

2019

A Conductor's Guide to Selected Works: Nature and the Elements

Katelynn Yelm
katelynn.yelm@siu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/gs_rp

Recommended Citation

Yelm, Katelynn. "A Conductor's Guide to Selected Works: Nature and the Elements." (Jan 2019).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Research Papers by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

A CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE TO SELECTED WORKS:
NATURE AND THE ELEMENTS

by

Katelynn Yelm

B.A., Monmouth College, 2017

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

Department of Music
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
May 2019

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

A CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE TO SELECTED WORKS:
NATURE AND THE ELEMENTS

by

Katelynn Yelm

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Music

in the field of Music

Approved by:

Susan G. Davenport, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
April 11, 2019

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this paper to my parents, Star and Kent Yelm and my grandparents, Sandy and Dan Powell. Thank you for all your support and encouragement throughout my life and education. I love you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
DEDICATION	i
LIST OF FIGURES	iii
CHAPTERS	
CHAPTER 1 – <i>Broad Waters, op. 39</i> (1979) Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki (1933-2010).....	1
CHAPTER 2 – “I Will Be Earth” (1993) Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)	12
CHAPTER 3 – “Voice on the Wind” (2015) Sarah Quartel (b. 1982).....	19
CHAPTER 4 – “The Lowest Trees Have Tops” (1603) John Dowland (1563 – 1626)....	27
CHAPTER 5 – “Fire” (2013) Katerina Gimon (b. 1993).....	33
CHAPTER 6 – “Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie” (2013) Kirby Shaw (b. 1942)	40
CHAPTER 7 – “Lebenslust” (1891) Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	52
VITA	54

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Figure 1 – <i>Broad Waters</i> Measures 12 and 13.....	7
Figure 2 - <i>Broad Waters</i> Measures 28 and 29	7
Figure 3 - <i>Broad Waters</i> Measures 45 and 46	7
Figure 4 - <i>Broad Waters</i> Measures 50 and 51	8
Figure 5 – Measure 23 and 24 of “I Will Be Earth”	14
Figure 6 – Measures # and # of “I Will Be Earth”.....	15
Figure 7 – Measures # and # of “I Will Be Earth”.....	15
Figure 8 – Measures 3 and # of “I Will Be Earth”	16
Figure 9 – Measure 67 and # of “Voice on the Wind”	22
Figure 10 – Measure 71 and 72 of “Voice on the Wind”	23
Figure 11 – Measure 1 and 2 of “The Lowest Trees Have Tops”	30
Figure 12 – Measure 8 of “The Lowest Trees Have Tops”	30
Figure13 – Measure 16 of “The Lowest Trees Have Tops”	30
Figure 14 – Measures 1-4 of “Fire”	35
Figure 15 – Measures 6 and 7 of “Fire”	36
Figure 16 – Measures 28 and 29 of “Fire”.....	36
Figure 17 – Measures 5-8 of “Fire”	49

CHAPTER 1

BROAD WATERS, OP. 39 (1979)

HENRYK MIKOLAJ GORECKI (1933-2010)

Composer Biography

Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki (1933-2010) was one of the foremost Polish composers of Modern classical music. Publishing his first composition in 1955, his style changed drastically throughout his life. At the beginning of his career, Gorecki was a strict serialist. His most significant contribution to classical music was the sound mass composition style associated with the Polish School of the 1960s. This style, with a compositional focus on extreme dissonance that is harsh to the listener, developed by Gorecki and other Polish composers of the time was a push for a purer form of expression.

Having been restructured using the Soviet model after World War II, the State Higher School of Music in Katowice, where Gorecki studied, may have influenced him to use such a serialist and dissonant style which came to be known as Polish sound mass. Using these techniques, Gorecki implemented patterns melodically and vertically to create different tone colors.¹ He firmly believed in the geometry of his songs and the geometry of the spaces where his works were performed, which he dictated in his scores.² Diagrams were included with his pieces written in this style, to assist the performer and director in finding an appropriate

¹ Leon Markiewicz, "Conversation with Henryk Górecki. Leon Markiewicz, July 1962," *Polish Music Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Winter 2003) <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/publications/polish-music-journal/#vol6no2>.

² Danuta Mirka, "Górecki's Musica Geometrica," *The Musical Quarterly* 87, (2004): 305-32, <https://login.proxy.lib.siu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.3600907&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

performance space and setting the stage for the optimal sound. After a hugely successful decade of compositions written in this manner from 1955-65, his style changed radically as Henryk Gorecki adopted a minimalist romantic approach to his compositions.

Becoming more intrinsically motivated and intimidated by his new-found fame, his style through the 1970s moved away from clusters of dissonance and focused on using more sparing dissonances to keep simplistic harmonic structures interesting to the listener. Gorecki began writing for himself to express his own thoughts and interests. These did not find him as much fame as his previous compositions. Abandoning his thoughts on geometric music, Gorecki stopped including diagrams and left many more aspects of performance up to the directors and performers of his works. He also applied repetition techniques to unify his pieces. For example, a rhythmic idea will return throughout the piece to join seemingly different moments of musical expression. Interviews conducted with Gorecki suggest that he always had an interest in Polish folk songs and tales, which was not prevalent in his prior music. Gorecki's compositional approach in the 1970s established the sound found in *Szeroka woda*.

Structural and Harmonic Analysis

Szeroka woda, or *Broad Waters*, is a five-movement work composed by Gorecki in 1979. His opus 39, *Szeroka woda* was written in the middle of Gorecki's career as an *a capella* piece that was written for four-part mixed choir with minimal *divisi* in the soprano and alto lines. This work is driven by the bottom three voice parts through much of the piece through different compositional ideas, including a driving rhythmic concept. Unifying ideas are popular in Gorecki's works from the 1970s.

Broad Waters is a short work lasting about sixteen minutes in its entirety and each movement can be a stand-alone piece. Gorecki chose to write this five-movement work in

different modes of G, which gives stability to his simple harmonic structure and provides continuity to the work as a whole. This text is composed of folk poetry from Polish tradition with three movements providing commentary on flooding and devastation caused by the bodies of water in the region. The other two movements are about love. For the purpose of this recital the three movements specifically about water were isolated and rearranged for harmonic continuity. The second, first, and fifth movement were combined in this order and are approximately seven minutes in length.

Henryk Gorecki's introduction to movement two, a strophic song entitled "When in Powiśle", begins with the bottom three voices, alto, tenor, and bass singing a swelling ostinato. This ostinato represents the flooding river, as heard in the repeated *crescendo-decrescendo* throughout. The two-measure ostinato of a quarter note and an eighth note followed by a dotted half note. Above the men's parts he also marks "*sempre poco staccato e marcato*" this detached, and slightly accented line emphasizes the unwavering power of the waters as the piece continues at a "*non troppo* (eighth note equals 100-104)" without slowing until the end of the piece.³ These lines flow to create forward motion throughout the work.

Movement two in G minor has a four-bar introduction that is followed by the soprano's entrance of the melody at measure five initially establishing G as the tonal center. The text of the soprano line refers to the devastation that the flooding of the river causes. "Oh, when in Powiśle the river floods us, we have nothing in our hut...", reads part of the text which depicts the lives the townspeople could have if the river would stop flooding their neighborhood.⁴ The sadness of

³ Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki, *Broad Waters, Op. 39.*, (London: Boosey and Hawkes. 1979).

⁴ Ibid.

the text is sung by the sopranos while the bottom three parts continue to be accompaniment on non-lexical vocables or neutral syllables.⁵⁶

Lasting roughly a minute and a half, Gorecki's harmonic minor melody captures the sorrow and despair of the people of Powiśle through his use of the raised seventh in the lower octave of the melodic line. The four-bar phrase of the soprano line is repeated four times through the movement. By measure 25 the melody of the song has finished, the accompaniment takes over and the sopranos join the bottom three parts to finish the song on a G minor root position chord.

There are very few suggestions from the composer in terms of expressive markings and dynamics. Above measure 1 there is the tempo marking as previously mentioned and “*mp-mf*” which was also previously mentioned. This emphasizes his push away from the style that brought him his fame in the 1960s by relinquishing control to the performers. The only other marking is a fermata in measure 38 to end the piece with a suspension of sound until the next movement begins.

Movement one, entitled “Our River Narew,” begins with the soprano and alto parts. The text they convey is specifically about the River Narew flooding. Similar to movement two, the text describes the harm the flooding does. However, unlike movement two these lyrics go on at measure 14 to describe how helpful the river is when it is not flooded. The text states “the

⁵ *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “non-lexical,” accessed January 23, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/non-lexical>.

⁶ *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “vocable,” accessed January 23, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vocable?utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=jsonld.

Narew, when not angry, will put things right for us” as it talks about the benefits to being able to travel on the river.

This movement starts with soprano and alto in two-part harmony beginning on a minor third. The D mixolydian melody with a flat sixth gives a new complexity to the simplistic writing of Henryk Gorecki in this piece. Removing the flat sixth after the first phrase of each section serves as text painting between the sad and happy realities of living on the river.

The simplistic texture of two-part women develops into four-part mixed chorus at measure 14 where the river’s benefits are first mentioned. Using an elongated I-V-I progression, the mixed chorus continues through measure 28. In measure 30, the women’s parts continue their original melody now expanded to four-part harmonies for the final stanza of poetry ending with “Others have far to go, but we are close to home.”⁷ The movement finalizes on a repeated declamatory statement, “Oh, our river Narew” sung in four-part mixed voices.⁸

Movement one has the most specific set of expressive markings, including tempo and dynamics change with each stanza of poetry. The lyrical two-part texture of the women is not only marked *piano*, but also *lento* and “*malincolico*” meaning slow and melancholy.⁹ This stanza finishes with a *rallentando* marked at the end of measure 11 carrying through to the end of the phrase in measure 13. At measure 14 in the full ensemble section of the movement, the dynamic shifts drastically to *forte* and is marked “*a tempo ma molto espressivo*” directing a return to the original tempo set, but with a bit more expression.¹⁰ Measure 18 pulls the dynamic back to a

⁷ Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki, *Broad Waters*, Op. 39.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

mezzo-forte and this stanza of poetry ends with two markings that slow down the tempo with a slight *ritardando*, followed by a *rallentando* and *diminuendo* to be carried from measure 26 – 28. Measure 30 supports the transition back to the original melody and voicing by adjusting to *piano* and insisting on a slight decrease in tempo and it is marked *dolce*. The third stanza of text sung by the four-part female voices ends with even more slowing marked specifically with “*rall. e poco dim.*” in measure 42 and “*molto rall. e poco dim.*” in measure 44.¹¹ Gorecki’s final markings for the movement are in measure 47 where the score is marked *piano* and the final moments of the piece are marked to slow down to *largo* and additionally *rallentando* in the following measure to the completion of movement one on a D major chord, the dominant of G furthering that as the tonal center of the piece.

The most interesting markings in Henryk Gorecki’s *Broad Waters* movement one is his use of rests. With no time signature the piece is seemingly in 3/8. At the end of each stanza of poetry, Gorecki places a certain number of rests in the measure. For instance, in measure 13 there is a single quarter note rest. The pause between stanzas is increased visually as Gorecki finished section two on measure 29 (see figure 1 and 2). This continues to increase as shown by the three quarter note rests in measure 46 and the three quarter note rests held over by three fermatas in the final measure of the piece (see figure 3 and 4). These rests lead the audience to listen more closely in anticipation of the next line to be sung.

¹⁰ Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki, *Broad Waters*, Op. 39.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Figure 1. Measure 12 and 13 from *Broad Waters* movement one.

szko - dy.

szko - dy.

Figure 2. Measures 28 and 29 from *Broad Waters* movement one.

szko - de - de.

szko - de.

szko - de - de.

szko - de - de.

Figure 3. Measures 45 and 46 from *Broad Waters* movement one.

o dim.

bli - sko.

bli - sko.

bli - sko.

bli - sko.

Figure 4. Measures 50 and 51 from *Broad Waters* movement one.

molto rall.

Na - rew.

Na - rew.

Na - rew.

Na - rew.

Movement five of Henry Gorecki's *Broad Waters* in G major is written homorhythmically. Beginning on a dominant to tonic progression, the song is a strophic form between measures 1-12 and measures 13-24 with a coda from measure 25-36 that ends on a first inversion G-major chord. This same pattern occurs again on page 19 from measure 37-73 and again in measure 74-110 with identical text for each verse progressing through I-IV-V-I.

The text is particularly significant to this movement. The lyrics make a connection to the spirit of the hymn-like structure. The first stanza, "Broad waters of the Vistula, now I shall tell you my thoughts," can be related to sharing in a spiritual setting. The second stanza expresses the need and loyalty to the waters of Poland, no matter how destructive the other movements may have depicted those waters to be.¹²

While the text is repeated in each verse with identical harmonic progressions, the beginning of a new verse is visually represented by expressive markings at the top of each page. Measure 1 is marked "*Maestoso* (quarter note = 72-74) *expressivo*" for a majestic and expressive

¹² Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki, *Broad Waters*, Op. 39.

first verse.¹³ Verse two begins at measure 33 marked *fortissimo* and marked to be more expressive. The final verse at measure 74 is a drastic shift to *piano* and the slowing to quarter note equals 48. The final marking is a *rallentando* at measure 107 that carries through the end of the piece. The specific markings in this movement may be just a glimpse of Gorecki's more controlling style pre-1970.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

When planning to rehearse *Broad Waters* there are a few considerations. First, teaching the bottom three parts separately from the soprano line in movement two is a simple way to strengthen the similarity in rhythms and movement. The soprano melody being taught separately allows for a solid understanding of the roles of each part. It may be helpful to have a separate men's and women's rehearsal on this piece, specifically movement one. This way all rehearsal time is utilized to its full potential and the women are able to rehearse their featured parts. Movement five, being completely chordal requires different rehearsal methods. It is vital for the ensemble to sing the unison D at the beginning of each section in tune. This will require a focus on a unified vowel to assist in the unison pitch.

This piece is *a capella*, which presents its own challenges. Rehearse with the piano early in the learning process to ensure pitches are solidified in the performers. The conductor should listen closely to the soprano and alto lines for clarity of dissonance, particularly in movement one. Removing the piano and checking for correct chords at cadences was informative to the director of this ensemble. Uncertainty of pitch will leave the ensemble falling behind the tempo throughout the movements.

¹³ Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki, *Broad Waters*, Op. 39.

When rehearsing the conducting of this piece as well as the ensemble, it is important to be thoughtful about the tempos chosen throughout. Listed tempos are very slow and will need to be practiced as such for the conductor's arm and the ensemble's breath support; however, learning the separate movements at a faster tempo will give the ensemble a chance to learn pitches without wasting rehearsal time. As the tempos are slowed back down it is important to only go as slow as the ensemble can sing beautifully.

In addition, it is important to remember that the language may be the most difficult part to learn in this piece. While there is a pronunciation guide included in the front of the score, Polish is not as common to choral singers as some other foreign languages. Some additional work on vowel shape may be needed to successfully integrate the Polish. For this reason, it is suggested that you add the language fairly quickly in the rehearsal process. A lack of confidence in the pronunciation will also cause the tempo to lag.

Teaching the text can be very difficult, but there are some rules to inform the ensemble about before learning to speak all of the Polish. For instance, any "ł" with a slash through it will be pronounced like a "w". Also, similar to German, the "w" will be pronounced as English speakers would pronounce "v". Finally, the "sz" found frequently in all three movements is pronounced like "sh" in English. These three rules are prevalent throughout all the movements of the piece and can give the performers a better understanding when they are writing in their pronunciations and reviewing how to say the lyrics correctly.

Learning the language of the piece should start early. With a fairly easy harmonic progression in each of the movements, the real challenge for a primarily English-speaking choir is the text. While learning the text later in the process, this ensemble found it helpful to repeat the text phrase by phrase multiple times. They were also given recordings of the text being spoken

for individual practice. The soprano line in movement one was spoken in rhythm frequently and a recording was also provided to ensure clarity of text in the performance.

Recording Review

The Lira Chamber Chorus and the Chicago Symphony Chorus, conducted by Lucy Ding, has an excellent recording of Henryk Gorecki's *Broad Waters* on an album entitled, "Gorecki: Miserere."¹⁴ While the tempos seemed exceedingly slow, a metronome informs the listener that it is the tempo Gorecki asked for in the score. The pure vowel sounds make the bottom three voice parts seamlessly blend together and the soprano melody floats over the top. This choir is able to execute the softest parts very lightly without losing tone and the powerful moments with an intensity that brings the piece to life. This is the only quality sound recording of merit for Gorecki's work.

The recording of Douce Memoire performing this work should be avoided.¹⁵ The main reason for avoiding it is the poor sound quality. From listening to the recording, it is hard to decide if the men are overpowering the women considerably, specifically in movement five, or if it is just because of the sound equipment. In movement one, with the same sound quality issues the women are sharp right from the first rising line. Other recordings would better serve a conductor or ensemble member in getting an understanding of this piece.

¹⁴ Lucy Ding, "Broad Waters," April 25, 1994, 15:07. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHu4JB_dIJE.

¹⁵ Felix van den Hombergh, "Gorecki – Szeroka Woda: 5 -Douce Memoire," directed by Felix van den hombergh, April 13, 2013, 4:53.

CHAPTER 2

“I WILL BE EARTH” (1993)

GWYNETH WALKER (b. 1947)

Composer Biography

Dr. Gwyneth Walker is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. All three of Dr. Walker’s degrees are in music composition. Previously, Dr. Walker was a “faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer.”¹⁶ Being a full-time composer, Walker has been very detail-oriented in her creations with over three hundred and fifty commissions completed in her lifetime.

Walker is an American composer who is best known for her lyrical melodies and carefully chosen text. “In high school, I played guitar and sang in a folk group for which I wrote all of the choral arrangements. Unlike some groups of this sort that learn the music by rote, we all read music quite well.”¹⁷ This affinity for folk songs can attribute to her well-known ability to create a beautiful melody. She also mentions that she has enjoyed writing melodies since the age of two, but “by the time I was in first grade, I had my own orchestra of friends. Composing music for others to play and sing has always been my favorite activity!”¹⁸ She believes she had

¹⁶ Gwyneth Walker, “Gwyneth Walker,” Copyright, 2018.
<https://www.gwynethwalker.com>.

¹⁷ Tom Wine ed., “Gwyneth Walker,” in *Composers on Composing for Choir*, (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2007).

¹⁸ Ibid.

no influences in her formal music education, as her professors allowed her to grow in her own style which stems from her natural ability to create melodies.¹⁹

However, before she can create these melodies Walker chooses texts almost always from an outside source, as opposed to writing her own. “I do not usually write the words for my compositions. In my mind, I have the basic nature of the idea I am seeking. I first need to find the right poetry, then once I select the poems, I create the music.”²⁰ Walker’s carefully selected texts are central to every choral composition she has written. “I Will Be Earth”(1993) epitomizes her style.

Structural and Harmonic Analysis

The final song in a song cycle entitled *Mornings Innocent*, “I Will Be Earth” by Gwyneth Walker is a four-part through-composed choral piece with piano accompaniment. The piece in its entirety is 3:45 long. This particular song gives the option for both a female and male solo at the beginning of the song, which begins in 3/4 in E major. On page three, the song shifts to a 6/8 meter in A-minor before returning to 3/4 in E major at measure 52 to the end.

The composer selected a love poem by May Swenson for the lyrics of this piece. With the need for a love text, the composer’s use of Swenson’s poetry gives beautiful imagery for Walker to bring to life through with music. Walkers also carefully crafts her accompaniments, “Often, the accompaniment is the central means of creating the imagery. The

¹⁹ Tom Wine ed., “Gwyenth Walker,” in *Composers on Composing for Choir*.

²⁰ Ibid.

vocal lines also participate in some musical imagery, but their primary function is to convey the words.²¹ This is evident when analyzing “I Will Be Earth”.

After an arpeggiated introduction by the piano, Swenson’s poem gives the line “I will be earth, you be the flower, you have found my root, you are the rain” and the first connection between the image of earth and text. This continues with the next line of text comparing the two lovers to a boat and water. At the key change in measure 29 there is a direct change in the accompaniment and the text. Changing to 6/8, the accompaniment goes from an arpeggiated motive to an alternating fifth motion in the right hand with even eighth notes (see figure 5). The vocal line also changes to duple as the text changes to match the imagery created by Walker’s composition (see figure 5).

Figure 5. Measures 29 and 30 of “I Will Be Earth”.

The image shows a musical score for two measures, 29 and 30, of the piece "I Will Be Earth". The score is written in 6/8 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and is labeled as "quasi recitative". The piano accompaniment is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and is also labeled as "quasi recitative". The text "How be stead-y earth that's now a" is written below the vocal line. The score includes a key signature change and a time signature change to 6/8.

The text, “How be steady earth that’s now a flood”, is found in the men’s duple line when it changes to a flowing eighth note melody as the “flood” is brought into the imagery of the

²¹ Tom Wine ed., “Gwyenth Walker,” in *Composers on Composing for Choir*.

melodic structure. The underlying support of the alternating fifths in the right hand of the accompaniment remain as steady as the Earth.

The imagery shifts yet again, first in the accompaniment at measure 43. This is the first time the accompaniment has chords, which are found in the left hand of the piano. The right hand moves from playing eighth notes (see figure 6) to playing sixteenth notes for the first time at measure 47 under the text “Burn radiant love, born scorpion need” which is being repeated from the previous imagery (see figure 7).

Figure 6. Measures 45 and 46 of “I Will Be Earth”.



Figure 7. Measure 47 and 48 of “I Will Be Earth”.

In measure 50 the right-hand accompaniment quickens in rhythmic structure even more to quintuplets suggesting the building need for this other person (see figure 8).

At measure 52, the original imagery and accompaniment return with the repeat of the initial text. On page 10, the accompaniment becomes repeated 8th notes, and the piece is concluded by imitative material in the women's voices and a final declamation from the men from measure 85 to the end. Walker's use of piano accompaniment in this piece demonstrates her ability to write equally important and expressive lines for piano and voice parts.

At the beginning of the song, Walker writes an optional female and male solos which are used to voice the love story of the text. The piece continues at the same tempo, but switches to a 6/8 meter, where the parts smoothly alternate between male and female voice parts. The first-time all four parts sing together is at measure 38. This denser section leads the song into a third slower tempo.

The homo-rhythmic four-part harmony continues at this slow passionate tempo leading to the strong dissonance at measure 51. Here, octave C's and D's are the final homo-rhythmic moment of the piece (see figure 8).

Figure 8. Measure 50 and 51 of "I Will Be Earth".

The image displays a musical score for measures 50 and 51 of the piece "I Will Be Earth". It features four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in a 6/8 meter and feature a homo-rhythmic four-part harmony. The piano accompaniment consists of repeated eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The score includes a "rit." marking and a final dissonant chord at measure 51.

The shift back to original melodic thought is brought about by a move back to E-major at measure 52. The soprano line becomes a quasi-descant as it sits above the other voices singing fragmented melodic content. Each part sings separately before alternating between male and female parts. Walker's accompaniment material and vocal lines work together to create the text imagery of Mary Swenson's poem.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

This song is fairly straight forward. Conductors should pay close attention to the duplets in 6/8 time at measure 29. Another spot to focus attention is measure 80 to measure 84. There eight entrance cues in these four measures. There is also a tendency for the ensemble to rush through the sixteenth notes that happen in the women's parts.

Overall, what will make this piece difficult will be the parts' independence from the piano accompaniment and attention to detail. Gwyneth Walker makes very specific notations. Each dynamic marking, tempo change, and accent needs to be done in order to keep the piece interesting.

This composition is about the beauty in the melodic construction. When learning this piece, it is important to emphasize tone quality. The words were not sung while initially learning the piece. The ensemble sang on a round "doo" to understand the rhythm through the initial consonant and find a tall unified sound through the vowel. After reintegrating the words, the ensemble found it difficult to accurately sing all the text in rhythm at the appropriate tempo. Slowing the tempo loses the continuity of the line, so the ensemble spoke text in rhythm at the marked tempo to correct this problem.

Recording Review

"I Will Be Earth" by Gwyneth Walker in the mixed chorus arrangement is masterfully

performed by the Atlanta Master Chorale.²² The ensembles vowel sounds are all very unified which makes the piece sound just as lyrical as the composer intended. The tempo is taken as written, with enough rubato and expressive quality to bring life into the piece. Also, the men's and women's parts blend well together to create a five-voice balanced sound wall. Overall, this is a wonderful reference recording for directors and performers.

There are many recordings of groups performing the gender-specific arrangements of "I Will Be Earth;" however, the Clovis East Concert Choir has recorded the SATB arrangement of this piece.²³ As a high school ensemble, they are a lovely model for others in terms of pitches and tone quality. While their pitch and tone quality are beautiful, the initial tempo of this rendition is very slow at 54 beats per minute, a drastic departure from Walker's marking of 120 beats per minute. At this tempo, the beauty of the accompaniment and the voice line are lost in the A section as the tempo is too slow to feel the flowing water imagery. The tempo at the B section is much closer to Walker's marked tempo but is a stark contrast to the tempo established at the beginning of the piece. This slower tempo is brought back at the return of the A material; however, the sopranos push that tempo ahead with their melismatic line and the tempo stays faster, making it seem as if the initial tempo was a mistake. Besides this deviation from the marked tempo, this is a wonderful example of a quality high school performance of this piece.

²² Eric Nelson, "Atlanta Master Chorale I Will Be Earth," directed by Eric Nelson, October 12, 2014, 3:48. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYbNsyDNwY8>.

²³ Carlin Truong, "I Will Be Earth Clovis East Concert Choir," directed by Carlin Truong, April 4, 2018, 3:27. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ppHl-8Xy-s>.

CHAPTER 3

“VOICE ON THE WIND” (2015)

SARAH QUARTEL (b. 1982)

Composer Biography

Sarah Quartel unintentionally became a composer. With an honors theory and composition degree and bachelor of education degree from Western University in London, Ontario, she began her career as an elementary music teacher and was quite content with her life. However, as her music began to become more well-known and she began getting commission requests, she had to cut back on teaching. She recently contracted with Oxford University Press in 2018. Currently, she is “the only Canadian signed as a house composer with OUP, the youngest person, and one of two women.”²⁴ While composing has become her primary income, she says she still chooses to substitute teach when she has the time.²⁵

As a strong accomplished female composer, it is no wonder that she accepted a commission to write “Voice on the Wind” for an all-girls chorus. Supporting women with this song’s message of strength, Quartel’s hope was that it would be “meaningful for young women carving out a place in their communities, families, and friend circles.”²⁶

Since 2013, Quartel has had 20 compositions published by Oxford University Press for choral music. The composer finds nature to be a large influence on her compositions, “I’m

²⁴ Sarah Quartel, email message to author, October 16, 2018.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

someone who is deeply inspired by nature and landscapes...”²⁷ Her affinity for nature is seen in compositions such as “Songbird,” “Snow Angel,” and “Here on These Branches” which all have imagery found in nature. This makes her use of the wind visual in “Voice on the Wind” an expected theme. These pieces exemplify several characteristics distinctive to her music: her use of open fifth intervals, her use of alternating major and minor third scale degrees to add variety to the melody, and her use of repetitious and clean-cut rhythms that drive her works forward like a drum.

Structural and Harmonic Analysis

“Voice on the Wind” by Quartel is a four-part women’s piece with hand drum accompaniment. The song was written for the twentieth anniversary of the Peninsula Girl’s Chorus of Burlingame, California to “celebrate 20 years of providing a place where girls find their voices.”²⁸ The song’s text written by Quartel herself, expresses the support of this mission to help females discover their own voices. The lyrics say, “I heard a voice on the summer wind” and goes on to describe how strong the song of the female personified wind is.²⁹ It also goes on “sounds familiar like my own,” recognizing her own strength in the voice of the wind.³⁰ Quartel explains her thoughts while writing this piece,

²⁷ Sarah Quartel, email message to author.

²⁸ Sarah Quartel, *Voice on the Wind*, (Great Britain: Oxford University Press. 2015).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

I thought of the journey many young people go through when growing up. We receive all sorts of messages about what to be like, what to believe, what our place is in the world, and for some it is difficult to find the path you want to follow. It can be tough to find yourself amidst the cacophony of voices attempting to influence your decision-making. The idea with this piece is that the singer/protagonist hears a strong and empowering voice on the wind and after careful listening, she realizes that the voice is hers. She feels capable, self-reliant, and confirmed that the path she has chosen for herself is the right one.³¹

The final phrase supports the empowerment of women with a realization, “I am the voice on the summer wind...Strong and sure where e’re I stand” which is followed by the syllables “hoo wa hoo wa hoo”, that were used throughout the song to imitate the sound of the wind and represent the voices of women.

Composed with C-sharp as the tonal center, the piece shifts between major and minor through the use of E-sharp and E-natural. The piece in AABA form begins with an optional mezzo-soprano solo or small group moment. In this solo the melody is sung in its entirety completely exposed with no drum. Following the solo, there is an alternation between a phrase of text and a hand drum line in a call and response fashion.

The A section continues through measure 65 at which time there are two measures of transitional material. At measure 67 the soprano two voice part sings a descant-like line in an attempt to sound like an echo of wind flowing through trees (see figure 9).

³¹ Sarah Quartel, email message to author.

Figure 9. Measure 68 to 70 of “Voice on the Wind”.

The two alto parts and soprano one line are supporting with non-lexical vocables and end the B section all together on a G7 chord. The C section of the piece is noticeably different from the rest of the piece. While the melodic material is the same, the song loses texture as the entire ensemble sings in unison, building to another G7 chord. Measure 95 to the end of the piece is a compilation of the non-lexical vocables found throughout the piece which ends on a declamatory statement, “I am the voice.”³² The song concludes with a final wind statement on an open C-sharp chord in measure 104.

The poetry, also written by Quartel, is not leading the form of this piece. The full poem is,

I heard a voice on the summer wind, Who she is I can't explain. I heard a voice on the summer wind, Blowing free and blowing wild. I heard a voice on the summer wind, Strength and spirit in her song. I heard a voice on the summer wind, Sounds familiar like my own. I heard a voice on the summer wind, Moves me like she knows me well. I am the voice on the summer wind, Strong and sure where e'er I stand. I am the voice.³³

This text is fragmented throughout the piece and separated by neutral syllables being used to personify the wind. Many lines of the text are repeated and has no bearing on the form as the text

³² Sarah Quartel, *Voice on the Wind*.

³³ *Ibid.*

was repeated to make a particular arch of the line. Text painting can be found in spots, particularly at measure 71 where the second sopranos sing “Moves me like she knows me well” multiple times in a row in a quarter note and eighth note pattern that drives the song forward (see figure 10).

Figure 10. Measure 71 and 72 of “Voice on the Wind”.

The musical score for measures 71 and 72 of "Voice on the Wind" is presented in a four-staff format. The top staff is a soprano line with vocalizations "oo" and "wah". The second staff is a vocal line with the lyrics "Moves me like she knows me well, she". The third staff is a vocal line with vocalizations "oo" and "wah". The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 4/4. The score shows a rhythmic pattern of quarter and eighth notes in the vocal line, and a more melodic line in the soprano and bass lines.

Also, at the realization that the “voice” being within each woman, the line “Strong and sure where e’er I stand” slows in rhythmic value to quarter notes with a fermata and half note on the word stand. The spreading of this chord to an octave and a half from a unison pitch gives the same imagery of strength. Quartel’s fragmentation of the text, varied textures of voices, and touching message create a powerful and unique composition.

Conducting Considerations

This piece is *a cappella*, so the sooner the ensemble can perform it without the piano, the more confident the performance will be. None of the parts are more important than any other in this song, making it imperative for the voice parts to be equally balanced in timbre and in volume. This will mean paying close attention to having strong low women’s voices to sing the alto two line. Performing at the marked tempo is probably the other most important factor in this

song being successful on a program. Notes and rhythms may be easy until the group is trying to enunciate at 104 beats per minute and this will take practice.

The ensemble began by learning measure 84 to the end, which is mostly A material that is being repeated, but it is marked at a much slower tempo. This gives the women a chance to solidify voice crossing and pitches before the tempo picks up considerably without taking parts of the song out of context. As the tempo was increased, the ensemble sang from the beginning, easily recognizing spots that were similar to measures 83-104. This worked well for understanding of the main melodic structure.

The weakest section for this ensemble was the transitional material between motive A and B. Without the main melody being sung, the clarity of the melody was lost and in turn, the understanding of the flow of the piece as a whole. Learning transitional material as the beginning to each “new” section would allow an ensemble to understand the entire piece equally well.

Recording Review

The Winston Churchill High School Varsity Women’s Choir is a pristine recording of “Voice on the Wind” by Sarah Quartel.³⁴ The soloist has a maturity to her sound that is powerful and commanding. The entire ensemble has a well-blended sound and is easily understood at the written tempo for the piece. This is the peak recording for conductors to listen to when deciding if this piece is for their ensemble. The rhythmic intensity of the group is outstanding.

³⁴ Ken Turner, “Voice on the wind – Quartel,” September 11, 2017, 4:11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcvdRVHN6fM>.

The Select Women from Prairie View High School Choir in Brighton, Colorado are a younger voiced choir singing “Voice on the Wind.”³⁵ For most of the song their intonation is very accurate. They are skilled at the rhythms which they seem to really emphasize by speeding the piece up. The song was performed at 115 beats per minute when the score is marked 104 beats per minute. The soloist at the beginning is not a good model for other soloists as she seems to attempt the entire solo in her chest voice and breaks at the top. This was an interesting recording because not only was the tempo taken quite a bit faster, but the parts marked slower were not taken proportionately to the markings given in the score.

“Voice on the Wind” as recorded by the South Salem High School Chamber Women’s Choir is an excellent recording.³⁶ This recording, going even faster at 125 beats per minute is performed with a less frantic feel than the previous recording. This may be because the choir is older and more experienced or that they had practiced at that tempo considerably longer in order to achieve a relaxed approach to the music. The soloist at the beginning provides a wonderful model for other soloists who are high school age or older. The song is well balanced between all four parts and the unison moments are beautifully tuned. In the C section, listeners can tell that the music is a little less sure as some of the balanced chords that were previously heard become a bit out of balance for a moment before the return of clarity with the A material’s reappearance.

³⁵ Madeline Gardner, “Select Women’s – Voice on the Wind,” March 17, 2017, 3:29. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=153fmiI2KCc>.

³⁶ Jenna Hernandez, “South Salem High School Chamber Women’s Choir – Voice on the Wind,” directed by Jenna Hernandez, February 2, 2019, 3:31. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfC_uV5kbnI.

While it looks deceptively simple to learn, “Voice on the Wind” has proven itself to be challenging for groups, specifically in rhythm and tempo.

CHAPTER 4

“THE LOWEST TREES HAVE TOPS” (1603)

JOHN DOWLAND (1563 – 1626)

Composer Biography

Known primarily as a lutenist, John Dowland is one of the most well-known English Renaissance composers for lute and voice. He came from a middle-class family who lived and served in an aristocratic household where Dowland received his early music education. Through the influences of this family he spent a small portion of time in France, which expanded his understanding of European music's trajectory from the late sixteenth century into the seventeenth century including the more dance like melodies of the French style.

After adolescence, Dowland studied and earned a bachelor of music degree from Oxford University. His goal was to become the court lutenist in England. When he was first turned down for this position, he began extensive traveling across Europe. He spent time in Germany and Italy where he served in various courts. After another failed attempt to be the English court lutenist, he continued his travels in Denmark, where he entered service of Christian IV, ruler of Denmark and Norway.³⁷ Having lived in so many places throughout Europe, he became a widely known musician of the time. He was highly regarded in these foreign courts and was paid well for his compositional and performing talents.

In his attempt to impress his native land's court, Dowland began publishing collections of his works. He even went as far as to dedicate his second collection to the wife of King James I,

³⁷ Diana Poulton, *John Dowland: His Life and Works*, University of California Press, 1972.

Anne of Denmark.³⁸ He did procure the position of the English court lutenist very late in his life as a result of his rising fame across Europe.

His unsuccessful attempts at becoming a part of the English court influenced his compositional style. By traveling all across Europe, Dowland was able to bring back the latest in compositional developments to England. His own style also continued to evolve from these various techniques. Particularly important to his style is the lute song, also known as an ayre, which was unfamiliar to the English prior to Dowland's publication of "First Booke of Songes or Ayres" in 1597.³⁹ Ayres, or lute songs, are strophic pieces "often in dance form, with an almost complete absence of chromaticism."⁴⁰ "The Lowest Trees Have Tops" by Dowland is written with stylistic elements of those English ayres.

Structural and Harmonic Analysis

The influence of this style of writing is apparent in John Dowland's "The Lowest Trees Have Tops" written in 1606, the same year as Dowland's dismissal from the courts of Denmark. This piece shows the strophic style and uses chromaticism sparingly at the cadential points. His writing demonstrates the influence of the lute song through these two stylistic choices.

All four parts are equally important in Dowland's writing. While the sopranos do have the main melody, the piece only works if there is a brilliant balance of all four voices throughout the work. This allows the contrasting rhythms to be emphasized simply through the movement

³⁸ Diana Poulton, *John Dowland: His Life and Works*.

³⁹ James Reel, "Artist's Biography", All Music, 2019, accessed January 10, 2019, <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/john-dowland-mn0000770105/biography>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

while other parts are sustaining. The balance of voices is just as important as the choir lands at cadential moments where there is a leaning towards traditional tonality. A perfectly balanced chord is imperative for the listener to really register it as a resting place.

Following his traditional melancholic theme of writing, John Dowland writes this AAB song using all of nature in relation to love. Each phrase is a different element or creature in nature and describes how their limitations do not keep them from doing something. For instance, “slender hares cast shadows though but small” and “Seas have their source, and so have shallow springs.”⁴¹ These sorts of phrases are then related to love right at the end of the first verse “And love is love in Beggars and in Kings” to remind audiences that the quantity of an item does not decrease the quality.⁴² The second verse occurs in a similar way, though mentioning more qualities possessed and finally at the end “They (hearts) hear, and see, and sigh and then they break.”⁴³

The text is supported by the vocal lines, where G seems to be the tonal center of the piece moving back and forth between minor and major mode throughout the song. The relationship between G and D is strongly emphasized with half cadences at measure 7 and 19. The soprano line still leads the text with the most syllabic musical line and an understanding of the part-writing rules of the time can also be seen as the bottom three voice parts move traditionally to complete phrases. For instance, in measure 4 the tenors rise by half-step, from F-sharp to G while the basses in the sense of a basso continuo move by a fourth from D to G.

⁴¹ John Dowland, *The Lowest Trees Have Tops*, (Boston: Choral Public Domain Library. 1603).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

Dowland also incorporates blatantly obvious text painting. For instance, the alto line in measures 1 and 2 drops a full octave from G4 to G3 on the word “lowest” (see figure 11).

Figure 11. Measure 1 and 2 from “The Lowest Trees Have Tops”.



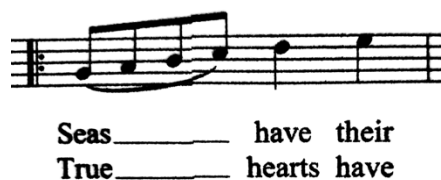
Also, in the bass line the basses have a half-step neighboring tone in measure 8 on the word “slender” (see figure 12).

Figure 12. Measure 8 from “The Lowest Trees Have Tops”.



This half step neighboring tone emphasizes the smallness of “slender”. Another example would be at measure 16 where the bass line has an ascending scalar pattern of eighth notes on the word “seas” (see figure 13).

Figure 13. Measure 16 from “The Lowest Trees Have Tops”.



This particular text painting is implying the flow of waves in the ocean. Dowland’s style shows mastery of specific techniques of the Renaissance demonstrating an understanding of voice parts and text painting.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

The date of this composition should always be in the conductor's thoughts during the rehearsal process. While analyzing the score it is noticeable that there is no tempo given but being written in the Renaissance, each phrase should be able to be sung in one breath; however, haste should be discouraged. Conductors should also remember that the score has been written for ease of reading. Do not take measure lines or time signatures as definitive. Often in this piece there are ends of phrases in the middle of a measure. Allow the piece to breathe where the notes seem to encourage it, not simply where measure lines are.

In the score used for this performance, the song is written with a single set of repeat marks between measures 16 and 22. However, verse 2 lyrics underneath the entirety of the song suggests another repeat should occur from measure 22 back to the beginning of the piece to make the strophic form.

The text was the dominant issue for the ensemble. The text describes many different species of nature and different characteristics that seem foreign to the performers. The text, while in English, did not come naturally. Practicing the text in rhythm helped with rhythm uniformity, so that the piece lined up vertically throughout. While the piece is not entirely tonal, it does lean that way. Thankfully, the cadences give a familiar resting moment for the ensemble to regain control of the pitch through the weaving counterpoint and voice crossing. The alto and tenor lines were watched closely through the process to ensure intonation at the moments of voice crosses.

Recording Review

The Robert De Cormier Singers' performance of "The Lowest Trees Have Tops" by John Dowland is excellent in the vocal execution.⁴⁴ Their vowels are pure, their tone is crisp and clean, and their rhythmic accuracy is pristine. The only argumentative decision is the tempo at which they perform the piece. This Robert De Cormier Singers' tempo seems to be frantic and out of character for the style of the piece.

There are very few choral recordings of this piece. Often, they are solo voice accompanied by lute, or other stringed instruments. There is a recording of The Copenhagen University Choir performing this piece under the direction of Jesper Grove Jorgensen.⁴⁵ They have very clear diction and precise rhythms; however, for standard performance practice this may not be the best recording to listen to due to the amount of vibrato used in each voice part, making the imitative moments a bit unclear. They do sing about 60 beats per minute to the quarter note.

⁴⁴ Robert de Cormier, "The Lowest Trees have Tops," directed by Robert de Cormier, March 21, 2015, 1:43. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCpem84wvd0>.

⁴⁵ Jesper Grove Jorgensen, "The Lowest Trees Have Tops," directed by Jesper Grove Jorgensen, August 7, 2016, 2:01. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMvNmSPJL6E>.

CHAPTER 5

“FIRE” (2013)

KATERINA GIMON (b. 1993)

Composer Biography

Katerina Gimon is a young Canadian composer rising to popularity across North America. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation describes her as “...a composer, improviser, and vocalist...rapidly gaining repute as one of the most distinctive emerging voices in Canadian contemporary composition today.”⁴⁶ Making her mark on the future of Canadian compositional style, Gimon's interests all seem to affect her writing.

More than a composer, Gimon "is also the founding director of all-female creative vocal ensemble Audax, which performs primarily new and improvised music exploring the connection between sound, movement and theatre."⁴⁷ Her first choral composition "Boundless" shows these interests in movement and improvisation as the female voice's clarity of sound is emphasized by removing text. Similar to “Boundless,” “Fire” is sung on syllables, which are dictated, but to the listener could be interpreted as modified scat singing.

She has written ten pieces for choir, five mixed voice, and five women's pieces, one of these being *Elements*, a multi-movement work that includes “Fire”. The other three movements are: “Earth”, “Air”, and “Water”. Each movement includes its own specific techniques to

⁴⁶ Robert, Rowat, “30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians Under 30,” CBS Music, 2017, accessed December 12, 2018, <https://www.cbcmusic.ca/posts/18752/30-hot-canadian-classical-musicians-under-30-2017>.

⁴⁷ Gimon, Katerina, “Katerina Gimon”, Katerina Gimon, 2018, accessed December 15, 2018, <http://www.katerinagimon.com/bio.html>.

embody its element. In “Earth” she integrates steady half note rhythms that embody sturdiness. In contrast to “Earth”, “Air” has a lighter quality by being sparse in texture and simply slowing speaking words related to air in different languages. The fourth movement of *Elements* is “Water” where Quartel composes using a flowing 12/8 meter and fast moving eighth and sixteenth note sections to evoke moving water.

She is particularly skilled in writing for the flexibility and sound quality of the voice. Quartel’s compositions are aleatoric in nature, and even when more traditional compositional components are used, certain aspects are still left to chance. The latter is found within the sighing motives in the score, the pitch the singer sigh to will be different with each ensemble that performs it.

Without text, the piece has to find other ways to be interesting. Gimon’s interest in the relationship between sound and music is evident in “Fire” where she writes in very precise body percussion that can be done crisply. When done correctly it brings unity to the piece and the ensemble.

Structural and Harmonic Analysis

Through-composed and written in 12/8 and A-flat minor, Katerina Gimon’s “Fire” is the third movement from a set of four SATB works called *Elements*. Written with similar formatting to George Crumb, this piece leaves empty space where the line is either resting or has a repeated phrase and is written in a mirroring fashion to make the score easier to read and provide artistry. A “hallmark of Crumb's is writing out his sheet music in such a way that the scores themselves

become a work of art.”⁴⁸ The basses spend the entire piece on a pedal tone low A-flat ostinato through the entirety of the piece therefore, their line is written in the first measure and left blank with the exception of body percussion to the end of the piece (see figure 14)

Figure 14. Measures 1-4 from “Fire”.

The tenor line deviates for the beginning of the piece giving us harmony and dissonance on an ascending scale pattern from A-flat to D-flat. It repeats this motion through measure 24 where they join the basses in unison A-flats for the remainder of the piece and again their line in the score remains empty. It is understandable that the men’s parts are relatively stationary as they are responsible for the body percussion from measure 26 to the end of the piece.

While the men represent the undertones and sturdiness of fire, the women have very different roles. They have syllabic percussion beginning at rehearsal A representing the hissing and popping of the fire of “ts” and “ha” (see figure 15).⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Jef Rouner, “A Gallery of Bizarre and Beautiful Scores,” accessed January 28, 2019, <https://www.houstonpress.com/music/george-crumb-a-gallery-of-bizarre-and-beautiful-scores-6492040>.

⁴⁹ Katerina Gimon, *Fire*. (Vancouver: Cypress Choral Music, 2016).

Figure 15. Measures 6 and 7 of “Fire”.

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with a dynamic marking of *mf*. It contains two measures: the first measure has the syllable 'ts' with a long horizontal line underneath, and the second measure has 'ha!' with an accent mark (>) over the 'a'. The bottom staff is a guitar accompaniment, also marked *mf*. It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating muted strings. The syllables 'ts k ts k ts ts ha!' are written below the notes, corresponding to the vocal line.

These hisses dissipate, and the women take on a new role at the same time that the men begin their body percussion in measure 26. At this moment, the women begin the most chordal moment of the piece. A sixth apart, the altos and sopranos begin an “ah” section that moves up by a half step before releasing upward on beat four. This moment solidifies the piece in A-flat minor as the alto note presents the third of the chord for the first time in measure 27. This repeats in measures 29 and 31 (see figure 16).

Figure 16. Measure 28 and 29 of “Fire”.

The image shows two staves of music for measures 28 and 29. The top staff is for the Soprano (S) and the bottom staff is for the Alto (A). Both staves are in treble clef and have a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music consists of a series of notes in the first two measures, followed by a long horizontal line with the syllable 'ah' underneath, indicating a sustained vowel sound. The Soprano part has a slight upward curve over the 'ah' line, while the Alto part is more level.

The women's parts shift one more time in this short piece splitting between a series of what Gimón states are "yips, shouts, and ominous laughs" while the altos are presented with a percussive quarter rest eighth note "ay" which is repeated for forty seconds. The women's parts disappear at this time, the thin texture of the men's ostinato returns, mirroring the beginning of the work. The interesting thing about this piece is that there is no text. The sounds are made to symbolize different aspects of fire, the cracking and popping, as well as the ritualistic aspects of fire through the low men's voices and the high animalistic sounds in the women's parts.

Conducting Considerations

The rehearsal process for this piece can be done in a variety of ways. For the purpose of this recital, the initial ostinatos for each voice parts sections were taught before the music was given to the ensemble. After an understanding of the individual sections was met the music was distributed. When learning this piece, it is important to recognize that the work is not meant to be done with music in the ensemble's hands. To be performed at its highest level, the piece needs to be memorized. Conductors should also teach the body percussion to their ensemble early on so that a unison sound may be achieved.

Conducting this piece is more of a challenge than the performance. Because the ensemble is not carrying music, they rely solely on the director for transitions to the next section of the piece. This piece requires very specific time beating for the men at the beginning of the piece. An aggressive downbeat should be given to project the accent needed on beat one of each measure in the men's parts. Once the flowing tenor line starts and the women are acting as percussion, the gesture can be very small with a cue on four for the down beat "ha" from the sopranos which is then echoed in syncopation by the altos.

Eye contact will be key at this time as the women will be singing cluster chords while the men begin the body percussion. The director needs to practice conducting it consistently with eye contact so that the performers can familiarize themselves with expectations for the performance. The dissonance of the cluster chord will also be emphasized with an energetic gesture on the upward sigh. A gesture of energetic release needs to remind the women that their cluster chords release on an upward sigh. As the rhythmic complexity continues to build, the men continue to do their same ostinato from the beginning and will be expected to keep that going themselves as the women need direction. The women must maintain eye contact with the director to begin the “yips and yells”, which continue at the conductor’s discretion.

The final set of cues are for a group of ladies yelling “ay.” This needs to be a very precise cue or the rhythm will be unclear. This leads to the last full group cue which will be a recognition of a final repeat of the 2 measures of “ay” leading to the stomp on the downbeat of measure 45 and the cue for the women to cut off. Then the only other focus is for the men’s line to *decrescendo* into nothingness.

Recording Review

“Fire” by Katerina Gimon was performed very well by the Nova Scotia Youth Choir of 2017.⁵⁰ First, the entire ensemble is memorized making for an audience engaging performance. It is important to notice the performance space of this rendition as the body percussion is much more effective on the hard wood floors presented in this version. The men stay on pitch on a beautiful unison tone as the women are not afraid of their volume while singing, yipping, and

⁵⁰ Rachel Rensink-Hoff, “Fire,” directed by Rachel Rensink-Hoff, October 4, 2017, 1:56. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNjBr3A_gAk.

yelling. The dynamics were also well executed as the recording crescendos to the climax and fades to nothing through the men's ostinato at the end.

The Laurier Singers performed "Fire" by Gimon as well.⁵¹ This recording is a bit strange as the men do not go back down to the low A-flat. Instead, they sing up the octave, which leaves a stronger feeling of dissonance between the men's ostinato and the women's parts until the end of the piece. It is a very uneasy thing for the listener as there is never a moment of rest when it is sung up the octave. However, for an example of "ominous laughter and yips" this is definitely a quality example of the character of the piece. The blend of the group is also a model as the men's voices are very evenly voiced at the beginning and the women are split evenly between all four "sigh" pitches and the "yips" and "ha" rhythms.

⁵¹ Katerina Gimon, "Elements," April 2, 2014, 12:31. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWd6wrtD_ZU.

CHAPTER 6

BRING ME LITTLE WATER SYLVIE (2013)

KIRBY SHAW (b. 1942)

Composer Biography

Kirby Shaw has been influential in music education and American compositions throughout the years. Mr. Shaw has degrees in “Music Education and Choral Composition from San Jose State University and a DMA degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Washington.”⁵² His work in choral music education is well known across the country and internationally as he continues to clinic choirs, conduct master classes, and to date has written over 2,500 choral pieces.

In addition, Mr. Shaw is known for having started jazz vocal ensembles at multiple institutions including Colorado State University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City.⁵³ According to the composer’s website, “Kirby is a member of Just 4 Kicks, a zany 4-man a cappella vocal ensemble specializing in Jazz.”⁵⁴

Kirby Shaw’s experience in and around jazz vocal ensembles makes him a credible source for a simple jazz arrangement. His arrangement of “Bring Me Little Water Sylvie” demonstrates his understanding of *a cappella* choral writing and jazz harmonies.

⁵² Kirby Shaw, “Kirby Shaw,” Kirby Shaw Music, 2018, accessed January 10, 2019, <http://www.kirbyshaw.com/press%20kit.htm>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Structural and Harmonic Analysis

Kirby Shaw wrote a simple jazz choral arrangement of “Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie” in a rondo form where the initial material reoccurs between different ideas. Originally an African-American folk song, the text is about a gentleman working in the fields and calling to a woman, presumably his wife, named Sylvie to bring him some water. Shaw writes in a female and male solo to support this dialogue. The female solo begins with the text “Can’t you see me coming” to announce that she is on the way. The male solo found at the end of the piece is a descant over the chorus as if he is shouting for her again to bring him water from measure 46 to 50.

“Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie” is written in E-flat major in 4/4 time. The song’s simple chord structure often alternates between I and ii chords. Cadential points are often between dominant chords and iv 7 chords. There are a few vi chords to decorate the transitional moments of the piece, starting at measure 37. The rhythms are straight quarter and eighth notes with the occasional syncopation using an eighth note rest, and there is no swing rhythm.

Kirby Shaw does give some direction in terms of expressive qualities. The song is marked “soulfully (quarter note equals 104) and *mezzo-forte*.”⁵⁵ When the solo comes in at measure 19, it is also marked *mezzo-forte*. There is a crescendo marked in measure 36 leading to a forte in measure 37. Shaw expresses a decrease in volume at measure 45 back to *mezzo-forte*. The only other marking is a note to let the 2nd ending be slow at measure 55.

⁵⁵ Kirby Shaw, “Kirby Shaw”.

Conducting and Rehearsal Considerations

One of the most important things for the conductor to do early on is find soloists. The soloists need to be able to carry their line in the *a cappella* piece. There is no opportunity for any instrument to provide a pitch. The other thing to consider is the conductor's gesture. It needs to be as simple as the writing on the page. Extra movement will not make this piece easier to follow. A gentle flowing, loose gestured four pattern will be the easiest for the ensemble to follow.

Notes are not difficult in this piece. The ensemble will only need help from the piano initially learning it. The ensemble can sing *a capella* quickly and the focus can be on other matters. While Shaw wrote a very simple arrangement in terms of meter, the 4/4 time can be misleading. This ensemble had a hard time understanding where the emphasis needed to be in this piece. The ensemble practiced the piece stepping on one and three in order to feel the emphasis of the two meter feel of the song; however, the director continued to conduct in four so as not to confuse any performer about cues.

The other difficulty was the dynamics, particularly during the solos. It is a very relaxed sort of piece and extremely loud dynamics should not be tolerated. The conductor needs to search for a strength in sound without an over abundance of volume. This way, the soloists can be heard having the conversation that the piece is based on.

Recording Review

The Rolla Choral Arts Society Jazz Choir is a group of students ninth to twelfth grade. There are sixteen singers in the ensemble. They choose an accurate for this arrangement of

“Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie.”⁵⁶ They took it a bit faster than the marked tempo of 104 beats per minute the choir performs this song at 108 beats per minute. This recording proves that the piece is accessible to a wide variety of ages. There are moments where it seems that the female parts of rushing, but overall the *a cappella* work is very solid in pitch and rhythm.

“Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie” was also recorded by the Grand Forks Central Chamber Choir.⁵⁷ While their rhythms and pitches were done quite accurately, this recording may be less reliable for style. The tempo marked 104 was increased to 131 and in turn the bass parts rhythms seem rushed and frantic throughout the piece. The choir does do an excellent job of letting the soloist be heard over top of the ensemble and their dynamic contrast is quite seamless and pleasant to listen to.

⁵⁶ Rolla Choirs, “Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie,” May 1, 2016, 2:37. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3MCGOcSZZM>.

⁵⁷ Grand Forks Central Chamber Choir, “Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie,” May 15, 2014, 2:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoHLUMg4FII>.

CHAPTER 7

LEBENSLUST (1818)

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797 - 1828)

Composer Biography

German composer Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828), composed during the early Romantic era while clinging to Classical forms, had an amazingly large output of material, composing over 1,500 works in his life.⁵⁸ Best known for his solo voice and piano works, Schubert wrote a variety of styles from song cycles to masses. While it was intended to be insulting, “Ernst Krenek discussed Schubert's style, abashedly admitting that he had at first ‘shared the widespread opinion that Schubert was a lucky inventor of pleasing tunes.’”⁵⁹ Krenek later decided that this was an incorrect assumption and that Schubert made purposeful melodic and accompaniment decisions.

From Krenek’s critique one is reminded that Schubert is most famous for his short and sweet melodies and strophic organization. One of his most famous examples would be “Die Forelle”, a strophic solo work composed with a dance-like lightness. This simple melodic design is carried through many of his other works including “Lebenslust” which translates to “Love of Life” and is written in the same time of Schubert’s life. This choral work written for four-part mixed chorus is very stereotypical Schubert in melodic and accompaniment construct. “Schubert’s flair for the invention of accompaniment figures in his songs has long been

⁵⁸ Christopher H. Gibbs, "Introduction: the elusive Schubert", *The Cambridge Companions to Music*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁵⁹ “Franz Schubert,” Lumen, 2018, accessed January 28, 2019, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/musicapp-medieval-modern/chapter/franz-schubert/>.

appreciated.”⁶⁰ Schubert’s accompaniments play an integral part in setting the scene for his pieces, while remaining independent from his melodic voice parts.

Schubert is sparing with his expression marks in the voice parts of his songs; this is because “singers knew instinctively what to do, whereas pianist did not.”⁶¹ This seems to hold true in “Lebenslust” where the markings of *piano* and *forte* are found throughout the piece, but there are no *crescendo* or *decrescendo* marks. Schubert trusts the singers to use their musical instincts to follow the line of the melody. Schubert uses tempo descriptors purposefully. When they are not present, his original tempo should be strictly followed. “Schubert always indicated exactly where he wanted or permitted a *ritardando* or *accelerando* or any kind of freer delivery. But where he did not indicate this, he would not tolerate the slightest arbitrariness or the least deviation in tempo.”⁶² This is important when conducting and performing his works, because there should not be added *ritardando* where he has not indicated them if the music is to be performed as close to the composer’s intent as possible.

Structural and Harmonic Analysis

“Die Geselligkeit,” more commonly known as “Lebenslust,” by Franz Schubert is written in D-major in 6/8 time. *Die Gelleigkeit*, translating to “anyone who feels pleasure in life” is shortened to *Lebenslust* or “Life Lust” which is said throughout the piece, unlike the original title of the piece.⁶³ Accompanied by a percussive and arpeggiated two-hand piano line Schubert’s

⁶⁰ Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ “Die Geselligkeit”, The Lieder Net Archive, Last modified August 19, 2018, http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=90334.

piece is mostly homo-rhythmic with the exception of the bass line which occasionally introduces a phrase before the rest of the voice parts. The work has some repetition with the structure being ABB¹. The A section runs from measure 1 to 18 at the fermata. The B section runs from measure 19 to measure 28 with the B¹ happening from measure 29 to 38 at the conclusion of the piece.

This energetic piece's text is secular and inherently about love. The lyrics describe how boring being alone is and how being in love is so much more appealing for people. The harmonic progression of this piece is incredibly simplistic with a I-IV-V-I progression through much of the song. The end of the A section at measure 18 on an E-major chord is the V/V on a fermata which leads us to the next section of the piece starting with the soprano.

The expressive markings for this piece are quite specific. The piece is marked "*Geschwind*" at the beginning, which means swift or fast in German. Each phrase is marked a different dynamic level. Measure 4 starts the piece out at *forte* with a large contrast of *piano* at measure 8. These markings found in the original publication *Franz Schubert's Werke* were followed for this particular recital. The *ritard* in measure 14, implying contemplation, leads to an *a tempo* just before measure 15 which is then broken only for a moment for a fermata at the end of measure 18 signifying the end of the A section. The B section of the piece crescendos from *piano* at the start at measure 18 to *forte* at measure 22 and up to *fortissimo* in measure 26, which is then repeated in the B¹ section which only differs in some harmonic structure.

Like many of Schubert's works, the accompaniment plays directly off of the text. This text is only the first stanza of a poem by Johann Karl Unger which reads, "Anyone who feels pleasure in life does not remain alone. Being on your own is unpleasant, who could enjoy it?"

Within a trusted circle, with heartfelt kisses, Living together is delight for the soul.”⁶⁴ Schubert’s accompaniment has a playful staccato eighth note motive under the chorus for the first line of text, but at measure 9 this changes to a more frantic set of 16th notes and a harmonic shift to more minor chords for “Being alone is unpleasant.”⁶⁵ The line of text asking “who could enjoy it” is repeated twice, first sung very quietly, but after a moment of contemplation from the piano with a *ritard* the chorus sings the line again with more conviction and at the same fast tempo originally noted.

Unlike the A section, the B section of this work stays in major tonality; however, it begins *piano* with rapid sixteenth notes in the accompaniment to imply the taboo of kissing to be mentioned at this time in measure 19. In measure 23 this timid sound is rebuked as the dynamic marking changes to *forte* and the line about kissing is repeated. At measure 25 and at a *fortissimo* the chorus nearly shouts “it is a delight for the soul” while Schubert’s accompaniment assists by holding a dotted quarter note tied to another dotted quarter note underneath before playfully rising in 16th notes for an octave and a half, perhaps implying other delights.

The B¹ section begins after this climactic scale pattern. Here the exact same dynamics and accompaniment motives are used, with slightly different harmonic structure as the voices spread apart in range. This extension of range occurs mostly in the soprano voice, which reaches up to an A5 in the penultimate measure.

When considering the accompaniment of this piece it is important to remember the lightness with which Schubert would play. “A beautiful touch, a quiet hand, clear, neat playing,

⁶⁴ Franz Schubert, “Die Geselligkeit”.

⁶⁵ Franz Schubert, *Lebenslust*, (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Hartel, 1872).

full of insight and feeling. He still belongs to the old school of good pianoforte players, whose fingers had not yet begun to attack the poor keys like birds of prey.”⁶⁶ The playing needs to be crisp and light with high energy due to the nature of the piece.

Conducting Considerations

During the rehearsal process, there are two main concerns the conductor needs to consider. Being written in German, the English-speaking ensemble needed to be given phonetic pronunciation and ample time to practice their diction. This can also be more difficult because the song does go by in a swift two pattern, so the diction will be a vital focus of time and efforts.

The other potential concern is securing an excellent accompanist who can collaborate with the choir frequently in rehearsal. It takes a skilled accompanist to follow the ensemble and the conductor while still playing what Schubert has written. While this should not be a deterrent, conductors thinking about doing this piece should know in advance that having the accompanist work with the ensemble for timing and tempo adjustments should be done preferably before the dress rehearsal.

This ensemble struggled to make the German understood. Familiarity with the text needs to be established early and repeated frequently. A pronunciation guide was provided to the ensemble to practice individually. The German lyrics were spoken by the director and repeated by the ensemble phrase by phrase, but repetition is key to clarity of diction and rhythm.

There are two technical issues that prove difficult for the choir. Note accuracy in the tenor line was difficult because the only line that was particularly frustrating for this ensemble was the tenor line. While not entirely difficult in most places, there are moments that the line is

⁶⁶ Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*.

very angular and requires accuracy of intervals in a very short amount of time. Additionally, recognizing the rhythmic pattern of a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note on beat one of many measures, such as measures 33 and 34 which repeats in other moments through the piece can also be difficult for the performers. (see figure 17).

Figure 17. Measures 5-8 from “Lebenslust”.

33

zusammen zu leben, ist See.lengenuss,
 zusammen zu leben, ist See.lengenuss,
 zusammen zu leben, ist See.lengenuss,
 zusammen zu leben, ist See.lengenuss, ist So

These include: measures 5 and 6, measures 7 and 8, measures 9 and 10, measures 23 and 24, measures 29 and 30, and measure 31 and 32. It is a very dance-like piece and the rhythm occurs many times throughout the work, but its combination with the German was not quite as smooth as it could have been. The ensemble spent quite a bit of time speaking rhythms on neutral syllables to try and understand the repetition of Schubert’s work.

Recording Review

The Texas A and M Century Singers do an excellent version of “Lebenslust” by Franz Schubert.⁶⁷ The harmonies are clear and strong as well as having a well-balanced blend of voices. At measure 14 the conductor makes an interesting decision to slow the piece down to under half the original tempo. It gives a strong purpose and significance to the only *ritard* in the piece.

A quartet of singers also do a very nice job performing “Lebenslust”. Elly Ameling, Janet Baker, Peter Schreier, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau have beautiful diction, it really allows for their rhythms to be clean and crisp.⁶⁸ The only problem with this recording is the lack of dynamics, with no significant difference between their *piano* and *forte*. When the soprano voice comes in alone at measure 19, imitated by the tenors, they were just as strong in volume as at measure 26 where the piece is marked *fortissimo*.

The Vocal Ensemble Omnitet also does a fine recording. With bigger voices, the singing is well balanced.⁶⁹ The dynamic contrast is also very impressive. While their diction is not quite as crisp and previously mentioned recordings, their recording is still an excellent reference for the dance-like feel needed in this piece. However, the accompaniment is too heavy. The pianist seems to be struggling to keep in line with the lively energetic sound of the singers. These are all

⁶⁷ Century Singers TAMU, “Lebenslust,” August 19, 2012, 1:22. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRmoKCHIOzo>.

⁶⁸ Elly Ameling, Janet Baker, Peter Schreier, Dietrich Frisher-Dieskau, “Lebenslust D. 609,” November 10, 2011, 1:26. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_zVJ2q7nBg.

⁶⁹ The Vocal Ensemble Omnitet, “Die Geselligkeit (Lebenslust) D. 609,” January 26, 2014, music video, 1:40. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKPNDVhvdLY>.

reputable recordings. The size of the ensemble intending to perform this piece will determine which recording will be best for each group as the recordings represented are of varying sizes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dowland, John. *The Lowest Trees Have Tops*. Boston: Choral Public Domain Library. 1603.
- Gibbs, Christopher H. "Introduction: the elusive Schubert". *The Cambridge Companions to Music*. Cambridge University Press. 1997.
- Gimon, Katerina. *Fire*. Vancouver: Cypress Choral Music. 2016.
- Gimon, Katerina. *Katerina Gimon*. Katerina Gimon, 2018. <http://www.katerinagimon.com/bio.html>.
- Gorecki, Henryk Mikolaj. *Broad Waters*. Op. 39. London: Boosey and Hawkes. 1979.
- Markiewicz, Leon. "Conversation with Henryk Górecki. Leon Markiewicz, July 1962". *Polish Music Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter 2003) <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/publications/polish-music-journal/vol6no2/gorecki-trochimczyk-conversation/>.
- Mirka, Danuta. "Górecki's Musica Geometrica." *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 2 (2004): 305-32. <https://login.proxy.lib.siu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.3600907&site=eds-live&scope=site>.
- Newbould, Brian. *Schubert: The Music and the Man*. Berkely: University of California Press. 1997.
- Poulton, Diana. *John Dowland*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.
- Quartel, Sarah. *Voice on the Wind*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press. 2015.
- Rouner, Jef. "A Gallery of Bizarre and Beautiful Scores." accessed January 28, 2019. <https://www.houstonpress.com/music/george-crumb-a-gallery-of-bizarre-and-beautiful-scores-6492040>.
- Rowat, Robert. "30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians Under 30." CBS Music, 2017. <https://www.cbcmusic.ca/posts/18752/30-hot-canadian-classical-musicians-under-30-2017>.
- Schubert, Franz. *Lebenslust*. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Hartel. 1872.
- "Franz Schubert." Lumen. 2018. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/musicapp-medieval-modern/chapter/franz-schubert/>.
- Shaw, Kirby. *Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation. 2013.

Shaw, Kirby. "Kirby Shaw." Kirby Shaw Music, 2018. <http://www.kirbyshaw.com/press%20kit.htm>.

The Leider Net Archive "Die Geselligkeit" Last modified August 19, 2018. http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=90334.

Toft, Robert. *Tune Thy Musicke to Thy Hart: The Art of Eloquent Singing in England*, Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

Trochimczyk, Maja. "Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki at 70." *Polish Music Journal* 6, no.2 (Summer 2003) <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/publications/polish-music-journal/vol6no2/>.

Walker, Gwyneth. *I Will Be Earth*. Boston: E.C. Schirmer Music Company. 1994.

Walker, Gwyneth. *Gwyneth Walker*. Copyright. 2018. <https://www.gwynethwalker.com>.

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Katelynn M. Yelm

yelm95@yahoo.com

Monmouth College
Bachelor of Arts, Music, 2017

Research Paper Title:

A Conductor's Guide To Selected Works: Nature And The Elements

Major Professor: Susan G. Davenport