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Scholarly Program Notes: Songs of the Heart-- An Exploration of Select Past and Present Composers for the Graduate Recital of Jessica Samples

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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES:
SONGS OF THE HEART-- AN EXPLORATION OF SELECT PAST AND PRESENT
COMPOSERS FOR THE GRADUATE RECITAL OF JESSICA SAMPLES

by

Jessica Samples

B.M., Meredith College, 2014

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

Department of Music
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Scholarly Program Notes:
Songs of the Heart-- An Exploration of Select Past and Present Composers for the Graduate
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in the field of music

Approved by:

Dr. David Dillard, Chair

Dr. Susan Davenport

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Graduate School
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JESSICA SAMPLES, for the Master of Music degree in MUSIC, presented on JUNE 16, 2016, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES: SONGS OF THE HEART-- AN EXPLORATION OF PAST AND PRESENT COMPOSERS FOR THE GRADUATE RECITAL OF JESSICA SAMPLES

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. David Dillard

These scholarly program notes examine various selections of vocal music by composers, such as J.S. Bach, Leonard Bernstein, W.A. Mozart, Franz Schrecker, Claude Debussy, Gwyneth Walker, Stephen Sondheim, and Cole Porter with the intention of attaining a better understanding of each piece through biographical, poetic, and musical analysis. The analysis of repertoire will be for the benefit of performance for the graduate recital of Jessica Samples.

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CHAPTER 1

J.S. BACH

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), a prolific German composer, expanded the use and furthered the development of contrapuntal harmony. Each instrumental line in his music features a unique melodic line that relates to other melodic lines in a predictable manner. This composer came from a very musical family, and many of them held Lutheran church positions pertaining to music. Bach himself worked at Lutheran churches for the duration of his career. During the early 1720's, Bach took a position, Thomaskantor, in Leipzig with St. Thomas church when Johann Kuhnau, the previous Thomaskantor, died.¹ While working, he composed many pieces of music for the church including the *Magnificat*. Performances of Bach's *Magnificat* occur frequently around the Advent season.

J.S. Bach first set the *Magnificat* in the key of E-flat Major, BWV 243a in 1723 and then twelve years later in D Major, BWV 243. The D Major version is performed frequently today, which he composed around 1732-1735.² The text of the *Magnificat* comes from the Gospel of Luke. Each of the twelve movements contains one verse from Luke 1:46-55, except for the doxology. *Magnificat* is Latin for "my soul magnifies" and is known as the Cantic of Mary. The text of the *Magnificat* reveals the Virgin Mary's praise of God. The text repeats many times in each of the movements including the aria "Quia respexit."

¹ Robert M. Cammarota, "The Sources of the Christmas Interpolations in J. S. Bach's *Magnificat* in E-Flat Major (BWV 243a)," *Current Musicology*. Accessed February 1, 2016. <http://currentmusicology.columbia.edu/article/the-sources-of-the-christmas-interpolations-in-j-s-bachs-magnificat-in-e-flat-major-bwv-243a>.

² Theodore Libby Jr, "Program Notes," <http://www.naxosmusiclibrary.com/sharedfiles/booklets/NPR/booklet-NCD60155.pdf>.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae.

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent.

Text from Luke 1:48

For He has regarded the lowliness of His
handmaiden.

For Behold, from henceforth all generations will
call me blessed.

Translation by Theodore Libby Jr.

CHAPTER 2

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) was an American born conductor, pianist, and composer of choral works, orchestral music, film scores, opera, song cycles, and musical theater shows. He began his musical studies with the piano and continued to study music during his higher education at Harvard University and The Curtis Institute of Music. Joan Peyser states, in her book entitled *Bernstein, a biography*, that Bernstein "became what can be called the first industrialist" of music, because he conducted, composed, wrote books, and gave television lectures.³ He used his talent and his work ethic to diversify in the music industry.

Communication through music was the most important goal of Bernstein's compositional technique.⁴ Bernstein integrated elements from various musical genres, such as classical, jazz, folk, amongst others, and merged characteristics from many sources, which include Spanish rhythms, in his works. He wrote memorable melodies, such as "Maria" and "Tonight" from *West Side Story*. Many of his compositions contain compound meters that frequently shift to serve the text and story. He also utilized unique rhythms that emphasize the pace of the language or an emotion that he sought to highlight.

La bonne cuisine is comprised of four French recipes from Émile Dumont's 1890 cookbook, which Bernstein selected, translated to English and set to music in this 1947 collection.⁵ The recipes in this cycle include Plum Pudding, Queues de Boeuf or Oxtail Stew,

³ Peyser, Joan. *Bernstein: A Biography*. New York: Beech Tree Books, Morrow, 1987, 33.

⁴ Paul R. Laird., and Hsun Lin, *Leonard Bernstein: A Research and Information Guide*, 15.

⁵ Émile Dumont's cookbook is entitled *La Bonne Cuisine - Manuel économique et pratique (ville et campagne)*

Tavouk Gueunksis, and Civet à Toute Vitesse, also known as Rabbit Stew at Top Speed.

Bernstein dedicated this work to the operatic mezzo-soprano, Jennie Tourel. Bernstein's settings of actual recipes from a cookbook prove that he could musically set the most mundane words to rhythmically challenging and harmonically progressive music. Each song contains a musical idea within the piano or vocal part that reappears in some way at the end of each piece.

Bernstein begins the song cycle with a recipe for dessert. "Plum Pudding" in G major begins with a rapid, staccato pulse of C octaves in the left hand of the piano. This rhythmic idea repeats again in the middle of the piece, as well as at the end. The repetition occurs during transition words in the recipe, such as "now first," "and then," and "now." Frequent meter changes from 4/4 to 2/4 to 3/2 aid in the expression of the rhythm of the language. Key changes occur often. The changes in tonal centers reflect the changes in the recipe. For example, "Plum Pudding" changes key midway through the song from C major to C minor when the recipe changes from describing solid foodstuffs to liquid. The vocal part consists primarily of leaps.

Now first you take eleven pounds of juicy concord grapes,
 Combined with equal parts of extra fine Tokays,
 (Be sure they are juicy).
 And then you take two cups or so of breadcrumbs,
 To which you melt a pound or so of butter, fat, or lard:
 (Use Spry or use Crisco).
 Eleven cups of sugar,
 (Either brown, or white, or powdered)
 A glass of milk,
 A half a cup of Bacardi or Brandy;
 Three eggs;
 And a lemon!
 Now mustard, powdered cinnamon, and ginger,
 All together making half a teaspoonful of condiment
 Which you combine with half a teaspoon of table salt.

The second song in the cycle, "Ox-tails," is a recipe for oxtail stew. In addition to the text of the recipe, Bernstein also includes his own text, admonishing the reader for being "too

Tavouk Gueunksis, so oriental.
 Put a chicken to boil,
 Young and tender and sweet,
 Then in the Arab manner you slice it up into pieces.
 Then boil flower and water,
 And add to it the chicken,
 Then prepare it as above,
 In the manner we described,
 For Mahallebi,
 Tavouk Gueunksis, a Turkish heaven.
Text by Leonard Bernstein

The final song, “Rabbit at Top Speed,” is the fastest piece in this collection. The eighth note equals 208. This through-composed song, primarily in 4/8 meter, accelerates as it progresses. There is one moment of respite and reflection that occurs with the text “a bottle and a half of rich claret.” The composer creates this moment through the instruction to “forget the haste” and the accompaniment playing a sustained C minor seventh chord. This line of text contains the only meter change in the song. Bernstein set this phrase in 3/4 time to help expand the moment. The tonal center of the piece is E. The vocal line contains fewer leaps and a smaller vocal range than the other pieces in the song cycle. Notes for the cook or asides given within the recipe occur in the vocal part as a succession of notes that repeat on the same pitch in a recitative-like style. This last piece is a recipe for a savory rabbit stew.

When you have a sudden guest,
 Or you're in an awful hurry,
 May I say here's a way to make a rabbit stew in no time.
 Take apart the rabbit in the ordinary way you do.
 Put it in a casserole or a bowl,
 With all it's blood and liver mashed.
 Take half a pound of breast of pork finally cut
 (as fine as possible),
 Add little onions with some pepper and salt
 (say twenty-five or so)
 A bottle and half of rich claret.
 Boil it up!

Don't waste a minute,
On the very hottest fire.
When boiled a quarter of an hour more,
The sauce should now be half of what it was before.
Then you carefully apply the flame,
As they do in the best most expensive cafes.
After the flame is out, just add the sauce to half a pound of butter,
And flour and mix them together,
And serve.

Text by Leonard Bernstein

CHAPTER 3

W.A. MOZART

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was an Austrian born composer who created a vast body of musical works during the Classical era that spans symphonies, chamber music, various concerti, anthems, art songs, and operas. His father guided his early musical studies, beginning at an early age with the violin and keyboard. He had one sister, Maria Anna, who played the keyboard. His family performed while traveling throughout Europe during his youth, which gave him exposure to other musicians and the music of other countries.

Mozart's compositional style expressed the fashionable simplicity of the Classical era, which developed as a reaction to the ornateness of the Baroque era aesthetic. He constructed number operas with refinement in a way that utilized many of the traditional compositional techniques of his time. Donald Jay Grout and Hermaine Weigel state in their book *A Short History of Opera* that Mozart's "genius and training led him to conceive of opera as essentially a musical affair, like a symphony, rather than as a drama in which music was merely one means of dramatic expression."⁶

Le nozze di Figaro, an opera in four acts, has become part of the standard operatic repertoire. It contains arias (da capo and other forms), *secco* recitative, accompanied recitative, ensemble numbers, and choruses, which are accompanied by violins, viola, cello, harpsichord, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, timpani. Lorenzo da Ponte wrote the Libretto with source material by French playwright Pierre Beaumarchais.

⁶ Donald Jay Grout and Hermaine Weigel, *A Short History of Opera*. 4th ed. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2003, 612.

Suzanna's recitative and aria in F major, "Giunse alfin...Deh vieni non tardar" is sung during the fourth act, while she is disguised as the Countess Almaviva. Throughout most of the opera, Susanna delivers her text in a speech like fashion (for example her aria "Venite, inginocchiateve") in contrast to that of the Countess, whose melodies express a long-lined, noble poignancy (i.e. "Porgi, amor"). It contains legato lines that imitate the pace and text delivery of the Countess. The vocal line of Susanna's aria in 4/4 meter assumes a melodic character similar to that of the Countess as she sings to the Count as a part of her plan with the Countess to lure him into a trap. Yet, Figaro, her soon-to-be husband, hides in the garden and she knows he is watching. Midway through the piece, she sings to Figaro, believing that he can tell it is she, even through her disguise. The accompaniment of the recitative includes dotted rhythms played by the strings, which prompt Suzanna's movement into the garden. The accompaniment of the aria contains melodic and rhythmic phrases that inform the listener about the environment. One example occurs before "Qui mormora il ruscel (here the river murmurs). The rhythmic and melodic patterns contain leaps that depict a bubbling brook or river.

Giunse alfin il momento
 Che godrò senz'affanno
 In braccio al idol mio...
 Timide cure uscite dal mio petto!
 A turbar non venite il mio diletto
 O come par che all'amoroso foco
 L'amenità del loco,
 La terra e il ciel risponda.
 Come la notte i furti miei risponda.

The moment finally arrives
 When I'll experience joy without haste
 In the arms of my beloved...
 Fearful anxieties, get out of my heart!
 Do not come to disturb my delight.
 Oh, how it seems that to amorous fires
 The comfort of the place,
 Earth and heaven respond,
 As the night responds to my ruses.

Deh vieni, non tardar, o gioia bella,
 Vieni ove amore per goder t'appella,
 Finche non splende in ciel notturna face,
 Finche l'aria e ancor bruna,
 E il mondo tace.

Oh, come don't be late my beautiful joy,
 Come where love calls you to enjoyment,
 Until night's torches no longer shine in the sky
 As long as the air is still dark,
 And the world quiet.

Qui mormora il ruscel, qui scherza l'aura

Here the river murmurs and the light plays

Che col dolce susurro il cor ristaura
Qui ridono i fioretti e l'erba e fresca
Ai piaceri d'amor qui tutto adesca.
Vieni, ben mio, tra queste piante ascose.
Vieni, vieni!
Ti vo' la fronte incoronar di rose.
Text by Lorenzo da Ponte

That restores the heart with sweet ripples
Here, little flowers laugh and the grass is fresh
Here, everything entices one to love's pleasures
Come, my dear, among these hidden plants.
Come, come!
I want to crown you with roses.⁷
Translation by Naomi Gurt Lind

⁷ Naomi Gurt Lind, http://www.aria-database.com/translations/nozze27_dehvieni.txt

CHAPTER 4
FRANZ SCHRECKER

Franz Schrecker (1878- 1934) was an Austrian teacher, conductor, and composer. He studied violin and composition at the Vienna Conservatory. Like many operatic composers, Schrecker was able to synthesize musical traditions with popular, current musical techniques. Influences of French music, Italian instrumentation, Wagnerian harmony, and *leitmotifs* are some of the elements included in his operas. Grout and Weigel state that Schrecker was as popular with the German people as Richard Strauss, and likened to Wagner.⁸

Schrecker was the son of a Jewish man and Catholic aristocratic woman.⁹ He did not identify himself as Jewish, but his lineage led to the end of his career and contributed to his death. Christopher Hailey writes that Schrecker's "music had been effectively banned in Germany since Hitler's ascent to power, and his teaching career brought to an end by a politically and 'racially' motivated forced retirement."¹⁰ Schrecker died in 1934 impoverished and ostracized by the Nazis. He left behind a legacy of music which is, unfortunately, experienced by few people today.

Fünf Lieder, Op. 4, written around 1899 is a collection of songs by Schrecker with texts by the poets Tolstoy, Lemayer, Strom, Sturm, and Scherenberg. Two prominent themes of the selected poetry are the pain of love and the desire for release from earthly constraints. Harmonically, the songs are primarily in major keys with frequent chromatic coloring.

⁸ Ibid. 6.

⁹ Michael Haas, Haas, *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

¹⁰ Hailey, Christopher. *Franz Schrecker, 1878-1934: A Cultural Biography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Schrecker's melodies, which tend to be set in a middle to high tessitura, move primarily in step-wise motion, but can also leap up to one octave. He sets the text almost exclusively syllabically. The tempos of the songs are often slow. These songs were never orchestrated; however, the piano accompaniments are dense and suggest that the composer may have conceived of them orchestrally.

Fünf Lieder begins in A minor with "Unendliche Liebe," or Unending Love. The form of this song is strophic, with some modification in the second verse. Schrecker composes the piano accompaniment in three-bar phrases of eighth-notes. Often the accompaniment doubles the vocal melody. The dynamic range is relatively moderate, ranging from piano to forte. Schrecker varies a motive in the vocal part that occurs four times throughout the piece; the first time it occurs, there is a C natural in the sequence and all the subsequent repetitions contain a c sharp.



Figure 4. "Unendlich liebe"



Figure 5. "Unendlich liebe"

In the first iteration of this motive, the first note is a half note. Thereafter, the motive fluctuates between beginning with a half-note or quarter note. The piece ends similarly to the first page with a procession of notes in the left hand ascending over four octaves. Schrecker uses a German translation of a Leo Tolstoy poem. The text refers to life's brevity and love's eternity.

Ich sehe Tränen im Aug' Dir glänzen,
härm' Dich nicht, Du bist mein höchstes Gut.
Denn meine Liebe kennt keine Grenzen,

umschließt den Erdball wie des Weltmeers
Flut.

I see a tear in your jealous sight...
Oh, don't yearn; you're still dear to me!
But I can love only in expanse,
And my love, as wide as a sea,
Cannot fit into the shores of life.

O härm' Dich nicht;
 bald wird Dein Kleinmut schwinden,
 Du bist mein höchstes Gut!
 Denn in der Ew'gen Himmelsliebe Bahn
 muß alle ird'sche Liebe münden,
 wie alle Ströme in den Ozean.
Text by Leo Tolstoi

Oh, don't yearn, my darling;
 the troubles of life will end soon,
 Just wait a bit more... the bondage is not long!
 We all will interflow into one Love soon,
 Into Love, which is as wide as a sea,
 Which cannot fit into the shores of life.¹¹
Translation by Emily Ezust

The second song in the collection, “Frühling,” in B major features an AAB form with text by Karl Freiherr von Lemayer. The opening piano accompaniment, which reappears in each A section, has two facets: the right hand contains a tremolo, outlining the harmony, while the left hand presents a melodic idea exclusive to the piano.



Figure 6. “Frühling”

Both A sections contain the same melodic idea that depicts spring (See Figure 6). Schrecker implements text painting with the progression of pitches for the words “Sonne glanz,” or sun’s rays. The leap from the D sharp to the F sharp suggests the image of the sun’s ray descending (See Figure 6).



Figure 7. “Frühling”

Frühling schimmert in den Lüften,

Spring shimmers in the air,

¹¹ Emily Ezust, http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=18307

Gleisset in der Sonne Glanz,
Spielt in süßen, lauen Düften,
Spielt im wirren Mückentanz.

It's spirit in the sun's rays,
Plays in sweet, warm scents,
Plays in tangled mosquito dance.

Frühling blüht auf allen Stegen,
Jauchzet in der Lerche Lied -
Und auf hohen Himmelswegen
Er in hellen Wolken zieht.

Spring blossoms in all lands,
The lark song shouts -
And on high sky trails
He pulls the bright clouds.

Doch im jungen Menschenherzen
Blüht's noch lichter als im Tal,
Blüh'n der Liebe süße Schmerzen,
Auf geküßt vom Frühlingsstrahl.
Text by Karl Freiherr

But the young man's heart
Flowers 's even lighter than in the valley,
Sweet pain of blooming love,
Kissed in the spring's ray.

The third song, "Wohl fühl ich wie das Leben rinnt," in the key of B Major has an ABA form with poetry by Theodor Storm. Schrecker creates contrast through text, tempo, meter, and texture. The poetry of the first section expresses the idea that life continues, yet the sweet release of death will finally arrive. This song begins with the instruction *Langsam, nicht schleppend*, translated slowly, but not dragging. Schrecker uses a primarily homophonic texture. The meter alternates between 4/4 and 3/4. The B section text deals with painful desire. The musical direction *Mit mühsam verhaltener Leidenschaft*, arduous and restrained passion reflects the thematic idea of the poetry and moves faster than A. The meter shifts between 4/4 and 2/4 and arpeggiated figures occur in the left hand of the piano accompaniment and syncopated chords occur in the right hand. The two bar postlude recalls the opening but slower and in a lower range.

Wohl fühl ich, wie das Leben rinnt,
Und daß ich endlich scheiden muß,
Daß endlich doch das letzte Lied,
Und endlich kommt der letzte Kuß.

I feel it well how life flows on,
And that I must finally depart,
That the last song shall finally come,
And that the last kiss shall finally come,

Noch häng' ich fest an deinem Mund
In schmerzlich bangender Begier;
Du gibst der Jugend letzten Kuß,
Die letzte Rose gibst du mir.

Now I still hang upon your lips
In painful, anxious desire;
You proffer the last kiss of youth,
The last rose you give to me.

Du schenkst aus jenem Zauberkelch
Den letzten goldnen Trunk mir ein;
Du bist aus jener Märchenwelt
Mein allerletzter Abendschein.

Am Himmel steht der letzte Stern,
O halte nicht dein Herz zurück;
Zu deinen Füßen sink ich hin,
O fühl, du bist mein letztes Glück!

Laß einmal noch durch meine Brust
Des vollsten Lebens Schauer wehn,
Eh seufzend in die große Nacht
Auch meine Sterne untergehn.

Text by Theodor Storm

From that magical chalice you pour
The last golden drink for me;
From that fairy-tale world you are
My very last glow of sunset.

The last star remains on the heavens,
Oh do not hold back your heart;
I sink down at your feet,
Oh realize it, you are my last happiness!

Let waft through my breast only once more
The fullest thrill of life,
Before into the great night, sighing,
My stars too set.¹²

Translation by Peter Donderwinkel

¹² Peter Donderwinkel, http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=110782

CHAPTER 5
CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Claude Debussy was an innovative French composer who created a body of work that challenged traditional harmonies. His compositions include an opera, orchestral pieces, chamber music, piano works, and around 100 *mélodies* (songs). According to Mark DeVoto, he composed songs more than any other musical form. He frequently used seventh and ninth chords as primary chords and did not establish traditional tonic/dominant relationships for his later compositions.¹³

Debussy won the Prix de Rome in 1884 with the cantata, *L'enfant prodigue* (The Prodigal Child) which was written before Debussy had fully developed his compositional style. Edouard Guinand wrote the text and the story comes from the biblical parable of the Prodigal Son; this work is unique in that it reveals a mother's perspective and gives names to characters many people have read about for ages in the bible.

Lia's aria in B minor, "L'année en vain chasse l'année... Azaël! Azaël!" is the opening aria in B minor accompanied by a chamber orchestra and features an ABBA structure. Lia portrays a wide variety of emotions. Debussy creates the mood and echoes Lia's sentiment through each musical section. This differs from Debussy's later works that feature impressionist elements, such as lack of harmonic clarity or an ambiguous setting, like in Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The setting is a sunrise over a serene countryside as Lia reflects over the joy of the past.¹⁴ It has accompanied recitative and long legato lines. In both A sections, she is lamenting the loss of her son and mourning the weight of time passing without her child. In the B

¹³ Mark DeVoto, "Debussy and the Veil of Tonality: Essays on His Music." Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2004, 31.

¹⁴ Claude Debussy and Edouard Guinand. *L'enfant Prodigue = The Prodigal Son: Scène Lyrique En Un Acte*. Paris: A. Durand, 1910.

section she reflects on the happy years past. Debussy's setting of the story of the prodigal son emphasizes the emotion of the characters through the harmonic progressions and instrumentation. For example, in "Lia's aria" arpeggiated strings forming major triads accompany the happy memories she recounts. The tempo and the accompaniment of the first section contrast with the second section. The first section is slower and the rhythm consists of quarter notes, whole notes, and half notes. The second section primarily utilizes sixteenth notes. The strings play an arpeggiated pattern in the B section that moves more quickly during the passages of song that reflect on memories of the past. This aria uses a wide variety of vocal technique through both slow legato passages, agilities in the B section, and leaps as large as a ninth.

L'année en vain chasse l'année!
 A chaque saison ramenée,
 Leurs jeux et leurs ébats m'attristent malgré
 moi,
 Ils rouvrent ma blessure et mon chagrin
 s'accroît...
 Je viens chercher la grève solitaire

The year chases the year in vain!
 Each season returning,
 Their joy and their frolics sadden me despite
 myself,
 They reopen my wound and my grief
 increases...
 I come to search the solitary shore

Douleur involontaire!
 Efforts superflus!
 Lia pleure toujours
 L'enfant qu'elle n'a plus!

Involuntary Sadness!
 Superfluous efforts!
 Lia cries always
 The child that she has no more!

Azaël! Azaël! Pourquoi m'as-tu quittée?
 En mon cœur maternel ton image est restée.
 Azaël! Azaël! Pourquoi m'as-tu quittée?

Azaël! Azaël! Why have you left me?
 In my maternal heart you image remains.
 Azaël! Azaël! Why have you left me?

Ce pendant les soirs étaient doux,
 Dans la plaine d'ormes plantée,

While the evenings were sweet,
 In the plain with the elm trees,

Quand, sous la charge récoltée,
 On ramenait les grands bœufs roux.
 Lorsque la tâche était finie,
 Enfants, vieillards, et serviteurs,
 Ouvriers des champs, ou pasteurs,

When under the load harvest
 We would take the big red ox.
 When the task was finished,
 Children, elders, and servants,
 Farm workers, or Shepherds,

Louaient, de Dieu la main bénie;

Ainsi les jours suivaient les jours
Et dans la pieuse famille,
Le jeune homme et la jeune fille
Echangeaient leurs chastes amours.

D'autres ne sentent pas le poids de
la vieillesse,
Heureux dans leurs enfants,
Ils voient couler les ans,
Sans regret comme sans tristesse
Aux cœurs inconsolés
que les temps sont pesants!

Azaël! Pourquoi m'as-tu quittée?
Azaël! Pourquoi m'as-tu quittée?
Text by Edouard Guinand

Would praise the blessed hand of God;

In this way the days would follow the days
And in the pious family,
The young man and the young girl
Exchanged their chaste love.

Others do not feel the weight of
old age,
Happy in their children,
They see the years crumble,
Like without regret, without sadness
Hearts inconsolable
that the time is heavy!

Azaël! Azaël! Why have you left me?
Azaël! Azaël! Why have you left me?

CHAPTER 6

GWYNETH WALKER

Gwyneth Walker (b.1947) is a New England composer who frequently sets the text of New England or American poets for her vocal and choral works. Walker studied music at Brown University and University of Hartford. Thus far, she has composed over 300 pieces of music for solo voice, piano, chorus, and more. According to Tana Rene Field-Bartholomew, Walker is a practicing Quaker and this affects her selection of poetry for her music.¹⁵ Most of her compositional output, especially for solo voice, includes physical instructions for the performer to include some gesture or movement in her work. She has both published and unpublished works available. *A Thousand Prayers* is an unpublished 2014 song cycle with poetry by New Englander Anne Sexton (1928-1974). Gwyneth Walker explains in her program notes that all of the poetry used in the song cycle was selected from a book of Sexton's poetry entitled *The Awful Rowing toward God*.¹⁶

The songs of *A Thousand Prayers* contain a unifying poetic theme and musical elements, which explore the poet's search for God and the revelation that in order to find God, according to the poet and the composer, one must "Look to Your Heart." Walker frequently utilizes similar architecture in the melodic structure for each of these pieces in the song cycle. Each piece has sections of text that occur on a single pitch, similar to recitative. Each of these songs includes an arpeggiated section in the accompaniment. The accompaniment represents the mood, an environmental element, or imitates the vocal line.

¹⁵ Tana Rene Field-Bartholomew, "A Performers Guide to the Songs of Gwyneth Walker." PhD diss., 2007, 4-5.

¹⁶ "Gwyneth Walker,": *A Thousand Prayers*. Accessed February 11, 2016, <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/athousandprayers.html>.

The first song, “Two Hands,” in C major features the idea of creation and its moral, which is to rejoice in life. The piece has three sections, each of which begins with the singer clapping an unaccompanied rhythm. The A sections in C major reflect joy and the B section in C minor features contemplative text. Key changes reflect the mood. Walker includes text painting, one example of which would be when the text “up came the other hand” (See Figure 8).

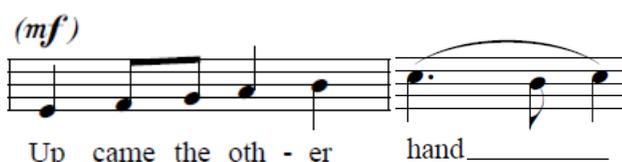


Figure 8. “Two Hands”

Walker highlights three phrases of Sexton’s text: “dying woman,” “even the prison of their bodies,” and “triumph came” by altering the accompaniment using an extended, harp-like arpeggiated pattern in the accompaniment (See Figure 9). The texture change in the accompaniment appears with the text. One could argue that the highlighted words within the section that have the same melodic idea represent Anne Sexton’s lifelong struggle with depression.

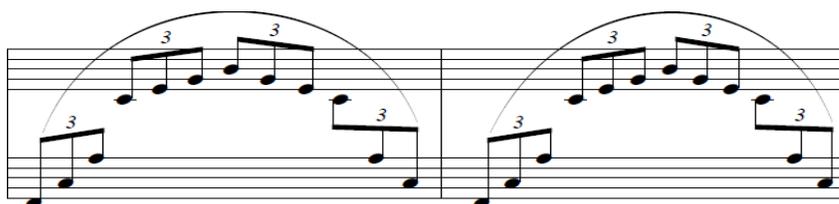


Figure 9. “Two Hands”

From the sea came a hand,
ignorant as a penny,
troubled with the salt of its mother,
mute with the silence of the fishes,
quick with the altars of its tides,

Sarah studying a beetle,
Mandrake holding his coffee mug,
Sally playing the drum at a football game,
John closing the eyes of the dying woman,
and some who are in prison,

and God reached out of His mouth
and called it man.
Up came the other hand
and God called it woman.
The hands applauded.
And this was no sin.
It was as it was meant to be.
I see them roaming the streets:
Levi complaining about his mattress,

even the prison of their bodies,
as Christ was prisoned in His body
until the triumph came.
Unwind, hands,
your angel webs,
unwind like the coil of a jumping jack,
cup together and let yourselves
fill up with sun
and applaud.

The second song in D major is entitled “Welcome Morning.” The joyful protagonist of this piece looks to give thanks and to have gratitude in the everyday routine. The song is through-composed and the piano accompaniment occasionally echoes the vocal line. This occurs in “Welcome Morning,” when the singer sings “hello there Anne” and the piano has a tremolo part with the instruction “as a wave hello” (See Figure 10).



Figure 10. “Welcome Morning”

Walker gives the vocal part more freedom through the sparse accompaniment. The singer often sings *a cappella*. The piece begins and ends with the same motive in the piano part. Walker gives the instruction that this motive represents church bells. The meter of the song shifts frequently, each time to better express the natural rhythm of the words.

There is joy
in all:
in the hair I brush each morning,
in the Cannon towel, newly washed,
that I rub my body with each morning,
in the chapel of eggs I cook
each morning,
in the outcry from the kettle

All this is God,
right here in my pea-green house
each morning
and I mean,
though often forget,
to give thanks,
to faint down by the kitchen table
in a prayer of rejoicing

that heats my coffee
 each morning,
 in the spoon and the chair
 that cry “hello there, Anne”
 each morning,
 in the godhead of the table
 that I set my silver, plate, cup upon
 each morning.

as the holy birds at the kitchen window
 peck into their marriage of seeds.
 So while I think of it,
 let me paint a thank-you on my palm
 for this God, this laughter of the morning,
 lest it go unspoken.
 The Joy that isn't shared, I've heard, dies
 young.

The third song in B-flat major, “What the Bird with the Human Head Knew,” is more mysterious and contains fantastical imagery. The song is through-composed with a reoccurring motive, which aides in the structure of the song. The walking motive occurs four times: twice at the beginning, then once in the middle and at end of “What the Bird with the Human Head Knew” in the piano accompaniment that coincides with an instruction given above the vocal line. Walker instructs the singer to explore the stage each time this motive appears (See Figure 11).



Figure 11. “What the Bird with the Human Head Knew”

I went to the bird
 with the human head,
 and asked,
 Please Sir,
 where is God?
 God is too busy
 to be here on earth,
 His angels are like a

I walked many days,
 past witches that eat grandmothers knitting
 booties
 as if they were collecting a debt.
 Then, in the middle of the desert
 I found the well,
 it bubbled up and down like a litter of cats
 and there was water,

The final song, “Look to Your Heart,” in F sharp minor expresses the lesson of the journeyer and concludes the search for God. Walker composes the accompaniment at the beginning with a repeated rhythm in the right hand in 4/4 meter. The accompaniment changes to tremolo chords in the next section and the phrases alternate from 4/4 to 6/4, which aid in the depiction of the journey’s progress. In this section, the person looks for God in everything around her. Walker introduces the final section of the piece that reveals the conclusion of the search in the accompaniment utilizing a harp like arpeggiated pattern. The text reveals the protagonist searching outside herself for God, but Heaven reveals to her that God is within her own being. Walker often creates certain sounds to accompany the idea of the text. The second time “you have a thousand prayers” occurs, it is on higher pitches for the voice and the piano echoes the idea of a thousand prayers by doing a high glissando. The glissando could be interpreted as an auditory reference to a thousand prayers going to heaven. The piece features many of the elements of the previous songs including passages that are to be more speech-like and other passages to be more legato or sung. Gwyneth Walker’s settings of Anne Sexton’s poetry highlights the importance of the text. The piano accompaniment enhances the story that the text reveals.



Figure 13. From “Look to Your Heart”

I cannot walk an inch
without trying to walk to God.
I cannot move a finger
without trying to touch God.
Perhaps it is this way:
He is in the graves of the horses.
He is in the swarm, the frenzy of the bees.
He is in the tailor mending my pantsuit.
He is in Boston, raised up by the
skyscrapers.
He is in the bird, that shameless flyer.
He is in the potter who makes clay
into a kiss.
Heaven replies:
Not so! Not so!

I say thus and thus
and heaven smashes my words.
Is not God in the hiss of the river?
Not so! Not so!
Is not God in the ant heap,
stepping, clutching, dying, being born?
Not so! Not so!
Where then?
I cannot move an inch.
Look to your heart
that flutters in and out like a moth.
God is not indifferent to your need.
You have a thousand prayers
but God has one.

CHAPTER 7

STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Stephen Sondheim, an American composer born in 1930, has made singular contributions to the development of musical theater with musicals such as *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *Into the Woods*, and *Sweeney Todd*. Sondheim has a sophisticated harmonic language and often uses shifting meters or complex rhythms. His mentors included Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein II.

Sondheim's musical *Sweeney Todd* premiered in 1979, based on a play by Christopher Bond. In Sarah Winter's article, "His knife and Hands Bloody: Sweeney Todd's Musical Journey from Page to Stage," she states that the musical has remained a steadfast apocryphal figure of horror since his birth in the Victorian period.¹⁷ The musical won several Tony Awards for the original 1979 production and the 2006 revival. It features a medium-sized orchestra of piccolo, flute, strings, harp, organ, celeste, trumpets, French horn, trombones, bass trombone, Bb and E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and percussion. When compared to some of his other musicals, there is more singing and less dialogue in *Sweeney Todd*. Many of Sondheim's musicals reveal the darker side of the human experience, and they often include a moral. The lesson from *Sweeney Todd* warns against an all-consuming desire for vengeance. Mary Lynn Dicker reflects on the differences in the plot and subject of *Sweeney Todd* to many other musicals

¹⁷ Sarah Winter, 'His Knife and Hands Bloody': Sweeney Todd's Journey from Page to Stage – Melodrama, Adaptation and the Original 1847 Manuscript." *Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance* 8, no. 3 (2015), 233.

that were successful around that time. This musical was gruesome and it gave social commentary unlike other musicals of that period.¹⁸

Mrs. Lovette, who is Mr. Todd's landlady, sings "By the Sea." Angela Lansbury premiered the role. She sings "By the Sea" to Mr. Todd to reveal the life she wants to live with the man who will never love her. "By the Sea" is a strophic piece in 3/4 meter that frequently shifts from A major to B-flat minor with each verse. Mrs. Lovette has two brief spoken interjections, which occur while the piece is in A major. The first time she relays a happy memory by the sea from her childhood and the second reveals her image of how she and Mr. Todd would dress by the sea. The text of the B flat minor passages depict a more intimate imagery of what their life could be like as a couple by the sea, for example "we shouldn't try it, though, till its legal for two-hoo." Sondheim composed the melodic phrases in A major with a lower range. The tessitura, in general, is low and often within speaking range. The vocal line has a speech like quality because of the narrow range and the vocal line moves, primarily, in stepwise motion.

Do you really want to know?
I've always had this dream...
Ever since I was a skinny little slip of a thing
and my rich Aunt
Nettie used to take me down to the seaside
August Bank Holiday...
The pier... Makin' little castles in the sand...
Ooh, I can still feel me toes wigglin' around in
the briney!
By the sea, Mr. Todd, that's the life I covet,
By the sea, Mr. Todd, ooh, I know you'd love
it!
You and me, Mr. T, we could be alone

Ev'ry night, in the kip, when we're through our
kippers,
I'll be there slippin' off your slippers!
By the sea,
With the fishies splashing!
By the sea!
Wouldn't that be smashing?
I can hear us wakin,'
The breakers breakin,'
The seagulls squawkin,'
'Hoo, hoo!'
I do me bakin,'
Then I go walkin'

¹⁸ Dicker, Mary Lynn. "An Analysis of the Adaptation of Sweeney Todd into a Musical." Master's thesis, 1980, 76.

In a house wot we'd almost own,
 Down by the sea!
 Wouldn't that be smashing?
 With the sea at our gate, we'll have kippered
 herring
 Wot have swum to us straight from the Straits
 of Bering!

Think how snug it'll be underneath our flannel
 When it's just you and me and the English
 Channel!
 In our cozy retreat kept all neat and tidy,
 We'll have chums over ev'ry Friday!
 By the sea!
 Don'tcha love the weather?
 By the sea!
 We'll grow old together!
 By the seaside,
 Hoo, hoo!
 By the beautiful sea!
 Oh, I can see us now, in our bathing dresses!
 You in a nice, rich navy, and me... stripes,
 perhaps.
 It'll be so quiet,
 That who'll come by it,
 Except a seagull
 Hoo, hoo!
 We shouldn't try it,

With you-hoo!
 Yoo-hoo!
 I'll warm me bones on the esplanade,
 Have tea and scones with me gay young blade,
 Then I'll knit a sweater
 While you write a letter
 Unless we've got better to do-hoo!

Though, 'til it's legal for two-hoo!
 But a seaside wedding could be devised,
 Me rumped bedding legitimized!
 Me eyelids'll flutter,
 I'll turn into butter,
 The moment I mutter I do-hoo!
 By the sea, in our nest, we could share our
 kippers
 With the odd payin' guest from the weekend
 trippers,
 Have a nice sunny suite for the guest to rest in,
 Now and then, you could do the guest in!
 By the sea,
 Married nice and proper!
 By the sea,
 Bring along your chopper!
 To the seaside,
 Hoo, hoo!
 By the beautiful sea!

CHAPTER 8

COLE PORTER

Cole Porter lived from 1891-1964 and composed songs, operettas, and musicals. He wrote melodies that were popular, easy to sing, and memorable. He utilized traditional harmonic progressions and created simple scores. He designed the music to highlight the text, which featured external and internal rhyme schemes.

One of Porter's musicals is *Fifty Million Frenchmen* with a book by Herbert Fields. This musical is written for strings, banjo, flute, piccolo, alto saxophone, oboe, clarinet, horn, trumpets, trombone, percussion. This musical began as Porter's first attempt to work on a score without a partner. This proved to be an unsuccessful venture. He eventually hired Fields to write the book for the show.¹⁹ Porter and Fields continued to collaborate on other musicals after the completion of *Fifty Million Frenchmen*. This show is a comedic two act musical with a traditional romance.

Fifty Million Frenchmen originally contained a song in E-flat major entitled "The Tale of the Oyster." During the New York tryouts for the musical, occurring around the same time as the stock market crash of 1929, the song "The Tale of the Oyster" was removed from the musical because it was believed that not many people wanted to think about regurgitation. The oyster is the narrator and is eaten by a wealthy woman on a yacht. He thinks that this yacht voyage will bring him somewhere where life is better. However, he is regurgitated right where he came from. Eventually, he realizes that his adventure was enjoyable, but there is no place like home. This song features an ABA structure. Both of the A sections are in E-flat minor and the text depicts oyster's home before and after the journey. The B section changes keys from G minor to C major

¹⁹ Eells, George. *The Life That Late He Led: A Biography of Cole Porter*. London: W. H. Allen, 1967.

to A minor. The key changes reflect the progress of the journey. The chef finding the oyster begins the journey in G minor. There is excitement and uncertainty for the oyster in this section. The C major section depicts the climax of the journey, which occurs when he is in the midst of many people on a yacht. The text set in A minor depicts the unrest that the woman who ate him feels. The vocal range is small and sparsely accompanied. The rhyme scheme is aabba and the simplicity of the setting allows the humor of the text to come to the fore.

Down by the sea lived a lonesome oyster,
 Every day getting sadder and moister.
 He found his home life awf'ly wet,
 And longed to travel with the upper set.
 Poor little oyster.
 Fate was kind to that oyster we know,
 When one day the chef from the Park Casino
 Saw that oyster lying there,
 And said "I'll put you on my bill of fare."
 Lucky little oyster.
 See him on his silver platter,
 Watching the queens of fashion chatter.
 Hearing the wives of millionaires
 Discuss their marriages and their love affairs.
 Thrilled little oyster.
 See that bivalve social climber
 Feeding the rich Mrs. Hoggenheimer,
 Think of his joy as he gaily glides
 Down to the middle of her gilded insides.
 Proud little oyster.

After lunch Mrs. H. complains,
 And says to her hostess, "I've got such pains.
 I came to town on my yacht today,
 But I think I'd better hurray back to Oyster
 Bay."
 Scared little oyster.
 Off they go thru the troubled tide,
 The yacht rolling madly from side to side.
 They're tossed about 'til that fine young oyster
 Finds that it's time he should quit his cloister,
 Up comes the oyster.
 Back once more where he started from,
 He murmured, "I haven't a single qualm,
 For I've had a taste of society,
 And society has had a taste of me."
 Wise little oyster.

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