heard earlier in the orchestral accompaniment gives the sense that Desdemona is completely isolated, despite the fact that Emilia is present.¹⁹ The Willow Song could be considered Desdemona's mad scene, but she is merely in a state of shock and is haunted by past memories, not insane. She frequently comments to Emilia between verses, and while she is more entrenched in her own story as she sings, Desdemona remains in tune with her surroundings.²⁰ As her story unfolds, the texture of the orchestra becomes thicker and more rhythmically active suggesting flowing rivers and tears. All is silent at the end of the fourth verse as Desdemona

¹⁸ Parker, 216-220, and William Berger, *Verdi with a Vengeance: An Energetic Guide to the Life and Complete Works of the King of Opera* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 413-414.

¹⁹ Course, 86.

²⁰ Berger, 412.

realizes how Barbara's story relates to her own. Desdemona hands her wedding ring to Emilia, asking her to put it away because Desdemona knows that her marriage is over and there is nothing she can do to stop Othello from killing her. Desdemona believes she hears noises outside the door, represented by tremolos in the orchestra, and thinking it is Othello coming to kill her, she cries out to Emilia. Emilia assures her it is just the wind and Desdemona finishes her story in a calm and settled manner, showing that she is at peace with her fate because she knows she was not unfaithful to her husband. As the clock strikes four, Desdemona gives Emilia one last emotional goodbye, knowing she will never see Emilia again.

The orchestral interlude between the Willow Song and Desdemona's Ave Maria is in a minor mode with chromatic descending tremolos in the bass underneath the same motive repeated several times in the upper voices. Desdemona's spirit is sinking further and further now that she is completely alone, and feels trapped mentally, emotionally and physically. Being of Catholic faith, Desdemona turns to the image of Mary, and out of the madness of her previous emotions comes a simple, yet glorious A-flat major triad followed by a melody harmonized in thirds. Desdemona recites the Ave Maria on a single pitch as if it were spoken, but the harmonic shifts under the voice illuminate the words as she prays the rosary for the last time. The aria proper is Desdemona's personal prayer as she calls out to Mary to pray for all the people, the sinner and the innocent, the weak, oppressed, and powerful, and those subject to injustice. Desdemona's melody flows freely and is supported by the orchestra in a homophonic texture with added harmonic interest. As Desdemona concludes her prayer, the orchestra repeats its opening melody and Desdemona almost silently restates the Ave Maria before finishing with the words "Ave" and "Amen". The postlude is calm and still, with slow descending thirds and a

cadence on an open A-flat major triad in first inversion. Contrasting with the impassioned prayer, the stillness of the postlude gives completion to Desdemona's emotional journey and leaves a settled atmosphere as Desdemona awaits her death.

Salce, salce

Mi pareva.
M'ingiunse di coricarmi e d'attenderlo.

Emilia, te ne prego,
Distendi sul mio letto la mio candida
Veste nuziale.
Senti! Se pria di te morire dovessi
Mi seppellisci con un di quei veli.
Son mesta tanto, tanto.

Mia madre aveva una povera ancella
Innamorate e bella;
Era il suo nome Barbara;
Amava un uom che poi l'abbandonò,
Cantava una cazione:
La canzone del Salice.
Mi disciogli le chiome.
Io questa sera ho la memoria piena di
Quella cantilena.

“Piangea cantando nell'erma landa,
Paingea la mesta.
O Salce! Salce! Salce!
Sedeo chinando sul sen la testa!
Salce! Salce! Salce!
Cantiamo! Cantiamo!
Il salce funebre sarà la mia ghirlanda.”

Affrettati; fra poco giunge Otello.

“Scorreano i rivi fra le zolle in fior,
Gemea quel core affranto,
E dalle ciglia le sgorgava il cor,
L'amara onda del pianto.
Salce! Salce! Salce!
Cantiamo! Cantiamo!
Il salce funebre sarà la mia ghirlanda.

Scendean l'augelli a vol dai rami cupi
Verso quel dolce canto.
E gli occhi suoi piangean tanto, tanto,
Da impietosir le rupi.”

Riponi questa'anello.
Povera Barbara!

The Willow Song

It seemed to me.
He told me to undress, get into bed and wait.

Emilia, please,
Lay out my pure white wedding garments
upon my bed.
Listen! If I happen to die before you
Bury me in one of those veils.
I am sad always, always.

My mother had a poor maid
She was in love and beautiful;
Her name was Barbara;
She loved a man that abandoned her,
And she sang a song:
The Willow Song.
Undo my hair.
This evening I have haunted memories
of this lullaby.

“She wept singing in the lonely land,
the sad girl wept.
O Willow! Willow! Willow!
She sat with her head upon her breast!
Willow! Willow! Willow!
Let us sing! Let us sing!
The willow will be my funeral garland.”

Hurry; Otello will be coming in a little while.

“The brook flowed between the flowering banks,
She moaned in grief,
And her eyes flowed with bitter tears,
in which her heart sought solace.
Willow! Willow! Willow!
Let us sing! Let us sing!
The willow will be my funeral garland.

The birds flew down from branches
towards this sweet singing.
And her eyes wept so much that,
the rocks pitied her.”

Here take this ring.
Poor Barbara!

Solea la storia con questo semplice suono finir:
saying:

“Egli era nato per la sua gloria, io per amar.”

Ascolta. Odo un lamento. Taci.
Chi batte a quella porta?

“Io per amarlo e per morir.
Cantiamo! Cantiamo!
Salce! Salce! Salce!”

Emilia, addio.
Come m’ardon le ciglia!
È presagio di pianto.
Buona notte.
Ah! Emilia, Emilia, addio,
Emilia, addio!

Ave Maria, piena di grazia,
Eletta fra le spose e le vergini sei tu,
Sia benedetto il frutto, o benedetta,
Di tue materne viscere, Gesù.

Prega per chi adorando a te, si prostra,
Prega pel peccator, per l’innocente,
E pel debole oppresso e pel possente,
Misero anch’esso, tua pietà dimostra.

Prega per chi sotto l’oltraggio piega
La fronte e sotto la malvagia sorte;
Per noi, per noi tu prega,
Prega sempre e nell’ora della morte nostra
Prega per noi, prega per noi, prega.

Ave Maria...nell’ora della morte.
Ave! Amen!
Libretto by Arrigo Boito

She used to end her song with this simple

“He was born for glory, I for love.”

Listen. I heard a moan. Quiet.
Who knocks at the door?

“I to love him and to die.
Let us sing! Let us sing!
Willow! Willow! Willow!”

Emilia, farewell.
How my eyes do burn!
It is the presence of weeping.
Good night.
Ah! Emilia, Emilia, farewell,
Emilia, farewell!

Hail Mary, full of grace,
chosen among wives and maidens art thou,
blessed be the fruit, o blessed one,
of thy womb, Jesus.

Pray for the one who kneels in prayer before you
pray for the sinner, for the one who is innocent,
and for the weak and oppressed, for the mighty,
and on the wretched, show thy mercy.

Pray for the one who bows his head
under injustice and under misfortune;
for us, pray thou for us,
pray ever and in the hour of our death
pray for us, pray for us, pray.

Hail Mary...in the hour of our death.
Hail! Amen!
Translation by Lori Decter Purcell

The entire scene is powerful because it draws upon so many raw human emotions of pain and fear, yet peace and the calming power of faith. Verdi intersperses recitative-like phrases between verses of the aria in the Willow Song to create an entire scene, not the typical recitative/aria format, which more accurately depicts the dramatic action musically. Figures in the orchestra describe Desdemona’s emotional state more specifically than her words and fluctuate between inner thoughts and exterior setting. While the Ave Maria follows the standard

convention of recitative/aria, the recitative does not push the plot forward. The entire scene constitutes a single stream of conscious thought, serving dramatic motivations over conventional musical structure, resulting in a powerful impact on performer and audience.

CHAPTER 5

AMY BEACH

Amy Marcy Cheney Beach was the only child born to paper manufacturer Charles Abbott Cheney and his wife Clara Imogene Marcy Cheney on September 5, 1867 in Henniker, New Hampshire. After moving to the Boston area in 1871, Clara, a singer and pianist, taught her daughter piano lessons. As a young child Beach showed great potential at the piano, and at the age of fifteen, Beach played her first concert with the Boston Symphony. Composition also came naturally to Beach, and per a suggestion from Wilhelm Gericke, conductor of the Boston Symphony, Beach studied the compositions of great musical masters. Only formally studying composition for one year, Beach was primarily self-taught in counterpoint, harmony, and language. At the age of eighteen, Beach married Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, who, twenty-five years her senior, worked as a Boston physician. Dr. Beach, a distinguished amateur musician, encouraged his wife to focus on composition, and after getting married, Beach put her piano performance career on hold. It was not until after the death of both her husband and her mother that Beach toured again as a concert soloist in 1911. Her first trip to Europe lasted four years in which she performed many of her own works with European symphony orchestras. Upon returning to the United States in 1914, Beach toured domestically as well. Throughout her life, when not composing, Beach enjoyed studying piano, especially the works of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, which allowed for an easy transition back to performing. She passed away at the age of 77 on December 27, 1944.²¹

²¹ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2001), 101-102, 105.

An outgrowth of late nineteenth century romantic music, the compositional style of Beach incorporated influences from Puccini, Liszt, and German Romantic composers. She avoided contemporary compositional trends, such as impressionism and atonality, and out of her 300 compositions, including a piano concerto, symphony, one-act opera, oratorio, chamber music, piano pieces, and choral works, art songs, numbering 117, comprised the largest percentage.²² Beginning with short songs and written cadenzas, her success with smaller forms led to larger works such as the *Gaelic Symphony* Op. 32, the first symphony published by an American female composer. Both American and European symphonies performed Beach's piano concerto, at times with Beach herself at the piano. However, Beach excelled at writing in smaller forms, which she enjoyed as a recreational activity, producing her greatest works.

In her compositions, Beach used chromaticism to highlight climatic moments or important changes in the text, which was reflective of the deep feelings from which the songs arose.²³ Universally her songs contain flowing, singable melodies, and because of her extensive background in piano, the accompaniments in her songs often incorporate melodies more memorable than the vocal line.²⁴ Beach also used the piano to set the mood of the piece, support the voice, and act as the unifying element bringing together melody and text. She selected from well-known American and European poets including Shelley, Browning, Tennyson, Shakespeare, Hugo, Burns, Goethe, Heine, Schiller, as well as contemporary writers. Many of the texts she set reflect Beach's love for nature and connect natural elements such as the sea, birds, flowers, trees,

²² Kimball, 252-253, and Jeanell Wise Brown, *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music: Biography, Documents, Style* (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 111.

²³ Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach Passionate Victorian: The Life and Work of an American Composer 1867-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 146, and Ammer 99.

²⁴ Brown, 128.

moon, and sun to themes of life and death, and earthly versus heavenly love, a direct connection to German romanticism. Many of these characteristics are present in *Three Browning Songs* Op. 44, published in 1900: comfortable intervals and tessitura in the vocal line, skillful setting of words, and a musical mood that reflects the sentiments of the text. Because of their success and popularity, Beach published versions of these songs with violin obligato, as duets for soprano and alto, and as choral arrangements.

“The Year’s at the Spring” was commissioned by the Boston Browning Society in celebration of Robert Browning’s birthday. Beach composed the song while riding a train, and the persistent rhythm of train wheels inspired the accompaniment.²⁵ This rhythmic drive propels the text forward to the climatic ending, and the triplet figure gives a youthful ardor and exuberance reflecting the hopefulness of spring. Beginning in the second stanza, each phrase rises one scale degree until the melody climbs an entire octave on the word ‘right’. Intensity builds both rhythmically and harmonically until the excitement explodes with the final phrase, ‘All’s right with the world’, and continues through the final chords in the piano.

While “The Year’s at the Spring” compares to a Schubert *lied* because of its melodic repetition and the recurrent rhythm in the accompaniment, “Ah, Love, But a Day!” shares similarities with a Brahms song.²⁶ The text incorporates images from nature as a person losing interest in their marriage and is reflected musically. The piece begins with a quarter rest, leaving an unclear downbeat and unsettled feeling. The turn motive, upon which the melody is based, appears in the vocal line and piano accompaniment, expressing the uncertainty of love. Despair is woven throughout the melody by use of a falling third on the word ‘day’ in mm. 4 and 8, and

²⁵ Kimball, 253.

²⁶ Ammer, 100.

the diminuendo over the phrase ‘summer has stopped’. Harmonically, Beach weaves from one seventh chord to another, especially on the phrase ‘Ah, Love’ in mm. 3 and 7 symbolizing the unsettled future of this romantic relationship. The piece begins in F minor, changing modes to F major on the phrase, ‘Look in my eyes’, followed by the first question asked in the text, ‘Wilt thou change too?’. A sense of optimism emerges with the change of tonality directly preceding the question, thus providing a glimmer of hope that love might endure in the otherwise despairing text. Through a common tone modulation Beach uses the same melodic material on the repetition of the text ‘Look in my eyes’ harmonized in D-flat major, a familiar tune over unfamiliar harmony. With a driving accompaniment to the end, the climax of the final iteration of ‘Ah, Love’ leads to the gradual fade out of the vocal line and piano accompaniment. While the piece musically ends with a settled feeling, the text never comes to a full conclusion.

The most harmonically and tonally progressive of the three songs is “I Send My Heart up to Thee!”. Modulations emphasize points of emotional changes in the text more so in this setting than in the previous two.²⁷ At the end of the first stanza, the vocal melody cadences harmonically in A-flat major, but Beach respells the A-flat in the melody as G-sharp and modulates to E major for the reiteration of the text. This same A-flat major to E major modulation is used several more times going forward symbolizing scattered thoughts that weave around a common thread. The harmonic language does not sound jarring to the listener, but highlights special moments of emotional emphasis, and appoggiaturas on important words give the vocal line a sense of longing. Driving triplets in the piano accompaniment build to the climatic moment on the words ‘my heart’ in m. 36. The setting ends with an echo of the opening

²⁷ Kimball, 253.

melody, this time marked *pp* as an internal reflection, and ties the piece together textually and melodically.

All three of the *Three Browning Songs* demonstrate Beach's late romantic style in her harmonic language and overly emotional gestures in melody and accompaniment. Chromaticism appears but the music remains tonal, even when tonal centers vary. The poems by Robert Browning speak to romantic feelings and include references to nature. While her work may have been criticized for being overly emotional and romantic, Beach's songs are full of feeling and thought, and are interesting, yet pleasing to the ear.

CHAPTER 6

IRVING BERLIN

Son of a Jewish cantor, Irving Berlin moved to New York from Russia in 1892 with his family at the age of four. Beginning at age 16, Berlin worked as a cabaret singer, chorus boy, vaudeville stooge, song plugger, and singing waiter. Having no formal musical training, Berlin taught himself piano and worked as a staff lyricist for the publisher and songwriter Ted Snyder.²⁸ Berlin launched his composition career as a Tin Pan Alley composer, publicizing his own tunes to sell sheet music. Written in 1911, “Alexander’s Ragtime Band” became Berlin’s first big song hit, and his first musical, *Watch Your Step* (1914) introduced ragtime into the popular music genre. During the 1920s Berlin spent significant time composing music for revues such as the Ziegfeld Follies and Music Box Revues, while continuing to produce musical scores. Berlin’s compositional style shifted the focus of Broadway musicals away from European operetta and toward an American song and dance show. In the 1930s, Berlin moved to Hollywood to compose movie musicals, several of which starred the famous duo, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. He returned to Broadway in the 1940s to finish his career as a stage composer. Despite his substantial output of 21 Broadway and 17 film scores, Berlin’s primary interest was in composing songs, and of the 3,000 he composed, only about half were published.²⁹

As a composer, Berlin did not tend to be experimental and was not interested in creating landmark musicals. Instead, he incorporated the latest trends and styles of popular music into his songs, making popular tunes relatable. His lyrics focus on four major topics: home, love, self-

²⁸ Steven Suskin, *Show Tunes 1905-1991: The Songs, Shows and Careers of Broadway’s Major Composers* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1992), 67.

²⁹ Thomas S. Hischak, *Word Crazy: Broadway Lyricists from Cohan to Sondheim* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991), 16.

pity, and happiness, and express emotional sentiments rather than intellectual ideas. Song titles are repeated frequently, a practice dating back to Tin Pan Alley, so the listener would remember the title when purchasing sheet music. Overall, his simple and honest music captures the spirit of the era in which it was written and creates a new style of American music which transferred to the stage, screen, and popular music charts. Because a substantial number of his songs have become standard pop tunes, his music is mistakenly credited to other composers.³⁰ As Jerome Kern stated, “Irving Berlin has no *place* in American music; he *is* American music.”³¹

After returning to Broadway from Hollywood, Berlin wrote *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), his most successful musical. Originally, producers Rodgers and Hammerstein hired Jerome Kern to compose the music to a libretto by Herbert and Dorothy Fields. However, Kern passed away shortly after beginning the project, and was soon replaced by Berlin as composer and lyricist. Motivated by Rodgers and Hammerstein to write a book musical, Berlin successfully combined character and plot development and despite the fact that Berlin did not use any previously written music, *Annie Get Your Gun* became one of the first musicals in Broadway history to be filled with hit songs.³² The show opened May 16, 1946 and ran 1,147 performances, Berlin’s most commercially successful show. After *Annie Get Your Gun*, Berlin wrote two additional failed musicals and retired from composition.

The character of Annie Oakley, a sharpshooter starring in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, was originally conceived for Ethel Merman, who premiered the role. In the first act of the musical, Annie develops a romantic relationship with Frank, the star of Buffalo Bill’s show, and

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Gerald Bordman and Thomas S. Hischak, “Berlin, Irving,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02827> (accessed March 9, 2015).

³² Suskin, 99, 103.

the two sing “They Say It’s Wonderful” as a duet while riding a train on tour. The song, which can also be sung as a female solo, begins with a four phrase verse setting up the idea of Annie’s unknown feelings of love. A 32-bar ballad in AABA form, the song transitions between internal and external sentiments and contains vernacular language reflective of Annie’s character and personality.³³ The lyrical vocal melody, supported by jazz-influenced harmonies, contains sustained pitches at the end of most phrases, allowing the accompaniment to finish the melodic line. Berlin captures the uncertainty of Annie’s character in a relatable way through his use of large descending intervals, as if Annie loses confidence part way through a phrase. Within the context of the musical, this song adds dimension to Annie’s personality because it shows vulnerability behind her tough exterior. The entire song alludes to falling in love and romantic relations, but it is not until the final phrase that Annie admits to the wonderful feeling of physical contact with a man. Audiences relate to its musical simplicity, and the song pleasantly contrasts with other boisterous tunes in the show.

³³ Philip Furia, *Irving Berlin: A Life in Song* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 222.

CHAPTER 7

JERRY BOCK AND SHELDON HARNICK

Jerry Bock, born in New Haven, Connecticut on November 23, 1928, grew up in Flushing, New York and began studying piano at age nine. Despite the fact that neither of his parents were musicians, Bock received a musical education and quickly excelled at composition. In high school, Bock wrote amateur musicals to support a fundraiser for a Navy hospital ship, and continued composing shows while pursuing a degree in music from the University of Wisconsin.³⁴ Composing music for revues launched his professional career, and he joined lyricist Sheldon Harnick in 1958. Together the pair produced seven musicals in 12 years, including *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), the first musical in Broadway history to run over 3,000 performances. Bock passed away in 2010 at the age of 81.

Like Bock, Sheldon Harnick, born in Chicago in 1924, began his musical education at a young age. As a child he studied violin, and attempted composition while serving in the Army. During his undergraduate education in Chicago, Harnick worked as a violinist in musical and dance orchestras, familiarizing himself with musical theater forms. In 1950 he moved to New York to pursue a career in musical theater, and composed music and lyrics for musical revues. However, after a meeting with Yip Harburg, who told him to stick with writing lyrics and pair with a good composer, Harnick focused his energy on lyricism. Overall, his lyrics follow traditional conventions, but like Oscar Hammerstein, he subtly broke rules to achieve self-expression. Harnick focused on writing texts for each particular character with relatable words and messages, further adding a dimension of realism by finding excitement in ordinary

³⁴ Suskin, 421.

situations. Comedic lines gave the character strength to survive tragic events, and paired with Bock's ethnically influenced music, Harnick's lyrics created characters with whom audiences could sympathize and understand.

She Loves Me, the first musical Hal Prince directed, opened at the Eugene O'Neill Theater on April 23, 1963. Based on the play, *Parfumerie* by Hungarian playwright Miklós László, the production experienced minimal success despite the praise from theater critics. The small cast lacked a chorus and extravagant dancing, and could not compete with more flashy shows running at the time. Also, the small theater did not generate sufficient box office receipts and managerial miscalculations in promotions and bookings furthered the demise.³⁵ Public admiration for *She Loves Me* materialized after the award winning 1993 American and 1994 London revivals. Intending to draw the attention of sophisticated theater attendees, *She Loves Me* contains musical plot development characteristic of Harnick's lyricism and Bock's detailed musical motifs.

Joe Masteroff wrote the book for *She Loves Me* first, and Harnick decided the best placement for songs by converting dialogue into lyrics at emotional or comic peaks to achieve a consistent flow of dramatic action. The show includes both traditional theater songs as well as musical conversations; ensemble numbers develop individual characters.³⁶ Because Harnick strategically places lyrics within the pre-constructed book, the progression of songs carries the plot forward. To further the continuity of the show, Bock includes recurring musical motifs that reflect the harsh realities expounded in the lyrics. Bock uses Hungarian dance rhythms and

³⁵ Philip Lambert, *To Broadway, To Life!: The Musical Theater of Bock and Harnick* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 128.

³⁶ Hirschak, 139-140.

imitations of native instruments to give an exotic flair that match the character names and original story source, such as diatonic turning figures at the beginning of each verse in Miss Ritter's song, "A Trip to the Library."³⁷

Quirky parfumerie worker Ilona Ritter, an uneducated, middle age woman involved with the fickle shop clerk, visits the library on an errand and meets a brazen optometrist, Paul, who quickly steals her affection. Recounting the story to her friend Amalia in "A Trip to the Library", Miss Ritter astounds herself and imagines a future with Paul. The tempo, marked 'Bolero' adds exotic flair and a hint of eroticism. Each verse contains three musical ideas, the first, harmonically stagnant, reflective of Miss Ritter's trepidation at the library, and then Paul's advances. A transitional section changes both musically and dramatically as Miss Ritter first meets Paul, and later, as she realizes her feelings for this man. The third section, most melodic, with dance rhythms in the vocal line and accompaniment, acting as the chorus, repeated a final time at the end a minor second higher. Within the chorus there are orchestral punctuations between phrases that reflect the text, and change tonality leading into the next phrase. These musical motives depict Miss Ritter's feelings and emotional reactions as she reveals the facts. It is not until the final iteration of the chorus, when Miss Ritter explicitly states her feelings, that the rhythmically driven orchestral punctuations yield to more lyrical phrasing and a mood reflective of Miss Ritter's daydreaming. Through the combination of Harnick's well-crafted lyrics and Bock's musical motives that expound Miss Ritter's inner thoughts, "A Trip to the Library" reveals character development and furthers the dramatic action while incorporating relatable humor.

³⁷ Lambert, 124-130.

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