5-2021

A Choral Conductor's Study, Rehearsal, and Performance Guide to Selected Pieces by Barber, Brahms, Dowland, Rutter, Victoria, Vivaldi, and Whitacre.

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A CHORAL CONDUCTOR'S STUDY, REHEARSAL, AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO SELECTED PIECES BY BARBER, BRAHMS, DOWLAND, RUTTER, VICTORIA, VIVALDI, AND WHITACRE

by

Elaina Crenshaw

B.A., Northwest Nazarene University, 2019

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

School of Music
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
May 2021

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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Approved by:

Dr. Susan Davenport, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
April 2, 2021

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Elaina Crenshaw, for the Master of Music degree in Music, presented on April 2, 2021, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: A CHORAL CONDUCTOR'S STUDY, REHEARSAL, AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO SELECTED PIECES BY BARBER, BRAHMS, DOWLAND, RUTTER, VICTORIA, VIVALDI, AND WHITACRE.

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Susan Davenport

This document is intended to serve as a commentary on the research and rehearsal process of the works included in a choral conducting recital. The pieces included in the recital are: Victoria's *Senex puerum portabat*, Dowland's *Fine Knacks For Ladies,* Vivaldi's *In exitu Israel*, Brahms's *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, Barber's "To Be Sung on the Water," Rutter's "Come live with me," and selections from Whitacre's *Animal Crackers vols. I* and *II*. These pieces were selected to cover the range of musical eras from the Renaissance era to the Modern era. The following focuses will be discussed for each piece: biographical and historical perspective of the composer and piece, formal analysis, conducting considerations and rehearsal process, and review of recordings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Susan Davenport for believing in me and my conducting potential, for endlessly editing this document, for teaching me something new every day, and for constantly pushing me to “be better.” I would like to thank my graduate committee, Dr. Susan Davenport, Dr. Brittany Benningfield, and Dr. Christopher Morehouse for the time they have poured into me. I would also like to thank Dr. Barbara Noyes for being a part of my musical endeavors in the 2020-2021 school year at Southern Illinois University. I would especially like to thank Thomas Frost and Scott Johnson for their mentorship and friendship through a unique graduate school experience. Finally, I would like to thank my family for supporting my career, and their constant love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE PAGE

CHAPTER 1

SENEX PUERUM PORTABAT (1572)

TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA (1548-1611)

Biographical and Historical Perspective

Born in Avila, Spain in 1548, Tomás Luis de Victoria is considered the greatest Spanish composer of the Renaissance era. Beyond his renown as a Spanish composer, his name is included as one of the greatest Renaissance composers alongside Byrd, Tallis, Lasso, and Palestrina. He undoubtably studied the works of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, and he may have also known Palestrina personally. Victoria was a choirboy at the Avila Cathedral until his voice broke and he was sent off to Rome to study theology and music at the Collegio Germanico, a Jesuit college.[1] Brown and Stein write, "Palestrina served as chapel master at its [Collegio Germanico] sister institution, the Seminario Romano, during those years, and the young Spaniard may have learned from him."[2] Victoria was deeply religious and never wrote any secular music. Though he could have taken a respected job at an institution in Rome, he was devoted to serving the church and would later be ordained as a priest in 1575.[3] Before his ordination, however, he took a job as the *cantor y sonador del órgano* at the Church of Santa Maria di Monserrato in 1569 and later added a second job teaching music at his alma mater Collegio Germanico in

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[1] Robert Stevenson, "Victoria, Tomás Luis de," in *Grove Music Online,* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed November 14, 2020, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029298.

[2] Howard Mayer Brown and Louise K. Stein, *Music in the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 310.

[3] Brown and Stein, *Music in the Renaissance*, 310.

1571.[4] In the early 1570s it is speculated that Victoria held four music positions simultaneously.[5] In addition to those four positions, he published his first book of music, *Motecta,* in 1572. Though the book was published in 1572, "when the music in this volume was composed is not known, but it is likely that it represents a selection of those he considered to be the best works he had written over the preceding eight or so years."[6] One of these works is *Senex puerum portabat*. In the dedication section of his book, Victoria writes that he "dared to publish [the book] so that fair people, and specially music experts, could use them."[7] Victoria's compositional output of motets is up for debate, but it is in the range of fifty to 140. He also composed twenty masses, eighteen Magnificats, nine sets of Lamentations, and two Passions[8]

Formal Analysis

Senex puerum portabat is a four-voice motet that has a sense of duple meter. The text for this motet is one of the more obscure feast day texts that composers set, yet it was also set by prominent composers such as Byrd and Palestrina. The translation of the text is "An old man carried the child, but the child was the old man's king. A virgin gave birth to that child, yet she

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[4] Eugene Casjen Cramer, *Studies in the Music of Tomás Luis de Victoria*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001), 235.

[5] Cramer, *Studies in the Music of Tomás Luis de Victoria*, 239.

[6] Cramer, *Studies in the Music of Tomás Luis de Victoria*, 236.

[7] "Dedication," Tomás Luis de Victoria Research Center, accessed January 19, 2021, https://www.tomasluisvictoria.es/en/node/1629.

[8] Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 95.

remained a virgin still: him whom she bore she also worshipped."[9] As stated by the *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, "The text was written for the feast of purification [February 2]. According to the Mosaic law a mother who had given birth to a man-child was considered unclean for seven days; moreover she was to remain three and thirty days 'in the blood of her purification'... Forty days after the birth of Christ Mary complied with this precept of the law, she redeemed her first-born from the temple...and was purified by the prayer of Simeon the just, in the presence of Anna the prophetess."[10] The seemingly pleasant narrative describing "the Temple where Joseph came with Mary the Virgin Mother and her Son JESUS to fulfil the divine law of purification after childbirth"[11] does not seem to match the sorrowful dissonance found in the music. Searching deeper into the context of this piece, Renaissance flautist and scholar Anne Smith relates that the Jesuits practiced spiritual meditations while reading scripture.[12] There are several parts to these meditations, but an important part at the end is to recognize the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made for the sins of the world, and to keep that in context with whatever text is studied. With this concept in mind, Victoria's use of dissonance make sense. For the Jesuits, there is a lens of Jesus' undeserved suffering that all other events are filtered through. Victoria

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[9] "Victoria TLd - Senex puerum portabat," The Choir of St John's Cambridge, Andrew Nethsingha, accessed January 5, 2021. https://www.sjcchoir.co.uk/listen/sjc-live/victoria-tld-senex-puerum-portabat.

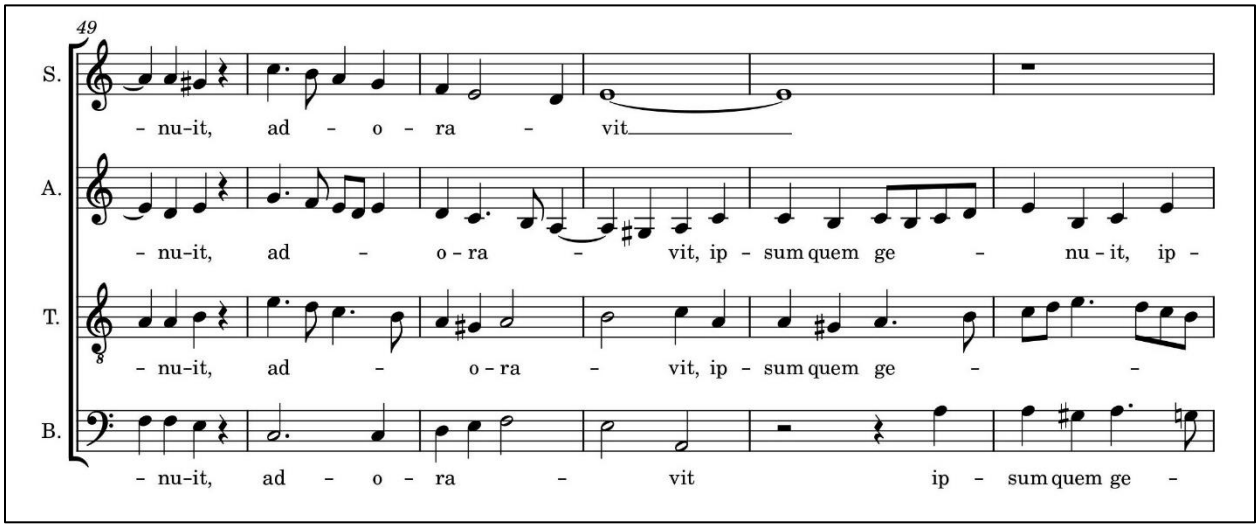
[10] Frederick Holweck, "Candlemas," The Catholic Encyclopedia, Robert Appleton Company, vol. 3, accessed March 2, 2021. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03245b.htm.

[11] Anne Smith, "Jesuit Imagery, Rhetoric, and Victoria's "Senex puerum portabat"," *Musica Disciplina* 59 (2014): 134, accessed January 19, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24893220.

[12] Smith, "Jesuit Imagery, Rhetoric, and Victoria's "Senex puerum portabat"," 128.

employs text painting in several instances, but one instance is on the line *adoravit*, meaning, she worshiped [Jesus]. All four parts have a descending line, which can be interpreted as one falling to their knees and bowing down to worship Him (see fig. 1).

Figure 1. Victoria, *Senex puerum portabat*, falling gesture mm. 50-52.[13]



Additionally, the first time *adoravit* is sung is the first and only time that all four parts cadence and then reenter homorhythmically. This brings emphasis to the element of reverence that is important to the Jesuits in their meditations. It can also be speculated that since Victoria was a religious man who only wrote sacred music, *adoravit* was an important line to him, and that is why it is emphasized. Other than the brief homophonic sections, such as the *adoravit* section mentioned above, the piece is mostly polyphonic and characterized by imitative entrances. Syllabic setting of the text is interspersed with melismatic runs. The relatively slow tempo makes these melismatic runs accessible to the average choir member. The piece employs the use of

[13] Tomás Luis de Victoria, *Senex puerum portabat*, edited by Elaina Crenshaw (2021).

musica ficta, pitch alterations that were necessary in performance but not notated.[14] Due to these pitch alterations not being written in the original score, several contemporary recordings of *Senex puerum portabat* do not include the raised accidentals that would have been expected in 1572. The piece ends on an E major chord, but it would be naïve to posit that the whole piece is in E major, or even that it stays in one tonal center. The strict distinctions of major and minor were not fully established in the sixteenth century, and modes were often used. The piece does, however, return to A aeolian mode (A minor) several times. If A minor is considered the tonal center, ending on an E major chord would be like ending on a half cadence. This ties back to the Jesuits' mindset that this text is not the ending of the story, the story of Jesus had just begun, and there were several chapters to come.

Rehearsal Process and Conducting Considerations

Asking the choir to sight read all four parts at once is not recommended. Especially for a chamber choir, even reading two parts at once can be too much. Not wanting to revert to learning notes by rote, the choir members were asked to all sing each part individually. For example, the whole choir sang the bass part, then they all sang the tenor part, etc. This not only increases their sight-reading skills by reading different clefs, it also gives them a greater understanding of what the other parts are doing when they inevitably get lost in subsequent rehearsals. The piece was introduced on a neutral syllable to eliminate the foreign language element when learning the notes and rhythms. *Solfege* was not used to introduce the piece because *solfege* is based on a major/minor tonality system, and *Senex puerum portabat* has modal elements in it. Learning the

[14] T. Karp, "Musica ficta," Encyclopedia Britannica, (December 5, 2007), https://www.britannica.com/art/musica-ficta.

text is not difficult because it is such a short text. Singing on text, however, is not easy. The choir demonstrated immense struggle even speaking the text in rhythm. The polyphonic nature of each line creates confusion in the simple act of counting to two. A help is to split the choir up into two halves, having one half audibly count “one and two and” while the other half sings their parts.

Review of Recordings

Many recordings of *Senex puerum portabat* show up when searched on YouTube. Several professional or semi-professional choirs have done high quality recordings with variances in tempo, tuning, and voicing. With Renaissance music, there is no specific tempo given, it was just common practice for the ictus to be approximately the tempo of one’s heartbeat. Because everyone has a different heartbeat, there is room for some variance within a moderate range. Similarly to the tempo, tuning was not standardized in the Renaissance, so the tuning of a piece would vary region to region. Today, some groups tune to the modern A440, while other groups use an older, usually lower, style of tuning. Both styles have their value. And finally, there is variation in voicing, meaning some groups use the now standard SATB, while others are all male choirs with either boy sopranos or countertenors singing the soprano part. The latter would be more historically accurate, yet the former is more accessible for a modern performance. One element that is not negotiable in the preferred recording is the use of *musica ficta*. There are some recordings that do not implement the accidentals and are therefore not recommended, such as the recording of the Choirs of Mater Dei Parish from 2015. There are three recordings on YouTube that are fine examples of Victoria’s piece: Ensemble Plus Ultra, La Colombina, and Il Convitto Armonico. Each implement a slightly different tempo, tuning, and voicing. It is up to each choir director to decide what is the best option for their choir. The tempo and tuning that Il Convitto Armonico uses are the best fit for this author’s choir.

CHAPTER 2

FINE KNACKS FOR LADIES (1600)

JOHN DOWLAND (1563-1626)

Biographical and Historical Perspective

English composer John Dowland is one of the most prominent Lutenists from the Renaissance era. Little is known about his early life, but his talent was acknowledged as early as 1588 when "the Oxford academic John Case listed him among English musicians worthy of honour."[15] Dowland's renown hinges primarily on three books for voice and lute, each containing upwards of twenty songs: The *Firste Booke of Songes or Ayres* (1597), *The Second Booke of Songs or Ayres* (1600), and *The Third and Last Booke of Songs or Aires* (1603). According to musician and music historian Edmund Horace Fellowes, Dowland's books lay the foundation for the short-lived English School of Lutenist Song Writers.[16] Fellowes claims that the genre came to maturity in 1597 with Dowland's *Firste Booke of Songes or Ayres* and died out with another book by Dowland called *The Pilgrim's Solace* in 1612. The voicing in these books ranges from one to five parts and allows flexibility of interpretation with how many voices are desired for a performance. *The Firste Booke of Songes or Ayres* was very successful, due in part to the creative layout Dowland chose. Dowland's design is explained in a Grove Music Dictionary article, "Instead of a set of quarto partbooks, with each book containing all the parts

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[15] Peter Holman and Paul O'Dette, "Dowland, John," in *Grove Music Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed September 3, 2020, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000008103.

[16] Edmund Horace Fellowes, *The English School of Lutenist Song Writers*, (London: Stainer & Bell, Ltd., 1922), preface.

in the collection for a particular voice or instrument, Dowland used a single folio book intended to be placed flat on a small table, to be read by the performers grouped around it."[17] The *Firste Booke of Songes or Ayres* was received so well by the public that it was reprinted in 1600, 1603, 1606, 1608, and 1613. The success of the *Firste Booke of Songes or Ayres* led Dowland to publish more books.

Dowland, having been passed over for a court musician position in the English court of Elizabeth I, was serving in the court of Christian IV, King of Denmark when he wrote *The Second Booke of Songs or Ayres*. The legal disputes that arose from the publication of this book give a glimpse of what the world of music publishing was like in seventeenth century England. Getting the book published required several people's cooperation: the publisher George Eastland, the printer Thomas East, and the patent holder Thomas Morley.[18] Dowland's wife had stayed behind in England, and since that was where the *Second Booke* was printed, she had some say in how much Dowland would be paid for this work. All disputes aside, Dowland's *Second Booke of Songs or Ayres,* similar to the *Firste Booke,* was also well received. In the introductory of his *Third Booke* Dowland writes, "The applause of them that iudge, is the incouragement of those that write: My first two bookes of aires speed so well that they haue produced a third."[19]

Fine Knacks for Ladies, knacks meaning knickknacks, from his *Second Booke of Songs*

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[17] Holman and O'Dette, "Dowland, John."

[18] Margaret Dowling, "The Printing of John Dowland's *Second Booke of Songs or Ayres*," *The Library*, Vol. s4-XII, no. 4, (March 1932): Pages 365–368, https://doi.org/10.1093/library/s4-XII.4.365.

[19] Diana Poulton, *John Dowland*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 275.

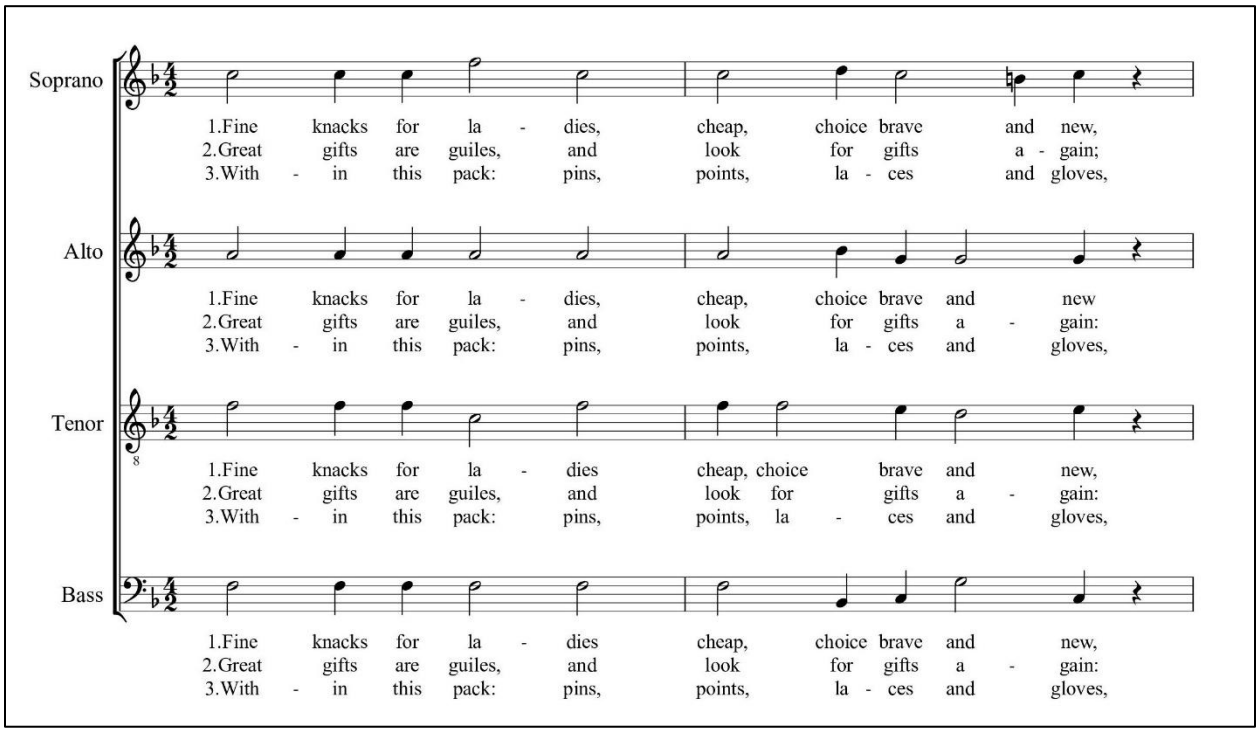
or Ayres, is one of Dowland's most performed pieces in current times. One search on NAXOS Music Library alone produces forty-four results. Comparatively, "Shall I Sue, Shall I Seeke for Grace," another song from his *Second Booke* only produced one result, and many of the other pieces from the *Second Booke* produced no results. Many choirs have sung *Fine Knacks for Ladies a cappella* or with lute accompaniment, but other arrangements of *Fine Knacks for Ladies* have also been performed by flute consort, brass ensemble, solo voice with lute accompaniment. and more. The influence of this piece goes beyond the classical music circle and into the pop realm. In 2006, Sting released a record featuring music from the 1600s. One track on that album is *Fine Knacks for Ladies*. Sting's rendition is surprisingly true to the original score and proves that the popularity of Dowland's compositions can withstand centuries of time.

Formal Analysis

Fine Knacks for Ladies is a pleasant strophic piece of three verses. Dowland situates the piece securely in F major, occasionally using secondary dominants for interest. It is noted in common time, which in this piece generally means four half notes per measure, rather than four quarter notes per measure (today's standard). But as is common with Renaissance music, not all measures have an equal number of beats. No tempo marking is indicated on the original score, but since the text is cheerful in nature, one could posit a tempo of 100 beats per minute to reflect that cheerful mood. No dynamic marking is given either, but it is acknowledged that music from the Renaissance should be performed within a range of *piano* to *mezzo-forte*, with no dramatic *crescendi* or *decrescendi*. The texture of this piece starts out homorhythmic, but each line becomes more independent as the piece progresses. Each part's independence is magnified with iambic rhythms occurring on different beats. For example, in m. two, the tenors have the quarter note-half note motif starting on beat one, while the sopranos have the quarter note-half note

motif starting on beat two (see fig. 2).

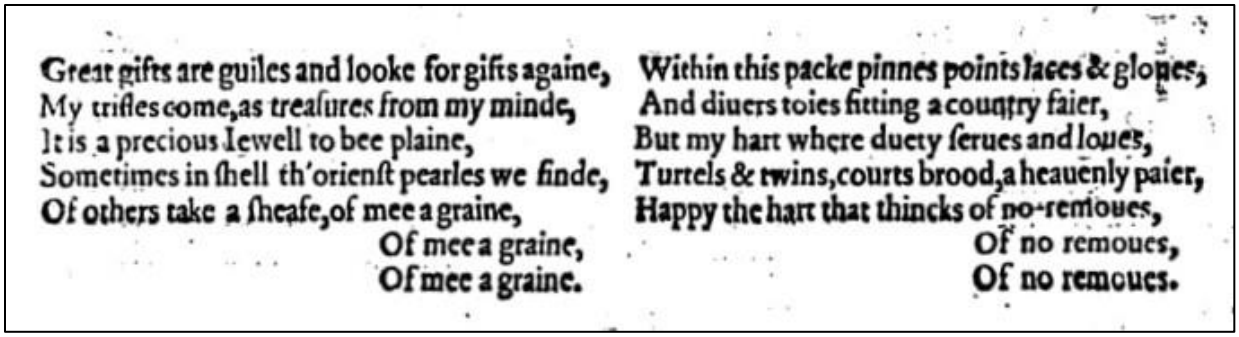
Figure 2. Dowland, *Fine Knacks for Ladies*, iambic rhythms m. 2.[20]



The text of this piece presents some analytical challenges, having been written in old English with varying translations. Anonymously written,[21] the text speaks to the importance of love outweighing the importance of having wealth, and that beauty is deeper than a person's exterior. The line that sums up the essence of this text is "though all my wares bee trash the hart is true." The text can at times be difficult to read, understand, or translate into a modern spelling of the word because it is written in Elizabethan English (see fig. 3).

[20] John Dowland, *Fine Knacks for Ladies*, edited by Elaina Crenshaw (2021).

[21] Edmund Horace Fellowes, *The English School of Lutenist Song Writers*, (London: Stainer & Bell, Ltd., 1922), preface.



Great gifts are guiles and looke for gifts againe,
My trifles come, as treasures from my minde,
It is a precious Iewell to bee plaine,
Sometimes in shell th'orienst pearles we finde,
Of others take a sheafe, of mee a graine,
Of mee a graine,
Of mee a graine.

Within this packe pinnes points laces & gloues,
And diuers toies fitting a country faier,
But my hart where duety serues and loues,
Turtels & twins, courts brood, a heauenly paier,
Happy the hart that thincks of no remoues,
Of no remoues,
Of no remoues.

Figure 3. Dowland, *Fine Knacks for Ladies,* Elizabethan English print.[22]

The possibility for misinterpretation can be found in many modern transcriptions of this piece, even those done by music historians. In her biography on Dowland, English lutenist, teacher, and musicologist Diana Poulton takes issue with music historian Edmund Horace Fellowes's slight change of spelling in one word, orienst. She states, "In the fourth line of the second stanza Dr. Fellowes has altered the word 'orienst' to read 'Orient's'. This is quite unnecessary. Orienst is a good Elizabethan word, the superlative of orient, meaning of superlative value or brilliance, as pearls from the Orient were considered to be."[23] These subtle differences can alter the meaning of the text away from the original meaning. Once the text has been properly translated into modern English, it is generally easy to interpret the meaning of the text. There is a phrase, however, that seems like nonsense to the contemporary audience and requires a musicologist to interpret the old mythological references. Poulton demonstrates the translation process of that phrase, "But [in] my hart where duety serues and loues, Turtels & twins, courts brood, a heavenly paier." Poulton explains:

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[22] John Dowland, *The Second Booke of Songs or Ayres* (London: George Eastland, 1600), pg. H.

[23] Poulton, *John Dowland,* 267.

> 'Turtels' is, of course, the old name for turtle-doves, which according to the O.E.D. [Oxford English Dictionary], are noted for soft cooing and affection for mate and young. Brood, also according to the O.E.D., has the specific meaning of a hatch of young birds or other egg-produced animals: 'courts brood, a heauenly paier' stands then from the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, the royal twins who, together with their sister Helen, were hatched from a single egg, laid by their mother, Leda Queen of Lacedæmon, after she had been ravished by Zeus. During their lives these twins became noted for many instances of brotherly love they showed towards each other. Finally, their father, Zeus, rewarded this attachment by placing them among the stars as the constellation *Gemini*. What the lines are intended to convey is that the poet has two symbols of love in his heart, turtle-doves and *Gemini*, the heavenly twins. To the educated Elizabethan, well versed in classical legend, the meaning would have been in no way obscure.[24]

With this new understanding of the text, the search for a nicely edited edition of the score was at hand.

There are many free editions of *Fine Knacks for Ladies* on websites such as IMSLP and CPDL including a facsimile of the original edition. The original is blurry, uses letters not used in today's alphabet, and uses notation that today's musician would not easily read. For those reasons, the original score is not used, and a newer edition must be found. Finding an edition that is accurate to the original score, yet legible to the modern singer has been challenging. The other free editions (no less than fifteen) were unsatisfactory for several reasons, including: the meter pointlessly being changed, the measures being barred inaccurately, difficulty reading the text due to poor positioning, using the unreadable old English, being in a different key, poor font choice, and a bad layout of the systems on a page. These inadequacies led this writer to create a new edition that bridges the gap between accuracy of words, meter, and barring, all with legibility to the modern singer. The new addition can be found in Appendix A. *Fine Knacks for Ladies*, just

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[24] Poulton, *John Dowland*, 267.

like most Renaissance music, requires some research before one can present a historically informed performance, but it is clearly worth it as we continue to perform the piece over 400 years after it was published.

Rehearsal Process and Conducting Considerations

Fine Knacks for Ladies is in F major, with only a few secondary dominants. This being so, this piece was introduced on *solfege*. A couple of areas, for example m. 6, took a second and third try to get the correct notes, but generally beginning on *solfege* was successful. A hindrance to their reading is the fact that it is in 4/2. Reminding the choir that the half note gets the beat should remedy this. Another issue that the choir may have is lack of confidence when each part has an independent rhythm. Because the piece starts out homorhythmically, this gives a false security of the whole piece being homorhythmic. One technique to help with this problem is to instruct the choir to speak the text in rhythm so that the variable of pitches is eliminated. A discussion should be hadregarding the text and meaning of the song. Finally, the text and pitches should be combined, and articulation and dynamics added.

Review of Recordings

As discussed in further detail above, there are numerous recordings of *Fine Knacks for Ladies* that can be found online. One must sort through these recordings taking into consideration the voicing, instrumentation, stylistic vocal accuracy, style of tuning, and audio quality. For the standard high school or collegiate choir, an SATB arrangement would be most applicable. A recording with instruments doubling the voices would be perfectly acceptable. The only problem with finding recordings that use instruments as well as voices is if the performing group does an arrangement of the piece, then it may not be accurate to the sheet music. In groups that aim for historical accuracy, an older style of tuning may be used. For choir members with

perfect pitch, this may cause frustration while listening to the piece. For those that do not have perfect pitch, however, the stylistic accuracy demonstrated in such a piece would be helpful for a historically informed performance. A recording to avoid is by the Christopher Wren Singers from 2014. While the audio quality is good, they have taken the piece far too fast. It sounds like they wanted to sing it as fast as they could, rather than as historically accurate as they could. For a historically informed performance, the recording by The King's Singers is recommended. They convey the light vocal weight and finesse needed in a piece from the Renaissance. Do not, however, listen to The King's Singers version that is published by PrincepsMusicae as the recording has extraneous white noise. Instead, listen to the recording that was published in 2014 by The Kings Singers.

CHAPTER 3

IN EXITU ISRAEL (1739)

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678-1741)

Biographical and Historical Perspective

Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi is widely known for his string compositions, and often referred to as "il prete rosso" or "the red priest."[25] Vivaldi's nickname was a literal description of his appearance and his job as he was ordained as a priest and he had red hair. Evidently the red hair was a genetic trait since his father's nickname was "rossi," meaning red in Italian. Musical ability was also passed down from Vivaldi's father, Giovanni Battista Vivaldi. Giovanni Battista was a violinist in the San Marco orchestra and taught Vivaldi how to play the violin. Vivaldi became a world class violinist, so it is no surprise that he had an affinity to string music. The bond between father and son was strong throughout their lives. Along with teaching Vivaldi music lessons, Giovanni Battista held a position as co-impresario with Vivaldi at the Teatro Sant'Angelo, and it is even suggested that he was Vivaldi's copyist for twenty years.[26] Though Vivaldi had carried out religious duties and been hired as a musician earlier in his life, 1703 was a significant year for his professional advancement. He was not only ordained as a priest, but he was also hired at the Ospedale della Pietà as the *maestro di violino*.[27] Vivaldi's motives for

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[25] Michael Talbot and Nicholas Lockey, "Vivaldi, Antonio," in Grove Music Online, (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed November 14, 2020. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040120.

[26] Talbot and Lockey, "Vivaldi, Antonio."

[27] Karl Heller, *Antonio Vivaldi: The Red Priest of Venice*, (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1997), 41.

becoming a priest are called into question by Karl Heller. Heller writes, "The fact that he took up a post as *maestro* at the Pietà in September 1703, only a few months after he had been ordained, indicates that he pursued the status and priestly title of *Don* largely to gain social prestige, while always intending to make a career in music."[28] Shortly after being ordained, Vivaldi stepped down from his priestly duties citing chronic illness. Regardless of the motives Vivaldi may have had for being ordained, the "red priest" nickname has stuck with him for centuries. Vivaldi was employed with the Ospedale della Pietà from 1703 to 1740 with breaks in his employment due to travel, other job obligations, and even some brief terminations of his position in 1709-1711 and 1716.[29] Vivaldi became involved in choral music at the Ospedale della Pietà as his title shifted from *maestro di violino* to *maestro di coro*, and then *maestro de' concerti*.[30] Chester Alwes, authoritative scholar of choral music, explains that Venice housed

> four ospedali (orphanages/conservatories)—the Incurabilli, Mendicanti, Dereletti, and Pietà—all of which maintained musical chapels. These institutions were, first and foremost, orphanages, but they championed musical performance, employing some of the same maestri who served the city's main churches. Contrary to popular belief, these institutions served both genders and a variety of ages. Boys were generally temporary residents, expected after puberty to leave for apprenticeships. For girls, their path to the outside world had to be earned: they had to work to earn the dowry necessary to marry or even join a convent. Membership in a musical organization was one of the more lucrative positions available to them, explaining the ospedali's emphasis on virtuosity.[31]

Their longer stay coupled with the monetary motivation for being involved in music clarifies

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[28] Heller, *Antonio Vivaldi: The Red Priest of Venice*, 42.

[29] Heller, *Antonio Vivaldi: The Red Priest of Venice*, 315-318.

[30] Heller, *Antonio Vivaldi: The Red Priest of Venice*, 315-318.

[31] Chester L. Alwes, *A History of Western Choral Music: From Medieval Foundations to The Romantic Age, Volume 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 187.

why Vivaldi often wrote music that was for the young women. *In exitu Israel*, contrarily, was intended for a mixed choir. It was in 1739, just two years before he died, that he composed *In exitu Israel* for the Easter service at the Pietà.[32]

Formal Analysis

In exitu Israel is a rhythmically charged piece that is almost entirely homophonic. The expected ease of a homophonic piece is counterbalanced by the difficulty of enunciating the densely packed and fast-paced text. Vivaldi wrote the piece for SATB choir, violin 1, violin 2, viola, and basso continuo. It is marked *allegro*, which in the baroque era meant joyfully, rather than the fast definition that is common today. In light of that, a tempo marking closer to 110 beats per minute (bpm) is more appropriate than, as an example, an exhausting 135 bpm. *In exitu Israel* is in C major, however, C major is not found in the entirety of the piece. Several times Vivaldi tonicizes G major, F major, A minor, all keys closely related to C major, and finally ends on a C major chord. The text used in *In exitu Israel* comes from Psalm 113 (Psalm 114 and 115 in the Protestant tradition). This Psalm is twenty-six verses long, which is about twice as long as the other Psalms that Vivaldi set. Daniel Ivo de Oliveira explains, "the decision (or perhaps necessity) to set Psalm 113 as a single continuous movement, instead of setting it as several movements comprising one or two verses each—as happens in most of the other psalms—perhaps indicates that Vivaldi had to compose the music as economically as possible, and even to shorten the text's exceptional length. He did not use the whole Psalm 113, omitting verses 5 and

[32] Antonio Vivaldi, *In exitu Israel*, (Daniel Ivo de Oliveira, Stuttgart, Germany: Carus, 2019).

6."[33]

Rehearsal Process and Conducting Considerations

In beginning rehearsals, introducing this piece at a reduced speed is needed. Once notes have been learned, a warm up that works on agility is recommended. A good place to start sight reading this piece is mm. 87-97. The piece starts and ends in C major, but throughout the middle section, Vivaldi uses accidentals and tonicizes several related keys. Sight reading the majority of this piece on *solfege* would cause more confusion than act as an aid, but mm. 87-97 (aside from two notes) is all diatonic and can be sung on *solfege* syllables. Additionally, all parts in mm. 92-96 are unison, so the choir can get a feel of the piece, but also be more confident with strength in numbers. While working through the rest of the piece, it is helpful to mention the key area that is being tonicized. For example, when the basses sing a D then a G, bringing their attention to the tonicization of G major will help them read it accurately.

The text in this piece is long and densely packed. Teaching the text early is suggested so that it becomes natural for the choir members to sing. Though there are often rhythmic patterns with sixteenth notes, the longer note values are the rhythms that cause the choir to stumble. Choir members should circle those areas where they made a mistake, and if the same spot continues to be a problem, writing in however many beats they need to hold that note can improve accuracy. If performing this piece with a string quartet, make sure the choir is fully prepared before asking the quartet to join the choir. Additionally, a rehearsal with the string quartet alone is recommended. Having rehearsals separately before bringing the choir and string quartet together ensures each members' time is not wasted.

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[33] Vivaldi, *In exitu Israel,* (Daniel Ivo de Oliveira, Stuttgart, Germany: Carus, 2019).

Review of Recordings

In exitu Israel requires precision and agility with a continuous forward motion. The gold standard for this is the Aradia Ensemble. There are three duplicates on YouTube of Aradia Ensemble's recording published through NAXOS. They have one poor cut off at minute marker 2:08, but other than that, it is a solid performance to which it is worth listening. The Ensemble Caprice has two drastically different recordings of *In exitu Israel* posted on YouTube. One appears to be from their album "Vivaldi: The Return of the Angels," and the other from a live concert. The former is a great quality recording but is a bad recording for learning purposes as it is an arrangement, not the original voicing. The live recording is visually engaging and far more accurate to the score but is a half step lower than A440. The audio quality of other groups that have posted recordings of live concerts is not up to par, so studying those recordings is not recommended.

CHAPTER 4

KLEINE HOCHZEITSKANTATE (1874)

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Biographical and Historical Perspective

German composer Johannes Brahms, master of genres such as the symphony, string quartet, and chamber vocal music, is one of the most influential composers from the nineteenth century. A native of Hamburg, the musical talent that Brahms possessed was seen at an early age, and his debut piano performance was in 1843 at the age of ten. His career grew immensely when he met Robert and Clara Schumann in 1853. The Schumann's were so impressed by his compositional talent and piano skills that Robert wrote an article "Neue Bahnen" introducing Brahms to the musical world. After their first meeting, Schumann said that one piano composition Brahms played for them was liken to "an orchestra of lamenting and loudly jubilant voices."[34] In 1874, Brahms spent time touring as a concert pianist and guest conductor. He was an established composer at this point and had just finished his post as the director of concerts at the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna.[35] His touring, combined with sales of his music, had earned him enough money to live comfortably without having to take any more official positions. Brahms had established his reputation as a perfectionist both in his performance and in his compositions.

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[34] George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes," in *Grove Music Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed August 30, 2020, https://www-oxfordmusiconlinecom.proxy.lib.siu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051879.

[35] Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde translates to society of music lovers.

The years 1873–1875 show examples of how Brahms's perfectionism affected his compositional output. Between 1873 and 1874 Brahms published his first two string quartets (Op. 51), after finally feeling that they were worthy of publication. In the early Romantic era, the string quartet was esteemed for its conversational and emotional connection. The vulnerability of hearing each "voice" individually made it particularly difficult for composers to master the genre.[36] Award winning biographer Jan Swafford explains the pressure Brahms felt to compose the perfect string quartets in the shadow of great composers such as Beethoven, writing, "Brahms claimed that Opus 51 had been preceded by twenty discarded quartets. The quartet genre/medium was a territory Haydn had laid out, Mozart carried forward, and Beethoven in his sixteen quartets explored to a breadth and depth that for composers raised the question of whether he had left anything for anyone else to say."[37] Brahms wanted to make sure his string quartets would be perfect before publishing them, lest they be scrutinized for not measuring up to Beethoven's string quartets.

This personality trait of striving to be the best composer he could be translated into his vocal music too. Some vocal compositions that he felt confident in publishing include his *Drei* [vocal] *Quartette* (Op. 64) in 1874, and the *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* (Op. 65) which he was finishing composing in 1874 and published in 1875. Yet, one piece that he wrote in 1874 which he did not feel was worthy of being published was *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*. Composed in July 1874, this piece was merely a favor for his friend and poet, Gottfried Keller. Keller requested

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[36] Walter Frisch, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 2013), 39-40.

[37] Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: a Biography*, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1997), 383.

that Brahms set his text to music after writing a poem for his friends' wedding. Lucien Stark, Professor Emeritus at University of Kentucky, notes Brahms's thought on the composition, "His pocket calendar for 1874 shows the July entry 'wedding joke'."[38] Stark continues explaining that Brahms did not want to be associated with this piece whatsoever. Brahms wrote in a letter to Keller "Dear Sir, your words are not very suitable for music and I was tempted to send something different, something more suitable for a pair of lovers."[39] Brahms, not fond of the text Keller wrote, begged Keller to take credit for both the text and music. Additionally, the groom, Sigmund Exner (for whom the piece was written), was not to let anyone make a copy of this wedding song. Indeed, this piece was not published while Brahms was living, but after changing possession from Sigmund Exner to a Heinz Hauser, the piece was published in 1927 by Breitkopf & Härtel in the Brahms Sämtliche Werke.[40] Who Heinz Hauser was and how the score made its way to the publisher is undiscovered. No other publication of the piece can be found.[41] Despite Brahms's obvious dislike of the text, which may have been his biggest objection to its being published, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* stands as a trademark of Brahms's choral writing.

Formal Analysis

Kleine Hochzeitskantate is in F major, the time signature is 3/4, the tempo marking is

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[38] Lucien Stark, "Little Wedding Cantata, WoO POSTH. 16," in *Brahms's Vocal Duets and Quartets with Piano: A Guide with Full Texts and Translations* (Bloomington; Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 144.

[39] Johannes Brahms, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, edited by Eusebius Mandyczewski, Brahms Sämtliche Werke, vol. 20, (Ann Arbor, MI: J. W. Edwards, 1949).

[40] Brahms, Sämtliche Werke, preface.

[41] Stark, *Brahms's Vocal Duets and Quartets*, IX –X.

Tempo di Menuetto, and the dynamics range from *piano* to *forte*. *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, though a lesser known work of Brahms, has several similarities compositionally to other prominent vocal quartets by Brahms from that same time period. *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* is less than a minute and a half long and it is not part of a set. Therefore, it can easily be placed in several different types of concerts. *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* is not only enjoyable to listen to, it can also serve as a great introduction of Brahms to high school choirs. It is a relatively simple and short piece, but the real treasure is when it is compared to Brahms's other vocal quartets.

Comparing Brahms's *Drei* [vocal] *Quartette* (Op. 64) to *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, there are two superficial similarities when listening to these pieces. One is the compositional language that is quintessential Brahms – using chromatic retardation, harmonic progressions, the accompaniment dropping out for brief portions, and syncopated rhythms in the accompaniment. The second similarity is that two of the *Drei Quartette* are set in 3/4, which is the time signature in which *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* is set. Brahms may have intended all of these pieces to be danced to, and therefore composed them in the same meter.

More significant similarities can be found in the famed *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* (Op. 65) and will be examined. Though the *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* is composed for a two-piano accompaniment, one can see the connection to the one-piano accompaniment that is in *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*. For the majority of *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* the left hand of the piano accompaniment plays running eighth notes, while the right hand plays percussive interjections (see fig. 4). This same idea can be seen split between the two pianos (instead of hands) especially in No. 2, No. 11, and No. 14 of *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* (see fig. 5).

Figure 4. Brahms, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, mm. 5-9. [42]

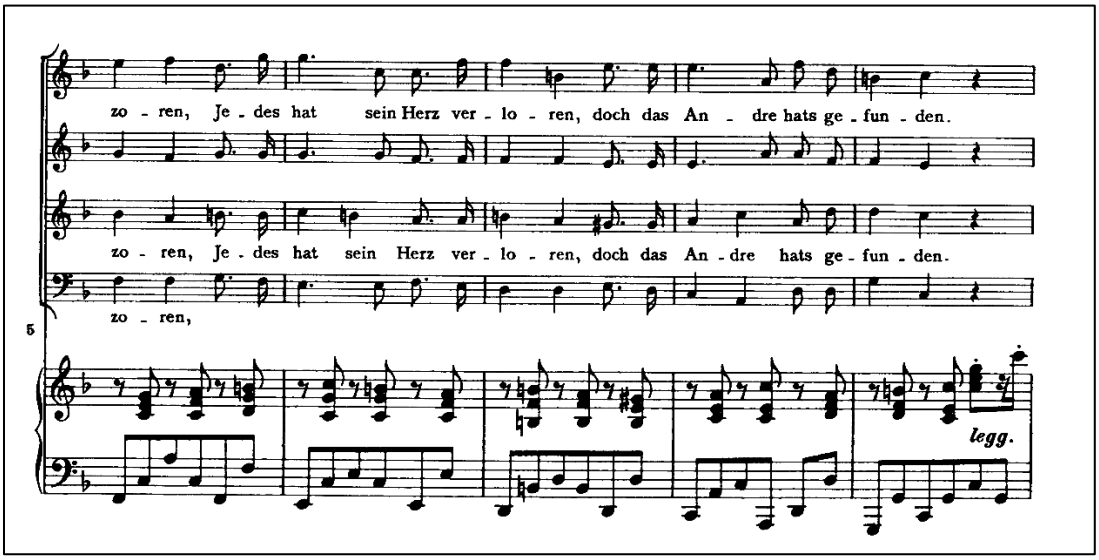
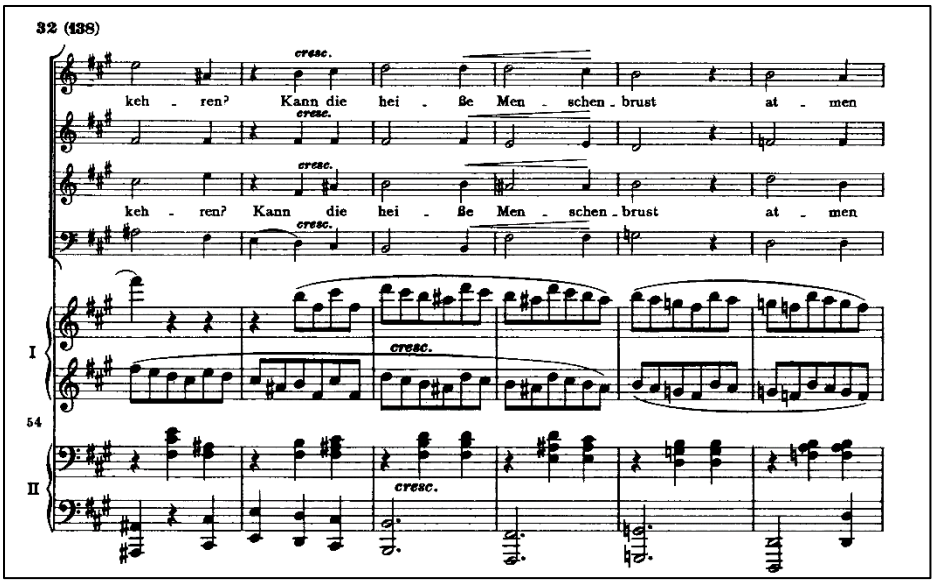


Figure 5. Brahms, *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer*, No. 14, mm. 54-59.[43]



A second similarity can be seen in No. 7 of *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* mm.2-5. Brahms writes

[42] Brahms, Sämtliche Werke, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, 226.

[43] Brahms, Sämtliche Werke, *Neue Libeslieder Waltzer*, 138.

unison octave jumps on C, which can also be found in mm. 24–25 in *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*. (see figs. 6 and 7).

Figure 6. Brahms, *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer*, No. 7, mm. 2-5.[44]

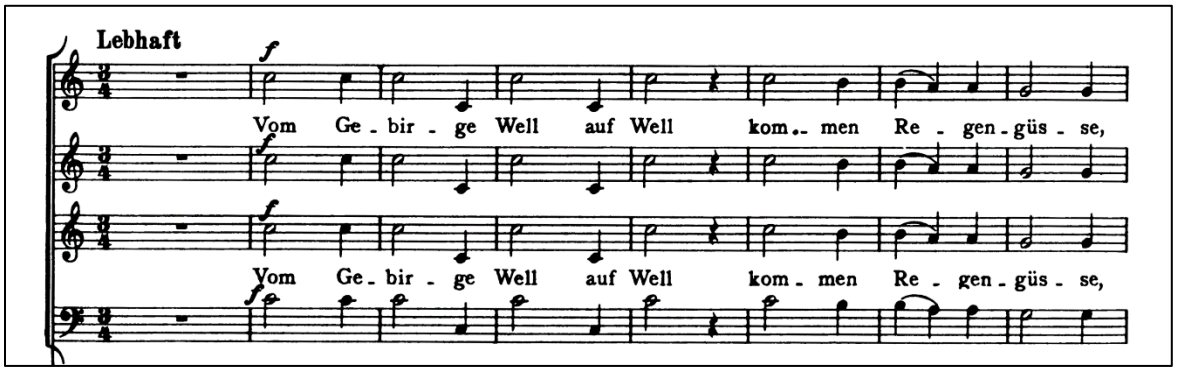
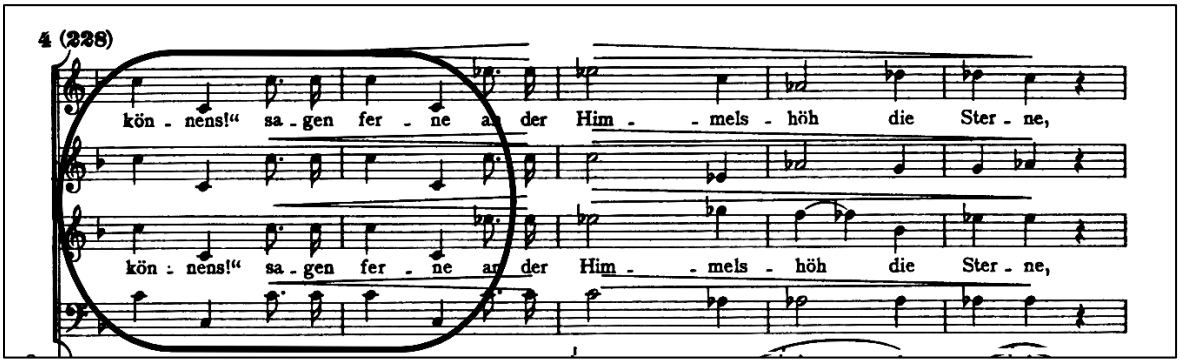


Figure 7. Brahms, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, mm. 24-25.[45]



A third similarity is how Brahms masterfully implements disjunct melodies in many of his pieces. Examples of this are found in *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* mm. 34-36, and in *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* No. 9 mm. 11-17 and No. 14 especially in mm. 18-23 (see figs. 8 and 9).

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[44] Brahms, Sämtliche Werke, *Neue Libeslieder Waltzer*, 119.

[45] Brahms, Sämtliche Werke, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, 228.

Figure 8. Brahms, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, mm. 34-36.[46]

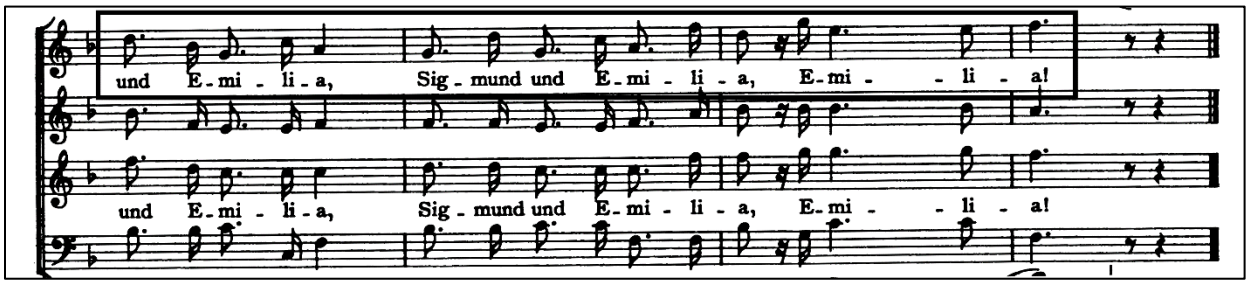
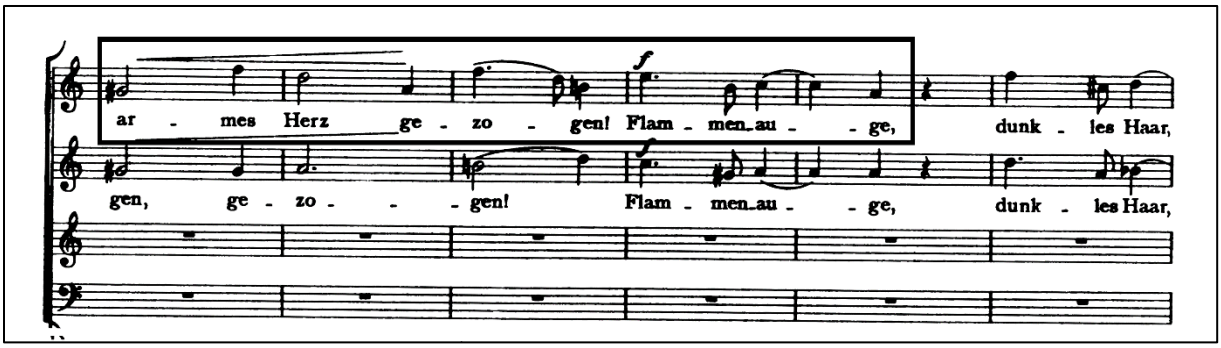


Figure 9. Brahms, *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer*, No. 14, mm. 18-23.[47]



Another trait that can be compared is the accompaniment interjecting imitation of the vocal parts. In *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* this is seen in mm. 29-33. In *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* this is seen in No. 1 mm. 6-8, 17-20, No. 14 mm. 33-39, and in No. 15 mm. 22-23. A chromatic stepwise passage is found in *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* in mm. 30-32. Similar passages can be found in *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* No. 10 mm. 11-13, and in No. 8 mm. 34-39, 42-44. *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* shares its key signature (one flat) with Nos. 3b, 4, 5, 6, and 15 from *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer*. And as one would expect from the title, all of the pieces in *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* are in 3/4 time.

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[46] Brahms, Sämtliche Werke, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, 228.

[47] Brahms, Sämtliche Werke, *Neue Libeslieder Waltzer*, 135.

Considering all of the similarities between this obscure work, *Kleine Hochzeitskantate*, and more well-known works, *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer* and *Drei [vocal] Quartette*, it is with confidence that this piece can be performed as a representation of Brahms's compositional abilities. The text was not liked by Brahms, but he was able to produce the same high-quality music as any other composition of his. Knowing this background gives readers a glimpse of Brahms's personality and shows that he was not just some mythical figure, he was a real person. The humanity of Brahms meant that he could be irritable and a bit of a poetry snob, but none the less a brilliant talent.

Rehearsal Process and Conducting Considerations

Rehearsal for this piece began with acknowledging that though one can say with confidence that it is in F major, Brahms used accidentals to tonicize and cadence in different keys. To get familiar with the piece, but not spoon feed then their notes, students were instructed to tap the rhythm of their part while the pianist plays only the accompaniment. They can hear the harmonic progression while they focus on reading their rhythms. Once that was completed, sight reading mm. 17-28 on *solfege* was introduced. It is important to enable them to be successful in reading, and mm. 17-24 stays completely diatonic with mm. 25-28 finishing out the phrase. The next rehearsal worked mm. 1-12. There are many places in these twelve measures where two parts are singing in unison or octaves. Students react two ways to this. They either think they have sung the wrong note and accidentally landed on the same pitch as a different part, or they have not opened their ears to hearing any other part and are oblivious when they should be singing unison or octaves with their neighbor. Calling attention to these spots should help their sight reading and intonation.

Review of Recordings

Noting the obscurity of this piece, it is no surprise that there are only three videos of *Kleine Hochzeitskantate* that come up when searched on YouTube. Three videos come up, but there are only two different recordings used in those three videos. One is by the Leipzig Radio Chorus and the other is by the Chamber Choir of Europe. While both are good quality recordings, there are several differences in how these groups perform the piece. The Chamber Choir of Europe performs a more historically informed performance in that they are one person to a part, a true quartet. They have great energy, contrast in dynamics, and are great singers. The downsides to the recording are that their blend is unbalanced and there are a couple of times when they sing incorrect notes. The Leipzig Radio Chorus has a great balance between parts, sensitivity to the articulation and phrasing, and clear diction. The undesirable part of their performance is the choice of tempo. While a specific tempo is not given in the score, their tempo along with their sensitivity can come across as somewhat sluggish. Therefore, the Leipzig Radio Chorus is recommended for articulation, blend, and note accuracy, and the Chamber Choir of Europe is recommended for tempo and energy. For those that have access to the NAXOS Music Library, the North German Radio Chorus has a recording that is a good balance of the aforementioned recordings.

CHAPTER 5

"TO BE SUNG ON THE WATER" FROM *TWO CHORUSES* (1968)

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

Biographical and Historical Perspective

American composer Samuel Barber is primarily regarded for his vocal compositions, but his capacity in other mediums of composition was also displayed in works such as his *Adagio for Strings* and *Violin Concerto*. Born in 1910, his musical talent was illuminated at the age of ten when he wrote his first operetta, *The Rose Tree*, based off of a libretto by his family's cook. He was encouraged to pursue a career in music by his musically literate aunt and uncle, Louise and Sidney Homer.[48] At the age of fourteen, Barber began his studies at the newly opened Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied composition, vocal performance, and piano performance. This aptitude in music led to a successful career early in his life. In the 1930s, he won several awards and prizes for his compositions such that "his international stature was confirmed in 1938, when Toscanini and the NBC SO broadcast his Essay (No.1) and the Adagio for Strings (an arrangement of the second movement of the String Quartet). After that point, nearly all of Barber's works were composed on commission for prominent performers or ensembles."[49] His compositional career was successful until 1966 when his commissioned opera *Antony and Cleopatra* was a critical failure. It was after this devastating blow to his self-esteem that Barber

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[48] Barbara B. Heyman, "Barber, Samuel," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press 2001), accessed October 29, 2020, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000001994.

[49] Heyman, "Barber, Samuel," *Grove Music Online.*

struggled with depression and alcoholism. In 1968 he wrote and published two works that reflected the solemnity he was feeling, *Despite and Still*, Op. 41, a song set for solo voice and piano, and *Two Choruses*, Op. 42, which includes "Twelfth Night" and "To Be Sung on the Water." Little has been written on these pieces, except by distinguished American conductor and choral director Donald Nally in his articles published in *The Choral Journal*. Therefore, Nally will be referenced many times.

"To Be Sung on the Water" is based on a poem by award winning American poet and literary critic, Louise Bogan. In "To Be Sung on the Water," Barber expresses his nostalgia and mourning as an era of critical acclaim passed, and his main focus turned to self-satisfying compositions, rather than commissioned works. Barber wrote in 1967, "I must stick to my decision not to accept any more orchestral commissions. I have fulfilled so many of them, but now want to compose what I want on my own time, be it forty-eight preludes and fugues for piccolo!"[50] "To Be Sung on the Water" is thought to have been considered for a revision of *Antony and Cleopatra* , but instead was dedicated to Florence Kimball, Leontyne Price's voice teacher and a friend of Barber. The location and performers involved in the first performance of the piece is unknown, but the piece was first published in 1969 by G. Schirmer. In 1971, Barber wrote one last choral work titled, *The Lovers*, before his death in 1981. Donald Nally describes *The Lovers* as "perhaps his most melancholy, desolate, and despairing work."[51] At Barber's memorial service, "To Be Sung on the Water" was performed in his honor. This performance

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[50] Donald Nally, "Barber's Opus 42: The Poetry and the Music as Key to His Musical Animus: Part I," *The Choral Journal* vol. 47, no. 4 (2006): 8, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23554857.

[51] Donald Nally, "Barber's Opus 42: The Poetry and the Music as Key to His Musical Animus: Part II," *The Choral Journal* vol. 47, no. 4 (2006): 30, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23554858.

had a different implication than perhaps what Barber had originally intended, the passing of a great composer, but nonetheless one that can be felt universally.

Formal Analysis

Nally says "To Be Sung on the Water" is Barber's "only completely diatonic choral work and that characteristic alone captures the essence of a poem that is the epitome of nostalgia: a simple, sentimental lyric."[52] Nally is correct in that Barber implements only one accidental in "To Be Sung on the Water," however, his statement may be misleading regarding the difficulty level of this diatonic piece. The piece is centered around C minor, but a strong plagal or authentic cadence is never felt. Instead, the alternation of VI^7 (A-flat major 7) and v^7 (G minor 7) chords are found frequently throughout the piece, giving no sense of progression. The lack of functional chordal progression, mostly switching back and forth between VI^7 and v^7, is convincing in portraying things relating to a body of water: waves, ripples, the isolation of being on a lake, and the up and down motion of being in a boat. The piece is in 3/4 and the tempo is marked "With a steady motion, rather fast."[53] Nally clarifies that "rather fast, refers to a persistent rhythmic ostinato that usually emphasizes a semitone fluctuation between the fifth and lowered sixth degree of the C minor scale," rather than a quick tempo.[54] The form of this piece seems to be through composed, with the addition of a coda that recalls the first section of the text. This fluidity of form enhances the water imagery. The text that Barber chooses to repeat

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[52] Nally, "Barber's Opus 42: The Poetry and the Music as Key to His Musical Animus: Part II," 20.

[53] Samuel Barber, *To Be Sung on the Water* (Milwaukee: G. Schirmer, 1969), 4.

[54] Nally, "Barber's Opus 42: The Poetry and the Music as Key to His Musical Animus: Part II," 25.

gives a glimpse into what he believed was the core of the poem, “Beautiful, my delight, pass, as we pass the wave; Pass as the mottled night leaves what it cannot save. Less than the sound of its blade dipping the stream once more.”[55] Perhaps in Barber’s later years he felt that his “delight” (composing) would no longer be marketable, and his compositional mark in history would be “less than the sound of its blade dipping the stream.”[56] Nally postulates that Barber’s sentiment behind this piece is a joyful memory and present desolation.[57] Regardless of his specific compositional intention, “To Be Sung On the Water” is a well-composed, reflective piece worthy of performance.

Rehearsal Process and Conducting Considerations

Considering this piece only has one accidental at m. 19 in the tenor line, one might think this would be easily learned by singing on *solfege* syllables. This assumption is deceiving. The tonal center is vague and there are two motives happening at once. The distorted sense of the strong beat, especially in the tenor and bass parts at the beginning of this piece, creates confusion and hinders a student’s ability to *solfege* the piece when sight reading. Speaking the text in rhythm should therefore be implemented first. One exercise that may be helpful is having the sopranos and altos count to three repeatedly while the tenors and basses speak their text. All parts can then be asked to speak their text in rhythm while tapping the beat. Because the soprano and alto parts have a separate motive and come in on a different beat than the tenors and basses,

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[55] Barber, *To Be Sung on the Water*, 1.

[56] Barber, *To Be Sung on the Water*, 1.

[57] Nally, "Barber's Opus 42: The Poetry and the Music as Key to His Musical Animus: Part II," 35.

it is inevitable that all parts will miscount. For the tenors and basses, coming in on beat two and singing the two sixteenth notes-eighth note rhythm will likely cause problems. This rhythm is deceivingly hard for a choir to read. The most helpful technique to overcoming the counting problems is to get their bodies involved. One technique is to step on the beat while tapping the division on their chest or thigh. Another tactic is to move in a dance pattern that emphasizes beat two while they sing. This reminds them of what beat they *should* be on if they lose the meter. Both techniques get them standing up and will be energizing when learning the notes becomes monotonous.

Review of Recordings

One of the biggest challenges in finding a good recording of "To Be Sung on the Water" is finding a recording that is loud enough to hear the beginning of the piece. There is a wide dynamic range in "To Be Sung on the Water," *pianissimo* to *forte*, so it is understandable when the piece starts at a *piano* level that it would be quite soft. It is, however, unfortunate when one cannot hear the beginning at all. A fine recording by Conspirare is rendered unusable due to its extreme softness. Some recordings by choirs such as the Pacific Harmonix and Mount Rainier High School Choir are loud enough, but their performances are not something to emulate. "To Be Sung on the Water" is such an exposed piece that any intonation issues are blatantly obvious. Many choirs, including Pacific Harmonix and Mount Rainier High School Choir, present recordings with those intonation issues. A middle ground must be found between the volume of the recording and the accuracy of the choir. Two middle ground options were found by Resonance Ensemble and Cork Chamber Choir. They approach the piece with delicacy and accuracy.

CHAPTER 6

"COME LIVE WITH ME" FROM *BIRTHDAY MADRIGALS* (1995)

JOHN RUTTER (b. 1945)

Biographical and Historical Perspective

Choral composer John Rutter's compositional style is described as growing "out of the British choral tradition as exemplified by Holst, Vaughan Williams, Howells, Britten and Tippett, but also draws on a wider sympathy for European music of the later 19th and early 20th centuries, especially the harmonic and melodic language of Fauré, Duruflé and their contemporaries."[58]

Rutter began composing at the age of six when he created melodies on his family's piano. Though his initial compositions were not published, he has since had over 350 original works and arrangements published and has become one of the premiere choral composers of this generation. In his adolescence, Rutter was a member of the boys choir at Highgate School, and later he attended Clare College, Cambridge to study composition. Rutter recounts "I had a nice voice when I was a boy treble, since when it's been what the French call a *voix de compositeur* - the right notes in tune but no pleasure to anyone's ear."[59] At Clare College he met Sir David Willcocks, legendary director of King's College Choir, who praised and promoted Rutter's compositions and connected Rutter with his now publisher, Oxford University Press. After

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[58] Matthew Greenall, "Rutter, John," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed September 14, 2020, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000048584.

[59] John Rutter, interview by author, email communication, September 10, 2020.

attending Clare College, Cambridge, he became the Director of Music at Clare College from 1975–1979, he further went on to found the Cambridge Singers in 1983.[60] His entrepreneurial spirit increased when he established his own record label, Collegium Records, to publish the recordings of the Cambridge Singers. The Cambridge Singers recordings have become some of the definitive recordings of not just his music, but also the music of many other fine composers.

The standard repertoire Rutter composes is a combination of sacred and secular choral anthems. Rutter has, however, dabbled in the jazz idiom in his *Suite Antique* in 1979, and in 1995 he composed a "jazz flavoured"[61] set of pieces for mixed choir, piano, and optional double bass called *Birthday Madrigals*. The title, *Birthday Madrigals*, is in honor of George Shearing's 75th birthday. Shearing, who passed away in 2011, was a jazz pianist who is most famous for composing the jazz standard "Lullaby of Birdland." This writer had the high honor of getting to interview Mr. Rutter himself about the compositional process of *Birthday Madrigals*. Rutter reveals "I first met Shearing when he came up to the maestro's suite in Carnegie Hall, where I had just conducted a concert he had enjoyed. He just wanted to meet me. We got talking, and it emerged that he and his wife Ellie spent a few months in England each summer…We remained good friends until his death a few years ago."[62] When asked if the piece was commissioned, Rutter explains "It was written at the invitation of an English choir conducted by my old friend and ex-King's Singer Brian Kay. No money changed hands, so technically it was a gift to George

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[60] Rutter, John. "Cambridge Singers." John Rutter: Composer & Conductor. October 6, 2017. Accessed September 24, 2020. https://johnrutter.com/artist/the-cambridge-singers.

[61] Rutter describes *Birthday Madrigals* as jazz flavoured.

[62] Rutter, interview.

on his 75th birthday."[63] The set contains five pieces that use Elizabethan texts, including "Come live with me." Rutter comments that the scope of the piece was "more or less settled by the size and makeup of the choir (the Cheltenham Bach Choir), and the length was in line with what they wanted."[64] When asked the reasoning behind using the texts he used, Rutter responds "I chose the texts myself - ones that I just liked, as simple as that. They needed to be secular, it wasn't a sacred concert, and I have always been attracted by Elizabethan poetry."[65] Rutter estimates it took two or three weeks to compose this set, emphasizing "I can't afford writer's block when there's a deadline to meet."[66] The combination of Elizabethan texts with jazz-tinged composition may seem unheard of, but Rutter assures us "Cleo Laine did a much-praised album years ago called Shakespeare and all that jazz. I wasn't doing anything new or daring."[67] Cleo Laine, whose album *Shakespeare and all that jazz* came out in 1964, is an English singer who mainly specialized in jazz, but was also active in opera, lieder and pop music. Rutter was most likely influenced by her fusion of Elizabethan texts and jazz, along with his admiration for George Shearing when he composed *Birthday Madrigals*.

Formal Analysis

"Come live with me" is marked lively, yet has a feel of easy sophistication. The more relaxed feel is because the half note gets the beat, while the liveliness to the piece comes from

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[63] Rutter, interview.

[64] Rutter, interview.

[65] Rutter, interview.

[66] Rutter, interview.

[67] Rutter, interview.

the quarter note walking bassline and syncopated rhythms of the vocal lines. While Rutter says that a double bassist and jazz pianist would be ideal for the accompaniment part, "if no double bass and jazz pianist is available, a classical keyboard player can play the written keyboard part in performance, but this is less desirable."[68] "Come live with me" starts and ends in D major, but frequently switches back and forth to D minor. This shift between D major and D minor reflects the perspectives of the text. The essence of this text is a conversation between a suitor and his love. The suitor has an optimistic outlook on life and is trying to persuade his love to live with him by telling her all the beautiful and amazing things they will have when they are together. The lady responds with a more pessimistic outlook rebutting all the suitor's claims. All, that is, until at the end of the piece when she is won over by her suitor. The tenors and basses sing the suitor's lines while the sopranos and altos sing the lady's lines. While parts of the song liken a conversation, only one person talking at time, or section of singers as the case may be, Rutter often utilizes the sections that are not carrying the text to provide background vocals on neutral syllables.

The form of this piece is AA'BACA with a coda and ranges dynamically from *piano* to *forte*. Though Rutter deflects any credit for coming up with this Renaissance text-jazz idiom fusion, credit is due to him for creating a piece that can be well executed by many choirs. Not all jazz pieces can be sung by a standard choir. The standard choir can, at times, be too stiff. But with "Come live with me," Rutter has crafted a piece that can make the standard choir feel

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[68] John Rutter, *Birthday Madrigals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), composer's notes.

successful presenting this "jazz flavoured"[69] piece.

Rehearsal Process and Conducting Considerations

For some choir members, jazz may be out of their comfort zone or musical language. With this in mind, a warm up that uses jazz language may be employed. A major seven chord with an added ninth is sung as a chord (minus the fifth) on [u o a ɛ i]. In *solfege* basses start on *do*, tenors on *mi*, altos on *ti*, and sopranos on *re* (or 1-3-7-2 in number notation). Going through the different vowels also works on the blend of the choir. The piece is swung, but some choir members may not know what that means. Explaining what it means for a piece to be swung is needed. Next, a discussion on the text is advised to explain the switching back and forth between D major and D minor. Once that is understood, sight reading will be easier. This piece has divisi starting at m. 39, but mm. 1-38 make a good introductory section. The melody and background "Oos" can be worked on separately before putting them together. In subsequent rehearsals where mm. 39-53 is worked on, *solfege* with altered passing note/accidental syllables works well. A knowledge of these syllables, however, is required. There are several tempo changes between measure 88 and the end of the piece, so reviewing this section in detail is needed.

Review of Recordings

The advantage of performing a piece by a contemporary composer is that there can be recordings of the composer conducting their own pieces. There is no better way to understand what the composer meant in their score markings than to listen to how they conducted the piece themselves. Rutter not only conducted *a* choir, he conducted *his* choir, The Cambridge Singers,

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[69] Rutter describes *Birthday Madrigals* as jazz flavoured.

performing “Come live with me.” This is not to say that no other recording should be studied, but Rutter’s recording needs to be at the top of the list of recordings to study. Rutter gives leeway in what instruments can be used when performing “Come live with me,” so depending on the instrumentation a choir director plans to use in their concert, it may be helpful to find a recording that represents the instrumentation one will have. Rutter encourages improvisation of the notated piano part by a pianist with jazz knowledge, but not all schools have a jazz pianist on hand. In the case of no jazz pianist, the Vasari Singers have a well-done interpretation that includes upright bass with the piano part less embellished than the recording by The Cambridge Singers. It would also be educational to listen to the recording by the Cheltenham Bach Choir, the choir for which this piece was written, to hear how Brian Kay interpreted the music. Their version is much lighter and faster than Rutter’s version. A fine recording that has only an upright bass for the accompaniment can be found on NAXOS by VocalEssence Ensemble Singers.

CHAPTER 7

"THE PANTHER" AND "THE FIREFLY" FROM *ANIMAL CRACKERS VOL. I* (2006). "THE CANARY" AND "THE EEL" FROM *ANIMAL CRACKERS VOL. II* (2009). ERIC WHITACRE (b. 1970)

Biographical and Historical Perspective

Eric Whitacre is an American composer who is most well-known for his choral compositions. Born in 1970, Whitacre attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and subsequently the Julliard School where he graduated in 1997. His career grew as he won awards from Barlow International Composition Competition, the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and the American Composers Forum.[70] He is recognized for his innovative virtual choir that he organized in 2010. He has since created and published several virtual choir projects, including his most recent project in 2020. In addition to being a composer, Whitacre also works as a conductor, often conducting his own pieces. One such example is Whitacre's Grammy Award winning album *Light & Gold*.[71] He has held the position of Composer in Residence for the University of Cambridge and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Whitacre is notorious for using cluster chords in the majority of his compositions, which creates a unique harmonic language that is easily identified as his. In an interview with columnist John Wadsworth from The Oxford Culture Review, Whitacre clarifies the reasoning behind his frequent use of cluster chords: "Ultimately, the clusters are not a musical construct for me; they're not something that

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[70] Eric Whitacre, "Biography (Long)," Eric Whitacre, accessed January 11, 2021. https://ericwhitacre.com/biography/long.

[71] Whitacre, "Biography (Long)."

I'm intentionally doing. I'm certainly not trying to be the 'cluster guy'. They're reflections of who I am: my personality and my emotions."[72] The cluster chords that are so iconic to Whitacre's music are usually found in conjunction with slow to moderate tempos, profound text, and a full sound. Two sets of pieces that seem to go against the style in which Whitacre is known, are *Animal Crackers vols. I and II*. He explains his compositional process for *Animal Crackers vols. I and II*, stating, "I have always dreamed of writing a substantial collection of choral works that might enter the standard repertoire, something with the depth and passion of Monteverdi's Fourth Book of Madrigals and the charm and timelessness of Brahms'[s] Liebeslieder Waltzes. I wrote this instead."[73] These sets of pieces are unusual in Whitacre's repertoire as they have a humorous flare inspired heavily by the poetry he chose. "For me, the text is the alpha and omega. It is what separates our art form from every other art form. It is the combination of words and music that elevates our art to a place very few others can reach. I take great care and pride in choosing only the best poetry... my most successful settings are the ones where I simply got out of the way, listened to the poetry, followed the architecture of it, and the music came out hidden right underneath the words."[74] The poetry used for *Animal Crackers vols. I and II* is by the legendary Ogden Nash. Nash was a smart man who attended Harvard for two

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[72] John Wadsworth, "Paradise Lost: An Interview with Eric Whitacre," The Oxford Culture Review, June 22, 2015, accessed January 11, 2021. https://theoxfordculturereview.com/2015/06/22/paradise-lost-an-interview-with-eric-whitacre/.

[73] "Animal Crackers vols. I and II," Eric Whitacre, accessed January 11, 2021. https://ericwhitacre.com/music-catalog/animal-crackers-vol-i.

[74] Tom Wine, "Searching for an Icon: Eric Whitacre on Composing & Conducting," *The Choral Journal* 58, no. 2 (2017): 46-47. Accessed November 15, 2020. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26412845.

years before dropping out to get a job. He is most well-known for his verse books, but he was successful in several other areas such as creating ad slogans, writing three screenplays for MGM movies, writing lyrics for the musical *One Touch of Venus*, and writing lyrics for the television show *Art Carney Meets Peter and the Wolf*.[75] Nash is known for his "cheerful maiming of conventional syllabication and pronunciation, his novel reorganization of stresses, his near rhymes, and the extended, straggling line, which he so frequently employed and likened to 'a horse running up to a hurdle but you don't know when it'll jump.'"[76] Nash's text used in *Animal Crackers* is a combination of preposterous concepts yet brilliantly succinct and effective. Whitacre conveys his attitude to this lighter text, "When I'm comfortable with my friends I'm goofy, and I feel that those pieces [*Animal Crackers*] really reflect that...For me it's natural; I'd like to write more funny music. It's hard to write something serious and beautiful, but it's even harder to write something funny. You're either funny or you're not, and the audience tells you everything."[77] Whitacre has said that he wishes to keep composing more volumes of *Animal Crackers*, but it has been twelve years since *vol. II* was published and it is unknown if or when another volume will be published.

Formal Analysis

Each volume of *Animal Crackers* contains three pieces, totaling six. Whitacre indicates that a choir director may choose any combination of these six pieces to perform in a concert. For

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[75] "Ogden Nash," Poetry Foundation, n.d., accessed February 9, 2021. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/ogden-nash.

[76] "Ogden Nash," Poetry Foundation.

[77] Wadsworth, "Paradise Lost: An Interview with Eric Whitacre."

the scope of this paper, only four of them will be analyzed: “The Firefly,” “The Eel,” “The Panther,” and “The Canary.” There are a few unifying factors across all of these pieces. First, they are all short in duration, each lasting less than one minute. Second, the poetry used is all written by Ogden Nash. Third, Whitacre incorporates the text with the music in such a way that even if the text was removed, the gist of the animal would be understood. This order listed above is not the order in which Whitacre published them, but instead has been chosen with key relation and balance in mind. To get a sense for the clever writing by Nash, each text will be given before a brief analysis.

Nash explores an aspect of the firefly that is rarely questioned. “The firefly’s flame Is something for which science has no name. I can think of nothing eerier, than flying around with an unidentified glow on a person’s posterior.”[78] Whitacre’s setting of “The Firefly” is a lively piece that starts in D minor and ends in D major. Whitacre uses a triplet figure in the accompaniment throughout the piece to evoke a small flying object. There are a few times that the melody jumps a fourth, bringing about imagery of the firefly’s light turning on. Whitacre also employs *crescendi* and *decrescendi* to make it sound like the fireflies are buzzing closer and farther from one’s ear.

Next, Nash offers brief statements about slimy creatures. “I don’t mind eels. Except as meals. And the way they feels.”[79] Whitacre matches the brevity of Nash’s text in the length of “The Eel.” It has the least amount of measures of the four Whitacre pieces, lasting only eleven measures long. It begins in D minor, which is the parallel minor of the key that “The Firefly”

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[78] Whitacre, “Animal Crackers vols. I and II.”

[79] Whitacre, “Animal Crackers vols. I and II.”

ended in, D major. As a complementary change of pace, "The Eel" is marked *largo* and exemplifies the slimy, slow moving creature that the text portrays. The accompaniment throughout the piece has either rolled chords or tremolo which evokes bubbles rising from the water in which the eel lives. The piece is through composed and ends in E minor.

In "The Panther," Nash gives advice regarding self-preservation. "The panther is like a leopard, except it hasn't been peppered. If you behold a panther crouch, prepare to say ouch. Better yet, if called by a panther, don't anther."[80] There is yet another change of tone in "The Panther." It is in A minor, and begins with a "Jaws"-like minor 2nd motif in the piano accompaniment. This sense of impending doom is the panther on the prowl for his next meal. The accompaniment plays heavy cluster chords that can be interpreted as the panther's marked steps. In the last measure, the accompaniment is at a *piano* dynamic level until the final beat which immediately increases to *fortissimo* as the panther suddenly pounces.

Finally, Nash conveys his annoyance with songbirds. "The song of canaries never varies. And when they're molting they're pretty revolting."[81] In E major, "The Canary" is in the dominant key of A minor, which is the key used in "The Panther." "The Canary" is a much lighter and brighter piece that contrasts "The Panther" nicely. Whitacre's text painting is spot on here. The text states, "the song of canaries never varies," and that line, or parts of it, is repeated seven times. The final chord, which Whitacre notes as "clusters with palms,"[82] sounds like the bird was eventually shot to put an end to the insanity.

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[80] Whitacre, "Animal Crackers vols. I and II."

[81] Whitacre, "Animal Crackers vols. I and II."

[82] Eric Whitacre, *Animal Crackers Vol. II* (Los Angeles: Shadow Water Music, 2009), 3.

Whitacre's creativity and compositional skills are displayed in these pieces. They are like miniature dramas that use the accompaniment, the tempo, the rhythm, the articulation, the tonality, the dynamics, and even some cluster chords to bring to life the text. The difficulty of these pieces varies from a homorhythmic piece that stays in one tonal center, to a piece that requires rhythmic independence and is constantly shifting tonal centers. What makes them accessible is their length and the flexibility of how many one chooses to perform in a concert. As mentioned earlier, Whitacre encourages the choir director to mix and match however many pieces they see fit to create their own "personalized zoo."[83] These vividly appealing comedic songs are sure to keep an audience engaged.

Rehearsal Process and Conducting Considerations

"The Firefly." It is not recommended to sight read this piece on text or *solfege*. Though it starts and ends in D minor, and is in English, the middle of the piece becomes a problem. There are far too many accidentals to modify the *solfege* and singing on the text will lessen the concentration on the actual notes. Reading the poem and discussing Whitacre's use of text painting before working on the piece, however, is recommended.

"The Eel." With no consistent tonal center, it is not advised to sight read this piece on *solfege*. Instead, one technique is to have students speak the text in rhythm while the pianist plays the accompaniment part. Articulating exactly where one wants the vowel placement in the diphthong in "eew" ([i u]) should be clarified from the beginning. Before singing mm. 8-9, students should be instructed to identify what chords the accompaniment plays before their chords and how they are related. Bringing this to their attention should increase their accuracy in

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[83] Whitacre, "Animal Crackers vols. I and II."

singing the correct pitches.

"The Panther." Almost entirely homorhythmic and diatonic, this piece can easily be introduced on *solfege* syllables. It is worth noting to the choir some parts practically never change pitches, just octaves. A warm up of jumping octaves may be helpful. Attention should be brought to mm. 9-11 where there are different rhythms for the sopranos and altos versus the tenors and basses. Spending ten minutes concentrating on those few measures will prove beneficial. One technique to help solidify their independence in mm. 9-11 is to have the choir count "1+2+, 1+2+3+4+" while they tap the rhythm of their part. It is a challenge, but it is effective.

"The Canary." There are few elements to the choir part in this piece. Sopranos must learn the canary motif, and altos, tenors, and basses must learn their dominant-tonic chord motif. With those motifs mastered, the note-learning process in mm. 1-18 is complete. The challenge that the sopranos may have is coming in at the right time especially in mm. 10-16. Speaking the text in rhythm before singing it will be helpful. The other section that may present some difficulty is the transition between mm. 18-20. The altos, tenors, and basses have rested in mm. 12-18 and then an unprepared shift in tonality comes at m. 19. Letting the choir listen to the transition a few times is beneficial.

Review of Recordings

The Brigham Young University (BYU) Singers do an excellent rendition of "The Firefly" in both recording quality and articulation of the music. Whitacre writes in specific accents, dynamics, *crescendi* and *decrescendi*, and BYU executes them admirably. An educational video that shows exactly what Whitacre is looking for in the abovementioned markings is by the University of West Florida Singers. This video is not a full performance, but just a clip of

Whitacre working with the choir on their articulation of the piece. A third video to be studied is one posted on Eric Whitacre's YouTube channel. This video includes all of the pieces from *Animal Crackers vol. I,* so one must skip to minute marker 2:02 to see specifically "The Firefly." In this video Whitacre conducts the University of Southern California (USC) Thornton Concert Choir. It shows how he switches between conducting in 2/2 and in 4/4. The audio and visual of the video are not synced, but it is valuable to see the composer conducting his own piece.

The Young Voices of Melbourne have a professional studio recording of "The Eel" where they follow Whitacre's articulation well. There are many other live recordings posted on YouTube, but the quality of the audio is not good. There are two live recordings of "The Eel" that will give a sense of how the piece can be received by an audience. One is by the Eastern New Mexico University Chamber Singers. Their rendition presents a choir member reading the text before the piece is performed, but the audio quality includes some extraneous white noise. The second is found on NAXOS by the Florida All-State Reading Chorus. The audio of their recording is professional, but the performance is a little sloppy. The audience, however, finds the performance very amusing.

Similar to "The Firefly," recordings of "The Panther" can be found by the BYU Singers and USC Thornton Concert Choir. "The Panther" is the first piece in the video from USC. "The Panther" is the least technically difficult out of the four Whitacre pieces discussed in this paper. Because of this, it allows younger choirs to perform the piece at a high level alongside the more mature choirs. One example of young voices executing this piece well is the Gondwana Singers, a choir made up of teenagers ages 14-16. They have a professional live recording on YouTube.

The Young Voices of Melbourne provide another good recording of Whitacre's pieces, this time it is "The Canary." Their articulation is accurate, and the audio quality is good. There is

also a recording of Whitacre conducting I Vocalisti. Whitacre's tempo is faster than the tempo that is taken in most other recordings on YouTube and NAXOS, but it is closer to the half note equals 85 that he indicates in the music.

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Againe/Wilt Thou Unkind Thus Reave Me/Weep You No More, Sad Fountains/My Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home/Cleare or Cloudie/In Darkness Let Mae Dwell/Spoken Reading of a Letter by Dowland." *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors*, vol. 30, no. 4 (March 2007): 109–11. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=24670463&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

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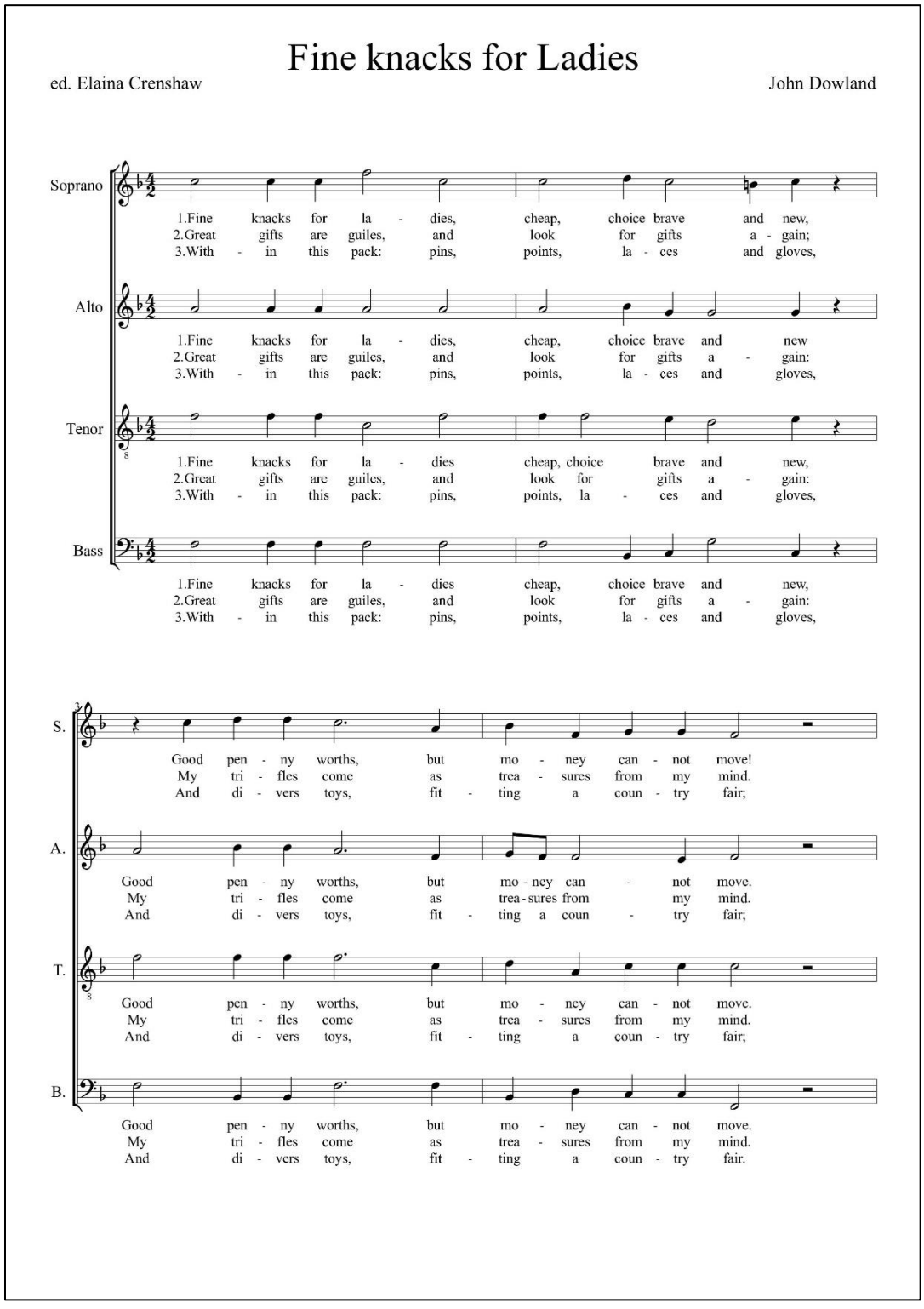
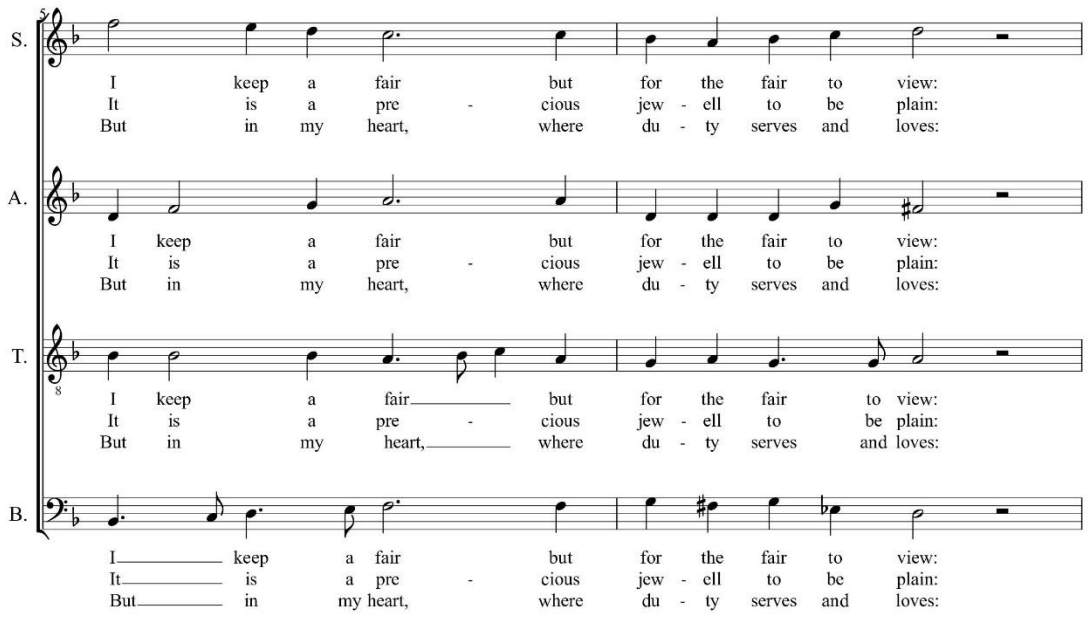
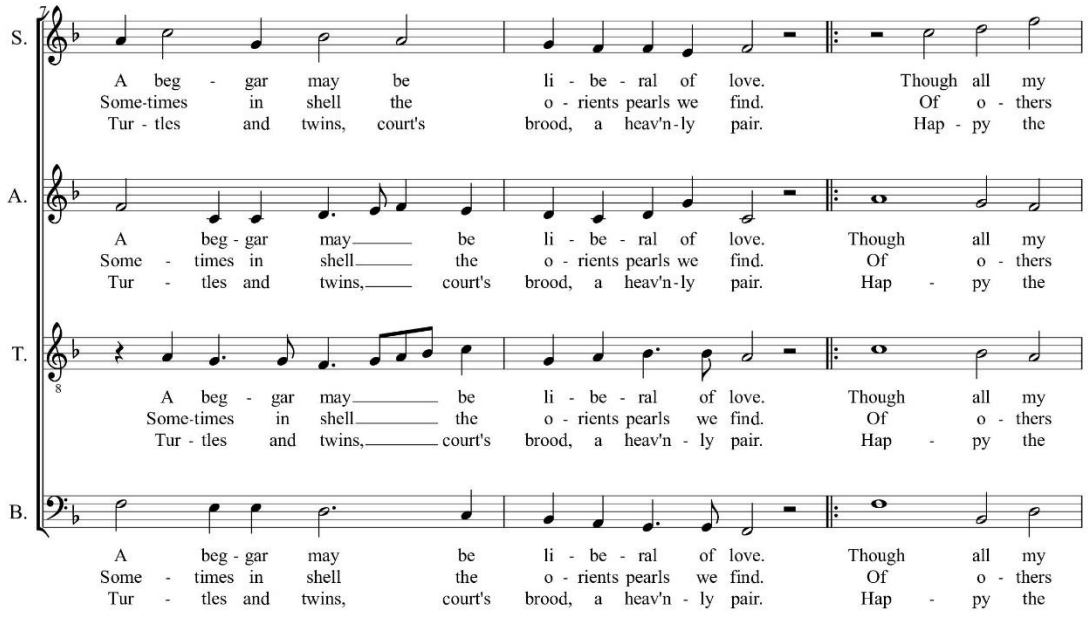
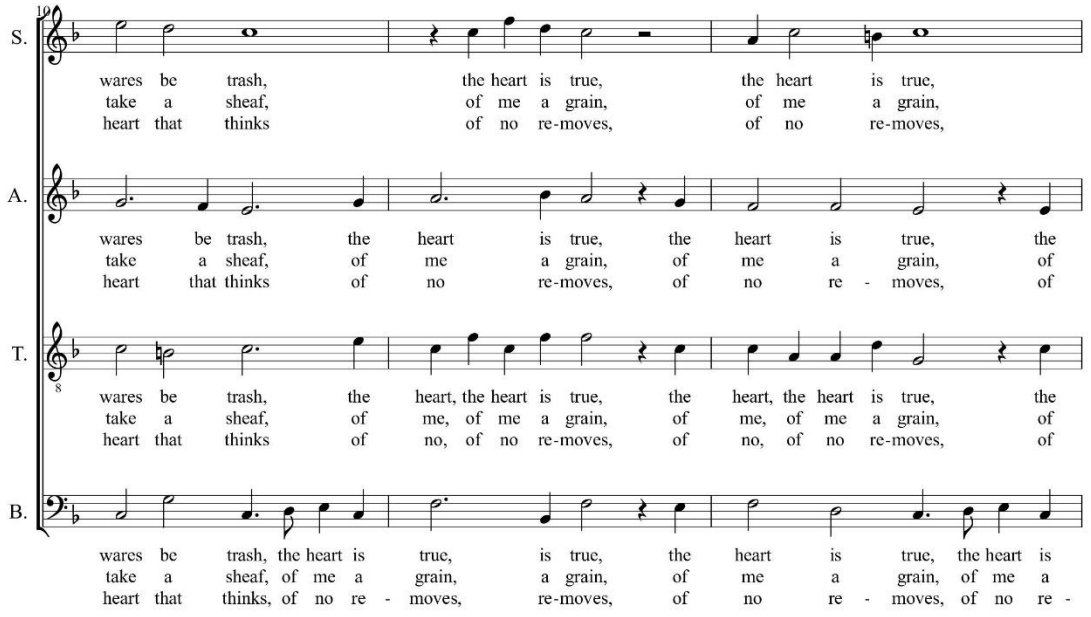
APPENDIX

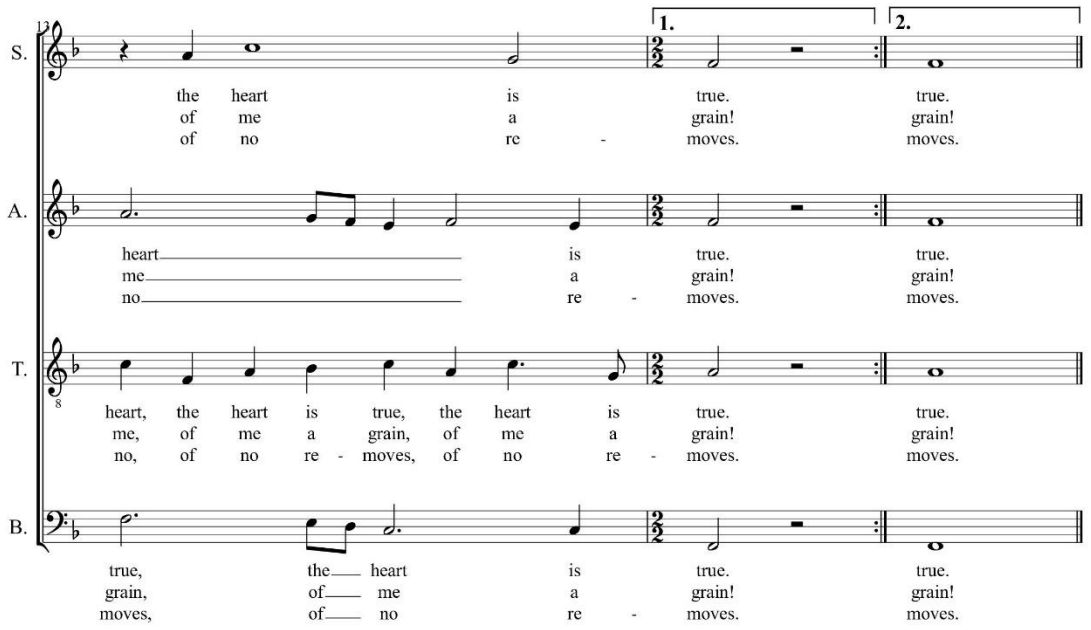
Fine Knacks for Ladies Score




S.
I keep a fair but for the fair to view:
It is a pre - cious jew - ell to be plain:
But in my heart, where du - ty serves and loves:
A.
I keep a fair but for the fair to view:
It is a pre - cious jew - ell to be plain:
But in my heart, where du - ty serves and loves:
T.
I keep a fair but for the fair to view:
It is a pre - cious jew - ell to be plain:
But in my heart, where du - ty serves and loves:
B.
I keep a fair but for the fair to view:
It is a pre - cious jew - ell to be plain:
But in my heart, where du - ty serves and loves:


S.
A beg - gar may be li - be - ral of love. Though all my
Some-times in shell the o - rients pearls we find. Of o - thers
Tur - tles and twins, court's brood, a heav'n-ly pair. Hap - py the
A.
A beg - gar may be li - be - ral of love. Though all my
Some - times in shell the o - rients pearls we find. Of o - thers
Tur - tles and twins, court's brood, a heav'n-ly pair. Hap - py the
T.
A beg - gar may be li - be - ral of love. Though all my
Some-times in shell the o - rients pearls we find. Of o - thers
Tur - tles and twins, court's brood, a heav'n - ly pair. Hap - py the
B.
A beg - gar may be li - be - ral of love. Though all my
Some - times in shell the o - rients pearls we find. Of o - thers
Tur - tles and twins, court's brood, a heav'n - ly pair. Hap - py the


10
S.
wares be trash, the heart is true, the heart is true,
take a sheaf, of me a grain, of me a grain,
heart that thinks of no re-moves, of no re-moves,
A.
wares be trash, the heart is true, the heart is true, the
take a sheaf, of me a grain, of me a grain, of
heart that thinks of no re-moves, of no re - moves, of
T.
wares be trash, the heart, the heart is true, the heart, the heart is true, the
take a sheaf, of me, of me a grain, of me, of me a grain, of
heart that thinks of no, of no re-moves, of no, of no re-moves, of
B.
wares be trash, the heart is true, is true, the heart is true, the heart is
take a sheaf, of me a grain, a grain, of me a grain, of me a
heart that thinks, of no re - moves, re-moves, of no re - moves, of no re -


13
1.
2.
S.
the heart is true. true.
of me a grain! grain!
of no re - moves. moves.
A.
heart is true. true.
me a grain! grain!
no re - moves. moves.
T.
heart, the heart is true, the heart is true. true.
me, of me a grain, of me a grain! grain!
no, of no re - moves, of no re - moves. moves.
B.
true, the heart is true. true.
grain, of me a grain! grain!
moves, of no re - moves. moves.

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Research Paper Title:
A Choral Conductor's Study, Rehearsal, and Performance Guide to Selected Pieces by Barber, Brahms, Dowland, Rutter, Victoria, Vivaldi, and Whitacre.

Major Professor: Susan Davenport